STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ROLES OF THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION FUNCTION

by

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SINOPSIS

Hoof uitvoerende beamptes en ander senior bestuurders skyn ontevrede te wees met die prestasie van hul korporatiewe kommunikasiebestuurders/praktisyns. Hul persepsies is dat praktisyns faal om breë besluitnemingsrolle in organisasies te vertolk. Dit kom voor asof hulle nie in staat is om die groter geheel of belangrike vraagstukke in hul industrie te verstaan nie -- hul denkwyse is takties, eerder as strategies. Praktisyns is gefokus op hulle eie aktiwiteite en media, op die bereiking van kommunikasie doelstellings en doelwitte—sonder om dit noodwendig aan besigheidsdoelstellings te verbind. Daar is klaarblyklik 'n gebrek aan begrip tussen topbestuur en die korporatiewe kommunikasiefunksie oor laasgenoemde se rol in die strategiese bestuursproses.

Hierdie situasie is moontlik die gevolg van 'n gebrek aan strategiese bestuurs- en strategiese kommunikasiekennis en -vaardighede by korporatiewe kommunikasiebestuurders, veroorsaak deur onvoldoende opleiding in hierdie velde (Groenewald 1998a).

Hierdie studie spreek die volgende navorsingsdoelwitte aan: **Eerstens,** om 'n strategiese rol vir die korporatiewe kommunikasiepraktisyn op die topbestuursvlak van die organisasie te konseptualiseer (die rol van *die 'korporatiewe kommunikasie strategis'.*) Dit vind plaas deur middel van 'n ondersoek van die strategiese bestuursliteratuur om vas te stel of daar 'n behoefte op topbestuursvlak vir so 'n strategiese rol bestaan. Die gedragsaktiwiteite van so 'n rol word geïdentifiseer uit beide die korporatiewe kommunikasie- sowel as die strategiese bestuursliteratuur.

Tweedens, om *korporatiewe kommunikasiestrategie* te konseptualiseer as 'n aktiwiteit van die kommunikasiepraktisyn in die rol van die *'korporatiewe kommunikasiebestuurder'*, 'n strategiese rol op die funksionele of meso vlak van die onderneming. Verder, om korporatiewe kommunikasiestrategie te differensieer van 'n kommunikasieplan.

Derdens, om 'n hipotetiese model vir die ontwikkeling van korporatiewe kommunikasiestrategie daar te stel. Vervolgens, om die model te implementeer, te evalueer en te verbeter deur die assessering en vergelyking van die korporatiewe kommunikasiestrategie projekte van derdejaar korporatiewe kommunikasiebestuurstudente aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, as vennote in die aksienavorsingsproses.

Die geselekteerde navorsingsbenadering is *kwalitatiewe* navorsing—'n *verkennende* ontwerp word gebruik in die bereiking van die eerste drie doelwitte (deur middel van 'n literatuurondersoek). 'n *Bevestigende* ontwerp word aangewend vir die implementering, evaluering en verbetering van die model (deur middel van aksienavorsing metodologie).

In die implementering, evaluering en verbetering van die hipotetiese model beweeg hierdie studie weg van die tradisionele dosent-gesentreerde benadering in die klaskamer na 'n situasie waar studente betrokke gemaak word in 'n navorsingsondersoek wat ten doel het om teorie te bou. Terselfdertyd word die deelnemende gemeenskap (in hierdie geval, nie-winsgeoriënteerde organisasies) blootgestel aan strategiese kommunikasiekennis. Hulle word betrokke gemaak by 'n proses waardeur hulle aktiewe deelnemers word (in samewerking met die studente en die navorser/dosent) in die ontwikkeling van korporatiewe kommunikasiestrategie vir hul organisasies. Die gevolge hiervan is tweeledig: eerstens verkry die personeel van die nie-winsgeoriënteerde organisasie sowel as die studente strategiese kommunikasievaardighede; tweedens verken die navorser 'n nuwe belangstellingsarea, bou teorie en bewerkstellig 'n leerproses vir studente om ervaring en kennis op te doen wat toepaslik is vir die praktyk.

In die konseptualisering van 'n nuwe rol vir die korporatiewe *kommunikasiepraktisyn op topbestuursvlak (die rol van die korporatiewe* kommunikasie 'strategis'), sowel as in die voorstel van korporatiewe kommunikasie strategie as skakel tussen die kommunikasieplan en die korporatiewe strategie, word daar gepoog om moontlike oplossings vir belangrike kwessies in die praktyk aan die hand te doen.

ABSTRACT

Chief executives (CEOs) and other senior managers do not seem to be satisfied with the performance of their corporate communication managers/practitioners. Perceptions are that practitioners fail to assume broad decision making roles in organisations. They seem to be unable to see the big picture or understand the key issues in their industry—their thinking is tactical, rather than strategic. Practitioners are focused on their own activities and media, on the achievement of *communication* goals and objectives--without necessarily linking them to *business* goals. There appears to be a lack of understanding between top management and the corporate communication function on the latter's role in the strategic management process.

This situation might be the result of a lack of strategic management and strategic communication knowledge and skills amongst corporate communication managers, possibly caused by insufficient training in these areas (Groenewald 1998a).

The research objectives addressed by this study are the following: **Firstly,** to conceptualise a strategic role for the corporate communication practitioner at the top management level of the organisation (the role of the *PR strategist*). This is done by investigating the strategic management literature to determine whether a need exists at the top management level to play a strategic role. The behavioural activities of such a role were identified both from the public relations and the strategic management literature.

Secondly, to conceptualise *corporate communication strategy* as an activity of a corporate communication practitioner in the role of the *PR manager*, a strategic role at the functional or meso level of the organisation. Furthermore, to differentiate a corporate communication strategy from a communication plan.

Thirdly, to hypothesise a model for developing corporate communication strategy — and thereafter to implement, evaluate and improve the model by assessing and comparing the corporate communication strategy projects of third year corporate

communication students at the University of Pretoria, as partners in the action research process.

The research approach selected is *qualitative* research—an *exploratory* design is employed in achieving the first three objectives by means of a literature investigation. A *confirmatory* design is used for the implementation, evaluation and improvement of the model through the methodology of action research.

In implementing, evaluating and revising the hypothesised model, this study moves away from the traditional teacher-centred approach in the classroom to a situation where students are involved in a research inquiry to build theory. At the same time, the participant community (non-profit organisations in this case) is exposed to strategic communication knowledge. They are involved in a process whereby they become active participants (together with the students and the lecturer/researcher) in developing corporate communication strategy for their organisations. The results are twofold: firstly, staff members of the non-profit organisation (as well as the students) acquire strategic communication skills; and secondly, the researcher investigates a new area of interest, builds theory, and facilitates a learning process for students whereby they obtain experience and knowledge that is applicable to practice.

In conceptualising both a new role for the corporate communication practitioner at the top management level (the role of the *PR strategist*), and proposing corporate communication strategy as the link between the communication plan and the corporate strategy, an attempt is made to provide possible solutions to important problems in practice.

FIGURE 1.1: OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

AND ITS SETTING

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TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC

RELATIONS' ROLES

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AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

In this first chapter the problem is introduced, research questions are stated, and the conceptualisation, delimitations, assumptions, and importance of the study are explicated. A synopsis of the research strategy and methodology is also provided.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This first chapter, together with the literature review (chapters 2 to 4), forms the conceptual framework for the study (the *what* and *why*). The research design section (chapter 5) describes *how* the study is conducted. Chapter 6 explicates the process of action research and Chapter 7 outlines findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1 THE PROBLEM

Chief executives (CEOs) and other senior managers do not seem to be satisfied with the performance of their corporate communication managers/practitioners. Perceptions are that practitioners fail to assume broad decision making roles in organisations. The communication function is peripheral to policy formulation, not a legitimate part of it (Budd 1991).

Corporate communication practitioners seem to be unable to see the big picture or understand the key issues in their industry (Lindenmann & Lapetina 1982)— their thinking is tactical, whereas top management wants them to think strategic (Neubauer 1997). Practitioners are focused on their own activities and media, on the achievement of *communication* goals and objectives--without necessarily linking them to *business* goals (Fleisher & Mahaffy 1997). According to Blum (1997), the South African CEOs he interviewed indicated that their practitioners were merely reactive, and awaited the initiative of their top management. There appears to be a lack of understanding between top management and the corporate communication function on the latter's role in the strategic management process (Woodrum 1995).

1.2.2 THE SETTING OF THE PROBLEM

Almost two decades ago, Lindenmann & Lapetina (1982) wrote the following:

> *"The public relations **function** is viewed by corporate management as extremely important for the 1980s. The public relations **practitioner**, however, is viewed as often failing to assume broad decision making roles.....and is lacking in what it takes to climb to the top of the corporate hierarchy".*

The main weaknesses of corporate communication practitioners pointed out by Lindenmann & Lapetina (1982) were that they often lacked a comprehensive understanding of the social, political and business problems and issues about which they wrote and counselled. They also lacked good management skills and the ability to look at the 'big picture'. Practitioners adopted a role as implementers of policy rather than as shapers and moulders of policy.

The more recent international body of knowledge on public relations points to the fact that dissatisfaction with the performance of corporate communication managers/practitioners remains. According to Budd (1991:9), the way in which corporate communication/public relations is practised, reduces it to nothing more than *communications*, meaning the exchange or transmission of information. Corporate communication is peripheral to policy formulation, not a legitimate part of the process—"*a major industry, with corporate titles abounding, but no closer to decision making than it was in the 1970s*".

An international study of chief executives (CEOs) and senior communicators showed that these two groups approached (internal) communication and its role in the organisation from two different perspectives. When communication executives spoke about communication, they were usually referring to the products, programmes and activities that the communication team had created. When the CEOs talked about communication, they usually described it in terms of results, or solutions to critical problems (Esler 1996).

The perceptions of CEOs are that the corporate communication function is focused on *communication* goals and objectives without necessarily linking them to the achievement of *business* goals—they are not seen as making a contribution to the bottom line. Practitioners generally perceive their work as fire fighting, as 'doing' or implementing—their thinking is tactical, rather than strategic (Fleisher & Mahaffy 1997). They either do not evaluate their work (Esler 1996), or they measure *outputs* rather than *outcomes* (Lindenmann 1993). Furthermore, the intelligence obtained are not integrated into the strategies of the larger organisation nor the function into its larger organisational domain (Fleisher & Mahaffy 1997).

Top management feels that the corporate communication function should be less obsessed with its own activities and media, and more focused on key

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organisational issues and outcomes (Esler 1996). They want senior corporate communicators to think strategically—to look at the goals and mission of the organisation and assist in delivering honest, open communication programmes or develop systems that will reach their employees (and other stakeholders) and help them understand the business of doing business. However, communicators have never been up to the task to any great extent--they are not there when they need to think about what needs to be done (Neubauer 1997).

The situation described above might also be applicable to South Africa. During informal interviews with South African CEOs, Blum (1997) found that most had a lack of faith in the ability of their communication staff. They felt that corporate communication managers needed to adopt a more professional business approach—they often had an inability to present communication strategies coherently and see the 'bigger picture'. They neither had understanding of other aspects of the business, nor did they have a holistic view of the industry. Communicators needed to know what the vision and the real purpose of the business was, and not isolate themselves within their own departments. CEOs complained that communicators were merely reactive, and awaited their decisions or initiatives. Although CEOs expected valuable input from their communicators—information that they could use to further the aim of the business—they did not necessarily receive this.

It is clear from the above that corporate communication managers are not regarded as playing a strategic role in their organisations (Towers 1993). Furthermore, the role of corporate communication is ill-defined in many organisations. There seems to be a lack of understanding and agreement about this role between the communication manager and his/her most important stakeholder—the chief executive (Woodrum 1995).

A possible reason for the fact that corporate communication managers do not make a strategic contribution in their organisations, might be that they do not have the required skills to do so (Moore 1996; Neubauer 1997). Little evidence can be found within the literature on public relations as to *how* exactly the corporate communication manager should contribute to the organisation's strategy formulation processes, *what* indeed constitutes a strategic role, or according to Tibble (1997), what strategy actually means in a corporate communication context.

Research by Groenewald (1998a) on the knowledge base of South African corporate communication *managers* indicated that they were not unaware of their shortcomings. Important findings of the study were that corporate communication managers perceived *strategic communication skills, management skills* and *management communication skills* as significantly more important than technical communication skills—however, perceived effectiveness of their training in the aforementioned was significantly *lower* than in technical communication skills.

It can therefore be deduced that corporate communication managers in Groenewald's study did not consider themselves sufficiently equipped for their present positions by the training they had received in skills they deemed important. This situation indicates a vicious cycle in industry that, if not broken, will reflect negatively on the position of the corporate communication manager, indeed on the whole communication profession:

> *"Encroachment is the inevitable by-product of a calling that fails to rise above technique. Practitioners must change their practice or see PR relegated to a low-level support function reporting to others..."(Broom & Dozier 1983:5).*

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The question arises how practitioners are to change their practice. Most corporate communication managers are communication technicians by training (Burger 1993). Many do not have the knowledge and skills to play a (strategic) management role. They often fill a management position by virtue of the fact that they are the most senior practitioner, or because they perform well in their technician roles. This, however, will not necessarily equip them for the role that seems to be expected by their top management.

The *Excellence Study,* a comprehensive 10-year research project of the communication profession (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig 1995), provides some answers to the above question. It pointed out that if an organisation does not have a practitioner in the role of corporate communication *manager* with knowledge of strategic management, the communication function cannot contribute to the organisation's strategic management process, make the organisation more effective (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:327) or by implication, fulfil expectations. The career failure of top practitioners to assume the communication management role within organisations is a failure to truly emerge as a profession from the communication skills practised by most (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:352).

Some corporate communication practitioners filling managerial positions play the role of a manager at the *middle* management level. In many cases, these practitioners managed to obtain management and/or business skills through experience or by attending short courses. If they are good, they manage their function according to classic management principles--planning, organising, co-ordinating, controlling (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998). If they are even more knowledgeable, they draw up a corporate communication strategy based on the corporate strategy, deriving communication goals from corporate goals. Their communication plans and programmes flow from the communication strategy, some practitioners even measuring the impact of these programmes.

Such communication managers can be said to be 'good'—however, they cannot necessarily be considered 'excellent'. Even though they are aligning communication programmes/plans to the corporate strategy, they are functioning at the micro level of the organisation, i.e. the level of implementation. They are not functioning at the macro level (Neubauer 1997), also called the level of *strategic environmental management* by Holtzhauzen *(*1995), where input to the strategy formulation process is made. Although they might be developing a corporate communication strategy, this is done 'reactive' to the corporate strategy--they are not playing a strategic role at the top management level by pro-actively influencing the formulation of the corporate strategy.

More often than not, these practitioners carry the title of 'manager', but do not understand the 'strategic' management role that CEOs seem to expect. If communication managers do not step into a (strategic) management role, a power vacuum is created. This leads to encroachment, where a person from another functional area is promoted to manage the corporate communication function (Lauzen 1992; Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992). Or the latter is subjugated to another function (e.g. marketing or human resources), where corporate communication activities are implemented following the decisions made by other functional managers (Ehling, White & Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992).

In times characterised by rationalisation and restructuring, not fulfilling the expectations of top management is a precarious situation to be in. Many organisations find themselves in a position where decisions have to be taken on whether they indeed have need of the corporate communication function, or whether a communication technician functioning in the marketing department, for example, could take care of their tactical communication needs. This situation must inevitably lead to the corporate communication function being marginalised and even outsourced as a non-core organisational activity. According to Patrick

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(1994), the vast majority of corporate communication support services will increasingly be handled outside the organisation.

Another reason for the problem referred to in previous paragraphs, might be that the CEO/top management of an organisation does not always understand the strategic role of the corporate communication manager themselves (Bovet 1993). They do not realise that their world-views might be obstructing the enactment of such a role by not allowing or supporting two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & White, *in* Grunig 1992), or by not involving the corporate communication manager in the identification of strategic constituencies (Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, *in* Grunig 1992). Not having been trained in corporate communication—since most business schools do not offer it in their MBA programmes (Groenewald 1998a)--the CEO does not understand the strategic importance of segmenting stakeholders or identifying issues around which publics/activists emerge, or developing communication programmes to adapt to the organisation's environment.

Many CEOs only know and understand the technical aspects of corporate communication through practical experience—therefore this is what they demand and allow. This means that, in most organisations, corporate communication is only practised (and therefore evaluated) on the micro level—the level of implementation—where decisions made by other functions/top management are implemented.

The problem spelled out above is a practical one. However, according to the researcher, this problem might be caused by the *training* that corporate communication managers receive—most notably the lack of (strategic) management and strategic communication skills. A managerial perspective, according to Prof Larissa Grunig, observer of corporate communication (public relations) education across the United States and in some 20 other countries,

serves not only corporate communication students well, but also society (LA Grunig 2000):

> *"It prepares the public relations practitioner for a role in managerial decision-making, negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution. In other words, communication management offers organisations an opportunity to develop stable, long-term relationships with their strategic constituencies and in so doing, use communication rather than litigation, confrontation, or even terrorism to solve the inevitable problems that occur between organisations and their publics. Never have organisations and the societies in which they exist needed such dialogue and collaboration more."*

The apparent shortcomings in the training of corporate communication students and practitioners might, in essence, be a *theoretical* problem -- caused by the lack of theory on what constitutes a strategic role at the top management level, and by the lack of a model(s) on how students can be prepared for such a role.

The Department of Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria (UP) is the only university in South Africa offering corporate communication training that is solely positioned in a Faculty of Management and Economic Sciences, teaching corporate communication *only* from a managerial perspective. It therefore seems logical that this Department should take the lead in investigating the problem outlined above.

The researcher (teaching Strategic Communication Management both at the third year and honours level at UP) will therefore attempt to determine whether a need exists at the top management level of South African organisations for the corporate communication manager to play a strategic role, and also to determine what such a role entails. Furthermore, to address the apparent lack of strategy in

the function by conceptualising corporate communication strategy as a strategy providing focus and direction to the organisation's communication with its strategic stakeholders.

Most important, however, is to relate theory to practice--this will be addressed by hypothesising a model for developing corporate communication strategy which is based on corporate strategy. This model will be implemented amongst non-profit organisations by groups of corporate communication students in the Department (by means of action research). The researcher/lecturer will evaluate the students' completed corporate communication strategies, and thereafter improve the model based on an analysis and comparison of the different groups' outputs.

To teach final year students the role of corporate communication in strategic management, and to empower them to practically develop a corporate communication strategy for an organisation will prepare students more successfully through their tertiary training to live up to the expectations of top management -- and to make a more meaningful contribution towards the effectiveness of their organisations once they are employed.

1.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF THIS EXPLORATORY STUDY (AND A FUTURE EMPIRICAL STUDY)

Conceptualisation can be described as a process that, inter alia, entails defining the key concepts in a research question. Concepts acquire meaning, or even new meaning, within a conceptual framework such as a theory or a model. Such concepts are referred to as 'theoretical concepts' or 'constructs' (Mouton 1996:115). *Constructs* are concepts that have been consciously and deliberately invented for particular scientific purposes (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch 1997).

Miles & Huberman (1984) consider it advantageous to the qualitative study to have a conceptual framework--identifying constructs, giving the constructs descriptive or inferential names, and getting some clarity about their interrelationships.

A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main dimensions to be studied—the key variables and the relationships amongst them. It specifies who and what will, and will not, be studied and also assumes some relationships. It is best presented graphically, and prior theorising and empirical research are important inputs.

Figure 1.2: CONCEPTUALISATION OF THIS EXPLORATORY STUDY (AND A FUTURE QUANTITATIVE STUDY)

THEORY (exploratory study)	Systems theory Theory of excellence in PR and communication management		
	↓	↓	↓
CONCEPT (exploratory study)	Strategic management roles in corporate communication		Implementation roles in corporate communication
	↓	↓	↓
CONSTRUCTS (exploratory study)	**Mirror** function	**Window** function	**Window** function
	↓	↓	↓
CONSTRUCTS (exploratory study)	**Information gathering and processing (envi-ronmental scanning and boundary spanning)**	**External representation**	**External representation**
	↓	↓	↓
CONSTRUCTS (exploratory study)	Inputs into **organisation's strategy formulation** processes (development of **corporate strategy)**	Inputs into **corporate communication function's strategy formulation** (devel-oping **corporate communication strategy and policy)**	Developing **communication plans/ functional tactics**
	↓	↓	↓
FACTORS AS CONSTRUCTS (to be conceptualised in this exploratory study, and to be isolated in a future quantitative study)	Role of *PR strategist* (**Strategic role** at top management or macro level)	Role of *PR manager* (**Strategic role** at the functional or departmental level)	Role of *PR technician* (**Tactical role** at the implementation level)
	↓	↓	↓
HYPOTHESES	To be developed in this exploratory study, but tested in a future quantitative study.	To be developed in this exploratory stu-dy, but tested in a fu-future quantitative study.	To be developed in this exploratory study, but tested in a future quantitative study.
	↓	↓	↓
ITEMS	To be developed in this exploratory study and to be measured in a future quantitative study	To be developed in this exploratory study and to be measured in a future quantitative study	Some will be developed in this exploratory study and some standardised items will be used in a future quantitative study

Source: Own research

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1.3.1 EXPLORATORY STUDY

As explicated in Figure 1, this is an *exploratory, qualitative* study that has as its aim to clarify concepts and constructs, and develop hypotheses to be tested in a future quantitative study.

The major concept in this study is **strategic management roles of the corporate communication function.** In the public relations literature reference is often made to a strategic role for the corporate communication practitioner -- however, uncertainty reigns as to what exactly is meant by the term. This study conceptualises strategic management roles in corporate communication as those consisting of activities performed in executing the **mirror** function and some of the activities executed in performing the **window** function of corporate communication.

Van Riel (1995:2) described the *mirror* function of corporate communication as the monitoring of relevant environmental developments and the anticipation of their consequences for the *organisation's communication policy.* For the purpose of this study, the researcher broadens the construct **mirror** function to the 'monitoring of relevant environmental developments and the anticipation of their consequences for the *organisation's policies and strategies, especially with regard to relationships with stakeholders'.*

The *window* function was described by Van Riel (1995:2) as the preparation and execution of a communication policy, resulting in messages that portray all facets of the organisation in a lucid and appealing way. For the purpose of this study, the researcher broadens the construct *window* function to add *strategy* to policy definition, and leaves out '*in a lucid and appealing way*' (for the latter smacks of

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asymmetry). The construct *window* function is therefore seen as 'the preparation and execution of a communication policy *and strategy*, resulting in messages that portray *all facets of the organisation'*.

The researcher regards the mirror and window function as functions typically performed by an organisation's boundary spanners. Most authors concur that boundary spanning roles are involved with either *(information) inputs to* the organisation and *(information) outputs from* the organisation. This corresponds with Adams' (1976) boundary spanning roles of **acquisition** and **disposal**, and Aldrich & Herker's (1977) **information processing** and **external representation** roles.

Katz & Kahn (1966) see three boundary spanning roles: procuring resources and disposing of outputs; *relating the organisation to its larger community* or social system; and **adapting the organisation to the future** *by gathering information* about trends and **planning** *to meet these developments*. Leifer & Delbecq (1978) regard boundary spanning activities as *protecting the organisation from environmental stress* and *acting as regulators of information* and material flow between organisation and environment.

To summarise the different views on boundary spanning expressed above, it can be said that **informational boundary spanning** is a two-part process—*firstly*, obtaining information from outside sources to adapt the organisation to the future by gathering information about trends, processing this information, acting as regulators of information by disseminating it internally, and planning to address external developments to protect the organisation from environmental stress. *Secondly*, disposing information to the outside world, representing the organisation in the external environment.

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> **Strategic management roles in corporate communication is conceptualised by the researcher as being twofold:**

♦ **Firstly,** it consists of the role of the **PR strategist**, i.e. a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the **macro or top management level.** Also called the **mirror** function (as adapted from Van Riel 1995), it consists of monitoring relevant environmental developments and anticipating their consequences for the organisation's policies and strategies, especially with regard to relationships with stakeholders. This is the **information gathering and processing role** of the boundary scanner, being **part of the planning team** that adapts the organisation to the future. This constitutes corporate communication's **inputs into the organisation's strategy formulation processes,** resulting in a contribution towards **corporate strategy** (Research Objective 1).

♦ **Secondly,** it consists of the role of the **PR manager, i.e. a strategic role for the corporate communication manager** at the **functional or departmental level.** This role of the PR manager is seen to form **part of the window** function.

The **window** or external representation function is the **information disposal** function of the boundary spanner. It is seen by the researcher as consisting of two different roles:

- the **PR manager role at the functional or departmental level,** which is conceptualised as **developing a corporate communication strategy and policy** for the organisation (derived from the corporate strategy), deciding **what should be communicated to stakeholders** to solve problems/capitalise on opportunities presented.

- the **PR technician role at the implementation level,** responsible for implementing the corporate communication strategy by developing

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communication plans and functional tactics for the organisation's communication with *stakeholders.*

Whereas the *PR manager role at the functional or departmental* level is regarded as one of corporate communication's *strategic* management roles, the *PR technician* role is not regarded as such.

In this exploratory study, precise hypotheses with regard to a strategic role at the top management level (the role of *PR strategist*); a strategic role at the functional level (the role of the *PR manager*) and a tactical role at the implementation level (the role of the *PR technician*) will be generated. Measurement questions for the role of the *PR strategist* and the *PR manager* will also be developed in this study, to be tested in a future quantitative study

1.3.2 FUTURE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

In the future quantitative study, an attempt will be made to isolate the constructs of *PR strategist, PR manager* and *PR technician* by means of a factor analysis. This statistical technique is an exploratory device for uncovering basic concepts or constructs, for exploring the unknown. The method is a *"screen through which data can be sifted to bare their underlying structure"* (Rummel 1970:19).

Factor analysis will thus be used as a deductive approach in hypothesising that the above three roles exist. The data will then be factored to see if these roles emerge.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND GUIDING HYPOTHESES

From a conceptual framework it is a direct step to the formulation of research questions, which make theoretical assumptions even more explicit than they may have been in the conceptual framework. Research questions *operationalise* the conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman 1984), by focusing a researcher on the most important variables for data collection. Research questions spell out what the researcher wants most or first, and also leads naturally to considerations about sampling, instrumentation, data-gathering decisions and eventual analysis (Miles & Huberman 1984).

Although this is an exploratory study, the aim is to generate research questions and hypotheses for a future descriptive/quantitative study. Use will therefore be made of *guiding* hypotheses, which indicate some possible directions to follow, but allows the researcher the freedom to explore and generate other hypotheses. Guiding hypotheses are described by Marshall & Rossman (1995:37) as *"merely tools used to generate questions and to search for patterns, and may be discarded when the researcher gets into the field and finds other exciting patterns of phenomena"*.

Research Question 1

Is there a need for the corporate communication (public relations) manager to play a strategic role at the top management level of the organisation (the role of the *PR strategist*) and if so, what does this role entail?

> *Guiding hypothesis 1a*
>
> The chief executive is not satisfied with the role played by the corporate communication manager.
>
> *Guiding hypothesis 1b*
>
> The chief executive expects the corporate communication manager to play a strategic role at the top management level.

Research Question 2

What is the meaning of the concept 'strategy' in the context of corporate communication (i.e. *corporate communication strategy*) and how does it differ from a *communication plan*?

> *Guiding hypothesis 2*
>
> The chief executive expects the corporate communication manager to develop a corporate communication strategy for the organisation.

Research Question 3

How can the process of *developing corporate communication strategy* satisfactorily be explicated to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and what lessons can be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector), and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions?

> **Guiding hypothesis 3**
>
> A model is a suitable tool to satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

All the above research questions are theoretical, e.g. Research Question 3 can be investigated in any one of a number of populations (private/public/non-profit sector) or different sites/settings (e.g. University of Natal or Cape Town). There is no reason to believe that the outcome would be different.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Research Objective 1

Primary Objective: To conceptualise the role of the *PR strategist*, i.e. a strategic role for the corporate communication (public relations) manager at the top management level (Chapter 3).

Secondary Objectives:

- To determine, by means of an analysis of the relevant literature on public relations, what the role of the *PR strategist* entails.

- To determine, by means of an analysis of the relevant literature on strategic management, whether a need exists for the corporate communication (public relations) manager to play a strategic role at the top management level of the organisation (the role of the *PR strategist*).

- To operationalise the role of the *PR strategist.*

- To develop precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR strategist.*

- To develop items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR strategist.*

Research Objective 2

Primary Objective: To conceptualise *corporate communication strategy* (Chapter 4).

Secondary Objectives:

- To differentiate between a corporate communication *strategy* and a communication *plan.*

- To provide an operational definition for the process of developing a corporate communication strategy.

- To develop precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR manager* (a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the functional or departmental level of the organisation) and the role of the *PR technician* (an implementation role at the micro or programme level).

- To develop items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR manager.*

Research Objective 3

Primary Objective: To develop a model that can satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and to identify the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

Secondary Objectives:

- To hypothesise a model for developing corporate communication strategy.

- To involve third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria as action researchers in the implementation of the model amongst some non-profit organisations in South Africa.

- To determine the student groups' *understanding* of the process of developing a corporate communication strategy: *firstly,* by assessing each individual group report and *secondly,* by comparing them in order to pinpoint the areas/constructs where problems are experienced, or alternatively, are (well) understood.

- To evaluate the hypothesised model: *firstly,* by analysing the results of the assessment and comparison of the student group reports (the corporate communication strategies) to ascertain common problem areas/constructs; and *secondly,* to analyse the theory on which the model is based (which was provided to the students to assist in their understanding of the model), as a possible reason for some of the problems experienced.

- To improve the model based on the analysis of the implementation results.

- To identify the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

- To make the findings public through presentations at academic and industry conferences, as well as through articles in academic and industry publications.

- To attempt to make a contribution towards theory building on the little-known subject of corporate communication strategy.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This exploratory study will focus on:

1) providing a theoretical framework and briefly investigating the historical origins of the concept 'public relations' (PR) role.

   The concept of public relations (PR) model, which is conceptually linked to public relations (PR) role (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:345), *will not be investigated.*

2) conceptualising the role of *PR strategist*, based on an adapted version of the mirror function (Van Riel 1995:2). The latter will be linked to the strategic management literature through the concepts of boundary spanner and environmental scanner as constituting the information gathering and processing role, explicated by Aldrich & Herker (1977). This role is regarded as representing the corporate communication manager's input into the strategic management process, establishing a strategic role at the macro level. *In this exploratory study, hypotheses and items for measuring the role of the PR strategist will be developed, but not tested.*

3) conceptualising *corporate communication strategy* as one component of the window function of corporate communication (Van Riel 1995:2) and one part of the external representation role, as explicated by Aldrich & Herker (1977). This will be linked to the strategic management literature as representing the corporate communication manager's strategic input at the functional level.

   Precise hypotheses and items for empirically measuring the role of the PR manager will be developed in this exploratory study, but tested in a future study. The other part of the window function/external representation role that refers to developing plans and functional tactics, i.e. the role of the technician

at the implementation level, will briefly be referred to in this study. Its relationship to the strategist and manager roles will be explained in order to develop hypotheses for testing, but will not be investigated in-depth. This role is well documented in the public relations literature--existing standardised items will mostly be used.

4) hypothesising a model that can be used for explicating the process of developing corporate communication strategy to students and practitioners, as well as implementing, evaluating and improving this model by means of action research.

The hypothesised model is developed through a literature analysis—it does not proclaim to explicate the way in which corporate communication strategy is indeed formulated in organisations. (This can only be determined by doing in-depth case studies of private sector organisations). The action research took place in non-profit organisations only, conducted by students under leadership of their lecturer (the researcher).

What the model did aim to achieve, was to focus the attention of students and the staff of non-profit organisations on communication as a means of solving organisational problems, by using communication to address key strategic issues.

What the study also aimed to achieve through action research, was to test the viability of implementing the model, i.e. are the constructs comprehensible to students and staff of non-profit organisations--can the model function as a tool for focusing communication on organisational issues.

Furthermore, the study aimed to evaluate the reports of students to find out where problem areas are, where constructs are not applicable or understood, and where new constructs/organising schemes/categories might surface. This is to be achieved through analysis and comparison of individual group reports, to pinpoint problems experienced by more than one group.

1.7 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

To achieve the specific research objectives set, a qualitative strategy was selected. This approach is particularly suited to the exploratory design of the study, as it allows in-depth investigation of little-known phenomena or unstructured processes in organisations (Marshall & Rossman 1995). Exploratory research design assists the researcher to become more familiar with a new area of interest, in order to formulate a problem or develop hypotheses (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:41).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

To conceptualise the role of the *PR strategist*, i.e. a strategic role for the corporate communication (public relations) manager at the top management level (Chapter 3).

In order to achieve this first objective, the means of exploration was a *secondary data analysis*, specifically of the strategic management literature. The aim was to determine whether a real need exists at the top management level of organisations for playing such a strategic role, and to argue the suitability of the corporate communication manager for playing this role. The latter was achieved through an analysis of the literature on public relations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

To conceptualise *corporate communication strategy* (Chapter 4).

In order to achieve this second objective, the means of exploration was a *secondary data analysis*, firstly of the body of knowledge on strategic management, in order to clarify the concept 'strategy' in an organisational

context. Secondly, of the literature on public relations planning to determine the meaning of the concept 'corporate communication strategy' and to ascertain whether a difference existed between a 'communication plan' and a 'corporate communication strategy'.

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3

To develop a model that can be used as a tool for explicating the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and to identify the lessons that can be learnt to serve industry and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions

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The means of exploration for achieving the first Secondary Objective (under Research Objective 3), namely 'To hypothesise a model for developing corporate communication strategy', was again an analysis of both the strategic management and the public relations literature. However, the further secondary objectives of implementing, evaluating and improving the model was achieved by involving students in the process of action research, by means of a confirmatory design.

Since the researcher is an educator, action research was considered the ideal methodology -- not only for building theory, but also for *involving* senior students in the research process and improving practically the process of education. It is a participatory approach that involves both the researcher(s) and the participant community in a shared inquiry (McNiff 1988:3-4). Therefore, action research was the most suitable choice for *improving* a little-known organisational process and *assisting* the non-profit sector (the target population) in obtaining much-needed management and strategic communication knowledge and skills.

Its advantage in this situation was the fact that it required no financial resources—the researcher/lecturer and students conducted the research as part of their academic obligations. Non-profit organisations who agreed to participate, made their staff available at no cost, since they stood to gain by the outcome of the research endeavour.

In conclusion it can be said that the cycle of research and action, which are the central tenets of this methodology (Stenhouse 1975), produced a process of ongoing learning, a win-win situation for all the parties involved.

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS

> An assumption is a hypothetical statement that the researcher chooses to accept as the truth, at least for the purposes of the investigation. Assumptions are therefore background beliefs that underlie other decisions in the research process (Mouton 1996:123).

1) In describing the *mirror* function of corporate communication, Van Riel (1995:2) referred to the anticipation of environmental developments and their consequences for the organisation's *communication policy*. In describing the window function, he referred to the preparation and execution of a communication *policy*. In this study, the definition of the mirror function was broadened to include the *organisation's policies and strategies,* and the window function was broadened to also include *strategy* together with policy.

   These are assumed to be related concepts in the strategic management process -- where *strategy* indicates the direction that an organisation will take (the thinking, the logic behind the actions) and *policy* represents broad guidelines for decision making that permit management to delegate authority (the parameters within which planning is carried out). These two concepts are grouped together since they are assumed to occur firstly on the macro level

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(organisational strategy and policy) and secondly, on the functional level (in this case corporate communication strategy and policy).

2) The role of the *PR strategist* was developed from a perspective of being core to the organisation, and therefore assumed to be best performed in-house—however, it is assumed that the role of *PR manager* (to a lesser extent) and the role of *PR technician* (totally) can be outsourced.

3) The following are assumed to be prerequisites for playing the role of the *PR strategist*:

- tertiary training in communication *management* (including management and strategic communication skills);

- being *part of the top management team* (the dominant coalition), with full access to strategic information.

4) Strategist is a role, not a position—in small organisations, it is possible that the role of the *PR strategist* and the *PR manager* will be played by the same person. In larger organisations, two different people might play these roles. However, it is assumed unlikely that one person will play both technician and strategist role.

5) It is assumed that the role of the *PR strategist* will be applicable to new organisational forms such as the network.

1.9 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Research projects must ask important questions, lead to new ways of thinking and lay the foundation for further research in the field (Leedy 1997:45).

Roles research plays an important part in understanding (organisational and) corporate communication as an emerging profession (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:350). This study attempts to provide some answers to Dozier's statement that *"the key issue in roles research is who will manage the corporate communication function and how will it be managed"*. It also attempts to provide some insight on the role that is to be played by the person heading the corporate communication function, in order to fulfil the expectations that top management seems to have of this position.

The Excellence Study pointed out that in order to be excellent, an organisation must have a communication practitioner playing the role of the *PR manager* (Grunig, in Grunig 1992). This study posits that to be excellent, an organisation should also have a communication practitioner playing the role of the *PR strategist*. In conceptualising the role of the *PR strategist* at the macro level, a unique contribution is made in broadening the theoretical viewpoint of the field of corporate communication (public relations) by drawing on a new body of theory, namely the strategic management literature.

In describing the new role of the *PR strategist* and developing measurement items for the activities which are to be performed on a day-to-day basis by a practitioner in this role, the study addresses a vacuum in the public relations literature. Whereas the literature does refer to the corporate communication

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manager playing a strategic role, it does not spell out how this is to be done, i.e. which activities are to be performed.

The researcher also conceptualises an important new activity for the corporate communication manager on the functional level, namely that of developing a corporate communication strategy for the organisation. In creatively applying concepts from one discipline to another, corporate communication strategy provides the missing link between the corporate communication function and the corporate strategy. By indicating how corporate communication goals should be aligned to the organisational mission, the contribution of corporate communication to organisational effectiveness is pointed out.

The study breaks theoretical boundaries by having reconceptualised Cutlip and Center's four-step 'PR process' model, introduced in 1952. It relocates the problem area in corporate communication from the situation analysis (as the first step in the process, taking place at the implementation or at the functional level of the organisation), to solving key strategic issues at the macro level--thereby elevating the corporate communication function from the functional to the strategic level. Corporate communication's contribution to organisational effectiveness is pinpointed by explicating the corporate communication manager's role in *pro-actively* preventing problems by being part of the strategic decision making process, rather than the traditional role of *'fire-fighting'* *(reactively* assisting top management in *solving problems)*.

Another important contribution that the study makes is the use of action research as a methodology to implement the hypothesised model. This highlights the importance of using new/creative approaches to improve teaching and shows how students can actively be involved in the research process.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this section all the terms in the problem statement or research questions are defined operatively—that is, the definition interprets the term as it was employed in relation to this research project (Leedy 1997:59).

1.10.1 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Corporate communication can be defined as the *"integrated approach to all communication produced by an organisation, directed at relevant target groups"* (Van Riel 1995:24).

Groenewald (1998b) pragmatically defines corporate communication as the communication on behalf of an organisation; managed as one of the organisational functions by a person(s) carrying the responsibility for the organisation's communication. She therefore suggests the use of the term *Corporate Communication Management* to clearly differentiate it as a management function, and not as a set of techniques.

For the purposes of this study, the term *corporate communication* will be used, referring to the management function (e.g. 'corporate communication' strategy as an overall strategy for the corporate communication function). Corporate communication is preferred for the following reasons:

- The term 'public relations' has negative connotations because of its historical association with publicity and propaganda.

- 'Corporate communication' is increasingly being used in practice--a survey in the USA amongst Fortune 500 companies indicated the trend to substitute public relations with corporate communication (Groenewald 1998b; Budd 1995).

- 'Public relations' is seen by some chief executives in South Africa as referring only to an organisation's external communication. Corporate communication is regarded as the broader term, encompassing both internal and external communication.

However, in academic literature the subject area is still known as public relations (Groenewald 1998b). When therefore referring to its body of knowledge, the term 'public relations' will be used in this study.

1.10.2 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Grunig & Hunt (1984:6) defined public relations as *"the management of communication between an organization and its publics."* According to Grunig (*in* Grunig 1992:4), this definition equates public relations and communication management. This probably explains the trend discerned in (modern) American academic literature to refer to *public relations and communication management* (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:4; Dozier *et al* 1995), emphasising the fact that public relations is regarded as a management function.

For theoretical purposes, public relations as a management function is therefore equated to the term 'corporate communication' as explicated above. The following definitions are seen to be the essence of public relations as employed in this research:

- The First World Assembly of Public Relations Associations, held in Mexico City in 1978, defined public relations as *"the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisational leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and the public interest"* (Jefkins & Ugboajah 1986).

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- Public relations is *"a communication function of management through which organisations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organisational goals"* (Long & Hazelton 1987:6).

- Public relations is *"the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends"* (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994).

The emphasis in these definitions is to identify and manage issues and stakeholders/publics in order to assist the organisation to adapt to its environment, and to build mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders, on whom it depends to meet its goals.

1.10.3 ROLE

Members of an organisation occupy different positions or ranks, each of which has a different role (Grunig & Hunt 1984). Role can be defined as *"the patterns of behaviour or the every-day activities of a corporate communication practitioner"* (Katz & Kahn 1978).

1.10.4 FUNCTION

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:96), functions are the output or performance variables of a system (e.g. an organisation) or a subsystem (e.g. a department in the organisation).

1.10.5 Mirror function

The monitoring of relevant environmental developments and the anticipation of their consequences for the organisation's strategies and policies (adapted from Van Riel 1995:2).

1.10.6 Window function

The preparation and execution of a communication policy and strategy, resulting in messages that portray all facets of the organisation (adapted from Van Riel 1995:2).

1.10.7 Information processing and external representation roles

Aldrich & Herker (1977) describes these two boundary spanning roles as *(information) inputs to* the organisation or *(information) outputs from* the organisation. This corresponds to Adams' (1976) boundary spanning roles of *acquisition and disposal.*

1.10.8 PR STRATEGIST

This key construct will be theoretically defined in the literature analysis, but is explained operationally as a corporate communication practitioner functioning at the top management level, exhibiting the following behaviour (Steyn 2000a; 2000b; 2000c):

- doing environmental scanning in the macro environment, identifying strategic stakeholders and the publics that emerge around issues, and their concerns;

- analysing the consequences of organisational behaviour on stakeholders/ publics and vice versa;

- feeding this strategic information into the organisation's strategy formulation process.

Although the term 'corporate communication' is preferred in general to 'public relations', the newly conceptualised role has been named *PR strategist,* in order that it may be understood in relation to the widely known existing roles of the *PR manager* and the *PR technician*.

1.10.9 *PR MANAGER*

This key construct will be theoretically defined in the literature analysis, but is explained operationally by the researcher as the activities typically performed by a corporate communication practitioner in a middle management position. A practitioner in the *PR manager* role therefore has the general responsibility of all functional managers, namely of planning, organising, leading, controlling, staffing, budgeting, etc.

Furthermore, a practitioner in the redefined *PR manager* role has the specific responsibility of developing a corporate communication strategy based on the enterprise/corporate strategy (Steyn 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2000d), as well as developing and managing the strategic communication plan (*ongoing programmes* such as employee and media relations, corporate identity, publications and crisis communication; or *time-limited campaigns* e.g. information campaigns). A *PR manager* frequently uses research to plan or evaluate work and facilitates communication between management and stakeholders/publics.

1.10.10 *PR TECHNICIAN*

This term can be operationally defined as a corporate communication practitioner who carries out the low-level (operational) mechanics of generating communication products, implementing policy decisions made by others. The *PR technician* provides the communication and journalistic skills—writing, editing, audio-visual production, graphics, and production of messages—needed to *implement* communication programmes (Grunig & Hunt 1984) and campaigns.

1.10.11 STRATEGY

Strategy is an organisation's pro-active response to an ever-changing environment –the instrument which enables an organisation to find synthesis between its goals and resources in view of the risks and challenges of the changing environment (Kotler 1988:33).

A strategy can best be described as an indication of an organisation's positioning for the future, i.e. *what* should be done, rather than *how* it should be done. According to Drucker (in Kotler 1988:61), it means *doing the right thing,* rather than *doing things right.* It is therefore the thinking, the logic behind the actions (Robert 1997:22).

1.10.12 MODEL

A model is a general, simplified representation of reality. It is an abstraction, a map of reality that captures the important features but leaves out much of the detail. McQuail & Windahl (1993:2) consider a model as a consciously simplified

description of reality in a graphic form. A model seeks to show the main elements of any structure or process and the relationship between these elements.

1.10.13 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

A corporate communication *strategy* provides the focus and direction for an organisation's communication with its stakeholders, i.e. it determines *what* should be communicated to assist in achieving organisational goals. This is derived from identifying key strategic issues, determining their impact on the organisation's stakeholders and determining *what should be communicated* to solve the problem or capitalise on the opportunity (Steyn 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2000d).

1.10.14 COMMUNICATION PLANS

A communication plan puts the corporate communication strategy into practice, i.e. it breaks down a set of intentions into steps, formalising those steps so that they can be implemented almost automatically (Steyn 2000a; 2000b; 2000c).

1.10.15 STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS

In the public relations literature, the term 'publics' is used to describe what is known as 'stakeholders' in the literature on strategic management. These two terms are therefore often used synonymously--however, in the context of the strategic management of an organisation's communication, there are subtle differences.

Individuals or groups are *stakeholders* when they are affected by the decisions of an organisation or if their decisions affect an organisation (Freeman 1984). Stakeholders are normally seen as being passive, e.g. employees or members of

the community. When they become aware of problems and actively communicate, they can be described as *aware* or *active publics* (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:125).

1.10.16 STRATEGIC ISSUES

Strategic issues are defined as *"developments, events and trends viewed by decision makers as consequential because of the potential to impact an organisation's strategy"* (Ansoff 1980; King 1982; Dutton & Ottensmeyer 1987). Strategic issues could range from a new competitive strategy necessitating fundamental changes in attitudes and behaviour, to restructuring, downsizing, cost improvement, transformation, the acquisition of new businesses or shifts in the environment.

1.10.17 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION (PR) PRACTITIONERS

This refers to all persons actively practising corporate communication (public relations) as their main occupation, whether in public or private companies, government or tertiary institutions, non-profit organisations or any other.

1.10.18 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STUDENTS

This term refers to third-year students enrolled for the course Strategic Communication Management (KOB 320, Module A), in the Department of Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria.

1.10.19 Student researchers

Corporate communication students were used in the action research process to implement the hypothesised model for developing corporate communication strategy, under the leadership of their lecturer (the researcher). They were solely responsible for obtaining the participation of, and interacting with, their selected non-profit organisation, collecting the data and using it to write a corporate communication strategy.

1.10.20 Non-profit organisations

This is operationally defined as any non-profit organisation registered in South Africa.

1.11 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1:   INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

In this first chapter the problem and research questions are stated, and the conceptualisation, delimitations, assumptions, and importance of the study are explicated. A synopsis of the research strategy and methodology is also provided.

Chapter 2: **TRADITIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLES AND THEORETICALPERSPECTIVES**

This chapter sets the scene with regard to 'public relations' roles, starting with the development of roles research in public relations during the 1980's. It also introduces the theories to be used as a framework for the study and concludes with the findings of the Excellence Study in the middle nineties.

Chapter 3: **CONCEPTUALISATION OF A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MANAGER (*THE ROLE OF PR STRATEGIST*)**

This chapter *firstly* explores the strategic management literature to determine qualitatively whether a need exists at the top management level for corporate communication to play a strategic role. *Secondly*, the constructs for such a strategic role are determined by analysing both the strategic management as well as the public relations literature. *Thirdly*, measurement questions and hypotheses for empirically testing the strategic role of the corporate communication manager are developed.

Chapter 4: **A CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

This chapter analyses the literature on strategic management to explore the meaning of the concept strategy. It also analyses the body of knowledge on public relations planning to determine whether the concept of strategy exists in corporate communication. The difference between a 'strategy' and a 'plan' is highlighted and 'corporate communication strategy' is conceptualised.

Chapter 5: RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the rationale for the qualitative research strategy, as well as the exploratory and confirmatory designs selected for the study. The methodology of action research is explicated, and details on sampling, data collection/recording/analysis are provided.

Chapter 6: DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY—THE PROCESS

Based on a literature investigation, a model is hypothesised as a tool for explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to students. This model is implemented by student groups in a longitudinal action research project, and the findings used to revise the model.

Chapter 7: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter, findings and conclusions reached with respect to the problem and research objectives are stated. Limitations are explicated and recommendations for further research are made.

CHAPTER 2
OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

AND ITS SETTING

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 2:

**TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC
RELATIONS' ROLES
AND THEORETICAL
PERSPECTIVES**

$\Rightarrow$

CHAPTER 3:

CONCEPTUALISATION OF A
STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE
CORPORATE COMMU-
NICATION MANAGER

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CHAPTER 5:

RESEARCH STRATEGY
AND METHODOLOGY

$\Leftarrow$

CHAPTER 4:

CONCEPTUALISATION OF
CORPORATE COMMUNI-
CATION STRATEGY

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CHAPTER 6:

DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR
CORPORATE COM-
MUNICATION STRATEGY
--THE PROCESS

$\Rightarrow$

CHAPTER 7:

FINDINGS,
CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 2

2. TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC RELATIONS' ROLES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter, the concept of role is explicated, the historical origin of public relations roles is explored, and the relationship between research and public relations roles is indicated.

Theoretical descriptions are also provided for the study--the relationships between major constructs are defined within the framework of the *Systems theory* and the *Excellence theory*. The chapter concludes with the findings of the *Excellence Study* which were made public in the middle nineties.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Practitioner roles are key to understanding the function of corporate communication (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992). Most organisations have practitioners playing the role of the *PR technician*, providing the communication and journalistic skills to implement the decisions made by other (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

However, for corporate communication to contribute to organisational effectiveness, there must be a practitioner playing the role of the *PR manager*, taking part in the organisation's strategy formulation process (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:327). The information that the *PR manager* brings to the decision making table, is obtained through research. Conducting research is a key characteristic of a practitioner in the *PR manager* role. Technician role playing is unrelated to any kind of research (Broom & Dozier 1985:30).

2.2 'PUBLIC RELATIONS' (PR) ROLES

2.2.1 THE CONCEPT OF ROLE

Katz & Kahn (1978) proposed the *role* concept as a major link between individual and organisational levels of theory. Their perspective is that an individual's behaviour may best be understood as a function of role. An individual occupies an office (or role), a space in the network of relationships that makes up the system called the organisation.

In an organisational setting, the concept of role refers to the standardised patterns of behaviour required of individuals in specific functional relationships (Katz & Kahn 1978:189)--through roles, organisations delineate expectations. The roles themselves may vary across relationships, leading to involvement in more than one activity or system. Such multiple role involvement increases with rank in the organisation. Each individual occupies a number of roles defined by one's group, but in order to decide on action at certain points, a commitment to a predominant role must be made.

2.2.1.1 Historical development of 'PR' roles

Broom & Smith (1979) introduced the concept of roles to corporate communication. *Roles* define the every-day activities of corporate communication practitioners. Research on 'PR' roles operates at the micro (practitioner) level of analysis, i.e. the study of individual practitioners and their work activities. According to Dozier (*in* Grunig 1992:327):

"PR roles are at the nexus of a network of concepts affecting professional achievements of practitioners, structures and processes of the function in organisations, and organisational capacities to dominate or co-operate with their environments."

Four theoretical roles, first conceptualised by Broom & Smith (1979) dominate corporate communication practitioner roles studies:

- *The expert prescriber* is seen as the authority on both corporate communication problems and solutions (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994:42), best informed about corporate communication issues and best qualified to answer corporate communication questions. A practitioner in this role researches, defines corporate communication problems, develops programmes, and takes responsibility for implementing programmes (Grunig & Hunt 1984). This role, however, leads to passive management involvement which frustrates practitioners—they are held responsible for programme results having little control over critical parts of the situation. The expert prescriber role can be linked to the two-way asymmetric and publicity/press agentry models (Grunig & Hunt 1984:21).

- *The communication facilitator* is a "go-between, interpreter or communication link" between management and publics. This role casts practitioners as sensitive listeners and information brokers who remove barriers in relationships between the organisation and its publics. Communication facilitators are boundary spanners who improve the quality of decisions that are related to policies, procedures and actions of both publics and organisations (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994:43). They are liaisons and mediators who keep continuous two-way communication flowing between the organisation and its publics. The communication facilitator role can be linked

to the public information and two-way symmetric models (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

- *The problem-solving process facilitator* is a practitioner who helps others in the organisation solve their corporate communication problems (Grunig & Hunt 1984). These practitioners work with management in defining and solving corporate communication problems, becoming part of the strategic planning team. This role is in contrast to the passive expert prescriber role, and can be linked to organisations practising the two-way symmetric model (Grunig & Hunt 1984:26).

Broom (1982) and Dozier (1984) found these first three roles to be interchangeable, conceptual components of the same empirical role, the *PR manager* role. Practitioners in the *manager* role make communication policy decisions and are involved in all corporate communication decision making. They frequently use research to plan or evaluate their work, and counsel management (Grunig & Hunt 1984). They are held accountable for corporate communication programme outcomes—they view themselves and are viewed by others in the organisation as communication experts. They facilitate communication between management and publics, and guide management through what practitioners describe as a *"relational problem-solving process."* Communication managers conceptualise and direct corporate communication programmes (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:19).

Dozier (1984) also found a corporate communication technician role that closely matched Broom's conceptualisation (Broom & Smith 1979) of the service provider role that he called the *communication technician*:

- *PR/communication technicians* do not participate in management decision making, but "*carry out the low-level mechanics of generating communication products that implement policy decisions made by others*". The dominant coalition makes strategic decisions, specifying actions and designating the communications directed at publics. The technician provides the communication and journalistic skills—writing, editing, audio-visual production, graphics, and production of messages—needed to carry out corporate communication programmes. He/she does not make organisational decisions, but implements the decisions of others, and does not do research to plan or evaluate work done. This role is linked to the press agentry (publicity) and public information models (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

The *PR manager* and *PR technician* roles are uncorrelated, indicating that they are empirically as well as conceptually distinct. They emerge empirically time and again in studies of different practitioners. However, these two broad public relations roles include several more narrow roles. The communication technician may write press releases, edit an employee newspaper or write speeches. At middle levels of management, communication managers may manage a media or employee relations programme. At higher levels of corporate communication management, they could plan the entire public relations programme, supervise middle-level managers, and counsel top managers on communication policy (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

2.2.1.2 Roles and the use of research

The use of research by practitioners is an important indicator of the managerial and technician role. Dozier (1984, 1986, 1987) and Broom & Dozier (1985, 1986) studied the ways practitioners use research in their practices. Analysis indicated that practitioners playing the manager role used both *scientific impact* and *seat-*

of-the-pants evaluation. Technician role playing was unrelated to any evaluation style. Evaluation activities also correlated with practitioner success in increased participation in management decision making (Broom & Dozier 1985:30).

According to Broom (1986:15), organisations receive inputs from their environments in the form of information about publics and environmental forces. The formal and informal research activities used by corporate communication practitioners to obtain information about 'what is going on' in the external environment, is called *environmental monitoring or scanning.* In systems language, environmental scanning is *"the detection of environmental turbulence or change likely to affect the homeostasis of the system"* (Broom & Dozier 1990:3-6).

Research on performance control and programme adjustment (*evaluation research*) is conceptually distinct from *environmental scanning*, which is research alerting organisations to turbulence or change in the environment that may affect the survival and growth of the organisation (Broom 1986).

Research studies indicate that all types of information gathering helps practitioners move into management roles (Cutlip, Centre & Broom 1994:46). Research is essential in the management of the adjustments, adaptations, and responses of the organisation to changing environments. Without a basis in research, corporate communication is little more than a low-level technical activity in support of management decisions in which the practitioner did not participate (Broom & Dozier 1990).

2.3 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

2.3.1 SYSTEMS THEORY

Systems theory as a meta-theoretical approach to public relations/corporate communication is important (Holtzhausen 1995; Long & Hazleton 1987; Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994; Baskin & Aronoff 1988; Grunig & Hunt 1984). The systems theory has its roots in General Systems 'Theory', which is in fact a scientific *approach* and not a theory (Angelopulo 1994:41).

The systems theory assists in understanding the total context of management. The systems concept of management incorporates organisational and environmental subsystems into the manager's thinking. One of the assumptions of systems management is that it challenges established practice—thereby helping to find innovative solutions to organisational problems (Grunig & Hunt 1984:95).

2.3.1.1 Open and closed systems

All systems can be classified in terms of the nature and amount of interchange with their environments. A closed system has an impenetrable boundary so it cannot exchange matter, energy, or information with its environment--it therefore moves toward progressive internal chaos (entropy), disintegration, and death. An open system is one that exchanges inputs and outputs through a boundary that is permeable, and is oriented toward life and growth. The extent to which a system is open or closed is an indication of its (in)sensitivity to its environment,

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and therefore to its inability to adapt to new conditions (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994).

Simple, relatively closed systems react to outside events only if the input—change pressure—is sufficient to penetrate the system boundary. Complex, relatively open systems monitor—and in some cases, actively probe—their environment to detect and predict changing conditions. Sophisticated open systems anticipate changes and initiate corrective actions to counteract the changes before they become major problems (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994).

2.3.1.2 Systems concepts

Systems concepts such as input, output, throughput, and feedback is used to describe the behaviour of a system. Systems receive *input* from the environment, e.g. as information, that identify problems that have put the system out of equilibrium with interpenetrating systems in its environment.

Systems process the inputs from the environment through an activity known as *throughput*. The systems organise the information inputs they receive and formulate solutions to the problems that generated the inputs. Systems then release *outputs* into the environment in an attempt to restore equilibrium with interpenetrating systems.

After those outputs affect the environment, the system seeks *feedback* from the environment to determine if it has solved the identified problem. This process continues until the system is back in equilibrium with its interpenetrating systems (Grunig & Hunt 1984:94-95).

Figure 2.1: SYSTEMS CONCEPTS

INPUT • organisations receive information from the environment on a problem that has put the system out of equilibrium	$\Rightarrow$	**THROUGHPUT** organisations process the information received by organising information inputs and formulating solutions to problems
$\Uparrow$		$\Downarrow$
FEEDBACK • organisations determine whether the problem identified has been solved (whether equilibrium has been restored)	$\Leftarrow$	**OUTPUT** • organisations release information into the environment to restore equilibrium

Source: The figure is based on the theoretical discussion of systems concepts in Grunig & Hunt (1984).

2.3.1.3 The organisation as an *effective* system

Traditional theories of management set forth principles for developing an internal structure to supervise internal processes in order that an organisation be successful. However, Pfeffer & Salancik (1978:11) define success in meeting internal goals as 'efficiency', whereas they regard 'effectiveness' as *"an external standard of how well an organisation is meeting the demands of various groups and organisations that are concerned with its activities"*.

An open systems approach is therefore a necessary condition for any organisation for ongoing effectiveness in the exchange of values with the environment (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994). This approach is maximised through the process of strategic management where the organisation strives to balance its mission—what it is, what it wants to be, and what it wants to do—with what the environment will allow or encourage it to do. Higgins (1979) defines 'strategic management' as *"the process of managing the pursuit of the accomplishment of the organizational mission coincident with managing the relationship of the organisation to its environment"*.

There are two types of communication behaviours which systems (including individuals, units within an organisation, organisations, publics, and groups) engage in. Systems acquire (seek or listen to) information and they disseminate (give) information. Information can be defined in information theory terms as anything that reduces the uncertainty in a situation (Schramm 1973:38).

The management environment, in which information acquisition and disposal takes place, comprises the following (Smith & Cronjé 1992:28-30):

- *micro or internal environment*, over which the organisation has complete control;

- *market or task environment* surrounding the organisation e.g. the consumers, competitors and suppliers, over which the organisation has some control;

- *macro or external environment* which includes the technological, economic, sociological, physical, institutional-political and international environments, over which the organisation has little or no control.

Important characteristics of the management environment is that the micro, task and macro environments are interrelated, and that there is increasing instability and change in the environment (a function of the amount of information available). Furthermore, that the environment is increasingly complex (as

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indicated by the number of external variables to which the organisation must react). These characteristics stress how important it is for management to understand and have a knowledge of the environment in which the organisation must function (Smith & Cronjé 1992:30-31). An active outward orientation for the organisation (Angelopoulo 1994:40) is best attained with the active intervention of a facilitating agent, such as a department of corporate communication.

There are three primary types of activities involving both internal and external organisational communication that should be part of strategy formulation (Kreps 1990:242):

- Identification of environmental opportunities and risks, which involves mainly external communication.

- Identification of strategic issues that influence public attitudes and behaviours toward the organisation, which involves mainly external communication.

- Identification of organisational strengths and weaknesses, which involves mainly internal communication.

These activities required in strategy formulation clearly indicate the need for setting up and managing internal and external communication channels to direct organisational growth and development.

This is the first argument presented to support the role of the *PR strategist*, i.e. a strategic role at the top management level for the practitioner heading the corporate communication function. Such a role will firstly entail monitoring and pro-actively probing the organisation's environment to detect and predict changing conditions, to identify issues that influence the attitudes of internal and external stakeholders towards the organisation, and to initiate corrective action.

2.3.2 A GENERAL THEORY OF EFFECTIVENESS AND EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The Excellence Study resulted in the first general theory of effectiveness and excellence in public relations and communication management, also called the 'Excellence Theory' (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992). The generality of a theory refers to its scope—for a theory to be regarded as a general theory its explanation *"must be sufficiently general to cover a range of events beyond a single observation"* (Littlejohn 1992). Grunig (1993:171) described the general theory of excellence in public relations and communication management as a 'grand theory', rarely found in communication.

The 'Excellence Study' refers to a $ 400 000, three-nation study of public relations and communication management, funded by the IABC Research Foundation. The Excellence Study took 10 years to complete, and consisted of both a qualitative and a quantitative study (Dozier *et al* 1995).

2.3.2.1 A general theory of effectiveness and excellence in public relations and communication management -- the literature review

Excellence in public relations and communication management, or simply 'communication excellence', refers to an abstraction or 'ideal' that the Excellence Study sought to measure. *Communication excellence* describes the ideal state in which knowledgeable communicators assist in the overall strategic management of organisations, seeking symmetrical relations through the management of communication with key stakeholders/publics on whom organisational survival and growth depends (Dozier *et al* 1995).

The qualitative phase of the Excellence Study (a literature analysis) sought answers to two questions:

- The **effectiveness** question addressed the question of what it means for an organisation to be effective and how corporate communication contributes to making an organisation more effective.

- The **excellence** question addressed how corporate communication must be practised and the communication function be organised to contribute the most to organisational effectiveness and therefore to the organisation's bottom line (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:3).

The **effectiveness** question is the foundation for a theory of excellence in public relations and communication management. There are different perspectives from which to explore effectiveness in organisations, of which the most relevant to this study is the strategic constituencies approach. This perspective focuses on segments within the environment that most threaten the organisation rather than on the total environment (Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, *in* Grunig 1992).

The behaviour of strategic constituencies, called *stakeholders* by Freeman (1984) and *publics* in the literature on public relations, has consequences for the organisation (or vice versa) and is the justification for the existence of corporate communication. The dominant coalition typically decides on the critical stakeholders and the strategies for dealing with them (Grunig, *in* Staff 1988). Corporate communication only share this responsibility when they are included in the dominant coalition.

However, the dominant coalition's *perception* of the external environment and the *actual* environment do not always correlate (Downey, Hellriegel & Slocum 1975). Managers do not base their decisions on objective assessments of the environment, but on their own perceptions thereof. Identifying key constituencies is one of the skills that professional corporate communication managers bring to the strategy formulation process (Robbins 1990).

If the corporate communication function can identify the strategic stakeholders and the publics in the environment and manage the organisation's response to these interdependencies, the theories of effectiveness show that corporate communication can help the organisation reduce uncertainty and conflict by stabilising relationships with key stakeholders and publics on whom the organisation depends (Grunig *et al, in* Grunig 1992).

The role of the *PR strategist* in the above regard is to identify strategic stakeholders and publics, and to manage strategies to deal with stakeholders and the issues around which publics emerge. Such a role will contribute towards organisational effectiveness by stabilising relationships with key stakeholders, thereby helping to reduce uncertainty in strategic decision making.

The **excellence** question was firstly researched at the *micro or programme* level of analysis, i.e. the level of individual corporate communication programmes. Peters & Waterman (1982) pointed out that excellently managed organisations have characteristics in common that make them more successful than others— the same is true for communication departments in organisations.

The *meso or departmental* level of analysis determined the characteristics of corporate communication departments that, most often, managed communication in this way. At the *macro or organisational* level of analysis, organisations and their environments were researched to determine the conditions associated with excellent communication departments (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:3). For the characteristics of excellent corporate communication, as proposed by the literature review of the Excellence Study, see Figure 2.2.

FIGURE 2.2: CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENT PUBLIC RELATIONS* AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

I. PROGRAMME LEVEL (micro level)
1. Programmes managed strategically
II. DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL (meso level)

2. Integrated public relations department
3. Separate function from marketing
4. Direct reporting relationship to senior management
5. Two-way symmetrical model
6. Senior public relations person in the managerial role
7. Potential for excellent public relations, as indicated by:
  • knowledge of the symmetrical PR model
  • knowledge of the managerial role
  • academic training in pubic relations
  • professionalism
8. Equal opportunity for men and women in public relations

III. ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL (macro level)
9. World-view for public relations in the organisation reflects the two-way symmetrical model 10. Public relations manager/director has power in or with the dominant coalition 11. Participative rather than authoritarian organisational culture 12. Symmetrical system of internal communication 13. Organic rather than mechanical organisational structure 14. Turbulent, complex environment with pressure from activist groups
IV. EFFECTS OF EXCELLENT PUBLIC RELATIONS
15. Programmes meet communication objectives 16. Reduces costs of regulation, pressure, and litigation 17. Job satisfaction is high among employees

Source: Grunig (*in* Grunig 1992:28). *As mentioned in Chapter 1, the term 'public relations' is used in academic literature, especially in the United States.

2.3.2.2 An expansion on the general theory of excellence in public relations and communication management

Holtzhausen (1995:164, 227) expanded on Grunig's general theory by firstly describing the corporate communication function at the micro level as one of *strategic communication management*. Secondly, she referred to corporate communication at the meso level as the *strategic organisational management* of the corporate communication function (Grunig named this the 'departmental' level). Thirdly, Holtzhausen posited that issues pertaining to organisational structure and culture will in some instances belong at the macro level (which

Grunig referred to as the 'organisational' level) -- Holtzhausen named this the *strategic environmental level.* For the purpose of this research, the terminology as put forth by Holtzhausen, will be adhered to.

Holtzhausen (1995) saw the macro level as the organisational level where the strategic management of the organisation takes place. It is where those managers who interpret the legal/political, competitive, technical and socio-cultural environment of the organisation) interface with the organisation's environment. Decisions at the macro level determine the attitude of the organisation towards communication with stakeholders, create the culture, determine the management style and the general direction. The macro level also describes the external environment, i.e. whether it operates in an autocratic or democratic system, which cultural perspectives exist outside the organisation, and even the global influences on the organisation.

What is most important in Holtzhausen's expansion of the general theory is the reversal of the process described by Grunig. She implied that the *macro* environment is actually the determining factor in the way corporate communication is practised at the meso and micro levels (Holtzhausen 1995:227). This is in contrast to Grunig (1990) who posited that strategic management only took place at the micro level of corporate communication, and that this contributed to organisational effectiveness.

In reversing the process described by Grunig, Holtzhausen's views are important in the argument for the role of the *PR strategist.* She posited that corporate communication's role in strategic management (at the macro level) determined the contribution of corporate communication to organisational excellence, and that decisions at the macro level determined the attitude of the organisation towards communication with stakeholders. Therefore, if the corporate communication manager is not part of the dominant coalition and does not play a

strategic role at the macro level, he/she will play no part in determining or devising strategies for managing strategic constituencies.

2.3.2.3 A general theory of excellence in public relations and communication management—the empirical study

The first phase of the empirical study was conducted from 1990-1991, consisting of a large-scale quantitative survey of 321 organisations in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. The respondents included corporations, not-for-profit organisations, government agencies, and professional/trade associations in all three countries. A second phase in 1994, consisted of case studies of 24 organisations that participated in the original survey (Dozier *et al* 1995). Follow-up studies to the Excellence Study have since been conducted in 25 countries across the world including Greece, India, Taiwan and Slovenia.

The *Excellence Study* found that communication excellence is universal—it was the same in different countries and across corporations, not-for-profit organisations, government agencies, and trade or professional associations. That is because communication excellence involves knowledge or expertise that transcends any particular public, organisational division or unit, industry, organisational type, or national setting (Dozier *et al* 1995:4).

Other findings were that communication excellence can be thought of as three spheres, one inside another. At the centre is the *knowledge base* of the communication department. The middle sphere represents a set of *shared expectations* about communication between communication managers and an organisation's top management.

Surrounding the knowledge core and the middle sphere of shared expectations, is a larger sphere of *organisational culture*. In general, participative cultures founded on teamwork and participative decision making are more apt to nurture communication excellence. However, in certain circumstances, communication excellence can be found in authoritarian cultures (Dozier *et al* 1995). For the purposes of this study, the first two findings concerning the knowledge base and shared expectations are relevant.

- Knowledge base

Communication technicians (practitioners who possess technical communication skills) perform mostly one-way communication activities---writing and editing; producing publications, film, video and photography; generating publicity; handling media enquiries; organising events, etc. In itself, these activities do not lead to excellence.

> The *core* knowledge base for excellent communication departments involves knowledge of the *manager* role, especially strategic management. This includes contributing to strategic planning, making communication policy decisions, outlining communication programme alternatives, guiding top management through a logical problem-solving process, and being held accountable for programme success and failure (Dozier *et al* 1995:11).
>
> Excellent communication furthermore involves knowledge of two-way symmetrical communication, e.g. specialised knowledge about formal and informal research. This includes doing environmental scanning to identify emerging trends and issues that affect the organisation, or doing formative and evaluative research to determine the effectiveness of corporate communication programmes.

Two-way communication can either be symmetrical or asymmetrical, representing two different world-views about the nature of relationships between organisations and stakeholders. Two-way asymmetrical communication entails the persuasion of stakeholders to think and behave as the organisation wants— top management is not expected to change its thinking or behaviour about a policy or issue. The organisation 'wins' only if the stakeholders 'loose'.

In using the two-way symmetrical communication model, 'win-win' solutions are developed through negotiation and compromise for solving conflicts between an organisation and its stakeholders. An important characteristic is that top management may change what it knows, how it feels, and the way the organisation behaves when using the two-way symmetrical model of communication. Practitioners act as advocates for the stakeholders' interests in strategic decision making, leading to ethical practices (Dozier *et al* 1995:12-13).

- Shared expectations

In the previous section it was seen that knowledge to play the *manager* role, to contribute to strategic decision making and execute two-way communication programmes were necessary prerequisites for communication excellence. However, it is not sufficient. To be excellent, the communication manager/department must develop partnerships with top management, the group of individuals who takes the decisions in the organisation (Dozier *et al* 1995:14).

In organisations with excellent corporate communication programmes, there are shared expectations between top management and senior communicators on what constitutes communication management, which role communication should play in the overall management of the organisation, and how communication can benefit the organisation. In the Excellence Study, chief executives (CEOs) with excellent communication programmes scored high on the Excellence Factor, and answered questions differently than did other CEOs (Dozier *et al* 1995).

CEOs valued communication managers who made inputs into the strategic management process by:

- acting as boundary spanners, environmental scanners and 'early warning systems'.

- telling top management what stakeholders know, how they feel, and how they might behave relevant to strategic decisions under consideration.

- acting as advocates for stakeholders, stating their viewpoints to top management.

- designing corporate communication programmes and messages to effectively communicate desired outcomes among targeted stakeholders, after decisions were made.

- sitting around the boardroom table when strategic decisions are made, thereby contributing to strategic management and planning.

- practising two-way, symmetrical communication.

If top management understands this role of the excellent communication manager and demands it, and the communication manager has the knowledge to deliver, critical linkages evolve between the communication department and top management (Dozier *et al* 1995:14-17):

"When dominant coalitions expect communicators to think strategically to solve a problem or conflict with a key public, that reinforces the knowledge or expertise in the communication department to deliver communication excellence. When communicators respond strategically to help solve a problem important to the dominant coalition, that reinforces the strategic view of communication in the dominant coalition".

2.3.3 CONCLUSION

Roles research plays an important part in understanding organisational and corporate communication as an emerging profession (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:350). Roles are powerful theoretical and empirical links between various concepts in a model of the corporate communication function. Of importance to this study, are the links to management decision making, research (both programme evaluation and environmental scanning), practitioner belief systems about the practice, and job satisfaction (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:335).

Most practitioners play the role of the *PR technician* and are found in all corporate communication departments, but practitioners in the role of `PR managers* are a necessary component of *excellent* corporate communication departments. Communication managers are found in organisations with threatening environments, with an open-system mind-set and are more likely to practise two-way symmetrical or asymmetrical models of corporate communication (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:19).

Systems theory suggests that the corporate communication function is essential to the survival and growth of organisations facing increasingly unstable and threatening environments. Definitions of corporate communication/public relations founded on systems theory, call for the problem-solving process facilitation, the communication facilitation and the expert prescription of a corporate communication *manager* (Dozier *in* Grunig 1992:352).

This study will attempt to provide some clarification on the key issue in roles research that, according to Dozier (*in* Grunig 1992:329), is the following: Who will

manage the corporate communication function, how will it be managed, and what are the role expectations.

In conclusion it can be said that the systems theory provides the ideal theoretical approach for the development of a strategic role for the corporate communication manager. Its emphasis on receiving information from the external environment in the form of input, interpreting this information during throughput, providing information to the environment during output, and receiving feedback on the whole process describes the process of corporate communication management.

Furthermore, the general theory on effectiveness and excellence in public relations and communication management strongly supports the argument for a communication manager to play a strategic role at the top management level. Reference is made here to the findings of the Excellence Study, specifically to the *knowledge base* of the communication manager to play a strategic role, as well as the *shared expectations* with top management on the activities that constitute such a role.

In view of the fact that (i) chief executives seem to expect their corporate communication managers to play a strategic role in the organisation, to take part in the strategic decision making processes (as seen in Chapter 1), and (ii) the two major theories in corporate communication support such a role, a strategic role for the most senior manager heading the corporate communication function is to be conceptualised in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

$\Rightarrow$

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM
AND ITS SETTING

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 2:		**CHAPTER 3:**
TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC RELATIONS' ROLES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	$\Rightarrow$	**CONCEPTUALISATION OF A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE CORPORATE COMMU-NICATION MANAGER**

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 5:		**CHAPTER 4:**
RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY	$\Leftarrow$	CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORPORATE COMMUNI-CATION STRATEGY

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 6:		**CHAPTER 7:**
DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CORPORATE COM-MUNICATION STRATEGY --THE PROCESS	$\Rightarrow$	FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 3

3. *CONCEPTUALISATION OF A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MANAGER (THE ROLE OF THE PR STRATEGIST)*

In this chapter, the role of the corporate communication manager in strategic decision making is analysed firstly from the perspective of the public relations literature, in order to conceptualise the role of the *PR strategist,* and to determine the constructs for such a role. Secondly, the strategic management literature is explored to determine qualitatively whether a need exists at the top management level for the corporate communication manager to play a strategic role, and to determine the constructs for such a role. Thirdly, precise hypotheses and measurement questions for empirically testing the role of the *PR strategist,* are developed.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the role of the *PR strategist* as a major construct in this study was substantiated within the framework of two corporate communication grand theories. This chapter is dedicated to achieving Research Objective 1: To conceptualise the role of the *PR strategist,* i.e. a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the top management level.

The role of the *PR strategist* is further investigated by obtaining a perspective from the body of knowledge on public relations. References to the strategic management of corporate communication have been analysed and the following

constructs have been pinpointed: the *mirror function* (information acquisition/processing), *boundary spanning, environmental scanning, stakeholders, publics, activists* and *issues*. Furthermore, the strategic management literature is investigated to obtain top management's perspective on the need for such a role—the constructs that have been identified are the *environment, boundary spanning, environmental scanning, stakeholders* and *issues*.

The following guiding hypotheses were set in Chapter 1 to lead the investigation.

Guiding hypothesis 1a

The chief executive (CEO) is not satisfied with the role played by the corporate communication manager.

Guiding hypothesis 1b

The chief executive (CEO) expects the corporate communication manager to play a strategic role at the top management level.

3.2 THE PUBLIC RELATIONS LITERATURE PERSPECTIVE

3.2.1 THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Van Riel (1995:1-2) regards the corporate communication function's contribution in achieving organisational goals as *"professionally carrying out the* window *and the* mirror *function"*. The researcher has broadened Van Riel's definition, in referring to the 'window' function as the preparation and execution of a communication policy *and strategy*, resulting in messages that portray all facets of the organisation. (This is the role of the *PR manager* that will fully be described in Chapter 4). In fulfilling this function, corporate communication managers

interpret the philosophies, policies, programmes and practices of top management to its publics (Seitel 1992). In this facilitating role, they help accomplish an active outward orientation for the organisation (Angelopulo, *in* Lubbe & Puth 1994).

In the past, corporate communication practitioners have frequently represented the organisation to the external environment--their journalistic training and use of the public information model emphasise the external representation function (Grunig & Hunt 1984). A relatively new practice in corporate communication is information acquisition and processing through environmental scanning (Dozier 1990). Environmental scanning is research conducted to detect problems and assess the status quo (Dozier & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992), and forms part of the problem-defining stage of corporate communication strategy formulation (Dozier 1986).

Environmental scanning is a form of system inputs—organisations gather intelligence about stakeholders and environmental forces. According to Broom & Dozier (1990), environmental scanning moves through three stages: problem detection, exploration, and description. When these inputs are collected systematically, it forms part of environmental scanning (Broom 1986). The strategic function of scanning is early detection of emerging problems as well as quantification of existing or known problems in the environment. This kind of research is conceptually and methodologically distinct from program evaluation— the latter being designed to evaluate the planning, implementation and impact of communication programmes (Dozier 1986).

Van Riel (1995:2) has described the above practice of information acquisition and processing through environmental scanning as the *mirror* function of corporate communication. The researcher has broadened the concept mirror function (see italics) to 'the monitoring of relevant environmental developments

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and the anticipation of their consequences for the *organisation's strategies* and policies, especially with regard to relationships with stakeholders'. (This is the role of the *PR strategist,* to be described in this chapter).

Corporate communication's value in the process of strategy development is that it is a source of intelligence regarding the organisation's environment, an early warning system that identifies issues before crises erupt. It is the organisational function that assists top management in gathering, interpreting and using the information (Winokur & Kinkead 1993:1). Large organisations usually gather large amounts of information, but much of it is lost because it is not gathered and interpreted at one collection point (White & Mazur 1995:25). Managing this process of information gathering from the external, internal and task environment will necessarily involve research and a systematic approach to sources of information (White & Mazur 1995:28).

Corporate communication managers are in an excellent position to provide this interpreting function, because of wide contact with the external and internal environment and an outside view of the organisation. They know what top management and the stakeholders are thinking, have firsthand knowledge of the reasons for management's decisions, and the rationale for organisational policy (Dozier *et al* 1995).

They explain to top management the impact of their behaviour on public opinion and prevent them from insulating themselves. They have a clear understanding of each stakeholder's concerns, sensitivities and preconceptions, being effective communicators (Winokur & Kinkead 1993:1). They therefore interpret the stakeholders' views to top management by giving continuous feedback. This means finding out what stakeholders really think and letting management know, whether they like it or not (Dozier *et al* 1995). Grunig & Hunt (1984:9) call this a boundary role: the corporate communication manager's/ practitioner's function at

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the edge of an organisation as a liaison between the organisation and its external and internal stakeholders -- being in touch with the real world by having one foot inside and one outside the organisation.

Corporate communication managers have real value in their ability to maintain a degree of detachment from the motives that drive other members of management--they view corporate policies with a multiple vision (Mason 1974). This is often lacking in other management members who develop an internal 'myopia' where they can only see within the short-range boundaries of the organisation (Hicks 1987). This role of the corporate communication manager keeps the organisation in harmony with its environment, gives it credibility and leads to acceptance of organisational policies.

Communication is increasingly gaining the status of an indispensable management tool. Corporate communication managers are no longer seen as 'information conduits', but rather act as fully fledged strategic advisers to top management (Seitel 1992:1-2). Communication managers must think strategically and demonstrate their knowledge of the organisation's mission, goals and strategies by aligning communication goals with those of the organisation. Trying to establish a communication programme without corporate direction, "*is a little like driving cross country without a road map*" (Webster 1990:19).

Corporate communication managers must have the opportunity of making strategic inputs in the strategy formulation of the organisation by taking part in decision-making--the role of information gatherer and processor is key to their participation (Dozier *et al* 1995). To make a real contribution to organisational effectiveness, corporate communication managers must be part of the strategic management of the total organisation. Good corporate communication cannot be

practised in a vacuum, but is only as good as its access to top management (Seitel 1992:10).

In the words of Grunig & Repper (*in* Grunig 1992:120), strategic management applies to corporate communication in two important ways:

- The first is the corporate communication manager's involvement in the strategic management of the organisation by surveying the environment, helping to define the mission and goals, and in developing problem-solving strategies for the entire organisation. This is the role that has been described above, a role for the most senior corporate communication manager/practitioner at the top management level—conceptualised by the researcher as the role of the *PR strategist*.

- The second has to do with strategically managing the corporate communication department's own programmes, integrating and co-ordinating its work with that of the organisation. This is the role of the *PR manager*, to be described in Chapter 4.

It is important to note that the corporate communication function is only effective:

- when the corporate communication manager reports directly to and is part of top management (Seitel 1992:10-11);

- when the corporate communication manager is knowledgeable on the *manager* role, especially on strategic management (Dozier *et al* 1995);

- if the chief executive (and other members of top management) understands and demands this role (Dozier *et al* 1995).

3.2.2 A MODEL FOR THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

The management of *publics* has been the core business of corporate communication since the 1950's. It is important to note that the significant groups of people in an organisation's environment are called *publics* by communication professionals, but *stakeholders* by managers and senior executives. (The management of *stakeholders* will be discussed in the second part of this chapter, as a part of the strategic management process--see 3.3.5).

For practical purposes, these concepts can be, and often are, used interchangeably. However, in the theoretical context of strategic communication management there is a clear distinction between the two (which will be adhered to in this study). This distinction is highlighted in Grunig & Repper's model (*in* Grunig 1992:124) for the strategic management of public relations (corporate communication), which consists of the following stages:

- The stakeholder stage

People are *stakeholders* of an organisation when the behaviour of the organisation has consequences for them or vice versa. Therefore, stakeholders are affected by organisational decisions or their decisions affect the organisation.

Many stakeholders, such as residents of a community, are passive. They are unaware of the mutual influence between themselves and the organisation or they see no need to act, or to become involved with the organisation. However, this situation might change when there are shifts in the environment -- resulting in a stakeholder's values, needs, desires, wants, goals or objectives becoming significantly different from those of the organisation.

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- The publics stage

Publics form when stakeholders recognise the consequences of an organisation's decisions/behaviour as a *potential problem*. A crucial distinction for segmenting people into publics is the extent to which they passively or actively *communicate* about a problem/issue and the extent to which they *behave* in a way that supports or constrains achievement of the organisation's mission.

When a stakeholder or another individual/group faces a potential problem created by organisational decisions, but do not yet detect the problem, they constitute a *latent* public (passive, but with the potential to be active). An executive committee's decision to manage staff numbers downward would probably transform employees (as a passive stakeholder group) into a latent public the moment the decision is taken, since such a decision could have major consequences for the employees.

When a latent public recognises the potential problem, it becomes an *aware public*. An announcement in the employee newsletter that the company is over-staffed and that certain measures will have to be taken, immediately creates an aware public (likely to become active whenever the first measure to carry out this policy is implemented). When the employees organise to do something about the problem, they become an *active* public. In such a case, they might collect signatures for a petition to top management, or lay complaints with the labour union.

- The issues stage

Crable & Vibbert (1985:5) maintain that issues enter the public agenda because an active public makes an issue out of a problem that is not satisfactorily addressed by an organisation: "*An issue is created when one or more human agents attaches significance to a situation or perceived problem*". They influence public opinion on the issue by, for instance, bringing in the media and participating in protest marches—when they have reached the latter stage, active publics can be called *activists*.

The media plays a major role in the creation and expansion of issues. As publicity mounts, other organisational stakeholders (or people not associated with the organisation) hear about the issue and may also become publics/activists on the issue (Van Leuven & Slater 1991).

- Activists

Activists merit special attention by corporate communication managers because they present threats to the organisation. However, they also present opportunities to those corporate communication managers who manage strategically. Pro-actively dealing with activists increases the need for, and the power of, the corporate communication function (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:503-530).

In the past, top management has tended to ignore the potential impact of small groups in the external environment (called pressure groups, special interest groups, issue groups, grassroots opposition or social movements). These terms

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all refer to collections of individuals that organise to exert pressure on the organisation on behalf of a certain cause.

Activist groups are characterised by their motivation, fervour, and enthusiasm; and will persevere until they achieve their goals. Their intent is to improve the functioning of an organisation from the outside. The aims of many typical activists are to present options as forcefully and as articulately as possible. They see the organisation as having no choice--it will change or be changed. Special interest groups operating outside the organisation increasingly try to control it (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:503-530).

According to Mintzberg (1983), organisations are affected by four types of powerful groups: owners, associates (suppliers, clients, partners, or competitors—all of whom have a purely economic relationship with the organisation), employee associations, and external publics. Mintzberg regards the most powerful external publics as being the mass media, government, and special interest groups.

Activist groups are increasingly aware of the power of the mass media and use it to their advantage--media coverage conveys legitimacy. The more the media covers an issue, the more negative the public's opinion of the organisation being pressured becomes. Activists often work with government to affect internal operations of organisations. In such cases, an organisation faces opposition from more than a single source, which presents a real threat to their autonomy (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:503-530).

3.2.3 THE ROLE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS, PUBLICS, ISSUES AND ACTIVISTS

Corporate communication management is the management of relationships with stakeholders. It is also the management of issues in order to minimise the conflict with publics and activist groups. Ideally, organisations should not wait until the issues stage to deal with problems, but should identify them in advance and manage the organisation's response to problems (Heath 1990:32). A pro-active approach may give the organisation a competitive advantage in detecting and managing potential problems before the media or government become involved in the issue or crisis.

The corporate communication function should scan the environment and the organisation's behaviour on a regular basis to identify the consequences they might have on each other. Ongoing communication with stakeholders will build stable, long-term relationships that will help to manage conflict, should it arise. Once potential problems have been identified, research should be done to determine whether publics are latent, aware or active. Communication with publics to involve them in the organisation's decision making processes assists in solving problems before they turn into issues. It is important to note that different kinds of communication with publics are needed, depending on whether they are in the latent, aware or active stages of communication behaviour (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992).

While continually scanning the environment, the corporate communication function should detect issues that emerge around problems, and manage the organisation's response to them. This process is also known as 'issues management' (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992). Special attention should be given to active publics who have turned activist--their interests should be

reconciled with the organisation they pressure. An important challenge faced by top management is to develop and establish a systems approach to the management of public policy issues in order not to surrender corporate autonomy and efficiency to the whims of bureaucrats and activist groups (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992).

The corporate communication manager can play a most valuable role in this situation in knowing when, what and how to communicate. Meeting this challenge entails using the pro-active approach of issues management--constantly monitoring relevant stakeholders to find out how the organisation is perceived and how to reach them via different channels of communication. This role in dealing with stakeholders, issues and activism may be a new phenomenon for many corporate communication practitioners. Not until the recent era of environmental and consumer issues did CEO's really seek a corporate communication practitioner who understood their business (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992).

Corporate communication practitioners who engage in issues management, expand their role beyond publicity or press agentry. They firstly identify and analyse emerging issues and secondly, evaluate alternative organisational responses. Rather than managing the issue or the activists, they assist in managing organisational efforts to contend with the problem. In this way, the corporate communication manager becomes part of the reconciliation process as well as the accompanying communication effort.

Without this involvement from corporate communication, the organisation may find itself unprepared to manage issues that lead to adverse government regulations. As a result, the CEO may turn to *"outworn and traditional public relations defence mechanisms"* (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992). Plumb (1984:4) advises corporate communication practitioners faced with opposition from

outside groups to constantly study their organisation and industry, to monitor the changing public climate, and to shape communication programmes that make sure people understand what is going on.

Although the impact of pressure groups on big organisations is increasing, many corporate communication efforts are the result of reactive, rather than proactive, management. Corporate communication should be aware of the expectations and perceptions of key stakeholders before it becomes a major threat to the organisation. They should also make organisational leaders more aware of, and knowledgeable on, the decision making processes of those organisations/groups that affect them. Without a thorough understanding of adversarial groups, the organisation is at their mercy (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992).

When the corporate communication manager is not part of strategic management, top managers may try to ignore him/her (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992). This can be countered by undertaking research on stakeholders/publics/activist groups and presenting this strategic information to management, together with strategies on how to manage the situation.

The communication manager should also make top management aware that stakeholders or pressure groups' trust in big business is not born overnight--it takes time, commitment and on-going personal contact. Top management should therefore be accessible and understand the importance of creating communication channels before controversy erupts--giving information when things are going well is being proactive (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992).

3.2.4 CONCLUSION

From the literature on public relations, the major constructs for the role of the *PR strategist* (the role of the corporate communication manager at the top

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management level) has been identified as the mirror function, environmental scanning, boundary spanning, as well as the management of stakeholders, publics, issues, and activists.

3.3 THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT LITERATURE PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this investigation of the body of knowledge on strategic management is to analyse the strategic management process in order to determine whether there is a need at the top management level for the most senior manager/practitioner heading the corporate communication function to play the role of a *PR strategist*, as conceptualised in the previous section.

3.3.1 THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The modern concept of strategic management, defined as *"balancing internal activities with strategies for dealing with external factors"* (Pearce & Robinson 1997), is the ideal way for an organisation to achieve maximum effectiveness. Pfeffer & Salancik (1978:11) see success in meeting internal goals as 'efficiency' (doing things right*)*, whereas 'effectiveness' (doing the right thing*)* is *"an external standard of how well an organisation is meeting the demands of various groups and organisations that are concerned with its activities"*.

According to Digman (1990:14), the strategic management process is an attempt to achieve a productive fit between the organisation's external or macro environment (economic, competitive, social, political/legal, technological factors) and its internal situation (structure, systems and procedures, climate and resources). The organisation must consider the threats and opportunities present

in the external environment, and the strengths and weaknesses present internally. However, executives are often compelled to subordinate the demands of the firm's internal activities and external environment to the multiple and often inconsistent requirements of its various stakeholders (Pearce & Robinson 1997).

Viewing strategic management as a process has the implication that any change in one component will affect several or all of the other components. Since this process is very dynamic, it should be monitored constantly for significant shifts in any of its component parts. Top management should continually assess the impact of the organisation's implemented strategies on the external environment, and take this into account in future decision making (Pearce & Robinson 1997:19).

Strategic management focuses on strategic decisions—those decisions that deal with the determination of organisational strategy, provide the definition of the business and the general relationship between the organisation and its environment. This includes an analysis of the environment, of resources and strategic capability, and of culture and stakeholder expectations (Costa & Teare 1994).

To keep up with the external environment, management must watch for changes and trends of strategic significance. The more rapid and discontinuous the change, the greater the need for environmental analysis and forecasting. The changes and trends are brought into and disseminated within the organisation by means of a strategic information system (Digman 1990:51). Although some information may be within the organisation, much of it exists in unrelated, unevaluated 'bits and pieces' that are difficult for decision makers to use. As a result, much information goes unused (Aaker 1983).

Strategic information is the information necessary to make strategic decisions at either the corporate or business level of the organisation. This information can be an important resource to the company if it is used to achieve a strategic competitive advantage (Wiseman 1988). Most companies rely on their management information systems (MIS) to obtain strategic information. However, the information top management really needs must be separately collected and processed and must follow separate pathways from information required for operations. MIS is almost exclusively concerned with the past, with the control function applied to the operational activities of the firm--few focus on the planning function or strategic decisions critical to the company's future (King & Cleland 1978:221; Rhyne 1985; Digman 1990, Xu & Kaye 1995).

What is therefore required is a separate strategic information system (SIS) designed to support the company's competitive strategies. The SIS should provide for 'scanning' the business environment to pick up new signals, and 'monitoring' to track previously identified trends, singled out as being significant to the organisation. An important part of an SIS is establishing responsibility for acquiring and handling such information within the organisation. Ansoff (1977) held that the degree to which an organisation is successful in integrating such information into its planning, will determine the level of its strategic thrust.

3.3.2 THE ENVIRONMENT

Strategic decisions deal with the determination of organisational strategy. In the process, the organisation monitors its environment, incorporates the effects of environmental changes into corporate decision making, and formulates new strategies (Jain 1997:10). The environment, perhaps more than any other factor, affects organisational strategy, structure, internal processes and managerial decision making (Duncan 1972; Pfeffer & Salancik 1978; King & Cushman 1994:16).

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From an information processing perspective, the environment is important because it creates uncertainty for managers, especially top managers (Nanus 1982:39). The central problem for chief executives today is the management of change and complexity arising from the organisation's interaction with an increasingly turbulent external environment. This manifests itself in a number of ways: the increasing amount of time devoted to environmental concerns by chief executives; major sections of annual reports devoted to social responsibility; the increased number of public affairs staff and lobbying efforts; and frequent media appearances by corporate representatives (Nanus 1982:39).

Environmental uncertainty is the absence of information about organisations, activities and events in the environment (Huber & Daft 1988). It results in increased information processing within organisations because top managers must identify opportunities, detect and interpret problem areas, take strategic decisions and implement strategic or structural adaptation (Hambrick 1982; Culnan 1983; Jemison 1984).

When organisations make decisions, they do so based on a set of shared perceptions of the organisation and its environment. From the academic literature, however, it is evident that there is a lack of a definite interpretation of the term *environment* (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:122)--various authors conceptualise it in different ways.

Pearce & Robinson (1997) define the environment as *"the sum total of all conditions and forces that affect the strategic options of the organisation and define its competitive situation, but that are typically beyond its ability to control"*. They see the environment as consisting of three categories:

- The *remote* environment (also called *macro* or *societal* environment by other authors), refers to sectors that affect organisations indirectly, by influencing its long-term decisions. It originates beyond, and usually irrespective of, any single organisation's operating situation. It consists of social, economic, political, technological and ecological factors to be considered.

- The *operating* or task environment includes sectors that have direct transactions with the organisation and influences day-to-day operations and goal attainment (Wheelen & Hunger 1992). It is typically much more subject to the organisation's influence or control than the remote environment -- and they can therefore be much more proactive in dealing with it. The operating environment, consisting of groups such as customers, suppliers, competitors and creditors (Hagen & Amin 1995), is usually easier to scan, the timing is more easily understood, and the impact is more predictable—scanning is also done more often.

- The *functional or internal environment,* which was added to the above classification by Olsen, Murthy & Teare (1994), refers to areas of specialisation within the organisation such as finance, human resources, operations, administration, marketing, corporate communication, and research and development.

Van Wyk (*in* Spies 1994) calls the macro, task and internal environment, the *decision making environment* of the organisation. When researching the environment, Mitroff (*in* Spies 1994) includes another component namely the *stakeholder environment,* thus adding behaviouralist methodology to the procedure. Pearce & Robinson (1997:46) also mention the stakeholder approach to the environment in stating that the legitimate right of the organisation's stakeholders must be recognised. All of the stakeholder groups must be identified and their relative rights, as well as their ability to affect success, be weighed. These stakeholders include not only stockholders but others affected

by the organisation's actions such as customers, suppliers, governments, unions, competitors, local communities and the general public.

The environment is built from the flow of information into the organisation (Duncan 1972). The organisational environment is not the physical surroundings (buildings, offices, equipment, people) that organisational members encounter, but the information to which they react. Thus the focus of the organisational environment is "*an action, process view of the messages that organisational members perceive and the meanings that they create in response to these messages*" (Weick 1969). Organisations create their own environments by paying attention to some information from out there while ignoring other information. An organisation's environment is therefore "*an arbitrary invention of the organisation itself*" (Starbuck 1976:1078).

Lenz & Engledow (1986) has a different view of the organisation's internal and external environment, namely that it can be represented as "*a patterning of strategic issues*". This differs from the depictions of the environment above as a set of general components (e.g. the technological, economic or social component), or a set of cognitive maps, or a collection of stakeholders. In considering the diverse views expressed above, one has to agree with Grunig & Repper (*in* Grunig 1992:122) that there is no consensus on the exact nature of the concept 'environment'.

3.3.3 BOUNDARY SPANNING

Boundary spanning is an important concept in the context of understanding the organisation's external environment. Organisations must acquire timely information from a number of external areas to be able to make strategic decisions. This strategic information is frequently provided by *boundary*

spanners, people within the organisation who interact with the organisation's external environment (Aldrich & Herker 1977).

Boundary spanning is defined as *"the set of activities involved with organisation-environment interaction"*. Boundary spanning units are important in strategic decision making because of their ability to recognise and deal with trends or changes in the external environment—an important characteristic of complex organisations that wish to survive (Jemison 1984:131).

Most authors concur that boundary spanning roles are involved with either inputs to the organisation or outputs from the organisation. This corresponds with Adams' (1976) boundary spanning roles of *acquisition* and *disposal.* Aldrich & Herker (1977) propose two primary classes of boundary spanning functions: information processing (called the *mirror* function by Van Riel 1995) and external representation (called the *window* function by Van Riel). Jemison (1984) inter alia associates the following activities with the above roles:

- *Information acquisition and control*: information is acquired from external sources and decisions are taken by boundary spanners as to whom, when and what portions of the information should be given to others.
- *Information is provided* to the external environment to create a favourable image of the organisation.

These boundary spanning roles can be carried out by more than one organisational function and are not synonymous with a particular position in the hierarchy (Tushman & Scanlan 1981). Organisational functions that engage in these boundary spanning roles will gain influence over strategic decisions to the extent that the boundary role is related to a critical contingency in that organisation (Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck & Pennings 1971).

Communication across boundaries is difficult and prone to bias and distortion. Boundaries can be spanned effectively only by individuals with the ability to translate across communication boundaries and who are aware of contextual information on both sides. Since informational boundary spanning is a two-part process, it will only be accomplished by individuals who obtain information from the environment and also disseminate it internally (Tushman & Scanlan 1981). These individuals must be well linked internally and externally.

Salesmen and buyers, for instance, are active in the external environment but there is no evidence that they actually disseminate information inside the organisation (Leifer & Huber 1977). They play the so-called 'representational' boundary spanning roles that usually do not mediate critical resources for the organisation, nor are they informally powerful roles (Tushman & Scanlan 1981). Corporate communication technicians traditionally also fall within this category.

Information acquired via formal information media (e.g. MIS reports) is inherently dated, and formal information systems have only limited encoding capabilities. Widespread direct communication across organisational boundaries is costly, inefficient, and prone to bias (Katz & Kahn 1978). Informal social mechanisms, such as boundary spanning, are an effective medium for acquiring and interpreting timely, current, and soft information (Aldrich & Herker 1977). Such information must be interpreted to be of relevance to the organisation and organised in a manner that fits the decision-making structure and process. Ignoring seemingly irrelevant information from the environment can have disastrous consequences for organisations.

Regarding high-level, strategic decisions, boundary-spanning personnel can play their most important role by acting as consultants who advise on methods of problem representation. As environmental scanners, they make important decisions when they decide to present certain information (but not other

information) to decision makers. Many decision makers will give importance only to that information that affects their area of specialisation (Dearborn & Simon 1958). Some decisions require constructing new meanings about the organisation in relation to its environment and typically involve action to change existing meanings. Boundary spanners have an important role to play and are uniquely equipped to structure new meanings regarding both the organisation and its environment. They provide decision makers with appropriate conceptual frameworks, representing the decision problem in a form that permits a solution (White & Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992).

Boundary spanning is one mechanism by which information is imported into organisations. The special characteristics of boundary spanners allow decision makers to maximise their information acquisition at a relatively low cost in terms of time, energy, and effort (Mintzberg 1973). However, boundary spanning individuals are often denied greater influence because their loyalty is suspect as a consequence of relatively frequent contact with outsiders. Boundary spanners violate the (psychological) demarcation between organisation and environment (Leifer & Delbecq 1978:4), and are viewed as identifying with external rather than internal interests. It seems the messenger is still blamed (although not killed) for unwelcome messages, regardless of their value to the decision making process (Aldrich & Herker 1977).

3.3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

Assessing the organisation's environment used to be *"an informal endeavour based on intuitive judgements"*. Today, however, it has become one of the most challenging aspects of the strategic management process (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998:101). Whether environmental changes have positive or negative consequences depends almost entirely on the speed, accuracy and interpretation of the information, the communication regarding changes and the rapid internal

reorientation of the organisation (King & Cushman 1994:16). Effective systems should be developed to acquire relevant environmental information in a timely fashion (Choudhury & Sampler 1997).

An analysis of the external environment can best be achieved by means of a research technique called *environmental scanning* and *monitoring*. It has as its primary purpose to provide an understanding of the constituents of the *macro or societal environment* (Jain 1984, 1990; Mason & Wilson 1987; Fahey & Narayanan 1986; Olsen, Murthy & Teare 1994; Xu & Kaye 1995; Pearce & Robinson 1997).

Environmental scanning is considered by many as the first step in the strategy formulation process (Hambrick 1981, 1982; Bourgeois 1980; Phillips & Calantone 1994; Robbins & De Cenzo 1998:105). It is the process of identifying and tracking trends that lead to business opportunities and threats (Olsen, Murthy & Teare 1994; Yasai-Ardekani & Nystrom 1996).

During the last two decades business leaders have seen that rapid changes in the environment could seriously threaten their organisations--they have learnt that they should understand their environment and change along with it in order to survive and prosper (Bates 1985; Yasai-Ardekani & Nystrom 1996). It is therefore important to monitor the relevant changes taking place (Digman 1990), since an organisation can only respond to those parts of the environment of which it is aware (Kuhn 1969).

'Scanning' was first conceptualised by Aguilar (1967) as the way in which managers studied the environment. He defined it as *"scanning for information about events and relationships in a company's outside environment, the knowledge of which would assist top management in its task of charting the company's future course of action."* Hambrick (1981:1982) reinforced Aguilar's

view, conceiving it as the *"first step in the ongoing chain of perceptions and actions leading to an organisation's adaptation to its environment"*.

Environmental scanning is a process in which an organisation learns about events and trends in the external environment, establishes relationships between them, and considers the main implications for problem definition and decision making. Daft & Weick (1984) have a narrower definition for scanning by seeing it as part of the interpretation process in an organisation: *Scanning* is data collection (viewing the environment); *interpretation* is translating events and developing shared understanding amongst top managers of how the environment affects the organisation; and *learning* is the process by which knowledge about outcome relationships is developed (i.e. providing a rough outline of the future state of the environment for purposes of strategy formulation).

3.3.4.1 Findings of initial research on environmental scanning: The macro or industrial view

The earlier stream of research on environmental scanning has taken the macro or industrial view, asking which organisational units and systems gather environmental data and how is it used (Aguilar 1967; Fahey & King 1977; Jain 1984; Stubbart 1982; Thomas 1980).

⇒ How is environmental scanning used?

Environmental scanning and management's perception of the environment is central to the strategy formulation process--management need to study and understand the environment in order to think strategically (Aguilar 1967; Kefalas & Schoderbek 1973; Miles, Snow & Pfeffer 1974; Thayer 1978; Bourgeois 1980; Hambrick 1982; Daft, Sormunen & Parks 1988; Pearce & Robinson 1997). It is

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therefore imperative to conduct environmental analysis to ensure that important external changes and information are included in the organisation's strategic decisions (Fahey & Narayanan 1986:1).

Scanning improves an organisation's abilities to deal with a rapidly changing environment in various ways (Jain 1990):

- It helps an organisation to capitalise on opportunities early.

- It provides an early warning signal of impending problems.

- It sensitises an organisation to the changing needs of its customers { and other stakeholders }.

- It provides a base of objective qualitative information about the environment.

- It provides intellectual stimulation to strategists in decision making.

- It improves the image of the organisation in the eyes of its stakeholders and publics.

In spite of its obvious advantages, scanning is not an ordered process in many organisations. In an analysis of 31 South African companies, Binedell (1982) found that 28 undertook environmental scanning on an irregular basis, and were dependent on published and 'informally' collected information. Only two published their analyses and presented them as a starting point for the planning cycle.

⇒ *Which systems are used in structuring environmental scanning?*

The corporate strategy must continually be reviewed to incorporate the impact of environmental trends of strategic significance--a systematic approach to environmental scanning is therefore needed (Jain 1997). Studies have shown that a number of environmental and organisational variables are of major importance in determining the content of specific business strategies. Many are

well-known, but some -- such as stakeholder values and social responsibility -- have not been studied adequately by researchers.

To make sense of chaos in today's world, decisions should be based on the maximum amount of information. The only way to secure information is to actively request it. In the case of key relationships with stakeholders, this means regular conversations, focus groups and opinion surveys. It also means that the organisation must organise itself to be receptive to inputs of opinion. Whether the subject is financial control, social performance, or environmental management, it is essential to have formal processes of information collecting, reporting and auditing if the issue is to be understood and managed effectively. This will lead to agreement on objectives which secure stakeholder commitment, such as improvements in product quality, employee development, or environmental management, thereby adding stakeholder value (Wheeler & Sillanpää 1998).

- *Which organisational unit should gather the data?*

A problem with scanning is who to ask to conduct the analysis and how to obtain useful information (Bates 1985). Scanning tasks must be made manageable by assigning individuals to scan information sources most relevant to company operations. It is important to keep the interests and backgrounds of participants in mind. Other organisational members who are exposed to important information, should also be made aware of the system (Aaker 1983).

There is frustration in knowing how and what to analyse and how to get the information utilised by line managers (Diffenbach 1983). This is exemplified by the following comment made by a researcher: "*Environmental scanning is one of those many ideas which look good on paper, but proves intractable in implementation*" (Stubbart 1982). This general feeling about the difficulties encountered in implementing environmental scanning seems to have carried

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over to the 1990s. Askew (1997) pointed to the fact that, at present, most monitoring procedures are *ad hoc* and unformalised.

Engledow & Lenz's (1985) research results pointed to the fact that environmental scanning is even more complex and harder to do than originally envisioned. However, four principles regarding effective implementation that emerged were the following:

- Environmental scanning must be linked, conceptually and practically, to current planning and operations.
- Systems for environmental analysis must fit the culture and decision-making styles of the organisation.
- Continuing support from internal champions such as the CEO or another is required to sustain the scanning over time. Environmental analysis is a relatively new, poorly defined activity which does not have a historical role in the planning process, and is always in danger of being smothered. Working champions must provide expertise and credibility, and have a strong belief in the inherent worth of the activity. The champions must be broad-thinking individuals with knowledge of relevant analytical methods, a keen sense of the philosophy and politics of the organisation and of the decision-making styles of key executives. They must have an 'away from the system' perspective, suggested by Ansoff (1980).

Much of the discussion focuses on whether environmental scanning should be organised as a free-standing staff function or in concert with strategic planning (Engledow & Lenz 1985), or in a unit outside the normal planning process e.g. across organisational hierarchies (Ansoff 1980). In practice, it is done in many different ways (Jain 1997):

- Line managers undertake it as part of their responsibilities.

- The strategic planning department undertakes to do it.

- A specific office is instituted to conduct scanning.

Other organisational arrangements could include a separate corporate entity for scanning; a corporate/strategic planning department; a product/market area or strategic business unit; the legal department; corporate communication/public relations or public affairs; marketing research; or a think tank or concept group (Jain 1984).

From Jain's (1984) study it appears that marketing research is the preferred organisational unit for scanning the social environment. The legal department is used for political scanning. Corporate communication/public affairs engages in environmental scanning as a substitute for corporate/strategic planning in all areas except the economic environment. More specifically, in organisations just starting the scanning activity, economic scanning is assigned to corporate/strategic planning, with other forms of scanning delegated to corporate communication (Jain 1984).

Freeman (1984:221) concurs with the latter in seeing the task of corporate communication not only to participate in strategic management processes, but also to scan the environment for new issues and new stakeholders, and to bring these to the attention of the business unit managers responsible.

3.3.4.2 Later streams of research on environmental scanning: The micro-level

Later studies focused on the informal scanning behaviours of individual managers, i.e. how they get information about their environment (Kefalas & Schoderbek 1973; Wang & Chan 1995, Yasai-Ardekani & Nystrom 1996; Oswald, Mossholder & Harris 1997). People possess a strong motivation to understand their environments, but limitations on their cognitive abilities create biases as they acquire and process information. Managers tend to focus on their own short-term interests, and they fail to share information with other managers (Yasai-Ardekani & Nystrom 1996).

There are numerous studies which centre on the information gathering activities of senior level executives, also referred to as boundary spanning activities (Murphy 1989:102). Top managers learn about the environment by means of environmental scanning (Hambrick 1982; Culnan 1983). Although they do not do all the scanning themselves, chief executives are responsible for the organisation/environment alignment (Ritvo, Salipante & Notz 1979). It is their job to be aware of external events, to interpret the environment and to translate cues into meaning for other organisational members—they must define the environment (Daft & Weick 1984).

Scanning represents a difficult organisational problem because the environment is vast and complex, and managers experience 'bounded rationality'—they cannot comprehensively understand the environment (Cyert & March 1963). The nature of the information retained from managerial sensing is largely a function of the filters that are applied (Choudhury & Sampler 1997).

A complex environment would seem to call for the increased use of sophisticated scanning systems, yet most information at top levels is gained through *ad hoc*, human sources (Hambrick 1981, Mintzberg 1973). Top management scanning tends to be irregular rather than systematic (Fahey, King & Narayanan 1981).

Upper-level executives do not indicate a consistent, concentrated tendency to scan according to their organisations' strategies, neither is it target-oriented. Environmental monitoring is largely individual and directed to person-specific interests (Reinhardt 1984:29). The general tendency is to scan according to own functional interests (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978:74-77). Knowledge of long-term trends possibly affecting the whole company is usually lacking. According to Wang & Chan (1995); Jain (1990); and Fahey & Narayanan (1986), one of the major problems confronting strategic management is that the external environments of many organisations have become increasingly turbulent with prevailing environmental information often being highly complicated, novel, ambiguous, or dynamic. Top managers often misperceive environmental changes because they cannot adequately process--that is to view, search, and interpret--information with the above characteristics (Ansoff & McDonnell 1990).

Another factor which could bias the judgement of decision makers is that, in order to avoid information overload, people base their judgements on information that is readily available to them and on things with which they are familiar (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998:140-141). Managers also develop paradigms—deep-seated beliefs about the nature of the organisational world and the way in which the task of organising should be undertaken (Wang & Chan 1995). They are therefore not open to new information or new ideas/ways of doing.

3.3.4.3 Conclusion to scanning

Three decades after environmental scanning was first conceptualised, it is still not practised in an orderly manner, nor is it in widespread use. The literature emphasises the fact that it is still not clear who (or which function) in the organisation should take responsibility for managing the process. It does however seem that the CEO needs support in his/her role as the main environmental scanner.

3.3.5 THE STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Higgins (1979:1) defines strategic management as *"the process of managing the pursuit of the accomplishment of the organisational mission coincident with managing the relationship of the organisation to its environment"*. In the discussion on the conceptualisation of the environment earlier in this chapter (section 3.3.2), Pearce & Robinson (1997:15, 46) referred to the *stakeholder approach* to the environment by stating that the legitimate right of an organisation's stakeholders must be recognised. All of the stakeholder groups must be identified, and their relative rights and ability to affect organisational success, be weighed. Mitroff (*in* Spies 1994) also referred to the *stakeholder environment*. Dozier *et al* (1995:27) concurred when they defined the overall strategic management of organisations as being *"inseparable from the strategic management of* relationships*")*.

For the purpose of this study, the organisation's environment will be looked on as the product of the strategic decisions of others □i.e. stakeholders□—consisting of the government, competitors, customers, society, and a host of other outside

influences. Events external to the organisation have important effects on future results (Digman 1990).

3.3.5.1 The stakeholder approach

Major strategic shifts in the business environment require conceptual shifts in the minds of managers (Emshoff 1978). One possible approach to the conceptual problem of dealing with the external environment of the organisation, is to place emphasis on the concept of 'stakeholders'—who they are and what their stakes entail.

The stakeholder approach provides a new way of thinking about strategic management—that is, how an organisation can and should set and implement direction—and what the affairs of the organisation actually constitutes. This approach to strategic management is concerned with groups and individuals who can affect the organisation, and the managerial behaviour in response to those groups and individuals (Freeman 1984:vi).

Developing good stakeholder relationships is becoming increasingly necessary in the information age. This also involves making consistent efforts to measure and manage stakeholder relations, with the objective of *"continuous improvement in all company operations, and ultimately the goal of increasing stakeholder value"* (Clarke 1997:211-221). Wheeler & Sillanpää (1997:xi) explain the concept of 'stakeholding' in today's business by comparing the organisation to:

> *"a social vehicle whose speed and steering are dependent upon careful reading of the road signs and the behaviour of other road users. The route is best determined by involving all passengers with knowledge to contribute to the map reading".*

A 1995 survey of Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) in the USA found that the vast majority worry about, and even measure, the organisation's performance in meeting stakeholder goals, supporting the notion that the quality of relationships with stakeholders drives financial performance (Birchard 1995). This is in contrast to the traditional view where the company has been perceived as a bundle of assets in which lies the key to economic performance--but more in keeping with the Eastern viewpoint where an organisation is conceived as a set of relationships (Boisot & Child 1996).

Organisations are responsible to a variety of stakeholders who have vested interests in the performance of the firm and on whom organisational activities have an impact (Freeman 1984; Evan & Freeman 1988). According to Freeman (1984:24), the *"emergence of numerous stakeholder groups and new strategic issues require a rethinking of our traditional picture of the firm..."*. Freeman's *stakeholder approach* to understanding an organisation in its environment has broadened management's vision of its roles and responsibilities beyond the profit maximisation function, to include interests and claims of non-stockholding groups. This idea is connected to an old tradition that sees business as an integral part of society, rather than an institution that is separate and purely economic in nature (Freeman & Lifdtka 1997).

Freeman (1984) calls for 'external affairs' managers to take the responsibility for strategically managing stakeholder groups. In his view, these managers should be boundary spanners; people with the so-called 'soft skills' who excel in the management of values, perceptions, expectations and feelings; people who possess excellent communication skills; people who know how to *listen* (Freeman 1984: 26). Corporate communication practitioners are among an organisation's designated boundary spanners (White & Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992).

3.3.5.2 The stakeholder concept

Evidence of the stakeholder concept can be traced as far back as Barnard (1938): "*The role of top management is to ensure the continued co-operation of all stakeholders by providing them at least minimal satisfaction*". By the 1970s the stakeholder concept began to surface in the strategic planning literature (Taylor 1971; Haselhoff 1976; King & Cleland 1978; Hussey & Langham 1978; Davis & Freeman 1978; Mason & Mitroff 1981; Emshoff & Finnel 1979:41; Mitroff & Emshoff 1979).

Dill & Ackoff (*in* Dill 1975) moved the stakeholder concept from the periphery of corporate planning to a central place: "*The move today is from stakeholder influence towards stakeholder participation.*" Dill regarded the role of strategic management as communicating with stakeholders and considering the role and impact of adversary groups. Until now, stakeholders had been assumed to be non-adversarial, or adversarial only in the sense of labour-management relations. By broadening the notion of stakeholder to "*people outside...who have ideas about what the economic and social performance of the enterprise should include*", Dill (1975) set the stage for the use of the stakeholder concept as an umbrella for strategic management.

The use of the stakeholder concept means thinking in terms that are broader than current strategic and operational problems. Business is not about squeezing the last drop out of suppliers and charging as high as possible a price to customers. This is the trader's mentality, thinking short term. To survive in the economic jungle, a company must win the loyalty of all important groups, not only their shareholders (Freeman 1984).

In their writings on stakeholder capitalism, Freeman & Lifdtka (1997) reinterpret the concept of the value chain in terms of stakeholders. Stockholders are nothing

but a key stakeholder group, whose support must be sustained in the same way as other important stakeholder he interests of stockholders and stakeholders are aligned and the issue is one of balancing the interests of these groups. The emergence of consumer advisory panels, quality circles, just-in-time inventory teams, community advisory groups were all designed to get the organisation more in touch with the key stakeholder groups that affected its future. If this is not done, key stakeholders use the political process to force regulation or legislation that protects them—hence the proliferation of labour legislation, consumer protection and legislation, and environmental protection (Freeman & Lifdtka 1997).

If stakeholders participate in decision making which affects them, they will be more committed to the future of the organisation. This points to a new role for organisations interested in leading the way—that of the *architect and shaper of an evolving community of stakeholders*" (Freeman & Lifdtka 1997).

3.3.5.3 Stakeholder management

During the 1980's, the concept of stakeholder management emerged as a method for *systematically* taking into account the interests of those groups who can affect and are affected by the organisation (Freeman & Lifdtka 1997). This necessitates an understanding of *who* the organisation's stakeholders are and *what* their perceived stakes are. Freeman's (1984) classic definition of "*a stakeholder in an organisation is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives,*" is one of the broadest definitions in the literature. It is based on the reality that organisations can indeed be vitally affected by, or they can vitally affect, almost anyone.

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Stakeholders are individuals and groups with a 'stake' in how well the organisation performs (Dill 1979:49). Looking at the interest or stake of stakeholders, it can be said that shareowners have an *equity* stake; customers and suppliers have an *economic* stake; and single-issue groups have an *influencer* stake. Looking at the concept of power, the prevailing world view in the 1980s was that stockholders have *formal voting* power; customers, suppliers and employees have *economic* power; special interest groups and government have *political* power. By 'economic power' is meant "*the ability to influence due to marketplace decision*" and by 'political power' the "*ability to influence due to use of the political process*" (Freeman & Reed 1983). A stakeholder may at once be a shareholder, customer and employee. According to Freeman, corporate communication/public affairs managers and lobbyists deal in the political arena.

The proponents of stakeholder analysis advocate a thorough understanding of an organisation's stakeholders and recognise that there are times when stakeholders must participate in the decision-making process. This involves assessing the stake and power of each stakeholder group. At the absolute minimum, a board of directors and top management must be aware of the impact of their decisions on key stakeholder groups (Freeman & Reed 1983).

Organisations which will sustain competitive advantage in the future are those which focus less on present shareholders and financial measures of success, but more on relationships with stakeholders (Goldenberg 1995). The influence of all stakeholder groups on the values, beliefs, policies, decisions and management of organisations is on the rise and here to stay.

3.3.5.4 Where does the responsibility for stakeholder management lie?

In the modern complex corporate structure that encompasses multiple business units, divisions, matrix configurations, etc., it is far too easy for the responsibility for stakeholders to become diffused. Integration occurs at the business or product level, but not necessarily at the corporate level where the impact of the organisation on a particular stakeholder group should be considered. Freeman (1984:233) argues for the existence of a manager responsible for bringing the needs of certain stakeholder groups to the constant attention of the other organisational units of the organisation.

The broadening of *corporate communication* into public affairs is a response to changes in the business environment. What has evolved is a concept of 'external affairs' whereby a group of managers (perhaps corporate communication or public affairs) is given the task of managing particular external groups. External affairs managers are in the best possible position to know who the stakeholders of the firm really are, and to communicate this message internally to the managers responsible for developing integrated business strategies (Freeman 1984:223).

Freeman sees it as the responsibility of these external affairs managers to paint the 'bigger picture' and to decide how policy is formulated or practised while taking multiple stakeholders into account. Their experience with thinking in terms of the 'big picture' can be an invaluable resource to profit centre managers caught up in their day-to-day affairs. Someone needs to explicitly formulate a statement of the organisation's objectives or mission in dealing with each stakeholder group, as a guideline for managers whose organisational units affect that stakeholder.

External affairs managers should have communication skills, seriously needed in negotiating 'win-win' solutions. However, to negotiate they must be empowered to make trade-offs and take decisions. The external affairs manager must be seen as a valuable resource to the chief executive, as a "*manager of vision and insight who can help to decipher a complex external environment and negotiate with a multiplicity of stakeholder groups*" (Freeman 1984).

Stakeholder managers should be 'ombudspersons', or places where stakeholders could go to have disputes listened to, and possibly resolved. Stakeholder experts could also form a 'ready-made' environmental scanning team, with information on stakeholder expectations (Freeman 1984:236).

Freeman sees the function of corporate communication as being externally oriented, making the organisation sensitive to the concerns of the external environment and convincing the external environment of the worthiness of the organisation's positions. However, while there is an increasing feeling that the corporate communication function is more important than ever, the traditional concepts and tools (press release, annual report, videotape) used are increasingly ineffective. As a boundary spanner, the corporate communication practitioner also has little credibility inside or outside the organisation, caught in the middle of all the environmental change (Freeman 1984). The stakeholder approach therefore requires a redefinition of the corporate communication function, which builds on the communication skills of corporate communication professionals, yet is responsive to the real business environment of the day (Freeman 1984:219).

The key message of the RSA 'Tomorrow's Company Inquiry' (1996) was that as the business climate changes, the rules of the competitive race are being re-

written. The effect thereof is to make people and relationships more than ever the key to sustainable success:

3.3.6 ISSUES MANAGEMENT

If environmental analysis is a starting point for strategy formulation, then issue identification is its control focus (Murphy 1989). Real issues that affect the strategic direction of the organisation or business unit need to be identified and tracked (Freeman 1984:22). The positive or negative impacts of macro and micro environmental forces on the business should be determined (Murphy 1989) and management advised on their response.

According to Freeman (1984:221, 224) issues management needs to be integrated with the stakeholder concept: "*Stakeholders are real, while issues are only useful conceptual abstracts.*" The external affairs manager must think broadly and be sensitive to changes in the stakeholder environment, identify new and emerging issues *and* stakeholders.

3.3.6.1 Definitions

The Conference Board of America defined an 'issue' as "*a condition or pressure, either internal or external, that if it continues, will have a significant effect on the functioning of the organisation or its future interest*". Issues are "*unsolved problems and a trend whose time has come*" (Brown 1979:1). Chase (1977) defined an 'issue' as "*an unsettled matter which is ready for decision*" and 'trends' as "*detectable changes which precede issues*". Chase, who originally conceptualised issues management in 1976, later changed the definition of an 'issue' to "*a gap between corporate action and stakeholder expectations*". He

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defined 'issues management' as the "*process used to close the gap*" (*in* Bryan 1997).

3.3.6.2 The issues management process

The term 'issues management' was first coined by Howard Chase (1977) as a management process consisting of "*identifying, analysing, developing positions, and briefing management on public policy issues that will have a critical effect on the company.*" Through the years the term 'issue' obtained a broader meaning and is now seen to include all key issues -- public policy, as well as social and strategic issues -- confronting organisations (Wartick & Rude 1986).

Arrington & Sawaya (1984) see issues management as a process that involves early identification of potential controversies, development of organisational policy related to these issues, creation of programmes to carry out policies and its implementation, communication with appropriate publics about these policies and programmes, and evaluation of results.

Issues management is a preventative technique that focuses on managing the issue rather than dealing with the crisis—the latter often evolves gradually because nobody notices it in the making. The idea is to locate the smoke and take action before a major fire develops. In this way, the organisation has a better opportunity to shape, rather than react to public discourse and decision making. Issues management is a low-cost technique for minimising the chances of a high-cost crisis (Bartha 1995).

3.3.6.3 Strategic issues

'Strategic issues' are defined as *"developments, events and trends viewed by decision makers as consequential because of the potential to impact an organisation's strategy* (Ansoff 1980; King 1982; Dutton & Ottensmeyer 1987). Internal strategic issues can alter the organisation's performance if left unnoticed. However, most frequently, strategic issues emanate from sources outside the organisation's boundaries such as competitor actions, political unrest, changes in government regulations, etc. (Dutton & Ottensmeyer 1987).

The subjectivity involved in their detection and diagnosis makes strategic issues difficult to manage. Because they are ambiguous, complex and fluid, their identification and diagnosis is an ongoing, interpretive and politically charged activity (Dutton, Fahey & Narayanan 1983).

3.3.6.4 Where does the responsibility for issues management lie?

A major question concerning issues management is which organisational function should manage it. In the public relations literature, many see issues management as fitting into the corporate communication function. Chase (1977), the father of issues management, regards it as the 'highway' along which corporate communication practitioners can move into full participation in management decision making. Heath & Cousino (1990) concur when saying that corporate communication practitioners' role in contributing to the bottom line lies in protecting corporate interests by being sensitive to the needs of a variety of external stakeholders. Ewing *(in* Gaunt & Ollenburger 1995:204) made the following statement:

"We invented it ☐issues management☐, we developed the techniques and no one is better equipped to staff issues management than we are. Who else is responsible for relationships with all the stakeholders? Issues management runs parallel in value to strategic planning among top management and we should never give it up".

Other corporate communication authors question these viewpoints--Cattell (1986) feels that corporate communication practitioners are technicians, not qualified to act as management counsellors. Gaunt & Ollenburger (1995) wonder whether issues management would not be more efficiently performed by the board of directors or the CEO, since it determines the very survival of the organisation.

In the strategic management literature, authors such as Wartick & Rude (1986) position issues management in existing organisational departments such as public affairs, corporate communication, government affairs, community affairs, social responsibility, consumer affairs, strategic planning, or corporate planning. They summarise the overriding purpose of issues management programmes as filling a void in corporate activity.

Finlay (1994) sees change management as one of the organisation's main tasks—the decision making process should be opened up and made more accountable to a wider segment of the public, taking an increasingly outward focus. He regards the public affairs function as one of the few resources of top management that is capable of providing detached, objective, analytical thinking about the impact and consequences of potential and corporate decisions on a wide variety of stakeholders.

As can be seen from the above, most authors position issues management within the corporate communication or public affairs function. Because of the

importance of issues management to the strategy formulation process, it seems a natural extension of the strategic role of the corporate communication manager to take responsibility for the management of issues, together with the management of stakeholders.

3.3.7 CONCLUSION

The investigation of the strategic management literature indicated the following as important constructs for a role that seems to be needed at the top management level: the environment, boundary spanning, environmental scanning, stakeholders and issues.

3.4 CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE ROLE OF THE *PR STRATEGIST*

Firstly, the major constructs determined through the investigation of the literature on public relations will be presented in conceptualising the role of the *PR strategist*. Secondly, the need that exists at the top management level will be described and related to the role of the *PR strategist*. Thirdly, based on the constructs developed from the strategic management as well as the public relations literature, the role of the *PR strategist* will be operationalised.

3.4.1 THE ROLE OF *PR STRATEGIST*, AS CONCEPTUALISED FROM THE LITERATURE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

The corporate communication manager's involvement at the top management or macro level of the organisation is seen as acquiring strategic information, through environmental scanning, on the stakeholder environment. This entails identifying

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the organisation's strategic stakeholders and their concerns, as well as determining the consequences of organisational behaviour on them. It also includes identifying and monitoring issues around which publics/activists emerge, before they erupt into crises (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992); and anticipating their consequences for organisational strategies and policies. Van Riel (1995) describes these activities as the *mirror* function of corporate communication. Furthermore, to present this strategic information to top management as input in the organisation's strategy formulation process (Robbins 1990), ensuring that the information is considered and used.

The researcher conceptualises these activities as the role of the *PR strategist, a* role to be played by the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication function. In managing the organisation's interdependencies with the stakeholder environment, in being a liaison between the organisation and its stakeholders, uncertainty and conflict is reduced and relationships with strategic stakeholders are stabilised. In this role, the corporate communication function's contribution towards organisational effectiveness is maximised (Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, *in* Grunig 1992).

However, to be truly effective in this role, the most senior manager responsible for the corporate communication function should be part of the top management team.

3.4.2 TOP MANAGEMENT'S NEED FOR AN 'EXTERNAL AFFAIRS' MANAGER

From the literature on strategic management, it is apparent that there are certain strategic aspects in the process which are not receiving the necessary attention, mainly because of uncertainty on who or which organisational unit should take the responsibility for it.

Strategic management focuses on strategic decisions—those decisions that deal *inter alia* with the determination of organisational strategy and the general relationship between the organisation and its environment. Top managers need to study and understand the environment in order to think and manage strategically. Environmental scanning, conceptualised by Aguilar (1967) as *"scanning for information about events and relationships"* is generally excepted as a means whereby top managers stay informed, and identifies changes, trends and events of strategic significance.

However, research findings on environmental scanning at the macro level pointed out that there is a problem as to whom (or which organisational function) should conduct it. For effective implementation, scanning should be linked to strategy formulation and fit the organisational culture, needs internal champions, and should be conducted by people who have an 'away from the system' perspective. Some authors such as Freeman (1984) suggested that corporate communication or public affairs should take the responsibility for scanning—they should scan the environment for both new *issues* and new *stakeholders*.

Research on scanning at the micro level found that top managers were responsible for scanning, but they had limitations on their cognitive abilities in doing it. They experienced 'bounded rationality', not being able to comprehensively understand or interpret the environment. They focused on information that was readily available to them, with which they were familiar and corresponded with their own short-term interests. Top managers directed scanning to person-specific interests, were not open to new information or new ideas of doing, and failed to share information with other managers.

A corporate communication practitioner in the role of the *PR strategist* can be the early warning system top management needs—doing environmental scanning, providing objective qualitative information on stakeholders, identifying issues in the environment and presenting relevant information on stakeholders to decision makers in a form that permits a solution. As a boundary spanner, the *PR strategist* will develop a shared understanding amongst top managers of the effects of their policies and of external issues on the organisation's stakeholders, and suggest strategies for managing these interdependencies.

Another problem identified in the strategic management process, is a lack of agreement on what constitutes the 'environment'. Although consensus exists that the environment creates great uncertainty for top management, it is not clear what it is that must be studied.

The *PR strategist* regards the strategic management of organisations as inseparable from the strategic management of relationships. The environment is therefore seen as the 'product of the strategic decisions of others', as a 'collection of stakeholders' and a 'patterning of issues'. The *PR strategist* regards an analysis of the values, needs, opinions, judgements, perceptions, expectations and even feelings of internal and external stakeholders as the first step in the strategic process. Providing this intelligence to top management will go a long way towards reducing uncertainty in strategic decision making.

The stakeholder approach to strategic management posits that the organisation must of its own volition undertake to satisfy the wants and needs of its key stakeholders, and recognise their legitimate rights. All of the stakeholder groups (not only the stockholders) must be identified and their relative rights and their ability to affect success, be weighed. This emphasis on the concept of stakeholders—who they are and what their stakes entail—requires thinking in

terms which are broader than current strategic and operational problems. The role of top management is to ensure the continued co-operation and loyalty of all stakeholders, moving from recognising stakeholder influence towards their inclusion in organisational decision making.

Freeman (1984) argued the need for an 'external affairs' manager to take the responsibility for strategically managing these stakeholder groups, someone who understands stakeholder thinking and has the vision and insight to decipher a complex external environment and negotiate with a multiplicity of stakeholder groups. External affairs managers will think broadly and be sensitive to changes in the stakeholder environment. They will know who the stakeholders of the organisation really are, and will communicate this message internally to the managers responsible for developing integrated business strategies. They will paint the 'bigger picture', decide how policy is to be formulated or practised while taking multiple stakeholders into account, and will explicitly formulate a statement of the organisation's objectives or mission in dealing with each stakeholder group.

However, managing stakeholders is no longer sufficient. The organisational environment is becoming increasingly turbulent--new and emerging issues *and* stakeholders must be identified. To be really effective, external affairs managers should manage the issue rather than deal with the crisis. Management's attention should be directed to strategic issues and understanding should be created of their implications for stakeholders. The management of issues is a critical, yet difficult process for top management to do alone or to control explicitly.

In the literature on issues management, many authors position the function in departments such as public affairs, corporate communication, government affairs, community affairs, social responsibility—all of which fall under the

umbrella of corporate communication. This supports Freeman's suggestion of corporate communication being a natural choice for 'external affairs' managers.

This has already been spelled out as the role of the *PR strategist*. In identifying the consequences of organisational behaviour on stakeholders and other individuals/groups, the *PR strategist* determines who the strategic stakeholders are and what the effect of each major strategic issue is on all the stakeholders. Publics emerging around issues are identified, determining whether these publics are in the latent, aware, active or activist stages of communication behaviour. By providing information to latent and aware publics, by putting processes in place for stakeholders and publics to routinely surface their concerns, by involving active publics or activists in the organisation's decision making processes, the *PR strategist* uses negotiation to reduce conflict and stabilise relationships with groups on whom the organisation's survival depends.

According to Freeman (1984), an 'external affairs manager' will have the ability to translate across communication boundaries, as well as the 'soft skills' needed to interpret values, perceptions, expectations and feelings. He/she will possess excellent communication skills, will know how to *listen,* and will become an 'ombudsperson'—providing a place where stakeholders could go to have disputes listened to, and possibly resolved. Freeman suggested corporate communication/public affairs managers as being ideal 'external affairs managers'—the corporate communication function is more important than ever. However, he sees traditional communication concepts and tools (press releases, annual reports, videotapes) are increasingly ineffective. The stakeholder approach requires a redefinition of the corporate communication function-- building on its communication skills, yet being responsive to real business needs.

> The objectives of this study is to conceptualise the role of the *PR strategist* as a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the top management level, responsible for identifying and managing stakeholders and issues. The role of the *PR manager* is to be redefined as a strategic role at the functional level, responsible for developing a corporate communication strategy as a link between the corporate communication function and the corporate strategy.
>
> If these objectives are achieved, it does indeed suggest a redefinition of the corporate communication function—building on existing communication skills, yet being responsive to real business needs. This broadening of the theoretical viewpoint of the field of public relations is centred around the role of the *PR strategist*, who takes responsibility for the activities described by Freeman as constituting the role of an 'external affairs' manager.

In summary, it can be said that the role of the *PR strategist*, as conceptualised from the public relations literature, seems to provide a solution to the need expressed in the strategic management literature for certain activities to be performed and certain processes to be put in place.

"Only through deepened relationships with—and between—employees, customers, suppliers, investors and the community will companies anticipate, innovate and adapt fast enough, while maintaining public confidence. A company adopting an 'inclusive' approach engages in reciprocal rather than adversarial relationships with their stakeholders; follows a partnership approach with employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders; and maintains a license to operate by working actively to maintain public confidence in the legitimacy of their operations and business conduct" (RSA Inquiry 1996).

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3.5 OPERATIONALISATION OF THE ROLE OF THE *PR STRATEGIST*

The role of the *PR strategist,* i.e. the role of the corporate communication manager at the top management level, is seen to consist of the following:

- doing environmental scanning in the macro, task and micro environment;

- analysing the organisation's linkages to key stakeholders, drawing up a stakeholder map;

- assisting in the identification of key strategic issues through issues monitoring and analysis;

- identifying the publics and activist groups that emerge around issues;

- analysing the consequences of corporate behaviour and external events/trends/issues on strategic stakeholders and publics;

- determining stakeholder concerns, sensitivities, feelings and attitudes towards the organisation;

- forecasting the behaviour of stakeholders/publics/activists and its consequences for the organisation;

- feeding this strategic intelligence into the organisation's strategic thinking and planning processes for the purpose of strategic decision making, thereby making inputs into the organisation's strategies.

3.6 RELATING THE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO THE ROLE OF THE *PR STRATEGIST*

In relating the systems approach to the role of the *PR strategist*, the researcher suggests that the systems approach to corporate communication be broadened. That is, that corporate communication becomes more deeply involved in the organisation's information acquisition phase (input) through environmental scanning and boundary spanning activities than has been the case up till now.

Furthermore, that the throughput phase be extended to include analysis and interpretation of information, as well as dissemination of strategic intelligence by corporate communication to relevant decision makers -- thereby participating in the strategic management process.

Based on the systems approach (as seen in Chapter 2, section 2.3.1), the role of the *PR strategist* can be described as monitoring and pro-actively probing the environment to detect and predict changing conditions, to identify issues that influence the attitudes of internal and external stakeholders towards the organisation, and to initiate corrective action.

Figure 3.1: SYSTEMS APPROACH TO THE ROLE OF THE PR STRATEGIST

INPUT
Role of the PR strategist
• Corporate communication becomes more deeply involved in information acquisition through environmental monitoring of stakeholders and issues.

$\Rightarrow$

THROUGHPUT
Role of the PR strategist
• Corporate communication becomes more involved in analysis and interpretation of information; and in
• dissemination of strategic intelligence to relevant decision makers;
• thereby participating in the strategic management process.
The role of the PR manager
• to be conceptualised in the following section.

$\Uparrow$

$\Downarrow$

FEEDBACK
The role of the PR strategist (and PR manager)
• determining whether the problem/ opportunity has been addressed satisfactorily.

$\Leftarrow$

OUTPUT
The role of the PR technician
• to be stated in the following section.

Source: Own research

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3.7 PRECISE HYPOTHESES FOR THE ROLE OF THE *PR STRATEGIST*

In this section, precise hypotheses for empirically measuring the role of the *PR strategist* are generated, with the aim of testing them in a future empirical study. The hypotheses are based on the guiding hypotheses stated in Chapter 1, and adapted after the new insights gained through the literature study in Chapters 2 and 3.

Hypothesis 1: The chief executive (CEO) expects the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function to play a strategic role at the top management level of the organisation, i.e. the role of the *PR strategist*.

Hypothesis 2: The role of the *PR strategist* consists of gathering and interpreting strategic information on the stakeholder environment, to be used in the organisation's strategy formulation processes.

Hypothesis 3: CEO expectations for the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR strategist* than his/her perceptions of the performance in this role.

Hypothesis 4: CEO expectations for the role to be played by the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher for the *PR strategist*, than for the *PR manager*.

Hypothesis 5: CEO role expectations for the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR strategist*, than in the role of the *PR technician*.

Hypothesis 6: CEO perceptions of the performance of the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR strategist* than in the role of the *PR manager*.

Hypothesis 7: CEO perceptions of the performance of the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR strategist* than in the role of the *PR technician*.

3.8 MEASUREMENT QUESTIONS FOR THE ROLE OF THE *PR STRATEGIST*

The following nine items are suggested for empirically measuring the role of the *PR strategist* (as obtained from the literature on public relations and strategic management):

Identify key stakeholders (through research) that can enhance or constrain achievement of the organisation's mission (Kreps 1990; Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, *in* Grunig 1992; White & Mazur 1995).
Act as advocate for key external stakeholders by explaining their views to top management (Dozier *et al* 1995).
Explain to top management the impact of their behaviour, obtained through research, on key external stakeholders such as the media, investors, communities (Grunig & Hunt 1984:9).
Initiate dialogue with pressure groups limiting the organisation's autonomy, e.g. environmentalists or consumer advocates or legislators (LA Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992).
Reduce uncertainty in strategic decision making by interpreting the external environment to top management (Dozier 1990; Dozier *et al* 1995:12-13; Van Riel 1995).
Develop strategies for building sound relationships between the organisation and key stakeholders (Dozier *et al* 1995).
Act as 'early warning system' to top management before issues erupt into crises (Dozier *et al* 1995).
Identify organisational problems that communication can solve, e.g. reduce employees' fears or uncertainty during rationalisation/ mergers (Steyn 1999).
Determine employees' information needs through research (Winokur & Kinkead 1993:1).

3.9 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN CHAPTER 3

The following research objectives were achieved in this chapter:

Primary Objective 1

The role of the *PR strategist* was conceptualised as a strategic role for the corporate communication (public relations) manager at the top management level--performing the mirror function, also known as the boundary spanning role of information acquisition.

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Secondary Objectives:

- An analysis of the relevant literature on public relations was carried out. The constructs for the role of the *PR strategist* were determined as being the mirror function (information acquisition/processing), boundary spanning, environmental scanning, stakeholders, publics, activists and issues. The activities constituting this role, were spelled out.

- It was determined, by means of an analysis of the relevant literature on strategic management, that a need exists at the top management level for a role of which the constructs were the following: the environment, boundary spanning, environmental scanning, stakeholders and issues. Since these were also constructs of the role of the *PR strategist*, the role needed at the top management level was equated to the role of the *PR strategist*.

- The role of the *PR strategist* was operationalised.

- Precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR strategist* were generated.

- Items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR strategist* were developed.

3.10 CONCLUSION

The term 'environment' permeates the literature on strategic management. However, in discussing the environment, authors seldom describe **how** the organisation should interpret the environment or **who** in the organisation should observe the environment. Although some public relations authors have recognised the role of corporate communication in helping to identify the most important components of the environment, very few scholars in strategic management have mentioned it (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992).

Quite a number of authors in strategic management mention stakeholders and issues as important components of the environment. Whereas issues management is mentioned by some as being the domain of corporate communication or public affairs, very few relate corporate communication to the management of stakeholders. This seems strange in view of the fact that the management of 'publics' (stakeholders) has been the business of corporate communication for most of the previous century.

One of the exceptions is Freeman (1984), in his stakeholding approach to strategic management. Although he suggested that 'boundary spanners' or 'external affairs' managers such as corporate communication or public affairs could be ideal in managing stakeholder relations strategically, Freeman thought that the corporate communication function will first have to be redefined—its concepts and activities were unsuited to responding to the turbulent environment.

Considering the 'Statement of the Problem' described in Chapter 1, it can only be deduced that corporate communication practitioners' emphasis on technique and media, and their focus on communication goals rather than organisational goals, makes them unsuited in the eyes of top management to fulfil the important function of stakeholder and issues management. Also, that their failure to assume broad decision making roles keeps them outside the boardroom.

However, it is clear from the analysis of the strategic management literature that a vacuum continues to exist for an 'external affairs' manager, as described by Freeman (1984). It is therefore suggested that a corporate communication practitioner in the role of the *PR strategist* would be an ideal candidate for the position.

The management vacuum in corporate communication is *"the opportunity of a century"* (Staff 1984). Filling the vacuum, especially on the strategic level, would allow corporate communication professionals to add to their skills and fulfil their aspirations for leadership roles in organisations. It is the opinion of the researcher that this can only be realised if they acquire the knowledge and skills needed to play the role of the *PR strategist* as explicated in this chapter, i.e. a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the top management level.

According to Grunig & Repper *(in* Grunig 1992:124):

> *"Public relations will fill the environmental void in theories of strategic management by diagnosing the environment to make the overall organisation aware of stakeholders, publics, and issues as they evolve. Theories of strategic management will fill the void in public relations theory of how public relations can contribute to making organisations more effective".*

This chapter indicated the contribution that could be made by the most senior corporate communication manager towards filling the environmental void in theories of strategic management. In the next chapter, the strategic management literature will be investigated in order to pinpoint corporate communication's contribution to organisational effectiveness. *Corporate communication* strategy will be proposed as the link between the communication function and the corporate strategy, ensuring the alignment of communication goals to the organisational mission.

CHAPTER 4

OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

$\Rightarrow$

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

AND ITS SETTING

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 2:		**CHAPTER 3:**
TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC RELATIONS' ROLES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	$\Rightarrow$	CONCEPTUALISATION OF A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE CORPORATE COMMU-NICATION MANAGER

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 5:		**CHAPTER 4:**
RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY	$\Leftarrow$	**CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORPORATE COMMUNI-CATION STRATEGY**

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 6:		**CHAPTER 7:**
DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CORPORATE COM-MUNICATION STRATEGY --THE PROCESS	$\Rightarrow$	FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 4

4. THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

This chapter relates the systems theory and the general theory of effectiveness and excellence in public relations and communication management, as a theoretical framework, to the conceptualisation of corporate communication strategy. The researcher also enters the debate on paradigmatic issues in corporate communication (public relations) by suggesting the organisational/managerial effectiveness paradigm for evaluating the work of corporate communication practitioners. Corporate communication strategy plays an important role in this new paradigm by providing a richer, unifying perspective by means of which all the other existing paradigms can be reconciled.

Chapter 4 explores the meaning of the concept 'strategy' by investigating the body of knowledge on corporate strategy and strategic management. It analyses the public relations body of knowledge in order to provide a framework for the conceptualisation of, and possible approaches to, the concept of *corporate communication strategy*. In this process, the difference between 'strategy' and 'plan' in the context of corporate communication is highlighted. In conclusion, a conceptualisation and working definition of corporate communication strategy as a functional strategy is provided—being a derivative of an organisation's enterprise, corporate and business strategies.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, Research Objective 1 was achieved by conceptualising the role of the *PR strategist* -- a strategic role for the most senior corporate communication practitioner. Chapter 4 has as its aim to achieve Research Objective 2, namely to conceptualise corporate communication strategy as an important activity of a practitioner in the role of the *PR manager.* (It needs to be mentioned at this stage that the action research process described in Chapter 6, which resulted in a model for developing corporate communication strategy, preceded the writing of this chapter. Chapter 4 therefore draws on the knowledge and experience gained during the action research process.)

The concept of 'strategy' is well-known in management theory and practice. However, the concept of 'corporate communication strategy' has received little attention in corporate communication (public relations) theory. The few publications that refer to the topic deal mainly with communication campaigns and plans as illustrated by the many planning models, operational plans and checklists which is frequently seen in corporate communication text books and articles. Academic knowledge in the area of the strategic management of the organisation's communication is relatively limited (Van Riel 1995:142). It is therefore necessary to gain insight into strategic decision-making procedures and related management concepts, in order to conceptualise corporate communication strategy and describe its linkages to the organisation's strategies.

The following guiding hypothesis was set in Chapter 1 to lead this investigation.

> **Guiding hypothesis 2**
>
> The chief executive (CEO) expects the corporate communication manager to develop a corporate communication strategy for the organisation.

4.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The four systems concepts of input, throughput, output and feedback were described in Chapter 2, providing a theoretical background for this study. In the following section, the relevance of these concepts in the conceptualisation of a corporate communication strategy for the organisation will be explicated.

4.2.1 SYSTEMS THEORY

As systems, organisations obtain information (*input*) from the environment in order to identify problems or issues that can create consequences for the organisation. During *throughput,* this information is analysed and solutions to problems are formulated by setting goals. In the *output* stage, practitioners behave by doing something, e.g. write a press release (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

In conceptualising the role of the *PR strategist* in the previous chapter, it was suggested that the systems approach to corporate communication be broadened in order that corporate communication become more deeply involved in the organisation's information acquisition phase *(input)* through environmental scanning. Furthermore, that *throughput* also be extended to include analysis and interpretation of information, and dissemination of strategic intelligence to relevant decision makers. (This provides the justification for the *PR strategist*'s participation in the strategic management process).

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In conceptualising corporate communication strategy in this chapter, it is suggested that corporate communication's participation in the *throughput* phase be broadened even further to also include the development of a strategy as focus for the corporate communication function -- identifying the organisation's key strategic issues and their implications for the strategic stakeholders (determining *what* should be communicated to stakeholders).

Based on the corporate communication strategy, it will then be a natural progression to develop a master plan for the corporate communication function's activities, as well as a communication policy for the organisation to facilitate the implementation of the strategy.

The above is graphically demonstrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: SYSTEMS APPROACH TO CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (THE ROLE OF THE PR MANAGER)

INPUT	THROUGHPUT
Role of PR strategist • Corporate communication becomes more deeply involved in information acquisition through environmental scanning.	*Role of PR strategist* • Corporate communication becomes more involved in analysis/ interpretation of information; • dissemination of strategic intelligence to relevant decision makers; • thereby participating in the strategic management process. *Role of the PR manager* • developing corporate communication strategy/policy for function; • developing corporate communication master plan for function.

⇑   ⇓

FEEDBACK	OUTPUT
Role of the PR manager (and strategist) • determining whether the problem/ opportunity has been addressed satisfactorily by means of evaluation research.	*Role of the PR technician* • developing communication plans and functional tactics; • implementing plans.

Source: Own research

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The corporate communication strategy will determine the focus of the organisation's communication with its stakeholders, i.e. determine *what* must be communicated to internal and external stakeholders. This is conceptualised as a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the functional level (i.e. a middle manager playing a strategic role in the reengineered organisation). *How* the corporate communication strategy should be communicated (i.e. the implementation thereof by means of communication plans and functional tactics), is seen by the researcher as the role of the *PR technician* at the implementation or micro level.

This extension of the throughput phase will provide a new paradigm for the corporate communication function, i.e. an emphasis on *what* should be communicated (corporate communication *strategy*), rather than the current focus on *how* it should be communicated (communication tactics).

4.2.2 GENERAL THEORY OF EFFECTIVENESS AND EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The general theory of excellence in public relations and communication management and its contribution to organisational effectiveness begins at the level of world-view—the way that people and organisations think about and define corporate communication (Grunig & White, in Grunig 1992:31).

The dominant world-view for corporate communication is the asymmetrical view that corporate communication is a way of getting what an organisation wants without changing its behaviour or compromising with its stakeholders. This mindset guides organisations in directions that are ineffective and not in their long-term interests. Asymmetrical world-views steer practitioners toward actions that are unethical, socially irresponsible, and ineffective. Such practitioners

presuppose that the organisation knows best and that publics benefit from 'co-operating' with it (Grunig 1989).

Excellent organisations adopt the view that corporate communication is a symmetrical process of compromise and negotiation and not a 'war for power'-- they do not isolate themselves from their environment, but are open to interpenetrating systems and freely exchange information. Such organisations strive toward an equilibrium with other systems, people are given equal opportunity, new ideas flourish, conflict is resolved through negotiation, and managers co-ordinate rather than dictate (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992:39, 43-44).

Developing a corporate communication strategy will make organisations with a symmetrical world-view even more excellent by managing stakeholders and issues pro-actively. In aligning communication goals to organisational goals by using corporate communication strategy as a link, the function will contribute towards organisational effectiveness.

A corporate communication strategy will also provide a guideline to organisations with asymmetrical worldviews on changing their corporate communication practice from persuasion to a focus on strategic stakeholders and their concerns—building mutually beneficial relationships through co-operation and shared decision making.

4.2.3 THE PARADIGM STRUGGLE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

In his classic work on scientific revolutions, Kuhn (1969) defined a paradigm as a *"model or pattern of thinking about and studying a problem"*. He suggested that major advances stem from defining a problem in a whole new way, often discarding previously standard beliefs and procedures and replacing those

components of the previous paradigm with others. This includes developing totally different methodologies to study the same problem. Langer (1957) said the way in which a question is formed *"limits and disposes the ways in which any answer to it—right or wrong—may be given"*.

According to Hallahan (1993), corporate communication lacks a common professional framework for evaluating its practice. Beyond the notion that corporate communication entails persuasion or communications, and in the absence of another *'richer, unifying perspective'*, Cutlip and Center's four-step process model has become the field's predominant paradigm by default. The time has come to seek a predominant paradigm for corporate communication.

Drawing on Kuhn (1969), Hallahan outlined seven alternative paradigms of corporate communication, focusing on the perspective of practitioners and how they should approach their work (i.e. the micro level). This is in contrast to the macro-level perspective followed by most academics and researchers, which has concentrated on how corporate communication as a whole impacts organisations, stakeholders or society. Each of these paradigms has a different focal question for assessing corporate communication efforts. Hallahan (1993:203-204) does not advocate any specific approach, but calls for an expanded debate on paradigmatic issues:

> *"Regrettably, none of these (paradigms) provides a fully satisfactory view of the field. If public relations practice is to advance, PR people need to engage in more discussion about these alternative perspectives. Educators can play a pivotal role in this process -- as researchers directly involved in theory development and testing, and as teachers...... Without a dominant paradigm, it is difficult to prepare prospective practitioners for careers and to provide them with a coherent framework to understand the field......PR text books are often bizarre collections of bits and pieces of all of these*

approaches, with few authors successfully integrating these diverse concepts".

Hallahan's (1993) paradigms are quoted below, since they are most relevant in indicating the need for the conceptualisation of a corporate communication strategy. Following his description of each paradigm, the researcher relates the concept of corporate communication strategy to the paradigm, indicating how it overcomes the inherent weakness in the specific paradigm.

1. Process Paradigm: "One approach to the paradigm dilemma might be to preserve the dominant four-step process idea, i.e. defining the problem, planning and programming, communication in action and evaluation (developed by Cutlip, Center & Broom 1985; Marston 1963; Chase 1984), *but to develop more perfect approaches, with fewer or more process steps"* (Hallahan 1993).

Researcher's suggestion: To preserve the 4-step process for communication *planning* purposes, but to add more steps to allow for developing a corporate communication strategy for the organisation, as the framework for the planning process. In this way, corporate communication strategy becomes the link in aligning communication plans with organisational strategies--the mechanism by which the corporate communication function contributes to the achievement of organisational goals and thereby to organisational effectiveness.

2. Plan or Program Paradigm: "Since most public relations activities are executed as part of self-contained efforts such as programmes or campaigns, the plan or program paradigm focuses on strategies and tactics".

Researcher's suggestion: Corporate communication strategy expands the current focus on 'self-contained' *operational* strategies and tactics developed in isolation from organisational issues. It refers to *strategy* (corporate communication strategy) and *tactics* (strategic communication plan) on a 'higher' organisational level, i.e. the <u>functional</u> level. In this way, corporate

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communication strategy again provides a means of linking the corporate communication function to the organisation's strategy formulation process, leading towards effectiveness.

3. Communication Paradigm: *"Public relations practice might be examined from the perspective of the communications produced—without regard to either process or plan."*

Researcher's suggestion: The researcher agrees with Hallahan that this paradigm suffers from the same problems as the first two—the emphasis is not on results, but on practitioner efforts and the resulting products. Communication is not the means to an end, but regarded as an end in itself. Most of the criticism against the communication function expressed in the 'Statement of the Problem' to this study, was aimed at this paradigm. However, corporate communication strategy counters this inherent weakness by focusing on outcomes (stabilising relationships with strategic stakeholders), rather than on communication products (which are the outputs of corporate communication technicians).

4. Organisational/Managerial Effectiveness Paradigm: *"Success in public relations is a function of meeting organisational expectations and the development of effective working relationships with the organisation".*

Researcher's suggestion: Developing a corporate communication strategy will lead to the fulfilment of many of top management's expectations, because a definite contribution towards organisational effectiveness will be made when concentrating on the management of relationships with strategic stakeholders. In such a paradigm, communication will be regarded as the *means* to an end, and not as an end itself. The end is the satisfaction of stakeholders with their relationships with the organisation, as well as the satisfaction of the corporate communication function's most important stakeholders—the chief executive and other senior managers -- with relationships with stakeholders, and therefore also

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with communication practitioners. This will be seen as a definite contribution to the bottom line, which would establish communication as a core capability.

5. *Behavioural Paradigm*: *"The success of a program lies in getting target audiences to buy, invest, donate, work or vote in the intended way".*

Although this paradigm focuses on the impact achieved through communication on certain stakeholders (not on the process itself), this approach is nonetheless based on persuasion and an asymmetrical worldview. The emphasis of corporate communication strategy is rather on building symmetrical relationships with strategic stakeholders, where the organisation is prepared to change its views to accommodate stakeholders as much as stakeholders are prepared to consider the organisation's views and problems.

6. *Social Problems Paradigm* : *"The social problems paradigm suggests that PR work is to deal with power relationships in society as a whole, by concentrating on influencing organisations/institutions and not so much individuals. This paradigm recognises the pivotal role that special interest groups and the government play in attaining public relations objectives".*

Researcher's suggestion: The function of corporate communication is to manage relationships with *strategic* stakeholders, and not all or some stakeholders. Depending on key strategic issues and organisational strategies at the time, these strategic stakeholders might include employees, the government, media, publics, activists, communities, etc—they might be individuals or organisations/institutions. However, the management of relationships with special interest groups and the government are very important, and will be addressed in formulating corporate communication strategy.

7. Systems Paradigm: "The systems perspective involves a series of inputs (both internal and external) and outputs (actions and communications), designed to reduce conflict and build consensus between an organisation and its publics." Hallahan (1993) considers this paradigm to be the most potent, but the most difficult to apply.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: Corporate communication strategy is based on the systems approach to managerial effectiveness, using two-way symmetric communication to manage the organisation's communication strategically, thereby reducing conflict and building consensus with strategic stakeholders.

The researcher is of the opinion that the predominant paradigm at present is very much a process paradigm, focusing on communication activities, as well as a 'planning' paradigm. The emphasis should rather be on a *strategic thinking* process which should precede communication planning, of which the outcome is corporate communication strategy--providing direction and focus to the organisation's communication with its stakeholders, using communication as a solution to critical organisational problems.

The suggestions made by the researcher above have indicated how the concept of corporate communication strategy can solve many of the weaknesses inherent in the existing paradigms by providing a mechanism for making a contribution towards organisational effectiveness. Through the above analysis, it has become clear that corporate communication strategy points strongly towards a paradigm that evaluates corporate communication practice from an organisational/managerial effectiveness perspective. It also embraces the systems perspective, where the focal question for assessing corporate communication effort is whether equilibrium was maintained in the relationship between the organisation and its environment.

The researcher therefore enters the debate on paradigmatic issues, by advocating an organisational/managerial effectiveness and a systems paradigm for assessing corporate communication practice.

In summary, it can be said that

(i) taking part in the organisation's strategy formulation processes by performing the role of the *PR strategist*;

(ii) developing a corporate communication strategy for the organisation and aligning communication goals to the organisation's strategies by planning programmes for strategic stakeholders by performing the role of the *PR manager*; and

(iii) striving toward the achievement of organisational goals and thereby contributing towards organisational effectiveness

provides a 'richer, unifying perspective' for evaluating corporate communication practice. The organisational/managerial effectiveness paradigm reconciles the different paradigms suggested by Hallahan (1993) above, but overcomes most of their weaknesses. It provides a new predominant paradigm for corporate communication.

Bearing the above theoretical framework in mind, the body of knowledge on strategic management will be analysed in the next section. The concept of *strategy* (in the context of the organisation's strategic management process), will be investigated as the major construct in the conceptualisation of corporate communication strategy.

4.3 THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ON STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

4.3.1 STRATEGY—A DEFINITION

The whole field of strategy is relatively new. There was no serious research on strategy until the 1950's or 1960's. According to Porter (*in* Gibson 1997), the field of strategy remains an emerging discipline—there is a need to keep learning about it.

Virtually everyone writing on strategy agrees that no consensus on its definition exists (Chaffee 1985:89). Strategy is derived from the Greek word 'strategia' (office of the general). In its military context, it means "*the science or art of military command as applied to the overall planning and conduct of large scale combat operations*".

Strategy could be seen as the thinking, the logic behind the actions (Robert 1997:22). Drucker *(in* Kotler 1988:61), sees it as an indication of an organisation's positioning for the future, the *what* rather than the *how*. It means doing the right thing, rather than doing things right. According to Kotler (1988:61,33), strategy is an organisation's pro-active response to an ever-changing environment, the instrument which enables an organisation to find synthesis between its goals and resources in view of the risks and challenges of the ever-changing environment.

A strategy can also be seen as an approach, design, scheme or system that directs the course of action in a specific situation (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig

1992:123). Where there is no clear concept of strategy, decisions rest on either subjective or intuitive assessment and are made without regard to other decisions (Jain 1997:9). Although strategy is not reflected on the organisational chart, it is linked to operations in that its main purpose is to *"ensure that the organisation is capitalising on its comparative advantages and distinctive competencies—i.e. its strengths—to take advantage of any opportunities the environment may provide, creating a competitive advantage"* (Digman 1990:13). Most authors affirm that the heart of strategy-making is in the conceptual work done by leaders of the organisation (Chaffee 1985).

Various authors see strategy as a pattern, namely:

- a pattern in the organisation's *"important decisions and actions, consisting of a few key areas or things by which the firm seeks to distinguish itself"* (Kami 1984);

- a pattern *"in a stream of actions—this pattern being the result of strategic decisions made by the firm"* (Mintzberg 1987);

- a pattern of *"major objectives, purposes, or goals and essential policies and plans for achieving those goals, stated in such a way as to define what business the company is in or is to be in and the kind of company it is or is to be"* (Jain 1997:9).

The fundamental truth in strategy is that an organisation cannot be all things to all people. Strategy requires choices—deciding what particular kind of value an organisation wants to deliver to whom (Porter, *in* Gibson 1997).

Corporate communication strategy is seen as a pattern in important communication decisions regarding relationships with strategic stakeholders, stated in such a way that the attitude of the organisation towards its stakeholders is clear.

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Chaffee (1985:90) clusters strategy definitions in the literature into three groups:

- 'Linear' strategy, which *"focuses on planning, and consists of integrated decisions, actions, or plans that will set and achieve viable organisational goals"*.

- 'Adaptive' strategy, which is concerned with the *"development of a viable match between the opportunities and risks present in the external environment and the organisation's capabilities and resources for exploiting these opportunities"*. The environment is a major focus in determining organisational action and is seen to consist of trends, events, competitors and stakeholders, to which the organisation must adapt. Rather than assuming that the organisation must *deal* with the environment, the adaptive model assumes that the organisation must *change* with the environment.

- 'Interpretive' strategy, which views the organisation as a *"collection of co-operative agreements entered into by individuals with free will. The organisation's existence relies on its ability to attract enough individuals to co-operate in mutually beneficial exchange"*. Strategy in this model might be defined as frames of reference that allow the organisation and its environment to be understood by organisational stakeholders. The focus is on desired relationships, symbolic actions and communication. Interpretive strategy emphasises attitudinal and cognitive complexity among diverse stakeholders in the organisation.

Corporate communication strategy is not linear strategy, focusing on planning. The latter is the predominant corporate communication paradigm of the moment. Rather, it is interpretive strategy—viewing the organisation 'as a collection of co-operative agreements entered into by stakeholders of their own free will'. The emphasis is on two-way symmetrical communication with strategic stakeholders, conveying meaning that is intended to motivate stakeholders to understand the

organisation and its policies, thereby reducing conflict and obtaining collaboration.

The strategy is the primary determinant of success or failure in fulfilling the mission and achieving the organisation's goals and objectives. It provides a framework for the effective and efficient tactics and operations necessary to implement the strategy (Digman 1990:13).

This chapter will provide a rationale for corporate communication strategy being the thinking behind the communication function's actions, determining *what* should be communicated before any decisions are taken on *how* it should be communicated.

4.3.2 THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Greene, Adam & Ebert (1985:536) sees strategic management 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*".

The first step in the strategic management process is *strategic thinking*, of which the outcome is strategic decisions—those decisions that deal with the determination of strategy, provide the definition of the business and the general relationship between the organisation and its environment. Strategic management also deals with the *strategic planning* required to put these decisions into practice as well as with *strategic control*, which ensures that the chosen strategy is being implemented properly and produces the desired results. The key concept in these definitions is *strategy*, the organisation's preselected

means or approach to achieving its goals and objectives while coping with current and future external conditions (Digman 1990).

> Corporate communication strategy will be the outcome of strategic decisions regarding the organisation's communication with strategic stakeholders. It will provide a framework for the strategic communication plan and the operational plans -- the means by which the strategy will be implemented.

4.3.2.1 Strategic thinking versus strategic planning

Strategic thinking is a fresh approach to the subject of strategy--it identifies the key factors that dictate the direction of an organisation. "*A strategist's job is to see the company not as it is...but as it can become*" (Teets, *in* David 1997:77). Strategic thinking is a process that extracts from the minds of people who run the business their best thinking about what is happening outside in the environment, and what the position of the organisation should be in view of highly *qualitative* variables (opinions, judgements, perceptions and even feelings of internal and external stakeholders)—not the quantitative ones (Robert 1997:30). It involves capturing what managers learn from all sources--both soft insights as well as the hard data (Mintzberg 1994). However, most organisations do not know how to synthesise the information on the values and expectations of their stakeholders with the hard issues of technology, politics and deregulation. They have vast amounts of data, but little gets interpreted.

Where most companies have sophisticated operational (and even strategic) planning processes, they do not have a formal process of strategic thinking (Robert 1997:54). The foundation of most corporate planning systems is internally generated data—highly quantitative and historical. They look back at

five years of numbers and extrapolate for the next five years. This does nothing to change the 'look' or the composition of a business.

Most of what organisations have been doing during the last four or five years have had an internal focus. They assume that outside influences will remain the same—as such, management spend most of their time discussing operational issues, not strategic ones (Robert 1997:44). This is a reactive management mode where the corporate profile starts to be shaped by outside forces rather than by management. The environment then moulds the organisation's direction and strategy, instead of its management (Robert 1997:41). Re-engineering, benchmarking, continuous improvement, total quality management—these are all about doing things better, about improving operational effectiveness. While important for survival, for staying in the race, it is not enough to win the race. "*It is not just a matter of being better at what you do—it is a matter of being different at what you do*" (Hamel, *in* Gibson 1997).

Many organisations have atrophied in their ability to think and act strategically. They focus on short term results—e.g. cut staff or outsource to boost earnings (Porter, *in* Gibson 1997). These issues have more to do with "*competing for the present than competing for the future*" (Prahalad, *in* Gibson 1997). If an organisation is interested in understanding the future, most of what it needs to learn is going to be learnt outside of its own industry (Hamel, *in* Gibson 1997:82). Organisations that will be true leaders will be those that invent the world, not those who respond to it (Handy, *in* Gibson 1997:10). The new leaders will be "*looking forward, scanning the landscape, watching the competition, spotting emerging trends and new opportunities, avoiding impending crises*" (Gibson 1997:11).

According to Mintzberg (1994) and Robert (1997), strategic thinking is different from both strategic and operational planning--it is the framework for the strategic

and operational plans. It attempts to determine *what* the organisation should look like, i.e. the strategy. Strategic and operational planning is the type of thinking that helps to choose *how* to get there (Robert 1997:26).

Once the strategic decisions have been taken (i.e. the strategy has been decided upon), strategic plans are developed for putting the strategy into practice. The selected strategy is created for each division or business unit and specific time-phased actions are required to support the strategy. The result is the strategic, long-range master plan for each division (Digman 1990:54).

Planning is about analysis—breaking down a set of intentions into steps, formalising those steps so that they can be implemented almost automatically, and articulating the anticipated consequences or results. Strategic planning, or strategic programming as Mintzberg (1994) calls it, is the intermediate step between direction setting (strategy formulation), and budgeting or resource allocation (operational planning). Strategic planning involves three steps:

- expressing the strategies in terms sufficiently clear to render them formally operational, so that their consequences can be worked out in detail;

- breaking down the strategies into sub-strategies and *ad hoc* programs as well as overall action plans specifying what must be done to realise each strategy; and

- considering the effects of the changes on the organisation's operations.

In applying the above to the corporate communication function, it would seem that senior communication managers are also spending most of their time discussing operational issues -- whereas they should be looking outside their function to identify key strategic issues and stakeholders of the organisation, with whom communication should take place in order to solve problems or capitalise on opportunities presented.

> Once the corporate communication strategy has been developed by means of a strategic thinking process, indicating what should be communicated to whom, a strategic communication plan should be developed for the corporate communication function and its divisions— expressing the strategy in terms sufficiently clear to render it formally operational, breaking it down into sub-strategies and plans (e.g. media plans, employee relations plans, financial communication plans) specifying how the strategy will be implemented.

4.3.2.2 Operational or tactical planning

Operational planning deals with the implementation and support of strategic plans--specific actions are devised which allow the organisation to realise its targeted priorities (Nutt 1984). Action plans incorporate four elements (Pearce & Robinson 1997:304):

- specific functional tactics*/actions/activities, to be undertaken in the next week, month or quarter (*each business function e.g. marketing, finance, human resources needs to identify and undertake key, routine, but unique activities--called functional tactics--that help to build a sustainable competitive advantage);

- each tactic/action/activity has one or more specific, immediate (short-term) objectives or targets, that are identified as outcomes;

- a clear time frame for completion;

- accountability, by identifying persons responsible for each action in the plan.

In applying the above to corporate communication, it is clear that the steps in developing and executing the communication plan is part and parcel of operational or tactical planning. The situation analysis, which is the research phase of the communication plan, seems to deal either with the support of strategic plans, or are part of *ad hoc* plans.

In referring to the 'Statement of the Problem' in Chapter 1, it can be said that top management's perceptions of the corporate communication function are that most effort is expended at the operational or tactical level-- where communication plans/programmes/campaigns and their supporting tactics are developed, focusing on activities such as media releases, writing articles for publications, events management, producing audio-visuals, etc.

In the next section, the levels of strategic management will be explicated in an effort to more clearly demonstrate the above differentiation between the corporate communication 'strategy' and the communication 'plan'.

4.3.3 LEVELS OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Separating strategy into stages or levels is more conceptual than real (Bower 1982). However, it is useful in understanding that different people participate in strategy development at different organisational levels (Digman 1990). This is especially important to corporate communication practitioners, who are criticised by top management for focusing on implementation strategy and tactics, rather than addressing key strategic issues

4.3.3.1 Enterprise strategy

Each organisation, regardless of size or sector of the economy, has a societal-role strategy. This strategy may not be implicitly or formally stated, but it exists nevertheless. Called 'enterprise' strategy by Ansoff (1977) and Schendel & Hofer (1979), it concerns the organisation's mission, purpose, and role in society. It addresses questions such as *why* the organisation exists; *what* it attempts to provide to society; *which* sectors of the economy it forms part of; and *how* it functions in society (e.g. as a not-for-profit or as a profit-making firm).

The enterprise strategy has to do with the achievement of *non-financial* goals, such as enhancing the organisation's image and fulfilling its social responsibilities. It influences the organisation's relationships with its environment, particularly the relationships with those who have an interest in what the organisation does and how it conducts its business (its stakeholders). It rests on an understanding of how the stakeholders of the organisation can affect each business area. In part, enterprise strategy represents the social and moral/ethical component to strategic management, which has largely been ignored (Freeman 1984:90). Enterprise strategy should address questions such as '*how* is the organisation perceived by its stakeholders', '*what* are their values and expectations' (Dill 1979:49) and '*what* does the organisation stand for'.

The enterprise strategy acts as a framework to guide the formation of corporate policies and strategies in other areas (Digman 1990:37). Enterprise level strategy is important because corporate survival depends in part on there being some 'fit' between the values of the organisation and its managers, the expectations of its stakeholders, and the societal issues which will determine the ability of the organisation to sell its products (Freeman 1984:197).

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The researcher is of the opinion that strategies at the enterprise level should be *STAKEHOLDER ORIENTED*.

Figure 4.2: ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

STRATEGIC THINKING
↓
VISION, MISSION & ROLE IN SOCIETY
↓
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT
↓
ACHIEVEMENT OF NON-FINANCIAL GOALS
↓
IMAGE, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY,
MORAL/ETHICAL ISSUES
↓
STRATEGY IS *STAKEHOLDER* ORIENTED

Source: Own research

4.3.3.2 Corporate strategy

At the corporate level, strategy is mainly concerned with defining the set of businesses that should form the organisation's overall profile, and unify and point them toward an overall goal (Jain 1997:9). Corporate strategy can be described as the responsibility of the board and top management for the organisation's *financial performance*. It addresses questions such as: 'which set of businesses should the firm compete in'; and 'how should they be integrated'. While this type of strategy is most applicable to organisations competing in more than one market, i.e. the multi-business firm, in a sense it applies to all organisations. The single-business firm is pursuing a corporate-level strategy by choosing to compete in only one business, rather than several.

considered in the proper context". Burgelman (1983) points to the crucial role of middle managers in conceptualising new strategies—not only do they improve the quality of strategic decisions, but they are often the first to *recognise* strategic problems and opportunities (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

It is therefore becoming increasingly important that top management develop organisational structures and reward systems that encourage middle managers and other organisational members to think strategically. This view challenges the traditional division of work in strategy and suggests new roles in the strategic process.

4.3.4.2 Middle management and reengineering

In their typical role of implementation, middle management has been part of an organisation's control system—translating strategies defined at higher levels into actions at operating levels. This involves:

- defining tactics and developing budgets for achieving objectives;
- monitoring the performance of individuals and sub-units;
- taking corrective action when behaviour falls outside expectations (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

In the reengineered organisation, however, top management rely less and less on middle managers—information and communications technologies make it easier for those at the top to monitor and control activities directly. Empowerment and cross-functional teams allow operators to take responsibility for defining their own roles. Reengineering has therefore automated and obliterated middle management (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

The withering of middle management's operating responsibilities justifies reductions—however, certain middle management behaviour is crucial to developing organisational capability. In seeing all middle managers from an operational viewpoint, top managers often fail to make distinctions about the variety of contributions made by middle managers, and overlook the possibility that some middle managers play strategic roles (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

One such a role is issue selling. As were seen in Chapter 3, 'strategic issues' are defined as *"developments, events and trends viewed by decision makers as consequential because of the potential to impact an organisation's strategy"* (Ansoff 1980; King 1982; Dutton & Ottensmeyer 1987). However, no issue is inherently strategic—rather, an issue becomes strategic when top management believes that it has relevance for organisational performance. If not, they will have little interest in the issue (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978). 'Issue selling' refers to *"individuals' behaviours that are directed toward affecting others' attention to and understanding of issues"* (Dutton & Ashford 1993).

'Middle managers' are managers *"who operate at the intermediate level of the corporate hierarchy, operating two or three levels below the CEO e.g. functional managers such as a vice president of marketing"* (Wooldridge & Floyd 1990). Middle managers can direct top management's attention by providing or concealing important information about issues, by framing issues in particular ways, or by mobilising resources and routines that direct top managers' attention to some issues and not to others.

Middle managers play a pivotal role in the successful generation and mobilisation of resources around new ideas (Burgelman 1983). They have their fingers on the pulse of operations, and therefore conceive, suggest and set in motion new ideas that top management may not have thought of (Kanter 1982). A focus on issue

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selling is consistent with research that points to middle-level managers playing significant roles in strategy making (Burgelman 1983).

Since issue selling is a mechanism that prompts top management to attend to issues they might not otherwise do, it is an important way in which the perspectives of middle managers are used to set an organisation's strategic agenda (Dutton & Duncan 1987), and to initiate organisational action. Choosing which issues should receive attention in organisations and understanding how they should be interpreted, remain critical yet difficult processes for top management to do alone or to control explicitly. An organisation's adaptation success may, in part, depend upon the capacity to discover an issue-selling process that enables individuals outside of top management to be effectively involved in the identification and communication of important issues.

Research indicates that middle management's strategic contributions directly affect the bottom line. This includes sustaining an adaptive balance between industry forces and organisational resources. Capabilities develop as the organisation learns how to deliver what customers and other stakeholders want, and how to create new combinations of assets and skills. These capabilities develop through the brains and nervous systems of middle managers. When these capabilities effectively differentiate an organisation from its competitors, they are called 'core capabilities' (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

Middle managers are likely to differ widely in their ability and willingness to assume a strategic role at a particular point in time. Research support the proposition that middle managers are potential reservoirs of core capability. However, conversations with top and middle level managers reveal that middle management's strategic roles are *"misunderstood, considered secondary, almost always non-sanctioned and often discouraged"*. Yet re-engineering's emphasis on responsiveness, flexibility and speed puts a premium on the middle manager

behaviour associated with development of new capabilities (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994:53).

As organisations move away from hierarchical toward more horizontal business structures, the importance of middle managers in achieving competitive advantage is likely to increase. Top managers interested in using these human assets should recognise the link between middle management, core capability and competitive advantage. They should identify middle managers with the appropriate skills, experiences, and potential to thrive within the organisation. The importance of boundary spanning experience is one criterion for discriminating among middle managers (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

Sometimes, top management expect middle managers to take charge of a process but give them very little real authority. This results in middle managers quickly becoming frustrated and cynical (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994). Top managers should redesign the organisation to leverage the knowledge and skills of a selected set of middle managers and encourage their influence on strategic priorities. In order to open up the organisation to environmental influence, boundary-spanning middle managers should become the owners of key business processes. There will be fewer layers and fewer managers overall, but the strategic roles of middle managers are likely to become more, rather than less, important in the organisations of tomorrow. Delayering can enlist middle managers in new strategic roles, but this requires a vision, organisational redesign, and new power relationships.

> "More like the Phoenix bird than the dinosaur, a new breed of middle managers—whose roles are more strategic than operational—should be rising from the ashes of the delayered corporation" (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994:48).

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A corporate communication practitioner in the role of the *PR manager* will be one of the middle managers in the reengineered organisation to play a strategic role. One of the first to recognise strategic problems and opportunities because of close relationships with strategic stakeholders, he/she will direct decision makers' attention to, and create understanding of, stakeholder concerns and emerging issues. This will necessitate a close working relationship with the practitioner performing the role of the *PR strategist*—if it is another person—as well as with other managers under whose jurisdiction the specific stakeholder or emerging issue falls. The practitioner in the role of the *PR manager* will have an invaluable ally in the *PR strategist*, who will create understanding amongst members of top management of the importance of the *PR manager's* role (as well as the *PR strategist's* role) in developing issues management and stakeholder management as one of the organisation's core capabilities.

4.3.5 STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT – THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

As discussed in Chapter 3, the stakeholder approach to strategic management (Freeman 1984:vi) is concerned with the identification of and managerial response to, groups and individuals who can affect and are affected by, the organisation's decisions and behaviour.

In a survey of 23 multinationals, Askew (1997) found consensus amongst them that society's expectations have changed in recent years—in a more demanding environment corporates are carefully scrutinised targets rather than free entrepreneurs. A general cynicism exists towards most institutions. This has given rise to sophisticated pressure groups, who understand the importance of emotion as well as logic. In such a challenging environment, issues can quickly become crises (Askew 1997).

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Three quarters of the sample felt that their traditional methods of corporate and issues management were no longer adequate to face the changing world and issues as they arise. Up to now, it has been accepted that different stakeholders may have different requirements, but for the most part, the management and monitoring of the stakeholders' expectations has been fragmented with little co-ordination (Askew 1997).

In advancing the integration of corporate social performance (CSP) and stakeholder theories, Waddock & Graves (1997) argue that CSP is fundamentally about the relationships between an organisation and its primary stakeholders, and possibly its secondary stakeholders. CSP is not simply a set of discretionary activities undertaken when there are sufficient slack resources, but rather a situation where organisations communicate on a routine basis with and through their primary (and perhaps, secondary) stakeholders to effect their strategies. Clarkson (1995:103) maintains that it is in effect not social issues to which organisations respond, but rather stakeholder issues. Any issue without a stakeholder group, is really no issue at all. This point of view might indicate a major shift in the way that managers should think about key decisions.

A first step in the strategic management process is therefore to identify the strategic stakeholders, then engage in a dialogue to discover what it is they value (Askew 1997). Their key issues and willingness to expend resources helping or hurting the organisation on these issues, must be understood and managed (Wheeler & Sillanpää 1998). By paying attention to particular stakeholder profiles, managers can undertake a process of reasonably sophisticated analysis to understand where (from a behaviour view) value is created; where there is potential for more co-operation; and where there is the need to sustain the value that has been created (Freeman & Lifdtka 1997).

Another important concept in the management of stakeholders, is that an organisation must of its own volition undertake to satisfy its key stakeholders. If it does not, a solution will be imposed upon it from the outside, by means of regulations and laws. It will be much cheaper to implement regular communication processes with multiple stakeholders, to negotiate with them on critical issues and to seek voluntary agreements. This can be done by integrating boundary spanners into the strategy formulation processes, who anticipate stakeholder concerns and try to influence the stakeholder environment (Freeman 1984:74, 78-79).

Bringing the above to the attention of top management and the board, is the strategic role of the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication function at the top management level—the role of the *PR strategist*. As a member of top management, it is this practitioner's responsibility to influence the enterprise strategy, developed by the board and top management. That is, to ensure that the organisation follows Freeman's (1984) strategic approach to stakeholder management; that processes were in place for regular communication with strategic stakeholders; that corporate social performance was not something done in isolation when there were discretionary funding around, but formed part of routine communication processes with strategic stakeholders, satisfying their social needs; and pointing out that an organisation must of its own volition undertake to satisfy its key stakeholders or a solution will be imposed upon it from the outside.

A strategy should therefore be in place for each stakeholder group—not only for stockholders, but also for groups such as consumer advocates, environmentalists, the media or any other affected by the organisation's decisions. Managing communication with stakeholders as if they were discrete and unconnected groups of people will not add value to the organisation. Although many processes are already in place in strategic management—

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portfolio analysis, strategic review and environmental scanning are the ones often used--each of these processes alone is inadequate in terms of taking complex stakeholder relationships into account (Freeman 1984:68). What is needed is a more sophisticated approach, supported by well thought-through strategies, systems and behaviours--enabling organisations to prioritise between stakeholder needs, aligning strategies and activities directed at stakeholders (Scholes & James 1997).

The organisation needs concepts and processes that give integrated, strategic approaches for dealing with multiple stakeholders on multiple issues. For each major strategic issue, the organisation must think through the effects on a number of stakeholders. For each major stakeholder, managers responsible for that stakeholder relationship must identify the strategic issues that affect that stakeholder and must understand how to formulate, implement and monitor strategies for dealing with that group. Many organisations do it well with one stakeholder group (e.g. customers), but few have the processes needed to integrate a number of stakeholder concerns (Freeman 1984:27).

Management must satisfy stakeholder wants, because—collectively, if not individually—stakeholder groups have a great impact on an organisation's performance. The task of management, including strategic management, has become one of satisfying stakeholders' wants and needs--of managing the relationships between, and often conflicting demands of, various stakeholders. In fact, some authors feel that the ultimate objective of strategy should be to address stakeholder benefits (Hax & Majluf 1988).

As discussed in Chapter 3, however, it is not sufficient to identify and manage stakeholders alone--issues that affect the strategic direction of the organisation or business unit also need to be identified and tracked (Freeman 1984:22). When public issues (e.g. environmentalism, consumerism, civil rights, feminism, energy shortages or pollution) impact on an organisation's investments, operations, or

ability to act, an organisation needs to actively manage those issues. Public policy and social issues are no longer peripheral to business planning and management—today they are the mainstream of it (Marx 1990). Issues management should therefore be integrated with the stakeholder concept--new and emerging issues *and* stakeholders must be identified (Freeman 1984:224).

An organisation with stakeholder management capability, can be defined as

> *"having the ability to understand the organisation's stakeholder map and the stakes of each group, having the organisational processes to take these groups and their stakes into account routinely, and implementing a set of transactions to balance the interests of these stakeholders to achieve the organisation's purpose"* (Freeman 1984:53).

The body of knowledge on strategic management indicates a need for concepts and processes to deal with multiple stakeholders on multiple issues. The concept of corporate communication strategy is suggested as a strategic approach to determine *what* it is that should be communicated to strategic stakeholders to solve organisational problems or capitalise on opportunities presented.

This will necessitate a close working relationship between the *PR strategist*, functioning on the macro level (influencing top management and the board's attitude towards communication with strategic stakeholders, predisposing them towards the stakeholder approach and a symmetrical communication model) and the *PR manager*, operating on the functional level (developing the corporate communication strategy by putting processes in place for regular communication with strategic stakeholders, identifying the implications of organisational policies and other strategic issues on the stakeholders—deciding *what* should be communicated to solve or prevent problems or capitalise on opportunities).

4.4 THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ON 'STRATEGIC' CORPORATE COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC RELATIONS)

In the next section, the public relations literature was analysed in order to *firstly*, obtain references for what is meant by 'strategic' corporate communication and *secondly*, to identify existing corporate communication decision making approaches and models which could possibly be used as an approach in the conceptualisation of corporate communication strategy.

4.4.1 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ROLES IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC RELATIONS)

Strategic management applies to corporate communication in two important ways (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:120):

- The first is the most senior corporate communication manager/practitioner's role as part of the top management team in developing and implementing problem-solving strategies for the entire organisation. Also called the *mirror* function by Van Riel (1995:1-2), this strategic role refers to monitoring relevant environmental developments and anticipating their consequences for the organisation's strategies and policies, being a source of intelligence regarding the stakeholder environment and an early warning system that identifies issues before crisis erupts. (This role was conceptualised in Chapter 3 as the role of the *PR strategist*, a strategic role at the top management or macro level of the organisation.)

- The second way in which strategic management applies to corporate communication, refers to the corporate communication department's own

efforts to integrate and co-ordinate its work with that of the organisation, by managing its own programmes strategically (Grunig & Repper, in Grunig 1992:120)--a necessary condition for the function to make a contribution towards organisational effectiveness. (This is the role of the *PR manager*, another strategic role for corporate communication).

This latter role forms part of the 'window' function of corporate communication, with the responsibility of developing a corporate communication policy and strategy (Van Riel 1995). The *window* or external representation function is the information disposal function of the boundary spanner. It includes the preparation and execution of messages that portray all facets of the organisation. The philosophies, policies, programmes and practices of top management are interpreted and communicated to stakeholders, accomplishing an active outward orientation for the organisation.

This role is performed on the meso or functional level of the organisation (Grunig 1990). If corporate communication programmes/plans are to be managed strategically, the corporate communication strategy should be based on the corporate strategy in order that communication goals be aligned to organisational goals.

Another part of the 'window' or external representation function, are the activities that take place on the micro or the programme level of corporate communication. This is not seen by the researcher as forming part of the strategic management of corporate communication. Rather, it concerns the role of the *PR technician*, a role at the implementation level. As pointed out in Chapter 2, practitioners performing the technician role do not participate in management decision making, but carry out the low-level mechanics of generating communication products that implement policy decisions made by others. The *PR technician* provides the communication and journalistic skills— writing, editing, audio-visual production, graphics, and production of messages—needed to implement communication programmes (Dozier 1984; Broom & Smith 1979).

The link between the corporate communication function and the organisational mission is the corporate communication strategy, ensuring that communication goals are derived from corporate goals. If the corporate communication strategy does not address issues of vital importance for the organisation's survival, communication plans and goals can not be considered as being aligned to corporate goals. This results in the corporate communication function not making a contribution to organisational effectiveness, nor satisfying top management's expectations.

4.4.2 A MODEL FOR THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC RELATIONS)

The model described in Chapter 3 (see 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) is one of the few sources that refer to the role of corporate communication in the strategic management process (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:124-150). Since this model is also relevant in the conceptualisation of corporate communication strategy, a short summary is provided:

If communication is to be managed strategically, it is imperative that stakeholders and issues be identified and managed pro-actively:

- The *stakeholder* stage of the model refers to the identification of strategic stakeholders through environmental scanning and the need for ongoing communication with them.

- The *publics* stage refers to the identification of groups or individuals who see the consequences of organisational decisions/behaviour as problematic. It is advocated that they be involved in the organisation's decision making in order to manage conflict and obtain co-operation.

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- The *issues* stage deals with the management of issues, and the important role of the media therein.

Stages four to seven of the model deal with communication programmes (objectives, planning, implementation and evaluation), the operational level of corporate communication, and will not be discussed here.

> The first three stages in the model is regarded by the researcher as steps also used in formulating corporate communication strategy: Since corporate communication strategy is a strategic approach for identifying and managing stakeholders and issues, it is important to differentiate between stakeholders and the publics/activists that emerge around issues. These individuals or groups are in different stages of communication behaviour, and the organisation needs to manage them, using different kinds of communication.

4.4.3 APPROACHES TO CORPORATE COMMUNICATION (PUBLIC RELATIONS) PLANNING

An analysis of the public relations body of knowledge indicates an emphasis on operational planning, rather than strategy formulation (Windahl, Signitzer & Olson 1993; Seitel 1995:146-147; Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994:316-327; Hainsworth & Wilson 1992).

According to Windahl, Signitzer and Olson (1993), a systematic approach to communication planning entails that all relevant receiver groups are reached, that messages are disseminated in the right order, that evaluations are done, and that a thorough goal analysis is part of the initial stages of a project. It is deduced that these authors are referring to planning on the *operational* level, but not to the problem defining stage at the macro level or the strategy stage at the functional level, as defined by the researcher.

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The same emphasis on operational planning is shown by Seitel (1995:146-147). The researcher is of the opinion that Seitel is referring to *implementation* strategy, formulated on the programme or campaign level:

> *"Public relations people must think strategically. Strategies are the most crucial decisions of a public relations campaign. They answer the general question: How will we manage our resources to achieve our goals? The specific answers then become the public relations tactics used to implement the strategies."*

Cutlip, Center & Broom's (1994:316-327) view of strategic planning in public relations is also seen as referring to *implementation* strategy on the operational level:

> *"....decisions about program goals and objectives, identifying key publics, setting policies to guide selection of strategies and determining strategies. There must be a close linkage between the overall program goal, the objectives for each public, and the strategies selected."*

According to Hainsworth & Wilson (1992), the four-step 'PR process' model, introduced by Cutlip and Center 48 years ago, falls short of providing an adequate basis for the systematic analysis of corporate communication problems. What is needed is a coherent, consistent framework of analysis and planning that provides a rational approach to problem solving. Their proposed strategic programme planning matrix also refers to communication planning, although their first phase (research) seems to imply that plans/programmes are determined strategically.

4.4.4 MODELS OF DECISION MAKING PROCESSES USED IN THE FIELD OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Since strategy is the outcome of a strategic thinking and decision making process, it is necessary to investigate corporate communication approaches to problem solving and decision making. Grunig & Hunt (1984:104-108) refer to different models of management decision making processes used by corporate communication practitioners (Haner & Ford; Maynes, Massie & Wallace; Cutlip & Center; Marston's RACE formula; and the planning and evaluation matrix developed by the Group Attitudes Corporation). All of these were brought together by Grunig & Hunt (1984) in a single and powerful theory called a behavioural molecule, based on the systems theory.

This molecule, especially the latter part, also seems to refer to the process of operational communication planning. Grunig and Hunt do however indicate that practitioners who do research in the 'detect' (first) stage, could use the full molecule to plan that research (Grunig & Hunt 1984:109). It therefore seems possible that the behavioural molecule can be used at the functional level (following all the suggested stages) as a decision making process in developing corporate communication strategy -- and then be repeated at the implementation level (once again following all the stages).

The different segments/stages suggested by Grunig & Hunt (1984) are indicated below, each followed by the **researcher's suggestion** as to how it can be used at the functional level to develop corporate communication strategy. (This would be the responsibility of a practitioner in the role of the *PR manager*, in consultation with the *PR strategist*.)

- In the **'detect'** segment, managers detect a problem from systems inputs.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager Identifies key strategic issues and stakeholders through environmental scanning, as well as from current/proposed organisational strategies.*

- The **'construct'** segment represents the cognitive processes--managers define the problem, suggest what is required to solve the problem, and formulate alternative solutions. This segment ends when the manager has constructed a single idea that makes sense of the situation.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager participates in strategy formulation by doing strategic thinking and deciding on options for the corporate communication function, i.e. considers the implications of the key strategic issues for the organisation's stakeholders and determines what must be communicated to deal with the issue.*

- In the **'define'** segment, managers specify distinctly how each alternative can be put into operation, how long it would take, how much it would cost, and what effects it would have.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager evaluates strategic options by determining whether the intended communication will indeed prevent the strategic issue turning into a major problem/crisis or whether the opportunity is exploited to full advantage.*

- In the **'select'** segment, managers make a decision. They select one of the alternatives to implement as a behaviour.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager prioritises key strategic issues and decides which ones will be addressed.*

- In the **'confirm'** segment, managers think through the consequences--about whether the selected behaviour will work and whether it is the best alternative, and what possibly could go wrong.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager revises the strategic decision by deciding whether these really are the most important issues facing the organisation and what the risks of communicating to stakeholders/publics/activists are.*

- In the **'behave'** segment, managers do something e.g. write a press release.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager formulates and documents the corporate communication strategy.*

One is now back at the beginning of the molecule, and the *PR manager* can repeat the process to develop a strategic communication plan for the corporate communication function.

- In the **'detect'** segment, managers examine the feedback from the behavioural outputs to detect if their objectives have been met.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager obtains feedback from top management/the PR strategist on the proposed corporate communication strategy.*

- The **'construct'** segment represents the cognitive processes--managers define the problem, suggest what it requires to solve the problem and formulate alternative solutions. This segment ends when the manager has constructed a single idea that makes sense of the situation.

> **Researcher's suggestion**: *The PR manager starts the thinking processes for developing a strategic master plan for the corporate communication function, i.e. which divisions/sections or project teams should address the issues pointed out by the strategy, etc. All stages in the molecule are repeated on the functional level with communication plans/campaigns as outcomes.*

One is now back at the beginning of the molecule, and the *PR technician* (in consultation with the *PR manager*) can repeat the process at the implementation level to develop individual communication plans/campaigns.

The researcher therefore proposes that the behavioural molecule be used *firstly* at the functional level by a practitioner in the role of the *PR manager* as a decision making process in developing corporate communication strategy. *Secondly*, that the behavioural molecule be repeated at the functional level to develop a strategic communication plan. *Thirdly*, that the behavioural molecule be repeated at the implementation level to develop individual communication plans/campaigns.

4.4.5 THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ON CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Although the public relations body of knowledge refers to a strategic role for the corporate communication manager, there are but a few references to corporate communication 'strategy' in a strategic organisational context.

Tibble (1997:356) is the only author found by the researcher who questioned the meaning of strategy in a corporate communication context. He was of the opinion that although the corporate communication industry acknowledges that strategy

should be an integral part of its communication programmes, in practice this amounts to little more than lip service:

> *"Strategy and the communications world, and particularly the PR part of that world, just do not seem to go together. It is certainly unusual to come across a memorable, cogent, sustained, and effective communications strategy. Not a brand strategy. Not a marketing strategy. Not an advertising strategy—a communication strategy."*

The word strategy is 'used very sloppy', is 'bandied around like a mantra' but contains little of substance. The main thrust of Tibble's (1997) thinking is that few practitioners understand the meaning of strategy, although it is a familiar, uncomplicated concept to those acquainted with management theory. The key problem seems to lie in the application of strategy for corporate communication issues, i.e. what strategy actually means in a communication context. The word strategy is often used by corporate communication practitioners to describe something 'important' (as in *strategic* messages, *strategic* direction) or to describe 'activities' (as in communication *strategy*). It is also used mistakenly while, in reality, describing a communication aim, objective, or tactic.

According to Tibble (1997:358), an effective strategy should provide the following:

- leadership of thought and activity processes for the communication programmes;
- the context, and a guiding principle, for all communication activity;
- the link between the 'why' and the 'how'; the logic that binds objectives and tactics together.

Tibble (1997:358) states that *"the definition of strategy in a communication context is open to debate"*. The purpose of this chapter is to enter this debate by suggesting the meaning of strategy in a corporate communication context, i.e. providing a conceptualisation for *corporate communication strategy*. (A model for the process of developing such a corporate communication strategy will be hypothesised in Chapter 5).

In conclusion, it can be said that with the exception of Grunig & Repper's model for the strategic management of corporate communication *(in* Grunig 1992), the approaches to corporate communication (public relations) planning and the models of decision making processes described above, refer mostly to communication *planning* rather than to *strategy* (as differentiated earlier in this chapter -- see 4.3). This view is supported by Tibble (1997) who stated that 'strategy' in the context of corporate communication is not understood and hardly exists.

It is therefore clear that there is a need for a strategy on the functional or meso level of the organisation that will provide the focus and direction for communication with the organisation's stakeholders—an approach for managing stakeholders and issues strategically, providing the processes needed to align communication goals to organisational goals.

Based on the discussion of 'strategy' and 'corporate communication strategy' in this chapter, a conceptualisation of *corporate communication strategy* will now be provided.

4.5 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

4.5.1 A CONCEPTUALISATION

In conceptualising 'corporate communication strategy' based on the concept strategy, an attempt will be made to explain the meaning of 'strategy' in a corporate communication context.

It can be said that a corporate communication *strategy* provides the focus and direction for an organisation's communication with its stakeholders. It determines *what* should be communicated to avoid conflict and obtain win-win solutions, thereby stabilising relationships with strategic stakeholders, and contributing towards the achievement of organisational goals.

Corporate communication strategy is the corporate communication function's pro-active response to a fast-changing environment, an approach that directs its course of action and provides an indication of its positioning for the future. It is a pattern in important decisions and actions with regard to communication with stakeholders, developed within the context of the organisation's vision, mission, corporate culture and policies, goals and objectives (the internal environment), but focusing on an assessment of the external environment.

Corporate communication strategy can be seen as a pro-active capability to adapt the organisation to changes in stakeholder expectations, opinions, even feelings (obtained through environmental scanning and boundary spanning activities). It can create a competitive advantage for the organisation through the early detection and management of issues, involving strategic stakeholders in

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decision making, giving the organisation the autonomy to concentrate on achieving its mission.

Corporate communication strategy focuses on strategic communication decisions, and is the outcome of a strategic thinking process by senior communication practitioners and top managers with regard to the identification and management of stakeholders and issues. It is problem solving in unstructured situations, selecting the right problems to solve—it produces a profile that can be used to determine which stakeholders and issues should receive more or less emphasis.

Corporate communication strategy does not follow the traditional 'linear' approach where the emphasis is on strategic planning, but is moulded on the more modern approaches to strategy. By adapting the organisation to trends, events and stakeholders in the environment, it can be considered 'adaptive' strategy. It also focuses on relationships, symbolic actions and communication, emphasising attitudinal and cognitive complexity among diverse stakeholders, which is the essence of 'interpretive' strategy. These approaches to strategy is easily explained when considering that the purpose of corporate communication is, per definition, *"to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends* (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1994).

Corporate communication strategy can be said to be the thinking, the logic behind the corporate communication function's actions -- *what* is to be done rather than *how*. It will result in the corporate communication function doing the right things, rather than doing things right. It therefore focuses on impact and outcomes (an effectiveness approach), rather than on process (an efficiency approach). It is clear that corporate communication strategy is not the same as communication plans. Corporate communication strategy provides the framework

for the strategic and operational communication plans necessary to implement the strategy.

The corporate communication strategy makes the corporate communication function/department relevant in the strategic management process through its focus on communication with strategic stakeholders, aligning communication goals to organisational goals. This provides the vital link between enterprise/corporate/business strategies and the corporate communication function. Although the corporate communication strategy is influenced most by the organisation's enterprise strategy -- and provides strategic inputs in the enterprise strategy -- it also supports the corporate and business strategies. In contributing to organisational effectiveness in this manner, corporate communication will go a long way in satisfying the expectations that top management seems to have of them.

Not only does the concept of corporate communication strategy provide a new way of thinking about, defining and studying organisational and communication problems, it also provides a new way of evaluating the efforts of corporate communication practitioners. It therefore provides a richer, unifying perspective, a new paradigm for corporate communication called the *organisational/managerial effectiveness* paradigm.

To conclude, it can be stated that the process of developing corporate communication strategy provides the strategic approach needed by organisations to identify strategic stakeholders, and to manage communication with them. This is achieved by identifying stakeholders and their major concerns; considering the effects thereof for the organisation; and considering the implications/effects of each strategic issue or organisational strategy on the stakeholders. These implications become the strategic communication concerns that have to be addressed by the organisation/corporate communication function, i.e. it

determines *what* should be communicated in order to solve organisational or communication problems; or to capitalise on the opportunities presented by key organisational issues. This is the essence of corporate communication strategy.

4.5.2 AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Corporate communication strategy is a process of:

- analysing the organisation's internal and external environment;

- drawing up/refining the stakeholder map by identifying strategic stakeholders and their concerns, and the consequences thereof for the organisation;

- identifying the organisation's key strategic issues, either through environmental scanning/issues analysis or by analysing current/proposed organisational strategies;

- considering the implications of these strategic issues, specifically focusing on the consequences thereof for the organisation's strategic stakeholders;

- identifying **what must be communicated** to strategic stakeholders to manage the stakeholder concerns or the consequences of the strategic issues (i.e. to solve the problem or capitalise on the opportunity presented by the strategic issue)—this is the essence of corporate communication strategy;

- deriving communication goals from the corporate communication strategy, providing a framework for the strategic communication plan;

- contributing to the achievement of organisational goals by providing the link between communication plans and the corporate strategy.

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4.6 PRECISE HYPOTHESES FOR THE ROLE OF THE *PR MANAGER* AND THE *PR TECHNICIAN*

In this section, precise hypotheses for empirically measuring the role of the *PR manager* and the role of the *PR technician* are developed -- to be tested in a future quantitative study. They are based on the guiding hypothesis set in Chapter 1, and are adapted resulting from the new insights gained during the literature investigation conducted for this chapter.

Hypothesis 8: CEO expectations for the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function is statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR manager* than his/her perceptions of the performance in this role.

Hypothesis 9: CEO expectations for the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function is statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR technician* than his/her perceptions of the performance in this role.

Hypothesis 10: CEO expectations for the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR manager*, than in the role of the *PR technician*.

Hypothesis 11: CEO perceptions of the performance of the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR manager* than in the role of the *PR technician*.

4.7 MEASUREMENT QUESTIONS FOR THE ROLE OF THE *PR MANAGER*

The following 10 items are suggested to measure the role of the *PR manager*, a strategic role at the functional level. The activities representing this role are seen mainly to deal with the development of a corporate communication strategy and a strategic corporate communication plan for the function.

Develop corporate communication strategy that supports corporate strategy (Steyn 1999).
Take responsibility for the success or failure of corporate communication strategy (Steyn 1999).
Take responsibility for the success or failure of corporate communication plans (Dozier *et al* 1995:11)
Develop corporate communication plans, e.g. crisis or employee communication or media plans (Grunig & Hunt 1984).
Manage the implementation of corporate communication plans (Grunig & Hunt 1984).
Evaluate functional tactics e.g. the channels used to reach communities (Grunig & Hunt 1984).
Manage the public relations budget (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998; Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).
Develop functional tactics to effectively communicate organisational messages to stakeholders (Grunig & Hunt 1984).
Translate communication goals into communication activities (Digman 1990).
Monitor the performance of corporate communication practitioners or sub-divisions (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998; Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

4.8 MEASUREMENT QUESTIONS FOR THE ROLE OF THE *PR TECHNICIAN*

The following items are suggested to measure the role of the *PR technician*, an implementation role at the micro or programme level. The activities representing this role is seen mainly to deal with the development and implementation of functional tactics. The items were based on, but are *not exactly the same*, as the references mentioned. One new item was developed, namely *"Keep a media clipping service"*. This item was included because media clipping is an activity that takes place in many organisations, seen as the responsibility of corporate communication/public relations.

Produce audio-visual materials for presentations (based on Groenewald 1998a).
Generate publicity e.g. write media releases (based on Groenewald 1998a).
Keep a media clipping service (new item).
Edit public relations materials e.g. speeches or the annual report (based on Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:334, as well as Groenewald 1998a).
Write articles for the organisation's publications (based on Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:334, as well as Groenewald 1998a).
Organise special events e.g. open houses or exhibitions or gala evenings (based on Groenewald 1998a).

4.9 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN CHAPTER 4

Primary Objective 2

Corporate communication strategy was conceptualised as a strategy at the functional level, providing focus and direction to the organisation's communication with its stakeholders. The process involves identifying key strategic issues and determining their implications for the stakeholders, as well as identifying stakeholders and their concerns, and the implications for the organisation's strategies and policies. Furthermore, to determine *what should be communicated* to solve these problems or capitalise on the opportunities.

Secondary Objectives:

- A corporate communication *strategy* was differentiated from a communication *plan*. The former is seen as the thinking process performed by senior communication practitioners and top managers, identifying *what* needs to be communicated. The latter was seen as breaking the strategy into steps that could be implemented.

- An operational definition for the process of developing a corporate communication strategy was provided.

- Precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR manager* (a strategic role for the corporate communication practitioner at the functional or departmental level of the organisation) were generated.

- Precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR technician* (an implementation role at the micro or programme level of the organisation) were generated.

- Items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR manager* and the role of the *PR technician* were developed.

4.10 CONCLUSION

The corporate communication function is in need of a new paradigm--a new pattern of thinking about and studying organisational and communication problems, and of evaluating corporate communication (public relations) practice. Developing a corporate communication strategy will assist in establishing such a paradigm—an *organisational/managerial effectiveness paradigm.* The emphasis in such a paradigm is on making a contribution to organisational effectiveness by aligning communication goals to the organisational mission, thereby fulfilling top management's expectations of the function.

However, to achieve this will necessitate both a strategic role for corporate communication at the top management or macro level (the conceptualised role of the *PR strategist*), as well as a strategic role at the functional or meso level (the redefined role of the *PR manager*). The latter will be responsible for developing a corporate communication strategy and a strategic communication plan, and for managing the planning, implementation and evaluation of communication plans/programmes/ campaigns strategically by aligning communication goals to organisational goals.

In order to determine corporate communication strategy, senior corporate communication practitioners will need to understand the business issues that the organisation faces. Rather than trying to move communication further up top management's agenda, they will link communication with what is already at the top of that agenda. By thinking and talking only in terms of communication

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processes without identifying the underlying business problems, corporate communicators risk imposing inappropriate solutions.

Top management is interested in solutions to business problems, not in communication problems. If the corporate communication function is to make a real contribution towards organisational effectiveness, they will have to become expert in using communication to help remove the barriers to organisational success (Quirke 1996). In developing their communication plans, practitioners will have to ensure that they are addressing organisational problems/goals, and not only achieving communication goals (as often seems to be happening). In the literature there are few guidelines on how this is to be achieved. This study is an attempt to provide such guidelines to senior corporate communication practitioners.

Chapter 4 is the final chapter in the conceptualisation phase of this study, explicating the 'what' and the 'why'. In Chapter 5, the research strategy and methodology is explained i.e. how the study has been conducted. In particular, the chapter will focus on action research as a methodology for the development of a model that can be used by practitioners and students to guide them in the process of developing a corporate communication strategy for an organisation.

Some authors such as Pearce & Robinson (1997:5) do not distinguish between enterprise and corporate level strategy, but combine both under the term corporate strategy. However, the researcher considers it useful to make this differentiation in order to understand the role of corporate communication in the organisation's strategy formulation process, which focuses on the identification and management of stakeholders—largely determined by the enterprise strategy.

At the corporate level, strategies tend to be *financially* oriented (Digman 1990:38).

Figure 4.3: CORPORATE STRATEGY

DEFINES AND UNIFIES PORTFOLIO
OF BUSINESSES
↓
HOW DO BUSINESSES
COMPLEMENT/REINFORCE EACH OTHER
↓
RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO
BUSINESS LEVELS
↓
SUPPORTS ENTERPRISE STRATEGY
↓
STRATEGY IS *FINANCIALLY* ORIENTED
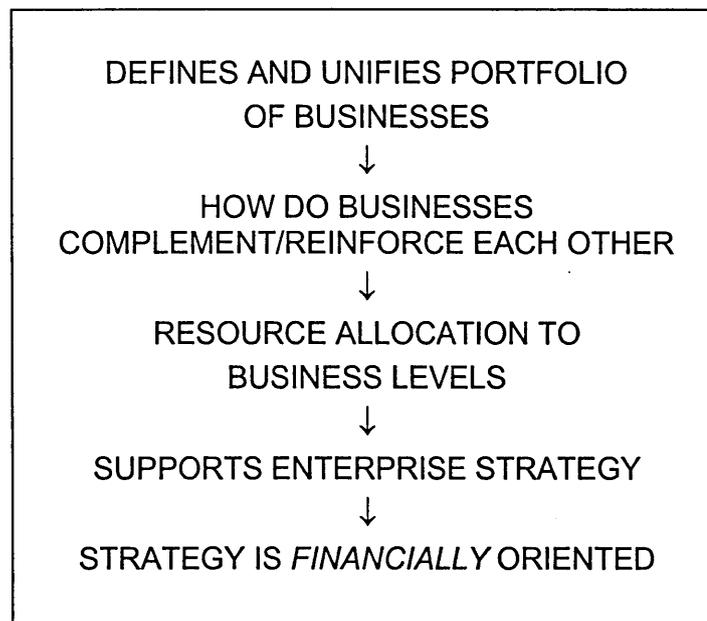
Source: Own research

4.3.3.3 Business unit strategy

Business strategy is the responsibility of the general manager of a business unit, who must translate the statements of direction and intent generated at the

corporate level into concrete objectives and strategies for individual business divisions (Jain 1997:19). A business strategy usually covers a single product or a group of related products (Pearce & Robinson 1997:6; Jain 1997) and focuses on how to compete in the product or market or industry segment--it looks at the niche it should seek.

The success of the individual business strategy depends not only on how well the organisation positions itself and competes in the given market segment, but also on how well it co-ordinates the various functions (and operations) required to design, manufacture, market, deliver, and support the product or service (Digman 1990:38).

At the business-unit level, strategies are often *marketing* oriented (Digman 1990:38).

Figure 4.4: BUSINESS-UNIT STRATEGY

HOW TO COMPETE IN PRODUCT/MARKET/
INDUSTRY SEGMENT
↓
IDENTIFY NICHE
↓
INTEGRATE FUNCTIONAL LEVELS TO
PRODUCE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
↓
SUPPORTS ENTERPRISE/
CORPORATE STRATEGY
↓
STRATEGY IS *MARKETING* ORIENTED

Source: Own research

4.3.3.4 Functional strategy

The principal responsibility at the functional level is to implement the strategic plans (Pearce & Robinson 1997:6). At both the functional and operating levels, the major emphasis is on maximising resource productivity by capitalising on any possible synergies and distinctive competencies that the organisation may possess (Digman 1990:38).

Each functional area of an organisation (e.g. marketing or corporate communication) makes its own unique contribution to strategy formulation at different levels. In many organisations, according to Jain (1997:9), the marketing (and corporate communication) functions represent the greatest degree of contact with the external environment -- the environment least controllable by the organisation. In such cases, marketing and corporate communication play a pivotal role in strategy development. Functional strategy thus involves what should be done in each of the key functional areas, given the relative emphasis placed on them and the resources allocated to them (Digman 1990:38).

Functional strategy should be oriented towards *supporting the enterprise, corporate and business strategies*.

Figure 4.5: FUNCTIONAL STRATEGY

RELATES THE ENTERPRISE, CORPORATE,
BUSINESS STRATEGIES TO THE FUNCTION
↓
CO-ORDINATION WITH OTHER FUNCTIONS
↓
SUPPORTS BUSINESS /CORPORATE/
ENTERPRISE LEVEL STRATEGY
↓
STRATEGY IS ORIENTED TOWARDS
CAPITALIZING ON SYNERGIES/
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES
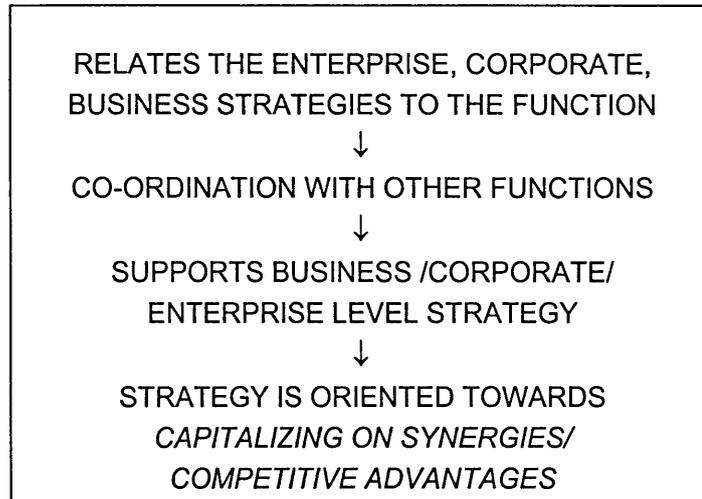
Source: Own research

The focus of corporate communication strategy as a functional strategy is to establish a match between the organisation, and the values and expectations of its strategic stakeholders. This is achieved by identifying strategic stakeholders, and managing relationships with them; identifying the organisation's key strategic issues and the publics/activists that emerge round them; and reducing conflict and uncertainty by bringing these groups into the organisation's decision making processes.

Traditionally, middle managers were involved with implementation and control—they did not play strategic roles. However, in the reengineered organisation, the *PR manager* will play a strategic role at the functional level, being a boundary spanner—developing the corporate communication strategy as a link between communication plans and organisational goals, and strategically *managing* the planning, implementation and evaluation of communication plans/programmes/campaigns at the micro level -- thereby contributing towards organisational effectiveness.

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4.3.3.5 Operations strategy

At the operational level, strategies are translated into action (Digman 1990:38; Pearce & Robinson 1997:304). Key operating managers must establish short-term objectives and operating strategies that contribute to business and corporate-level goals (Pearce & Robinson 1997:311). Operations strategies are needed to manage operating units and line areas in a *cost-effective* manner (Digman 1990:38).

Figure 4.6: OPERATIONS OR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

TRANSLATES ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY
INTO 'ACTION'
↓
DEVELOPS FUNCTIONAL TACTICS
(ACTIVITIES UNIQUE TO FUNCTION)
↓
MAXIMIZES RESOURCE PRODUCTIVITY
↓
STRATEGY IS ORIENTED TOWARD
COST-EFFECTIVENESS
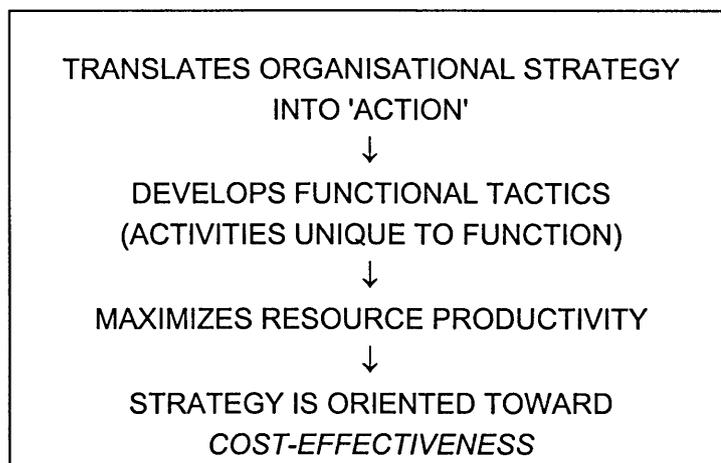
Source: Own research

In understanding the difference between enterprise, corporate, business, functional and operational strategies, corporate communication practitioners will realise that operational strategy, as applied in the communication plan, is not the same as the proposed corporate communication strategy. The latter is strategy at the functional level, involving *strategic* decisions—providing focus and direction to the corporate communication function, producing a profile that can be used to determine which stakeholders should receive more or less emphasis. Operational strategy, as part of the communication plan, provides a framework for functional tactics—it involves *tactical* decisions e.g. whether a print or

electronic media campaign or folk media should be used to communicate the message to identified stakeholders/publics. This is the domain of the *PR technician,* an implementation role at the micro or programme level.

4.3.4 MIDDLE MANAGEMENT'S INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGY FORMULATION

4.3.4.1 The traditional view

The traditional view of the strategic process is that strategy is the province of top management (Ansoff 1965; Schendel & Hofer 1979). According to Porter (*in* Gibson 1997:55), this is no longer true—strategy should not only be the province of the leader. Participation in the strategic process is not limited to a few individuals who are located at the very top of the organisation (Fredrickson 1984:459; Porter, *in* Gibson 1997). Burgelman (1983) describes strategy as the product of autonomous behaviour initiated outside top management. Mintzberg & Waters (1985) see strategy as a combination of deliberate strategies (decided upon by top management) and emergent strategies (that develop in the process of management and implementation).

Middle managers have traditionally been seen as being responsible for implementing strategy. {In the discussion on functional strategy under point 4.3.3.4 in this chapter, Pearce & Robinson's (1997:6) viewpoint was that the principal responsibility at the functional level was to implement the strategic plans}. In cases where middle managers have been involved in strategy formulation, it was because their involvement enhances implementation, and firsthand exposure to the strategies of top management improves understanding, consensus and commitment. However, in discussing the role of middle managers in strategy, Bower (1970) said that *"middle managers are the only men in the organisation who are in a position to judge whether (strategic) issues are being*

CHAPTER 5

OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

$\Rightarrow$

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

AND ITS SETTING

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 2:	**CHAPTER 3:**
TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC RELATIONS' ROLES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	CONCEPTUALISATION OF A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE CORPORATE COMMU-NICATION MANAGER

$\Rightarrow$ (between Chapter 2 and Chapter 3)

$\Downarrow$ (below Chapter 3)

CHAPTER 5:	**CHAPTER 4:**
RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY	CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORPORATE COMMUNI-CATION STRATEGY

$\Leftarrow$ (between Chapter 5 and Chapter 4)

$\Downarrow$ (below Chapter 5)

CHAPTER 6:	**CHAPTER 7:**
DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CORPORATE COM-MUNICATION STRATEGY --THE PROCESS	FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

$\Rightarrow$ (between Chapter 6 and Chapter 7)

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CHAPTER 5

5. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research strategy (qualitative), the research design (both exploratory and confirmatory), and the methodology of action research. It also provides detail on sampling procedures, data generation and recording, data analysis, reliability, validity and generalisability.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Research Objective 1 was achieved in Chapter 3 and Research Objective 2 in Chapter 4, by means of a literature investigation. In this chapter, the procedures that were used to achieve these two objectives are detailed. Furthermore, action research as a *methodology* for achieving Research Objective 3 (implementing, evaluating and improving a hypothesised model for developing corporate communication strategy), is described. The various *stages* in the action research process are to be addressed in Chapter 6 (i.e. the initial literature study, the resulting hypothesised model and the process of implementing, evaluating and revising the model.)

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5.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY OR APPROACH

> The strategy is a road map, an overall approach for undertaking a systematic exploration of the phenomenon of interest (Marshall & Rossman 1995:40).

To answer the specific research questions posed in this study, a qualitative strategy has been selected. Qualitative research differs markedly from quantitative research in that it is *"analytic and interpretative—it attempts to examine phenomena in a holistic manner"*. Events or extraneous variables are not controlled—the purpose is to capture the normal flow of events (Du Plooy 1995:33).

Qualitative data are in the form of words, rather than numbers. It is therefore a source of *"well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts"*. Qualitative data is more likely to lead to integrating new theory since it helps researchers to go beyond initial preconceptions and frameworks (Miles & Huberman 1984).

The qualitative strategy fulfils two important criteria, as set out by Zelditch (1962):

- *Informational adequacy*: The research strategy maximises the possibilities that the researcher will be able to respond to the questions thoroughly and thoughtfully, and elicit the sought-after information.

- *Efficiency*: The strategy allows adequate data to be collected at the least cost in terms of time, access, and cost to participants. (Since the participants to the action research were a lecturer, students and non-profit organisations, this criterion was of the utmost importance, both in terms of time and money.)

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A qualitative strategy also fulfils ethical considerations as a critical criterion (Marshall & Rossman 1995), as it does not violate the participants' privacy or unduly disrupt their every-day worlds. In this study, participation by non-profit organisations in the action research was entirely voluntary. They were non-profit organisations specifically selected by students on the grounds of their enthusiasm for participating, and the total access to information they were willing to provide. Although participation by students were 'obligatory', the action research constituted their practical project for the subject Strategic Communication Management--they were therefore obliged to set the time aside. Furthermore, not only did the project represent a large percentage of the total second semester mark (40%), but the knowledge and experience gained were deemed invaluable by the students, upon completion of the project.

According to Marshall (*in* Marshall & Rossman 1995:43), a qualitative study is research:

- *"that delves in depth into complexities and processes;*
- *on little-known phenomena;*
- *on unstructured processes in organisations;*
- *that cannot be done experimentally for practical reasons;*
- *for which relevant variables have yet to be identified".*

A qualitative research approach was therefore particularly valuable in answering the research questions posed in this study.

It must be noted that there are real problems associated with the output of qualitative studies. There is a serious question of sampling involved, since the sheer bulk of data makes it unlikely that a sample of more than a few dozen cases can be managed. In this study (Project 1), each student group selected *one* non-profit organisation for in-depth interviewing, which spread the work to manageable proportions. Not only did this result in a sizable sample, but more

importantly, it increased the quality of the data generation and analysis. In Project 2, the lecturer/researcher did a census—all 90 existing projects on corporate communication strategy were analysed. Since the projects constituted the students' practical projects for obtaining semester marks, they were evaluated individually as part of the lecturer's academic responsibilities. The only 'extra' work was the analysis of the projects in order to improve the model. This was done during the December holidays—a quiet period--that again improved the quality of the analysis.

The generalisability and the replicability of qualitative analyses also merit concern. The most serious difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated. There are *"few guidelines for protection against self-delusion"*. Another concern is that analysis methods are rarely reported in detail in published case studies and one can therefore not follow how a researcher arrived at conclusions (Miles & Huberman 1984). The generalisability, replicability and methods of analysis of this study will be dealt with later in this chapter.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. It is the plan and structure of the empirical investigation to obtain answers to research questions, and provides a framework for specifying the relationships among the study's variables (Cooper & Emory 1995:114).

In achieving Research Objectives 1 and 2, as well as the first secondary objective under Research Objective 3 (see next page) the design of this study is *exploratory.* Exploratory research is a particular type of descriptive research, its advantage being that the subject of investigation need not be precisely

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determined but is left open for adjustment (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995: 41). It often serves as an initial step before a quantitative study, which is the case in this study: the conceptualisation of the role of the *PR strategist* (Research Objective 1) and the conceptualisation of corporate communication strategy as the primary activity of a practitioner in the role of the *PR manager* (Research Objective 2) have served as initial steps before a future quantitative (formal) study.

Exploratory research is used to *"gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person, arising out of a lack of basic information on a new area of interest"*. This research design has assisted the researcher in becoming more familiar with the situation in order that an exact problem could be formulated and precise hypotheses be developed for the future study. It has also assisted in assessing the correctness of the concepts (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:41), and in identifying/discovering important variables (Marshall & Rossman 1995:41). Use have been made of *guiding* hypotheses, which have indicated some possible directions to follow, but has allowed the researcher the freedom to *explore and generate* other hypotheses.

The first guiding hypothesis that was set in Chapter 1 is the following:

Guiding hypothesis 1a

The chief executive is not satisfied with the role played by the corporate communication manager.

Guiding hypothesis 1b

The chief executive expects the corporate communication manager to play a strategic role at the top management level.

The first objective set for the study is the following:

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1

Primary Objective: To conceptualise the role of the *PR strategist*, i.e. a strategic role for the corporate communication (public relations) manager at the top management level (Chapter 3).

Secondary Objectives:

- To determine, by means of an analysis of the relevant literature on public relations, what the role of the *PR strategist* entails.

- To determine, by means of an analysis of the relevant literature on strategic management, whether a need exists for the corporate communication/public relations manager to play a strategic role at the top management level of the organisation (the role of the *PR strategist*).

- To operationalise the role of the *PR strategist*.

- To develop precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR strategist*.

- To develop items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR strategist*.

To achieve Research Objective 1, the means of exploration has been a *secondary data* investigation: *firstly* of the body of knowledge on public relations to determine the constructs for the role of the *PR strategist*; and *secondly* of the strategic management literature in order to determine whether a need exists for such a role. Whereas the theory on corporate communication (public relations) is well-known to the researcher, the strategic management theory is not. Since an attempt is made to develop a strategic role for the corporate communication

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manager, with the emphasis on gathering strategic information through environmental scanning as well as the identification of strategic stakeholders and issues around which publics emerge, it has been deemed important that the researcher familiarise herself with the following:

- the strategic thinking, planning and decision making processes;

- the needs of top management regarding information gathering and interpretation;

- whether environmental scanning continues to be important to top management as an information gathering process;

- whether environmental scanning is well defined, well organised and well managed at the top management level;

- which person or organisational unit in the organisation typically carries the responsibility for managing the environmental scanning process.

Furthermore, to determine

- the importance of stakeholder management to the organisation;

- who, or which function, takes responsibility at the top management level for the identification and management of stakeholders;

- who, if anyone, develops a corporate strategy for stakeholder relations;

- the importance to the organisation of publics and activists that emerge around issues.

The aim of the literature analysis is to establish whether a real need exists at the top management level of organisations for someone to play the suggested strategic role; to develop arguments as to the suitability of the corporate communication manager for playing this role; and to make suggestions as to how this role would fit into the strategic management process.

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The second guiding hypothesis that was set in Chapter 1 is the following:

Guiding hypothesis 2

The chief executive expects the corporate communication manager to develop a corporate communication strategy for the organisation.

The objective set for the second part of the study, is the following:

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

Primary Objective: To conceptualise *corporate communication strategy* (Chapter 4).

Secondary Objectives:

- To differentiate between a corporate communication *strategy* and a communication *plan*.

- To provide an operational definition for the process of developing a corporate communication strategy.

- To develop precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR manager* (a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the functional or departmental level of the organisation) and the role of the *PR technician* (an implementation role at the micro or programme level).

- To develop items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR manager*.

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The means of exploration to achieve Research Objective 2 has been a secondary data investigation of:

the body of knowledge on strategic management, in order to clarify the concept 'strategy' in an organisational context;

the literature on public relations to determine the meaning of the concept 'corporate communication strategy'; the context within which it is used; and whether there is indeed a difference between a communication 'plan' and a 'corporate communication strategy'.

The third guiding hypothesis set in Chapter 1 is the following:

Guiding hypothesis 3

A model is a suitable tool to satisfactorily explicate the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

The research objectives set for the third part of the study are:

Research Objective 3

Primary Objective: To develop a model that can satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and to identify the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

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Secondary Objectives:

- To hypothesise a model for developing corporate communication strategy.

- To involve third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria as action researchers in the implementation of the model amongst some non-profit organisations in South Africa.

- To determine the student groups' understanding of the process of developing a corporate communication strategy, *firstly* by assessing each individual group project and *secondly*, by comparing them in order to pinpoint the areas/constructs where problems are experienced, or alternatively, are (well) understood.

- To evaluate the hypothesised model, *firstly* by analysing and comparing the corporate communication strategies (student group reports) to ascertain common problem areas; and *secondly*, to analyse the theory on which the model was based--also provided to the students to improve their understanding of the model--as a possible cause of the problems experienced.

- To improve the model based on the analysis of the implementation results.

- To identify the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

- To make the findings public through presentations at academic and industry conferences, as well as through articles in academic and industry publications.

- To attempt to make a contribution towards theory building on the little-known subject of corporate communication strategy.

The means of *exploration* to achieve the first secondary objective under Research Objective 3 (namely to hypothesise a model for developing corporate communication strategy), has been an investigation of both the strategic

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management as well as the public relations literature. All the other secondary objectives, namely to involve students in the implementation of the model, and evaluate and improve the model, has been achieved by means of action research—employing a *confirmatory* design.

According to Miles & Huberman (1984), qualitative research can be '*outright confirmatory*.' This kind of design is used when preliminary work has provided insight into a phenomenon (*in this case, the initial literature study and hypothesised model*) and the researcher wants to enquire as to how this would work in natural settings (*i.e. whether the hypothesised model is adequate for guiding students and their action research partners in the process of developing corporate communication strategy, and whether the constructs in the model are valid).* The researcher therefore goes into the field with a nearly complete theory or a set of hypotheses (*the hypothesised model*).

The reasons for having provided a pre-existing conceptual framework for the action research in the form of the hypothesised model (based on the literature investigation), rather than having used action research to also *create* the conceptual framework, will now be explained. According to Miles & Huberman (1984), an important consideration with qualitative studies is whether there should be a pre-existing conceptual framework, or a set of research questions, or even pre-designed devices for collecting data. There is a lively debate amongst academics/researchers on whether such 'bounding' of the study blinds the researcher to important features in the cases investigated and causes misreading of participants' perceptions; or whether *lack* of bounding and focusing leads to indiscriminate data collection and data overload.

The conventional viewpoint is that the conceptual framework should emerge empirically from the field in the course of the study (the inductive model) and that pre-structuring and tight designs should be kept to a minimum. Miles &

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Huberman (1984) is of the opinion that the latter makes sense when there is plenty of time or when one is exploring very complex social realities. However, when investigating better-understood social phenomena, a highly inductive approach is a waste of time. Also, the looser the initial design, the less selective the collection of data. If different field-workers are working inductively, with no common framework or instrumentation, they are bound to end up with data overload and lack of comparability across cases.

Miles & Huberman (1984) therefore consider it advantageous to the qualitative study to have a conceptual framework--identifying the constructs, giving the constructs descriptive or inferential names, and getting some clarity about their interrelationships. A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main dimensions to be studied—the key variables and the relationships amongst them. This forces the researcher to decide in advance which dimensions are more important, which relationships are the most meaningful, and what information should be collected and analysed. It also allows multiple researchers/fieldworkers to be sure that they are studying the same phenomenon. (The latter was an important consideration in this study, since plus minus 45 student groups--with 4 to 5 students in each group— constituted the fieldworkers every year).

The above provides the rationale for the researcher's decision to achieve Research Objective 3 (involving the students in implementation, and evaluating and improving the model) by means of a deductive approach—having started with some orienting constructs, and having assumed certain relationships between the constructs obtained by means of the literature investigation. The resulting conceptual framework was displayed graphically in the form of the hypothesised model (see Chapter 6). The model was then used as a guideline in collecting and analysing the data, confirming its validity through the selected methodology of action research, rather than identifying the initial constructs/categories by means of exploration.

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The advantages of having used a confirmatory design was *firstly*, that much time was saved and *secondly*, that the conclusions were deemed more valid. The participant community (non-profit organisations) were not knowledgeable on the subject of corporate communication strategy, and neither would the students have been without the model. The student researchers, having studied the hypothesised model, participated in the research endeavour as full partners by offering their knowledge, whereas the non-profit organisations' leaders contributed their practical experience. Having shared knowledge and experience widely resulted in better outcomes for the projects.

The reader's attention is drawn to the fact that the remainder of this chapter will focus on action research, as the methodology selected to implement, evaluate and improve the model for developing corporate communication strategy.

5.4 ACTION RESEARCH AS METHODOLOGY

Whereas the research strategy (discussed in section 5.2) can be considered a road map or overall approach for undertaking a systematic exploration of the phenomenon of interest, the *methodology* is the specific tools for conducting the research (Marshall & Rossman 1995:40).

Action research is a particular form of participatory research, the latter being the encouragement of the active participation of people whom the research is intended to assist. Participatory research is not necessarily action research, but action research is always participatory (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:56).

Action research as a research methodology for implementing, evaluating and improving the hypothesised model for developing corporate communication

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strategy (amongst some non-profit organisations in South Africa) has been most suitable for this study--it suggests a particular complementary relationship between action and research, with the researchers and participant community each bringing valuable resources to the project. There is no general formula for doing action research--*action* and *research* takes place alternatively in an ongoing learning process for everyone involved.

Being a lecturer in the third year subject Strategic Communication Management at the University of Pretoria, the researcher used the opportunity presented by the lack of theory or textbooks in this sub-field to involve third year corporate communication students in research with the aim of building theory. Action research is an ideal vehicle, not only for building theory, but also for *"improving practice and understanding the process of improving practice"*, which are the central tenets of this research method. The main focus of action research in classrooms is to encourage teachers to become involved in their own practice, and to view themselves as researchers (Stenhouse 1975).

> *"Increasing numbers of teachers are gaining the confidence to challenge the way academics have traditionally thought about education. They are developing ways of understanding practice which involves the systematic examination of practical problems. They are imagining solutions, acting and evaluating the outcomes of their actions" (McNiff 1988).*

Unfortunately, the work of most researchers in the different disciplines and curriculum areas who employ action research "often emphasise *understanding* and is rich in practical description, but is rather sparse in *explanation* and weak on case studies of their own attempts to improve practically a process of education" (McNiff 1988).

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In looking at the rationale for action research, the social basis can be regarded as *involvement*; whereas the educational basis is *improvement*—using action research implies/demands *changes*. Action research means ACTION, both of the system under consideration, and of the people involved in that system. It is participatory in that it involves the teacher in his/her own enquiry, and collaborative, in that it involves other people as part of a shared inquiry. It is research WITH, rather than research ON (McNiff 1988:3-4).

Action research is not just teaching. It is being aware and critical of that teaching, and using this self-critical awareness to be open to a process of change and improvement of practice. It encourages teachers to become adventurous and critical in their thinking, to develop theories and rationales for their practice, and to give reasoned justification for their public claims to professional knowledge (McNiff 1988:5).

Action research is a "*systematic enquiry made public*" (Stenhouse 1980)—this is precisely what distinguishes the activity as research (McNiff 1988:3-4). The latter was the justification for having included the following secondary objective under Research Objective 3: 'to make the findings public through presentations at academic and industry conferences, as well as through articles in academic and industry publications'.

5.4.1 STAGES IN THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:59) see five stages in the action research process. (In Chapter 6, the course of the action research project will be explicated according to these stages.)

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STAGE 1: Implementation begins with a period of research where the resources and needs of a community are systematically assessed and the necessary information to guide action is gathered.

> *This stage refers to the lecturer/researcher having become aware of the need for a model to develop corporate communication strategy through requests from corporate communication practitioners to provide examples or guidelines for developing such a strategy. A literature search for a model/theoretical description to guide practitioners resulted in the realisation that neither seemed to exist. An informal request to a few corporate communication managers to supply their written corporate communication strategies to the researcher, provided further evidence of the seeming non-existence of guidelines in this regard--the so-called 'strategies' that were provided seemed to be no more than plans or a collection of activities. Furthermore, no pattern could be discerned in the way the strategies were developed.*
>
> *Thereupon the lecturer/researcher conducted the initial literature investigation for this study in 1997, resulting in a hypothesised model for the development of corporate communication strategy (Model 1), as explained in Chapter 6 (the first secondary objective under Research Objective 3). A paper was delivered on this subject at the SACOMM Conference in Bloemfontein, in September 1997.*

STAGE 2: Some kind of action is undertaken together by the action research partners.

> *The model was implemented by student researchers amongst 48 non-profit organisations during the second semester of 1998 (middle July to middle September).*

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STAGE 3: Thereafter the results of the action are to be assessed.

The 48 written reports on corporate communication strategy, developed by the student groups and participants, were individually assessed by the lecturer/researcher during the last two weeks of September 1998.

STAGE 4: A further period of research (of an evaluative nature) is initiated.

The results of the assessment were analysed by comparing it across projects, in December 1998.

STAGE 5: Depending upon the results of the research, it may be necessary to develop or completely redesign the original action undertaken.

Another literature investigation was undertaken by the researcher in January 1999, to validate and/or explain the results of the assessment. The model was adapted/improved in February 1999.

At the beginning of the second cycle of action research (second semester 1999), the adapted model and literature study was presented to student groups and the whole process started over again--an adapted model, new student groups and different non-profit organisations. This process is to be repeated again during the third cycle, starting the second semester of 2000.

The action research process, graphically presented by McNiff (1988), is displayed on the next page. The researcher has indicated the course of this action research project in (*italics*).

Figure 5.1: THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

CYCLE ONE (1997-98)	CYCLE TWO (1999)	CYCLE THREE (2000)
Identifying initial data (*literature study*)	↓	↓
↓	↓	↓
Fact finding and analysis (*identifying constructs*)		
↓	↓	↓
General plan (*developing model*)		
↓	↓	↓
Implementation (*amongst non-profits*)		
↓	↓	↓
Monitor implementation and effects (*evaluate and analyse projects*)		
↓	↓	↓
Explain failure to implement and effects (*pinpoint problems*)→　→	Revise general idea	
	↓	↓
	Amended plan (*revised model*)	
	↓	↓
	Implementation	
	↓	↓
	Monitor implementation and effects	
	↓	↓
	Explain failure to implement and effects→→	Revise general idea
		↓
		Amend plan (*revise model*)

Source: Applied based on McNiff (1988:30)

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Action and research therefore continue as alternate processes in the solution of the research problem, as stated in Research Question 3: How can the process of *developing corporate communication strategy* be explicated to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and what are the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions?

The repeated cycle of research and action, neither one possible without the other (see Figure 5.2), produces a process of ongoing learning for all the participants.

Figure 5.2:THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACTION AND RESEARCH
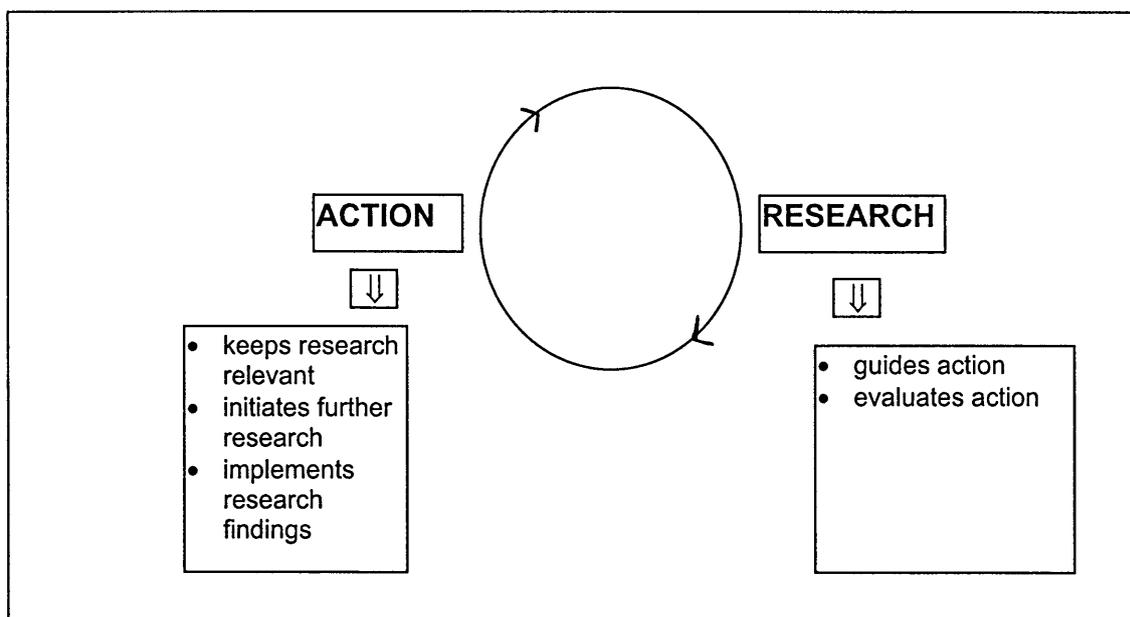
Source: Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:59)

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5.4.2 PARTICIPANTS IN THE ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Participants were the following:

- Third-year corporate communication students who were registered for the subject Strategic Communication Management during 1998 and 1999 were the student researchers that conducted Project 1 (the implementation of Model 1 amongst the non-profit sector, of which the outcomes were research reports in the form of corporate communication strategies).

- The lecturer of the third-year course in Strategic Communication Management (KOB 320, Module A) at the University of Pretoria was the leader of the longitudinal action research project and the principal researcher that conducted Project 2 (an analysis of the student group projects in order to improve the hypothesised model, hereafter referred to as Model 1).

- The participant community during 1998 and 1999 was the non-profit sector. (During 2000, this longitudinal research project will be directed towards the SA government sector). Each student group was responsible for selecting *one* non-profit organisation as their research partner. The only requirement was that the organisation and its leaders be willing and eager to participate in the project, and be prepared to provide total access to relevant information.

The student researchers and the participant community in this study established a broad ethical framework based on mutual trust, within which they worked together. Student researchers were encouraged by their lecturer (the researcher) to sign a formal action research contract which outlined exactly what each party was expected to contribute to the project, and what each party expected to gain from the project. Following is an example of a simple action research contract (shortened):

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Figure 5.3: SIMPLE ACTION RESEARCH CONTRACT

	PARTICIPANT COMMUNITY	RESEARCHERS
To provide	• active participation • firsthand, practical knowledge of the problem on the ground	• active participation • academic and research skills

Source: Adapted from Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:58)

The student researchers and the participant community reached a compromise on the goals of the project beforehand. The students informed the participant community by means of a written and/or oral presentation exactly what information was needed to find a solution to the problem and how that information was to be collected--participants had to agree to make the relevant information available to students, before they were selected as partners. It was also discussed how the project was to be broken down into manageable parts and how the responsibility was to be distributed amongst all participants. A good relationship between participants and students was deemed essential for the success of the action and the research.

5.4.3 TIME DIMENSION

The design of this study was longitudinal, since data collection (*generation*) was distributed over an extended period of time (Cooper & Emory 1995:116).

According to Gall (*in* Leedy 1997:223), a longitudinal study involves collecting data from a sample at *different points in time*, in order to *study changes* or continuity in the sample's characteristics. The aim of this research was to study

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the students' group projects (in the form of the corporate communication strategies) over a period of several years to ascertain whether the model was an effective tool to explicate the process of developing corporate communication strategy, and to determine the problems in implementation. Furthermore, to use the students' knowledge and experience gained to assist in improving the model, and also to determine the effect of the changes/improvements of the model upon students' understanding of the process.

The action research was conducted over an extended period of time, namely two full cycles over two academic years, specifically during the second semester (July to October). This was the period during which third year students, enrolled for the subject Strategic Communication Management, were expected to participate as student researchers in order to obtain a mark for practical work. The third cycle of action research, commencing in July 2000, will not form part of this research script.

5.4.4 EMPIRICAL OBJECTIVES

Although the research objectives of the study were stated in Chapter 1, the specific empirical objectives to be achieved were the following:

Empirical Objective 1: To implement the hypothesised model by developing a corporate communication strategy for a number of non-profit organisations.

This objective was to be achieved by the student researchers, and will be referred to as **Project 1** in the ensuing discussion.

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Empirical Objective 2: To analyse and evaluate the corporate communication strategies (research reports) of all the student groups (as the outcome of the implementation process and a measure of their understanding of the process), *firstly* by assessing each individual project against the hypothesised model, and *secondly* by comparing the projects with one another in order to ascertain common problem areas.

This objective was to be achieved by the lecturer/principal researcher, and will be referred to as **Project 2** in the ensuing discussion.

5.4.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

According to Smith (1988:75), the following concepts are fundamental in understanding sampling procedures:

5.4.5.1 Element or unit of analysis

> An element is the basic unit or 'thing' about which information is collected (Smith 1988).

In communication research, the element of interest is usually either the subjective perceptions, feelings or beliefs of individuals or groups, or the outputs of such individuals or groups (Smith 1988).

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Project 1

There were three elements of interest in Project 1: For the student researchers, the first element of interest was the organisational members' *knowledge* of the non-profit organisation—of its operations, structures, policies, plans, corporate culture, stakeholders, etc. Once 'collected', the students could apply this knowledge to the model and write a corporate communication strategy for the non-profit organisation.

The *model* can be considered the second element of interest for the students— information was 'collected' on the model by repeatedly studying it. The lecturer's *knowledge* on corporate communication strategy was the third element of interest for the students -- they consulted with her regularly in order to collect more information on the model and to improve their understanding of it.

Project 2

For the lecturer/researcher, the element of interest was twofold: firstly, the *understanding* that student groups had of corporate communication strategy, as measured by their ability to implement the model; and secondly the *suitability* of the model as a tool for bringing about such understanding.

5.4.5.2 Sampling unit

A sampling unit is *"that element or set of elements considered for selection in some stage of sampling"*. Sampling units may include elements other than those forming the basis of the study (Smith 1988).

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The *final* sampling units were the *understanding* that these student groups had of corporate communication strategy, as manifested by the objective content of their projects.

5.4.5.3 Observation unit

> An *observation unit* is the person(s) <u>from whom</u> information about a target element is collected (Smith 1988).

Observation units and elements are often identical (i.e. when individuals report about their own feelings, ideas, etc.). However, this is not always the case especially when individual/group *outputs* are the research elements.

Project 1

There were three observation units in Project 1, which were the same as the target elements: The student groups collected information for their research projects from certain *members* of their selected non-profit organisation. These organisational members were selected on the grounds of their holistic *knowledge* (target element) of the organisation. (This was the reason for having considered the director/manager the most desirable person to interview).

The hypothesised model can also be considered an observation unit—students 'collected' information from the model by studying it, trying to improve their understanding of the constructs in order to develop their corporate communication strategies.

The lecturer/researcher was the third observation unit. Students had regular contact with their lecturer, both in class and during consulting hours that were set

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aside specifically for interviews with students about their projects. The students were interested in her *knowledge* (target element) on corporate communication strategy.

Project 2

In Project 2, there were two observation units: For the lecturer/researcher, the first observation unit was the group projects. The researcher collected information from the objective content of the students' projects in order to ascertain each group's *understanding* of the process of developing corporate communication strategy.

The second observation unit was the model -- the lecturer/researcher analysed and compared the student reports to identify constructs on the model where problems were experienced, and thus had to be improved.

5.4.5.4 Population

A population is the total collection of elements that the research focuses on (Cooper & Emory 1995:200); a comprehensive and well-defined group of the elements pertinent to a given research question or hypothesis (Smith 1988).

A *target population* is an idealised group representing the totality of target elements that interest the researcher. However, due to constraints such as time, cost or personnel, researchers do not always have access to the target population. In such circumstances, one has to be realistic and define the *accessible* population, to which one may generalise the findings (Du Plooy 1995). This is called a *survey population* by Smith (1988) -- a realistic group of elements available to a researcher after practical constraints have been taken into account.

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Project 1

For the student researchers, the *target* population consisted of all the non-profit organisations registered in South Africa, both national and international. The *accessible* or *survey* population are the non-profit organisations (mainly in the Witwatersrand area, or close to their home towns, but not exclusively), to whom student groups could gain access--either by word of mouth, personal experience or contacts--and who were willing and eager to participate in the project.

Project 2

The target and survey population of Project 2 was the same--it consisted of the third-year corporate communication students' research reports (in the form of corporate communication strategies), developed by student groups since the project's inception. In 1998 there were 48 student groups and during 1999 there were 46. In total, the population consisted of 94 group projects on corporate communication strategy.

5.4.5.5 Sampling frame

A sampling frame is an actual list of the sampling units—usually the target elements—a roster of population members (Smith 1988).

Project 1

There was no sampling frame—every student group selected a non-profit organisation on a convenience basis.

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Project 2

For the lecturer/researcher, the sampling frame was the numbered list of student groups participating in the research project every year. (The names of group members were also on this list). Since the action research project had been conducted twice over the past two years, there were two sampling frames.

The validity of sample data depends in part on how accurately and completely a sampling frame represents the population of interest. In this case, it was a perfect representation, since a census was taken.

5.4.5.6 Sample

A sample is a subset of a population, consisting of a small number of sampling units (Smith 1988) selected to represent that population (Cooper & Emory 1995:63).

Sampling and selection are principles and procedures used to identify, choose, and gain access to relevant units which will be used for data generation by any method (Mason 1996).

Project 1

The only restrictions placed on sample selection was that student groups were responsible for finding a non-profit organisation that was willing and eager to participate in the project, and provided total access to information.

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The students therefore used non-probability sampling—the specific type was *accidental* or *availability* sampling, called *convenience sampling* by Cooper & Emory (1995:202). Students groups as interviewers chose sample members at random, making no pretense of being representative of a population—i.e. no attempt was made to control bias. According to Leedy (1997), all research data do not have to be sterile, highly refined and controlled by criteria—however, *"without these safeguards, the research may not be trustworthy"*.

The fact that the design is longitudinal and different non-profit organisations will be selected by different student researchers every year increases the representativeness of the total sample each year.

Project 2

In this study, a sample was not drawn, but a census was done in both years—all corporate communication strategies that were developed by student groups, were assessed and analysed. A complete census was practical to achieve and also considered necessary, because the population was relatively small (94 projects during 1998 and 1999).

Although a census took place, it does not mean that no sampling had been done. Sampling had already been applied in the decision to use *third-year corporate communication students* at the *University of Pretoria* for the action research. 'Census' only implies that every unit within that specific category was selected (Mason 1996).

It can be said that the projects analysed during the two years, were from two different 'samples.' However, this was the aim of the study, being longitudinal.

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5.4.5.7 Sample size

Bertaux & Bertaux-Wiame (1981) claim that the size of the sample is dictated by the social process under scrutiny. *"You sample until you reach theory-saturation point, that is until you know that you have a picture of what is going on.....when your data stops telling you anything new."*

Sample size should help to *understand the process* rather than to statistically represent a population (Mason 1996).

Project 1 and 2

The sample size for both projects were the same. Because of practical considerations, the sample size could not be set in advance—it depended on the number of student groups that registered for the class project each year. This was determined by the size of the third year class in the subject Strategic Communication Management (KOB 320, Module A), at the University of Pretoria. There are usually around 230 third-year students per year—with four to five students per group, this roughly results in about 45 groups per year. In the final analysis, the number of non-profits sampled and the number of projects analysed by the lecturer/researcher depended on the number of groups (who completed and submitted their projects).

At the time of documenting this research report (May 2000), data generation and analysis has already taken place twice over a period of two years. The number of strategies analysed has increased to 94 (48 projects in 1998 and 46 projects in 1999). This can be regarded as a considerable number as far as in-depth interviewing is concerned (Project 1), and also sufficient for drawing preliminary conclusions as to the suitability of the twice-revised model for guiding students in the development of corporate communication strategies (Project 2).

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5.4.5.8 Key dimensions to sampling

The following dimensions to sampling are closely tied up to the question of validity. A judgement about whether data analysis is valid is a judgement about whether or not it measures, explicates or illuminates whatever it claims to do.

> ⇒ Temporal dimensions: This refers not only to what the researcher wants to sample, but specifically *when*.

Project 1 and 2

In both projects, the student researchers and lecturer were bound by the time of the year (first or second semester) that the third-year course in Strategic Communication Management (KOB 320, Module A) was presented. The action research fieldwork therefore had to take place during the second semester (middle July until the end of the September holidays).

> ⇒ Spatial or geographic dimensions: This refers to whether sampling units are *bounded* by place, space and location.

Project 1

No restrictions were placed by the lecturer on the sample of non-profit organisations selected by the student researchers--they were free to choose a non-profit anywhere in the country, as long as they could access them for data generation. Some students choose organisations in their home towns, which were geographically widely dispersed. However, for reasons of convenience, most students selected organisations located within the Witwatersrand area.

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Project 2

In this project, the students as *primary* sampling units were bound by place (the University of Pretoria) insofar their lectures on corporate communication strategy and access to their lecturer was concerned.

Geographical area had an influence on student groups (as *secondary* sampling units) as far as their place of living was concerned. Executing the research project necessitated many hours of group-work. Students who were living far from each other, experienced problems especially as far as working at night and during the September holidays was concerned (lack of transport, etc.).

> ⇒ Organisational, administrative, social, cultural or linguistic dimensions refer to how the sampling units are located in relation to the above dimensions.

Project 1

In selecting a non-profit organisation for their projects, few of the above dimensions created problems for the student researchers.

Project 2

In producing their corporate communication strategies, the student groups were influenced *firstly* by access to computers as well as computer literacy (for the presentation of the final report). They were also influenced by cultural and linguistic dimensions if the group was mixed. This presented a lot of conflict and influenced the output, in the form of the reports, to a great extent. Whereas culturally mixed groups were encouraged to manage conflict themselves, the

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lecturer was available if necessary to provide advice to individual group members on several occasions.

5.4.6 INSTRUMENTATION

An interview schedule is the 'questionnaire' that is used in an interview situation (Cooper & Emory 1995).

Project 1

Data was generated during *focused* in-depth interviews, where the student researchers guided the direction and coverage of the topic. It took place in the participants own environment, which was relaxed and unconstrained (an important characteristic for quality data). Since this was a confirmatory study, a semi-structured interview schedule was a logical choice—not only did it have the advantage of emphasising internal validity, generalisability and manageability, but provided the standardisation required for multiple cases (Miles & Huberman 1984).

To promote discussion and share as much information as possible, student researchers prepared an interview schedule with a set of *unstructured questions*, focused on the hypothesised model. Unstructured questions do not have a limited set of responses (they are open-ended) but provide a frame of reference for respondents' answers (Cooper & Emory 1995).

Project 2

The instrument used to gauge the understanding of the students was the hypothesised model.

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5.4.7 METHODS OF GENERATING DATA

> Data are the facts gathered from the study's environment (Cooper & Emory 1995). Qualitative data is any information the researcher gathers that is not expressed in numbers (Tesch 1990).

According to Mason (1996), it is more accurate to speak of *data generation* than data collection, because most qualitative perspectives would reject the idea that a researcher can be a completely neutral collector of information about the social world. Instead the researcher is seen as actively *constructing* knowledge about that world according to certain principles.

Qualitative studies often combine several data collection *{generation}* methods over the course of the study, depending on the type of information sought (Marshall & Rossman 1995).

Project 1

Data generation occurred *under actual environmental conditions,* also called a field setting. Student researchers generated their own data for the express purpose of the project. This is called *primary* data, since the data was collected for the first time and was original in character (Du Plooy 1995).

The method of data generation for Project 1 was a combination of participation, elite interviewing, and review of documents (Marshall & Rossman 1995:79-83).

Participant observation

Participant observation can both be an overall approach as well as a data gathering technique. (In this study, the latter is true). It is a technique that requires immersion in the community chosen for the study. The many hours spent at the non-profit organisations enabled student researchers to hear, see and experience the reality of a non-profit organisation as the participants did.

In-depth interviewing

This method is described by Kahn & Cannel (*in* Marshall & Rossman 1995:80) as "*a conversation with a purpose*". In-depth interviewing was used by students in two instances:

> ⇒ *To interview their selected non-profit organisation, in order to obtain information in the field that will enable them to write their corporate communication strategy research reports.*

The most important part of an interviewer's approach is to convey an attitude of acceptance, namely that the information is valuable and useful (Marshall & Rossman 1995). Student researchers had a vested interest in the outcome of their interviews--to obtain the right kind of information to be able to develop a corporate communication strategy for the particular non-profit organisation, in order that they may obtain a (good) semester mark. A fair chance thus existed that they would view the information as valuable and useful. Furthermore, since students did not have the information themselves and could not obtain it anywhere else (there is no literature on the subject), and also because experience has indicated that students enjoy practical projects, their attitudes probably conveyed eagerness and acceptance (as was confirmed by letters of

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thanks received by the lecturer/principal researcher from the non-profit organisations afterwards).

{The Department of Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria require of their students to conduct large practical projects, at all levels of study. It has been noted that students are usually very enthusiastic about their practicals, even though it takes considerable time and effort to execute--the average student, however, does not necessarily exhibit the same amount of enthusiasm when it comes to studying and being tested on theory.}

The principal data generation method used by student researchers closely resembled a specific form of in-depth interviewing, called *elite interviewing,* which focuses on a particular type of interviewee. These are usually influential, prominent and well-informed individuals in an organisation/community, selected for their expertise in areas relevant to the research (Marshall & Rossman 1995:83).

In this project, students attempted to interview the person heading the non-profit organisation, i.e. the manager or director, since they were deemed the most probable to be able to provide an overall view of the organisation, and the information and perspective required for developing a corporate communication strategy. In the event that the most senior manager was not available, student researchers interviewed the corporate communication practitioner and as many relevant others that were deemed necessary or were willing to participate in the research—thus ensuring quality data collection.

The most important disadvantage of elite interviewing is usually the accessibility of important, busy persons. In the case of this project, it did not present a big problem-- the person heading a non-profit organisation was conceivably not under the same time constraints as those faced by the chief executive of a major

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corporation. The student researchers, in all probability, also had more knowledge on the subject of corporate communication strategy than did the director/manager. This was bound to lend them credibility, increase the likelihood of holding the director's attention and obtaining a good interview by staying in control of the situation (which would not have been the case, for instance, with the chief executive of a major corporate).

⇒ *To interview their lecturer/the principal researcher (or the lecturer's research assistant)*

This was done during the lecturer's consultation hours over a period of two and a half months while the action research was being conducted. The consultation hours were specifically set aside for interviews with students who were experiencing problems in some way or the other. These occasions took place at the request of the student groups, but were also very meaningful to the lecturer/researcher as it shed light on problem areas.

Review of documents

The analysis of documentary sources is a major method of social research, referring to the gathering and analysis of documents produced in the course of every day events. Some documents are already in existence whereas others are generated through the research process. Text-based documents are used by researchers because aspects of the social world can be traced or read through them (Mason 1996). In some instances the documents are viewed in a literal sense—as data itself. In other cases they need to be read and integrated for evidence. Researchers must be forearmed with a good sense of what they are looking for—what the documents should be able to tell them about, i.e. what part of the intellectual puzzle they might help to address (Mason 1996). This data generating method was used in Project 1 as follows:

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The student researchers reviewed existing documents and other visual communication products produced by non-profit organisations, to supplement the elite interviewing described above. This *unobtrusive* method provided an alternative angle on the data generated through the interviewing process. The method was used because the documents existed, they were relevant to the research question and it was easy to gain access to them (Mason 1996). In this project, documents referred mostly to vision and mission statements, organisational planning documentation, marketing or communication campaigns, letters or funding proposals to donors, etc. It also included videos, slides and other audio-visual materials.

In some instances the students viewed the documents in a literal sense--as data that could be transferred straight onto their reports, i.e. the mission and vision statements. In other cases the documents had to be interpreted to deduce the meaning with regard to the research objective (for instance, the planning documentation as well as the campaign plans).

Student researchers were encouraged by the lecturer/researcher to supplement their in-depth interviews with a review of existing documents. Obtaining and studying the above mentioned documentation even before the first in-depth interview took place, created a definite advantage for a student group. Not only did it familiarise them with the non-profit organisation, but it also assisted in drawing up relevant interview schedules. This probably increased the credibility of the student researchers in the eyes of the manager/director of the non-profit organisation, resulting in more in-depth discussions and more meaningful data generation.

Project 2

The review of documents was the principal data generation method used by the lecturer/researcher in the evaluation and analysis of the students' research reports.

These corporate communication strategy documents did not exist, but were generated through the research process in order to answer research questions. Student groups developed corporate communication strategies by implementing the model in a non-profit organisation of their choice. Through the evaluation and analysis of the projects, the researcher determined the extent to which student groups understood the concept of corporate communication strategy and the process of developing it in an organisational setting. In this project, the documents were not viewed in a literal sense—i.e. as data itself. They needed to be read, analysed and integrated to provide the necessary evidence (Mason 1996).

5.5 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER(S)

In qualitative studies, the researcher is "*the instrument …..whose presence in the lives of the participants invited to be part of the study, is fundamental to the paradigm*" (Marshall & Rossman 1995:59).

A researcher's role might entail varying degrees of actual participation in a study—it could either be one of full participation or that of a complete observer.

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Project 1

The lecturer as the principal researcher coached the student researchers and set broad guidelines, but did not become personally involved in the social interaction with the participant community (Marshall & Rossman 1995:60). The student researchers carried full responsibility for making contact with a non-profit organisation, obtaining their participation for the project. They were expected to make a presentation (both written and oral) in order to explain their role and activities, what they were interested in learning about as well as the possible uses of the information obtained. Also, they were to ascertain the expectations of the non-profit staff members for the research project.

To avoid any misunderstandings in this regard, it was obligatory for students to obtain a letter of intent (a kind of action research contract), signed by a senior representative of the non-profit organisation, which had to be included when submitting their research reports to the lecturer. The above procedure satisfied another requirement for good qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman 1995:65), namely that researchers were to inform participants on what their role entailed. Student researchers were furthermore responsible for conducting the research and providing follow-up by making the research report available to their research partners (after it had been assessed and evaluated by the lecturer/researcher).

In action research, the purpose of the study is revealed fully to the participant community -- their total participation is a prerequisite (Marshall & Rossman 1995:60-61).This was not difficult to obtain, since the non-profit organisations stood to benefit greatly from the outcome of the research. For the same reason, negotiating entry to the organisations did not present a problem. Nevertheless, the right of the non-profit to decline participation, was fully respected.

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According to Marshall & Rossman (1995:64), qualitative studies depend primarily on the interpersonal skills of the researcher(s), referring to aspects such as building trust, maintaining good relations, and a sensitivity to human interaction. Student researchers were final year students in communication management, knowledgeable on the value of building good relationships with 'stakeholders'. Furthermore, during their second year of study, they had been equipped with knowledge on group and management communication, e.g. following a people oriented approach to motivation, conflict resolution, a participatory management style and leadership skills. This background was bound to prove invaluable in their interaction with the participant community.

Project 2

Although the lecturer/researcher did not involve herself physically in interaction with the participant community, her participation in the action research lay in:

♦ conducting the initial literature study

♦ hypothesising the model

♦ consulting with students throughout the duration of the project

♦ evaluating the individual group reports on the completed corporate communication strategies

♦ analysing the reports for possible implementation problems/new or difficult constructs, and

♦ adapting the model.

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5.6 THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

5.6.1 RECORDING AND MANAGING THE DATA

> Data should be recorded in a systematic manner that is appropriate and will facilitate analysis (Marshall & Rossman 1995).

Project 1

Students recorded the data that was generated in a systematic manner, by following the guidelines in the form of the hypothesised model. The lecturer made it clear to student researchers that the model was a tool or tentative guide with which to begin observation and analysis, but that they were free to record any additional information they considered relevant.

When using participation approaches for recording data, care should be taken that techniques used will not intrude unnecessarily on participants' lives/daily events. However, in action research approaches, this is not an issue. In this project, full participation was obtained in advance from the non-profit organisations, in some cases even solicited by them.

Project 2

The lecturer/researcher used evaluation forms to assess each student group's project according to specific criteria. (An example of the form is included in the section on 'Schedule and Project Management'--see 5.9.5 'Evaluation'). Furthermore, detailed notes were taken in comparing the projects against each

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other—all problem areas were carefully noted, as well as the areas where no problems were experienced.

5.6.2 DATA ANALYSIS

> Marshall & Rossman (1995:111) see data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of data collected *(generated)*.

According to Miles & Huberman (1984), data analysis actually consists of three concurrent flows of activity:

> ⇒ *Data reduction* refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data that have been written up in field notes.

Data reduction occurred continuously throughout the life of both action research projects--even before data generation, when the lecturer/researcher decided which conceptual framework, research questions or data generating approaches to use.

Project 1

Data reduction already took place during data generation amongst non-profit organisations, when student researchers based their interview schedules on the model, and also during interpretation and report writing, when students once again used the model as their conceptual framework in taking decisions.

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Project 2

Data reduction took place as the lecturer/researcher was evaluating student research reports, noting which constructs on the model was causing problems for students (meriting further attention/changes), and which could be left as is.

⇒ *Data display* is an organised assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action taking. The most frequently used form is narrative text, which is very bulky—more effective are matrices, graphs, networks and charts.

Project 1

The student researchers wrote their reports in narrative form, based to a large extent on the format of the hypothesised model.

Project 2

The initial (and later literature studies) was displayed by the lecturer/researcher in narrative form, and the resulting hypothesised model and its revisions in graphic form.

⇒ *Conclusion drawing/verification* takes place from the beginning of data generation, when the researcher(s) starts to decide what things mean--noting patterns, explanations, regularities, etc.

Data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification were interwoven before, during and after data generation--together it made up the data analysis.

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Conclusion drawing/verification as part of data analysis will be discussed in the following section under 'Interpretation of the Data'.

5.6.3 INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

In this study, final conclusions did not appear until data generation, analysis and evaluation was over, but they were prefigured from the start.

Project 1

The data generated from the interviews with, and the review of the documents of, the non-profit organisations was analysed and interpreted by the student researchers. In this process, they were greatly aided by the hypothesised model as a conceptual framework for developing a written corporate communication strategy for their particular non-profit organisation.

Student researchers were further assisted in the interpretation process by consultations with a research assistant, as well as with the lecturer/researcher. These consultations occurred on an ongoing basis while data generation and analysis took place, but intensified during the stage of interpretation and report writing. In order to counter the students' time constraints in this regard, the final date for submission of the research reports/corporate communication strategies were set after the September holiday break. This enabled students to work full-time on their reports for a week (without classes, tests, etc.) and also allowed unlimited access to the lecturer/researcher during this critical time.

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Project 2

After having individually assessed and evaluated students' corporate communication strategies, the lecturer/researcher comparatively analysed these reports. Some implementation problems and new/related concepts were discovered, and other concepts discarded to improve the model. This process will fully be described/explicated in Chapter 6.

At the time of writing this research script, the process has twice been repeated during two consecutive years (94 reports in total). The researcher foresees that during the next (third) cycle of action research, major modifications should occur less often since constructs seem to have fallen into established categories. However, the process will continue with the new third year groups during the second semester of the year 2000 (July to September). Analysis will be considered complete when the critical categories have been defined, and the relationships among them have been established (Marshall & Rossman 1995:112).

5.6.3.1 Building explanations from the data

> Qualitative researchers are in the business of producing social explanations, or addressing intellectual puzzles. Social explanation can do different things: *compare*, *develop* and *trace, describe, predict* and *theorise* (Mason 1996).

A researcher should decide which kinds of explanations are developed by the study: whether the data is an explanation in itself, or provides a way into an explanation, or represents/signifies an explanation--i.e. does the data need to be

interpreted, and must the researcher read behind or beyond the data (Mason 1996).

Project 1

The explanations provided by the non-profit organisations and the student researchers were *developing* and *tracing*. *Developmental explanations* are those which attempt to trace and account for the development of social phenomena, social processes, social change, etc. (Mason 1996). The data generated enabled the student researchers to trace and chart relevant developmental stages in the formulation of corporate communication strategy. The data did therefore not present an explanation in itself, but provided a way into an explanation of what corporate communication strategy constituted for that particular non-profit organisation.

Project 2

The lecturer/researcher developed *comparative explanations*, which aim to draw some explanatory significance from a specified set of comparisons (Mason 1996). The data, generated and classified by the student researchers on the key comparative components (the key constructs in the model) and presented in the form of a corporate communication strategy, was analysed and compared. A simplified version of cross-sectional analysis was used, which implies making comparisons across the whole of the data set, around certain specified themes (the constructs on the model). The focus of the activity was in comparing *everything* on the basis of specified themes, rather than selecting specific comparisons in order to test developing explanations.

This comparative approach was used across all the observations, and the evidence from many observations combined (King, Keohane & Verba 1994),

looking for negative instances. The latter signifies problem areas, e.g. where students did not understand the model, or what it was they had to achieve. This is where the most important changes were made—in the negative instances indications were found as to where problem areas were, and how they could be solved by improvements on the model.

In the process of analysing the 94 completed corporate communication strategies, the researcher had to read behind or beyond the data to assess whether student groups *understood* the constructs, were *able to implement* the model by generating and recording meaningful data and arriving at conclusions (a meaningful final product in the form of a communication strategy). The comparisons between the projects were used to *identify common problem areas* in the corporate communication strategies, signifying *weak/unclear constructs* in the model that had to be improved (secondary objectives under Research Objective 3). In some cases, strong student groups provided improved some constructs themselves. In Project 2, it can be said that the data stood for or represented evidence of something else in an interpretive or significative sense— it was not an explanation in itself.

The above process of analysis led to the lecturer developing further explanations, namely that of *theorising.* This implies that the qualitative data analysis had wider relevance to some explanatory body of knowledge. According to Mason (1996), the researcher must decide at what point in the research process the construction and development of theory is done. In this research script, both inductive and deductive reasoning was employed in building theory.

In achieving Research Objectives 1 and 2, inductive reasoning was used. Theory was the outcome of the literature investigations, in the form of the conceptualisation of the role of the *PR strategist* (Chapter 3), and the conceptualisation of *corporate communication strategy* (Chapter 4). Inductive

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reasoning was also used in achieving the first secondary objective under Research Objective 3 (the hypothesised model for developing corporate communication strategy), since theory was again the outcome of a literature investigation.

However, in achieving the secondary objective of implementing the model, deductive reasoning was used—here theory came first in the form of the hypothesised model, generated in advance of the research process. The model was confirmed or measured against the data generation and analysis (the development of the corporate communication strategies). In achieving the secondary objective of improving the model, however, inductive reasoning was used. In this case, theory came last (the model was twice modified by the empirical research), developed from and through the data generation, analysis and comparison of the corporate communication strategies.

5.6.4 CONCLUSION

This longitudinal study can be seen as having using structured, organised data generating and analysing schemes, which still left enough freedom to record the new or unexpected. Where the model provided initial categories for data generation, the student researchers shifted/replaced them as data was generated and analysed. After evaluating and analysing the students' final research reports, the lecturer/researcher also shifted around and even discarded some concepts/categories, in order to improve the hypothesised model (Marshall & Rossman 1995).

5.7 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND GENERALISABILITY

In this section, the questions of reliability and accuracy of method; validity of data; and generalisability of analyses will be considered.

5.7.1 RELIABILITY AND ACCURACY OF METHOD

In quantitative research, reliability is often measured by observing the consistency with which the same methods of data collection produce the same results. *"Reliability is therefore conceptualised in terms of how reliable, accurate and precise the research tools or instruments are, and this in turn is being judged by the consistency with which instruments produce certain measurements"* (Mason 1996). It was not possible for the lecturer/researcher to perform reliability tests of this type because the data that was generated did not take the form of a clearly standardised set of measurements.

However, data generation and analysis should not only be appropriate to the research question -- it should also be thorough, careful, honest and accurate (Mason 1996):

- **thorough:** The qualitative research strategy maximised the possibilities that adequate information would be obtained enabling the researcher to respond to the research questions thoroughly and thoughtfully, eliciting the sought-after information.

- **careful:** Pains were taken by the researcher to make the students understand the importance of being extremely careful in their data generation and analysis, and so herself as well.

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- **honest:** The students were honest with the non-profit organisations in explaining what they could do, but also what they could not do for them. The importance of being honest insofar as not inventing or misrepresenting the data, was also explained. The fact that the students worked in groups, greatly assisted in ensuring honesty. There were three instances of dishonesty in the projects over the two years, but the lecturer's knowledge of the subject made it easy to recognise. The particular students were given the choice of appearing before a disciplinary committee, or doing the project over. In all instances they chose the latter.

- **accurate** (as distinct from true or correct): The information was deemed accurate for the following reasons: Participation by non-profit organisations in the action research was entirely voluntary--they were specifically selected by students on the grounds of their enthusiasm for participating, and the total access to information they were willing to provide. Many staff members of the non-profits were volunteers, with a passion and much enthusiasm for their work. Participant organisations also had much to gain from providing accurate information, since they were the beneficiaries in the end, by receiving a corporate communication strategy for their organisations.

Only one student group was allowed per non-profit organisation—this prevented interview fatigue. The groups usually consisted of four or five students, which acted as a safety mechanism in providing accurate information. Different non-profit staff members provided information, which meant the information could be double-checked. Students also provided their reports to the non-profits after they had been evaluated, which acted as a further control mechanism for providing accurate information.

What was very important, was that students seemed 'thrilled' that their knowledge was sought after and went the extra mile—the quality of the research reports were of a high standard.

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5.7.2 VALIDITY OF DATA

> The validity of the action research approach lies in the skills of the enquirer; it is more personal and interpersonal, rather than methodological (McNiff 1988).

A judgement about whether data analysis is valid, is a judgement about whether or not it measures, explicates or illuminates whatever it claims to do--it concerns the conceptual clarity of the study. Qualitative researchers tend to focus on validity, since it is a more meaningful concept to qualitative research than reliability. It is important that the validity of the data generation methods and the validity of interpretation should be demonstrated (Mason 1996).

- *Validity of data generation methods*

In the discussion of the research methodology up to date, care has been taken to indicate how the data sources (the model and non-profit organisations in the case of the student researchers, and the student groups' corporate communication strategies in the case of the lecturer) and the data generation methods provided the explanations necessary to answer the empirical objectives, as well as Research Objective 3. A short overview of this chapter, specifically referring to the validity of the data generation methods, will now be provided.

The researcher decided to create a pre-existing conceptual framework for the study in the form of a model. Although the traditional view is that the conceptual framework should emerge from the field, the researcher concurred with Miles & Huberman (1984) that a *lack* of bounding and focusing in this particular study would have led to indiscriminate data collection and data overload. The looser the initial design, the less selective the collection of data. Having decided thus, the researcher had to decide in advance which dimensions of the study were

more important, which relationships were the most meaningful, and what kinds of information should be collected and analysed. The model was then used as a guideline by the student researchers in generating and analysing the data, confirming its validity through the selected methodology of action research, rather than identifying the initial constructs/categories by means of exploration.

In conducting this confirmatory study, a semi-structured interview schedule was a logical choice—not only did it have the advantage of emphasising internal validity, generalisability and manageability, but provided the standardisation required for multiple cases (Miles & Huberman 1984). If different field-workers are working inductively, with no common framework or instrumentation, they are bound to end up with data overload and lack of comparability across cases. It also allowed multiple researchers/fieldworkers to be sure that they were studying the same phenomenon—a necessary requirement in this study where 94 organisations were interviewed over two years by approximately 400 students.

The fact that only one group of students were allowed to work within an organisation, prevented interview fatigue amongst organisational members, ensuring quality of data generation and therefore increased validity. This was further strengthened by the fact that the student researchers worked with different people in the organisation, obtaining different views on the same constructs. In most instances, the principal participant was the manager/director-- the most likely person to have the information relevant to the research questions.

Students also supplemented their in-depth interviews with a review of existing documents. Obtaining and studying relevant documentation even before the first in-depth interview took place, familiarised students with the organisation and assisted in drawing up relevant interview schedules. This probably also increased the credibility of the student researchers in the eyes of the

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manager/director and other organisational members, resulting in more in-depth discussions and more meaningful/ valid data generation.

Another important factor in obtaining valid data was the fact that organisational members were willing and eager to participate in the project, and prepared to provide total co-operation and access to relevant information. The active participation of people whom the research is intended to assist, is an important advantage of action research. Organisational members seemed to appreciate the students' enthusiasm and earnest efforts to be of help, which resulted in good relationships between organisational members and students. (This was manifested by the letters and calls of appreciation that the lecturer received from members of the non-profit organisations. Some even attended the presentations that students made to a panel of lecturers upon completion of the project. The lecturer has since received calls from eight non-profit organisations, asking to be considered for the project during the next cycle.)

The validity of the data was also increased by the fact that student researchers and the participant community reached a compromise on the goals of the project beforehand. The students informed the participant community on their own role in the data generating process, what they were interested in learning about, and the use of the information obtained.

In drawing up the research assignment and work plan for the student groups, the lecturer/researcher considered important sampling dimensions which are closely tied to the question of validity—i.e. temporal, spatial/geographic dimensions, and organisational/administrative/social/cultural/linguistic dimensions. (These were fully explained in section 5.4.5.8 earlier in this chapter).

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- *Validity of interpretation*

> This involves asking how valid the data analysis is, and the interpretation on which it is based. Validity of interpretation is dependent on validity of method, since interpretation cannot be valid unless the methods and sources have enabled the researchers to get at the concepts they say they are getting at (Mason 1996).

The fact that the student researchers used the hypothesised model as a pre-existing conceptual framework for understanding the concept of corporate communication strategy, for basing their interviews schedules on it, and for recording/structuring/interpreting the data according to the constructs on the model, was a major factor in increasing the validity of the study. The biggest advantage of the confirmatory design was that the conclusions were deemed more valid. The participant community (non-profit organisations) were initially not knowledgeable on the subject of corporate communication strategy, and neither would the students have been without the model.

In view of the discussion in the previous section on the validity of the data generation, the researcher is reasonably satisfied that this aspect was well managed. With regard to the interpretation of the data, the researcher (and her research assistant) was personally much more involved through the consultations with students. Hours were spent with student groups in order that they might arrive at the correct interpretation of the data. In assessing the individual assignments, another 80 hours (per year) were spent in verifying that groups did indeed arrive at the correct interpretation, as manifested in their research reports/corporate communication strategies.

In the analysis and comparison of the different group reports, great care was taken to pinpoint the problem areas and difficult constructs. Specific attention was paid to 'negative instances' i.e. cases which you would not expect to see, if your explanations were adequate. These areas/constructs merited special attention--especially if there were several cases, all making the same mistake. This indicated the changes/improvements that had to be made on the model. The researcher is of the opinion that the biggest changes have now taken place and most conceptual improvements have been made. However, the action research project will continue until no new constructs/problem areas can be ascertained. It is planned that these projects will be directed towards the government sector in the second semester of 2000, and towards small to medium sized private sector companies in 2001.

5.7.3 GENERALISABILITY OF ANALYSES

According to Mason (1996), generalisation can be thought of in two ways: *empirical* generalisation and *theoretical* generalisation. An empirical generalisation is based on a logic whereby the researcher makes generalisations from an analysis of one empirical population (i.e. the non-profit organisations studied in the action research project) to another wider population (i.e. *all* non-profit organisations in South Africa), on the basis that the study population was statistically representative of the wider population. The researcher is unable to make this kind of generalisation.

However, the researcher does claim to make a *theoretical generalisation*, which does not represent one uniform method of generalising, but instead encompasses a range of strategies based on differing logics (Mason 1996). At the very least, it can be said that, although analysis had not been based on data derived from a representative sample, there is *no reason to believe that the sample and therefore the analysis is atypical.* Furthermore, that the analysis of

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the process of developing corporate communication strategy amongst 94 non-profit organisations demonstrated *that it was possible for such processes to work in the way specified by the hypothesised model.* The lecturer/researcher is of the opinion that lessons can indeed be learnt from the study to serve not only other non-profit organisations, but also corporate communication practitioners in the for profit and government sector, as well as corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

The object of study in this research was not only the process of teaching corporate communication students how to develop a corporate communication strategy. The study was a case of a larger phenomenon--the particulars of the study served to illuminate larger issues such as the possible use of the model as a guideline to corporate communication practitioners in general, which pointed to the study's significance.

If it could be shown that corporate communication students at UP, as well as the staff of non-profit organisations understood how to apply the model, there is no reason to believe that practitioners, who are much more knowledgeable in the field, could not do so. Non-profit organisations are a particularly difficult setting, because there is little knowledge of strategy or planning—it therefore presented an excellent testing ground to judge the implementation of the model. Non-profit organisations as sampling units were therefore significant in theoretical, if not in empirical, terms.

In qualitative research, there is a serious question of sampling involved—the validity of sample data depends in part on how accurately and completely a sampling frame represents the population of interest. In Project 2, it was a perfect representation, since a census was taken. The researcher therefore judged 94 corporate communication strategies as being sufficient for drawing *preliminary*

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conclusions as to the suitability of the model for explicating the process of developing corporate communication strategy.

In Project 1, a convenience sample was drawn—no effort was made to control bias. However, the design of the study is longitudinal--different non-profit organisations will be selected by different student researchers every year to implement a different (revised model), increasing the representativeness of the total sample each year.

5.7.4 ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA OF SOUNDNESS

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985:290), the constructs of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity are inappropriate for naturalistic or qualitative inquiry. They propose the following four alternative constructs that more accurately reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm:

- *credibility,* in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that *the subject was accurately identified and described.* Within the parameters of the setting, population and theoretical framework, the research is deemed credible by the researcher.

- *transferability,* in which demonstrating applicability of one set of findings to another context rests more with the researcher who makes the transfer than with the original researcher. The researcher established the theoretical parameters of the research by constantly referring back to the original theoretical framework (the hypothesised model) to show how data generation, analysis and interpretation was guided by the constructs on the model.

- *dependability,* where a researcher accounts for changing conditions in the phenomenon studied as well as changes in the design created by increasing comprehension of the setting (this is in sharp contrast to the concept of reliability). In both projects, the lecturer/researcher constantly referred to the fact that different student groups selected different non-profit organisations

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every year to study a different (revised model), thus accounting for both changing conditions as well as for changes in the design through increased comprehension.

- **_confirmability_** refers to the traditional concept of objectivity, i.e. whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another. The preliminary findings of the study is simply that the revised model seems to be an effective tool to satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year students at UP. Furthermore, that there is no reason to believe that the model cannot successfully be applied by students at other tertiary institutions, by corporate communication practitioners, or in other sectors such as government or the private sector.

This has already been put to the test in that three corporate communication managers (one from a tertiary institution, one from a mining house and one from an information technology company) has recently used the model in developing a corporate communication strategy for their organisations. Upon perusing the strategies they had developed, the lecturer found that, in general, the model was successfully implemented. The one area that proved difficult to the practitioners (and also to the students) was namely to identify the implications of strategic issues on the stakeholders, in order to arrive at the communication issues that should be addressed (from which communication goals are derived).

This might be caused by the fact that the model is still seriously flawed. Alternatively, it might be that the link between communication goals and corporate goals truly is a problem for most students/practitioners. The lecturer/researcher is of the opinion that the latter is the case. This was exactly the problem spelled out by the 'Statement of the Problem' in Chapter 1—corporate communication practitioners are not addressing strategic issues. This might be because they do not know how to identify them or how to link their communication goals to corporate goals. This is therefore the area that will receive special attention in the third cycle of action research—trying to build theory and revise the model in such a way that the problem is addressed.

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5.8 TIME, HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

> The resources most critical to successful completion of a study are time, personnel, and financial support (Marshall & Rossman 1995).

5.8.1 TIME MANAGEMENT

Time was seen as presenting the biggest difficulties in implementing this research project. Third year students in their final semester before graduation are inundated with practical projects, tests and examination preparations. A very tight time schedule for the project and provision of assistance by the lecturer in developing it, was seen to be essential for successful completion of the research project. This was done by having provided a detailed section in the students' study guide, outlining the scope of the research project and setting preliminary deadlines for administrative as well as academic progress.

5.8.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

To staff the project did not present a problem. The researcher was a lecturer, conducting the action research as part of her research and teaching responsibilities. The research assistant was also a staff member, acting as academic/research assistant to the lecturer. The student researchers were obligated to conduct the research as part of their semester mark, and the non-profit organisations made their staff available upon their agreement to participate.

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5.8.3 FINANCIAL SUPPORT OR EXTRA FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT

Financial support or extra facilities were not required. The lecturer/researcher and research assistant worked from their offices, the non-profit organisations provided their inputs free of charge and the students carried their own costs (e.g. transport, computer equipment, typing paper, binding of reports, etc).

5.9 SCHEDULE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

5.9.1 RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between the lecturer/researcher and student researchers was *firstly* that of lecturer to students and *secondly*, that of project manager to support staff. No problems were experienced in this regard.

5.9.2 TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF REPORTS

The students were obligated to register their groups by a certain date, and also to 'register' their non-profit organisations in order that two groups were not preparing corporate communication strategies for the same organisation. The latter was done by supplying the research assistant with the letters of intent/action research contracts signed by the participating non-profits. This measure was deemed necessary because it was surmised that if a second group interviewed the same organisational members, they would not get the same quality of data as the first. This ensured quality of data and thus increased the validity of data generation.

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Student researchers were furthermore obligated to report their progress twice to the research assistant (during the first two months) and once to the lecturer (during the third month) before submitting their reports. Both the research assistant and lecturer were available to the students on a daily basis for consultations, an opportunity that was used by most groups.

5.9.3 RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

Following is an extract from the research assignment as provided to the students in their study guides at the beginning of the second semester. The first period of the semester was spent explaining the project.

Develop a **Corporate Communication Strategy** for any non-profit organisation. Apply the theory in Theme 1—use the model as a framework.

Develop the corporate communication strategy by first drawing up a *stakeholder map* and identifying strategic stakeholders and publics. Thereafter describe *five strategic issues* faced by the organisation, obtained through environmental scanning and a SWOT analysis. Clearly differentiate between strategic issues caused by wrong or no communication, and those organisational issues (not caused by communication) for which good communication provides a part of the solution.

Now identify and describe the *key communication issues* resulting from the five strategic issues, by analysing their implications for the organisation's strategic stakeholders and publics, both internal and external. Prioritise the key communication issues and state your reasons for why some have graver implications for the organisation than others—also indicate where pro-active

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> communication will have the most success, i.e. contribute most to the organisation achieving its mission.
>
> (Please note the evaluation criteria to see which other aspects must also be covered in-depth in your strategy).
>
> The **written assignment** is to be submitted to the tutor on **Thursday 23 September,** between 9h30 and 11h30 **(E&B 4-103)**, or to the academic assistant between 12h00 and 14h00 **(E&B 4-105).**

5.9.4 WORK PLAN

Following is an extract from the work pan in order to demonstrate the effort of the lecturer/researcher to assist the student researchers with time scheduling.

> Register a group of 4-5 people **before 23 July** with the tutor in E&B 4-103.

> - Names and student numbers must be presented, upon which a group number will be assigned.
> - During registration with the tutor a **first** appointment is to be made to see the academic assistant to discuss your corporate communication strategy (a schedule of appointment times will be provided by the tutor—please bring your diary along).
> - On this occasion please collect a letter of introduction from the tutor, which you can show to the non-profit organisation to prove your legitimacy and explain the nature of the research project.

> Approach any non-profit organisation with both a *written* and *oral presentation* of what a corporate communication strategy entails, and what the advantages would be in actively taking part in the research project.

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- Acquire the **written** permission of the organisation for your group to obtain the information required and to develop a corporate communication strategy for them. (This letter of permission must be handed in together with the written assignment).

- Organise a contact person in the organisation through whom all negotiations can take place.

- Work with different people in the organisation in order to obtain the necessary information about the organisation—include the manager/director if at all possible, since this person would be in the best position to assist you with information relevant to developing a corporate communication strategy.

It is **obligatory** for each group to visit the research assistant **at least twice** before submission of the project. The **first visit** must take place **before 12 August** and the **second visit before 9 September**. Your visits will be noted and taken into account should you be a border case at the end of the semester.

- During the **first visit** (before 12 August), the **name** of the non-profit organisation is to be **registered.** However, it is advisable that you register as soon as permission has been obtained. This will avoid disappointment, since **only one group per organisation** can be allowed.

Do not try to divide the project between group members. If one element of the strategy does not flow directly or logically from the previous, the group will loose marks.

The lecturer is available for consultations for the duration of the project (as well as during the holidays). Please note her consulting hours (provided in the study guide and on her door). Arrange an appointment if these times do not suit you.

Attend the **practical classes,** where practical cases and examples will be presented.

- Hand in on time and note the aspects on which you will be evaluated. For each day that the project is handed in late, **10%** will be deducted from your marks.

- See to it that you have finished writing up the project by the end of the holidays (19 September) in order to leave enough time for typing and editing.

- Please make backups on stiffies and print a hard copy **regularly**. It is imperative that you have a Plan B ready in the event of a crisis.

5.9.5 EVALUATION

Following is an abstract of the evaluation form used in 1999 to assess student reports.

TECHNICAL CARE	
• Table of contents, numerical system	5
• Language use and editing	5
• Bonus (neatness, special presentation, outside cover, etc.)	5
	15
CONTENTS OF THE PROJECT	
• Description of the corporate profile (vision, mission and corporate culture)	8
• Overall stakeholder analysis (internal and external)	10
• Identification of key strategic issues, environmental scanning and SWOT analysis	14
• Identification of key communication issues (implications of key strategic issues)	8
• Communication policy	5
• Overall media analysis	5
	50
CONTENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN	
• Situation analysis and objectives (derived from the strategy)	6
• Specific stakeholders/target publics	5
• Messages	4
• Implementation strategy and activities (action plans)	10
• Scheduling	5
• Evaluation research	5
	35
TOTAL FOR PROJECT	**100**

Of relevance to this research project is the second part, namely 'Contents of the Project'. Whereas the first part evaluates the technical care, the second part can be described as the core of the project, counting 50% of the marks.

Since the identification of stakeholders and issues were identified in the literature investigation of this research script as being the core of the two strategic management roles of the corporate communication function, the overall stakeholder analysis counts 10% of the total marks of the report. The identification of the key strategic issues and the scanning used therein counts the most namely 14%. The rationale behind this was explained in the 'Statement of the Problem' in Chapter 1. Chief executives were of the opinion that corporate communication practitioners do not address organisational problems/key strategic issues, but focus only on communication problems. The lecturer/researcher therefore attempts to focus the attention of students on the identification of stakeholders and issues <u>before</u> they start to develop communication plans.

The third part of the evaluation focuses on the development of a communication plan, based on one of the key strategic issues. The development of the plan is not addressed for the purposes of this script, since it is familiar to most corporate communication practitioners and students, and regularly appears in most corporate communication texts. However, what is important here is that students' attention was focused in their assignment on *communication goals* being the link between the communication plan and the organisational mission. Therefore, that a strategic stakeholder and issues analysis <u>must</u> precede the development of the communication plan, in order to link it to organisational issues/problems, and thereby to the achievement of the organisational mission.

5.10 CONCLUSION

Action research is clearly a valuable tool in knowledge sharing and ongoing learning. It was particularly apt in this study for the following reasons (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:60-61):

- It is concerned with solving particular problems facing communities (students and non-profit organisations).

- It assists individuals, organisations and communities (students and non-profit organisations) to learn skills and obtain resources to function more effectively in future.

- It is a way of spreading understanding gained through research to individuals, groups, organisations or communities who can benefit from those findings (students, non-profit organisations, and practitioners through eventual publications and conferences).

- It facilitates communication between researchers and communities in need of assistance.

- It makes the work of researchers directly beneficial to society.

Because of a lack of resources, non-profit organisations in general do not have highly qualified corporate communication practitioners (if any), nor do their leaders have strategic communication skills. This poses a serious threat to them, since in most instances they are dependent on their donors for survival. Excellent long-term relationships with strategic stakeholders such as donors are of the utmost importance to most non-profit organisations. This project provides them with an opportunity to obtain knowledge on strategic communication by working closely with the student researchers. The end result, a corporate communication strategy for their organisation, is available to them at no cost (except their time invested).

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Corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, on the other hand, do not undergo internships, which results in a lack of practical experience. This is a disadvantage upon seeking a job, especially when compared to technicon students. This project provides them with an opportunity to obtain experience by applying their knowledge and learning firsthand of the problems facing industry. It also provides an opportunity for third year students to contribute their time and knowledge to the non-profit sector—acquiring not only strategic communication skills in the process, but also learning to become socially involved.

Having selected action research as a methodology for the implementation and improvement of the hypothesised model, the empirical part of this study represents the researcher's own attempts to improve practically a process of education—to involve students in building theory, to improve practice, and to understand the process of improving practice.

In Chapter 6, the procedures followed in developing a model for the formulation of corporate communication strategy is explicated by means of a detailed analysis of the different stages of the action research process, through two full cycles of action research completed for the purposes of this research script.

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CHAPTER 6

OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

$\Rightarrow$

> **CHAPTER 1:**
>
> INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM
>
> AND ITS SETTING

$\Downarrow$

> **CHAPTER 2:**
>
> TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC
>
> RELATIONS' ROLES
>
> AND THEORETICAL
>
> PERSPECTIVES

$\Rightarrow$

> **CHAPTER 3:**
>
> CONCEPTUALISATION OF A
>
> STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE
>
> CORPORATE COMMU-
>
> NICATION MANAGER

$\Downarrow$

> **CHAPTER 5:**
>
> RESEARCH STRATEGY
>
> AND METHODOLOGY

$\Leftarrow$

> **CHAPTER 4:**
>
> CONCEPTUALISATION OF
>
> CORPORATE COMMUNI-
>
> CATION STRATEGY

$\Downarrow$

> **CHAPTER 6:**
>
> **DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR**
>
> **CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**
>
> **STRATEGY**
>
> **--THE PROCESS**

$\Rightarrow$

> **CHAPTER 7:**
>
> FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS
>
> AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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CHAPTER 6

6. DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY—THE PROCESS

In Chapter 5, the procedures used to achieve Research Objectives 1 and 2 were detailed. Furthermore, action research as a *methodology* for achieving Research Objective 3 was described.

This chapter is dedicated to describing the action research process as implemented in achieving **Research Objective 3**. The *primary* objective of the latter is: To develop a model that can satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and to identify the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

The *secondary* objectives to be achieved in this chapter are the following:

- To hypothesise a model for developing corporate communication strategy.

- To involve third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria as action researchers in the implementation of the model amongst some non-profit organisations in South Africa.

- To determine the student groups' understanding of the process of developing corporate communication strategy, *firstly* by assessing each individual group report and *secondly*, by comparing them in order to pinpoint the areas/constructs where problems are experienced, or alternatively, are (well) understood.

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- To evaluate the hypothesised model, *firstly* by analysing the results of the assessment and comparison of student group reports to ascertain common problem areas/constructs; and *secondly*, to analyse the theory on which the model is based (provided to the students to assist in their understanding of the model)--as a possible reason for some of the problems experienced.

- To improve the model based on the analysis of the implementation results.

- To identify the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

- To make the findings public through presentations at academic and industry conferences, as well as through articles in academic and industry publications.

- To attempt to make a contribution towards theory building on the little-known subject of corporate communication strategy.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4 it has been suggested that the *PR manager* (as a boundary spanner) will be one of the middle managers operating on the functional level, who will play a strategic management role in the reengineered organisation. The existing theoretical and empirical role of the *PR manager*, conceptualised two decades ago, was therefore redefined by the researcher as taking the responsibility for developing a corporate communication strategy (as a functional strategy) and a strategic plan for the corporate communication function. Functional strategy, as explicated in Chapter 4 (section 1.3.3.4), involves what should be done in each of the key functional areas of the organisation, given the relative emphasis placed on, and the resources allocated to, that particular function.

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It was also pointed out in Chapter 4 that few corporate communication practitioners understood the meaning of *strategy*. The key problem seems to lie in the application of strategy for corporate communication issues, i.e. what 'strategy' means in a corporate communication context. In view of the enquiries received by the Department of Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria from corporate communication practitioners requesting guidelines in the above regard, the researcher deemed it necessary that theory, as well as a model, be developed for explicating the process of formulating corporate communication strategy. According to McQuail & Windahl (1993:2), a model is a consciously simplified description of reality in a graphic form that seeks to show the main elements of any structure or process, and the relationship between these elements

Such a theory and model could be used to teach third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria (and possibly practitioners at a later stage), to practically apply the conceptualised corporate communication strategy. It is therefore the objective of this chapter to conduct a literature study, hypothesise a model, and implement and revise the model, by means of an action research project.

The following hypothesis was set in Chapter 1 to lead this investigation:

Guiding hypothesis 3
A model is a suitable tool for explicating the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

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CYCLE ONE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

It needs to be pointed out that the action research project described in this chapter already started in 1997. The initial literature study and the resulting hypothesised model (Stage 1), is presented here *with all its shortcomings,* as it was provided to third year students in their 1998 Class Notes. In the ensuing discussion, these shortcomings will be pointed out.

The model (referred to as Model 1) was first implemented during the second semester of 1998 by third-year Corporate Communication students at the University of Pretoria (Stage 2). The model was improved based on the findings of the first cycle of action research (Stages 3-5). Cycle Two of the action research started during the second semester of 1999, when Model 2 was implemented by students and improved again by the lecturer/researcher, resulting in Model 3. Another in-depth literature study was conducted in the beginning of 2000, resulting in the conceptualised corporate communication strategy that was described in Chapter 4.

The final (third) version of the model presented at the end of this chapter must therefore be seen as the outcome of the first two cycles of action research. The conceptualised corporate communication strategy described in Chapter 4 represents the researcher's attempt to build theory based on the knowledge accumulated during the previous three years, while the action research project was being conducted.

6.2 THE LITERATURE STUDY: STAGE 1

Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:59) see five stages in the action research process. The course of this action research project will now be explicated according to these stages.

> **STAGE 1:** Implementation begins with a period of research where the resources and needs of a community are systematically assessed and the necessary information to guide action is gathered (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

This stage refers to the lecturer/researcher having become aware of the need for a model to develop corporate communication strategy, through requests from corporate communication practitioners to provide examples or guidelines for developing such a strategy. The lecturer/researcher thereupon conducted the initial literature investigation in 1997 (as set out in sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.12).

> The initial literature study presented below was provided to third year students in July 1998 as part of their Class Notes, representing the theory to be studied in order to be able to develop a corporate communication strategy for their selected non-profit organisations. These students were the first action research groups.
>
> Text highlighted in this literature study indicates either areas/constructs on Model 1 which were later pinpointed by the assessment/evaluation of the students' corporate communication strategies (research reports) as having been **problem areas** or indicating **shortcomings in the theoretical explanation** (i.e. not having been comprehensive enough). These areas will be discussed in the assessment and evaluation stages (stages 3 and 4).

6.2.1 THE ROLE OF THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MANAGER AT THE TOP MANAGEMENT LEVEL

As a framework for the development of a corporate communication strategy, a description was first provided of the role of the corporate communication manager at the top management level (see 6.2.1). Of particular interest are the two concepts 'mirror' and 'window' function. The mirror or 'listening' function explicates the initial research/problem-defining stage, central to strategy development. The window/representation or 'talking' function is generally more familiar to practitioners as it has been the function of corporate communication (public relations) since its beginning.

Strategic management applies to corporate communication in two important ways. The first is the corporate communication manager's role as part of the top management team in developing problem-solving strategies for the entire organisation. The second has to do with the corporate communication department's own efforts to integrate and co-ordinate its work with that of the organisation (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992).

Communication is increasingly gaining the status of an indispensable management tool. Corporate communication (PR) managers are no longer seen as 'information conduits', but rather act as fully fledged strategic advisers to senior management (Seitel 1992:1-2). Communication managers must think strategically and demonstrate their knowledge of the organisation's mission, goals and strategies by aligning communication goals and objectives with those of the organisation.

The emphasis on the organisational mission provides the connection to organisational goals that corporate communication must have to contribute to organisational effectiveness. To be able to do so, corporate communication must

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be part of the strategic management of the total organisation (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992). Trying to establish a corporate communication programme without corporate direction "*is a little like driving cross country without a road map*" (Webster 1990:19). Corporate communication should also manage its own programmes strategically (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992).

The corporate communication department's role in this process can be summarised as professionally carrying out the '*window*' and the '*mirror*' function. The '*mirror*' function refers to the monitoring of relevant environmental developments and the anticipation of their consequences for the organisation's strategies and communication policies (Van Riel 1995:1-2). Large organisations usually gather large amounts of information, but much of it is lost since it is not gathered and interpreted at one collection point (White & Mazur 1995:25).

Corporate communication's value in the process of strategy development is that it is a source of intelligence regarding the environment, an early warning system that identifies issues before crisis erupts. It is the function that assists top management in interpreting and using the information. The corporate communication manager/ department is in an excellent position to provide this interpreting function, because of their wide contact with the external and internal environment and their outside view of the organisation. They have a clear understanding of each constituency's concerns, sensitivities and preconceptions being effective communicators (Winokur & Kinkead 1993:1). Managing this process of information gathering from the external, internal and task environment will necessarily involve research and a systematic approach to sources of information (White & Mazur 1995:28).

The '*window*' function refers to the preparation and execution of a communication policy and strategy, resulting in messages that portray all facets of the organisation. Corporate communication managers interpret the philosophies,

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policies, programmes and practices of top management to its stakeholders. In this facilitating role, they help accomplish an active outward orientation for the organisation (Van Riel 1995:2).

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:9), corporate communication managers perform a boundary role: they function at the edge of an organisation as a liaison between the organisation and its external/internal publics. They are in touch with the real world by having one foot inside the organisation and one without. They explain to management the impact of their behaviour on public opinion and prevent them from insulating themselves.

They have real value in their ability to maintain a degree of detachment from the motives that drive other members of management and view corporate policies with a multiple vision (Mason 1974). This is often lacking in other management members since they develop an internal 'myopia' where they can only see within the short-range boundaries of the organisation (Hicks 1987). This role of the corporate communication department keeps the organisation in harmony with its environment, gives it credibility and leads to acceptance of policies.

However, to accomplish these tasks accurately, corporate communication practitioners must first know what top management and the stakeholders are thinking. Good corporate communication cannot be practised in a vacuum. It is only as good as its access to top management. Corporate communication managers must have the opportunity of making strategic inputs in the strategic planning of the organisation by taking part in decision-making. They must have firsthand knowledge of the reasons for management's decisions and the rationale for organisational policy. On the other hand, they must interpret the stakeholders to top management by giving continuous feedback. This means finding out what stakeholders really think and letting management know, whether they like it or

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not. This function is only effective when the corporate communication manager reports directly to and is part of top management (Seitel 1992:10-11).

The starting point for developing a corporate communication strategy is an analysis of the organisation's internal environment e.g. the profile, vision, mission, corporate culture and corporate strategies, as well as of the external environment -- referring to the stakeholders and other external influences (political, economic, social, technological, ecological and judicial factors) which impact the organisation (Eiselen 1992).

6.2.2 CORPORATE PROFILE

In order to develop a corporate communication strategy, it is essential for the practitioner in the role of the *PR manager* to have sufficient background on the organisation's financial status and reputation in the field, as well as familiarity with its products or services and the overall competitive environment. Knowledge about the marketing, human resources, legal and other functions are also important in order to co-ordinate corporate communication efforts with those functions. Having regular interviews with key management personnel, and analysing documents such as the annual and/or quarterly reports can provide this information (Hendrix 1992).

Being knowledgeable on the delivery system for the organisation's products or services, its major suppliers, and the identity and demographics of its customers are all important aspects in understanding the organisation. Also needed is a good working knowledge of the organisation's human resources--its total work force, both management and non-management. Special attention must be given to key management people--the way in which top management views corporate

communication and their expectations for the function is very important (Hendrix 1992 :9).

The corporate communication manager should understand the formal structure of the organisation, i.e. the way it is plotted in the organisational chart and how the functions are related to one another. An informal power structure may be an even more important indication of how decisions are made. Communication is often the key to the effective working of the organisational structure (Kendall 1992:171).

However, the initial focus for developing the corporate communication strategy should always be the vision, mission, culture and strategies of the organisation (Webster 1990:18):

> *"To be strategic, public relations should pass one basic test: At a minimum, everything done must be aligned with the corporate vision or mission ...and must substantially contribute to achieving the organisation's objectives. Ideally, public relations should be part of the team helping to create the corporate mission and set the objectives."*

6.2.3 VISION

A vision represents a realistic, credible and attractive future state of affairs - a condition which, in some important way, is better than that which now exists. **The vision indicates where the organisation is going and what it wants to achieve**--the goals and objectives are derived from the vision. When a vision is achieved, a new vision is developed (Eiselen 1992).

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A vision is the 'big organisational picture' and must be lived every day by each individual organisational member.

6.2.4 MISSION

The mission is a definition of the organisation's role in society and the economy. The mission flows from the values of stakeholders -- the people and groups with an interest in the organisation (Digman 1990:49).

The mission is an **explanation of an organisation's identity and ambition—** the purpose for its existence, a roof under which organisational members gather. It captures in a concise way the essence of the organisation, describes the nature and scope of the work performed and communicates the business. The mission usually remains unchanged as a statement of the organisation's common and timeless cause (Eiselen 1992).

Whereas the vision is more associated with goals, the mission is associated with a way of behaving. A sense of mission is an emotional and deeply personal feeling. The individual with a sense of mission has an emotional attachment to the organisation, what it stands for and what it is trying to achieve (Eiselen 1992).

6.2.5 CORPORATE CULTURE

Deal & Kennedy (1982) define corporate culture as the set of dominant values espoused by the organisation, i.e. "*the way we do things around here*". Peters & Waterman (1982) see it as "*a set of shared values conveyed by symbolic means such as stories, myths, legends and anecdotes*". A good example of corporate culture would be "*the customer is always right*" (Moorhead & Griffin 1989:493).

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The values that make up corporate culture is seldom written down - they are basic assumptions made by employees about what is acceptable and what is not. It is a powerful influence on employees because it is not explicit - it becomes ingrained in their beliefs.

An organisation's culture is similar to an individual's personality—an intangible theme that provides meaning, direction, and the basis for action. In much the same way as a personality influences the behaviour of the individual, the shared assumptions (beliefs and values) among members influence opinions and actions within the organisation (Pearce & Robinson 1997:356).

6.2.6 ORGANISATION'S STRATEGIC PLAN (CORPORATE STRATEGY)

The mission provides the basis for strategic plans. Typically, their planning horizon is five years or more. They are conceptual in nature in that they lay out general guidelines rather than detailed schedules. Strategic plans are often called long-range plans and indicate how the organisation is planning to get where it is going (Bittel 1989) *"....if you you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there"* (Uyterhoeven, Ackerman & Rosenblum 1977:7).

The **strategic plan** is the organisation's course regarding its strategic areas and describes the direction the organisation is taking. Key factors to consider, according to Eiselen (1992) are:

- maintaining or changing the organisation's course;
- (re)positioning the organisation regarding anticipated future developments;
- determining the impact of the new course on the organisation.

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According to Arnold (1995:33), **strategy is determined by first identifying key strategic issues which are of critical importance for achieving the corporate vision and mission**, such as people, management, the product, stakeholders and the budget. This is achieved by **doing environmental analysis and issues tracking** which can be turned into a source of intelligence for top management -- to be executed in the organisation's macro, task and micro environment to be really effective in the identification of problems and issues around which publics will form:

- The *external environment* is mostly beyond the control of the organisation and is influenced by political, economic, social, technological, environmental, cultural and judicial factors.

- The *task environment* is the environment in which the organisation operates. This analysis evolves around the organisation's interaction with major players in the industry such as clients, competitors, suppliers, associates and principals.

- An analysis of the *internal environment* involves human resources, formal arrangements, structures and procedures, physical resources, culture and social structure, duties and responsibilities, technology, information and management style. This environment is largely of the organisation's own making and within management's ability to change (Pearce & Robinson 1982).

The implications of each strategic issue must be thoroughly analysed and issues prioritised before the organisation's goals and objectives are determined.

In the next section, an explanation is given by Eiselen (1992) on the meaning of corporate communication strategy.

6.2.7 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The corporate communication strategy indicates **how the organisation's strategic goals and objectives are communicated to internal and external constituents**. This implies that the **opportunities and risks of communicating** each strategic issue is determined and that the **communication strategy is derived from it.** The communication strategy should essentially reflect or mirror the corporate strategy. In that sense most communication plans are tactical in nature since they help the organisation to meet its strategic goals and objectives. However, the way in which they are determined should be strategic (Eiselen 1992).

Strategic planning is therefore a prerequisite for developing a sound communication strategy because it provides focus and direction to the communication and synergy between corporate strategy and communication. It makes communication relevant to the organisation and responsive to its needs (Eiselen 1992).

The emphasis that theories of strategic management place on monitoring the external environment and adjusting the organisation's mission to it suggest a crucial role for corporate communication in the process (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992). Apart from an adequate awareness and understanding of the external environment, the organisation must know what to do with all the incoming signals. Some kind of analytical framework is necessary to help make the information from the environment relevant for business decision making (Bartha 1994:138).

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Communication goals and objectives can be developed by:

- studying **corporate goals and objectives**

- prioritising issues

- doing environmental scanning/research

- having interviews with functional managers

- **doing a SWOT analysis**

- **doing a communication audit**

6.2.8 COMMUNICATION POLICY

Most organisations develop a series of guidelines called 'policies' as an expression of their strategic plans (Bittel 1989:78). Organisational policies constitute a practical day-to-day set of rules for conducting business, in contrast to the longer scope of the philosophy, mission, goals and objectives continuum.

A policy is a standing plan that provides managers with general guidelines for making decisions. Its main purpose is to assure consistency among the organisation's managers and to avoid having to make the same decision over and over again (Bittel 1989:78). It is the parameters within which planning is carried out and will necessarily reflect organisational and/or government policy.

The **communication policy** is based on the corporate mission and strategy, but is **also influenced by the corporate culture, values and norms** (Trainor 1990:15). Therefore the communication policy may differ widely from organisation to organisation. In general terms, communication policy could deal with:

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- functional communication areas (internal or external communication) and specified communication programmes e.g. lobbying or media liaison.

- functional relationships between communication and other departments e.g. marketing or research.

- the structure of the communication department, hierarchical orientation and lines of command.

- communication goals and objectives.

- corporate do's and don'ts e.g.

  - only the chief executive deals with politically related issues;

  - only the chief executive deals with foreign stakeholders;

  - only the corporate communication manager may be quoted by the media;

  - advertising is the exclusive domain of the marketing department;

  - the acceptance or non-acceptance of gifts;

  - general conflicts of interest;

  - the use of confidential information.

A way of developing communication policy is to make a list of:

  - what *must* be communicated;

  - what *should* be communicated;

  - what the organisation is *prepared* to communicate;

  - what the organisation is *not prepared* to communicate;

  - what is to be communicated in *special situations* such as emergencies or crises (Trainor 1990:16-17).

An example of communication policy might be a commitment to honesty and openness, transparency, access to top management, credibility, compassion, trust, integrity and a sensitivity for the diverse nature of stakeholders and publics.

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The policy must be enforceable, precise and clear. Messages must be consistent and all departments must use the same standards when communicating internally or externally.

6.2.9 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The overall strategic management of organisations is inseparable from the strategic management of relationships (Dozier *et al* 1995: 27). The organisation's environment is a highly complex system of interrelated 'private' domains. Every stakeholder has its own set of values, needs, desires, wants, goals and objectives, which may be and often are significantly different from those of the organisation attempting to manage interactions with them (Blewett 1993:15).

The management of relationships is the function of the corporate communication department. Before these relationships can be managed, however, the different stakeholders of the organisation must first be identified. This should be done through research that provides a way for top management to become attuned to strategic stakeholders and publics--research can be considered the other part of two-way communication. Focus groups and surveys are as much channels of communication as are news releases, press conferences, and internal publications.

In the literature and in practice a wide variety of terminology exists to describe the constituents of the organisation. A few of these terms will now be examined, and ordered according to the systems theory and Grunig's situational theory (Steyn & Van Wyk 1996).

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⇒ *From the systems theory*

a. Audience and public

These terms are not synonymous. An *audience* suggests a group of people who are recipients of something - a message or performance. An audience is thus inherently passive. The term *public* evolved to distinguish between passive audiences and active ones.

In corporate communication (public relations), the term public ('active audience') encompasses any group of people who are tied together, however loosely, by some common bond of interest or concern (Seitel 1995) and whose behaviour has consequences for an organisation (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

b. Internal and external publics

Publics are divided into two categories (Seitel 1995):

*   *external* publics exist outside the organisation and are not directly or officially a part thereof, but they do have a relationship with it. Examples are the media, the community, government, consumers, competitors, suppliers and educators.
*   *internal* publics share the institutional identity, e.g. management, employees, board members, etc.

c. Target public (stakeholder)

Any particular public may become the focal point for a corporate communication effort. When that occurs, the public singled out for attention is called a 'target' or

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'*priority public* (Newsom, Vanslyke Turk & Kruckeberg 1996:141). Each organisation has its own publics, all or many of whom may become target or priority publics at any time.

Priority publics can be described in three ways (Newsom *et al* 1996:145):

- *nominatively:* this consists of giving the public a name such as stockholders;

- *demographically:* this involves looking at the public's statistical characteristics such as age, gender, income and education;

- *psychographically:* this examines the defining emotional and behavioural characteristics of the public and often shows how one primary public resembles another in interests, attitudes, beliefs or behaviour.

⇒ *According to the situational theory*

a. Stakeholders

An important step in developing the corporate communication strategy is to make a list of the individuals/groups who are linked to the organisation. Freeman (1984) called this list a *stakeholder map,* which usually contains groups such as owners, consumer advocates, customers, competitors, the media, employees, special interest groups, environmentalists, suppliers, governments, and local community residents.

According to Grunig & Repper (*in* Grunig 1992:124), an organisation has a relationship with *stakeholders* when the behaviour of the organisation or of the stakeholders has consequences for the other. Formative research should be done to scan the environment to identify these consequences.

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b. Strategic stakeholders

Communication programmes should only be planned with the most important - the most strategic - stakeholders, the ones that are *"critical, crucial, essential, important, or vital for an organisation in the accomplishment of its mission"* (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:123). Communication at the stakeholder stage, before conflict has occurred, is important because it helps to develop the stable, long-term relationships that an organisation needs to build support.

One method for the identification of key stakeholders is to analyse strategic linkages with groups that are critical for an organisation to survive. Esman *(in* Grunig & Hunt 1984:140) identified the following four linkages:

- *enabling linkages* (to groups that provide authority and control resources such as government regulators and stockholders);

- *functional linkages* are to groups that provide inputs (employees and unions) and outputs (consumers and graduates);

- *normative linkages* are to professional or industry associations, providing connections to similar organisations that assist in solving shared problems;

- *diffused linkages* are connections to groupings of individuals who are not part of any organisation. Minority relations, community relations and environmental relations are attempts to manage linkages with diffused groupings.

Organisations must manage enabling and functional linkages because they create consequences for the organisation--they cannot pursue their goals without them. The organisation must manage diffuse linkages when organisations create consequences for others. When diffuse publics organise, they create consequences for the organisation. For example, diffuse linkages such as environmental pressure groups would be very important for a chemical company

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and would probably merit an environmental relations programme. The more turbulent an organisation's environment, the more linkages the organisation must manage with its environment and the more rapidly those linkages change (Grunig & Hunt 1984:141). These linkages should form the basis for the corporate communication department's communication programmes with stakeholders.

c. Publics

Publics form when stakeholders recognise the consequences of an organisation's behaviour as a problem and organise to do something about it. People never recognised as stakeholders before may also form a public due to an issue in the macro environment. These publics should be identified and segmented through research--by involving publics in the decision making processes of the organisation, conflict can often be managed before it turns into issues (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:124).

A crucial distinction for segmenting people into publics is the extent to which they passively or actively communicate about an issue and the extent to which they behave in a way that supports or constrains the organisation's pursuit of its mission (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:125).

Publics are more likely to be active when the people who make them up have a *high level of involvement*, *recognise* the problem and are *not constrained* from doing something about the problem. If none of these conditions apply, the group would be classified as a *non-public,* which means that it is of no concern to the organisation (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

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d. Publics arise around issues

When publics make issues out of problems, they typically use the mass media to bring attention to their cause by staging events such as protests, marches, strikes, and even hunger fasts and violent demonstrations. When publicity mounts, stakeholders and even members of non-publics hear about the issue (VanLeuven & Slater 1991).

In the handling of issues, according to Bartha (1994:140), the organisation has to measure the impact of an issue on the relationship with its stakeholders. First, the problem or situation that affects the stakeholders has to be identified. Issues can be classified into three types:

⇒ *Universal issues.* The problems that fall into this category tend to affect large numbers of people in many walks of life. Universal issues are not permanent, but come and go mainly as a result of social and economic conditions. An increase in the price of petrol and "Mad Cow" disease are universal issues and can affect many of the organisation's stakeholders.

⇒ *Advocacy issues.* These issues are usually introduced and promoted by groups claiming to represent broad public interest. They include topics such as health, environmental concerns, consumer issues, etc. These groups tend to be activists and may influence the organisation's relationship with its stakeholders through media publicity.

⇒ *Selective issues.* Selective issues deal with a matter of concern in the immediate relationship between the organisation and a stakeholder, e.g. the way in which an employee was handled during a disciplinary trial. The employee then becomes an active public and creates an issue around the problem.

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After identifying the issue, the following questions must be asked:

- Who is affected - which stakeholders/publics/shadow constituencies are involved?
- How are they affected?
- How will they respond - actively or passively?

e. Public opinion

According to Seitel (1995:51), public opinion is the aggregate of many individual opinions on a particular issue that affects a group of people. Stated another way, public opinion represents a consensus of the members of a public about an issue. Consensus, deriving as it does from many individual opinions, begins with people's attitude toward the issue in question.

f. Shadow constituencies

Shadow constituencies, a new breed of corporate stakeholder, are individuals and groups outside traditional corporate spheres of influence (the task environment) who may arise as a public due to an emerging issue. As they are not listed as stakeholders of the organisation, the only way to identify these publics is through the monitoring of issues -- it could be advocacy or universal issues.

These shadow constituencies might include women's organisations, minorities, gays, arts and education proponents, political groups, even homeless people and gangs (Mau & Dennis 1994:10). These individuals/groups, having little or no power, often use the power of the media to get attention and thereby wreak havoc on the image of an organisation.

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Apart from the strategic stakeholders with whom the organisation strives to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship through planned communication programmes, the management of the opinions of publics emerging around issues, should form an integral part of every organisation's corporate communication strategy.

Whereas corporate communication strategy, policy and the identification of stakeholders and issues is the domain of the *PR manager,* practitioners in the role of the *PR technician* take responsibility for the implementation of communication plans, programmes and campaigns. However, there is substantial confusion in practice as to the meaning of these terms, whether they are in fact the same -- and if not, what the differences actually are. The researcher will therefore differentiate between these terms in the following section, in order that they be well understood in relation to corporate communication strategy.

6.2.10 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMMES

The focus of strategic symmetrical communication programmes is on relationships, a coming together of the organisation and its strategic stakeholders/publics around issues of mutual interest. Formative research should be done to scan the environment for identifying these consequences and to sensitise management to changes and potential threats to relationships with stakeholders (Blewett 1993:15).

In a study sponsored by the IABC Research Foundation (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992), researchers report that the most effective communication programmes are strategically managed by knowledgeable communication managers who conceptualise and direct the programmes. Excellent communication programmes

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are not an evolution of what has been done in the past, but are aimed at groups who are important to the organisation in strategic terms, as identified in the stakeholder analysis and the corporate communication strategy. Excellent practices are strategic, not historic—they are concerned with impact, not process--and aim to influence stakeholder attitudes, opinions or behaviours rather than simply put processes in motion such as news release production.

The corporate communication department should have *continuous programmes* for stakeholders. This does not mean that the same activities will be repeated year-after-year, but implies that campaigns/activities should be devised annually for the organisation's stakeholders as well as current publics. *Ad hoc* communication plans might have to be made during the year for an emerging public (previously unknown or non-existing). Should this public persist over the long term, it should be incorporated in the ongoing communication programmes.

Figure 6.1: EXAMPLES OF CONTINUOUS PROGRAMMES

Issues management	Employee relations
Change management	Media relations
Government relations/ lobbying	Customer relations
Industrial relations	Community relations
Social investment	Sponsorships
International relations	Corporate identity
Publications	Corporate advertising
Crisis communication	Communication training

Source: Own research

Whereas communication programmes are *continuous* communication efforts aimed at strategic stakeholders, campaigns (discussed in the next section) are time-limited.

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6.2.11 CAMPAIGNS

According to Kendall (1992:9) the term 'campaign' in its general usage means a *"connected series of operations designed to bring about a particular result"*. In the context of the field of corporate communication, one can differentiate between two types of campaigns: the *corporate communication* (public relations) campaign and the *public information* campaign.

6.2.11.1 Corporate communication (public relations) campaign

The 'corporate communication' (public relations) campaign is a concerted effort of an organisation to build socially responsible relationships with strategic stakeholders by achieving research-based goals through the application of communication strategies and the measurement of outcomes.

The corporate communication campaign planned for a month, six months or a year is much more subject to measurement of effect and tends to involve greater precision in planning and execution than a continuing programme that has no clear beginning and end. Plans for activities that have no deadlines tend to get pushed back in the scheduling of priorities.

The corporate communication campaign is an organised and integrated effort to manage certain well-focused corporate communication activities, together with their supporting communications, to achieve a more controlled result. Best results are achieved when regular activities that form part of communication programmes such as announcing decisions to the press, publishing the employee newsletter, and responding to media enquiries are co-ordinated with the concentrated effort of a campaign. For example, when the campaign theme and activities are incorporated into the newsletter, the bulletin board and other

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communication, the additional notice will multiply the effect. Co-ordinating regular programmes and campaign activities enables the corporate communication function to measure the effectiveness of specific activities as well as the total effect. The campaign will also attract renewed interest in familiar programmes.

The corporate communication campaign does not need to be a one-time effort--a cycle of campaigns, each building on and profiting from previous ones, has much to recommend it over the indeterminate continuing programme. The basic elements that make up a corporate communication campaign can simply be repeated with revisions, additions, and different directions for a more effective long-range programme.

The cyclic continuing series of campaigns also has the advantage that the evaluation of one campaign can be incorporated in the research phase of the next. Research leads to adaptation of the organisation's resources to the campaign, which leads to the implementation strategy to solve the problem situation, which leads to an evaluation of the campaign (Kendall 1992:10-11).

6.2.11.2 Public communication campaign

The 'public communication campaign' tends to focus on an *immediate objective*, such as to stop smoking, control wildfires, or reduce crime, and relies primarily on *mass* communication.

The corporate communication campaign also seeks such objectives but as a means of building relationships with the organisation's stakeholders. While it may use mass communication, it relies on the complete spectrum of communication media. The difference between the two types of campaigns lie in orientation (Kendall 1992:3,6).

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6.2.12 COMMUNICATION PLANS

Planning is a comprehensive process in which managers first formulate the specific objectives of an organisation and then develop the plans for attaining them.

Where *strategic plans* frame the big picture painted by the mission statement, *operational or tactical plans* focus on short-term objectives, their horizon almost always being one year or less. Operational planning provides the cutting edge for an organisation's strategic plans in that it deals with down-the-line specifics of its resources to create specific plans and schedules. The majority of operating plans are 'single use' plans (Bittel 1989:71).

Operational planning is specifically concerned with the process that converts resources into results, inputs into outputs. The emphasis is on concrete details. Forecasts of future conditions can no longer be hypothetical or general; they must settle on numbers that can be placed in schedules and budgets. Dates and times are pinned down. Facilities, equipment, and materials are designated. Personnel assignments are made.

Goals and plans are essentially inseparable. A good plan incorporates the three pivotal goal specifications into five vital elements of a plan. All plans should cover the five points *what, where, when, how* and *who*. Goals designate the *"what,"* *"where,"* and *"when"*; plans add to these the *"how"* and *"who"* (Bittel 1989:79).

Effective planning follows a systematic process - there are several variations of what constitutes a systematic approach to corporate communication (public relations) planning. According to Hendrix (1992:8), the corporate communication

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problem-solving process involves four procedures. *First,* initial research is performed to establish the basic elements of the communication transaction. *Second,* objectives for the transaction are established. *Third,* programming -- including all the methods of communication used -- is planned and executed to carry out the objectives. *Finally,* ongoing and follow-up evaluation is conducted both to monitor and to measure how well the plan accomplished its objectives.

Cutlip, Center & Broom (1985:221) describes the corporate communication (public relations) process slightly differently as defining the corporate communication problem or opportunity through research, then devising ways for coping with it through planning. During this second step, strategy decisions must be made and plans of action set down for the specific communication plan. The third step is communication and action, and the fourth is to evaluate the whole process.

In the original Class Notes provided to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria during the second semester of 1998, another theoretical section followed the above, specifically explicating the elements of the *communication plan*. At the end of that discussion, a graphic presentation of both the hypothesised model for developing corporate communication strategy, as well as a model for developing a communication plan, was provided.

The theory and model for developing a communication plan (included in the 1998 Class Notes) does not form part of this study and will not be documented here, with the exception of the first two phases (Research and Planning) which can be viewed in Appendix 1; and the 'Model for developing a communication plan', which is included in Appendix 2. The reason for discussing the first two phases of the model for developing a communication plan is that the model is a direct follow-up on the corporate communication strategy model, indicating the

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beginning of the planning phase of corporate communication. It is in the Research Phase (in the 'opportunity/ problem statement' and the 'situation analysis') that the *link* between the corporate communication strategy and the communication plan is made. This link is strengthened in the Planning Phase, where the communication plan is built around the 'goals' that were identified during the development of the corporate communication strategy.

6.2.13 HYPOTHESISED MODEL FOR DEVELOPING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (MODEL 1)

In Chapter 1, the following guiding hypothesis was set to direct this part of the study:

Guiding hypothesis 3

A model is a suitable tool to satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Based on the findings of the initial literature analysis and the guiding hypothesis presented above, the researcher hypothesised a model as a framework for developing a corporate communication strategy. A model, according to McQuail & Windahl (1993:2), is a general, simplified representation of reality that captures the important features but leaves out much of the detail.

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The model presented in figure 6.2, will be referred to as Model 1.

> Hypothesis 12: Model 1 is an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Hypothesis 12 is to be empirically tested in this study in stages two to five of Cycle One.

Figure 6.2: MODEL 1: DEVELOPING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

CORPORATE PROFILE
Vision/Mission/Corporate Culture

↓

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN
Environmental scanning/issues tracking (Macro/task/internal environment)

↓

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES
Internal/External Implications of each issue((Environmental scanning) Prioritise issues Organisational goals and objectives

↓

KEY COMMUNICATION ISSUES
Opportunities/risks of communicating each issue (Environmental scanning/research/ interviews with functional managers/ SWOT analysis/communication audit) Prioritise issues Communication goals and objectives
DRAFT TO TOP MANAGEMENT

↓

COMMUNICATION POLICY
Mission/strategy/corporate culture/values/norms

↓

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS
(Organisational linkages *e.g. diffused linkages*) (Emerging or current issues *e.g. environment*) Strategic stakeholders/publics/shadow constituencies *(e.g. environmental pressure group)*

↓

COMMUNICATION PROGRAMMES
Continuous (stakeholders/current publics e.g. environmental relations)

↓

MEDIA ANALYSIS

↓

MANAGEMENT LIAISON

↓

COMMUNICATION PLANS/CAMPAIGNS

Source: Own research

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6.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL 1: STAGE 2

> **STAGE 2:** Some kind of action is undertaken together by the action research partners (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

Model 1 was implemented for the first time by the student researchers amongst 48 non-profit organisations during the second semester of 1998 (under guidance of the researcher, then designated leader of the third year practical assignment). The model, together with the theory on which it was based (the initial literature study documented in the previous section) was provided to third-year students as Theme One in their Class Notes for the semester.

As leader of the practical assignment, the researcher was invited by Mrs Retha Groenewald (the third year lecturer during 1998) to lecture the theory on which the model was based. Not only was it considered to be in the interest of the students that the researcher, as leader of the third year practical assignment (the action research project), also lecture the theory, but it would also increase the validity of the action research. These lectures took place over a three-week period in which fixed consulting hours were set (for a period of eight weeks). During this time, the researcher consulted the 48 students groups, whilst they were in the process of developing a corporate communication strategy for their selected non-profit organisation.

6.4 ASSESSMENT OF 1998 RESEARCH REPORTS: STAGE 3

> **STAGE 3**: Thereafter the results of the action are to be assessed (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

According to Rensburg & Angelopulo (1996:53), 'assessment' is the phase of a project in which all relevant information is gathered and the conditions identified. The assessment begins with extensive research, investigating all aspects related to the problem/opportunity--it is a thorough situation analysis. The central criterion for selecting information to be included in the assessment phase, is its relevance to the project at hand. A conscious effort must be made to include everything that is important, but exclude superfluous information.

The 48 written research reports on corporate communication strategy, developed by the student groups and their action research partners (the non-profit organisations), were individually assessed by the lecturer/researcher during September 1998, according to the evaluation criteria, and compared in order to pinpoint common problem areas/constructs. The following evaluation form was used for this purpose (the rationale for the allocation of marks was explained in Chapter 5 -- see 5.9.5 'Evaluation'):

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Figure 6.3: EVALUATION FORM 1998

* **Evaluation**

The practical project will be evaluated in three parts:

<u>TECHNICAL CARE</u>	
Introduction	5
Heading and numerical system	5
Neatness	5
Care taken with presentation/ appearance	5
	20
<u>CONTENTS OF THE PROJECT</u>	
Description of the corporate profile	8
Identification of key strategic and communication issues	15
Communication policy	4
Analysis of the media and publics	8
Communication plan	15
	50
<u>PRESENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN</u>	
Introduction/ Conclusion	5
Visual tools	5
Structure/ Format	5
Group participation	5
Persuasion/ Logical discussion	5
Creativity of ideas	5
	30
TOTAL	**100**

Source: Steyn B (1998)

The mark allocation on this form was slightly different from that of 1999. During 1998, it was required that student groups also present their plans to a panel of lecturers (counting 30 of the 100 marks allocated for the total project).

The only section that will be commented upon in the following assessment, is "CONTENTS OF THE PROJECT" (with the exception of the communication plan)--i.e. only the constructs that are relevant to this research (developing corporate communication strategy). The assessment will follow the headings on the evaluation form—each heading also including the other relevant constructs

on the model for evaluation purposes. (This was explained to the students in class).

6.4.1 GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE PROJECTS

The quality of the research reports (the corporate communication strategies) was surprising. After having marked the first 10, the researcher contacted the KOB 320 lecturer, Mrs Retha Groenewald, and requested that she externally examine the marks given to the first 10 groups (since they seemed high). Mrs Groenewald conceded to this request—her commentary upon handing it back to the researcher was that *"the student groups could have received higher marks than that which was allocated"*.

The reason for the researcher's surprise at the quality of the projects, might be attributed to some degree of scepticism expressed by members of the Department as to the ability of third year corporate communication students understanding the strategic management process, especially the concept of *strategy*. As a rule, these concepts are normally taught to *post-graduate* students in corporate communication, at other tertiary institutions. However, the researcher was of the opinion that the KOB 320 students would be able to grasp the concepts, since they were *management* students—enrolled in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Pretoria. Corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions (both in South Africa and abroad) are usually enrolled in the humanities—therefore these concepts might be foreign to them.

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Top marks allocated in 1998 were the following:

Figure 6.4: TOP STUDENT GROUPS IN 1998

GROUP 51	*Sungardens Hospice 1**	86%
GROUP 26:	*Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut*	85.5%
GROUP 15	*Mountain Zebra National Park*	83.5%
GROUP 7:	*Reach For A Dream*	80%
GROUP 40:	*CBC Old Boys*	81%
GROUP 41:	*New Hope School For Specialised Education*	80%

*There were two student groups who did a corporate communication strategy for the *Sungardens Hospice*. The lecturer was not aware of this until marking the projects, since the second group changed organisations at the last minute—a situation which should preferably be avoided. The second group will be referred to as *Sungardens Hospice 2*.

In order to illustrate the process of developing a corporate communication strategy, the project of the top group, *Sungardens Hospice 1*, will be summarised shortly. Since the constructs on the model flow one from another, i.e. the strategic issues from the environmental analysis, the communication issues from the implications of the strategic issues, the communication goals from the communication issues, and the plan from the communication goals, it is necessary for the reader to have a holistic view of at least one project to better understand the process.

This specific group was selected, not only because they were a top group, but more importantly because they were a top group *whose members never came for consultations*. This meant that their only guideline was the model and the

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accompanying theory—a situation which could provide a good indication of flaws in the model, which surely existed. The reasoning behind this conclusion was the following: This was an action research project, meaning that the lecturer/researcher was learning together with, and from, the students. After each consultation, she herself understood the process and the constructs causing problems better, and was therefore increasingly able to explain and even pre-empt problem areas. Student groups who were experiencing problems, and who visited the lecturer often (which the majority of groups did), were recipients of her increasing knowledge. However, groups who did not avail themselves of this opportunity, had nothing but the model and the theory in the 1998 Class Notes (with all its shortcomings) to guide them. Such groups are of considerable interest in achieving the objectives of this chapter.

6.4.2 TOP GROUP PROJECT: *SUNGARDENS HOSPICE 1*

Introduction

The group provided some background information—inter alia explaining the meaning of the word 'hospice', the beginning of the movement in London in the 1960's, and how the first Hospice was started in SA in 1986. Thereafter, twenty features of the hospice organisation were explained, e.g. that staff was on call 24 hours a day, that they were trained to deal with the loneliness and fears of patients and family, and that care was offered in the patient's home more often than in Hospice facilities itself.

Corporate Profile

Under this heading, the location of Hospice was explained, who its patients were, and what the Hospice Model of care entailed. Information was given on the

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operations and staff complement of Hospice, and an organisational chart was provided.

Since no vision or mission statements existed, the following were suggested by the group:

Vision

"We aspire to affect a permanent paradigm shift that makes the community realise that healing a person does not necessarily mean finding a cure".

Mission

"Hospice is a program of specialised palliative care dedicated exclusively to people facing progressive and advanced illness, which will be the most likely cause of death. This is a medically directed, nurse co-ordinated program of care responding to the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of the patients, family and appropriate others. Hospice exists in the hope and belief that with the appropriate care and the promotion of a caring community, patients and family may be free to attain a degree of mental and spiritual preparation for death that is necessary to them." The different elements of the mission was hereupon further explained in detail by the group.

Corporate culture

This was stated as *"being powerfully influenced by the Roman Catholic religion, namely to give unconditional care to those in need. Although the culture is based on religious concepts, Hospice has no religious affiliations and consequently*

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there are no restrictions as to whom they care for and from whom they accept help".

Environmental Analysis

An analysis of the *macro*, *task* and *internal* environment was provided. For brevity sake, only the macro environmental analysis is indicated here:

- *"Economic environment: As interest rates continue to increase, disposable income decreases--resulting in less discretionary income that can be spent on charity.*

- *Physical environment: There is a general increase in public awareness of HIV/Aids, as well as the number of people falling ill with the virus.*

- *Socio-cultural environment:*

  - *Hospice has a social responsibility toward their community in the Pretoria East area, but individuals living outside this area will not be turned away.*

  - *There is an overwhelming fear of diseases as well as stigmas attached to terminal illnesses and death, especially 'social' diseases such as Aids.*

- *Legislative/regulative environment:*

  - *The abolishment of the Fund-raising Act means that no fund-raising number is required any longer in the collection of funds from the community.*

  - *R50 000 is provided by the Department of Health every 18 to 24 months, who then dictates how the money is spent.*

  - *No further subsidies from the Government."*

(The task and internal environment was analysed in the same way).

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Key strategic issues

Fourteen *internal* issues were identified and explained, e.g. *"no individuals want to assume responsibility for the fund-raising function"*. The **implications of the issues** were also explained--e.g. for the above: *"The means and methods to obtain funds are sorely neglected and as a result long term mutually beneficial relationships are forfeited as is the awareness and visibility with which these relationships are associated."*

Thirteen *external* issues were also identified such as the following:

- *"The morbid image of Hospice results in people preferring to contribute towards the living rather than the dead"*, the implication being that people rather contribute to those who can reap the benefits for a considerable time to come.

- *"Corporate sponsors require detailed financial statements on how their sponsorships are allocated"*, the implication being that Hospice needs to find a compromise between how they allocate funds and how the sponsors see fit for the funds to be allocated.

SWOT analysis

The *strengths and weaknesses*, as well as the *opportunities and threats* of the *Sungardens Hospice*, was highlighted in this section.

Prioritising issues

The group prioritised the issues identified in terms of two issues each for the macro, task and internal environment. They then combined two issues in the task environment as the priority strategic issues that they would be addressing in their

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communication plan (i.e. the most important issues to be communicated to the relevant stakeholders). The two priority strategic issues were the following:

- *"Hospice lacks awareness and visibility within the greater Pretoria community".*

Researcher's comments: This is indeed a **strategic issue**, of which the **implications** are that people do not know about Hospice, and therefore cannot make donations to them or use their services. The construct 'communication issue' should identify *what it is that should be communicated to whom to solve this problem of low awareness and lack of visibility.* The **communication issue** in this case is that Hospice must be brought to the attention of the greater Pretoria community. Once this has been identified, the **communication goals** flow naturally from it--for instance *"to convey the mission/aims of Hospice to stakeholders and others in the greater Pretoria community, who are not familiar with the concept".*

- *"The Afrikaans community perceives Hospice to be an English institution affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church".*

Researcher's comments: This is also a *strategic* issue, of which the implication is that Afrikaans people would probably not make donations to Hospice, nor use its services. The *communication issue* in this case (i.e. the information that should be communicated to solve the problem), would be that Hospice has no formal affiliation with any particular group or religion. The *communication goals* flow directly from the *communication issue*, i.e. *"to inform the Afrikaans community that Hospice has no affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church, or any other religion"*; or *"to convey the message that Hospice's doors are wide open to care for Afrikaners in need".*

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Key Communication Issues

The students stated the following as being **key communication issues:**

- *"To increase the public's awareness of the organisation through communication with key stakeholders."*

- *"To correct the misconception that the organisation has religious affiliations."*

Researcher's comments: In essence the students have the right idea as to what it is that should be communicated, although they phrased it as communication *goals* (the next step in the process*)* rather than as communication issues. To arrive at the crux of the problem, it is important to pinpoint *exactly* what it is that should be communicated. The communication issue is not necessarily the same as the communication goal—and one communication issue might also have several communication goals.

The students furthermore determined the opportunities and risks associated with **communicating the implications** of the key strategic issues to the stakeholders. This is in contravention of the model, which states that the **opportunities or risks of communicating each issue** must be identified. As **opportunity** they saw that *"an increase in awareness of Hospice could promote further financial support"*. As a **risk** they saw *"the possibility of not being able to bring about a paradigm shift in the Afrikaans community's attitude, or not having enough money to bring about this shift"*.

Researcher's comments: Their opportunities and risk analysis is indeed flowing from the key strategic issues as identified, and is correct. However, this did not seem to assist the student group in the identification of the key communication issues, since the latter have already been stated. The researcher has no way of knowing whether the communication issues were stated first by mistake, or whether students indeed saw the communication issues as standing loose from the opportunities/risks instead of being derived from it.

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Communication objectives (attitudinal):

- *"To reverse within a year the indifferent attitudes expressed by the Afrikaans community;*

- *To educate and inform the public to form new attitudes about Hospice, by using mass media;*

- *To educate the public on terminal diseases through appropriate channels of communication".*

Researcher's comments: The theory on the communication plan indicates that these objectives are indeed attitudinal. However, the objectives should have been more specific—students should have set time frames and indicated how the improvement in attitude was to be measured.

Organisational goals and objectives

Upon finding that *Sungardens Hospice* did not have any **organisational goals and objectives,** the group defined the following objectives:

- *"To increase individuals' awareness as to what Hospice is and aspires to be".*

- *"To increase individuals' involvement with Hospice activities and fund raising events.*

- *"To place emphasis on an individual's social responsibility towards those in need of physical, emotional, spiritual and social support which is achieved by urging the community to identify with the values, norms and beliefs of Pretoria Sungardens Hospice".*

Researcher's comments: These are in fact communication goals and not organisational objectives. Furthermore, it seems *superfluous* that the students had to go through the exercise of formulating these organisational goals/objectives. (Further comment on this in Stage 4, the analysis of the model).

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Draft to top management

The students suggested that *"the strategy and the logic guiding the formulation is presented to the Executive Committee to ensure that communication efforts are consistent with Hospice's overall goals and objectives".*

Researcher's comments: This is good. Most other groups failed to address this construct on the model.

Communication Policy

The students suggested that *"the nature of the organisational structure dictates the need for all decision making pertinent to a crisis situation to be directed through the Board of Directors."*

Researcher's comments: Crisis communication theory suggests that only one director should take responsibility, not all of them.

Further suggestions for communication policy were:

- *"All fund-raising events and media relations are to be handled by the Head of Fund-raising.*

- *All medical issues must be addressed* (communicated) *by the Matron.*

- *The* (communication about the) *receipt and allocation of monetary funds is the responsibility of the Head of Fund-raising.*

- *All decisions regarding employment and the termination thereof is handled* (should be communicated) *by the executive committee".*

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Researcher's comments: In most of these cases, the students did not address the activities of the communication function—see researcher's corrections (indicated in brackets). Communication policy refers to *'who is allowed to communicate what to whom'*. The students, however, referred more to *organisational* policy, rather than to communication policy.

Stakeholder analysis

This analysis was done extensively, *firstly* identifying the *internal* stakeholders: organisational officers, the executive committee, two voluntary secretaries, a full-time receptionist; employees receiving compensation (e.g. occupational therapists and nurses); members of Hospice who take responsibility for support services (e.g. domestic staff), many of whom are volunteers. *Secondly, external* stakeholders were identified as patients (both in-home and those admitted to Hospice facilities); corporate sponsors (physical commodities, vehicles, cellular phones); the greater Pretoria community (Rotary, schools); the family of the patient/deceased; the media (mass, specialised and national); the government; and religious institutions. The identified stakeholders were not only listed, but described in detail.

Researcher's comments: This was an excellent analysis—students seemed to have no problem in understanding and applying the constructs.

Media analysis

This was also relatively well understood, although the group only addressed the mass media. They identified *local media* (Radio Tuks, Impact Radio, RSG Afrikaans Radio and the Record); *national media* (SAFM and the newspapers); and *specialised media* (Hospice Chronicle--the internal newsletter).

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6.4.3 OTHER GROUP PROJECTS

Extracts from some other group projects will now be made. It is not practical to give a detailed account of all the projects here, nor does the study claim to be representative in any way. Rather, under each construct efforts will be concentrated on providing the norm, and thereafter mentioning a few groups who seemed to be experiencing problems, in the opinion of the researcher. The projects not mentioned were those the researcher deemed not to have major problems--these student groups seemed to understand the work, but did not go to a lot of trouble. If they did, it could reasonably be assumed that their projects might have earned good marks, and would therefore have been mentioned as an example of 'good' work.

The researcher admits the possibility that this might have been a wrong assumption, i.e. if these students had indeed done more than the minimum (like some other hardworking groups), their problems might have been more obvious. However, with the information at her disposal (and within the confines of time and the length of the study), she decided to rather concentrate on those groups who were obviously weak on certain constructs (the latter being more in line with the aim of the study).

6.4.3.1 Description of the corporate profile

This section included a discussion of the selected non-profit organisation's vision and mission statements, as well as their corporate culture--it was generally understood well. It seemed as though these management students were familiar with the constructs. Nevertheless, some problems were still experienced and will be pointed out.

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Vision statements

Some groups, such as *Forever Young*, the *Red Cross* and *Bankfontein School* ignored vision statements, and received a '0' for their lack of effort. Others did not differentiate between the vision and the mission--the vision was included in the mission statement i.e. "*om binne Paul Jungnickelhuis behuising en versorgingsgeleenthede te skep vir persone met gestremdheid* (mission)*, om hulle volle potensiaal te ontwikkel en sodoende hul lewenskwaliteit te verhoog* (vision). Although it can be surmised that this statement was directly transferred from the non-profit organisation's literature, it was required that the students criticise the vision (if it was theoretically incorrect) and suggest an improved version. It is therefore deduced that they did not understand the difference.

A few groups, such as the *Endangered Wildlife Trust*, changed the vision and mission around: Their vision was: "*Maintain essential support systems and ecological processes, preserve genetic diversity and utilise resources and ecosystems on a sustainable basis*". (This is in fact the *mission*, as it describes the business they are in). Their mission was described as "*to conserve the diversity of species in Southern Africa*", which is indeed the *vision*, as it is more future-oriented, a desired future state of affairs.

A vision such as the following is not considered a vision, but rather an objective*:* "*Om gepaste verteenwoordigers in al die provinsies van Suid-Afrika te kry wat hul eie begroting kan behartig en bewustheid kan skep*" or "*Om die totale bedrag wat jaarliks internasionaal as donasies ontvang word, te verhoog na $50 miljoen teen die jaar 2000.*"

As far as the rest of the groups were concerned, they seemed to have a good grasp of this construct. The *CBC Old Boys* group (as did many others) wrote a

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vision statement where none existed: *"CBC Old Boys Club will* (wants) *to be the best sporting and social private club in the Pretoria area, offering the ultimate sporting facilities and services"*.

The *Melgisédek Christian Centre* had a most appropriate vision, a quote from the Bible (Luke 4:18-19): *"Om met die hulp en leiding van die Heilige Gees en in die naam van Jesus Christus, Pretoria en die omliggende gebiede se inwoners vir die Koninkryk van God, die God wat hemel en aarde geskape het, te wen….."*

Mission statements

In looking at examples of mission statements, many groups successfully criticised the existing mission according to the theory provided. The mission of *The Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut "Om die sukses van lede in 'n veranderende omgewing deur betekenisvolle dienslewering te ondersteun"*, was improved to: *"Die AHI is 'n leidinggewende multi-sektorale werkgewersorganisasie wat aktief sy lede se kennis en energie poel om welvaart in Suid-Afrika te skep. Ons streef hierdie doel na deur middel van beïnvloeding, netwerkskepping, gemeenskapsontwikkeling, internasionale skakeling, die bevordering van entrepreneurskap, opleiding en samewerking met ander belangegroepe."*

Projects of the *Red Cross* and *Bankfontein School* did not address the construct 'mission statement' (they were the ones who also did not formulate a vision statement)--however, this was the exception rather than the rule. The mission statement of the *Irene Middle School*, not considered a good one, contained a lot of **superfluous/incorrect** information: *"The **key objective** was to create a safe and educating environment where farm workers' children would be occupied during the day. **Unfortunately, due to the political circumstances this education was below standard and inadequate. Today, their objectives have changed drastically….."***

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Another such example was the *Mountain Zebra National Park*, whose mission read as follows:

- *"Raising funds for the Cape Mountain Zebra* (incorrect);

- *Creating jobs and opportunities, on a long-term basis, for the local communities* (incorrect);

- *Creating a major conservational area of unique biological diversity* (correct);

- *Attracting domestic and international tourists* (incorrect—however, this would have been correct if the organisation had been, for instance, the South African Tourism Board).

The above were the only mission statements that were not good. All the other projects were considered passable.

Corporate culture

In general, the section on corporate culture seemed to be well answered although some groups did not discuss the construct. (The *Reach for a Dream Foundation* also did not discuss it, but included a section on values). The *Irene Middle School* was one of the few groups who did not seem to grasp the concept: *"The basic ideal of the school is 'For the Sake of the Children'. The principle and teachers are very concerned about the welfare and education standard of these underprivileged children. Sound education is made the personal business of the Governing Body and the Parents Teachers Association who meet on a monthly basis to discuss finances, welfare and other relevant factors with regard to the children".*

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Nicor Consultants was another whose members did not understand corporate culture. Most of their description was about the history, the stakeholders and the number of customers—and not about the 'way we do things around here'.

In spite of the problems mentioned above, most other groups described it correctly, e.g. *"The culture at Radio Tuks 1 is formal as well as informal. Each member is regarded as special and fulfils their position within the whole organisation. There is no specific dress code to be followed, which contributes to a loose structure with the exception of the general meetings and other important appointments. Members love working at Radio Tuks because they see themselves as members of a big family. The station director as well as the other directors are very open-minded and always listen emphatically to their members. The vibe and feeling projected is friendly, hopeful and positive. Beliefs at the radio station are as diverse as can be since the workforce itself is so diverse".*

To end this section, the groups who did more than was expected on corporate profile, will be mentioned. Some included a history of their organisation and/or an organisational chart. The *Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut* group gave a detailed description of the advantages of membership, as obtained through their questionnaire and interviews. *Radio Tuks 2* included an organisational philosophy, a behavioural code, values and norms, disciplinary procedures as well as rules and regulations to be followed in the studio. The *New Hope School for Specialised Education* group did extremely well by discussing the history, location of the school, the identity and demographics of the customers, the management set-up, the school's reputation in the field as well as its financial status.

The group *Sungardens Hospice* 2 included a philosophy:

- *"Hospice affirms life.*

- *Hospice exists to provide support and care for persons in the last phases of incurable disease, so they may live as fully and comfortably as possible.*

- *Hospice recognises dying as a normal process and neither hastens nor postpones death.*

- *Hospice recognises grief as a normal response to loss and therefore support to the families continues into the bereavement period".*

The groups *Mission without Borders* and *Reach for a Dream* included value statements, of which the former is mentioned: *"Values are the foundation on which we build to achieve our mission. Our values shape every thought we think and every deed we do. The values that drive our organisation are dignity, involvement, service, financial integrity, our people, our affiliates and our field"* (each of these were described in detail).

6.4.3.2 Corporate strategic plan

According to the model, this construct included the identification of issues in the macro, task and micro environment by means of an environmental analysis. In general, environmental scanning was well understood and it proved difficult to choose a good example amongst many (lengthy) discussions.

Sungardens Hospice 2 did an excellent, six and a half page environmental scan. Under the *micro* environment, they identified the following (providing a full description of each):

⇒ organisational structure:

- the executive committee and their duties;

- the management committee and their duties, and the heads of departments who fall under their jurisdiction;

⇒ financial background: the biggest sponsor and total monthly budget were *inter alia* mentioned;

⇒ the activities by which funds were raised were identified and described as being a golf day, fashion show, budget drive, wine festival, CSIR run, Hospice week, market, boxing dine, Christmas toy fair, Christmas tree of lights and Club 2000;

⇒ the manpower consisted of the volunteers, the nursing staff (home nursing care, day care, and in-patient care) and management.

As part of the *task* environment, they identified the following:

⇒ media (Pretoria News, Beeld, Rekord, Radio Impact, 702 FM and Radio Rippel);

⇒ activist groups e.g. the gay community (who have their own hospice);

⇒ educational programs (parents/friends/schools);

⇒ relationships with other Hospices in Pretoria;

⇒ financial aid.

The *macro* environmental scan produced the following:

⇒ the competition;

⇒ demographic factors (increasing young black population—AIDS; shifts in population concentrations in certain cities; and decreasing disposable income);

⇒ social and cultural factors—corporate social responsibility;

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⇒ physical factors: climate, availability of medical supplies;

⇒ international factors: sky-rocketing exchange rates;

⇒ economic factors: spending power is a function of economic variables such as income, price, savings and credit allowance;

⇒ technology: research could provide a cure for AIDS;

⇒ political factors: government changes in attitudes and policies, political turmoil, legislation;

⇒ legal factors: extensive legislation governing welfare organisations:

- Fund-raising Act (1978);

- Social and Associated Workers Act (1978);

- National Welfare Act (1978);

- Medicine Act and Nursing Council.

On the grounds of the above environmental scan, a SWOT analysis was conducted.

Another good scan was done by *Paul Jungnickel Home*. Their *macro* analysis produced the following:

⇒ ecological factors, such as water scarcity, presenting a problem for the upkeep of the garden--an important activity for patients;

⇒ economic factors, such as the cut in subsidies to welfare organisations, and the income tax to be paid;

⇒ political factors, i.e. the relationship with unions is good and no discrimination could be discerned internally;

⇒ social factors, such as the perception of the Home, is a problem. A suggested solution was to obtain the services of a public relation person.

⇒ technology is expensive and changing fast—the costs involved create a problem for a non-profit organisation.

Important factors in the *micro* environment were:

⇒ communication with employees: messages from management do not always get through to employees;

⇒ untrained staff;

⇒ theft by employees;

⇒ the cut in government subsidies resulted in financial hardship internally;

⇒ the pressure from unions to continually increase the employees' salaries also put great pressure on the financial situation.

With the exception of two groups who did not do an environmental scan, no project could be criticised on their discussion of this construct.

6.4.3.3 Key strategic issues and their implications, and the identification of communication issues and goals from these implications.

From the following discussion, it will become clear to the reader that this section of the project caused the most problems for student groups. It is not surprising, considering the fact that the *thinking* process required to get to the crux of the real issue involved, as well as the correct communication issue that should be addressed, is most challenging. It is not possible for students to do this part of the project in 'parrot style'—i.e. to simply transfer information from existing literature with only little application involved. An example of the latter would be the existing mission and vision statements of non-profit organisations that only had to be checked against the theory to see whether they were in fact correct. Nor is it possible to do it simply by analysis (a process where the content is broken into smaller parts)--rather, it requires a process of *synthesis,* of making loose parts into a whole, of forming a holistic view (Robert 1997:56-57). It is putting the puzzle together that often proves the most difficult, also in practice.

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The problems experienced by the students seemed to have centred on the *process* of deriving the one construct from the other, especially deriving communication issues from the implications of the strategic issues. For this reason, the researcher did not consider it meaningful to discuss these constructs in isolation, but rather simultaneously under the same heading. An effort will be made to describe the process in stages, in order to identify the biggest problem areas in the process. Cross references will continuously be made to the other related constructs in order to explain and build a picture for the reader as to why a group's interpretation was considered incorrect (and to suggest a possible correct option).

Key strategic issues

In general, most student groups did not have problems in *identifying* their selected non-profit organisation's key strategic issues. Most problems experienced were rather with *phrasing* the key strategic issue correctly in order that it may be understood as either an opportunity or a problem. The lecturer/researcher considers this an important step in the process of developing corporate communication strategy, in order that students may correctly interpret the **implications** of the issue, therefore arriving at the real **communication issue** to be addressed.

As an example we will consider the five **key strategic issues** identified by the *Mountain Zebra National Park* project, which were in essence correct but not always correctly stated. Three of these will be detailed here:

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⇒ *The acquisition of land*

> Researcher's comments: The real issue at this stage is not the acquisition of land (yet). However, it might become one if the Park is not successful in using communication to bring this issue to the attention of donors and other stakeholders. The real issue is the fact that the carrying capacity of the land has been exceeded—i.e. the *expansion* of the park is the real issue, since there is a lack of adequate land for current species as well as for introducing new ones. The **implications** of expansion are firstly that farmers in the area might be unwilling to sell their farms to the Park, or will be charging unrealistic prices if they do. The **communication issue** should lead from these implications, i.e. what should be communicated to the farmers as strategic stakeholders to solve this problem.

⇒ *Funding*

> Researcher's comments: This does not describe what the issue concerning funding is, e.g. is the real problem *insufficient* funding, in which case the Park must try and obtain more funding--or have they already tried and not been successful? This is important to know in order to consider the implications for the stakeholders and arrive at the *real* communication issue.

⇒ The Town Council

> Researcher's comments: This is not specific enough—in which way is the Council an issue? From the students' description of the issue it became clear that this is a **strategic opportunity**, since the Council is actually prepared to donate some land—"*The Town Council's possible donation of land*" would have provided a better indication of the real issue/opportunity. **The implications of the strategic opportunity** is that it would greatly assist in solving both the issues of funding and expansion of the park. A **communication issue** could therefore be

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to immediately cement the relationship with the Town Council, before they changed their mind (i.e. in the event that other Council stakeholders such as squatters might hear about the issue and clamour for the same land). The **communication goals** could for instance be to convey gratitude to Council members, and to provide them with information about the importance of obtaining the land and the specific way in which it will be utilised. Should the squatters indeed make trouble for the Council, the squatters immediately become a strategic stakeholder with whom the Park should communicate. The **communication issue** in such a case would be to explain to them the job and other opportunities that would result from increased tourism in the area, and make them part of the decision making process before they turn activist.

The *Iyamceda* group built their identification of strategic issues around *people, management, products* and *budget*, as suggested in the class notes. However, their interpretation of this theory was not correct. They ended up doing no more than:

⇒ identifying stakeholders, rather than identifying strategic issues around *people*,

⇒ describing the members of *management*, rather than their strategic issues;

⇒ naming the *products*, rather than the strategic issues around the products;

⇒ stating the *budget* as a strategic issue, rather than a lack of funding or donors.

Implications of the strategic issues

Bankfontein Skool (a farm school) correctly identified their strategic issues, but they also had trouble in *phrasing them correctly*. Furthermore, they did *not specifically point out the implications of the strategic issues*, although it was *implicit* in their lengthy discussion of issues. The same was true for a number of other groups who, In their analysis and discussion of key strategic issues, often touched upon the implications of strategic issues without naming them as such.

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This creates problems when they have to pinpoint the communication issues, since they are derived directly from the implications of the strategic issues.

A few examples of the strategic issues that the *Bankfontein School* student group identified are:

⇒ *transport* (students having to walk up to 20 Km, arriving late in class, teachers getting fed-up and asking the students to leave the school). The real issue is the fact that there is *no school bus.* The implications are that students arrive late and teachers become irate—this causes conflict between teachers and students. The **communication issue** in this case should centre around bringing the teachers and students together, both having the opportunity of stating their case, bringing about mutual understanding for the problem, which none of them caused. Further communication could centre around bringing the issue to the attention of those who are able to do something about it (the community, Department of Education, donors).

⇒ *legislation* (the issue is really the *new* legislation regarding religion practised at schools). The religion practised at a school is no longer automatically Christian, but rather that which is practised by the largest part of its community. The **implication/effect** of this new legislation is that the farmer on whose land the school is situated (the largest sponsor, and a Christian) is unhappy with this situation, leading to conflict. Up till now the school has been found on Christian values and norms, and most of the teachers are also Christian. The **communication issue** should centre around building understanding and respect for each others' religions between students/parents and (Christian) teachers/the owner.

⇒ *farm owner will be retiring soon* (75 years old). This is correctly phrased, although 'pending retirement of owner' could be considered better language. This issue has **major implications** for everyone involved. The **communication issue** should centre around bringing the stakeholders together and trying to find a solution to this pressing issue.

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Identification of organisational goals and objectives

The *Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut's* group studied the organisational goals as set out in the AHI information brochure and annual report, and listed 10 of these. Thereupon they analysed the communication strategy of the AHI, and found some small differences in the goals mentioned here and those mentioned above. In the communication strategy, they found that three organisational goals were indicated as being major. An abstract of their commentary on this analysis follows:

"Kritiek teen bestaande AHI doelstellings:

- *Die huidige doelstellings vloei, wat ons betref, nie almal direk uit die geïdentifiseerde strategiese kwessies voort nie. Verskeie aspekte wat as strategiese kwessies geïdentifiseer is, word nie in die vorm van doelstellings verwoord nie. So bv. is daar geen doelstellings ten opsigte van die toevoeging van waarde aan lede, ledewerwing oor taal- en kultuurgrense of die bemagtiging van personeel nie. Tog word hierdie aspekte as strategiese uidagings beskou.*

- *Dit is belangrik dat die organisasie se doelstellings op 'n konsekwente wyse in alle dokumente uiteengesit moet word. Die doelstelling oor gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid verskyn byvoorbeeld in die inligtingsbrosjure en jaarverslag, maar nie in die kommunikasiestrategie nie. Let ook op die konsekwente gebruik van die term 'doelstellings' versus 'oogmerke' in alle dokumente.*

- *Die gelyste doelstellings is baie omvattend. Ons stel voor dat die doelstellings aan die hand van temas wat vir 'n sekere tydperk geld, geprioritiseer word. Op dié manier word die aandag om die beurt op spesifieke doelstellings gefokus. Die organisasie kan onmoontlik tegelykertyd aandag aan al die doelstellings gee.*

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This top group identified in the AHI the same problem experienced by other third year student groups in identifying the goals of their non-profit organisations. In most cases, the goals were standing loose from the strategic issues, i.e. students 'sucked them from their thumbs' or stated them by intuition—the goals were not arrived at through a systematic analysis of the strategic issues. A good example of this is the description of corporate goals provided by the *CBC Old Boys'* group:

"The organisation's reason for existence and operation is mainly one of social responsibility. To make a place where people can come and socialise with others who have a common interest. A place where you can keep in contact with old friends with whom you grew up with at school and where business meetings can be held in a relaxed and friendly environment. The club focuses its goals on increasing prestige, their reputation, and quality of their sporting facilities as well as containing costs. Making sure that all employee attitudes are positive and that they are in agreement with management is of great importance to achieve goals as well as maintaining and increasing employee performance. The club also recognises the need for social responsibility in expanding efforts to include underprivileged people (e.g. Bramley Homes).

Goals for the season:

- *to build a competitive, healthy attitude to sports and to life;*

- *to encourage a friendly family atmosphere;*

- *to encourage membership from outside;*

- *to promote fellowship with other clubs;*

- *above all, to have fun."*

The same trend was noticed in the project of the *New Hope School for Specialised Education* (since this project will be used as an example again later, it is attached as Appendix 3—see page 10). Although their strategic issues were identified as financial shortages; insufficient marketing of services; the concept of

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mainstream education; the provision of multi-racial and multi-lingual education; and outcomes-based education, most of their organisational goals and objectives were not directly related, i.e. did not systematically flow from the issues:

"*Goal: To provide multi or trans disciplinary skilled and specialist personnel to work with families, other care givers, groups and agencies in the ethnic and wider community.*

Objectives:

- *training of specialised personnel;*

- *market related remuneration packages;*

- *appointment criteria;*

- *manual on multi-disciplinary character in Specialised Education.*"

Other goals mentioned were the following (their corresponding objectives can be viewed in Appendix 3, page 11):

- "*To manage the school cost effectively.*

- *To create an effectively managed school.*

- *To implement an educationally responsible extra curricular program.*

- *To provide uniquely specialised services to the education community, other than the normal services offered at schools.*

- *To create a marketing strategy to introduce the needs of the child with learning problems.*

- *Maximal provision and use of physical facilities (school and residence).*"

Researcher's comments: Except for the fact that most groups did not correctly derive organisational goals from strategic issues (a situation that could be corrected by teaching), it seems to the researcher that the construct 'organisational goals and objectives' are out of place on the model. In reviewing the researcher's suggestions/discussion of the strategic issues incorrectly phrased by the *Mountain Zebra National Park* and *Bankfontein School* earlier, it appears to be more correct that communication issues should be derived *directly*

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from the implications of strategic issues. This makes the construct 'organisational goals' on the model superfluous. This is only a preliminary remark—after the discussion/assessment of the projects on the construct 'communication issues' in the following paragraphs, it should become more clear whether this is indeed so.

Identification of communication issues and goals

These two constructs will be discussed in the same section, since it is important to judge the identification of communication goals by whether they were derived from the key communication issues. We will once again consider the project of *New Hope School for Specialised Education* (see Appendix 3, page 12).

This top group followed the model by describing the opportunities/risks of communicating each strategic issue, of which the first was *financial shortages*. The *risks* they saw in communicating the fact that the school was experiencing financial shortages, were few. Most people affected already knew. The few risks they identified were the *employees fearing their jobs being cut*, and the *parents fearing an increase in school fees*. The *opportunities* identified by communicating the financial shortages, were seen as *everybody internally becoming more determined to raise funds*, and *stakeholders externally* becoming aware of the fact and *contributing more.*

Researcher's comments: In order to ascertain whether one arrives at the same communication goals when considering the implications of the strategic issues, the researcher will now suggest communication goals having been determined by this method. According to the researcher, the **implications** of financial shortages might be that *employees feared losing their jobs*, parents feared an *increase in school fees*, and the children received an *inferior education*. The **communication issues** regarding this strategic issue would be to communicate

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with employees/parents/donors, providing them with correct information. The following **communication goals** are suggested in such a case:

i. to *reassure employees* that no downsizing is planned <u>or</u> alternatively, *to communicate openly* regarding the possible loss of jobs;

ii. to *inform parents of the increase in school fees*; <u>or</u> *to ask their assistance in fund-raising in order that school fees not be increased;*

iii. to communicate the possibility of an *inferior education (less teachers, or not as qualified) both to parents and donors* in order that they might raise funds/donate money.

<u>Researcher's comments</u>: Even though some of the same communication issues were raised, the researcher considers the method of considering the implications of the strategic issues in arriving at the communication goals, as both easier, more specific and deriving at more valid goals--it makes one think more deeply about the implications of a strategic issue on all the stakeholders. Therefore, rather than practising persuasive communication, this method makes one consider the feelings/opinions/expectations of stakeholders about an issue before communicating with them. This is the essence of two-way symmetrical communication.

In communicating the second strategic issue, *insufficient marketing of services*, the risks were seen as *personnel fearing additional responsibilities* and becoming stressed. The *opportunities* were that *people might volunteer their services* in this regard. (For risks and opportunities of communicating the issue 'concept of mainstream education, see Appendix 3, page 13).

<u>Researcher's comments</u>: In repeating the exercise done with the first strategic issue, the researcher considers the **implications** of issue two to be strongest for the *donors* (they will not know about the school and therefore cannot donate money), as well as for *customers* (the parents of children needing specialised education will not know about the school and therefore cannot use the services

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nor assist in raising funds—also resulting in a loss of revenue). Communication issues are therefore to identify and inform donors and customers.

Once again, the researcher is of the opinion that this method of thinking through the *implications* on all the stakeholders, leads to more precise identification of communication goals, resulting in stabilising relationships with strategic stakeholders.

The students identified the following internal goals and objectives, as well as external goals and objectives:

Internal goals:

- *"To maintain a healthy, open and effective communication environment between school members.*

- *To create a positive image for the school to counteract past negative connotation to the school's name amongst the pupils in the school."*

Researcher's comments: These goals were not specifically related to the risks and opportunities of communicating the strategic issues, as spelled out above. The researcher suggested communication goals to solve the problem on the previous page, in the discussion of the strategic issues and their implications.

Internal objectives:

- *"Implementation of workshops for promoting more healthy open and effective communication.*

- *To hold regular social gatherings to promote interpersonal relationships between staff and pupils.*

- *By having awards ceremonies for numerous school activities, for example education, carnivals, fun runs etc. this will create a sense of belonging and pride which directly improves positive attitudes toward the school and its name.*

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- *To create a positive atmosphere between the teachers, which will directly affect the pupils' attitude."*

> Researcher's comments: These objectives are also vague and general, not pinpointing the problem.

External goals:

- *"To implement, educate and create an awareness and sensitivity towards the school and its pupils.*

- *To communicate the school's needs to the external publics, for them to provide an efficient support system to the school."*

> Researcher's comments: These communication goals are closer to solving the strategic issues of financial shortages and insufficient marketing.

External objectives:

- *"To provide the publics, through the use of various media, with as much information as possible, regarding the school's purpose for existence and any other extra programmes.*

- *To arrange events to attract external publics to get them involved in the school's activities."*

> Researcher's comments: In looking at the **communication goals and objectives** identified, the student group do not seem to have derived the goals and objectives directly from the strategic issues. Especially the internal goals and objectives seem rather general, vague and unspecified. The students seem to be focusing on process objectives, i.e. on the events, workshops themselves, instead of impact objectives, i.e. how attitude/opinions will be changed.
>
> Researcher's suggestions: The method of deriving communication goals by considering the implications of the strategic issues on all the stakeholders, still seem to be a better alternative.

A few other projects will now be discussed shortly in order to indicate the kinds of problems experienced by groups. The pages in the group projects which contains the full discussion on these constructs, are included in the appendices, for the reader's perusal.

⇒ *Mission without Borders* (Sending sonder Grense = SSG)

On page 8 of their assignment, this group identified five strategic issues: awareness; corruption and credibility; politics, culture and religion; suitable representatives; and the economy (see Appendix 4, page 8). On the next page they discussed the *economy; corruption and credibility*; and suitable *representatives* as their 'key communication issues'. However, what they were in effect discussing *were not communication issues*, but rather the implications of their strategic issues (see lecturer/researcher's comments on the assignment in this regard). On page 11, they again discussed *awareness* (as their priority strategic issue) which strictly speaking, is the communication issue. It must be noted that there are times when a lack of awareness is a strategic issue—in such cases, the strategic and communication issue will be the same. Although the communication objectives stated by the group were in fact communication *goals*, it was nevertheless clear that they understood the kind of information that had to be communicated to solve the strategic issue.

⇒ *Birchleigh High School*

This group identified 11 strategic issues, but did not phrase them in a way that indicated what the issues really were. Thereupon they identified the implications of their first strategic issue. Under the heading 'key communication issues', this group showed that they had a reasonable understanding of what should be communicated to the different stakeholders to solve each of the three priority strategic issues (see Appendix 5, page 4).

⇒ *Radio Tuks 1*

This project was done by one person, repeating the subject. (However, since the project was new, it was the first time he had to develop a corporate communication strategy according to the model provided). The student indicated considerable understanding of the issues at hand. Two external and three internal issues were identified, followed by an in-depth discussion of the issues and its implications--issues were then prioritised. Under the heading 'key communication issues' (they were in fact key strategic issues) the issues were further discussed, and the threats and opportunities in communicating them, were analysed. Communication goals and objectives were then identified for the most important strategic issue (see Appendix 6, pages 5-12).

<u>Researcher's comments</u>: Most other groups had considerable problems understanding the construct 'communication issues', and how it was derived from the implications of the strategic issues. Examples will now be provided to illustrate this phenomenon.

⇒ *Trans Oranje School for the Deaf*

The next group whose strategic and communication issue analysis is attached, is Nicor Consultants. Their identification and description of the strategic issues of the School for the Deaf were excellent, although they had the same problem as many others in not phrasing the strategic issues clearly. They could also not identify the communication issues, communication goals (or communication activities) separately, although most of the information needed to do so, was contained in their discussion (see Appendix 7, pages 4-9).

⇒ *Tuks Jool*

In essence, the strategic issues identified by this group were correct, although they were also not stated clearly. Under the heading 'key communication issues' (which was incorrect), they conducted a SWOT analysis and prioritised their key

strategic issues--being *external image, motivation of committees* and *transformation.* Now followed another discussion of these strategic issues, still not identifying the communication issues, nor the goals/objectives (see Appendix 8, pages 9-13 for researcher's comments and suggestions).

⇒ *Radio Tuks 2*

Under the heading "SLEUTEL KOMMUNIKASIE VRAAGSTUKKE" the group discussed internal and external issues. These were in fact key strategic issues, and not communication issues. Once again most of the information was contained in their discussion, but the students were not able to differentiate between a strategic issue, the implications of the strategic issue, and the resulting communication issue(s). There was a discussion under the heading "KOMMUNIKASIE-IMPLIKASIES" and another for "DOELSTELLINGS EN DOELWITTE") (which were in fact **communication** goals and objectives). The above indicates confusion amongst the students as far as these constructs are concerned (see Appendix 9, pages 7-9).

⇒ *Paul Jungnickel Home*

This group identified their **key strategic issues** in the *macro* environment under headings such as ecological, economic, political, social and technological factors. They also identified key strategic issues in the *micro* environment such as government subsidies, unions, transfer of messages, untrained staff and theft. Under the heading 'key communication issues', the group in fact discussed the implications of the strategic issues, rather than the communication issues. They did not identify communication issues, nor communication goals. Under the heading 'objectives', they identified some organisational and some communication goals in the macro and micro environment, without differentiating between the two (see Appendix 10, pages 4-10).

$\Rightarrow$ *Neobirth Crisis Pregnancy Centre*

Four strategic issues were identified and discussed. The implications of these issues were implicit in the discussion, but not spelled out. A SWOT analysis was then conducted, followed by a heading 'corporate communication strategy'. Under the latter, goals and objectives were set—some were *organisational* goals and objectives, and others *communication* goals and objectives. The group did not (or was not able to) differentiate between the two (see Appendix 11, page 8-14).

Researcher's comments: It is clear from the above analysis (and also from the many hours of consultations that the researcher had with student groups) that the construct 'communication issue' caused confusion amongst student groups, both average as well as top groups. Students were, in most cases, not able to identify the communication issues from the implications of the strategic issues. They therefore also had problems in identifying the communication goals, which is logical since this flows directly from the communication issues.

6.4.3.4 Draft to top management

New Hope School for Specialised Education was one of few groups that included this section. "*The proposal thus far, has been presented to Mr J Stapelberg and the governing body of the school. They have agreed with the strategic issues we have identified, as well as the implications thereof.*"

Researcher's comments: This is exactly why this construct was included on the model, namely to obtain top management buy-in and support.

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6.4.3.5 Communication policy

Communication policy, in general, was not as well understood as previous constructs such as the corporate profile and environmental scanning. Some groups ignored the construct, while others did not grasp the model). The *Endangered Wildlife Trust* described communication policy as follows:

"*Mission: To conserve the diversity of species in Southern Africa.*

Strategy: Initiate and fund projects that make a significant contribution to the maintenance of biodiversity......

Corporate culture: The Trust has a basic organisation structure from which they work. Normally the structure is very flat and flexible.........

Values and norms: The Trust aims at doing everything in correlation with their mission and goals as ethical as possible........."

> Researcher's comments: This was the wrong interpretation of the model, possibly caused by students who did not consult the theory provided, but only followed the model. Communication policy basically explains *who may communicate what to whom.*

Another group who made the same mistake as the previous, was *LifeLine*: "*Volgens die Ashridge Mission model kan daar 'n beleid opgestel word vir LifeLine. Wat die model bespreek is Doelwitte, Waardes, Strategieë en Standaarde en Optrede (Jefkins, Public Relations: 1998). Die beleid word saamgestel uit doelwitte wat voortvloei uit die missie en visie van die organisasie. Na die beleid opgestel is word daar gewerk aan die korporatiewe kultuur, waardes en norme. Die missie, doelwitte en kultuur is alreeds bespreek.*"

> Researcher's comments: This group did not seem to understand the essence of communication policy.

On the other hand, the following two examples indicate that these (average) groups seemed to understand the basic concept very well: *"Iyamceda is verbind tot eerlike, deursigtige en kredietwaardige kommunikasie en die bekendmaking van inligting aan die gemeenskap, publiek en donateurs. Alle inligting wat deurgegee word, is tot die uiterste bevoordeling en vervulling van die diverse behoeftes en leemtes in die kindergemeenskap van S.A. Ons wil soveel as moontlik, met soveel as moontlik, publieke en gemeenskappe kommunikeer om ons behoeftes bekend te maak en relevante inligting deur te gee......"*

"Paul Jungnickelhuis se kommunikasiebeleid kan kortliks saamgevat word as 'n beleid wat ten alle tye die eerlikheid en opregtheid hoog op prys stel. Daar is vir topbestuur niks belangriker as om met die sleutel publieke eerlik en reguit te wees nie, dit sluit veral ouers en naaste familie van die inwoners in. Vir die Huis is hulle beeld baie belangrik en juis daarom probeer hulle om die positiewe kant bo te hou, maar sal ook die negatiewe na vore laat kom, wanneer nodig............Die Huis se kommunikasiebeleid skiet egter tekort aan 'n plan wat tydens krisis tye gevolg kan word. Daar word verwys na die voorval toe 'n man aan 'n hartaanval in sy kamer beswyk het. Die verpleegster was teenwoordig tydens die voorval. Skaar drie ure later word gerugte versprei dat die man aan 'n stuk brood verstik het in die eetsaal. 'n Voorstel word gemaak dat die bestuur die feit dat van die inwoners verstandelike beperkte vermoëns het, in gedagte moet hou en juis in sulke situasies pro-aktief moet optree om die tipe van gerugte wat versprei word te voorkom. Verder sal ons voorstel dat die topbestuurder alleen in noodgevalle of krisissituasies die kommunikasie hanteer, juis omdat die persoon baie goed met mense kan werk, so ook met die media."

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6.4.3.6 Stakeholder Analysis

In general, the stakeholder analysis was done very well—most groups spent a page or two (if not more) on this construct. Every group seemed to understand what stakeholder analysis is all about. There were only two groups who could be criticised, and that was on the grounds of their analysis being too short/incomplete (in comparison with all the other groups). *Neobirth* did little more than dividing their stakeholders into *external* (government, media, community and donors) as well as *internal* (volunteers, secretaries and receptionists). *Priority publics* was seen to be *firstly* women with unwanted pregnancies that needed counselling, that wanted abortions or just had abortions, and that had nowhere else to go. *Secondly*, individuals who were aware of Neobirth and the importance of such a centre for the community, and were willing to make donations.

Researcher's comments: This was a typical example (referred to earlier by the researcher) of a group that gave the impression of understanding the theory, but who went to the minimum trouble. They seemed to grasp the essence of stakeholder analysis, but no detailed explanation/examples were given nor methods of analysis suggested.

LifeLine was the other group that did not seem to have made an effort on the stakeholder analysis. For a project that earned 68% in total, this was a surprisingly incomplete analysis. One could only speculate that a specific group member was given the responsibility for stakeholder analysis (and for communication policy), since the standard of these two sections were much below the rest. A word for word account of their stakeholder analysis was the following: "*Alle groepe mense wat betrokke is by die organisasie word ontleed en in kategorieë geplaas vir verwysings. Die belangegroepe wat ons gevind het was: Werknemers en vrywilligers, die owerheid wat LifeLine reguleer, donateurs,*

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die media waardeur LifeLine homself ontbloot, die teikengroepe wat LifeLine dienste aan verskaf, en LifeLine Internasionaal."

Having to choose one from the many good examples of stakeholder analysis, proved difficult. *New Hope School for Specialised Education* did an excellent two-page analysis, according to the 'organisational linkages' concept. They identified *enabling* linkages with the government and sponsors, *functional* linkages with employees and unions (groups who provide an input), pupils (groups who provide an output) and *normative* linkages with similar institutions. Their strategic stakeholders were identified according to theory--*internally* they were the employees, and *externally* the trade unions, government, media, possible sponsors, parents and children—all these stakeholder groups were described in detail (see Appendix 3, pages 15-17).

Melgisédek Christian Centre did a four-page analysis by, *inter alia*, providing background on the reasons for why their stakeholders were in need of their services. They brought in new theory on the factors and trends which influenced their customers. The *Reach for a Dream Foundation* did a four-page analysis, identifying their priority stakeholders by means of the PVI-index (Potential Vulnerability and Impact). They categorised them nominatively, demographically and psychographically. The group discussed volunteers, Dream Children and their families, donors/sponsors, the media and members of the medical profession (nursing staff, doctors and specialists, social workers and potential volunteers), in detail.

Nicor Consultants were responsible for the following excellent stakeholder analysis of the Trans Oranje School for the Deaf. Firstly they identified the *external* publics:

♦ *"staat:*
- geografies—*distriksrade (N3), onderwysamptenare van Gauteng, nasionale regering*

♦ *borge en skenkers:*
- demografies*: sakemanne met gemiddelde tot hoë inkomste potensiaal, persone en ouers met 'n hoë inkomste potensiaal*
- geografies*: besighede in en om Pretoria, groot maatskappye met bekende naam*
- psigografies*: maatskappye wat wil bydra tot die gemeenskap, wat bewus is van hul sosiale verantwoordelikhede*

♦ *media*
- geografies*: plaaslike koerante soos bv. Rekord en Pretoria News wat gemeenskapsforum bladsye bevat; groter provinsiale koerante soos Beeld om bv. die Opedag daarin te adverteer; televisie, tydskrifte en radio bv. Radio Tuks wat 11.00 in die oggende 'n gemeenskapsforum het wat skoliere en studente trek; Radio Jakaranda het soms praatjies oor dowes; en Trans Oranje Skool trek volwassenes.*

♦ *kerke*
- geografies*: kerke om Trans Oranje Skool, kerke in groter Pretoria.*

♦ *gemeenskap*
  ◊ *kinders:*
  - demografies*: tussen ses en 13 jaar*
  - geografies*: in skole rondom Trans Oranje Skool en in Pretoria*
  - psigografies*: maklik leerbaar en toeganklik, dra alles aan ouers oor*
  ◊ *jong volwassenes*
  - demografies*: tussen 14 en 20 jaar*
  - geografies*: hoërskole, universiteite en technikons in Pretoria*
  - psigografies*: kan eie opinies vorm, skep waardestelsel en kan houdings vorm teenoor die dowe*
  ◊ *volwassenes*
  - demografies*: 21 tot 60 jaar*
  - geografies*: werksaam in en om Pretoria*
  - psigografies*: self ouers, kan begrip hê vir ouers met 'n dowe kind*
  ◊ *bejaardes*
  - demografies*: 61 tot 90 jaar*
  - geografies*: woon in en om Pretoria*

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- psigografies: *kleinkinders, is baie maklik oorreedbaar, het meer tyd om na iemand te luister en kan empatie hê*

♦ *dowe gemeenskap*
  - demografies: *alle ouderdomme*
  - geografies: *in en om Pretoria*
  - psigografies: *is self doof, kan dus die dowe leerder se situasie verstaan en kan empatie hê met daardie persoon*

♦ *arbeidsmark*
  - demografies: *alle gegradueerdes en sakemanne van besighede (groot en klein)*
  - geografies: *in en om Pretoria werksaam*
  - psigografies: *moontlik bereid om dowe persoon in diens te neem en om finansiële ondersteuning te bied aan Trans Oranje Skool*

♦ *Suid-Afrikaanse ekonomie*

♦ *hospitale en klinieke*
  - geografies: *in en om Pretoria"*

The same detailed analysis was also conducted to identify *internal* publics (pupils, teachers, family and friends), as well as for publics in the *task* environment such as other schools for the deaf, alumni of the Trans Oranje Skool, and DEAFSA (Deaf Federation of SA).

> Researcher's comments: The students applied a marketing segmentation technique, which was relevant and well done--a lot of thought went into the analysis.

6.4.3.7 Media analysis

In general, the media analysis was sufficient—but not as well done as the stakeholder analysis. Some groups ignored the construct, while others such as the *High School Birchleigh,* did only the minimum:

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- "*Intern: Omsendbriewe, vergaderings en inligtingsaande;*

- *Ekstern: Persverklarings, omsendbriewe, nuusbriewe, oueraande/ massavergaderings, email/fakse vir regering en vakbonde.*"

The *Paul Jungnickel Home* also expended little effort: "*Binne die organisasie word daar van die volgende media's gebruik gemaak: 'n Interkomstelsel wat die hoofgebou en woonareas verbind. Dit sluit in die eetsaal, werkswinkel, gange en buitekant. Hierdie luidsprekers is nie baie duidelik nie en 'n deel van die boodskap gaan verlore. Daar is 'n inligtingsbord binne die eetsaal. Telefone, 'n faksmasjien en selfone word ook gebruik, asook 10 rekenaars wat nie regtig aan hul behoeftes voldoen nie. Daar word veral gebruik gemaak van 'n riemtelegram.*"

One of the many groups who did a reasonable analysis of the media, was *Tuks Jool.* Their *internal* analysis identified the post box of each member of a Rag committee as a medium, as well as bulletin boards. *Externally* the strategic stakeholders were the donors—an in-depth description was given of the procedures involved in contacting and managing donors, i.e. the use of telephone, fax and letter. The quarterly newsletter 'Die Joler', as well as a bi-annual publication 'Die Joolnuus' was mentioned. Rag representatives of each residence/house was said to communicate rag news interpersonally. The mass media identified were *inter alia* the publication 'Die Joolblad' (general public); a Website (national and international communication); as well as Radio Tuks. Specialised media were seen to be the notices sent to houses and businesses in the vicinity to apologise for the noise during Rag Week; the faxes sent to donors to keep them up to date on happenings; and the letters sent to receivers of Rag funding to inform them about payments made.

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An excellent media analysis was done by *Reach for a Dream Foundation*, who discussed controlled media (print, audio-visual, interpersonal, folk/oramedia) as well as uncontrolled communication. The *Endangered Wildlife Trust* also did well with the following:

Figure 6.5: *ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST* **MEDIA ANALYSIS**

MAINSTREAM	SPECIALITY	OWN	INTER-PERSONAL
Current Media			
1. Business Day 'After Hours	1. Keeping Track	1. Endangered Wildlife	1. Gyps Snips
2. The Star	2. Radio Safari	2. A Vision	2. Talon Talk
3. Mail & Guardian	3. 50/50	3. Wildlife College Prospectus	3. Newsletter from groups
4. Sunday Times	4. Die Boer/ The Farmer	4. Pamphlets	4. Meetings
5. The Sowetan	5. www.wildnetafrica.co.za	5. Info booklet— Eagles and farmers	5. email
6. Sawubona/ Sunday Independent		6. Internet http://www.ewt.org.za	
7. Saturday Star		7. Videos	
8. 702			
9. Highveld Stereo			
10.Classic FM			
11.City Press			
Potential Media			
1. Beeld	1. Panorama		
2. Die Rapport	2. National Geographic		
3. Huisgenoot	3. Custos		
4. Radio Jakaranda	4. Landbou Weekblad		
5. Radio Tuks			
6. Radio Oranje			
7. KFM			
8. Radio Sonder Grense (RSG)			

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6.4.3.8 Management liaison

CBC Old Boys was one of the few groups who included this section: *"Management liaison involves the different channels of communication which exists between members, employees, professional coaches and management. Within the CBC Old Boys Club a number of different managers are consulted regarding certain issues."* Now followed detailed communication channels for how certain matters were brought to the attention of certain managers, e.g. *"Replacement and repair of sports equipment are brought to the attention of the various managers of their respective sports by the captains or coaches of Bowls, Cricket, Soccer, Hockey, squash, Marathon"* etc.

> Researcher's comments: This was not what was required. The idea was rather to discuss the development of the corporate communication strategy with top management, to obtain their opinions, further suggestions and support.

Endangered Wildlife Trust also included this construct: *"We had a meeting with the management of the Endangered Wildlife Trust and we had discussions about the project and what it entails. They gave us their full consent to do the project for their organisation."*

> Researcher's comments: This could be seen as the first step in the liaison with management, but should not have been the only.

The *LifeLine* group saw the following reasons for management liaison:

- *"Kommunikasie is 'n fundamentale komponent van bestuur;*
- *Bystand en ondersteuning van topbestuur is noodsaaklik dat die kommunikasieplan moet slaag;*
- *Bestuurders is die sleutel tot sukses;*

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- *Gereelde evaluasie moet plaasvind om effektiwiteit te verseker.*

Kommunikasiekanale wat werknemers kan gebruik om met die bestuur te liaison, sluit in interpersoonlike kommunikasie, groepvergaderings of byeenkomste en persoonlike kommunikasie." LifeLine seemed to have a better idea of what was required in this section.

However, the best example came from *Sungardens Hospice 2*, who described in one full page the three meetings they had with the management team. The first meeting was to introduce themselves and explain the project. During the second and third meetings, a questionnaire was presented to obtain information from several people, and documentation was provided to the group.

6.4.3.9 Communication programmes

Even before the evaluation of the model, while the theory was still being lectured, the researcher discussed the model with her colleagues. All were in agreement that communication programmes should be the last construct on the model, together with communication plans/campaigns. Programming takes place at the implementation level and is not part of the strategy. The constructs communication plans/campaigns were in fact only shown on this model to give students an indication of where they fitted in, but is not considered an integral part of the corporate communication *strategy* model.

Students were therefore advised in class that the construct 'programmes' should move right down, as the last construct on the strategy model. Communication plans/campaigns/programmes will not form part of this discussion, although some students did discuss programmes on their reports.

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6.4.3.10 Conclusion

The aim of Stage 3 was to assess the projects, give examples of where students did or did not understand the constructs, by comparing them with one another.

Based on the assessment, it is the opinion of the researcher that the following constructs on the model were understood well by student groups:

- the corporate profile (including the vision, mission and corporate culture);
- environmental scanning (in the macro, task and micro environment);
- the identification of strategic issues;
- stakeholder analysis.

Some groups experienced relatively minor problems with communication policy and media analysis.

Almost all the groups experienced problems with the following:

- phrasing a strategic issue correctly;
- identification of the implications of strategic issues;
- setting corporate goals and objectives;
- identifying communication issues from the implications of strategic issues;
- deriving communication goals and objectives from communication issues.

Most groups did not address the following constructs:

- draft to top management;
- management liaison.

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Groups were told in class that they did not need to address the constructs 'communication programmes/plans/campaigns' as part of the corporate communication strategy model. The constructs actually formed part of the communication plan, but were included on the strategy model to provide an indication of where they fitted in.

In Stage 4, the model and theory will be evaluated, based on the assessment of the group projects.

To end this section on the assessment of the group projects, it was thought fitting to include the following:

Figure 6.6: PREFACE TO GROUP 5's PROJECT

THE *IYAMCEDA* CHILD WELFARE ORGANISATION

When we approached "IYAMCEDA" (as a not-for-profit child welfare organisation) to develop a communication strategy and plan for them, we saw it as just another practical project that had to be done in order to obtain our degree!

How our views have changed after studying the institution's activities and projects. Observing the absolute commitment of the volunteers at close range, seeing how they gave of themselves and their time to improve life for others, it also became vitally important to us to assist IYAMCEDA through an improved communication approach (which included a communication strategy and plans), to achieve their goals, vision and mission.

We quickly realised that if IYAMCEDA applied this strategy and resulting plans that we developed for them, they will be able to improve communication and build lasting relationships with churches, the general public, communities and other welfare organisations. They will be better equipped to communicate important needs and inform stakeholders about planned activities, thereby receiving support and successful implementation of plans.

If IYAMCEDA can succeed in this, they will have fulfilled their mission--"Improved child welfare and care for the children of South Africa" will have become a reality!

(The above preface to Group 5's IYAMCEDA project was translated by Benita Steyn from Afrikaans.)

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6.5 EVALUATION OF MODEL 1: STAGE 4

> **STAGE 4**: A further period of research (of an evaluative nature) is initiated (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

In December 1998, the results of the individual assessment and comparison of projects (completed during Stage 3), were analysed. The aim of Stage 4 was to try and find explanations for common problem areas in the student group projects--looking for flaws in the model (e.g. misleading information that appeared on the model itself) or identifying insufficient/incorrect theoretical explanations provided to students in the 1998 Class Notes (together with the model).

6.5.1 CORPORATE PROFILE

This construct seems to have been well understood by the students. The theory in the class notes also seems to have been sufficient and well understood—it will therefore be included unchanged in the next year's class notes.

6.5.1.1 Vision and mission

Except for the fact that some groups could not differentiate between a vision and a mission, or changed the meaning of these two constructs around, no other problems were evident. More theory will be added to the class notes on both these constructs in an effort to clarify the difference between vision and mission. Examples will also be provided in class.

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In order to prevent confusion, the researcher studied the theory on vision and mission in the third year Business Management text book to ascertain whether the theory provided in the Communication Management class notes were in accordance with this subject—this was found to be the case.

6.5.1.2 Corporate culture

Few problems were experienced by the students concerning the construct corporate culture. The theory provided seems to have been sufficient to explain the meaning of the construct.

6.5.1.3 Student contributions

Some group projects were creative, adding more information than was requested. A few described the values and the corporate philosophy of their non-profit organisations. Theory on these two constructs will be added to the 1999 Class Notes under 'corporate profile'.

6.5.2 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

Under this heading, most student groups did an excellent environmental scan, identifying issues in the macro, task and internal environment. Many also did a SWOT analysis here, summarising the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/threats that were identified by the environmental scan.

Lecturer's contribution: While preparing for the theoretical lecture on this aspect of the model, the researcher/lecturer came upon theory explaining the different levels of strategy--enterprise, corporate, business, functional and operational level (Digman 1990). This theory will be added to the 1999 Class Notes--since it is an important distinction that will assist students in understanding where corporate communication strategy, as a functional organisational strategy, fits into the picture.

Two other sources consulted by the researcher (Robert 1997; and Mintzberg 1994) pointed to the fact that 'corporate strategy' and 'corporate strategic plan' were different concepts. Since the 1998 Class Notes equated corporate strategy with the organisation's strategic plan, the relevant theory will be changed accordingly. Theory will also be added to explain the strategic management process (strategic thinking, strategic planning and implementation) in more detail, as well as the concept of strategy.

Based on the above, the model will be changed as follows:

- Enterprise and corporate strategy will be added to the corporate profile.

- The construct 'corporate profile' will be changed to 'internal environment', which now has a much broader scope.

- The construct 'corporate strategic plan' will no longer appear on the model (what was in effect described by the students under this heading was the construct 'environmental scanning').

- Since scanning is conducted in order to identify the key strategic issues, 'environmental scanning' will be placed under the construct 'key strategic issues'.

6.5.3 Key strategic issues

Students did fairly well in identifying and prioritising key strategic issues—they also had no problem in differentiating between internal and external issues. A problem they did experience was in *phrasing* these issues so that the problem/opportunity became evident. Attention will be given to explaining this during lectures, and exercises will be given during practical periods.

Students had problems in phrasing the 'implications of each strategic issue'. Since this emerged as a key construct during the assessment stage, it will be emphasised by making it a separate heading on the model.

Based on the assessment of the group projects, the construct 'organisational goals and objectives' will be removed from the model. Since it seems preferable to derive communication goals directly from the communication issues, it is superfluous to identify organisational goals and objectives as well—it only leads to confusion.

The researcher noted that some groups only identified *communication* issues in their projects, and no *organisational* issues. Since chief executives saw their corporate communication managers/practitioners as only setting and achieving *communication* goals, and no *organisational* goals (see Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem), it appears imperative that a construct be added to the model to obligate students to also identify organisational issues (from which communication goals will be derived).

It is suggested that the construct 'key strategic issues' be adapted as follows on the model:

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- The construct macro/task/micro environment will be moved from 'corporate strategic plan' to environmental scanning/issues tracking, and further be broadened by adding PESTE. This is an acronym for political, economic, social, technological and ecological environment—many students described their scanning in terms of these macro environmental factors that impact the organisation.

- The 'implications of the strategic issue' will be moved to become a separate heading on the model.

- The construct SWOT analysis will be moved from where it is placed under 'key communication issues' on the model to this heading.

- Organisational and communication issues (as strategic issues) will be differentiated on the model.

Theory will be added to the class notes to explain the following constructs:

- the difference between 'issue' and 'strategic issue';

- environmental scanning and issues tracking;

- the different types of issues/strategic issues.

6.5.4 KEY COMMUNICATION ISSUES

This was the construct on the model which created the biggest problem for student groups. Upon studying the model and the theory upon it was based (provided to students in their class notes), it was evident to the researcher why this occurred. Reasons were the following:

- Communication issues should flow from the implications of strategic issues. However, inspection of the class notes showed that there was in effect no theory to explain *exactly how* communication issues are to be derived from strategic issues.

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- The only reference to the determination of communication issues was *"opportunities and risks of communicating each strategic issue is determined and the communication strategy derived from it"*. However, as seen during the assessment stage, this did not always lead to the same, nor the correct, communication goals.

- The constructs mentioned under this heading as obtained from the initial literature study--namely environmental scanning/ research/ interviews with functional manager/ SWOT analysis/ communication audit were not helpful in determining communication issues, and should be eliminated.

- The model seems to be presenting *two options* for arriving at communication goals:

  - The first option is to follow the construct **'key strategic issues'** on the model: namely to identify key strategic issues (internal and external), as well as their **implications**--then to prioritise the issues and **identify organisational goals**. This is indeed what some students had done. However, once having arrived at this point, nothing remains but to derive *communication* goals directly from the organisational goals (i.e. to *skip* **the next construct 'key communication issues'**). If one is already at the (organisational) goals stage, it is too late to put oneself in the stakeholders' shoes to find out how they are feeling and what the problem is that should be communicated about—i.e. to arrive at the communication issues. At this stage the goals have already been decided upon by top management or other managers and they only remain to be communicated.

    This is probably the closest to the way it has been working in practice, namely that top management decides on issues and goals, and the communication function does no more than to communicate it (i.e. no strategic contribution is made). If this is indeed what is happening in practice, it might provide some explanation for the feelings/ opinions/ expectations of stakeholders being ignored—for organisations not

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practising two-way symmetrical communication, but rather two-way asymmetrical communication (persuasion).

- The second option is to follow the elements of the construct '**key strategic issues**' on the model: namely to identify key strategic issues (internal and external), as well as their implications--then to prioritise the issues. However, to *skip* the organisational goals and go directly to the construct '**key communication issues**'. The latter is identified by considering the **implications of the strategic issues *on the stakeholders***, i.e. by identifying what the issue is that should be communicated about--this is the key *communication* **issue.**

- The construct 'communication issues' is right at the centre of the above dilemma. A few groups followed the first option, a few the second option—but most (even some top groups) were caught in the middle by trying a combination of the two, which led to general confusion. In light of the assessment of the student projects (and the researcher's comments during Stage 3); the interviews conducted with student groups; and comments/questions by students during lecturing the researcher has decided that the second option provides the more correct (and also the easiest) way to determine 'communication issues'.

It is imperative that theory be added to the 1999 class notes to explain the identification of communication issues, as spelled out above. The model will be modified as follows:

- the opportunities/risks of communicating each issue will be eliminated;

- environmental scanning/ research/ interviews with functional managers/ SWOT analysis/ communication audit will be eliminated;

- the implications of the strategic issues will be moved to become a separate heading on the model and be equated to *being* the 'communication issues'. (Whatever effect the strategic issue has *on the stakeholder*, that is what should be communicated about.)

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- the different types of communication issues will be explained.

- communication issues will be moved to a separate heading.

6.5.5 COMMUNICATION POLICY

Some students could not differentiate between corporate policy and communication policy. Inspection of the theory indicated that 'corporate policy' was explained as an introduction to communication policy. It will be removed and placed under a separate heading in the class notes (as part of the corporate profile--following vision/ mission/ corporate culture. It will also be explained in more detail. The remaining theory (only on communication policy) should now be more clear.

The terms mission/ strategy/ corporate culture/ values/ norms which appears under the construct 'communication policy', will be eliminated from the model.

6.5.6 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Students did very well on their stakeholder analysis. The theory provided was extensive and might have assisted in this regard. One change that will be made to the model—following students' suggestions during a class discussion—is to move this construct towards the beginning of the model, right after the corporate profile. Strategic issues and their implications on the stakeholders cannot, or should not, be identified before a stakeholder map for the organisation has been drawn up (and any other techniques for identifying strategic stakeholders have been used, e.g. organisational linkages).

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6.5.7 MEDIA ANALYSIS

Students in general seemed to understand the concept, although an *in-depth* media analysis was conducted by few. Groups also seemed to concentrate on the mass media, ignoring other types of media which might be more appropriate for non-profit organisations considering their financial constraints.

In the 1998 Class Notes, no theory on this construct was provided in the research paper that was prescribed as the core source for this part of the curriculum. The reason was that students were to study media relations right after the module on 'corporate communication strategy', in time to assist them in doing their projects. However, it seems necessary from the assessment of the projects that theory should be added to this section. An *overall* media analysis is considered as being important in the strategy formulation process of the corporate communication function, of which the outcome is corporate communication strategy.

The different types of media will be added to the model, as an indication to students that they should consider other than the mass media as well.

6.5.8 COMMUNICATION PROGRAMMES/PLANS/CAMPAIGNS

As explained in Stage 3, this construct was placed on the model to indicate the planning phase of corporate communication (which started directly after this section with theory and a model for developing a communication plan), as opposed to the strategy phase.

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In order to make this more clear, the model will be changed as follows:

- A new construct 'develop a strategic communication plan' will be added as the last construct on the model, incorporating communication programmes/ plans/ campaigns. (The theory will remain unchanged).

In the following section, the improved model will be presented.

6.6 THE IMPROVED MODEL: STAGE 5

> **STAGE 5**: Depending upon the results of the research, it may be necessary to develop or completely redesign the original action undertaken (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

Earlier in the study, the following guiding hypothesis was documented (set in Chapter 1 of the study):

> **Guiding hypothesis 3**
>
> A model is a suitable tool to satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Based on the findings of the literature analysis and the guiding hypothesis presented above, the researcher revised Model 1 (see Fig. 6.2, discussed under section 6.2.13). Model 2 was hypothesised as a (new) framework for developing a corporate communication strategy. The following hypothesis is stated to replace Hypothesis 12:

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Hypothesis 13: Model 2 is an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Model 2 can be viewed on the next page (Figure 6.7). New constructs/changes are indicated on the model in **boldface**. These changes resulted from the common problem areas pinpointed in the first cycle during assessment (Stage 3) and evaluation (Stage 4). Model 2 will be included in the 1999 Class Notes, together with the greatly extended theoretical background. The latter will be documented in Stage 1 of Cycle Two of the action research project. Hypothesis 13 is to be empirically tested in stages two to five of Cycle Two.

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Figure 6.7: MODEL 2—DEVELOPING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

KNOW THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
Corporate Profile/ Vision/ Mission/ Corporate Culture/ **Values/ Policies/ Enterprise & Corporate Strategies**

↑↓

IDENTIFY STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT)
Draw up Stakeholder Map (organisational linkages, public relations audit*)   **Identify organisational consequences on Stakeholders/Publics (social audit)***   **Identify Stakeholder Perceptions/ Attitudes/ Concerns (public relations audit)***   **Identify familiarity with organisation (corporate image studies)***   **Identify Key Stakeholder Issues, both organisational and communication**

↑↓

IDENTIFY KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES
Macro/ Task/ Internal Environment (PESTE)   (environmental scanning/ **issues tracking)***   **Identify Publics/ Activists (issues tracking)***   **Consequences for organisation (e.g. SWOT analysis)**   Prioritise Key Strategic Issues, **both organisational and communication**

↓

IDENTIFY IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR STAKEHOLDERS =CORPORATE COMMUNICATION ISSUES
Differentiate between types of communication issues/problems: • *organisational issues:* communication is not cause of problem, but can provide solution;   • *organisational issues:* communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution but can explain the issue;   • *management communication issues,* where too little or no communication is the cause of the problem—not telling them *what* they want to hear   • *communication issues* where messages are not getting through to target groups (communication audits e.g. readership surveys, content analysis and readability of messages)*   Discuss with top management

↓

WRITE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (*what to do*)
Prioritise / Develop Communication Goals (for comm plans)   Draft to Top Management

↓

WRITE COMMUNICATION POLICY *(what is allowed)*
Organisational guidelines   **Draft to top management**

↓

OVERALL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MEDIA ANALYSIS
Intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational, public and mass media

↓

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN (*master plan for how to do it*)
Communication Programmes **(continuous communication with strategic stakeholders)**   Communication Campaigns **(single or cyclic)**   Communication **(operational)** plans **(implementation strategy and action plans)**

*in brackets are Lerbinger's definition of the kinds of corporate communication research

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CYCLE TWO OF THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

6.7 THE LITERATURE STUDY: STAGE 1

STAGE 1: Implementation begins with a period of research where the resources and needs of a community are systematically assessed and the necessary information to guide action is gathered (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

In the second cycle, the *'community'* no longer refers to corporate communication practitioners/non-profit organisations and their need for a model to provide guidelines (as in Cycle 1: Stage 1), but to third-year corporate communication students and their information needs as far as understanding the model is concerned.

Prompted by the common problems that student groups experienced with the model's constructs (mainly caused by insufficient theoretical explanations), the researcher conducted a further literature investigation in January 1999. This had now become important, after a decision was taken by the Department of Marketing and Communication Management during a strategic thinking session to institute a new module at the third year level, called Strategic Communication Management. Whereas the hypothesised model for developing corporate communication strategy and the research paper on which it was based constituted only the *practical assignment* of third year corporate communication students during 1998 (executed as part of an action research project), it was now to become the *core* of the new seven-week third year module.

This was an exciting outcome of Cycle 1 of the action research project— however, the biggest problem was the fact that there were no suitable text books

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to form the basis of this course. In an international evaluation of the corporate communication courses in the Department of Marketing and Communication Management, Prof Larissa Grunig of the University of Maryland, USA confirmed this by saying: "The study guide for KOB 361 suggests one of the most challenging courses for undergraduates...I agree that no suitable text exists for teaching this class. We, too, rely on selected readings and our own research" (L Grunig 2000). The researcher was therefore given the task of putting together Class Notes for the new course in Strategic Communication Management, as she was also to lecture it in 1999 (in addition to carrying the responsibility for the practical project, as during 1998). The syllabus for this course was the following:

Figure 6.8: 1999 SYLLABUS -- STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

	THEME 1: **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT** • **Study Unit 1.1: The strategic management process** • **Study Unit 1.2: Strategy** • **Study Unit 1.3: Corporate communication strategy** • **Study Unit 1.4: The communication plan**
	THEME 2: **COMMUNICATION RESEARCH** • **Study Unit 2.1: The basics of research** • **Study Unit 2.2: Environmental scanning**
	THEME 3: **STAKEHOLDERS, PUBLICS, ACTIVISTS AND ISSUES** • **Study Unit 3.1: Stakeholder management** • **Study Unit 3.2: Publics and activists** • **Study Unit 3.3: Issues management**

Study Unit 1.1: The strategic management process

The 1999 Class Notes for Study Unit 1.1 consisted of information contained in Chapter 3 of this study. For brevity's sake, it will not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that, as background to understanding the model (based on the theoretical needs identified by the evaluation in Stage 4), information was provided to students on the strategic management process--*strategic decision making, strategic thinking, strategic planning* and *implementation*, the different *levels* of strategic management, and *middle management's role in strategy formulation.* (In order to understand the action research process, it is important to note that this information *first* formed part of the 1999 Class Notes, i.e. of the action research project. Thereafter, Chapter 3 and 4 of this study was written *from* the 1999 Class Notes).

Study Unit 1.2: Strategy

The Class Notes for Study Unit 1.2 consisted of information contained in Chapter 4 of this study. Once again, it will not be repeated here. As background to understanding the model, information was provided to students on the concept *strategy*, and *the role of the corporate communication manager* in the organisation's strategy formulation process. The concepts *environment* and *boundary spanning* were also introduced, as described in Chapter 3 of this study.

However, what will be documented here as it is not described elsewhere in this study, is the theoretical explanation added to the initial literature study—and therefore to the 1999 Class Notes--under the heading **STARTING POINT FOR DEVELOPING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY.** This was a direct result of the assessment and evaluation stages of Cycle 1.

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6.7.1 VISION

A vision is the *big organisational picture* that must be lived every day by each individual organisational member. It communicates that which makes the organisation special and unique, and sets it apart from the competition.

6.7.2 MISSION

The starting point in formulating an organisation's strategy is its mission or purpose—the definition of the organisation's role in society and the economy. The mission flows from the values of stakeholders, the people and groups with an interest in the organisation, including the public and the government (Digman 1990:49).

6.7.3 CORPORATE VALUES

Corporate values are sets of real beliefs that determine standards of practice (teamwork, customer service, respect for the individual, etc.). The commitment and energy of organisational members are fuelled by the values that drive the organisation.

Defining an organisation's values in the mission statement helps to face issues squarely and to make policy decisions. These values serve as a code of ethics for operating the business and as criteria against which organisational members can test future decisions. It ensures that there are no significant differences between internal and external messages (Askew 1997).

6.7.4 CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

The organisation's philosophy is an orientation that lies behind the mission statement. Philosophy, according to the American Heritage dictionary, is "*a system of motivating concepts and principles, a viewpoint*" (Kendall 1992:169-170). Corporate philosophies and culture are derived from the corporate values. They are guiding principles that drive organisational behaviour--guiding principles for employee involvement, empowerment, customer service, quality control, continuous change and improvement, community involvement, etc.

6.7.5 CORPORATE CULTURE

An organisation's culture is similar to an individual's personality—an intangible theme that provides meaning, direction, and the basis for action. In much the same way as a personality influences the behaviour of the individual, the shared assumptions (beliefs and values) among an organisation's members influence opinions and actions within the organisation (Pearce & Robinson 1997:356).

6.7.6 CORPORATE POLICIES

Researcher's comments: Previously this was the introduction to communication policy. Since this created some confusion amongst students, it was moved to this section, together with the other strategic management concepts. The last paragraph was added to differentiate corporate policy from procedures and rules.

Most companies develop a series of guidelines called 'policies' as an expression of their strategies (Bittel 1989:78). Policies are guiding principles for behaviour that furnish an underlying and continuing basis for specific actions. They define philosophy, provide direction and establish guidelines. However, policies should

allow some alternatives for a particular situation. They should not be too detailed and rigid, since that would limit the flexibility of an organisation.

Organisational policies constitute a practical day-to-day set of rules for conducting business, in contrast to the longer scope of the philosophy, mission, goals and objectives continuum. Policies may be formalised statements, or exist as conventional understandings.

The policy is a standing plan that provides managers with general guidelines for making decisions. Its main purpose is to assure consistency among the organisation's managers and to avoid having to make the same decision over and over again (Bittel 1989:78). These broad guidelines for decision making permit management to delegate authority--it is the parameters within which planning is carried out, and will necessarily reflect company and/or government policy.

Policies are different from procedures and rules:

- *procedures* are specific series of tasks to be followed in performing work or accomplishing an activity, e.g. how a budget is to be completed, when it is to be submitted and how it will be reviewed. Procedures are therefore detailed steps to carry out policies.

- *rules* are specific requirements that often relate to employee conduct, for example 'no smoking in office building'. Rules are most specific and detailed, and deviations from rules are not allowed.

Study Unit 1.3: Corporate communication strategy

Under this heading, there were major changes/additions to the theory that accompanied Model 2, as compared to the initial literature study in Cycle 1.

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6.7.7 STEPS IN FORMULATING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

As in the strategic management process, the corporate communication management team needs to formulate corporate communication strategy by means of a *thinking* process. They need to take the whole picture into account and think through the qualitative aspects of the business and the environment it faces, before starting the communication *planning* process. Communication strategy establishes a framework or profile against which ongoing decisions are tested--it reviews and questions the direction taken by the corporate communication function. It produces a profile that can be used to identify the right problems to solve and to prioritise areas/issues for which communication plans/programmes are developed.

The corporate communication strategy is the framework for the strategic communication plan and the operational communication plans/programmes—it attempts to determine *what* **the corporate communication function should be doing** in support of the enterprise and corporate strategies. The strategic and operational communication planning is the type of thinking that helps to choose *how* to get there. This is done under leadership and supervision of the corporate communication *manager*, but executed or implemented by corporate communication *technicians*.

The corporate communication strategy should essentially reflect or mirror the enterprise/corporate strategy. Strategy formulation and strategic planning in the organisation is therefore a prerequisite for developing a sound corporate communication strategy because it **provides focus and direction to the communication** and creates synergy between the corporate strategy and the communication strategy. In supporting the corporate and enterprise strategy, the corporate communication function becomes relevant to the organisation and responsive to its needs – thereby contributing to organisational effectiveness.

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STEPS IN THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (FUNCTIONAL STRATEGY)

KNOW THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

↑↓

IDENTIFY STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS

↑↓

IDENTIFY KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

↓

IDENTIFY CORPORATE COMMUNICATION ISSUES

↓

WRITE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

↓

WRITE COMMUNICATION POLICY

↓

OVERALL MEDIA ANALYSIS

↓

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN
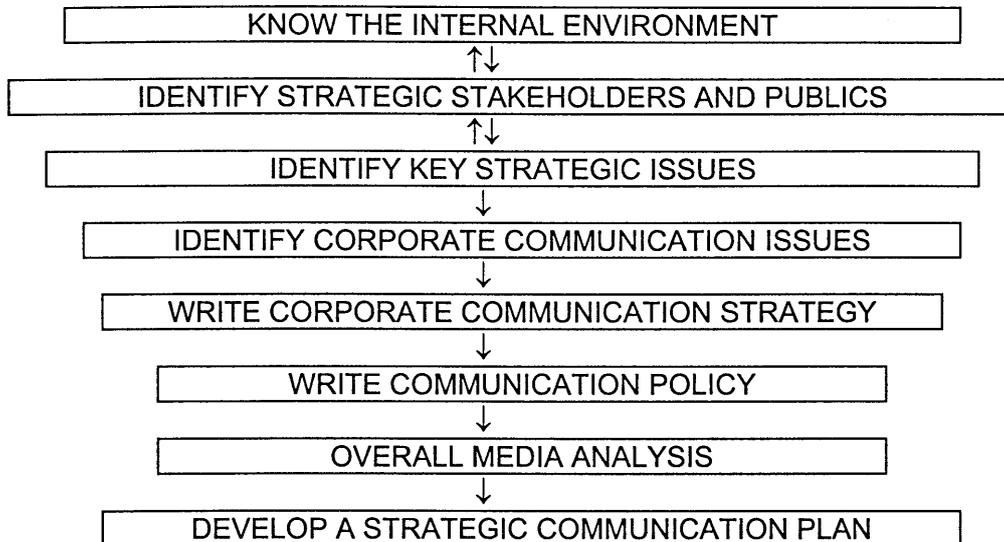
MODEL 2 WAS SITUATED IN THIS LOCATION IN THE 1999 CLASS NOTES

After the graphic presentation of the model, a discussion of each major step followed.

Know the internal environment
Corporate Profile/ Vision/ Mission/ Corporate Culture/ Values/ Policies Enterprise / Corporate Strategies

To make communication relevant in the organisation's strategy formulation process, the corporate communication manager should be intimately familiar with the organisation's internal environment, before developing the corporate communication strategy. (Please refer to study themes 1 and 2, where the above-mentioned concepts were explained in detail).

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Identify strategic stakeholders and publics
(external and internal environment)
Draw up Stakeholder Map (organisational linkages, public relations audit)
Identify organisational consequences on Stakeholders and Publics (social audit)
Identify Stakeholder Perceptions/ Attitudes/ Concerns (public relations audit)
Identify familiarity with organisation (corporate image studies)
Identify Key Stakeholder Issues (organisational and communication)

This step was explained in much the same way as in the initial literature study in Cycle One (which was quite comprehensive), and will not be repeated here.

Identify key strategic issues
Macro/ Task/ Internal Environment (PESTE)
(environmental scanning/ issues tracking)
Identify Publics/ Activists/ Shadow Constituencies (issues tracking)
Consequences for organisation (SWOT analysis)
Prioritise Key Strategic Issues (organisational and communication)

In study unit 1.2, strategy formulation was seen to concern the relationship of an organisation to its environment. **Strategy is determined by first identifying key strategic (major) issues which are of critical importance for achieving the corporate vision and mission,** and turn this into a source of intelligence for top management. Being part of the team that identifies the key strategic issues facing the organisation, is part of the strategic role of the corporate communication manager. It is here that the strategic link between corporate strategy and the communication function is made.

These strategic issues could be anything from a new competitive strategy necessitating fundamental changes in attitudes and behaviour to restructuring, downsizing, cost improvement, the acquisition of new businesses, or important shifts in the external environment such as technological innovations, social trends, new legislation, development of activist groups, etc.

Strategic issues are identified by doing environmental analysis and issues tracking, incorporating the effects of environmental changes into corporate

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decision making, and formulating new strategies (i.e. deciding *what* to do). Issue identification should be executed in the organisation's macro, task and micro environment to be really effective in the identification of problems and issues.

Identify implications of strategic issues for stakeholders = corporate communication issues
Differentiate between types of issues:
• *organisational issues*--communication is not the cause of the problem, but can provide a solution;
• *organisational issues*--communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution, but can explain the issue;
• *management communication issues*—caused by too little or no communication--not telling employees *what* they want to hear about;
• *communication issues*—messages aren't getting through to target groups—*how* it is packaged is wrong (communication audits e.g. readership surveys, content analysis and readability of messages)
Discuss with top management

In arriving at corporate communication issues for which communication programmes/plans should be developed, the **implications that key strategic issues** have for strategic stakeholders and publics must first be analysed.

In order to do this, communication practitioners need to understand the business issues that the organisation faces, and be expert in **using communication to help remove barriers to success**. Rather than trying to get communication further up senior management's agenda, the communication manager should be **linking communication with what is already at the top of that agenda**. Top management is interested in their business problems, not in communication problems. They are more interested in solving their own operational problems and may not readily see the connection between communication and their problems—especially when they are measured not on the levels of their communication but on attaining key goals. Communicators need to connect communication to that which should be changed and provide it as a solution to

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top management in achieving their business goals (Quirke 1996). These changes to be made can include the organisation's behaviour when it has negative consequences for the organisation's internal and external stakeholders.

Communication is but a means to an end, and that end is helping managers to improve business processes, and the performance of people in those processes. A communication strategy should support the business strategy, and should help an organisation compete more effectively. By talking in terms only of communication processes without identifying the underlying business problem, communicators risk imposing inappropriate solutions (Quirke 1996).

Many communication professionals and/or members of top management blame communication for failing to reach communication goals when other factors should be blamed. Even more problematic is seeking communication solutions when they are not adequate. It is therefore imperative to identify whether a problem can be solved by communication efforts alone, by communication in conjunction with other measures or by other measures only.

In differentiating between the types of communication issues/problems, attention must be paid to the following:

- *organisational issues* where communication is not the cause of the problem, but can provide a solution (e.g. transformation or affirmative action);

- *organisational issues* where communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution, but can explain the problem (e.g. budget cuts).

- *management communication* issues, where not enough or no communication with employees is the cause of the problem (not telling them *what* they want to hear e.g. where the organisation is heading, or giving them the information they need to do their jobs);

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- *communication issues* where messages are not getting through to the stakeholders, since the way in which messages are packaged are incorrect (using wrong channels, using difficult language, etc.).

In order to set impact objectives for communication programmes/plans and campaigns, it is important to **find the real cause of the problem**, and not address symptoms. This necessitates an analytical process where the communication practitioner must think through the problem, before deciding on communication action.

This is not a simple process. According to Mintzberg (1987), the real challenge in crafting communication strategy lies in

> *"detecting the subtle discontinuities that may undermine a business in the future. And for that, there is no technique, no program, just a sharp mind in touch with the organisation's stakeholders and issues. Such discontinuities are unexpected and irregular, essentially unprecedented. They can be dealt with only by minds that are attuned to existing patterns yet able to perceive important breaks in them".*

Write corporate communication strategy *(what to do)*
Prioritise Issues
Develop Communication Goals
Draft to Top Management

A corporate communication *strategy* indicates the direction that an organisation needs to take with regard to its stakeholders/publics. It determines in broad terms what needs to be done to create a competitive position with regard to stakeholders, that is compatible with overall enterprise/corporate strategy.

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This direction is obtained from the **strategic issues and their implications for strategic stakeholders, which form the corporate communication issues** to be addressed by the corporate communication function.

In order to write the corporate communication strategy, **these corporate communication issues must be prioritised and communication goals be developed that would solve organisational and communication problems.** This is the corporate communication strategy, the basis for all activities, the logic behind the communication programmes/plans/campaigns to be developed by communication technicians.

Write communication policy   *(what is allowed)*
Organisational guidelines for communication with stakeholders based on the mission/ corporate strategy/ corporate culture/ values   **Draft to top management**

The theory for communication policy has already been documented in Cycle One, and will not be repeated here.

Overall communication media analysis

The purpose of the overall media analysis is to investigate the different communication media available that might be suitable for the specific organisation and its stakeholders. Broad guidelines as to the different kinds of media that might be considered are provided at the end of this study unit. This includes intrapersonal and interpersonal media, group or organisational media, public or mass media channels. More unknown types of media such as folk media, private media, etc. are also explained.

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Researcher's comments: The guidelines were extracted from Rensburg (*in* Lubbe & Puth 1994). It inter alia included the following:

- controlled and uncontrolled communication;

- internal organisational communication media (print, audiovisual, interpersonal);

- mass communication media (press, broadcast media, public and trade exhibitions);

- private created and folk/oramedia.

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN *(master plan for how to do it)*
Communication Programmes (continuous communication with strategic stakeholders/current publics)
Communication Campaigns (single or cyclic)
Communication (operational) plans (implementation strategy and action plans)
Draft to top management

The theory on communication programmes, campaigns and plans remained unchanged from the initial literature study, as presented in Cycle One.

Study Unit 1.4 The communication plan

The information remained the same as in the original literature study. However, it was documented in the same way as the previous study unit on corporate communication strategy, i.e. by first presenting the model for developing a communication plan, and thereafter explaining each element of the model.

Study Unit 2.1: The basics of research

The rest of the study units in the 1999 Class Notes provides the 'tools' that the third-year corporate communication students need to be able to develop a corporate communication strategy (and plan) for an organisation.

The strategic management of corporate communication is not possible without a knowledge of research. Therefore a literature study was conducted on this topic-- in Study Unit 2.1, students are *firstly* introduced to the research process and *secondly*, to the two types of corporate communication research:

- environmental scanning; and

- evaluation research.

In relating research to the development of a corporate communication strategy, Lerbinger's (1977) classification of corporate communication research was provided to students. Because the classification is of particular interest to this study--it was used to suggest a type of research for each step on the model (indicated in brackets on the model)-- it is documented here:

- *Environmental monitoring* is research to detect trends in stakeholders' opinions and in the social-political, economic, technological, ecological and juridical environment. It is used to keep track of what is going on 'out there'. Environmental monitoring is the mainstay of corporate communication and is often referred to as 'assessing the corporate climate'.

- *Social auditing* is research similar to environmental monitoring. Social audits determine the consequences the organisation has had on its stakeholders and the extent to which the organisation must correct those consequences. The

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primary purpose is to examine, catalogue, systemise and measure the organisation's performance as a corporate citizen—e.g. are the organisation's manufacturing procedures conducive to a healthy environment? Is the organisation more than just a system of inputs and outputs designed for the sole purpose of making maximum profit?

- *Public relations auditing* is research to define stakeholders/publics and to determine how they perceive and evaluate the organisation. According to Pavlik (1987), there are two basic types of corporate communication (PR) audits—audience identification and corporate image studies.

⇒ *Audience identification*:

- identifies relevant stakeholders/publics (does the organisation have an effect on a stakeholder/public, or does the stakeholder/public affect the organisation);

- evaluates the organisation's standing with each relevant stakeholder/public—the focus is on perceptions, attitudes, and involvement with the organisation;

- identifies issues of concern to those stakeholders/publics;

- measures the power of each stakeholder/public (extent of the resources e.g. financial, human).

⇒ *Corporate image study* (an extension of the PR audit):

- determines the familiarity of each public with the organisation;

- determines the attitudes of each stakeholder/public toward the organisation;

- determines the personality characteristics each stakeholder/public associates with the organisation.

- *Communication auditing*

This is research to evaluate corporate communication programmes/plans, to find out whether messages did actually get through to the receivers of the messages. It includes readership surveys, content analysis of messages, and measurement of the readability of messages. These evaluative methods are used for pre-testing messages or to measure public relations objectives.

Pavlik (1987) sees communication auditing as research assessing communication activities--widely used to study the readability and readership of corporate newsletters, and other routine communication, such as annual reports and press releases.

Study Unit 2.2: Environmental scanning

Since environmental scanning is considered an essential research tool in the development of corporate communication strategy, an extensive literature study was conducted--one study unit was dedicated to this topic. The information on which it is based, is contained in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.4), and will not be repeated here.

Study Unit 3.1: Stakeholder management

Study Unit 3.2: Publics and activists

Study Unit 3.3: Issues management

Since the management of stakeholders and issues are considered to be the core function of corporate communication, the researcher considered it imperative to conduct an extensive literature study on these topics.

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The information which was supplied to students in Study Unit 3.1, is contained in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.5.3), as well as in Chapter 4 (4.3.5). Publics and activists (Study Unit 3.2) are discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.2), as well as in Chapter 4 (Section 4.4.2). The literature study on issues management (Study Unit 3.3) is contained in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3.6).

As can be seen from the syllabus as contained in the 1999 Class Notes, an extensive literature study was conducted on all the major constructs of the hypothesised model (Model 1) and its improvement (Model 2).

6.8 IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL 2: STAGE 2

> **STAGE 2:** Some kind of action is undertaken together by the action research partners (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

Model 2 was implemented by student researchers amongst 46 non-profit organisations during the second semester of 1999. The model, together with the theory on which it was based, was provided to third-year students as part of their 1999 Class Notes. Whereas the initial literature study on developing a corporate communication strategy and the hypothesised model which resulted from it, comprised only one theme in the 1998 Class Notes/curricula (Cycle One of the action research project), the whole curriculum for the new module on Strategic Communication Management was built around it.

The theory was lectured by the researcher/lecturer during a seven-week period. Fixed consulting hours were set (for a period of 12 weeks) during which the lecturer consulted the 46 students groups, whilst they were in the process of

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developing a corporate communication strategy for their selected non-profit organisation.

For the work plan that was provided to students as a guideline for doing their research projects, see **section 5.9.4 in Chapter 5.**

6.9 ASSESSMENT OF 1999 RESEARCH REPORTS: STAGE 3

STAGE 3: Thereafter the results of the action are to be assessed (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

The 46 written research reports on corporate communication strategy, developed by the student groups and their action research partners (the non-profit organisations), were individually assessed by the lecturer/researcher during September 1999 according to the evaluation criteria, and compared in order to pinpoint common problem areas/constructs. The following evaluation form was used for this purpose:

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Figure 6.9: EVALUATION FORM 1999

TECHNICAL CARE	
• Table of contents, numerical system	5
• Language use and editing	5
• Bonus (neatness, special presentation, outside cover, etc.)	5
	15
CONTENTS OF THE PROJECT	
• Description of the corporate profile (vision, mission and corporate culture)	8
• Overall stakeholder analysis (internal and external)	10
• Identification of key strategic issues, environmental scanning and SWOT analysis	14
• Identification of key communication issues (implications of key strategic issues)	8
• Communication policy	5
• Overall media analysis	5
	50
CONTENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN	
• Situation analysis and objectives (derived from the strategy)	6
• Specific stakeholders/target publics	5
• Messages	4
• Implementation strategy and activities (action plans)	10
• Scheduling	5
• Evaluation research	5
	35
TOTAL FOR PROJECT	**100**

6.9.1 GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE PROJECTS

In the opinion of the researcher, the standard of the projects was considerably higher in 1999 than during the previous year. Whereas only six groups averaged of 80% and higher in 1998, this year there were 13 groups who achieved it. The top group, *Business Against Crime*, achieved a near perfect score with 98%, while the second group, the *Christelike Maatskaplike Raad* (CMR), was not far behind with 97%. (The researcher went through these projects two times, but found it difficult to subtract any marks).

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This situation might have been caused by a combination of the following five factors: *Firstly*, an announcement of a R 2 500 cash prize for the top group was made in class. *Secondly*, it was also announced that the top group would have the opportunity of presenting their project at the first PRISA Student Conference on October 1, 1999. *Thirdly*, it seemed as though the two top groups had gone into competition with each other. *Fourthly*, the two top groups spent an extraordinary amount of time with the researcher/lecturer, coming for consultations as many as seven or eight times, perfecting their projects. *Fifthly,* they also met very regularly in their groups. (As is evident from the 'Schedule of Meetings' included in the *Business Against Crime* project, this group met four times during July; 13 times during August; and 13 times during September).

Groups in general experienced almost no problems with the description of the constructs 'corporate profile' (vision, mission and corporate culture); 'environmental scanning and SWOT analysis', and the overall 'stakeholder analysis' (internal and external). The constructs 'communication policy' and 'overall media analysis' which caused some problems during the previous year, was well described this year. A contributing factor might have been the theory added to the explanation of the model, as well as the emphasis placed on these constructs during lectures and consultations. Since the constructs mentioned above were explicated in detail in Cycle One: Stage 3, the discussion will not be repeated here. However, in order that the reader may benchmark the quality, the top project--*Business Against Crime*--is included in its entirety in Appendix 12).

This assessment stage will therefore focus on the constructs with which students experienced the most difficulty during 1998 (the previous year), namely the following:

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- *phrasing* key strategic issues in order that the problem/opportunity becomes apparent;

- *deriving* key communication issues from the strategic issues; and

- *setting* communication goals.

Efforts will be concentrated on determining whether there was any noticeable improvement in these areas during the second cycle.

It needs to be mentioned that these specific constructs were emphasised in the assignment as described in the study guide (presented at the beginning of the Class Notes), as well as during lectures, practical classes and especially during consultations with individual groups. The relevant section in the study guide, the 'Research Assignment', is extracted here:

Develop a Corporate Communication Strategy for any non-profit organisation. Apply the theory in Theme 1—use the model as a framework.

Develop the corporate communication strategy by first drawing up a *stakeholder map* and identifying strategic stakeholders and publics. Thereafter describe *five strategic issues* faced by the organisation, identified through environmental scanning and a SWOT analysis. Clearly **differentiate between strategic issues** caused by wrong or no communication, and those organisational issues (not caused by communication) for which good communication can provide a part of the solution. Now identify and describe the *key communication issues* resulting from the five strategic issues, **by analysing their implications** for the organisation's strategic **stakeholders** and publics, both internal and external.

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6.9.2 Identify key strategic issues

As in 1998, almost no problems were experienced with the *identification* of the issues. There were also much fewer problems with the *phrasing* of the issues than during the previous cycle. A contributing factor might have been the requirement set by the researcher/lecturer in class that students first had to *describe* the strategic issues in their projects to understand them well, before pinpointing its implications. To view the norm, the reader is referred to this particular section of the top project *Business Against Crime* (see Appendix 12, pages 13-20), as well as the number two project, *Christelike Maatskaplike Raad,* which is also attached (see Appendix 13, pages 19-28).

Examples of the few projects that experienced problems with *phrasing* the issues, will now be given (the lecturer's correction appears in brackets)—the first being the *DBV (Dierebeskermingsvereniging)* group's key strategic issues:

- *"Bewustheid en verwronge persepsies"* (Lae bewustheid en wanpersepsies);
- *"Korrupsie" (...*onder werknemers veral);
- *"Donateurs en die ekonomie"* (Gebrek aan voldoende fondse);
- *"Pretoria Stadsraad tender"* (Gevaar om Pretoria Stadsraad tender te verloor);
- *"Media"* (Negatiewe beriggewing in nasionale pers reflekteer op Pretoria DBV tak).

The MPO (Melkprodusente Organisasie) phrased their strategic issues as follows:

- *"Regering"* (Regering sny subsidies);
- *"Werknemers"* (Personeeltekort);

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- *"Inmenging van boere"* (Onnodige inmenging van boere in bestuursaangeleenthede);

- *"Die vraag na melk het gedaal"* (....as gevolg van swak publisiteit en gebrek aan fondse om beeld reg te stel);

- *"Generiese opvoeding"* (Boere se finansiële ondersteuning nodig vir generiese opvoeding).

> Researcher's comments: In the discussion which followed these groups' identification and implications of issues it was clear that they understood what the strategic issues were—their only problem was in *phrasing* them correctly so that the problem/opportunity was evident.

In considering the other subconstructs under this heading, no problems were experienced with 'environmental scanning in the macro/task/internal environment' or the 'SWOT analysis'. Minor errors were made by groups such as *The Council for the Blind (SANCB),* who identified 'suppliers' and 'customers' as issues in the *internal* environment, whilst in reality they should have been classified as issues in the *task* environment. However, for purposes of this research it was not an important error—much more important is the fact that they were *able to identify* these strategic issues in the first place.

6.9.3 IDENTIFY IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR STAKEHOLDERS = CORPORATE COMMUNICATION ISSUES

This construct was an improvement on the 1998 model, although certain problems remained/new ones were created. In considering the projects, the researcher/lecturer will comment and give examples of the way in which student groups approached this construct on the model.

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6.9.3.1 Identify implications of strategic issues for stakeholders

Quite a few groups discussed the implications of their strategic issues for different stakeholders extensively. One issue from each of the following two groups will be detailed here:

⇒ The *Trinity Presbyterian Church Lynnwood*

"*Strategic issue: There are not enough counsellors within the congregation.*

Implications for the Minister: It is impossible for the Minister to single-handedly meet all the counselling needs of his congregation. If more counsellors aren't brought in to assist the Minister, he will end up neglecting his other tasks and duties. It is therefore necessary to get members of the Church involved in the counselling programme.

Implications for the congregation and community: These parties suffer from the lack of counselling facilities. They rely on the Church to provide this service and it will be to their detriment if it is not adequately provided.

Solution: Three members of Trinity Church will complete a Christian Counselling Course in November 1999. This course is run under the auspices of Vista University and is presented by a clinical psychologist. The Trinity members who have completed this two year Advanced Certificate, will be qualified to offer counselling to people in need. They will also offer a one year course in Christian Counselling to the congregation in 2000. The increased number of people being equipped to offer counselling will make it possible to serve the members of the congregation and the wider community by assisting them in their various areas of needs.

It is vitally important to get as many people from the congregation involved in the proposed counselling programme as possible. It is necessary to encourage members to participate in the Christian Counselling course, so that they themselves can offer counselling to other members."

Researcher's comments: This last paragraph was the communication issue (that which should be communicated about), although the group did not name it as such. This group's analysis provided an excellent example of the reasoning to be followed in order to be able to set the correct communication goals, derived from the communication issue (based on the strategic issue).

⇒ The *National Zoological Gardens of South Africa, Pretoria*

This group did an excellent 8-page analysis, where they described four strategic issue in detail, classified them according to type, did a SWOT analysis on each issue to determine the implications of the issue, and then described the communication issue, goals, objectives and action plans for all four issues. An example of the analysis of one issue is the following:

"Strategic issue: The Johannesburg Zoo {a major competitor} has better/more extensive media coverage than the National Zoological Gardens, Pretoria.

Implications of the issue: The perception is created that the Johannesburg Zoo is more involved in the community, and therefore can rely on more community involvement in its programmes, than the National Zoo. It has the potential of diminishing the awareness of the work done and the excellent international reputation of the National Zoo, Pretoria in the eyes of the public and potential sponsors and donors.

Communication issue: What must be communicated to the media to ensure increased positive exposure of the National Zoo in relation to the Johannesburg Zoo.

Communication goal: To increase media exposure of the National Zoo by 50% in 2000 in selected major regional and national publications.

Communication objectives and action steps": Four of these were detailed in this excellent project.

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> Researcher's comments: This was correct. The only criticism is that the communication issue should have been more specific by pinpointing *exactly what* must be communicated.

The reader is referred to Appendix 12 (pages 15-20) and Appendix 13 (pages 19-26) for an excellent example of the way in which the two top groups identified the implications of their issues for each of their strategic stakeholders.

There seemed to be only one group that did not understand the implications of the strategic issues on the stakeholders at all. (Although not all the groups described the implications under this specific heading as such, they all referred to it either in the description of the strategic issues, or in differentiating the strategic issues, or in arriving at the communication issues).

⇒ Pretoria DBV (Dierebeskermingsvereniging)

> Researcher's comments: The type of error made by these students was unique--no other group did this, nor did questions in this regard come up in class or during consultations. However, it must be taken into consideration that they might have been the only group to be confused by the different constructs in this one section of the model (in the following section, the researcher admits this to have been a mistake). These students did not seem to have thought through the matter, as most other students must have done, but took the different constructs literally. The crux of the students' confusion seemed to lie in the fact that they considered the 'implications of the strategic issues on the stakeholders' that which should be differentiated into organisational and communication issues. This is evident when considering their analysis.

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"IMPLIKASIES VAN STRATEGIESE VRAAGSTUKKE OP BELANGEGROEPE

- *Tipes kommunikasie-vraagstukke*

Die implikasies van strategiese vraagstukke op 'n organisasie se belangegroepe kan gedifferensieer word volgens vier verskillende tipes vraagstukke. Hierdie onderskeiding word gebruik om die wortel van die vraagstuk-probleem te herken en kommunikasie te gebruik om die hindernisse tot sukses te verwyder. "

Thereupon they described the classification as it appeared in the Class Notes, e.g. organisational issues (two types), management communication issues and communication issues. Their analysis of their first strategic issue looked as follows:

"IMPLIKASIES VAN (LAE) BEWUSTHEID EN VERWRONGE PERSEPSIES OP BELANGEGROEPE

BELANGE-GROEP	TIPE VRAAGSTUK	IMPLIKASIES
Werknemers	*Organisatories (1)*	• *Gebruik nie "word of mouth" nie.*
Donateurs	*Organisatories (1)*	• *Nie bewus van feit dat enigiemand kan skenk nie.* • *Donasies slegs op voorwaarde.* • *Verweg (?) verkondiging van donasie*
Pretoria Stadsraad	*Bestuurskommu-nikasie*	• *Nie bewus van DBV se afhanklikheid van tender nie.*
Gemeenskap	*Kommunikasie*	• *Nie bewus dat enigiemand kan skenk nie.* • *Sien DBV as goedkoop veeartsenydiens.* • *Weet nie wat DBV alles doen nie.* • *Besef nie waarde van DBV nie".*

Researcher's comments: It is the strategic issue that is to be classified, not the implications of the issue on the stakeholders.

6.9.3.2 Corporate communication issues

It was evident from the projects and the consultations with student groups that they found the <u>terminology</u> of this construct (and its subconstructs) confusing. Possible reasons for the students' confusion could be:

- Firstly, the use of 'corporate communication issues' in the heading was confusing in view of the fact that the rest of this construct was actually about differentiating between types of *'strategic issues'*.

- Secondly, the term *communication issues* in the subconstruct 'Differentiate between types of *communication issues*/problems' might also have been confusing since it in fact referred to the heading *corporate communication issues (as an abbreviation)*, rather than to the fourth type of communication issue 'where messages are not getting through to stakeholders'.

- Thirdly, the term 'corporate *communication issues'* used in the heading, as a generic term for that which should be communicated about, created confusion in view of the fact that *'communication issues'* was one of the subconstructs indicating 'type of strategic issue'.

- Fourthly, as will be seen during the discussion of the subconstruct 'differentiating between types of issues', another (fifth) type of issue will be added to the typology namely *'corporate communication issues'*. The latter makes the use of the construct 'corporate communication issues' in the heading impossible in future.

<u>Researcher's comments</u>: The rationale for having placed the construct 'Identify implications of strategic issues for stakeholders = corporate communication issues' on the model was to point out that the **implications of the strategic issues** for the stakeholders were really the essence of that which the *corporate communication function* should be communicating about, i.e. the *'corporate communication issues'*. However, in such a case the 'implications of strategic issues' should have been a separate construct from 'differentiate between types

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of {corporate} communication issues' (i.e. differentiate between the types of *strategic issues* that should be *communicated* about). The aim of the latter construct was to point out the difference between types of strategic issues, i.e. to ensure that students not only addressed communication issues in their communication plans (as indeed happened during the first action research cycle, and also happens with practitioners), but that they also addressed organisational issues. The aim of the former construct is to identify corporate communication *strategy*, i.e. the direction that the corporate communication function should take. It is therefore suggested that the construct 'identify implications of strategic issues for stakeholders = corporate communication issues' be modified by removing *"= corporate communication issues"* from the model.

⇒ DBV Pretoria

This example was detailed under the previous heading 'implications of the strategic issues'. It is obvious that this group was the most confused by the terminology.

⇒ *Jakaranda Kinderhuis*

This group was totally confused (and not only by the terminology, it seems):

- Although they stated the strategic issues correctly, they skipped the heading 'KOMMUNIKASIEVRAAGSTUK' (communication issue) and went straight to 'DOEL' (goals). However, the example given was not a goal, but rather the communication issue.

- Under the heading 'DOELWIT' (objective), they stated goals.

- 'AKSIEPLANNE' (action plans) was formulated correctly.

- Their last heading was 'IMPLIKASIE VAN DIE VRAAGSTUK' (implications of the issue), which should have started the analysis, because it actually assisted in arriving at the goals and objectives.

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The rest of the groups had some of their headings wrong as a result of the terminology, but must have understood the work or sorted it out for themselves, because their analyses were correct.

6.9.3.3 Differentiate between types of issues

Positive impressions were that students, to a large degree, understood the 'different types of issues'--not only did they classify them correctly as organisational or communication issues, but they also indicated whether the issues appeared in the *macro*, *task* or *internal* environment.

⇒ *SANCB*

This group was one of the many who did environmental scanning and classified their strategic issues under the heading 'KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES AND SWOT ANALYSIS', according to issues in the *macro* environment (political, economic, technological), *task* and *internal* environment (in addition to the strategic issue typology).

"Macro Environment

⇒ *Political: The changes in the government since the election in 1994 have had large direct and indirect effects for all the institutions for the disabled.*

- *Currently the government has suspended state aid of four million for the workshop for three months. The subsidies for the blind society have dropped from 20% to 10%."* (The group identified this as an **organisational issue** where communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution, but can **explain** the problem to stakeholders involved.)

Researcher's comments: This is correct, although communication can also be used as a solution—i.e. when instituting lobbying efforts with government.

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- *"A proposal by the government is to mainstream all education. This means that the blind, deaf and mentally disabled will be placed in the same class as 'normal' students. This will result in the disabled children being left behind. The blind society is currently lobbying against this proposal."* (The group identified this as an **organisational issue** where communication is not the cause of the problem, but can provide a **solution.**)

Researcher's comments: This is correct.

- *"The introduction of the state lottery has forced the dissolution of the Viva Scratch Card although they will still continue raising money in other ways. Twenty percent of the proceeds of the lottery will go to welfare organisations. The society was getting R100 000 monthly from Viva but this has dropped to R100 000 annually."* (The group identified this as an **organisational issue** where communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution, but can **explain** the problem.)

Researcher's comments: This is correct, if the intention is to explain this to strategic stakeholders such as donors.

⇒ "Technology

- *A disadvantage caused by technology is that the society's logo can be scanned and placed on fake money collection forms e.g. raffle tickets. Money that belongs to the society is therefore landing in the wrong hands. The image of the society is tarnished, as raffles are not in line with the image they wish to have."* (The group identified this as an **organisational issue** where communication is not the cause of the problem, but can provide a **solution).**

Researcher's comments: This is correct.

The reader is referred to Appendix 12 (pages 15-20) to view the classification of the strategic issues of the top group, *Business Against Crime.*

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The correct classification of this and other groups were done in spite of the problem referred to above, where the subconstruct 'differentiate between types of communication issues/problems' should have read: 'differentiate between types of *corporate* communication issues/problems'.

Researcher's comments: Most students seemed to have recognised this as an error/incomplete explanation and correctly described their organisational or communication issues--possibly because this was mentioned in class and emphasised during consultations. Another redeeming factor was that there were two other places in the model where the *types of strategic issues* were indicated as being both organisational *and* communication issues, and not only communication issues (see last sentence under 'Identify strategic stakeholders and publics', as well as the last sentence under 'Identify key strategic issues')—a fact which should have (and did) alert most students.

However, there were groups who had some trouble in classifying the strategic issues according to type.

⇒ *NeoBirth Pregnancy Crisis Centre*

This was a top group who identified and phrased most of their strategic issues correctly, but made a few mistakes in classifying the following:

• Under the heading '*Tekort aan strategiese beplanning*', the group described a situation where there was a substantial amount of informal communication in the organisation, but no strategic planning as such. Thereupon they classified the issue as a **management communication** issue.

Researcher's comments: This was in effect an **organisational problem** (at the top management level), where communication was not the cause of the problem, but could become part of the solution. This will be the case if communication is either used to communicate the lack of strategic planning to the top manager (a very tricky communication situation); or to communicate the problem to other

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managers so that they could all bring up the subject together; or if used to bring about understanding of the strategic planning process, once a decision has been taken to start doing it.

- Under the strategic issue '*Gebrek aan delegering deur bestuur*', the group described a situation where top management spent their time on tactical issues because they did not trust volunteers enough to delegate these matters to them. The implication of this was that it demotivated the volunteer workers, because they did not feel involved nor trusted. The group identified this as an **organisational issue** caused by a lack of communication.

> <u>Researcher's comments:</u> This is not totally correct. If lack of two-way communication channels (i.e. a lack of opportunity for feedback on volunteers' dissatisfaction) caused the problem, it is a management communication issue. However, if this situation is caused by the autocratic management styles of top management, it is indeed an organisational issue, where communication can either help to explain the issue, or might help to provide a solution if other employees/managers communicated the need for delegation to top management (once again a tricky communication situation).

⇒ *SANCB*

Although this group differentiated correctly between types of strategic issues, they had trouble with the following one:

- "*Since the elections the concentration of the organisation has also shifted from higher education for the blind white people to the general welfare of the previously disadvantaged populations. The same amount of money is being distributed amongst a larger group therefore leaving them with more basic services that they are offering.*" (The group did not classify this issue).

> <u>Researcher's comments:</u> This is an organisational issue, where communication cannot provide a solution, but can explain the issue—e.g. the reason can be provided to blind white people for why they can no longer be educated by the *SANCB*. This issue also provides an opportunity (as a

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corporate communication issue = new category) for the *SANCB* to communicate with their (new) strategic external stakeholders, namely the previously disadvantaged population.

In general, however, groups did not seem to have major problems in differentiating between the issues. The biggest problem experienced will be explained in the next paragraphs.

6.9.3.4 Some strategic issues were classified incorrectly, or not at all.

Researcher's comments: After an analysis and comparison of the projects, the researcher came to the conclusion that these issues belonged to a class not identified on the model—issues that could be ascribed to *corporate communication* problems, i.e. 'where no or not enough communication with *external* stakeholders' was the problem. This class will be added to the revised model (Model 3).

⇒ *The Council for the Blind (SANCB)*

This was one group who probably identified such issues, but could not classify them (since the particular classification was not yet on the model). Although most of their other issues were classified correctly-- see earlier discussion--they did not classify these issues (probably because they understood the typology well enough to realise that these issues did not fit into the typology at all).

"Political:

- *In respect to affirmative action the society is in line with these requirements as the blind people themselves are employed within the organisation. Most of the people working for the society are women as they are not as set into going into the corporate world; therefore the quota is being reached."* (The group identified this as an **organisational issue** where communication is

not the cause of the problem, but can provide a **solution**—they did not explain how.)

Researcher's comments: This is correct only if the communication issue is seen to be informing other groups who are discriminated upon as to why they are not being employed. However, this is also a good example of an issue that could have been classified as a **corporate communication opportunity**—informing the government and donors (as strategic external stakeholdersf) that quotas are being met, obtaining goodwill and funding.

"Technology

The technology is changing quicker and quicker and it is becoming cheaper and more accessible to the average individual. Typed material on computers can now be printed in Braille by special Braille printers. This enables the blind to have access to e-mail, giving them a better quality of life." (The group classified this as a **management communication** issue.)

Researcher's comments: This is not correct—it is a **corporate communication** opportunity, where enough or the right communication can improve relationships with strategic stakeholders

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- *"Laser surgery is being used to remove cataracts. The partially blind and the blind's sight is being restored by these operations."* (The group classified this as a **communication issue**, where messages are not getting through to stakeholders.)

Researcher's comments: This will only be correct if messages are indeed being sent but are not getting through because of wrong channels, language etc., not getting through. More likely, however, is that messages are not being sent. As explained elsewhere in their project, the real issue is that the small fee of R40 being charged by (donor) doctors might be misinterpreted by clients as being poor quality medical care or poor service. This makes it a **corporate communication issue** (no communication with strategic external stakeholders).

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From the above analysis it can be seen that the *SANCB* group mostly classified their issues correctly, except for the category that did not yet exist—*corporate communication issues.*

⇒ *MCC Consultants*

A (top) group who also classified most of their issues correctly, except for the ones that in fact belonged to the new type (*corporate communication issues*), was the students who did a corporate communication strategy for UNESCO:

- Their one strategic issue was identified as *"Lack of awareness of UNESCO's purpose and role in a democratic South Africa".* (It was classified as *a* **communication issue**, where messages were not getting though to stakeholders.)

> Researcher's comments: Once again, if messages were indeed being sent, but not getting through because of incorrect channels for instance, this would indeed be correct. However, if not enough communication with external stakeholders was the problem, this would be a **corporate communication issue.**

- Another strategic issue was *"Absence of constructive feedback from strategic stakeholders resulting in an ambiguous perception of how effective UNESCO's efforts have been".* (The group identified this as a **management communication** issue with too little communication.)

> Researcher's comments: In reality, this is a **corporate communication issue,** with too little communication with external stakeholders and of a lack of a mechanism for feedback.

- The issue of *"Difficulty in leveraging resources worldwide"* was explained as the Pretoria office not being able to leverage intellectual information from other member state offices, particularly Latin America. (The group classified this

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issue as being both an **organisational** issue as well as a **management communication** issue.)

> Researcher's comments: It is indeed an **organisational issue** where communication could both provide the solution and explain the issue to head office abroad. It could also be seen as a **management communication** issue from the point of view that the responsibility to communicate this type of information lies with UNESCO's head office abroad, and they should be communicating this to all their branch offices (e.g. their employees). However, it could also be seen as a **corporate communication** issue from the point of view of the Pretoria office, who should communicate the problem to other UNESCO stakeholders.

⇒ The *SPCA Centurion*

This group did a good analysis by spelling out the implications of strategic issues, classifying them according to type, and setting communication goals. This was all done correctly, except for the following:

- The strategic issue identified was *"Lack of Centurion Town Council support"*, which was classified as a **management communication** issue since there was little communication between the SPCA and the Town Council.

> Researcher's comments:This is in effect a **corporate communication issue**, where there is too little or no communication with a strategic external stakeholder.

6.9.4 WRITE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Under this heading, students were supposed to *prioritise* communication issues and *set* communication goals.

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⇒ Not many groups prioritised the communication issues--the *Voortrekkers* was one of the few who did. Theirs was an excellent analysis where they first prioritised the key strategic issues, described the implications and arrived at the communication issues. They then described the communication issues and pointed out the implications for internal and external stakeholders. Under the heading 'KORPORATIEWE KOMMUNIKASIE STRATEGIE' (corporate communication strategy), they prioritised the communication issues with a further description thereof. These were:

- *"Wanpersepsie van die oningeligte publiek.*

- *Ondoeltreffende aanwending van kommunikasiemiddele.*

- *Mededingende voordeel deur strategiese posisionering in regering (lobbying).*

- *Verouderde siening van aktiwiteite deur verkeerde boodskap.*

- *Bewustheid en verstandhouding deur samewerkingsooreenkomste."*

The group came to the conclusion that solving these five communication issues, would solve the major strategic issue of lack of awareness. Thereafter the group set communication goals for each communication issue:

"KOMMUNIKASIEDOELWITTE (this translation is wrong—it should be KOMMUNIKASIEDOELSTELLINGS = COMMUNICATION GOALS')

Die bereiking van die volgende doelwitte (it should be 'doelstellings') is noodsaaklik vir die oplossing van die kommunikasievraagstukke:

- *Persepsie van die publiek oor die Voortrekkers te verander:*

  - *bewusmaking van Afrikaners oor bestaan van Voortrekkers;*

  - *inligting aan publiek te verskaf or beginsels van die Voortrekkers;*

  - *moedig deelname aan, kry diverse kulture betrokke.*

- *Interne kommunikasie:*

  - *daarstelling van oop kommunikasiekanale;*

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- *terugvoering rakende Voortrekker aangeleenthede moet deurlopend plaasvind;*

- *heersende kommunikasiemiddele moet effektief aangewend word;*

- *kort en kragtige inligting uitruiling (om informasie oorlading te voorkom).*

- *Regeringskakeling*

  - *om aktief betrokke te raak by regering deur in wandelgange te boer;*

  - *verslae oor voltooide aktiwiteite moet opgestel word en aan regering oorhandig word;*

  - *uitnodiging aan die regering om prestige funksies en aangeleenthede by te woon;.*

  - *die Voortrekkers moet betrokke raak by regeringsfunksies en aktiwiteite (bv. inhuldiging van die president).*

- *Verouderde siening van die aktiwiteite van die Voortrekkers regstel:*

  - *deurlopende kommunikasie deur lede aan alle belangegroepe sodat negatiewe siening oor aktiwiteite uitgeskakel word;*

  - *reël aanloklike aktiwiteite om potensiële lede te werf."*

Researcher's comments: Although the wording of the goals were not always one hundred per cent correct, this group had a very good understanding of setting communication goals that were derived from the communication (and strategic) issues.

It is clear that describing communication issues in detail makes it much easier to set communication goals. However, the researcher is going to remove the subconstruct 'prioritise the communication issues' from the model since it might be unnecessarily confusing for third year students to do so (in view of the fact that they also have to prioritise the strategic issues). It probably would be more apt to require this refinement on the postgraduate level.

> Researcher's comments: In practice, however, it would still be a good idea to prioritise the communication issues, especially if it is done by someone who understands the model for developing communication strategy well. The reason is that a strategic issue would not necessarily always have major communication implications. It could happen that a minor strategic issue could have major implications on the stakeholders, and that such an issue should receive urgent attention from the communication function.

For more examples of excellent communication goal setting, the reader is referred to Appendix 12 (pages 16-20) and Appendix 13 (pages 20-27) to peruse these sections of the two top projects.

⇒ Quite a few groups described the communication issues under the heading 'CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY'—one of them being the *Acestes Taekwon-do Klub.* Their strategic issue--which they incorrectly described under the heading "KOMMUNIKASIEVRAAGSTUK" (communication issue)--and also phrased incorrectly, was "mededingers" (competitors). They incorrectly classified the issue as an **organisational issue** where communication can explain the issue—however, using communication to obtain information on competitors' styles, was in fact an opportunity.

> *Researcher's comments: In spite of the incorrect analysis, their use of 'corporate communication strategy' to describe the communication issues (repeated by some other groups), might provide the answer to the problem that the term 'communication issue' has created.*

⇒ A few groups were successful in setting communication goals (their communication issues were implicit in their discussion although they did not spell them out under a heading), e.g. the *NAHYSOSA (National Association of Hellenic Youth Students of South Africa)*:

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Strategic issue: This was described as the membership of the club being severely limited by the fact that Greeks do not make up a large percentage of the SA population.

Communication goal: *"To gain more support from a wider spread of the Greek communicaty in South Africa"* (the lecturer added: by informing them of the advantages and aims of the club).

⇒ Many groups did not set communication goals, even though they described the implications of the strategic issues well, and arrived at the correct communication issues (e.g. the *SANCB*, the *Trinity Presbyterian Church Lynnwood, Radford House*). A few **communication issues** of the latter group were:

- *"By communicating with Radford House's stakeholders as to the direction the school wishes to pursue, and its plans to get there, communication will provide corporations with all the information necessary for them to approve sponsorships.*

- *Communicating to parents as to the school's needs shall further aid with the expansion of the school."*

> Researcher's suggestions for a **communication goal** for the above two communication issues: To communicate the direction the school wishes to pursue to potential and current sponsors (including the parents).

- *"By communicating and joining with other private schools, Radford House will be in a stronger position with regards to lobbying than if it were going about it alone."*

> **Communication goal** suggested: To build relationships with other private schools and lobby jointly against restrictive legislation.

As can be seen from the communication issues described by the *Radford House* group, they knew exactly what had to be communicated. It would have

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been a small step further to actually set the communication goals. It is unclear why they did not do so.

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Researcher's comments: It can only be surmised that these groups did not find it important to do so, because it seemed obvious from the rest of their analysis that they understood the constructs well enough to have been able to do so. This provides a reason for making communication goals a separate construct on the model, in order to emphasise its importance. It is of no use if students can develop a corporate communication strategy, but does not pay attention to setting communication goals--which are in effect the cornerstone of the communication plan.

</div>

⇒ Some groups did not know how to set communication goals, even though their strategic issues analysis was good. The group *Live and Let Live,* for example, described the following:

"Strategic issue: Legislation concerning company 1% levy.

Implication: A white paper bill has been passed concerning company profit. Companies are to donate 1% of their profits towards charitable and/or non-profit organisations. This would mean a great deal, however the Child Welfare is not aware of this bill at present. If the organisation kept on ignoring the act, they may end up loosing a great amount in permanent donations, which could help the welfare to function effectively.

Communication issue: Build and maintain relations with the government, thus the Child Welfare will be better informed about government legislation and regulation."

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;">

Researcher's comments: Up to here it is correct.

</div>

"Communication goal: Government will be better informed about the Child Welfare and vice versa."

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Researcher's comments: This is not correct. It should have been phrased as "To establish regular contact with government officials in order that Government be better *informed about the Child Welfare and vice versa."* Their other communication goals were also phrased incorrectly.

6.9.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of Stage 3 was to assess the projects, give examples of where students did or did not understand the constructs, by comparing them with one another.

Although the constructs that did not present problems during Cycle One were *not described* again in Cycle Two, they were of course *assessed* by the researcher—this was the first step in the assessment stage: Marks were given to each group, shared by all group members, as the mark for their practical projects. It was based on this part of the assessment that the researcher considered it unnecessary to document the description of these constructs again, since they were even better executed than during the first cycle. It can therefore be said that the researcher considers the following constructs on the model to be well understood by practically all the student groups:

- the corporate profile (including the vision, mission and corporate culture);
- environmental scanning (in the macro, task and micro environment);
- the identification of strategic issues;
- stakeholder analysis.

Since students experienced hardly any problems with the following constructs during 1999, they can now be added to the above list:

- communication policy;
- media analysis.

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Although almost all the groups experienced problems with *phrasing* the strategic issues correctly during 1998, there was a major improvement in this area in 1999. Even the identification of the implications of strategic issues is considered to have been done fairly well this year.

The construct 'communication issues' was once again problematic for many student groups, and needs to be improved. (This particular section of the model is to a considerable extent responsible for the situation). 'Deriving communication goals from communication issues' was another construct that leaves room for improvement.

In Stage 4, the model and theory will be evaluated, based on the assessment of the group projects.

6.10 EVALUATION OF MODEL 2: STAGE 4

> **STAGE 4**: A further period of research (of an evaluative nature) is initiated (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

In December 1999, the results of the individual assessment and comparison of projects that was done during Stage 3, were analysed. In Stage 4 the aim was to try and find explanations for common problem areas, by looking for flaws in the model or finding possible insufficient/incorrect theoretical explanations in the Class Notes, that was provided to students together with the model. As in Stage 3, this discussion will mainly focus on the 'identification of key communication issues from the implications of the strategic issues'. However, other minor changes to the model will also be indicated, in **boldface**.

6.10.1 KNOW THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The model and theory for this section remains unchanged. The only improvement suggested is to substitute '**Know** the internal environment' with '**Analyse** the internal environment'.

ANALYSE THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
Corporate Profile/ Vision/ Mission/ Corporate Culture/ Values/ Policies/ Enterprise/ Corporate Strategies

6.10.2 IDENTIFY STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS

As suggested during the previous evaluation stage, this construct was moved to second position on the model. Since it worked well to have done so, this construct remains unchanged (both the model as well as the theory), except for the following minor changes (indicated in **boldface** on the model):

IDENTIFY STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT)
Draw up Stakeholder Map (organisational linkages, public relations audit*) Identify organisational consequences on Stakeholders and Publics (social audit)* Identify Stakeholder Perceptions/ Attitudes/ Concerns (public relations audit)* Identify **stakeholder** familiarity with organisation (corporate image studies)* Identify Key Stakeholder Issues (both organisational and communication)

6.10.3 IDENTIFY KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

Changes to be made to the model as far as this construct and its subconstructs are concerned, are the following:

- The 'Key strategic issues' should not only be identified, but also **explained.**
- 'Identify Publics/Activists' will be extended with '**that emerge around issues**'
- '**Identify**' will precede 'Consequences for organisation' (e.g. SWOT analysis).

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- The construct 'Identify key strategic issues' will be merged with the construct 'Differentiate between types of communication issues/problems'.

- 'Both organisational and communication' will be eliminated after: Prioritise Key strategic issues.

- The latter will become 'Differentiate between types of **strategic** issues', consisting of both organisational and communication issues.

- One more type of issue will be added to the classification of strategic issues, namely:

  - *corporate communication issues*, where too little or no communication with external stakeholders is the problem.

- The word **'tactical'** will precede communication issues; and 'getting through' will be substituted by **'not reaching'**.

IDENTIFY **AND EXPLAIN** KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES
Macro/ Task/ Internal Environment (PESTE) (environmental scanning/ issues tracking)* Identify Publics/ Activists **that emerge around issues** (issues tracking)* **Identify** consequences for organisation (e.g. SWOT analysis) Prioritise Key Strategic Issues *Differentiate between types of **strategic** issues:* • *organisational issues:* communication is not cause of problem, but can provide a solution; • *organisational issues:* communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution but can explain the issue; • *corporate communication issues,* **where too little or no communication with external stakeholders is the problem;** • *management communication issues,* where too little or no communication between managers and employees (internal) is the cause of the problem--not telling them *what* they want to hear • *(tactical) communication issues* where messages are **not reaching** target groups (communication audits e.g. readership surveys, content analysis and readability of messages)*

Theory and examples will be added to the Class Notes.

6.10.4 IDENTIFY IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR STAKEHOLDERS = CORPORATE COMMUNICATION ISSUES

This construct will be modified to 'Identify the implications of **each** strategic issue'. (The equation with corporate communication issues will be eliminated). **This is to be done for each (strategic) stakeholder.** The brackets around strategic indicate that some stakeholders will *become* strategic through identifying the implications—others would already have been identified as strategic previously.

IDENTIFY THE IMPLICATIONS OF **EACH** STRATEGIC ISSUE
For each (strategic) stakeholder

Theory and examples will be added to the Class Notes.

6.10.5 WRITE THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- This construct will be changed to '**Decide on** the corporate communication strategy' and will be explained as '*what* must be communicated to *each* stakeholder to solve the problem or capitalise on the opportunity'.

- The subconstruct 'prioritise (communication) issues' will be eliminated from the model, since the rationale is considered to be too advanced for students at the third year level.

- The subconstruct 'develop communication goals' will be moved to become a separate construct, in order to emphasise it more--many students ignored it in their projects.

- The subconstruct 'draft to top management' will become a separate construct on the model, in order to emphasise its importance.

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DECIDE ON THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
What must be communicated to *each* stakeholder to solve problem/capitalise on opportunity

Theory and examples will be added to the Class Notes.

6.10.6 COMMUNICATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Because of its importance as the link between the corporate communication strategy and the communication plan, 'communication goals' will become a separate construct on the model. (Communication goals identified during the development of the strategy become the goals around which communication plans are to be developed during the planning phase).

SET COMMUNICATION GOALS (around which communication plans are developed)
Derived from the corporate communication strategy

Theory and examples will be added to the Class Notes.

6.10.7 WRITE COMMUNICATION POLICY

Only minor changes will be made to the model (see **boldface**). The theory will remain unchanged, but examples will be added to the Class Notes.

COMMUNICATION POLICY *(what is allowed/ by whom)*
Organisational guidelines **for communication**

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6.10.8 DRAFT TO TOP MANAGEMENT

To draw attention to this important construct (since most students ignored it), 'draft to top management' will become a separate heading on the model. Theory will also be added to the Class Notes for 2000, as well as examples.

DRAFT TO TOP MANAGEMENT
Obtain management support and buy-in for each step

6.10.9 OVERALL COMMUNICATION MEDIA ANALYSIS

This construct will remain unchanged on the model. The substantial amount of theory that was added during the previous evaluation stage resulted in students having conducted satisfactory media analyses under this heading (some even in-depth analyses).

OVERALL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MEDIA ANALYSIS
Intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational, public and mass media

6.10.10 DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

This construct will remain the same on the model and the theory unchanged.

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN (*master plan for how to do it*)
Communication Programmes (continuous communication with strategic stakeholders)
Communication Campaigns (single or cyclic)
Communication plans (implementation strategy and action plans)

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6.11 THE IMPROVED AND FINAL MODEL: STAGE 5

> **STAGE 5**: Depending upon the results of the research, it may be necessary to develop or completely redesign the original action undertaken (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

The following guiding hypothesis was set in Chapter 1 of the study:

> **Guiding hypothesis 3**
>
> A model is a suitable tool to satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Based on the findings of the literature analysis and guiding hypothesis presented above, the researcher revised Model 2 and hypothesised Model 3 as a framework for developing a corporate communication strategy. The following hypothesis is stated to replace Hypothesis 13:

> Hypothesis 14: Model 3 is an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Model 3, as the final version of the model for purposes of this study, will be lectured in the second semester 2000, during Cycle Three of the action research project. New constructs/changes to the model are indicated in **boldface**, and can be viewed on the next page (Figure 6.10). These changes resulted from the common problem areas pinpointed during assessment (Stage 3) and evaluation

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(Stage 4). The model will be included in the 2000 Class Notes, together with minor additions to the theory. The latter will be documented in Stage 1 of Cycle Three of the longitudinal action research project. Hypothesis 14 is to be empirically tested in stages two to five of Cycle Three (which does not form part of this study).

Figure 6.10: MODEL 3--DEVELOPING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

ANALYSE THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
Corporate Profile/ Vision/ Mission/ Corporate Culture/ Values/ Policies/ Enterprise/ Corporate Strategies

↑↓

IDENTIFY STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT)
Draw up Stakeholder Map (organisational linkages, public relations audit*) Identify organisational consequences on Stakeholders and Publics (social audit)* Identify Stakeholder Perceptions/ Attitudes/ Concerns (public relations audit)* Identify **Stakeholder** familiarity with organisation (corporate image studies)* Identify Key Stakeholder Issues (both organisational and communication)

↑↓

IDENTIFY **AND EXPLAIN** KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES
Macro/ Task/ Internal Environment (PESTE) (environmental scanning/ issues tracking)* Identify Publics/ Activists **that emerge around issues** (issues tracking)* **Identify** Consequences for organisation (e.g. SWOT analysis) Prioritise Key Strategic Issues *Differentiate between types of strategic issues:* • *organisational issues:* communication is not cause of problem, but can provide a solution; • *organisational issues:* communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution but can explain the issue; • **corporate communication issues, where too little or no communication with external stakeholders is the problem;** • *management communication issues,* where too little or no communication between managers and employees (internal) is the cause of the problem--not telling them *what* they want to hear • *(tactical) communication issues* where messages are **not reaching** target groups (communication audits e.g. readership surveys, content analysis and readability of messages)*

↓

IDENTIFY THE IMPLICATIONS OF **EACH** STRATEGIC ISSUE
For each (strategic) stakeholder

↓

DECIDE ON THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
What **must be communicated to** *each* **stakeholder to solve problem/capitalise on opportunity**

↓

SET COMMUNICATION GOALS (around which communication plans are developed)
Derived from the corporate communication strategy

↓

COMMUNICATION POLICY *(what is allowed/ by whom)*
Organisational guidelines **for communication**

↑↓

DRAFT TO TOP MANAGEMENT
Obtain management support and buy-in for each step

↓

OVERALL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MEDIA ANALYSIS
Intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational, public and mass media

↑↓

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN *(master plan for how to do it)*
Communication Programmes (continuous communication with strategic stakeholders) Communication Campaigns (single or cyclic) Communication plans (implementation strategy and action plans)

*in brackets are Lerbinger's definition of the kinds of corporate communication research

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CYCLE THREE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

6.12 THE LITERATURE STUDY: STAGE 1

STAGE 1: Implementation begins with a period of research where the resources and needs of a community are systematically assessed and the necessary information to guide action is gathered (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

Once again, the 'community' will be regarded as the third-year corporate communication students. The theoretical background to be obtained through a further literature study will be added to the 2000 Class Notes. This literature study has not yet been conducted, and will not form a part of this study.

6.13 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MODEL: STAGE 2

STAGE 2: Some kind of action is undertaken together by the action research partners (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:59).

Model 3 will be implemented in the government sector, starting July 2000.

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6.14 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN CHAPTER 6

In this chapter, Research Objective 3 has been achieved: A model has been developed that can satisfactorily be used as a tool for explicating the process of *developing corporate communication strategy* to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria. The lessons that have been learnt in the process that could serve non-profit organisations, industry and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions have been discussed throughout the chapter by pointing out the mistakes made, and the problem areas/difficulties encountered. It seems that there are some similarities between the problems experienced by the students and the weaknesses of practitioners indicated by chief executives/senior communication executives in Chapter 1, under the 'Statement of the Problem'. This point will further be discussed in Chapter 7.

The first secondary objective (under Research Objective 3) was achieved by:

- hypothesising a model for developing corporate communication strategy (Model 1), based on the initial literature study presented in Cycle One as the first step in the action research process.

- hypothesising a model for developing corporate communication strategy (Model 2), based on the implementation, assessment and evaluation of Model 1.

- hypothesising a model for developing corporate communication strategy (Model 3), based on the implementation, assessment and evaluation of Model 2.

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The other secondary objectives achieved were the following:

- corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria were involved as action researchers in the implementation of the model amongst some non-profit organisations during Cycle One of the action research process (Empirical Objective 1);

- student groups' understanding of the process of developing corporate communication strategy was determined—*firstly*, by assessing each individual group report and *secondly*, by comparing the projects with one another in order to pinpoint the areas/constructs where problems were experienced, or alternatively, were (well) understood (Empirical Objective 2);

- the hypothesised model was evaluated, *firstly* by analysing the results of the assessment and comparison of student group reports to ascertain common problem areas/constructs; and *secondly*, by analysing the theory on which the model was based as a possible reason for some of the problems experienced;

- the model was twice improved based on the analysis of the implementation results;

- the findings (the revised model) was made public through a presentation at an academic and an industry conference (in May 2000); an article in an academic journal and industry publications are to follow towards the end of 2000.

- an attempt towards building theory on the little-known subject of corporate communication strategy was made, with the assistance of the third year corporate communication students and their action research partners.

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6.15 CONCLUSION

As in the strategic management process, the corporate communication management team needs to formulate a corporate communication strategy by means of a *thinking* process -- taking the whole picture into account and thinking through the qualitative aspects of the business and the environment it faces before starting the communication *planning* process.

The corporate communication strategy forms the framework for the strategic communication plan and the operational communication plans/programmes/campaigns that flow from it. The strategy attempts to determine *what* the corporate communication function should be doing in support of the enterprise and corporate strategies. The strategic and operational communication planning assists in choosing *how* to get there. This is done under leadership and supervision of a practitioner in the role of the *PR manager*, but executed or implemented by practitioners in the role of *PR technicians*.

The model for corporate communication strategy that was developed in this chapter, is intended first and foremost as a guideline that can be used by lecturers to explain to corporate communication students the process of developing a corporate communication strategy for an organisation. It is also intended for implementation by these students in the execution of projects of which the aim is to provide practical experience in this process.

By having to implement the model for developing corporate communication strategy, third year students are obliged to go through the strategic thinking process, together with the leaders of their selected non-profit organisations. This presents an excellent opportunity for students to experience firsthand the process involved in developing a corporate communication strategy for an

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organisation—obtaining skills that will provide a competitive advantage to them, both as a *PR technician* in an entry position and later in the role of the *PR manager.*

However, there seems to be no reason why this model cannot be used by corporate communication practitioners who have to develop a corporate communication strategy for their organisations, and who have no other knowledge or guidelines for doing so. This is suggested on the condition that they take into account that no research has been conducted to validate the use of the model either by *practitioners,* or in the *government, educational* or *for-profit sector.*

In actual fact, use of the model by individual corporate communication practitioners has already commenced (Model 2). Upon request, the researcher/lecturer has made the model available to practitioners in an information technology firm, a tertiary educational institution, a corporate communication consultancy, and a mining house.

In the latter case, the development of a corporate communication strategy (based on Model 2) was given to the corporate communication practitioner of the mining house as an examination project in the honours subject Strategic Communication Management 780—with a view to her possible admission to the masters degree in Communication Management. The completed project was assessed according to the same criteria used for the third year corporate communication practical projects. The practitioner seemed to experience problems with the same constructs as the students had—possibly pointing to flaws in the model (which undoubtedly exist), but possibly also an indication of the areas where problems are experienced in practice.

The implementation of the model by other corporate communication practitioners is not impossible--approximately 20 practitioners and consultants requested the paper delivered by the researcher on the subject of corporate communication strategy at a local conference in May 2000. (The model was included in the paper). It seems clear that interest from industry in a model (or other guidelines) for developing corporate communication strategy has not subsided.

In the next (and final) chapter, the major findings and conclusions of this study will be stated and related to the research objectives. Recommendations and suggestions for further research in this regard will also be made.

CHAPTER 7

OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

$\Rightarrow$

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM
AND ITS SETTING

$\Downarrow$

CHAPTER 2:	CHAPTER 3:
TRADITIONAL 'PUBLIC RELATIONS' ROLES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	CONCEPTUALISATION OF A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE CORPORATE COMMU-NICATION MANAGER

$\Rightarrow$ (between Chapter 2 and Chapter 3)

$\Downarrow$ (below Chapter 3)

CHAPTER 5:	CHAPTER 4:
RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY	CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORPORATE COMMUNI-CATION STRATEGY

$\Leftarrow$ (between Chapter 5 and Chapter 4)

$\Downarrow$ (below Chapter 5)

CHAPTER 6:	CHAPTER 7:
DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY --THE PROCESS	FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

$\Rightarrow$ (between Chapter 6 and Chapter 7)

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CHAPTER 7

7. *FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDA-TIONS FOR THE STUDY*

In this final chapter, the findings, conclusions and recommendations with respect to the problem and research objectives are stated. The study's limitations are explicated and recommendations for further research are made.

7.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

In Chapter 1, the problem was introduced namely that chief executives perceived their corporate communication managers/practitioners as being reactive and not playing a strategic role in the organisation. A possible contributing factor was mentioned, namely that corporate communication practitioners might not be trained for such a role, and that theory as to what constituted such a role, is not explicitly stated in the literature. The following research questions were posed and guiding hypotheses set to investigate this situation:

Research Question 1

Is there a need for the corporate communication (public relations) manager to play a strategic role at the top management level of the organisation (the role of the *PR strategist*) and if so, what does this role entail?

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> **Guiding hypothesis 1a**
>
> The chief executive is not satisfied with the role played by the corporate communication manager.
>
> **Guiding hypothesis 1b**
>
> The chief executive expects the corporate communication manager to play a strategic role at the top management level.

Research Question 2

What is the meaning of the concept '*strategy*' in the context of corporate communication (i.e. *corporate communication strategy*) and how does it differ from a *communication plan*?

> **Guiding hypothesis 2**
>
> The chief executive expects the corporate communication manager to develop a corporate communication strategy for the organisation.

Research Question 3

How can the process of *developing corporate communication strategy* satisfactorily be explicated to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and what lessons can be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector), and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions?

> **Guiding hypothesis 3**
>
> A model is a suitable tool to satisfactorily explain the process of developing corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

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The concept of 'strategic management roles in corporate communication' was generated in chapter 1, as consisting firstly of the *PR strategist* role (a role at the top management or macro level of the organisation), constituting the activities performed in executing the 'mirror' function of corporate communication. Secondly, it consists of the *PR manager* role (a role at the meso or functional level of the organisation), constituting certain activities performed in executing the 'window' function of corporate communication.

Furthermore, the delimitations, assumptions, and importance of the study was explicated, and a synopsis of the research strategy and methodology was provided.

7.2 TRADITIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In Chapter 2, the theoretical underpinnings for the study were provided. The concept of 'role' was explicated, the historical origins of 'public relations' roles were explored, and the relationship between research and 'public relations' roles were indicated. Furthermore, the relationships between major constructs were defined within the framework of the *Systems theory* and the *Excellence theory*.

The chapter concluded with the findings of the Excellence Study (Dozier *et al* 1995), namely that there are two prerequisites for excellent communication in an organisation: The first is knowledge to play the manager role, especially knowledge of strategic management and two-way symmetrical communication. The second is that shared expectations must exist between top management and senior communicators on what constitutes communication management, and what the role of communication in the organisation should be.

7.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MANAGER (THE ROLE OF THE *PR STRATEGIST)*

7.3.1 FINDINGS

In Chapter 3, Research Objective 1 was achieved--the primary objective having been to conceptualise the role of the *PR strategist*, a strategic role for the corporate communication (public relations) manager at the macro or top management level of the organisation. The theoretical background for such a role was provided and it was conceptualised as follows:

The corporate communication manager's involvement at the top management or macro level is seen as acquiring strategic information on the stakeholder environment by means of research techniques such as environmental scanning, issues identification and analysis. This entails identifying the organisation's strategic stakeholders and their concerns, and determining the consequences of organisational decisions/behaviour on them; also identifying and monitoring issues around which publics/activists emerge before they erupt into crises (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992), and anticipating their consequences for organisational strategies and policies. Van Riel (1995) describes these activities as the 'mirror' function of corporate communication.

Furthermore, to present this strategic information to top management as input in the organisation's strategy formulation process (Robbins 1990), ensuring that the information is considered and used. In managing the organisation's interdependencies with the stakeholder environment, in being a liaison between

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the organisation and its stakeholders, uncertainty and conflict is reduced and relationships with strategic stakeholders are stabilised. In this strategic role, the corporate communication function's contribution towards organisational effectiveness is maximised (Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, *in* Grunig 1992).

Secondary Objectives achieved in Chapter 3 were the following:

⇒ An analysis of the relevant literature on public relations was carried out. The constructs for the role of the *PR strategist* were determined as being the mirror function (information acquisition/processing), boundary spanning, environmental scanning, stakeholders, publics, activists and issues. The activities constituting the role of the *PR strategist* were spelled out by means of the following operationalisation:

- Doing environmental scanning in the macro, task and micro environment;

- Analysing the organisation's linkages to key stakeholders, drawing up a stakeholder map;

- Assisting in the identification of key strategic issues through issues monitoring and analysis;

- Identifying the publics and activist groups that emerge around issues;

- Analysing the consequences of corporate behaviour and external events/trends/issues on strategic stakeholders and publics;

- Determining stakeholder concerns, sensitivities, feelings and attitudes towards the organisation;

- Forecasting the behaviour of stakeholders/publics/activists and its consequences for the organisation;

- Feeding this strategic intelligence into the organisation's strategic thinking and planning process for the purpose of strategic decision making, thereby contributing towards the organisation's strategy formulation.

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⇒ It was determined, by means of an analysis of the relevant literature on strategic management, that a need exists at the top management level for a role of which the constructs are the following: the environment, boundary spanning, environmental scanning, stakeholders and issues. Since these are also the constructs of the role of the *PR strategist*, the role needed at the top management level was equated to the role of the *PR strategist*.

⇒ Precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR strategist* in a follow-up study were generated. They are the following:

Hypothesis 1: The chief executive (CEO) expects the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function to play a strategic role at the top management level of the organisation, i.e. the role of the *PR strategist*.

Hypothesis 2: The role of the *PR strategist* consists of gathering and interpreting strategic information on the stakeholder environment, to be used in the organisation's strategy formulation processes.

Hypothesis 3: CEO expectations for the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR strategist* than his/her perceptions of the performance in this role.

Hypothesis 4: CEO expectations for the role to be played by the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher for the *PR strategist*, than for the *PR manager*.

Hypothesis 5: CEO role expectations for the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR strategist*, than in the role of the *PR technician*.

Hypothesis 6: CEO perceptions of the performance of the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR strategist* than in the role of the *PR manager*.

Hypothesis 7: CEO perceptions of the performance of the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR strategist* than in the role of the *PR technician*.

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⇒ Items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR strategist* in a follow-up study were developed. The following nine measurement questions are suggested:

Identify key stakeholders (through research) that can enhance or constrain achievement of the organisation's mission (Kreps 1990; Grunig, Grunig & Ehling, *in* Grunig 1992; White & Mazur 1995).
Act as advocate for key external stakeholders by explaining their views to top management (Dozier *et al* 1995).
Explain to top management the impact of their behaviour, obtained through research, on key external stakeholders such as the media, investors, communities (Grunig & Hunt 1984:9).
Initiate dialogue with pressure groups limiting the organisation's autonomy, e.g. environmentalists or consumer advocates or legislators (L Grunig 1992).
Reduce uncertainty in strategic decision making by interpreting the external environment to top management (Dozier 1990; Dozier *et al* 1995:12-13; Van Riel 1995).
Develop strategies for building sound relationships between the organisation and key stakeholders (Dozier *et al* 1995).
Act as 'early warning system' to top management before issues erupt into crises (Dozier *et al* 1995).
Identify organisational problems that communication can solve, e.g. reduce employees' fears or uncertainty during rationalisation/ mergers (Steyn 1999).
Determine employees' information needs through research (Winokur & Kinkead 1993:1).

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7.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In relating the role of the *PR strategist* to the systems approach, the researcher suggests that the systems approach to corporate communication be broadened and that corporate communication become more deeply involved in the organisation's information acquisition phase (input) through environmental scanning and boundary spanning activities.

Furthermore, that the throughput phase is extended to include analysis and interpretation of information, as well as dissemination of strategic intelligence by corporate communication to relevant decision makers--thereby participating in the strategic management process.

The following diagram is presented in relating the role of the *PR strategist* to the systems theory:

Figure 7.1: SYSTEMS APPROACH TO THE ROLE OF THE *PR STRATEGIST*

INPUT		THROUGHPUT
Role of the PR strategist	⟹	**Role of the PR strategist**
• corporate communication becomes more deeply involved in information acquisition through environmental monitoring of stakeholders and issues.		• corporate communication becomes more involved in analysis and interpretation of information; • dissemination of strategic intelligence to relevant decision makers; • thereby participating in the strategic management process. *Role of the PR manager* • to be conceptualised in the following section.

⇑   ⇓

FEEDBACK		OUTPUT
Role of the PR strate-gist (and the PR manager)	⟸	*Role of the PR technician*
• determining whether the problem/ opportunity has been addressed satisfactorily.		• to be stated in following section.

Source: Own research

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7.4 THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

7.4.1 FINDINGS

In Chapter 4, Research Objective 2 was achieved--the primary objective having been to conceptualise *corporate communication strategy.*

Corporate communication strategy provides the focus and direction for an organisation's communication with its stakeholders. It is the thinking or the logic behind the corporate communication function's actions, the *what* rather than the *how*--the outcome of a strategic thinking process by senior communicators and top managers with regard to the identification and management of stakeholders and issues.

Corporate communication strategy is a pattern in important decisions and actions with regard to communication, and determines *what* should be communicated to avoid conflict and obtain win-win solutions in relationships with strategic stakeholders. It is developed within the context of the organisation's vision, mission, corporate culture and policies, goals and objectives (the internal environment), but focuses on an assessment of the external environment. The process of developing corporate communication strategy provides the strategic approach needed by organisations to identify, and manage communication with, strategic stakeholders.

The corporate communication strategy makes the corporate communication function relevant in the strategic management process through its focus on communication with strategic stakeholders, using communication as a solution to

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organisational problems. It provides the vital link between the enterprise/corporate/business strategies and the corporate communication function, aligning communication goals to the organisational mission.

Secondary objectives achieved in Chapter 4 were the following:

⇒ A corporate communication *strategy* was differentiated from a communication plan. The former is seen as the thinking process performed by senior communicators and top managers, identifying *what* needs to be communicated. The latter is seen as operationalising the strategy, i.e. breaking it down into steps that can be implemented.

⇒ An operational definition for the process of developing a corporate communication strategy was provided. It can be seen as a process of:

- analysing the organisation's internal and external environment;

- drawing up/refining the stakeholder map by identifying strategic stakeholders and their concerns, and the consequences thereof for the organisation;

- identifying the organisation's key strategic issues, either through environmental scanning/issues analysis; or by analysing current/proposed organisational strategies;

- considering the implications of these strategic issues, specifically focusing on the consequences thereof for the organisation's strategic stakeholders;

- identifying **what must be communicated** to strategic stakeholders to manage their concerns or the consequences of the strategic issues (i.e. to solve the problem or capitalise on the opportunity presented by the strategic issue)—this is the essence of corporate communication strategy;

- deriving communication goals from the corporate communication strategy, providing a framework for the strategic communication plan;

- contributing to the achievement of organisational goals by providing the link between communication plans and the corporate strategy.

⇒ Precise hypotheses for empirically testing the role of the *PR manager* (a strategic role for the corporate communication practitioner at the functional or departmental level of the organisation), and the role of the *PR technician* (an implementation role at the micro or programme level) were generated. They were the following:

Hypothesis 8: CEO role expectations for the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR manager* than his/her perceptions of the performance in this role.

Hypothesis 9: CEO role expectations for the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR technician* than his/her perceptions of the performance in this role.

Hypothesis 10: CEO role expectations for the most senior manager/practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly higher in the role of the *PR manager*, than in the role of the *PR technician*.

Hypothesis 11: CEO perceptions of the performance of the most senior manager/ practitioner responsible for the corporate communication/public affairs function are statistically significantly lower in the role of the *PR manager* than in the role of the *PR technician*.

⇒ Items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR manager* were developed. The following 10 measurement questions are suggested:

Develop corporate communication strategy which supports corporate strategy (Steyn 1999).
Take responsibility for the success or failure of corporate communication strategy (Steyn 1999).
Take responsibility for the success or failure of corporate communication plans (Dozier *et al* 1995:11)
Develop corporate communication plans, e.g. crisis or employee communication or media plans (Grunig & Hunt 1984).
Manage the implementation of corporate communication plans (Grunig & Hunt 1984).
Evaluate functional tactics e.g. the channels used to reach communities (Grunig & Hunt).
Manage the public relations budget (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998; Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).
Develop functional tactics to effectively communicate organisational messages to stakeholders (Grunig & Hunt 1984).
Translate communication goals into communication activities (Digman 1990).
Monitor the performance of corporate communication practitioners or sub-divisions (Robbins & De Cenzo 1998; Floyd & Wooldridge 1994).

⇒ Items for empirically measuring the role of the *PR technician* were also developed (an implementation role at the programme or micro level). The following six measurement questions are suggested:

Produce audio-visual materials for presentations (based on Groenewald 1998a).
Generate publicity e.g. write media releases (based on Groenewald 1998a).
Keep a media clipping service (new item).
Edit public relations materials e.g. speeches or the annual report (based on Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:334, as well as on Groenewald 1998a).
Write articles for the organisation's publications (based on Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:334, as well as on Groenewald 1998a).
Organise special events e.g. open houses or exhibitions or gala evenings (based on Groenewald 1998a).

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7.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that the systems approach to corporate communication be broadened to accommodate the role of the *PR manager* in developing a corporate communication strategy for the function.

This is to be done by broadening corporate communication's participation in the *throughput* phase to also include the development of a corporate communication *strategy* as a focus for the corporate communication function--identifying the organisation's key strategic issues and their implications for the strategic stakeholders (thereby determining *what* should be communicated to stakeholders to solve problems or capitalise on opportunities).

Based on the corporate communication strategy, it will then be a natural progression to develop a master plan for the corporate communication function's activities, as well as a communication policy for the organisation to facilitate the implementation of the strategy. This can graphically be presented as follows:

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Figure 7.2: SYSTEMS APPROACH TO CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (THE ROLE OF THE *PR MANAGER*)

INPUT	THROUGHPUT
Role of PR strategist	*Role of the PR strategist*
• corporate communication becomes more deeply involved in information acquisition through environmental scanning.	• corporate communication becomes more involved in analysis and interpretation of information; • dissemination of strategic intelligence to decision makers; • thereby participating in the strategic management process.
	Role of the PR manager • developing corporate communication strategy for the organisation; • developing corporate communication master plan for the organisation. • developing communication policy for the organisation.

⟰   ⟱

FEEDBACK	OUTPUT
Role of PR manager (and PR strategist)	*Role of the PR technician*
• determining whether problem/opportunity has been addressed satisfactorily.	• developing communication plans and functional tactics; • implementing plans.

Source: Own research

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7.5 DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY—THE PROCESS

7.5.1 FINDINGS

In Chapter 6, Research Objective 3 was achieved--the primary objective having been to develop a model that can satisfactorily explain the process of *developing corporate communication strategy* to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, and to identify the lessons to be learnt to serve corporate communication practitioners (in the non-profit, for-profit and government sector) and corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

The first secondary objective achieved in Chapter 6 was the following:

⇒ Based on the initial literature study, a model for the process of developing corporate communication strategy was hypothesised and tested qualitatively:

Hypothesis 12: Model 1 is an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Model 1 was found not to be an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria. Thereupon

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Model 2 was hypothesised, based on the assessment and comparison of student projects implemented in 1998, as well as the evaluation of the model and accompanying theory:

> Hypothesis 13: Model 2 is an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Model 2 was found not to be an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria. Thereupon Model 3 was hypothesised, based on the assessment and comparison of student projects implemented in 1999, as well as the evaluation of the model and accompanying theory:

> Hypothesis 14: Model 3 is an effective tool for satisfactorily explicating the process of developing a corporate communication strategy to third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria.

Model 3 has been hypothesised for the purpose of being tested in the longitudinal action research project among third year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, during the second semester of 2000.

Further secondary objectives achieved in Chapter 6, were the following:

⇒ Third-year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria were involved as action researchers in the implementation of Models 1 and 2 amongst some non-profit organisations in South Africa.

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(This secondary objective also represented the achievement of **Empirical Objective 1,** that was set in Chapter 5 for the student researchers--it was referred to as **Project 1** in the discussion on action research as methodology).

⇒ The extent to which each student group understood the process of developing a corporate communication strategy, was determined--*firstly* by assessing each student group report done during 1998 and 1999 individually, and *secondly* by comparing them in order to pinpoint the common problem areas/constructs where problems were experienced, or alternatively, were (well) understood;

⇒ Models 1 and 2 were evaluated, *firstly* by having analysed the results of the assessment and comparison of student group reports, in order to ascertain common problem areas/constructs; and *secondly*, by having analysed the theory on which the models were based as a possible reason for some of the problems experienced.

(The above two secondary objectives represented the achievement of **Empirical Objective 2** that was set in Chapter 5 for the lecturer/principal researcher—it was referred to as **Project 2** in the discussion on action research as methodology).

⇒ Models 1 and 2 were improved based on the analysis of the implementation results.

The third version of the model (and the final one for the purpose of this research report) can be viewed on the next page (figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: MODEL 3--DEVELOPING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

ANALYSE THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Corporate Profile/ Vision/ Mission/ Corporate Culture/ Values/ Policies/ Enterprise/ Corporate Strategies

↑↓

IDENTIFY STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT)

Draw up Stakeholder Map (organisational linkages, public relations audit*)
Identify organisational consequences on Stakeholders and Publics (social audit)*
Identify Stakeholder Perceptions/ Attitudes/ Concerns (public relations audit)*
Identify Stakeholder familiarity with organisation (corporate image studies)*
Identify Key Stakeholder Issues (both organisational and communication)

↑↓

IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

Macro/ Task/ Internal Environment (PESTE) (environmental scanning/ issues tracking)*
Identify Publics/ Activists that emerge around issues (issues tracking)*
Identify Consequences for organisation (e.g. SWOT analysis)

Prioritise Key Strategic Issues
Differentiate between types of strategic issues:

- *organisational issues:* communication is not cause of problem, but can provide a solution;
- *organisational issues:* communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution but can explain the issue;
- *corporate communication issues,* where too little or no communication with external stakeholders is the problem;
- *management communication issues,* where too little or no communication between managers and employees (internal) is the cause of the problem--not telling them *what* they want to hear
- *(tactical) communication issues* where messages are not reaching target groups (communication audits e.g. readership surveys, content analysis and readability of messages)*

↓

IDENTIFY THE IMPLICATIONS OF EACH STRATEGIC ISSUE

For each (strategic) stakeholder

↓

DECIDE ON THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

What must be communicated to *each* stakeholder to solve problem/capitalise on opportunity

SET COMMUNICATION GOALS (around which communication plans are developed)

Derived from the corporate communication strategy

↓

COMMUNICATION POLICY *(what is allowed/ by whom)*

Organisational guidelines for communication

↓

DRAFT TO TOP MANAGEMENT

Obtain management support and buy-in for each step

↓

OVERALL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MEDIA ANALYSIS

Intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational, public and mass media

↓

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN (*master plan for how to do it*)

Communication Programmes (continuous communication with strategic stakeholders)
Communication Campaigns (single or cyclic)
Communication plans (implementation strategy and action plans)

*in brackets are Lerbinger's definition of the kinds of corporate communication research

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⇒ It is proposed that the lessons learnt from the implementation of Models 1 and 2 (by corporate communication students at UP amongst the non-profit sector), will also serve corporate communication practitioners at other non-profit, for-profit and government sector organisations, as well as corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions. There seems to be no reason why Model 3 (twice-improved) cannot be made available to practitioners and other students for theoretical or implementation purposes, nor why such implementation will not meet with the same relative success as that achieved by UP students and their action research partners in the non-profit sector.

⇒ The findings (in the form of Model 3) were made public through a presentation at an academic and an industry conference in May 2000. Articles in industry publications will follow later in the year.

⇒ A contribution towards theory building on the little-known subject of corporate communication strategy will have been achieved by the publication of an academic article (which will be submitted to the academic journal *Communicare* in September 2000, for consideration). Furthermore, by the publication of a text book/management reader based on this research script. (This book, titled "*Corporate Communication Strategy*" is being written at present, to be published by Heinemann in December 2000).

7.5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

⇒ That Model 3 be made available to corporate communication practitioners at other non-profit organisations, to private and government sector organisations, as well as to corporate communication students at other tertiary institutions.

⇒ That the findings of the action research (especially Model 3) be published as soon as possible -- in industry publications, academic journals and also in the form of a text book/management reader.

⇒ That the findings of the action research be presented at an international conference.

⇒ That a series of workshops be held to introduce the model and its theory to practitioners, possibly in co-operation with professional associations such as PRISA and the IABC.

⇒ That a short course be developed to introduce Model 3 and its theory to practitioners, possibly through the PRISA Education and Training Centre, or alternatively through Business Enterprises@Tuks.

⇒ That the theory and model on developing corporate communication strategy be introduced to practitioners at the Communication Management Discussion Forum held every two months at the University of Pretoria.

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7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The reader is referred to Chapter 1, where a conceptualisation of the (present) exploratory study and a (future) empirical study was done (see section 1.3). The following recommendations for further research are made:

1) That the exploratory study described in Chapter 3 be followed by a quantitative study--testing the hypotheses generated and the measurement items developed for the role of the *PR strategist*. Therefore, that the need for a corporate communication practitioner to play the role of the *PR strategist* be empirically verified in South African organisations (including the government and private sector), as well as abroad.

2) That the exploratory study described in Chapter 4 be followed by a quantitative study--testing the hypotheses generated and the measurement items developed for the role of the *PR manager*. Therefore, that the need for a corporate communication practitioner to play the role of the *PR manager* be empirically verified in South African organisations (including the government and private sector), as well as abroad.

3) That the need for the development of corporate communication strategy, as an important activity of a practitioner in the role of the *PR manager*, be empirically verified in South African organisations (including the government and private sector) as well as abroad, by means of a quantitative study.

4) That the concept of 'PR model' be empirically linked to 'PR role' in future studies.

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5) That the process by which corporate communication strategy is actually formulated in private sector organisations be explored by means of a qualitative study—i.e. that an inductive approach be followed by building theory from the data collected and analysed (rather than using a confirmatory approach). This would confirm the validity of the model.

6) That the model for developing corporate communication strategy that was implemented through action research in non-profit organisations, also be implemented in public and private sector companies.

7) That the process of developing corporate communication strategy be further analysed, evaluated and improved.

8) That the influence of the chief executive's world-views on playing the role of the *PR strategist* and the *PR manager*, be investigated (and the resulting 'PR model' practised).

9) That environmental scanning as a research technique to be utilised by a practitioner in the role of the *PR strategist* and the *PR manager*, be further investigated-- both qualitatively and quantitatively.

10) That the process of issues management, as an integral part of the strategic role of the corporate communication manager be investigated, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

11) That the identification and management of stakeholders as an integral part of the strategic management of corporate communication be investigated, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

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12)That the identification and management of publics and activists, as an integral part of the strategic management of corporate communication be investigated, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

7.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are regarded as the most important limitations of the study. (It could also be regarded as indicating further possibilities for future investigations):

1) The role of the *PR strategist* was conceptualised by means of a *literature* investigation only.

2) The model for developing corporate communication strategy was hypothesised by means of a *literature* investigation only.

3) The model was implemented amongst a *non-representative (convenience) sample*.

4) The model was implemented in the *non-profit sector* only.

5) Findings *could not be generalised* to the population.

6) According to Marshall & Rossman (1995:4), *"full collaboration between researcher and participants in posing the questions to be pursued and gathering data to respond to them, is the hallmark of action-research"*. Since the student researchers in this study were guided by a hypothesised model for developing corporate communication strategy, and the participants in the non-profit organisations were assumed not to be knowledgeable on the subject or skilled in strategy development, *"full collaboration between researcher and participants in posing the questions to be pursued and gathering data to respond to them, did not take place"*. The model was *prescriptive* in providing guidelines for the *minimum* information to be gathered, although freedom was allowed students to pose other questions or gather additional information that they (or the non-profit participants) thought relevant.

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7) The *PR strategist* role was developed against a background of traditional organisational forms. Hardly any literature *in this regard* exists on matrix and network organisational forms.

8) Whether the role of the *PR strategist* can be *outsourced,* or should rather be performed in-house, was not investigated.

9) The chief executive's world-views and the 'PR model' practised by the organisation could have a major influence on the role played by the PR practitioner. These factors were not taken into consideration in this study.

7.8 CONCLUSION

The problem addressed in this study was the seeming dissatisfaction of chief executives/other senior managers with the performance of their corporate communication managers and/or practitioners. The literature indicates that their major shortcomings are perceived as not playing a strategic role in their organisations, or making a contribution to strategic decision making. Corporate communication practitioners are seen as being reactive, awaiting the initiative of their chief executives. Their thinking is tactical, rather than strategic – their focus is on the achievement of *communication* goals, rather than the organisational mission.

A further problem is that the role of communication seems to be ill-defined in many organisations. It can be said that there is a lack of understanding between the corporate communication function and top management on what constitutes communication management, on the role communication should play in the overall management of the organisation, and how communication can benefit the organisation.

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The literature review also points to the fact that corporate communication *managers* in South Africa are not unaware of their shortcomings (Groenewald 1998a). Although they perceived strategic communication, management and management communication skills as very important in their positions, they did not consider themselves sufficiently equipped by the training they had received in these skills.

It is obvious that in order to address the problem described above, corporate communication practitioners will have to change their practice. However, there is little indication in the academic literature on exactly how this is to be done -- the very lack of theory might even be a reason for the situation described. Some light was shed by the findings of the Excellence Study (Dozier *et al* 1995), one of the few sources that touch on corporate communication's strategic role. It found that one of the prerequisites for an organisation to have 'excellent' communication is that there must be a practitioner functioning in the role of a corporate communication (public relations) *manager,* with knowledge of strategic management.

The point of departure of this study was therefore that in order to contribute to strategic management, there should also be a corporate communication practitioner functioning in the role of the *PR strategist*. This role was conceptualised from the public relations literature as one of the major objectives of the study. The need for such a role at the top management level was qualitatively verified in the body of knowledge on strategic management. By providing a description of this role and indicating its behavioural characteristics, the study addressed a vacuum in the public relations literature—providing some insight on the activities that might fulfil the expectations that top management seems to have for a senior corporate communication practitioner.

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The lack of definitions or description of the concept 'corporate communication strategy' in the literature provides a further possible reason for the management vacuum in the function. As an attempted solution, the study redefined the historical role of the *PR manager*, identifying the development of corporate communication strategy as one of the major activities of a practitioner in this role. Corporate communication strategy is conceptualised as the *direction* an organisation should take with regard to its communication with strategic stakeholders—determining *what* should be communicated to obtain their co-operation, maintain stabile relationships with them and avoid conflict.

In order to provide guidelines to students as to how corporate communication strategy should be formulated, a model was hypothesised from the literature. Thereafter the model was twice implemented, evaluated and revised—resulting in Model 3, the final 'Model for developing corporate communication strategy for an organisation'. The lessons learnt that could be applied to the training of practitioners or students at other tertiary institutions were noted throughout the discussion.

Having conceptualised the role of the *PR strategist* and redefined the role of the *PR manager,* this study made an important contribution to the body of knowledge by broadening the theoretical viewpoint of the field of corporate communication. It also provided some answers to Dozier's question (in Grunig 1992:329) of *"who will manage the corporate communication function, how will it be managed, and what are the role expectations".*

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APPENDICES CHAPTER SIX

APPENDIX 1:

RESEARCH AND PLANNING PHASES OF THE MODEL FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Class Notes 1999
Strategic Communication Management
KOB 320, Module A

Study unit 1.4: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION PLAN

1.1 Research
Problem or opportunity statement Situation analysis

1.1.1 Opportunity or problem statement

This statement accounts for **why action is required** at this time. If corporate communication is **practised strategically**, the motivation/situation will flow directly from the **corporate communication and organisational strategy**. However, ad hoc plans must sometimes be made to respond to unforeseen circumstances or a crisis situation.

- Is there a unique opportunity to favourably influence stakeholder attitudes/opinions/behaviours toward the organisation (**pro-active plan**);
- What is the source of
  - the *organisational* (business) problem/issue;
  - the *management communication* issues;
  - the *communication* problem where messages are not getting through to receivers;
- Is the plan a response to the development of unfavourable attitudes/opinions/behaviours toward the organisation (**reactive plan).**

1.1.2 Situation analysis

The situation analysis **examines** the motivation or situation that prompted the effort **in depth**. All aspects of the specific situation must be thoroughly studied to discover what **attitudes, opinions or behaviours** should be changed, among which stakeholders/publics and what kind of communication will be necessary to accomplish these ends.

To be effective, the communication plan should **fit the organisational culture**. The research needed may involve the study of documents as well as people and behaviour.

1

1.2 Planning
Communication goals (Overall, long term) Communication objectives (Specific, short term)

1.2.1 Goal setting

This step is frequently overlooked by communicators. Each communication situation should be approached as a goal-setting activity. Goals help to direct attention and action because they specify the **target** to shoot for, stating where one wants to be in the **long run**. When communication is practised strategically, corporate communication goals flow from the organisation's strategic issues. However, from time to time ad hoc plans must be drawn up, in which case goals will be set at this stage.

Students should be aware of the fact that in the literature, there seems to be some **confusion** about the difference between **goals and objectives**. Some authors use the terms interchangeably, while others such as Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg describe communication goals as set tasks to be accomplished within a given time period and to a specified degree. The latter is **not correct**, since this is a description of **objectives** (achievements or **incremental steps marking progress** along the way--**smaller, shorter-ranged and measurable**). A correct description of a **goal** is the **overall destination** of where an organisation wants to go—it is not specific nor measurable, and can be said to be a mini-vision.

1.2.2 Objectives

Objectives are expected **solutions to day-to-day problems**. They are **shorter term, very specific** and should create word pictures in your mind about what is to be done and what is to be expected. Objectives transform the problem/opportunity statement into a form that can be **achieved and measured**. If the problem is clearly stated, the objective is much easier to see and to evaluate. (Evaluation research is done to evaluate the achievement of objectives).

All objectives should be goal-related and are not to be created in a vacuum. **A few objectives** (at least 2 or 3) should be stated for **each goal** in a communication plan.

Objectives are the single most important element in the public relations **planning** process. They represent the corporate communication department/organisation's **desired outcomes** in communicating with the targeted groups. They are the *raison d'être* (reason for being) for corporate communication programmes/plans.

2

Many organisations are now using management by objectives **(MBO)** which involves **co-operative goal setting** by groups of superiors and subordinates in the employee hierarchy.

It is very important for students to be able to differentiate between the two basic types of objectives used in communication plans, namely impact objectives and output objectives.

- **Output objectives:**

These objectives represent the **work to be produced (what the PR practitioner does)**, e.g. the distribution or execution of programme materials. Also called *process objectives*, they refer to stated intentions regarding **programme production and effort** (or output). Process objectives **focus on the campaign or plan or communication** (e.g. contacting all voters in the area and giving them a piece of literature), and not on the stakeholders/publics (e.g. influencing the voters and getting a certain percentage of them to vote for your candidate). These activities should not be confused with desired **programme impacts** (the **outcomes**, i.e. the desired impact on stakeholders/publics).

In the best of all possible worlds, communication managers would set only **impact** objectives. In the real world, however, output objectives are more common, possibly because they are easier to measure. Unfortunately, **output objectives are unrelated to the actual impact** the programme may have on its intended stakeholders/publics. Therefore, such programmes do not necessarily support organisational strategies or make a contribution to organisational effectiveness. This is an important factor causing top management dissatisfaction with the communication function.

- **Impact objectives**

There are three kinds of impact objectives:

⇒ *Informational objectives* include **message exposure** to, **message comprehension** by, or **message retention** by the stakeholder/public. Such objectives are appropriate when an action or event is to be publicised or an audience is to be educated e.g. *"to increase employee awareness of new plant safety procedures by 50% during a three-month safety campaign"*.

3

⇒ *Attitudinal objectives* aim at modifying the way stakeholders/publics feel about the client or organisation and its products or services. It may consist of :

♦ **forming new attitudes** where none exist, e.g. *"to create favourable attitudes toward the Old Mutual as an investment opportunity among 25% of its former policy holders during the first three months after demutualisation".*

♦ **reinforcing existing attitudes** e.g. *"to reinforce favourable opinion toward a non-profit organisation among 80% of its past donors during March and April".*

♦ **changing existing attitudes** e.g. *"to reverse within a period of one year the negative attitudes and ill will now being expressed toward the manufacturer of a defective product among 20% of former and current customers".*

⇒ *Behavioural objectives* involve the **modification of behaviours** toward the client or organisation e.g. *"to accomplish adoption of new safety procedures among 75% of the organisation's employees by September 16".*

In the public relations process, **objectives precede and govern programming decisions.**

4

APPENDIX 2:

MODEL FOR DEVELOPING A
COMMUNICATION PLAN

MODEL FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

RESEARCH
Problem or opportunity statement
Situation analysis

↓

PLANNING
Communication goals
(Overall, long term)
Communication objectives
(Specific, short term)

↓

ADAPTATION STAGE
Stakeholders/publics
Statement of limitations

↓

MESSAGE
Central message derived from goals
Message for each target public
Theme/slogan
Central action/special event

↓

STRATEGY STAGE
Implementation strategy (what)
Action plans (activities/tactics--how)
Media (channels)

↓

SCHEDULING
(Day, week, month)

↓

BUDGET
(Cost of each activity)
SELL PLAN TO MANAGEMENT

↓

EVALUATION RESEARCH
Process/impact
In-process/internal/external
Quantitative/qualitative

↓

REPORT RESULTS TO MANAGEMENT

APPENDIX 3:

THE NEW HOPE SCHOOL

FOR SPECIALISED EDUCATION

A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND PLAN FOR A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Prepared for
Me. B Steyn
Department of Communication
University of Pretoria

Prepared by
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LiveWire Corporate Consultants

September 17, 1998

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LiveWire Corporate Consultants
158 Dorado Avenue
Waterkloof, Pretoria 0181

September 17, 1998

Department of Communication
University of Pretoria
Hatfield, Pretoria
0083

Me B Steyn:

As you requested the following xpg report describes a communication strategy and plan for a non-profit organization.

Our company chose New Hope School for Specialized Education as they do not have a communication plan or strategy and experience serious financial difficulties.

This Study examines:
1. The present strategy at New Hope
2. A suggested Communication Strategy
3. A Communication Plan

We interviewed Mr. J. Stapelberg, senior deputy principle, as our primary data source.

Our secondary research consisted of academic text books and other relevant information supplied by Mr J. Stapelberg.

We believe that the communication plan and strategy we have developed for the marketing of services at the school, will improve their strategic position and more importantly their financial position.

We would be pleased to present and discuss this report and suggestions at your request.

Thank you for your confidence in selecting our company to develop a strategy and plan for this non-profit organization.

Sincerely,

J. Ludik
Project Manager
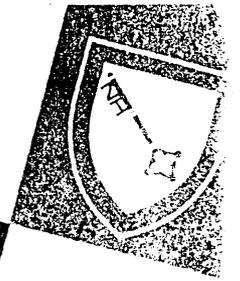
Verw./Ref ....

14 September 1998

WIE DIT MAG AANGAAN

Hiermee word magtiging verleen aan mej. Jolanie Ludik om 'n werkstuk vir haar studies oor Nuwe Hoop-Skool te mag maak.

Sy moet asb. net in voortdurende kontak met mnr. Stapelberg bly sodat inligting gekontroleer kan word.

Met dank

J N STAPELBERG
SENIOR ADJUNKHOOF

S P BURGER
SKOOLHOOF

Management Summary

As will be shown by this in-depth study conducted by Live wire Corporate Consultants, an integrated communication strategy and communication plan is an absolute necessity for the success of any organization.

In today's cut-throat business world, it is impossible to survive, let alone prosper if an organization doesn't have a corporate strategic plan. These plans are long range and indicates how the organization is planning to get where they want to be in the future. To emphasize this, Uyterhoeven, Ackerman and Rosenblum (1997.7) say "... if you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."

This unfortunately is also true for non-profitable organization including New Hope School for Specialized Education, especially with the present subsidy cuts endangering the survival of the school. It is therefore imperative that they find alternative sources of income with this strategy.

To execute this strategy, it is necessary to do thorough research, as well as develop and implement plans to convince the sources to give donations and to volunteer their time to support the school's activities if possible.

In this report, we have decided to achieve the above mentioned through the development of a communication plan involving the annual carnival held at the school. We have focused on the marketing of services of New Hope School to introduce the school to and create awareness among the various publics that could have an influence on the school. We believe that through the implementation of this plan, the public will be happy to contribute to a good cause.

The report is based on data supplied by interviewing Mr. J. Stapelberg, senior deputy principal of New Hope School and the use of academic textbooks and other relevant information supplied by Mr. J. Stapelberg.

After analyzing the data, we identified and discussed the three most important strategic issues:
1. Financial Shortages
2. Insufficient marketing of services
3. Concept of Mainstreaming

On the basis of these findings, it is recommended that the school implement the communication strategy and plan we have developed. This will ensure a greater flow of income and other aids toward the school, as well as making the school well known.

1. INTRODUCTION

For this project, we chose New Hope School as our non-profit organization. New Hope offers specialized education for children with cerebral palsy and/or learning disabilities. We have developed a communication strategy and plan to improve their strategic position.

We have identified and explained the most important strategic issues and ways to manage them.

2. DEVISING   AN   OVERALL   CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2.1 CORPORATE PROFILE

New Hope School for Specialized Education has a staff of approximately 100 persons and is the largest school for specialized education in the country. Education in English and Afrikaans is offered on a non-racial basis. Provision is made for children from three years to matriculation level. Infants receive therapy as out patients or visiting scholars. The school is state subsidized and is run by a board of management.

New Hope School is responsible for the education and instruction of:

* *Children with cerebral palsy:* cerebral palsy is a condition caused by damage to the immature and developing brain, occurring before, during or after birth. It may result in various physical disabilities including malfunction of the sensory-motor system
* *Learning disabled children:* children with an average or above average intellectual ability who experience serious problems with reading, spelling, writing or mathematics, as a result of neurological dysfunction.

The education and teaching is of a specialized and individualized character. A multi-disciplinary work method is followed to develop the potential of the pupil, as well as to help him/her to adapt to and overcome the disability.

The school has 567 pupils, of whom most are learning disabled. The different levels are pre-primary, primary and secondary.

2.1.1 History
A meeting was held on January 11, 1971 whereby the decision was made to establish another school for cerebral palsied children in Pretoria, as the present school was already full at that stage. On 17 May 1971, 33 pupils, 14 teachers and two house-mothers moved into the old St. Peter's Hostel in Murray street, Brooklyn. A part of the farm Garsfontein was bought from the widow of L.V. van Oost, for the purpose of building a school.

The old farm homestead was named "New Hope" by its original owner, and that is where the school's name has its origin.

2.1.2 Location
New Hope's physical address is Cecilia Road, Ashlea Gardens (near Menlyn), Pretoria. The school's grounds are approximately 4,28 Ha.

2.1.3 Identity and demographics of customers

New Hope School caters for children with different levels of brain damage.

Children of school - going age are referred by Education Aid Centers to the Psychology Department of New Hope School where arrangements are made for an evaluation.

Pre - school children are referred by medical practitioners, community health services or other therapists. Children referred to New Hope School are evaluated by a multi - disciplinary team, and decisions are made in terms of placement & therapeutically needs.

New Hope School also provides education for category C-pupils. They are children with an average IQ (i.e. 100), who have learning disabilities and, despite receiving remedial intervention, still cannot cope in a normal school environment.

2.1.4 Management

New Hope is managed by a governing body, which consists of ten people.
They are:
- principal
- senior deputy principal
- two experts in the field of cerebral palsy and/or learning disabilities
- three parents
- three ministerial appointments

This framework may change in January 1999. At present, it is an interim governing body until the new formula is implemented.

2.1.5 Reputation in the field and overall competitive environment

New Hope is the largest school of its kind in the country, as wall as being the only school in Pretoria who provides education from pre-primary level right through to Grade 12. It also offers N1 and N2 technical courses instead of Grade 10 - 12. This was implemented to give the school a competitive advantage in the specialized education market. The courses are offered to provide the pupils with technical skills in addition to academic skills.

The N-courses offered are:
- business studies
- nutrition technology
- technical - motor
           - electrical

New Hope provides a strong outpatient service, which includes the diagnoses of disabilities and defects in infants, aged three to five, and therapy for rehabilitation. The school offers community service to universities, especially UP, for medical and therapy students. It is equipped to provide training services.

New Hope's biggest competitors in Pretoria, is Pretoria School for Specialized Education and Prospectus Novus. However, these schools do not provide education for Grade 10 - 12.

2.1.6 Financial status

New Hope is state-subsidized, and managed financially by a financial committee consisting of six people.
They are:

- senior deputy principal
- administration official, who is a co-opted member
- two auditors, one of whom is a co-opted member
- one legal expert
- one parent

The financial committee gathers monthly to discuss the trial balance and to determine the school's liquidity. For more information on New Hope's financial status, see Appendix A Financial documents.

2.1.7 Vision

To provide the best education for all children and young people with cerebral palsy and learning disabilities.

2.1.8 Mission

The mission of New Hope is to lead our pupils physically, psychologically and intellectually to balanced, socially acceptable adults, with the help of specialized education.

2.1.9 Corporate Culture

New Hope's corporate culture is summarized in the following values:
- Give comprehensive and objective information to enable parents to choose placement options that best meet the needs of their child.
- Be respectful of the diverse ethnic, cultural religious heritage of South Africa.
- Provide support services as early as possible in life.
- Be consistent with appropriate professional standards
- Services to pupils with learning problems to be coordinated (nationally)
- Be accessible for all children with learning problems.
- No discrimination - equal opportunities

- The pupil's right to participate in and realize their full potential in a SA society with dignity and pride.
- Professional behavior in every aspect of our work
- The child and his interests is our main concern. We therefore care about our pupils, parents, buildings, equipment and books.
- We take pride in our work
- Effective communication is a two-way process
- We believe that total commitment and involvement in the process of education is essential and therefore full participation of teachers, students and parents in all aspects of education is of primary importance.
- We strive towards excellence.
- Emotional security to create a safe haven for all those involved.

Human dignity is one of the most important aspects at New Hope. Because of their various disabilities, the pupils are very sensitive and easily hurt. Therefor, anything that offends their dignity, is totally unacceptable.

2.1.10   Organizational Structure

GOVERNING BODY

PRINCIPAL
MR S.P. BURGER

| **SNR. DEPUTY PRINCIPLE**
MR.J.A.MULLER
GUARDIAN:
Primary level | **PRINCIPLE AUXILARY SERVICES**
MR. J. DU PREEZ
GUARDIAN:
Pre - Primary |

DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

1. **Pre - Primary**
   Mrs. W. Visser

2. **Jnr - Primary**
   Mrs. N. Fourie

3. **Snr - Primary**
   Mr. P. Pretorius

4. **Technical**
   Mrs. R. Pretorius

5. **Languages**
   Mrs. R. Coetzee

6. **Science**
   Mrs. G. Pretorius

7. **Business Subjects**
   Mr. J. Stapelberg

8. **Educational Guidance**
   Mr. M. Ferreira

DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

1. **Occupational Therapy**
   Mrs. S. Jordaan

2. **Fisiotherapy**
   Mrs. R. Battison

3. **Psychology**
   Mr. L. Du Preez

4. **Speachtherapy**
   Mrs. R. Dercksen

2.2 Corporate Strategic Plan.

SWOT – Analysis

Strenghts		Weaknesses		Opportunities		Threaths	
1.	Specialized Services Assisting staff in teaching, and therapeutical activities. Individual and Differentiated Teaching.	1.	No departmental Structures	1.	Inclusiveness with the Community	1.	Financial Costs of Specialized Schools
2.	School can serve a wide area	1.	Financial stress, ralatively higher than normal Education	2.	Outcome based Education	2.	Inclusion
3.	Multi – Disciplinary evaluation and intervention.	2.	Shortage of Specialized services And facilities.	3.	Business orientated Education	1.	Survival of services and Specialized Schools
4.	Effective Teaching.	4.	Personnal Shortages	4.	Responsible inclusion in State Schools	5.	Provincial and Distric Segmenting
5.	Experienced / Structured Education Structure	5.	Shortage of fully equiped Hostels, For children & Personnal.	4.	Expansion of Differentiated Individualized approach	4.	Overpopulation of Schools Impaires effective Teaching
6.	Scientific approach	6.	Marketing of services	5.	Services to all Language, Gender & Race groups	8	Perception fo Isolation
7.	Quallity Education	7.	Parent Involvement			5.	Phasing out of Special Exams for Children with learning Disabilities
		8.	Phasing out of Specialized Schools				

2.3 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

2.3.1 Identify key strategic issues

From the SWOT analysis performed in no.2.2, we derived the five most important strategic issues; in order of importance.

They are as follow.

1. Financial shortages
2. Insufficient marketing of services.
3. Concept of Mainstream Education
4. Provides education multi-racially and multi-lingual
5. Scientific approach. i.e. outcome-based education

2.3.2 Discuss issues and implication

The first three will be discussed in detail.

Financial shortages

The state subsidy New Hope receives is R87 000 per month, which is less than previous years. This subsidy is constantly cut without prior notice. It is also paid out erratically, for example nothing for three months, then five months in bulk. The children's school funds cover only the costs of teaching, bus transport and residence. The school currently has a shortage of R481 675 per year.

Strategic implications:

- The subsidy basically covers only the wages of the assisting personnel and the repair and maintenance costs.
- In an attempt to balance the shortages, cross subsidizing takes place.
- If services are decreased, the quality of the education will be impaired.
- No long-term financial goals and objectives can be set, as the subsidy may be cut without notice.
- The financial committee has to reorganize and change budgets that have been accepted, on a monthly basis. This lays an additional fund-raising burden on personnel.
- The shortage of funds means that an additional R481 675 per year must be raised.
- Due to new education legislation and shortages of funds, there are personnel shortages and therefor the current personnel are overloaded with work.

Marketing of services

Mr. J. Stapelberg is responsible for all marketing and external communication functions, in addition to his responsibilities as senior

Strategic Implications:

- If the concept of mainstreaming is indeed implemented, it would mean that schools such as New Hope would cease to exist. The children would have to go to normal schools that do not have the necessary facilities, expert personnel and vital knowledge and experience to educate these children.

- The schools where these disabled children enroll would have to hire expert personnel and buy and/or develop the facilities, which are extremely expensive. However, it is questionable whether, in the present climate of subsidy cuts, enough funds will be available for the above mentioned. If so, the children would not be able to develop to their full potential and most probably be more handicapped than ever. This would diminish their chances of ever functioning as balanced socially acceptable adults.

- At present, the difficulties caused by the grouping of schools for specialized education with normal schools in the same district, under the same body of authority, and the fact that therefor specialized education schools in different districts fall under different bodies of authority, are manifold. Often, the body of authority that is over the school does not have the necessary expertise to manage the school. It occurs too many times that the requirements the specific body of authority sends out to each school aren't reconcilable with practice, especially for a school like New Hope.

- When the relevant body of authority is informed of this, they either ignore it or become aggressive. It is the opinion of our source Mr. J. Stapelberg, senior deputy principal of New Hope, that the reason for their reaction is the fact that because they do not possess the expertise they require, they are discouraged, frustrated and sensitive.

- Another problem caused by the confusing state of affairs regarding the grouping of schools for specialized education into different districts, is the total lack of coordination between the various education district-departments. Different rules, regulations, policies, etceteras are sent out to schools who fall in the same category, like all specialized education schools, thus causing a tremendous amount of contradicting information.

2.3.3 Organizational goals & objectives

Goal:

To provide multi or trans disciplinary skilled and specialist personnel to work with families, other care givers, groups and agencies in the ethnic and wider community.

Objectives:

- Training of specialized personnel
- Market related remuneration packages
- Appointment criteria
- Manual on multi-disciplinary character in Specialized Education

Goal:

To manage school cost effectively

Objectives:

- Financial provision by the GDE within a government subsidized model in Specialized Education
- To create a budget to maximize the school's responsibility to survive within a government supported model, with additional help from sponsorships

Goal:

To create an effectively managed school

Objectives:

- Use of organizational chart
- Strategic planning structure
- Problem solving model

Goal:

To implement an educationally responsible extra curricular program

Objectives:

- Sport coordination between scholars
- Culture coordination between pupils and employees

Goal:

To provide uniquely specialized services to education community, other than the normal services offered at schools

Objectives:

- Satellite services
- Milieu disability
- Multi-disabled character
- Catering
- N Courses

Goal:

To create a marketing strategy to introduce the needs of the child with learning problems

Objectives

- Establishing an effective management structure for New Hope for marketing purposes.

Goal:

Maximal provision and use of physical facilities (school and residence)

Objectives

- Expansion plan
- Maintenance plan

2.4   KEY COMMUNICATION ISSUES

2.4.1 Opportunities or risks of Communicating each issue

Financial shortages

Risks:

It is our opinion that the risks of communicating the fact that the school is experiencing financial shortages, are few. The reason for this is that the people who are affected by this issue, are already aware of the problem. Therefore, they are semi-prepared for the consequences. The few risks that we have   are as follows:

Employees of the school may feel that their jobs are threatened. A natural consequence of subsidy cuts is job losses.

Parents in the school may fear the increase of school funds, Which is already considerable. This could mean that they would no longer be able to afford the best education for their children, for example New Hope.

Opportunities:

Although New Hope is struggling financially, there is a number of opportunities in communicating this issue.

Realizing the magnitude of the problem, all involved directly with the school (teachers, parents and pupils) may become more determent in raising sufficient funds to ensure the quality of education at the school.

By communicating the financial shortage externally, the school may benefit financially through the sponsorships and/or donations from organizations and/or individuals. Benefits are not only limited to financial support.

Insufficient marketing of services

Mr. J. Stapelberg is solely responsible for marketing the services of the school. However, his other responsibilities, as discussed earlier, take up most of his time. For the effective marketing of services of New Hope, it would be necessary to appoint an extra person or organize a marketing department to share the responsibilities.

Risks:

All the qualified personnel at New Hope experience fierce demands, with there own responsibilities. By communicating the need for effective marketing of services, and the necessity of another person sharing Mr Stapelberg's responsibilities, some personnel may fear being overburdened. This could create stress and lead to the deterioration of relationships.

Opportunities:

When it is communicated that New Hope needs more marketing of services and personnel to assist with such services, the moral conscience of the public is reached. Thus cause individual members to volunteer their time, money or assets for the school's use. On a larger scale, organizations can claim tax deductions for financial supporting the activities of the school, since it is registered as a non-profiting organization.

Concept of mainstream education

Risks:

If this concept is communicated, the parents and family members of children in standard schooling structures could oppose the integration process. This may cause pupils of New Hope school to feel alienated, and therefore discouraged. Their loss of hope would counteract the social progress achieved thus far by the school's efforts.

Parents of New Hope pupils will oppose mainstreaming for fear of their child's social integration process, and the difficulties there-in. This applies for the pupils of New Hope school as well.

Opportunities:

Should the concept be favorably excepted by the majority of the affected publics it would allow for a basis of goodwill and acceptance. This will allow pupils of New Hope school a faster integration process. It also gives these pupils acceptance into normal social conditions, therefore building their hope, the main purpose of the school, regardless of the school's own well being. Thus hope is communicated, even if the school is closed down.

From another point of view, a public outcry against mainstreaming could just force government to stop process and continue financial support, thus ensuring the school's survival.

2.4.2 Communication Goals and Objectives

Internal Goals:

- To maintain a healthy, open and effective communication environment between school members.
- To create a positive image for the school to counteract past negative connotation to the school's name amongst the pupils in the school.

Internal Objectives:

- Implementation of workshops for promoting more healthly open and effective communication.
- To hold regular social gatherings, to promote interpersonal relationships between staff and pupils.
- By having awards ceremonies for numerous school activities, for example, education, carnivals, fun runs etc. This will create a sense of belonging and pride which directly improves positive attitudes toward the school and its name.
- To create a positive atmosphere between the teachers, which will directly affect the pupil's attitude.

External Goals:

- To implement, educate and create an awareness and sensitivity towards the school and its pupils.
- To communicate the school's needs to the external publics, for them to provide an efficient support system to the school.

External Objectives:

- To provide the publics, through the use of various media, with as much information as possible, regarding the school's purpose for existence and any other extra programs.
- To arrange events to attract external publics to get them involved in the schools activities.

2.5   DR AFT TO TOP MANAGEMENT

The proposal thus for, has been presented to Mr. J. Stapelberg and the governing body of the school They have agreed with the strategic issues we have identified, as well as the implications thereof.

2.6   COMMUNICATION POLICY

This school has no formal communication policy, because only Mr J. Stapelberg is concerned with internal and external communication. Thus a communication policy needs to be developed.

2.6.1 Functional Communication Areas

Internal:

- Presently a newsletter is used for communicating internally. The newsletter contains information about what's happening in the school and with staff members, for example birthdays, meetings and achievements.

- The internal communication channels used are strictly according to the organizational hierarchy (see organizational chart page 5) This allows top management to fulfill their duties and responsibilities without having to   worry about petty problems.   Should, for example, a departmental head have a problem with his/her immediate superior and the problem remains unresolved, this person can go directly to the top.

- Regular meetings are held between:
    - i) Principals and departmental heads
    - ii) Departmental heads and personnel
    - iii) Personnel and parents
    - iv) Student representatives and personnel

- A box for "prayer requests" is available in cases of severe illness of any children or staff members.

- In addition we recommend a suggestion box for all staff members and pupils to communicate internal problems and suggestions.

External:

- Mr J. Stapelberg is the only communication officer who has contact with external publics. Therefor, he alone is responsible for dealing with radio, newspapers and other external media.

- We suggest that an additional person be appointed to do only personnel relation work and administration for organizational communication, seeing   that Mr Stapelberg has already too many other responsibilities.

- New Hope school has no existing communication department, as it is not necessary. Thus there is no need to discuss functional relationships between the communication department and other departments or the structure of the communication department.

2.7   STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

2.7.1 Organizational linkages

Enabling linkages

These linkages should be effectively managed between the school and the government, to achieve a favorable attitude from the latter, thus enabling larger subsidies.   Effective management should be maintained with possible sponsors, so that donations raised will also increase the standard of the school's education system.

Functional linkages

Employees - groups that provide an input

Harmony between management and employees will ensure better relationships, and therefore provides happy employees who are more motivated to work for the cause rather than remuneration alone.

Unions - groups that provide an input

Unions often supply the information for the identification of possible future problems to the management of the school. Thus unions ensure proactive rather than reactive solutions for possible problems.

Pupils - groups that provide an output

The credibility of the school is increased in the long term through the willingness of the pupils to learn. This will be attained largely by provision of a happy learning environment, thereby showing to the outside world that handicap children are capable of leading a normal life.

Normative linkages

Joint ventures with similar institutions will help increase awareness amongst members of community and government. Through increased awareness of their actions a positive attitude is generated towards the importance of the existence of such institutions. This will help counteract movements in government to stop funding institutions of this kind.

2.7.2 Strategic stakeholders

According to documented communications theory, strategic stakeholders is defined as, "... those that are critical, crucial, essential, important or vital for an organization in the accomplishment of it's mission" (Grunig & Roper 1992:123). Therefore, the following strategic stakeholders have been identified: internal and external publics are the two main categories.

Internal publics

Employees -   teachers
-      students teachers
-      auxillary service therapists
-      service workers
-      top management

External publics

Trade unions -   37 service workers are members of the national
                  health and allied workers union (NEHAWU). The
                  remaining three service workers are members of
                  the institute for Public Service (IPS).

Government -   National Department of Education
           -      Gauteng Department of Education

Media   -   Mass media (television, radio, print media)
           -      Community media (radio, print media)

Possible
sponsors   -   Individual members of public
           -      Corporate sponsorship

Parents of children with cerebral palsy and/or learning disabilities.

Pupils   -   pupils with cerebral palsy
           -      pupils with learning disabilities

These stakeholders have a dramatic effect on the future of the school.
Through their constant support and interest the school's standards on
all levels can be improved upon.

2.8   COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS

The Association for People with Disabilities: Gauteng North
collaborates with a committee of school principals in specialized
education, for example New   Hope, to discuss matters of mutual
interest.

New Hope also works together with PACSEN (Parents Association for
Children with Special Education). This is a group of parents who
exercise their constitutional rights collectively as parents in the
educational situation.

2.9   MEDIA ANALYSIS

Radio, newspapers, Internet, social events and any other media can
be used.

2.10 MANAGEMENT LIAISON

The communication strategy thus far has been presented to Mr.J. Stapelberg. He has agreed with the issues and implications we identified. Our ideas for the communication plan were also discussed with him. Mr. J. Stapelberg is really supportive and excited to implement our communication strategy and plan.

3. COMMUNICATION PLAN

3.1 RESEARCH

3.1.1 Problem statement

The marketing of services at New Hope school with the aim of raising sufficient funds for the effective management of the school.

3.1.2 Situational analysis

The school has a current financial shortage of more than R481 000 per annum. The following questions need to be answered:

How can funds be raised?
Funds can be raised through the marketing of services like for example, informative presentations of the school's services at Lion's Club meetings and the use of brochures.

Corporate companies and individuals can also provide sponsorships to the school.

The implementations of fundraising events, like a motor show, annual carnivals and a golf day.

From whom do we want to raise funds?
Funds need to be raised for the school, as government subsidies are on the decrease and the school is running at a loss at present. The subsidy could be halted at any given moment without notice. Therefore the school will have no more funds from the state and will have to seek resources elsewhere.

Why should funds be raised?
The field in which funds can be raised should not be limited, because as much funds as possible are needed to increase the schools income.

Another reason for marketing our service is to encourage the external public to have a positive attitude towards the school, its name and pupils.

APPENDIX 4:

MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS (SSG)

MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS

'n Kommunikasiestrategie en –plan

KOMMUNIKASIEBESTUUR 320

Prepared for:

Mev. Benita Steyn
Departement van Bemarkings- en Kommunikasiebestuur

Prepared by:

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C. Vilonel	9616427

17 September 1998

6. SLEUTEL STRATEGIESE VRAAGSTUKKE

6.1 BEWUSTHEID

- Die opname (verwys na bylae) het getoon dat 'n baie klein persentasie van die publiek bewus is van SSG.
- Dit impliseer dus dat potensiële skenkers nie die geleentheid het om te kan skenk nie.

6.2 KORRUPSIE EN GELOOFWAARDIGHEID

- Die persepsie bestaan by die meeste Suid-Afrikaners dat sommige welsynsorganisasies oneerlik is met die aanwending van die skenkings wat hulle ontvang.
- Die oorsaak hiervan is korrupsie onder staatsamptenare en belangrike persone, met die gevolg dat mense die geloofwaardigheid van alle organisasies bevraagteken.

6.3 POLITIES, KULTUUR EN GODSDIENSTIG

- Sommige lande, byvoorbeeld China, laat sendingwerk glad nie toe nie.
- Lande soos Roemenië, Bosnië en Oekraïne is te trots om hulp te aanvaar wanneer dit blyk 'n welsynpoging is.
- Dus sal lande, al het hulle 'n dringende behoefte, die skenkings by doeane wegwys.

6.4 GEPASTE VERTEENWOORDIGERS

- Dit is moeilik vir die bestuur van SSG om geskikte verteenwoordigers te kry vir elke provinsie, aangesien dit 'n taak is wat baie diverse vaardighede (van finansiële aanleg om begrotings op te stel tot goeie interpersoonlike kommunikasie en sterk Christelike oortuigings) verg.
- Baie tyd en geld word dus aangewend vir suksesvolle werwing en keuring

6.5 EKONOMIE

- Die ekonomie is huidiglik van so 'n aard dat mense nie so 'n groot deel van hulle besteebare inkomste aan nie-winsgewende organisasies kan skenk nie.
- Die verswakking van die Rand maak ook die bedrae wat oorgeplaas word na die VSA aansienlik minder.

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7.1 EKONOMIE

Die ekonomie beïnvloed SSG op 'n nasionale en internasionale vlak:

• NASIONAAL

Met die verhoging in die repo- en uitleenkoerse in Suid-Afrika die afgelope ses maande, het die gemiddelde persoon se besteebare inkomste aansienlik verminder. Dit lei dus daartoe dat individue wat tans skenk, sal kyk waar hulle aan hul maandelikse begrotings kan sny, en baie moontlik SSG sal uitsny ten einde in hul eie behoeftes te kan voorsien. (verwys na bylae)

Omdat Suid-Afrikaners nog rente-verhogings verwag (verwys na bylae), wil hulle hulself nie nou bind om te begin skenk nie.

• INTERNASIONAAL

Ook verbandhoudend met die verswakking van die Rand, is die hoeveelheid Rande wat ses maande terug oorgeplaas is VSA toe, in Dollars veel minder werd. Die gevolg is dat SSG (SA) baie meer donateurs moet werf (met gepaardgaande ekstra uitgawes) ten einde dieselfde hoeveelheid in Dollars oor te stuur.

7.2 KORRUPSIE EN GELOOFWAARDIGHEID

Dit is essensieel vir 'n nie-winsgewende organisasie om geloofwaardig in die oë van hul publieke te wees. Mense is bewus van die feit dat korrupsie dikwels plaasvind en hulle wil seker wees dat hulle donasies aangewend word vir die doel waarvoor dit geskenk is. Daar was die afgelope paar maande verskeie geleenthede waar sulke fondse verduister is. Die Allan Boesak saak is 'n goeie voorbeeld hiervan (verwys na bylae). Ons vind in ons navorsingsverslag dat 6% van die respondente as gevolg van vrees vir korrupsie nie donasies wil maak nie.

Daar is egter nie-winsgewende organisasies met 'n goeie beeld in die publieke oog. Mense sal makliker 'n skenking maak aan 'n organisasie waarmee hulle goed vertroud is. Dit behoort met ander woorde SSG (SA) se prioriteitskommunikasie doelwit te wees om hulself te bemark in hulle onderskeie publieke. SSG (SA) kan hulle publieke inlig oor die feit dat 73 sent uit elke dollar aangewend word vir die saak waarvoor dit geskenk is. SSG kan ook beklemtoon dat alle finansiële state beskikbaar is vir insae by hul onafhanklike ouditeure (*Ernst & Young*). Foto's of videos word ook geneem om die toestande van die weeshuise te toon voordat dit deur SSG opgegradeer is.

7.3 TEKORT AAN GEPASTE VERTEENWOORDIGERS

- Ron Lindeman, die direkteur van SSG (SA) het as doelwit gestel om teen die jaar 2000 'n gepaste verteenwoordiger in elke provinsie te hê.
- Tans is daar vyf provinsies wat nie 'n verteenwoordiger het nie, of wat 'n verteenwoordiger deel met 'n ander provinsie.
- "Gepaste" verteenwoordigers is nodig omdat hy/sy in staat moet wees om sy eie begroting op te stel. Finansiële vaardighede is dus noodsaaklik. Die verteenwoordigers moet Christelike waardes en norme hê, mensekennis en goeie menseverhoudings. Ook moet hulle oor goeie kommunikasievaardighede beskik omdat hulle baie voorleggings en aanbiedings moet doen en die sending bevorder.
- Implikasies:
  - Daar is nie genoeg verteenwoordigers nie, dus word al die teikengroepe nie bereik nie.
  - Daar is wel mense wat bereid is om as verteenwoordigers op te tree, maar hulle beskik nie noodwendig oor die nodige vaardighede nie.
- Kommunikasie implikasies:
  - Daar word nie voldoende gekommunikeer met die teikengroepe nie.
  - Onopgeleide mense wat nie die implikasies van hulle optrede besef nie, mag moontlike donateurs afskrik.
  - Dus moet daar gekommunikeer word met:
    - Mense in kerke
    - Besigheidspersone by selgroepe/bidgroepe
  - Lei mense wat gewillig is op.
  - Adverteer die poste en voer onderhoude.

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SSG (SA) is relatief onbekend onder belangrike publieke wat hulle graag sal wil bereik. Mense wat wel donasies sal maak is onbekend met die sending en kan dus nie bydrae tot die organisasie nie.

8.1 ONDERSTEUNENDE FEITE

- SSG het 'n tekort aan vrywilligers en personeel – dus is daar te min mense beskikbaar om SSG te bemark en projekte te loots.
- Baie kerke ondersteun alreeds ander sendingorganisasies of het hulle eie sending programme en is nie gewillig om nog projekte te ondersteun nie.
- 'n Onderhoud op Radio Kansel en Impact Radio het relatief min terugvoer tot gevolg gehad.

8.2 IMPLIKASIES

- As gevolg van die bogenoemde feite kan die organisasie nie optimaal groei nie.
- Individue wat wel SSG sou ondersteun het nie die geleentheid nie, omdat hulle onbewus is van SSG.

8.3 KOMMUNIKASIE DOELWITTE EN IMPLIKASIES

- SSG moet die volgende boodskappe aan hul onderskeie publieke oordra:

  1. SSG ontwikkel programme wat strewe daarna om te voorsien in die behoeftes van die begunstigdes, bv. CRI.

  2. Die sending stel geleenthede daar vir ondersteuners om betrokke te raak, te dien en om 'n verandering te maak.

  3. SSG moet die toestand in die verskillende lande aan latente donateurs verduidelik en hulle laat verstaan hoe dringend hulp benodig word.

  4. Hulle moet ook die dringende behoefte aan vrywilligers en verteenwoordigers verduidelik.

  5. Ron, die direkteur, het laat blyk dat hy bereid is om enige program of voorstel te probeer om so veel as moontlik publisiteit of bekendheid vir SSG (SA) te bekom.

APPENDIX 5:

BIRCHLEIGH HIGH SCHOOL

KOMMUNIKASIESTRATEGIE EN - PLAN VIR HOëRSKOOL BIRCHLEIGH

VOORBEREI VIR:
ME. B STEYN
DEPARTEMENT BEMARKING EN KOMMUNIKASIE

VOORBEREI DEUR:
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JODINE KRUGER 9622939
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PHIA VAN TONDER 9509663

17 SEPTEMBER 1998

4. SLEUTEL KOMMUNIKASIE VRAAGSTUKKE

Rasionalisasie

⇒ Rasionalisasie het die gevolg dat al hoe meer onderwysers afgedank word.
⇒ Baie van die goeie onderwysers neem eerder pakket as om in slegte omstandighede skool te hou.
⇒ Moet voor die media die onderwysers inlig dat daar dalk van die onderwysers afgedank moet word.
⇒ Indien 'n onderwyser wel afgedank moet word, sal die hoof hulle inroep om die nuus te gee.
⇒ Lig ouers en kinders in oor hoeveel en wanneer van die onderwysers afgedank moet word.
⇒ Lig onderwysers vroegtydig in oor hul opsies, bv. pakkette en ander vak aanbied.

Klasgroottes

⇒ Nuwe wetgewing het tot gevolg dat klasse al hoe groter word.
⇒ Die groot klasse veroorsaak dat daar probleme met dissipline is en dat leerlinge in die massa verdwyn.
⇒ Onderwysers moet voor die tyd ingelig word hoe groot hul klasse gaan wees sodat hulle kan voorberei vir lesse.
⇒ Lig ouers in hoeveel leerlinge in die klase gaan wees.
⇒ Maak voorsiening vir leerlinge wat probleme het, deur ekstra klasse en onderwysers wat bereid is om hulle te help.
⇒ Oortuig onderwysers om ekstra moeite te doen om leerlinge wat agter bly, te help.
⇒ Oortuig leerlinge dat hulle die onderwysers moet kan nader vir hulp en dat hulle moet help met die dissipline.

Negatiwiteit

⇒ As gevolg van onsekerheid oor die toekoms word leerlinge, ouers en onderwysers baie negatief.
⇒ Niemand is meer bereid om moeite te doen of hul beste te gee nie.
⇒ Hou op om negatiewe inligting te verskaf en gee eerder opbouende kritiek en inligting aan leerlinge en onderwysers.
⇒ Moenie leerlinge of onderwysers afkraak nie, bou hulle eerder op met positiewe opmerkings.
⇒ Kry 'n beloningstelsel vir prestasie aan leerlinge en onderwysers.
⇒ Betrek ouers om negatiwiteit van leerlinge te verminder.

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APPENDIX 6:

RADIO TUKS 1

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

For

RADIO TUKS

By
John Cross
#9457046

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

There are several key strategic issues-both internal and external- that surround Radio Tuks.

The external issues are the following:

❖ Student-wise and their involvement in advertising sales of Radio Tuks
❖ The South African telecommunication's and Radio Authority (SATRA) and there new proposed legislation regarding community broadcasting

The internal issues are:

❖ High turnover of staff within Radio Tuks
❖ The on-going lack of transparency within the organization
❖ The mandatory process of Racial Integration

The External Issues

Student-wise and their involvement in advertising sales of Radio Tuks

Studentwise is-amongst other things-an advertising placement agency that, as described above, harness the power of several community stations across the country to form a national advertising base. They, at the request of an advertiser, place adverts on community stations where ever the advertisers require. This is done for a commission fee, which is equal to 16.4% of the community stations advert cost. *This is a very good system as it allows community to expand their vision to national advertising. It also allows community stations to be promoted by Studentwise who have a vested interest in the success of the station. The problem however lies in the fact that about 65% of Radio Tuks' advertising income comes from Studentwise. This means that if something goes wrong with Studentwise, Radio Tuks will suffer badly. It also gives Studentwise too much power over the station, due to the fact that they hold the power to dramatically effect the financial soundness of Radio Tuks. These issues have not yet been addressed and must be, before it becomes too late.

The South African telecommunication's and Radio Authority (SATRA) and there new proposed legislation regarding community broadcasting IBA Satra

S.A.T.R.A defines itself as:

> *The South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority*
> *(SATRA) is an independent body with wide-ranging powers*
> *which was established in 1997 in terms of the*

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Telecommunications Act. It has a broad public interest
mandate, which includes not only regulation but also the
promotion of universal service, fair competition and the
upliftment of previously disadvantaged communities. SATRA
is governed by a Council responsible for over 250 staff
members and is funded by parliamentary appropriation.

SATRA has recently released a white paper on community broadcasting which has
several implications for community broadcasters like Radio Tuks. 2 of these issues are
however detrimental to the existence of community broadcasting as it is presently known.
The First issue is the "capping" of national advertising on community stations. This limits
the amount of national advertising that the station is allowed to broadcast. The reason this
is relevant to radio stations that do not broadcast nationally is that a large percentage of
the advertising on community stations comes from big companies like Nedbank or
Toyota. Companies like these would not advertise to one small community when they,
through TV, could advertise their products to the entire nation. Therefor by combining
the force of community stations across the country-i.e. Radio Tuks in Pretoria and
Rhodes Music Radio in Grahams Town-national advertising may be achieved. This
however achieved at a much cheaper rate than advertising on a National station like 5fm
for example. Therefor capping this type of advertising will limit the income and potential
advertisers of small community stations that are already struggling to survive due to the
severe cost constraints of running a Radio Station.
The other important implication of the white paper is that the definition of community
will be re-defined. It will no longer be based on a field of interest but on geographic
positioning. This will mean that Radio Tuks will no longer broadcast to scholars and
students between 16 and 24 but to the region of Pretoria including all of its age groups
and population segments. All of these segments and age groups will have to be
represented on the management of the organization and catered for in the program
format.

The Internal Issues

The high turnover of staff at Radio Tuks
Radio Tuks is a Student organization, which is run and funded entirely by
students and the adverts they sell. Due to the fact that the organization is being run by
students, the turnover of staff is very high. This is either due to the fact that people who
join the station do so for the experience and in so doing find out that it is not to their
liking and then leave. Or the members graduate and enter the so called "Real World" and
then leave Radio Tuks. Or the students who join the station find that their studies suffer
as the station takes up too much of their time and thus their parents get angry and force
them to leave.
Radio Tuks sees itself as a training ground for its members, Therefor once a year the
management of the organization is changed. This happens on all levels of management
including the director of the organization. Therefor communication between the old and

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new management's of the organization is vital. A high turnover of staff means the corporate culture of Radio Tuks is not stable as the way things are done the way issues are perceived and the way business is handled is changed too regularly.

The lack of transparence within orginization

Radio Tuks consists of between 80 to 100 members. They are run by a directorship (Top Management) consisting of 3 members and a middle management consisting of 6 department heads. This means that 9 people control the other 90 within the organization. Due to the management structure and a lack of people skills found in the directorship a serious lack of transparency exists within the organization especially between the Directorship and the ordinary members. The members feel that they have very little say in the overall direction of the station. This results in low morale amongst the members of the station and thus a drop in productivity.

The process of Racial Integration

One of the biggest problems facing Radio Tuks is "Racial Integration". The University of Pretoria requires the Radio Tuks integration rate to be on par with its own. This mean that at least 26% of the selected member must be black. This is no problem until Black DJs hit the air waves. Radio = entertainment = culture, like any other form of entertainment i.e. it designed around a certain type of culture. Now, when Black DJs broadcast they broadcast to a black audience and visa versa, the problem is that the Radio Tuks listenership is almost entirely white. The process of integration thus becomes very important as the On Air product of the station is directly influenced or more specifically changed by it as well as the off air side of Radio Tuks. This type of change will effect all the aspects of Radio Tuks and all aspects of the organization will have to be altered to deal with the required change correctly thus communication of this process of change is critical.

The priority of the issues

1. The process of Racial Integration
2. The South African telecommunication's and Radio Authority and there new proposed legislation regarding community broadcasting
3. High turnover of staff within Radio Tuks
4. The lack of transparency within the organization
5. Student-wise and there involvement in advertising sales of Radio Tuks

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KEY COMMUNICATION AND ISSUES

The 3 communication issues are in order of priority:

* ❖ Racial Integration
* ❖ High turnover of staff at Radio Tuks
* ❖ The Lack of transparency within the organization

Racial Integration

This issue is first, as I believe it is most important. The product of the station is what sells it to its advertisers, its listeners and all of its other audiences. With this product undergoing such intense changes danger is prevalent.

First lets define the problem further. The problem is a programming issue that involves changing and re-focusing the product of Radio Tuks. This problem will therefor effect the internal and external environments of Radio Tuks.
There are 2 main external problems to be faced: firstly the new listeners reached i.e. black listeners, then the listeners lost i.e. the non tolerant White listeners. Secondly the image of Radio Tuks in the eyes of the organizations that they have previously associated with e.g. the record companies, will change with its product change.
On the internal front there are 3 areas of concern: Firstly target market's demographic composition will change around the new product. Secondly the target advertising buyers audience will have to be altered also to suit the altered Radio Tuks product. Finally the internal culture of the organization will have to change to accommodate the new members of different cultures.

The threats in communicating this issue are the following:
Communicating a fundamental change to any organization will lead to resistance. This is further enhanced by the fact that Radio Tuks is seen as hip Afrikaans Radio from an Afrikaans University and thus integration will really inspire reaction from effected parties both on the White and Non-White sides.
Another threat is that the Staff of Radio Tuks may become irritated and scared by the communication of a need to racially integrate the station they may not see the bigger picture involved. Change is always difficult in an organization.

Opportunities include the following:
The members of the organization are all students which implies that they are relatively young and not as scared of change as their parents would be if faced with the same situation at work. The students are also not been paid for their services and so they have no risk of financial loss again making the change easier.

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Students also get to see the results of racial integration first hand and therefor will be able to handle it better in later life in the real working environment.
There is also an opportunity to educate the members of Radio Tuks in the essence of other cultures other than their own.

The High Turnover of Staff

The High Turnover of Staff at radio Tuks is the next most important communication issue. As stated above the main problem here is that the new management which is chosen once a year is almost without exception not at all experienced at running or managing the organization. The new staff that are selected as members of Radio Tuks bi-annually are totally untrained in any practical business skills e.g. answering a phone call correctly, taking down a message time and date from a contact person correctly or even sending a fax correctly. Thus as far as the new staff is concerned training is vital and usually no problem, as the old members have been trained in basic skills. The next problem is the transfer of information between the old and new management. This is a big problem.

There are a few risks and opportunities involved with the training of the new members. Firstly the threats, By forcing the new members to do things a certain way on the presumption that they know little or nothing, will result in a certain amount of stagnation within the organization. New and better ways to do things may be ignored. Also the new member may feel at sea when they are expected to learn so much so quickly. On the other side of the same coin they may feel that they are being treated like children, as they may already know how to send faxes and answer phone calls correctly.
The Opportunities include the fact that a longer term corporate culture may be set up by establishing a "way to do things" which will help to slow down the drastic changes in the face of the organization by the high staff turnover. Another opportunity exists in the training of the older member on how to train the younger ones.

The Opportunities and threats involved in the handing of information over from the old management are as follows.
The threats included the fact that the new management may not want the old management's advise, this could be for a number of reasons e.g. perhaps they did not like the way things were being done and feel that the less they know about them the better. They may also feel that they are being force fed by the old management and because they are new at what they're doing they may not see the long- term benefits of what the old management is trying to do.
Opportunities include the chance to form a business culture, or a way that Radio Tuks manages its staff or handles its clients over a longer term than just one year. The opportunity also exists for the organization to grow from where the old management left off and not have to catch up to where they were first, and then start growing.

The Lack of transparency within the organization

In brief this problem is as a result of a few factors. As listed above the small amount of managers controlling a large amount of staff which leads to non transparency, and the lack of people skills of the directorship alienating the staff of the organization contribute to the problem.
Firstly we will look at the management structure of the station.

Threats to the adoption of a more transparent method of management include the following. The staff at Radio Tuks is reviewed twice a year and therefor it is conceivable that if a person has belonged to the organization for more than 6 months he or she achieves a senior position in the organization. The problem is that, that person's opinion and his /her knowledge of the organization are not equally matched. The opinion may be of a senior member but the contents thereof may be of little value. Thus that person's opinion of upper management actions carries too much weight and so something that management wants to do for the good of the organization may be misunderstood. It may then be miss-communicated to the other members and then it may become an issue that has to be corrected by the top management using up time and other recourses unnecessarily. All this could have been avoided if the 6 month old member was unaware of the situation in the first place, ie a lack of transparency may have been useful at that point in time.

Opportunities exist in the fact that more people thinking about issues will lead to better solutions to them, so if top management is transparent about the issues it faces, then the solutions found may be better than if they were not transparent.

As for the second problem (improving the people skills of the top management) only opportunities exist in my opinion. It will improve the general morale of the station as the members will better understand the intention of the top managers, the potential of people may be better utilized as they would be far more inclined to perform well for an organization when they like the "bosses" they work for.

Communication Goals and Objectives

The issue of **racial integration** is by far the most important issue facing Radio Tuks, so goals must be set to accurately communicate the problem so that it may be fixed.

Goal 1
To inform listeners of Radio Tuks, of the change that is about to take place and to get feedback from them on the proposed changes.

Objectives:
1. To place adverts on Radio Tuks detailing the changes that are going to be taking place. This should include a time frame of 2 years for the changes. It should also include the new ratios of white to black DJs and white to black music ratios. The adverts should also include an invitation to respond to the proposed changes. This should be done 3 months before the proposed date of the beginning of the changes.
2. Clear communication channels between the listeners and the Station must be set up to receive feedback from the listeners who choose to respond to the adverts. The responses should be made by post, fax or email thus all relevant collection points must be established. All the data should be collected and set out into positive and negative responses and all advice should be noted separately. This data should be processed and setout as stated one month before the proposed changes take place.

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3. The Responses and the advice given by listeners should then be reviewed by top management and any changes to the integration plans must be made in the month before the strategy is due to be implemented.

Goal 2

To inform the members of Radio Tuks of the needed changes and to get feedback from them on how best to handle these changes.

Objectives:

1. Set up a social meeting where these changes can be named and communicated to the members of the organization. At this informal meeting a date for a formal meeting must by decided upon about 2 weeks from the date of the informal meeting where all questions will be answered.

2. At the formal meeting, questions about the proposed changes are answered and feedback from the members will be asked for. Like with the listeners the feedback may be presented in writing or by email. The answers given at the meeting should be honest and truthful. A deadline must be set for the feedback from the member, 1 week from the time of the formal meeting.

3. Top management should then review the feedback from the members and make any changes to the integration they deem necessary. This revised policy should then be presented to the members' 1 week before the station goes ahead with the proposed changes.

APPENDIX 7:

TRANS ORANJE SKOOL VIR DOWES

(NICOR CONSULTANTS)

KORPORATIEWE KOMMUNIKASIE STRATEGIE EN KOMMUNIKASIEPLAN VIR DIE TRANS ORANJE SKOOL VIR DOWES

Opgestel deur:
Groep 2

C. Ligthelm	9415564
C. Emmenes	9500755
R. de Laura	9523971
N. de la Bat	9611031

1) Eksterne omgewing: buite beheer van die orga-
    nisasie en word beïnvloed deur:
    ➢ polities: Trans Oranje Skool moet op hoogte bly van
       nuwe wetgewing en die impak van die nuwe
       Grondwet op die skool verstaan.
    ➢ tegnologies: Om   voldoende   opleiding   en
       ontwikkeling te kan gee, moet Trans Oranje Skool op
       hoogte bly van nuwe tegnologiese ontwikkelings en
       veral van nuwe apparatuur.
    ➢ ekonomies: Trans Oranje Skool moet na die Suid-
       Afrikaanse situasie gaan kyk en die ekono-
       miese afplattings in ag neem in hul begrotings.
    ➢ sosiaal: Arbeidsmark se houding teenoor Trans
       Oranje Skool moet nagevors word.

2) Interne omgewing: Trans Oranje Skool skep self die omge-
    wing waarin die skool opereer en word self deur die skool beheer
    bv. eie bestuurstyl, eie beheerraad. Moet pogings aanwend om
    met elke interne publiek te kommunikeer en uit te vind hoe
    hulle voel oor Trans Oranje Skool en die dowes.

3) Taakomgewing: Dit is die omgewing waarin Trans Oranje
    Skool funksioneer. Moet kyk na ander soortgelyke skole,
    DEAFSA (Deaf Federation Of South Africa) en die dowe kultuur.

3) Sleutel strategiese vraagstukke

3.1) Finansies

Die uitgawes oorskry die inkomstes en ook as gevolg van die
ekonomiese afplatting is daar 'n dringende geldtekort.

➢ Staatsubsidies word elke jaar meer en meer gesny en die
   skool moet self nou fondse inwin
➢ Van die ouers is nie welgesteld nie, kan nie skoolfonds
   betaal nie. Dus kan skoolfonds nie baie verhoog word om
   as 'n ekstra bron van inkomste te dien nie
➢ Hoë mediese kostes as gevolg van ander gestremdhede ook
   en duur apparaat wat aangekoop moet word is 'n groot
   probleem. Spraak-, arbeids- en fisioterapeute word op 'n
   daaglikse basis benodig
➢ Koshuis-uitgawes verhoog weens 'n styging in voedsel-
   pryse, water en elektrisiteit en onlangse prysstygings in
   petrol het ook 'n invloed gehad om die kinders te kan
   vervoer. Die bussies kan ook nie instand gehou word soos
   dit moet nie

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> Geboue en tuine word <u>afgeskeep</u>, die geboue se dakke moet geverf word
> Professionele personeel kan <u>nie die salarisse betaal</u> word soos nodig nie, en ekstra onderwysers moet uit die skoolfonds betaal word
> Die geboue en nodige geriewe is al klaar gevestig, dus word onnodige boukostes uitgesny
> Organisasies word meer bewus van sosiale verantwoordelikheid, en Trans Oranje Skool behoort meer geld te kry indien hulle die fonds-insamelingsplanne goed beplan en reg bestuur
> Borge dien op die bestuursraad, dus is hulle nou betrokke by die skool en weet hulle wat is die finansiële krisisse.

3.2) <u>Beeld van Trans Oranje Skool vir Dowes</u>

Mense is nie bewus van Trans Oranje Skool nie; wanpersepsies van die gemeenskap dat 'n dowe persoon ook intellektueel gestremd is. Die beeld is dus misvormd en moet reggestel word.

> Die demografiese ligging van die skool is 'n probleem. Die skool is baie afgesonderd, in die industriële gebied geleë en nie in 'n woongebied nie
> Beperkte fondse stel Trans Oranje Skool nie in staat om die beeld effektief oor te dra nie. Kan bv. nie brosjures en pamflette druk nie
> Die voorkoms van die geboue en tuine is nie baie mooi nie
> Die dowe kultuur word geïsoleer van die gemeenskap as gevolg van die wanpersepsie wat daar bestaan oor 'n dowe persoon
> Daar word wel sosiale geleenthede vir Dowes gehou, bv. Miss Deaf SA, 'n Week vir Dowes
> Daar word baie meer vir dowes gedoen, bv. op televisienuus is daar 'n gebaretaalvertolker
> Trans Oranje Skool het onlangs 'n bewusmakings-poging by Menlyn Park gehou. (Sien boekmerk). Maar daar is net borde geplaas met prente en 'n bietjie inligting op, geen persoon was teenwoordig om mee te praat oor Trans Oranje Skool nie, met die gevolg dat die mense dit net sien as nog 'n organisasie wat geld vra. _Voorstel:_ 'n beter veldtog moet gereël word, waar spesifieke inligting deurgegee word en nie so seer geld gevra word nie.
> Fanie de Villiers, die bekende krieketheld, het 'n dowe dogtertjie. Trans Oranje Skool kan hom dalk gebruik om 'n praatjie te hou of om bemarking vir die skool te doen.

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3.3) <u>Arbeidsmark</u>

As gevolg van sosio-maatskaplike probleme en die persepsies van die gemeenskap, word die dowe tans moeilik aanvaar in die arbeidsmark.

- ➤ Trans Oranje Skool leer die dowe lees, skryf en kommunikeer in gebaretaal, maar kan die dowe nie toerus om toe te tree tot die arbeidsmark nie
- ➤ 'n dowe persoon kry nie werk nie, want besighede dink dat dowes nie oor die nodige vaardighede beskik nie
- ➤ Die dowe leer nie om te kommunikeer met gewone mense in die arbeidsmark nie, omdat 'n dowe persoon geïsoleer word van die gemeenskap
- ➤ die arbeidsmark is beperk vir dowes, kan nie enige tipe werk doen nie, bv. telefoon antwoord
- ➤ Die Arbeidswet en die Wet op Gelyke Beregtiging maak vir die dowe voorsiening. Regstellende aksie is ook gemik op gestremdes
- ➤ Oud-leerlinge van Trans Oranje Skool wat tans in die arbeidsmark staan kan leerders van die skool help om 'n plek te vind in die arbeidsmark

3.4) <u>Onderrigmetodes</u>

Beste aanbiedingsmetode is om die dowe leerder te bemagtig en die kwessie van gebaretaal vs orale taal is 'n groot vraagstuk.

- ➤ Die doelwit van die skool is om elke leerder toe te rus met 'n gehoorapparaat. Verouderde apparate maak dit moeilik om die doelwit te bereik
- ➤ Die kontinuum van intellek en gestremdhede van die kinders wissel van meervuldige gestremdhede tot net doofheid
- ➤ Gebaretaal word eerste aan die leerder geleer, daarna 'n geskrewe taal. Maar navorsing het getoon dat gebaretaal nie die Dowe verhoed om te leer praat nie. As die kind 'n normale gebaretaalvermoë het en dan geleer word om 'n gesproke/geskrewe taal te lees en te skryf, dan bemeester hul die vermoë om te praat baie beter. Dus, geen tweetalige program is teen spraakopleiding nie, maar ondersteun dit

  - ➤ Omdat 90 persent van dowe kinders gebore word in horende families, weet die familie niks van doofheid

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nie. Die kind kan dus nie kommunikeer met die familie nie. Ouers en familie is onbetrokke en die kind voel afgeskeep

> Trans Oranje Skool beskik oor professionele onderwysers om die kinders by te staan in die opleiding en ontwikkeling
> Beroepsgerigte opleiding is die klem van vandag. Paradigma verskuif van mediese na menslike model; 'n dowe kind na 'n kind met doofheid. Onderwystransformasie is aan die orde van die dag, bv. Kurrikulum 2005
> Paradigmaskuif van gebaretaal na waar ander tale bykom
> Trans Oranje Skool besit tans 'n voorskool, 12 grade en 'n naskoolse beroepskool wat die leerders probeer voorberei vir die arbeidsmark
> Goeie vaardigheid wat aan dowe leerders geleer word, is die gebruik van rekenaars wat later kan help in die beroepslewe. Maar as gevolg van onvoldoende fondse sit die skool met verouderde rekenaars en programmatuur

3.5) Beplanning en bestuur van Trans Oranje Skool

Die skool het 'n gebrek aan strategiese beplanning, geen beplanningsraamwerk nie en doen huidiglik net krisis-bestuur.

> Geen terugvoer word aan die gemeenskap verskaf na projekte nie
> As gevolg van die heersende ekonomiese omstandighede word daar net korttermyn beplanning gedoen en gekonsentreer op oorlewing
> Die personeel ervaar weerstand teen alles
> 'n Verteenwoordigende bestuursraad bestaan, wat beplanning ietwat vergemaklik
> Nuwe hoof is pas aangestel, en hy is gemotiveerd om alles reg te ruk

4) Kommunikasie vraagstukke

4.1) Finansies

Uitgawes oorskry die inkomstes en as gevolg van die ekonomiese afplatting is daar 'n dringende geldtekort.
> Trans Oranje Skool moet die staat probeer oortuig dat die skool 'n unieke skool is, deur bv. vir DEAFSA te kry om vir die skool te lobby

> Trans Oranje Skool moet meer spesifieke veldtogte reël, bv. nie net geld insamel vir die skool nie, maar vir bv. nuwe toerusting/bussies
> Die skool moet die ouers motiveer en positief beïnvloed om skoolgeld te betaal, want daar is wel ouers wat kan betaal maar wat dit nie doen nie
> Inligtingsessies kan gehou word met besighede, om hulle in te lig oor die vaardighede van dowes. Personeellede kan bv. opgelei word om die onderhandelings te hanteer
> Kommunikeer spesifieke behoeftes aan besighede, bv. die skool het 'n rekenaarbehoefte. ICL of IBM kan dan rekenaars skenk en die skool kan die rekenaarsentrum dan na die maatskappy vernoem
> Die ouers wat dalk nie skoolfonds kan bekostig nie is dalk goed met hulle hande, bv. kan die elektriese foute regmaak, of stoele en tafels maak

4.2) <u>Beeld van die skool</u>

Mense is nie bewus van Trans Oranje Skool vir Dowes nie, en die wanpersepsies wat bestaan oor die dowe persoon moet reggestel word.

> Trans Oranje Skool moet die publiek bewus maak van die dowe as 'n gewone persoon, al wat ander is is die doofheid
> Opleiding in gebaretaal kan vir die gemeenskap aangebied word
> Die spesifieke behoeftes van die dowe moet bekendgemaak word aan die gemeenskap en aktiwiteite rondom dit moet gereël word en lewendig en aktief bemark word. Bv. die gemeenskap inlig oor gebaretaal, die skool benodig tolkediens – persone uit die gemeenskap kan dalk opgelei word as tolke
> Hoofstroomskole kan besoek word om die beeld van die skool uit te bou
> Spesifieke moontlike borge nader vir die borg van spesifieke aktiwiteite, bv. opstel van 'n glanspamflet met inligting oor Trans Oranje Skool vir Dowes. Dit hoef nie noodwendig groot maatskappye te wees nie, kan bv. sommer 'n verfmaatskappy wees
> Indien projekvoorstelle aan besighede voorgelê word, moet dit baie oortuigend en professioneel wees. Daarvoor kan selfs 'n ekspert gekry word

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> Kritiese onderwysamptenare (spesifiek vanuit Gauteng) op 'n gereelde basis uitnooi na spesiale geleenthede en aktiwiteite by of van die skool vir groter betrokkenheid vanaf die staat
> Trans Oranje Skool val in die N3-distriksraad. Amptenare van die distriksraad kan ook genooi word want die spreekwoord "Bekend maak bemind" is waar

4.3) <u>Beplanning en bestuur van die skool</u>

Gebrek aan strategiese beplanning, geen beplanningsraamwerk bestaan nie en die skool doen net krisisbestuur

> Trans Oranje Skool moet strategies begin beplan en bestuur, moet begin om na die langtermyn te kyk
> Die bestuur moet personeel motiveer om meer betrokke te raak, deelname en toegewydheid skep sodat weerstand teen verandering teengewerk kan word
> Bestuur moet kommunikeer om die verlede agter te laat, die hede te aanvaar en om 'n nuwe begin te skep
> Beskryf verandering in soveel moontlike detail, sodat die personeel kan verstaan hoekom verandering plaasvind en hul vrese vir die verandering kan oorkom, bv. Kurrikulum 2005
> Bestuur moet deeglike projekvoorstellings aan maatskappye doen. Met projekvoorstelling moet die volgende vrae beantwoord word: wat, hoeveel, vir wie, wat daarmee doen en wat daarmee bereik.

5) <u>**Kommunikasiebeleid**</u>

Kommunikasiebeleid dui op die vaste reëls van kommunikasie binne die Trans Oranje Skool.

> Net die skakelbeampte skakel met borge en skenkers
> Tydens 'n krisis moet die hoof die orde behou, die skakelbeampte reik persverklarings uit en die bestuursraad moet bymekaar kom om oplossings te soek
> Gereelde toeganklike en ondersteunende kommunikasie met ouers is belangrik
> Die bestuursraad en personeel moet altyd toeganklik, oop en eerlik wees in kommunikasie
> Vir enige skenkings bo R100-00 word 'n dankie-sê brief gestuur wat persoonlik onderteken word deur die hoof
> Die skool respekteer elke bydrae deur personeellede

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APPENDIX 8:

TUKS JOOL

Tuks Joo

Ontwikkeling

TUSHO

Fondsinsameling

4. Sleutel strategiese vraagstukke

4.1 Die Eksterne Beeld van Tuks Jool:

Die wanpersepsie van die eksterne publiek dat Jool net uit die twee weke veldtog bestaan en dat daar gedurende die res van die jaar nie veel gebeur nie, het 'n negatiewe invloed op die kontuïniteit van die Jool-aktiwiteite.

Ook die feit dat drankmisbruik aan Jool gekoppel word, is 'n geweldige probleem op die eksterne beeld, wat die gevolg het dat die verkryging van borgskappe bemoeilik word.

Die beeld waarna SJK streef, beklemtoon dat Jool 'n deurlopende aktiwiteit is en dat dit in 'n profesionele manier behartig word.

4.2 Komitee Motivering:

Dit is 'n probleem dat studente nadat hulle aangestel is op die Joolkomitee, besef hoeveel werk regtig betrokke is en dan na 'n kort periode bedank.

Verder ondervind die komitee probleme met die werkverrigting van lede na afloop van die Joolweek, want daarna is daar nog verskeie projekte wat afgehandel moet word. Die komittee beoog om deur doelgerigte kommunikasie die probleem van gebrek aan motivering reg te stel.

4.3 Transformasie:

Die SJK moet op 'n verantwoordelike wyse die transformasie van die ledesamestelling na 'n meer verteenwoordigend van die Suid-Afrikaanse populaise getal behartig. Kommunikasie gaan 'n sleutelrol speel in die proses, omdat dit kan lei tot konflik wat opgelos sal moet word deur inligting.

Transformasie sal ook 'n invloed hê op die aktiwiteit wat deur die joolkomitee aangebied word, met ander woorde ander kulture gaan ook meer betrek word by die doen en late van SJK. Dit gaan beteken dat aangepaste aktiwiteite gegenereer moet word om die ander kulture in Suid-Afrika te akomodeer.

4.4 Borgwerwing:

Die afwaartste daling in die ekonomie en die verswakking van die rand, het die gevolg dat die verkryging van borge al hoe moeiliker raak.

Die toenemende kompetisie op die gebied van fondswerwing het die gevolg dat ondernemings negatief ingesteld raak teenoor fondswerwers.

Borgwerwing is egter van kardinale belang aangesien die voortbestaan van SJK en die bevoordeelde organisasies daarvan afhanklik is.

4.5 Maksimering van fondse:

Weens die toenemende weerstand wat daar vanaf borge ervaar word, word die SJK genoodsaak om ander aktiwiteite te loods om fondse te maksimeer, bv. Kunsfeeste, Gholfdae, ens.

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5. Sleutel Kommunikasie vraagstukke

5.1 SWOT -Analise:

a) Geleenthede:

- Jy vergroot jou borgskap-inkomste deurdat jy 'n meer profesionele beeld handhaaf en 'n hoër kwaliteit produk lewer.

- Hoe meer doeltreffend 'n komitee gemotiveer word, hoe harder en positiewer sal hulle werk en sodoende meer geld insamel.

- Tegnologiese innovasie skep 'n geleentheid deurdat SJK nou internasionaal kan bemark, en so ook vir belangegroepe belangrike inligting direk kan verskaf.

- Die SJK bestaan uit studente wat jaarliks nuut gekies word en dus kan lei tot die generering van nuwe idees.

b) Bedreigings:

- Die land se dalende ekonomie is 'n bedreiging vir SJK, omdat minder kapitaal beskikbaar is vir borgskappe.

- Die hoeveelheid toenemende liefdadigheidsorganisasies wat meeding om dieselfde borge.

- Drukgroepe bv. die Studenteraad wat die aktiwiteite beperk.

- Die persepsie van die publiek oor wat die Joolaktiwiteite regtig behels, a.g.v. die Joolweek, skep 'n negatiewe houding teenoor die aktiwiteite van die Joolkomitee.

c) Sterk punte:

- Tuks Jool is een van die grootste liefdadigheidsorganisasies dwars oor ons land.

- Tuks Jool is A-Polities, dus het geen politieke verandering enige invloed op Tuks Jool nie.

- Tuks Jool is redelik bekend onder die publiek, en het dus geen bekendstelling nodig nie.

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- Tuks Jool betrek die meerderheid studente op kampus by liefdadigheid.

d) Swak punte:

- Motivering van die komiteelede regdeur die jaar is 'n probleem, veral na die Joolweek.

- Die algemene indruk van die studente as dronklappe op die Joolplaas.

- Die studente se volle aandag is nie by die SJK-aktiwiteite nie, aangesien sy eerste prioriteit by sy akademiese prestasie lê.

- Daar word elke jaar 'n nuwe komitee gekies, dus is daar nie kontinuiteit in die bestuursstyl nie.

- Die komiteelede is onervare in die aanpak van hul projekte, a.g.v. van die jaarlikse rotasie.

- Daar is geen gestandaardiseerde kommunikasieplan vir die Joolkomitee nie.

5.2 Prioriteitsvraagstukke:

a) Eksterne Beeld:

Die kulture en tradisies wat oor die afgelope aantal jare gevorm is, het meer 'n negatiewe assosiasie gelaat as 'n positiewe. Drankmisbruik is 'n kenmerk van die Joolweek wat gehou word vroeg in Februarie. Die algemene fout wat die publiek maak is om die week te veralgemeen met die jaar se aktiwiteite. Hulle sien dus die hele Joolprojek as een groot partytjie. As gevolg van dié persepsie, word die goeie werk van die hele jaar oorskadu.

Die volgende korrektiewe stappe is al geloods:
- Geen SJK -lid mag in sy fakulteitsdrag drink nie
- Geen SJK -lid mag drank gebruik terwyl hy in 'n Joolvoertuig ry nie.
- Die SJK self word verbied om tydens die twee weke van Jool te drink.

Die SJK het nie die beeld van profesionaliteit uitgestraal nie. SJK word grotendeels nie ernstig opgeneem nie, aangesien hulle as onervare studente gesien word.

Die volgende korrektiewe stappe is aangewend:

- Die formaat van SJK se korrespondensie is aangepas vir 'n meer profesionele voorkoms.
- Fakulteitsdrag word by sekere geleenthede verplig.
- Met die nadering van borge word die UK lid vergesel deur die voorsitter, beide geklee in fakulteitsdrag.

b) Komitee Motivering:

Na die lede se verkiesing tot die komitee besef hulle die hoeveelheid werk betrokke en is daar 'n redelike aantal bedankings. Die wat wel aanbly, verloor ook van hulle geesdrif met die tyd.

Nog 'n groot probleem is dat daar nie finansiële motivering betrokke is nie, en alle motivering agter goeie werkverrigting humanisties van aard is.

Die persoonlike motivering is nie op liefdadigheid gerig nie, maar eerder op pret en plesier.

c) Transformasie:

Tuks Jool was deel van die Studenteraad tot en met 1994. Die SR het polities geöriënteerd geraak en Tuks Jool het afgestam en A-Polities gebly.

Die huidige samestelling van SJK is 11.5 % nie-blank, en stem glad nie ooreen met die Universiteit se samestelling van 30 % nie, dus is dit nog nie op standaard nie.

Die volgende korrektiewe stappe is geneem:

- Keuring word op die basis gedoen van wie die beste persoon vir die werk is.

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Ook die feit dat drankmisbruik aan Jool gekoppel word, is 'n geweldige probleem op die eksterne beeld, wat die gevolg het dat die verkryging van borgskappe bemoeilik word.

Die beeld waarna SJK streef, beklemtoon dat Jool 'n deurlopende aktiwiteit is en dat dit in 'n profesionele manier behartig word.

4.2 Komitee Motivering:

Dit is 'n probleem dat studente nadat hulle aangestel is op die Joolkomitee, besef hoeveel werk regtig betrokke is en dan na 'n kort periode bedank.

Verder ondervind die komitee probleme met die werkverrigting van lede na afloop van die Joolweek, want daarna is daar nog verskeie projekte wat afgehandel moet word. Die komittee beoog om deur doelgerigte kommunikasie die probleem van gebrek aan motivering reg te stel.

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Die SJK moet op 'n verantwoordelike wyse die transformasie van die ledesamestelling na 'n meer verteenwoordigend van die Suid-Afrikaanse populaise getal behartig. Kommunikasie gaan 'n sleutelrol speel in die proses, omdat dit kan lei tot konflik wat opgelos sal moet word deur inligting.

Transformasie sal ook 'n invloed hê op die aktiwiteit wat deur die joolkomitee aangebied word, met ander woorde ander kulture gaan ook meer betrek word by die doen en late van SJK. Dit gaan beteken dat aangepaste aktiwiteite gegenereer moet word om die ander kulture in Suid-Afrika te akomodeer.

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4.4 Borgwerwing:

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Borgwerwing is egter van kardinale belang aangesien die voortbestaan van SJK en die bevoordeelde organisasies daarvan afhanklik is.

4.5 Maksimering van fondse:

Weens die toenemende weerstand wat daar vanaf borge ervaar word, word die SJK genoodsaak om ander aktiwiteite te loods om fondse te maksimeer, bv. Kunsfeeste, Gholfdae, ens.

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5. Sleutel Kommunikasie vraagstukke

5.1 SWOT -Analise:

a) Geleenthede:

- Jy vergroot jou borgskap-inkomste deurdat jy 'n meer profesionele beeld handhaaf en 'n hoër kwaliteit produk lewer.

- Hoe meer doeltreffend 'n komitee gemotiveer word, hoe harder en positiewer sal hulle werk en sodoende meer geld insamel.

- Tegnologiese innovasie skep 'n geleentheid deurdat SJK nou internasionaal kan bemark, en so ook vir belangegroepe belangrike inligting direk kan verskaf.

- Die SJK bestaan uit studente wat jaarliks nuut gekies word en dus kan lei tot die generering van nuwe idees.

b) Bedreigings:

- Die land se dalende ekonomie is 'n bedreiging vir SJK, omdat minder kapitaal beskikbaar is vir borgskappe.

- Die hoeveelheid toenemende liefdadigheidsorganisasies wat meeding om dieselfde borge.

- Drukgroepe bv. die Studenteraad wat die aktiwiteite beperk.

- Die persepsie van die publiek oor wat die Joolaktiwiteite regtig behels, a.g.v. die Joolweek, skep 'n negatiewe houding teenoor die aktiwiteite van die Joolkomitee.

c) Sterk punte:

- Tuks Jool is een van die grootste liefdadigheidsorganisasies dwars oor ons land.

- Tuks Jool is A-Polities, dus het geen politieke verandering enige invloed op Tuks Jool nie.

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- Tuks Jool betrek die meerderheid studente op kampus by liefdadigheid.

d)   Swak punte:

- Motivering van die komiteelede regdeur die jaar is 'n probleem, veral na die Joolweek.

- Die algemene indruk van die studente as dronklappe op die Joolplaas.

- Die studente se volle aandag is nie by die SJK-aktiwiteite nie, aangesien sy eerste prioriteit by sy akademiese prestasie lê.

- Daar word elke jaar 'n nuwe komitee gekies, dus is daar nie kontinuiteit in die bestuursstyl nie.

- Die komiteelede is onervare in die aanpak van hul projekte, a.g.v. van die jaarlikse rotasie.

- Daar is geen gestandaardiseerde kommunikasieplan vir die Joolkomitee nie.

5.2   Prioriteitsvraagstukke:

a)   Eksterne Beeld:

Die kulture en tradisies wat oor die afgelope aantal jare gevorm is, het meer 'n negatiewe assosiasie gelaat as 'n positiewe. Drankmisbruik is 'n kenmerk van die Joolweek wat gehou word vroeg in Februarie. Die algemene fout wat die publiek maak is om die week te veralgemeen met die jaar se aktiwiteite. Hulle sien dus die hele Joolprojek as een groot partytjie. As gevolg van dié persepsie, word die goeie werk van die hele jaar oorskadu.

Die volgende korrektiewe stappe is al geloods:
-      Geen SJK -lid mag in sy fakulteitsdrag drink nie
-      Geen SJK -lid mag drank gebruik terwyl hy in 'n Joolvoertuig ry nie.
-      Die SJK self word verbied om tydens die twee weke van Jool te drink.

Die SJK het nie die beeld van profesionaliteit uitgestraal nie. SJK word grotendeels nie ernstig opgeneem nie, aangesien hulle as onervare studente gesien word.

Die volgende korrektiewe stappe is aangewend:

- Die formaat van SJK se korrespondensie is aangepas vir 'n meer profesionele voorkoms.
- Fakulteitsdrag word by sekere geleenthede verplig.
- Met die nadering van borge word die UK lid vergesel deur die voorsitter, beide geklee in fakulteitsdrag.

b) Komitee Motivering:

Na die lede se verkiesing tot die komitee besef hulle die hoeveelheid werk betrokke en is daar 'n redelike aantal bedankings. Die wat wel aanbly, verloor ook van hulle geesdrif met die tyd.

Nog 'n groot probleem is dat daar nie finansiële motivering betrokke is nie, en alle motivering agter goeie werkverrigting humanisties van aard is.

Die persoonlike motivering is nie op liefdadigheid gerig nie, maar eerder op pret en plesier.

c) Transformasie:

Tuks Jool was deel van die Studenteraad tot en met 1994. Die SR het polities geöriënteerd geraak en Tuks Jool het afgestam en A-Polities gebly.

Die huidige samestelling van SJK is 11.5 % nie-blank, en stem glad nie ooreen met die Universiteit se samestelling van 30 % nie, dus is dit nog nie op standaard nie.

Die volgende korrektiewe stappe is geneem:

- Keuring word op die basis gedoen van wie die beste persoon vir die werk is.

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APPENDIX 4:

MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS (SSG)

MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS

'n Kommunikasiestrategie en –plan

KOMMUNIKASIEBESTUUR 320

Prepared for:

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17 September 1998

6.1 BEWUSTHEID

- Die opname (verwys na bylae) het getoon dat 'n baie klein persentasie van die publiek bewus is van SSG.
- Dit impliseer dus dat potensiële skenkers nie die geleentheid het om te kan skenk nie.

6.2 KORRUPSIE EN GELOOFWAARDIGHEID

- Die persepsie bestaan by die meeste Suid-Afrikaners dat sommige welsynsorganisasies oneerlik is met die aanwending van die skenkings wat hulle ontvang.
- Die oorsaak hiervan is korrupsie onder staatsamptenare en belangrike persone, met die gevolg dat mense die geloofwaardigheid van alle organisasies bevraagteken.

6.3 POLITIES, KULTUUR EN GODSDIENSTIG

- Sommige lande, byvoorbeeld China, laat sendingwerk glad nie toe nie.
- Lande soos Roemenië, Bosnië en Oekraïne is te trots om hulp te aanvaar wanneer dit blyk 'n welsynpoging is.
- Dus sal lande, al het hulle 'n dringende behoefte, die skenkings by doeane wegwys.

6.4 GEPASTE VERTEENWOORDIGERS

- Dit is moeilik vir die bestuur van SSG om geskikte verteenwoordigers te kry vir elke provinsie, aangesien dit 'n taak is wat baie diverse vaardighede (van finansiële aanleg om begrotings op te stel tot goeie interpersoonlike kommunikasie en sterk Christelike oortuigings) verg.
- Baie tyd en geld word dus aangewend vir suksesvolle werwing en keuring

6.5 EKONOMIE

- Die ekonomie is huidiglik van so 'n aard dat mense nie so 'n groot deel van hulle besteebare inkomste aan nie-winsgewende organisasies kan skenk nie.
- Die verswakking van die Rand maak ook die bedrae wat oorgeplaas word na die VSA aansienlik minder.

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7. SLEUTEL KOMMUNIKASIE VRAAGSTUKKE

7.1 EKONOMIE

Die ekonomie beïnvloed SSG op 'n nasionale en internasionale vlak:

● NASIONAAL

Met die verhoging in die repo- en uitleenkoerse in Suid-Afrika die afgelope ses maande, het die gemiddelde persoon se besteebare inkomste aansienlik verminder. Dit lei dus daartoe dat individue wat tans skenk, sal kyk waar hulle aan hul maandelikse begrotings kan sny, en baie moontlik SSG sal uitsny ten einde in hul eie behoeftes te kan voorsien. (verwys na bylae)

Omdat Suid-Afrikaners nog rente-verhogings verwag (verwys na bylae), wil hulle hulself nie nou bind om te begin skenk nie.

● INTERNASIONAAL

Ook verbandhoudend met die verswakking van die Rand, is die hoeveelheid Rande wat ses maande terug oorgeplaas is VSA toe, in Dollars veel minder werd. Die gevolg is dat SSG (SA) baie meer donateurs moet werf (met gepaardgaande ekstra uitgawes) ten einde dieselfde hoeveelheid in Dollars oor te stuur.

7.2 KORRUPSIE EN GELOOFWAARDIGHEID

Dit is essensieel vir 'n nie-winsgewende organisasie om geloofwaardig in die oë van hul publieke te wees. Mense is bewus van die feit dat korrupsie dikwels plaasvind en hulle wil seker wees dat hulle donasies aangewend word vir die doel waarvoor dit geskenk is. Daar was die afgelope paar maande verskeie geleenthede waar sulke fondse verduister is. Die Allan Boesak saak is 'n goeie voorbeeld hiervan (verwys na bylae). Ons vind in ons navorsingsverslag dat 6% van die respondente as gevolg van vrees vir korrupsie nie donasies wil maak nie.

Daar is egter nie-winsgewende organisasies met 'n goeie beeld in die publieke oog. Mense sal makliker 'n skenking maak aan 'n organisasie waarmee hulle goed vertroud is. Dit behoort met ander woorde SSG (SA) se prioriteitskommunikasie doelwit te wees om hulself te bemark in hulle onderskeie publieke. SSG (SA) kan hulle publieke inlig oor die feit dat 73 sent uit elke dollar aangewend word vir die saak waarvoor dit geskenk is. SSG kan ook beklemtoon dat alle finansiële state beskikbaar is vir insae by hul onafhanklike ouditeure (*Ernst & Young*). Foto's of videos word ook geneem om die toestande van die weeshuise te toon voordat dit deur SSG opgegradeer is.

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7.3 TEKORT AAN GEPASTE VERTEENWOORDIGERS

- Ron Lindeman, die direkteur van SSG (SA) het as doelwit gestel om teen die jaar 2000 'n gepaste verteenwoordiger in elke provinsie te hê.
- Tans is daar vyf provinsies wat nie 'n verteenwoordiger het nie, of wat 'n verteenwoordiger deel met 'n ander provinsie.
- "Gepaste" verteenwoordigers is nodig omdat hy/sy in staat moet wees om sy eie begroting op te stel. Finansiële vaardighede is dus noodsaaklik. Die verteenwoordigers moet Christelike waardes en norme hê, mensekennis en goeie menseverhoudings. Ook moet hulle oor goeie kommunikasievaardig-hede beskik omdat hulle baie voorleggings en aanbiedings moet doen en die sending bevorder.
- Implikasies:
  - Daar is nie genoeg verteenwoordigers nie, dus word al die teikengroepe nie bereik nie.
  - Daar is wel mense wat bereid is om as verteenwoordigers op te tree, maar hulle beskik nie noodwendig oor die nodige vaardighede nie.
- Kommunikasie implikasies:
  - Daar word nie voldoende gekommunikeer met die teikengroepe nie.
  - Onopgeleide mense wat nie die implikasies van hulle optrede besef nie, mag moontlike donateurs afskrik.
  - Dus moet daar gekommunikeer word met:
    - Mense in kerke
    - Besigheidspersone by selgroepe/bidgroepe
  - Lei mense wat gewillig is op.
  - Adverteer die poste en voer onderhoude.

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SSG (SA) is relatief onbekend onder belangrike publieke wat hulle graag sal wil bereik. Mense wat wel donasies sal maak is onbekend met die sending en kan dus nie bydrae tot die organisasie nie.

8.1 ONDERSTEUNENDE FEITE

- SSG het 'n tekort aan vrywilligers en personeel – dus is daar te min mense beskikbaar om SSG te bemark en projekte te loots.
- Baie kerke ondersteun alreeds ander sendingorganisasies of het hulle eie sending programme en is nie gewillig om nog projekte te ondersteun nie.
- 'n Onderhoud op Radio Kansel en Impact Radio het relatief min terugvoer tot gevolg gehad.

8.2 IMPLIKASIES

- As gevolg van die bogenoemde feite kan die organisasie nie optimaal groei nie.
- Individue wat wel SSG sou ondersteun het nie die geleentheid nie, omdat hulle onbewus is van SSG.

8.3 KOMMUNIKASIE DOELWITTE EN IMPLIKASIES

- SSG moet die volgende boodskappe aan hul onderskeie publieke oordra:

1. SSG ontwikkel programme wat strewe daarna om te voorsien in die behoeftes van die begunstigdes, bv. CRI.

2. Die sending stel geleenthede daar vir ondersteuners om betrokke te raak, te dien en om 'n verandering te maak.

3. SSG moet die toestand in die verskillende lande aan latente donateurs verduidelik en hulle laat verstaan hoe dringend hulp benodig word.

4. Hulle moet ook die dringende behoefte aan vrywilligers en verteenwoordigers verduidelik.

5. Ron, die direkteur, het laat blyk dat hy bereid is om enige program of voorstel te probeer om so veel as moontlik publisiteit of bekendheid vir SSG (SA) te bekom.

APPENDIX 5:

BIRCHLEIGH HIGH SCHOOL

KOMMUNIKASIESTRATEGIE EN - PLAN VIR HOëRSKOOL BIRCHLEIGH

VOORBEREI VIR:
ME. B STEYN
DEPARTEMENT BEMARKING EN KOMMUNIKASIE

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17 SEPTEMBER 1998

4. SLEUTEL KOMMUNIKASIE VRAAGSTUKKE

Rasionalisasie

⇒ Rasionalisasie het die gevolg dat al hoe meer onderwysers afgedank word.

⇒ Baie van die goeie onderwysers neem eerder pakket as om in slegte omstandighede skool te hou.

⇒ Moet voor die media die onderwysers inlig dat daar dalk van die onderwysers afgedank moet word.

⇒ Indien 'n onderwyser wel afgedank moet word, sal die hoof hulle inroep om die nuus te gee.

⇒ Lig ouers en kinders in oor hoeveel en wanneer van die onderwysers afgedank moet word.

⇒ Lig onderwysers vroegtydig in oor hul opsies, bv. pakkette en ander vak aanbied.

Klasgroottes

⇒ Nuwe wetgewing het tot gevolg dat klasse al hoe groter word.

⇒ Die groot klasse veroorsaak dat daar probleme met dissipline is en dat leerlinge in die massa verdwyn.

⇒ Onderwysers moet voor die tyd ingelig word hoe groot hul klasse gaan wees sodat hulle kan voorberei vir lesse.

⇒ Lig ouers in hoeveel leerlinge in die klase gaan wees.

⇒ Maak voorsiening vir leerlinge wat probleme het, deur ekstra klasse en onderwysers wat bereid is om hulle te help.

⇒ Oortuig onderwysers om ekstra moeite te doen om leerlinge wat agter bly, te help.

⇒ Oortuig leerlinge dat hulle die onderwysers moet kan nader vir hulp en dat hulle moet help met die dissipline.

Negatiwiteit

⇒ As gevolg van onsekerheid oor die toekoms word leerlinge, ouers en onderwysers baie negatief.

⇒ Niemand is meer bereid om moeite te doen of hul beste te gee nie.

⇒ Hou op om negatiewe inligting te verskaf en gee eerder opbouende kritiek en inligting aan leerlinge en onderwysers.

⇒ Moenie leerlinge of onderwysers afkraak nie, bou hulle eerder op met positiewe opmerkings.

⇒ Kry 'n beloningstelsel vir prestasie aan leerlinge en onderwysers.

⇒ Betrek ouers om negatiwiteit van leerlinge te verminder.

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APPENDIX 6:

RADIO TUKS 1

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

For

RADIO TUKS

By
John Cross
#9457046

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

There are several key strategic issues-both internal and external- that surround Radio Tuks.

The external issues are the following:

❖ Student-wise and their involvement in advertising sales of Radio Tuks
❖ The South African telecommunication's and Radio Authority (SATRA) and there new proposed legislation regarding community broadcasting

The internal issues are:

❖ High turnover of staff within Radio Tuks
❖ The on-going lack of transparency within the organization
❖ The mandatory process of Racial Integration

The External Issues

Student-wise and their involvement in advertising sales of Radio Tuks

Studentwise is-amongst other things-an advertising placement agency that, as described above, harness the power of several community stations across the country to form a national advertising base. They, at the request of an advertiser, place adverts on community stations where ever the advertisers require. This is done for a commission fee, which is equal to 16.4% of the community stations advert cost. *This is a very good system as it allows community to expand their vision to national advertising. It also allows community stations to be promoted by Studentwise who have a vested interest in the success of the station. The problem however lies in the fact that about 65% of Radio Tuks' advertising income comes from Studentwise. This means that if something goes wrong with Studentwise, Radio Tuks will suffer badly. It also gives Studentwise too much power over the station, due to the fact that they hold the power to dramatically effect the financial soundness of Radio Tuks. These issues have not yet been addressed and must be, before it becomes too late.

The South African telecommunication's and Radio Authority (SATRA) and there new proposed legislation regarding community broadcasting IBA Satra

S.A.T.R.A defines itself as:

> *The South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) is an independent body with wide-ranging powers which was established in 1997 in terms of the*

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Telecommunications Act. It has a broad public interest mandate, which includes not only regulation but also the promotion of universal service, fair competition and the upliftment of previously disadvantaged communities. SATRA is governed by a Council responsible for over 250 staff members and is funded by parliamentary appropriation.

SATRA has recently released a white paper on community broadcasting which has several implications for community broadcasters like Radio Tuks. 2 of these issues are however detrimental to the existence of community broadcasting as it is presently known. The First issue is the "capping" of national advertising on community stations. This limits the amount of national advertising that the station is allowed to broadcast. The reason this is relevant to radio stations that do not broadcast nationally is that a large percentage of the advertising on community stations comes from big companies like Nedbank or Toyota. Companies like these would not advertise to one small community when they, through TV, could advertise their products to the entire nation. Therefor by combining the force of community stations across the country-i.e. Radio Tuks in Pretoria and Rhodes Music Radio in Grahams Town-national advertising may be achieved. This however achieved at a much cheaper rate than advertising on a National station like 5fm for example. Therefor capping this type of advertising will limit the income and potential advertisers of small community stations that are already struggling to survive due to the severe cost constraints of running a Radio Station.

The other important implication of the white paper is that the definition of community will be re-defined. It will no longer be based on a field of interest but on geographic positioning. This will mean that Radio Tuks will no longer broadcast to scholars and students between 16 and 24 but to the region of Pretoria including all of its age groups and population segments. All of these segments and age groups will have to be represented on the management of the organization and catered for in the program format.

The Internal Issues

The high turnover of staff at Radio Tuks

Radio Tuks is a Student organization, which is run and funded entirely by students and the adverts they sell. Due to the fact that the organization is being run by students, the turnover of staff is very high. This is either due to the fact that people who join the station do so for the experience and in so doing find out that it is not to their liking and then leave. Or the members graduate and enter the so called "Real World" and then leave Radio Tuks. Or the students who join the station find that their studies suffer as the station takes up too much of their time and thus their parents get angry and force them to leave.

Radio Tuks sees itself as a training ground for its members, Therefor once a year the management of the organization is changed. This happens on all levels of management including the director of the organization. Therefor communication between the old and

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new management's of the organization is vital. A high turnover of staff means the corporate culture of Radio Tuks is not stable as the way things are done the way issues are perceived and the way business is handled is changed too regularly.

The lack of transparence within orginization

Radio Tuks consists of between 80 to 100 members. They are run by a directorship (Top Management) consisting of 3 members and a middle management consisting of 6 department heads. This means that 9 people control the other 90 within the organization. Due to the management structure and a lack of people skills found in the directorship a serious lack of transparency exists within the organization especially between the Directorship and the ordinary members. The members feel that they have very little say in the overall direction of the station. This results in low morale amongst the members of the station and thus a drop in productivity.

The process of Racial Integration

One of the biggest problems facing Radio Tuks is "Racial Integration". The University of Pretoria requires the Radio Tuks integration rate to be on par with its own. This mean that at least 26% of the selected member must be black. This is no problem until Black DJs hit the air waves. Radio = entertainment = culture, like any other form of entertainment i.e. it designed around a certain type of culture. Now, when Black DJs broadcast they broadcast to a black audience and visa versa, the problem is that the Radio Tuks listenership is almost entirely white. The process of integration thus becomes very important as the On Air product of the station is directly influenced or more specifically changed by it as well as the off air side of Radio Tuks. This type of change will effect all the aspects of Radio Tuks and all aspects of the organization will have to be altered to deal with the required change correctly thus communication of this process of change is critical.

The priority of the issues

1. The process of Racial Integration
2. The South African telecommunication's and Radio Authority and there new proposed legislation regarding community broadcasting
3. High turnover of staff within Radio Tuks
4. The lack of transparency within the organization
5. Student-wise and there involvement in advertising sales of Radio Tuks

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KEY COMMUNICATION AND ISSUES

The 3 communication issues are in order of priority:

* ❖ Racial Integration
* ❖ High turnover of staff at Radio Tuks
* ❖ The Lack of transparency within the organization

Racial Integration

This issue is first, as I believe it is most important. The product of the station is what sells it to its advertisers, its listeners and all of its other audiences. With this product undergoing such intense changes danger is prevalent.

First lets define the problem further. The problem is a programming issue that involves changing and re-focusing the product of Radio Tuks. This problem will therefor effect the internal and external environments of Radio Tuks.
There are 2 main external problems to be faced: firstly the new listeners reached i.e. black listeners, then the listeners lost i.e. the non tolerant White listeners. Secondly the image of Radio Tuks in the eyes of the organizations that they have previously associated with e.g. the record companies, will change with its product change.
On the internal front there are 3 areas of concern: Firstly target market's demographic composition will change around the new product. Secondly the target advertising buyers audience will have to be altered also to suit the altered Radio Tuks product. Finally the internal culture of the organization will have to change to accommodate the new members of different cultures.

The threats in communicating this issue are the following:
Communicating a fundamental change to any organization will lead to resistance. This is further enhanced by the fact that Radio Tuks is seen as hip Afrikaans Radio from an Afrikaans University and thus integration will really inspire reaction from effected parties both on the White and Non-White sides.
Another threat is that the Staff of Radio Tuks may become irritated and scared by the communication of a need to racially integrate the station they may not see the bigger picture involved. Change is always difficult in an organization.

Opportunities include the following:
The members of the organization are all students which implies that they are relatively young and not as scared of change as their parents would be if faced with the same situation at work. The students are also not been paid for their services and so they have no risk of financial loss again making the change easier.

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Students also get to see the results of racial integration first hand and therefor will be able to handle it better in later life in the real working environment.
There is also an opportunity to educate the members of Radio Tuks in the essence of other cultures other than their own.

The High Turnover of Staff

The High Turnover of Staff at radio Tuks is the next most important communication issue. As stated above the main problem here is that the new management which is chosen once a year is almost without exception not at all experienced at running or managing the organization. The new staff that are selected as members of Radio Tuks bi-annually are totally untrained in any practical business skills e.g. answering a phone call correctly, taking down a message time and date from a contact person correctly or even sending a fax correctly. Thus as far as the new staff is concerned training is vital and usually no problem, as the old members have been trained in basic skills. The next problem is the transfer of information between the old and new management. This is a big problem.

There are a few risks and opportunities involved with the training of the new members. Firstly the threats, By forcing the new members to do things a certain way on the presumption that they know little or nothing, will result in a certain amount of stagnation within the organization. New and better ways to do things may be ignored. Also the new member may feel at sea when they are expected to learn so much so quickly. On the other side of the same coin they may feel that they are being treated like children, as they may already know how to send faxes and answer phone calls correctly.
The Opportunities include the fact that a longer term corporate culture may be set up by establishing a "way to do things" which will help to slow down the drastic changes in the face of the organization by the high staff turnover. Another opportunity exists in the training of the older member on how to train the younger ones.

The Opportunities and threats involved in the handing of information over from the old management are as follows.
The threats included the fact that the new management may not want the old management's advise, this could be for a number of reasons e.g. perhaps they did not like the way things were being done and feel that the less they know about them the better. They may also feel that they are being force fed by the old management and because they are new at what they're doing they may not see the long- term benefits of what the old management is trying to do.
Opportunities include the chance to form a business culture, or a way that Radio Tuks manages its staff or handles its clients over a longer term than just one year. The opportunity also exists for the organization to grow from where the old management left off and not have to catch up to where they were first, and then start growing.

The Lack of transparency within the organization

In brief this problem is as a result of a few factors. As listed above the small amount of managers controlling a large amount of staff which leads to non transparency, and the lack of people skills of the directorship alienating the staff of the organization contribute to the problem.
Firstly we will look at the management structure of the station.

Threats to the adoption of a more transparent method of management include the following. The staff at Radio Tuks is reviewed twice a year and therefor it is conceivable that if a person has belonged to the organization for more than 6 months he or she achieves a senior position in the organization. The problem is that, that person's opinion and his /her knowledge of the organization are not equally matched. The opinion may be of a senior member but the contents thereof may be of little value. Thus that person's opinion of upper management actions carries too much weight and so something that management wants to do for the good of the organization may be misunderstood. It may then be miss-communicated to the other members and then it may become an issue that has to be corrected by the top management using up time and other recourses unnecessarily. All this could have been avoided if the 6 month old member was unaware of the situation in the first place, ie a lack of transparency may have been useful at that point in time.

Opportunities exist in the fact that more people thinking about issues will lead to better solutions to them, so if top management is transparent about the issues it faces, then the solutions found may be better than if they were not transparent.

As for the second problem (improving the people skills of the top management) only opportunities exist in my opinion. It will improve the general morale of the station as the members will better understand the intention of the top managers, the potential of people may be better utilized as they would be far more inclined to perform well for an organization when they like the "bosses" they work for.

Communication Goals and Objectives

The issue of **racial integration** is by far the most important issue facing Radio Tuks, so goals must be set to accurately communicate the problem so that it may be fixed.

Goal 1
To inform listeners of Radio Tuks, of the change that is about to take place and to get feedback from them on the proposed changes.

Objectives:
1. To place adverts on Radio Tuks detailing the changes that are going to be taking place. This should include a time frame of 2 years for the changes. It should also include the new ratios of white to black DJs and white to black music ratios. The adverts should also include an invitation to respond to the proposed changes. This should be done 3 months before the proposed date of the beginning of the changes.
2. Clear communication channels between the listeners and the Station must be set up to receive feedback from the listeners who choose to respond to the adverts. The responses should be made by post, fax or email thus all relevant collection points must be established. All the data should be collected and set out into positive and negative responses and all advice should be noted separately. This data should be processed and setout as stated one month before the proposed changes take place.

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3. The Responses and the advice given by listeners should then be reviewed by top management and any changes to the integration plans must be made in the month before the strategy is due to be implemented.

Goal 2
To inform the members of Radio Tuks of the needed changes and to get feedback from them on how best to handle these changes.

Objectives:
1. Set up a social meeting where these changes can be named and communicated to the members of the organization. At this informal meeting a date for a formal meeting must by decided upon about 2 weeks from the date of the informal meeting where all questions will be answered.
2. At the formal meeting, questions about the proposed changes are answered and feedback from the members will be asked for. Like with the listeners the feedback may be presented in writing or by email. The answers given at the meeting should be honest and truthful. A deadline must be set for the feedback from the member, 1 week from the time of the formal meeting.
3. Top management should then review the feedback from the members and make any changes to the integration they deem necessary. This revised policy should then be presented to the members' 1 week before the station goes ahead with the proposed changes.

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