



INTERPERSONAL  
COMMUNICATION  
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**BUSINESS**  
INFORMATION  
SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED

# Integrated Organisational Communication

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Campaign

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IMAGE

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**CUSTOMER  
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Systems Thinking

**Collaboration**

STRUCTURE

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CHAPTER  
**1**  
**Communication and the  
organisation**

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Communication is all of the procedures by which one mind can affect another  
Weaver (in Shannon & Weaver, 1949)

The ability to organise – to routinely engage in interlocked behaviours that allow us to transcend our individual limitations – is one of humanity's most highly developed talents.  
Farace, Monge & Russell (1977)

**1.1 Introduction**

Communication is often described as the glue that binds an organisation together. It enables people working within an organisation to co-operate and, by doing so, to achieve more than they would if they worked alone. Communication also makes it easier for people within an organisation to interact with important people and groups outside the organisation – that is, its customers, clients, agents, legislators and the broader public.

In the corporate environment of organisations and businesses, individuals may sometimes be unaware of communication simply because it is such a natural part of everyday life. People generally become aware of communication in an organisation only when it is emphasised, for example during planned communication events like negotiations, presentations, or when media are used to convey a particular message. But planned communication is only one variation of the communication that occurs in organisations. Other types of communication often prove more difficult to discern, understand or deal with, even though such communication undoubtedly affects the well-being and success of the organisation. For example, communication between managers and staff, the employees' knowledge of the company's long-term plans, or whether a company director feels comfortable asking for information and advice, are simple situations where ordinary communication affects, to a greater or lesser degree, the ultimate success of the organisation. Organisational communication is therefore a complex phenomenon and somewhat broader than might at first be imagined.

Communication exists in and around organisations in different forms, activities and functions, including:

- planned communication such as management communication, public relations, advertising or personal selling
- corporate culture, co-operation or dissent
- relationships between staff
- relationships between the people within the organisation and those outside it.

Communication is central to the success of organisations and the people within them and is therefore deliberately encouraged by management, workers, special-interest groups and individuals inside and outside the organisation. In its complex diversity, communication is studied and practised in universities and organisations as an integral part of a variety of subjects, disciplines and fields. This chapter provides an overview of these topics and reviews a number of the basic concepts associated with the communication of organisations. The chapter addresses:

- communication in the context of the organisation
- important academic and applied approaches to the broad discipline of communication
- the strategic role of communication in the organisation.

Before further considering organisational communication it is first worth exploring the separate concepts of *communication* and *organisation*.

## 1.2 Communication

Communication may be described as a transactional and symbolic process in which messages are exchanged and interpreted with the aim of establishing mutual understanding between parties. This definition covers many of the characteristics typically ascribed to communication but, as will become clear, it has been highly contested.

As with so many of the social sciences, the communication discipline and our knowledge of it have developed over the centuries through scientific, pre-scientific, humanistic and social scientific inquiry. Communication has been studied from the perspectives of a multitude of disciplines and theoretical approaches. Our knowledge of the subject is drawn from the interwoven contributions of rhetoric, psychology, sociology, language studies and philosophy, amongst many other disciplines, and this knowledge has been broadened by practical experience in the professions, industry and other fields of endeavour that include business, the media, journalism, information technology, social development, art and culture.

When attempting to define communication, one must recognise that communication 'is one of those human activities that everyone recognizes but few can define satisfactorily' (Fiske, 1990: 1). Difficulties with definition have emerged because such a wide range of meanings for communication have become established through everyday usage (Cleverger, 1991). Excluding meanings associated with physical transfer or transportation (for example in uses such as 'communication of disease' or 'road communications'), the word 'communication' still retains a diversity of meanings that are reflected in a range of scientific and academic applications. Even if we narrow our focus to use of the concept only in human and organisational communication, we remain confronted with a range of definitions, as the following examples illustrate.

- the formal and informal sharing of meaningful and timely information (Anderson & Narus, 1990)
- 'all means of facilitating the exchange of knowledge, the expression of desires, and the dissemination of information' (Peters & Fletcher, 2004: 1)

- 'a process whereby meaning is defined and shared between living organisms' (Wikipedia, 2011)
  - 'social interaction through messages' (Fiske, 1990: 2)
  - a human activity that links people together and creates relationships (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998)
  - one individual's means of relating to other individuals which makes it more than just information giving (Sanford, Hunt & Bracey, 1976; Zhu, May & Rosenfeld, 2004)
  - 'the synthesis of information, utterance and understanding' (Luhmann, 2006: 47).
- Numerous attempts have been made to categorise the definitions of communication. Princeton University's WordNet differentiates between meanings of communication as activity, content and connection (WordNet, 2011). Another categorisation is that of Dance (1970), who identifies three conceptual pillars in the definition of communication.
- The first is *level of observation*, ranging from broad to restrictive:

For example, the definition of communication as 'the process that links discontinuous parts of the living world to one another' (Ruesch, 1957) is general. On the other hand, communication as 'a system (as of telephones or telegraphs) for communicating information and orders (as in a naval service)' (Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* 1966) is restrictive (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008: 3).

- The second pillar is *intentionality* – the degree to which communication is intended. For example:

Those situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver with conscious intent to affect the latter's behaviours (Miller, 1966) [is a definition that includes intent]. A definition that does not [include] intent follows: 'It is a process that makes common to two or several what was the monopoly of one or some (Cartier, 1959)' (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008: 3).

- The third pillar is *normative judgement*: the qualification of effectiveness or success:

The following definition, for example, presumes that communication is successful: 'Communication is the verbal interchange of a thought or idea' (Hoben, 1954) ... Another definition, on the other hand, does not judge whether the outcome is successful or not: 'Communication [is] the transmission of information' (Berelson & Steiner, 1964). Here information is *transmitted*, but it is not necessarily received or understood (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008: 3).

It is evident that scholars define communication very widely and it is therefore questionable whether an attempt to formulate a single definition is possible or even desirable. An attempt to do so would result in the loss of the variety associated with the concept. Dance (1970) suggests that the diversity associated with the term 'communication' is appropriate and that its definitions and theories should remain a 'family of concepts' rather than a single theory, definition or idea. The variety of definitions should be seen as a range of tools that can be flexibly used (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008):

While there is not a right or wrong perspective, choices regarding [their selection in academic studies] are not trivial. These perspectives launch scholars down different

theoretical trajectories, predispose them to ask distinct questions, and set them up to conduct different kinds of communication studies (Anderson, 1991: 309).

Littlejohn and Foss (2008: 3) state that:

... different definitions have different functions and enable the theorist to do different things. A definition should be evaluated on the basis of how well it helps scholars answer the questions they are investigating. Different sorts of investigations require separate, even contradictory, definitions of communication.

It is clear, therefore, that communication is difficult to define as a single entity, as a single discipline or as a single concept. It is more appropriate to consider it as a cluster of theories and perspectives that provide different insights into the broad phenomenon which we describe as communication. Because of their diversity we have to accept that these insights might at times be compatible and at times contradictory. There is no single theory of communication but rather a range of theories, perspectives and approaches, and there is certainly no single theory or definition of communication that is 'true' or 'correct'. At best it might be possible to claim that, within a particular context, there is a theory or definition of communication that is more accurate than another, or that one theory gives greater insight than another when a particular communication situation, context or problem arises.

In social science, of which communication science is an example, there are no irrefutable laws that explain the relationships between social phenomena. Instead of laws, we should rather think of explanations that have a high degree of probability. This is the case even with theories that have been derived from the most rigorous of scientific methods. Social science and the communication discipline do not comprise universally valid laws or theories. Theories of communication are best seen as the means to understand and interpret specific events, as the prisms that help us to focus and organise certain aspects of communication that we observe and study – that is, as observational aids. To understand communication as it applies to the organisation we therefore need to consider a variety of theories and approaches.

It is evident that in attempting to define communication we are confronted with a range of concepts, definitions and theories that might frequently appear to be equally valid. It therefore becomes necessary to identify those that are most appropriate for our purpose. Our aim here is to understand communication within the context of the organisation. Not only do we wish to understand communication as a social phenomenon but also as a phenomenon of organisations that can affect their well-being and success, one that can be understood and managed in various professional contexts throughout organisations and their environments. With this in mind, therefore, the theories and definitions that offer the clearest insight into communication in the organisational context are the most appropriate.

It is possible to identify two broad theoretical streams that offer insight into the communication of organisations and reflect Fiske's (1990: 2) view of:

... two main schools ... The first sees communication as the transmission of messages. It is concerned with matters like efficiency and accuracy ... The second school sees communication as the production and exchange of meanings. It is concerned with how messages, or texts, interact with people in order to produce meanings.

In the first stream, communication tends to be defined as a mechanistic phenomenon; in the second, as a social, interactive and often transactional phenomenon. Mechanistic approaches conveniently and simply identify important components and properties of communication whereas interactional approaches give a broader and more nuanced view of communication and its role in the lives of people acting as social beings in the context of the organisation.

### 1.2.1 A mechanistic view of communication

The mechanistic view suggests that all phenomena involve a sequence of events that have specific, identifiable causes. These phenomena and their causes then cause other events, which in turn cause others, and so on. From the mechanistic perspective, all phenomena and their causes can be identified and measured separately. We can understand the world, and communication, by understanding the relationship between cause and effect, and by our ability to identify the variables in this relationship, however small. From a mechanistic perspective, the reason we do not understand why something occurs is either because we have not identified the variables that cause it or because we have not been able to measure these variables' effects with sufficient accuracy.

#### Dividing communication into parts

In the mechanistic model, everything can be reduced to essential parts that can be understood and measured. A person's body, for example, can be divided into head, torso, arms and legs, and these parts can be measured for length or weight. Following on from this, everything that results from the interaction of parts can be explained and predicted. For example, by understanding how a person's feet and legs move, it is possible to understand how a person walks or runs. It is assumed that the variables that determine some phenomena can be isolated from all irrelevant ones and can be viewed and measured separately from the rest, that patterns of cause and effect can be identified and, eventually, that similar phenomena that might occur in the future can be accurately predicted. To reiterate, from the mechanistic perspective, the reasons why a phenomenon is not understood is either that the variables that cause it have not been identified or their mutual effect upon one another has not been properly understood or measured.

#### Communication as the transfer of signals

The mechanistic model and the view of communication that derives from it are strongly influenced by Shannon and Weaver's information theory, popularised in their book *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1949) and originally conceived as a model for application in engineering and mathematics. The theory was greatly influenced by Shannon's work as a telecommunications engineer. Information theory was not originally intended as a model of human communication. It does not address meaning, for example, and instead focuses on data and its transmission. Despite this, their model has been adapted to human communication and has had a significant impact on the study of human communication.

The mechanistic model can be portrayed as the transfer of signals, often illustrated by the well-known diagram shown in Figure 1.1.

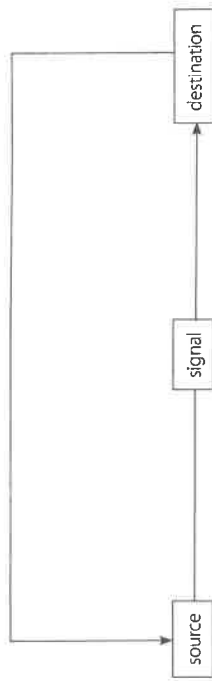


Figure 1.1 A mechanistic model of communication

From a mechanistic perspective, communication does not occur exclusively among humans. It can also occur between machines when viewed as the transmission of a signal from a source to a receiving destination. The signal undergoes a 'journey' from one place to another. Communication is seen to be successful when it is received and interpreted by the destination in exactly the way that it was sent and intended by the source. The sender, or source, assesses whether the signal was correctly received and interpreted by the destination by monitoring feedback from the destination.

**The components of communication**

A simple adaptation of the model as it would apply to human communication is illustrated in Figure 1.2.

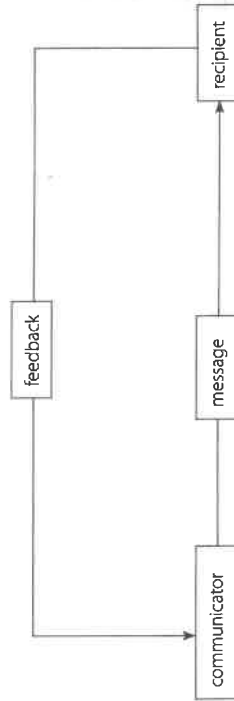


Figure 1.2 An adapted mechanistic model of communication

The communicator is the source of the message. He or she encodes it – the signal – from thoughts into forms such as words or symbols that are capable of being transmitted. This message is then transmitted via a channel such as the air through which sound travels or a technological medium such as a telephone, computer or radio. The message is received by the recipient – the destination – who decodes it into a form that has some meaning in order for it to be understood. During transmission the message might not have meaning, it only has meaning prior to being encoded for transmission and after it has been decoded at the end of the transmission.

Two-way communication occurs when there is feedback. Feedback is essentially transmission in the reverse order of the initial communication from communicator to recipient. Feedback also requires encoding, transmission and decoding.

A continuous communication loop is created in ongoing communication in which the roles of communicator and receiver change and eventually become blurred. In more structured, formal variations such as mass communication, the definitions of communicator and receiver are clearer and more durable than they might be during informal communication between people in everyday contexts.

Mechanistic communication has the potential for fault or failure. This occurs where there is a disruption of the message during transmission. Everything that impairs the message during encoding, transmission and decoding is termed 'noise'. It is accepted in the mechanistic model of communication that perfect communication is difficult to achieve, and that some degree of noise is present in most communication, and that meaning, as intended by the communicator, is rarely exactly the same as that understood by the receiver.

The mechanistic model described here is relatively simple. This model has been extended and developed in attempts to describe more complex forms of communication. Mass communication, the communication networks of groups and organisations, multi-step modes of communication, various forms of feedback, communication breakdowns, and the position of gatekeepers and opinion leaders have all been explained in terms of this approach.

**Measurability and efficiency**

Hypothetically, every element of the mechanistic communication model can be identified and measured. Every part is portrayed as a precise entity, separated from all others by closed and precise boundaries. Where boundaries are unclear it is necessary to identify them by inspecting increasingly small parts of the phenomenon under study. The model suggests that there is a quantifiable interplay between factors that can be isolated, measured and individually manipulated.

The mechanistic approach is most commonly used to plan and interpret communication effects in fields as varied as persuasion and mass media studies. The approach emphasises the importance of efficiency and effectiveness in communication activities and has proved to be particularly useful for communication in the organisational context where time, cost and the quantification of processes and activities are crucial.

**1.2.2 An interactional view of communication**

The interactional view differs from the mechanistic view by explaining communication as a social phenomenon that cannot be analysed as a sum of constituent parts. The interactional approach discussed here is drawn from the common foundation of a range of perspectives that are similar in some respects but dissimilar in others. They include information theory (which has also had a strong influence on the mechanistic approach), symbolic interactionism, the transactional view of perception, and systems theory.



In the interactional view, the concept of linear signal transmissions and the labelling of communicators as senders, sources, receivers or destinations fall away. The division of communication into parts and the emphasis on codes and signals are not seen as the essence of communication.

#### Communication as interaction

Communication is seen to be a purely human activity, to exist only as interaction (or transaction) between human beings. Communication is the process by which meaning becomes shared and common understandings emerge in the formation of groups and cultures, and the process through which interpersonal transaction, social position, action, status and power are created, altered and, in some cases, diminished.

Society and its structures are made up of communicating, interacting and transacting individuals who actively shape their own behaviour. Although social structures do affect people's lives, it is the ongoing interaction of individuals, rather, that creates, recreates, maintains and changes these structures.

Even large organisations that appear to exist independently of the people within them do so because of these people, their actions and interactions which, over time, occur and recur according to a framework of frequent, established and stable meanings. 'It is the social process in group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life' (Blumer, 1969: 19). Communication creates the network of relations that exist between people, and the resulting patterns of interaction form the structures of society.

The interactional view does not describe communication as an entity or an activity that exists apart from people and their interaction with one another. Where there is communication there is interaction, even though all interaction is not necessarily communication. According to the interactionist approach, communication is a phenomenon that does not exist as separate from people, and it therefore does not exist between machines, or between man and machine. Machines can, however, assist communication between people and, with the ascendancy of information technology, the machine increasingly frames and structures human communication and the patterns of that communication.

Communication is viewed as a process and not as a structure. Because communication is inherently interactive, adaptive and transactional, and because it evolves, any attempt to freeze the process for purposes of definition results in a false impression of the phenomenon. Communication is fluid and ever changing.

#### The centrality of meaning

The cornerstone of the interactional approach to understanding communication is the process through which meaning is created and shared. An individual's creation of meaning is seen to occur in a world of personal and environmental stimuli, which would be regarded as completely random and even chaotic were it not for the individual's creation of order within that random variety. This process of creating order has been termed 'mapping', and refers to the discernment of meaningful patterns in the stimuli. Through mapping, a person creates 'objects' out of the stimuli. The complete set of a

person's objects forms that person's reality. Blumer (1969) suggests that there are three types of objects: physical (things), social (people) and abstract (ideas). Manfred Kuhn sees an object as any aspect of a person's reality: 'a thing, a quality, an event, or a state of affairs' (in Littlejohn, 1992: 174-175). An object is not separate from an individual; it is implicit in the person's relationship with the set of stimuli that comprise it.

When an object is to be used in the context of communication, the individual has to conceive of it from the perspective of others to ensure that they understand all reference to it. The individual's definition of an object is created through his or her interaction with others and it is the group norms thus formed that regulate how the object is symbolised and dealt with socially.

Individuals attach symbols to objects. Rothstein describes symbols as objects 'to which we give names', and suggests that 'people can use these names to communicate and agree that they refer to the same object' (in Buckley, 1967: 98). Symbols extend beyond language and can include gestures, facial expressions and hand signals. The symbol represents the individual's direct relationship to the object; his or her perception of how he or she, as a member of society, should relate to it; and how he or she perceives others' relation to it (Buckley, 1968; Littlejohn, 1992). Individuals communicate with one another by mutually defining symbols and creating regions of shared meaning. These shared meanings ultimately become common amongst the individuals of a group and, in time, form a society of similar meanings. However, because every object represented by a symbol is uniquely perceived by each individual, the precise meanings of symbols can differ, to a greater or lesser extent, from person to person and this results in a degree of uncertainty in all communication.

For the individual to attempt to share meaning it is necessary for him or her to reduce the uncertainty inherent in communication. The individual achieves this by constantly reformulating his or her perception of the object to which a symbol refers, and realigning it more closely with the perceptions held by other participants in the communication process. With the increase in interaction between communicators and greater alignment of the meanings ascribed to symbols, meaning becomes increasingly shared.

Communication is unnecessary where meaning is completely shared. Only where meaning is not shared, or where it is not known to be shared, is it necessary to expend the effort of communication to ensure that others share the same perceptions regarding symbols or objects. Yet perfect communication and the complete sharing of meaning among communicators probably do not exist, as there is inevitably some variation in the meanings ascribed to every symbol. According to Farace *et al.* (1977: 48), the 'chances of achieving exact communication are close to zero, if not completely impossible'.

Meaning is not static; it is continuously created and recreated. Communication is the ongoing process of one person attempting to identify another's meaning of an object and its symbolic representation and to co-ordinate this meaning with his or her own. Meaning is derived from the very process of communication because this process reduces uncertainty. Meaning is also derived from the definition and redefinition of the symbolic parameters of specific objects and the stimuli to which these refer. In the

process, increasing constraint is placed on the range of interpretation that is possible in the interpretation of symbols.

### 1.2.3 The utility of mechanistic and interactional approaches

We have focused on mechanistic and interactional approaches to communication because of their usefulness to understanding and implementing communication in the context of organisations. Each approach suggests a distinct view of communication. However, if communication is viewed exclusively according to only one approach then the resulting perception is often dysfunctional. An exclusively mechanistic approach portrays communication as something that is rigid and which occurs apart from human beings. An exclusively interactional approach presents communication as something that 'is' us – a 'part' of us – but which, as a result, is difficult to quantify or manage.

Both approaches are important. The mechanistic approach offers a structure for planning, timing and integrating the components of communication while the interactional approach provides a clear perspective of the interactive, ongoing, relational and meaning-based nature of communication.

The approaches also present different views of human experience. The mechanistic approach focuses on social phenomena as a sum of autonomous parts, actions and purposes that can be understood in isolation from all related phenomena, frozen in time, which can be seen to exist meaningfully as static entities. In contrast, the interactional approach, although not a holistic model, gives some insight into the wholeness, transience, adaptability and interactive nature of social phenomena.

## 1.3 Organisations

An organisation may be defined as two or more people who intentionally work together in order to achieve a set of objectives.

To a greater or lesser degree, organisations exist as separate entities within their environments, and the move from environment to organisation implies passing through some form of barrier or boundary – this could be a fence or gate, but it could also be something abstract, such as a mindset, a particular way of behaving, identification, membership, knowledge, etc. They are more or less self-regulating in terms of their objectives, performance, control and degree of internal and external co-operation. Organisations take on many forms and are determined primarily by their objectives. These can arise from business, religion, government, education, sport or recreational interests, or any other shared interests of their members.

Organisations vary in their degree of formality. They can be legally constituted entities, such as registered companies that pay tax and operate according to fixed policies and operational guidelines, with formal structured relationships between their members. Organisations can also be completely informal and might not exist as legal entities, with flexible voluntary membership, irregular meetings and few structured operational processes or procedures.

The structure of organisations varies extensively. They can have very little structure or be highly structured in any number of ways. They can be rigid hierarchies with highly specified areas of responsibility, specialisation and division of labour;

they can operate as a matrix where members have responsibilities across the organisation and work across functions and projects; or they can operate as loose associations of professionals with high autonomy. What is common to all organisations, however, is that they are social systems, made up of people who interact with one another in particular ways that are specified within the organisation.

Although we are particularly interested in the communication of organisations, they can also be considered from a number of other perspectives such as sociology, law, politics, anthropology or business, and viewed, for example, as operational processes, as patterned behaviour and interaction amongst people, or as entities that serve various purposes and ends. While we focus our attention on the organisation as an entity of human communication, we will, in the course of this chapter and the remainder of the book, bring in a number of these alternative and complementary perspectives as they relate to organisational communication.

## 1.4 Organisational communication and its constituent fields

This book addresses the topic of communication in the context of organisations, in a discipline that can be termed 'organisational communication'. In attempting to define organisational communication, the difficulties faced by the International Communication Association (ICA, 2010) in its own attempts to do so are instructive:

In 1968 ... [members of the first meeting of the Organisational Communication group of the ICA saw organisational communication as a field that dealt with] ... '[p]erson-centred interface, analyses of interaction between organisational structure, message forms and flow, channel effects and person behaviour' ... [with] ... the need for applied research that addresses current organisational problems. At the first business meeting mentioned above, members set forth a number of questions, comments, and made an attempt to define organisational communication.

Writing 'due to the time limit and perceived futility by the group of arriving at a workable definition,' they agreed to table the discussion of a definition. Since 1968, few would argue that any concrete definition has surfaced as agreeable to all and although the core of the mission remains it has expanded and changed with the field, the applied focus has always remained in concert with the study of macro as well as micro organisational communication.

The International Communication Association still has no coherent definition of organisational communication. The term is very widely used and interpreted, with little agreement on its definition. As is evident from the discussion below, the concept is used in a number of ways. In this book we use the term 'organisational communication' primarily as the umbrella concept that covers all communication that occurs in the context of organisations but we also consider a number of other meanings associated with it. In this section we review a wide range of approaches, disciplines and practices that constitute this broad field, and some of these are discussed in more detail in later chapters.

A number of academic and professional fields address the communication of organisations and we focus here on the more prominent of these. Academics originally studied communication from the very different perspectives of rhetoric, sociology, anthropology and psychology; among others. In business, communication became

important because it was seen as a means to generate publicity, an extension of journalism, or a means of generating interest in companies and products. As a result of so many people from different backgrounds focusing on this phenomenon, there is considerable variety in the range of perspectives on organisational communication that exist. The intention in this section, therefore, is to make some sense of the variety and relationships that exist between the more prominent academic and professional fields that deal with the communication of organisations.

The disciplines and fields of communication that are discussed here are business, management, organisational, corporate, public relations and marketing communication. Attention is also paid to the impact that digital communication has had on all of these fields. Although later chapters address organisational communication, public relations and marketing communication, the fields of business communication, management communication and corporate communication are not discussed in greater detail. The reasons are that business and management communication focus more narrowly on skills whereas this book pays more attention to theory; and corporate communication overlaps extensively with public relations. Nevertheless, many of the aspects addressed in this book have some bearing on business and management communication, and many of the principles of corporate communication are addressed in the discussion on public relations. This chapter addresses these fields in order to identify a comprehensive disciplinary range, while the remainder of the book focuses on specific areas of interest.

We describe the 'components' of organisational communication as 'fields' or 'academic fields', and only in some cases as 'disciplines'. We use 'discipline' to describe an area of study that is characterised by a relatively unique body of knowledge that has coherent and widely accepted theoretical foundations, a range of accepted norms for research, a clear scope of the problems addressed, and consensus that it exists as a discipline among scholars. 'Field' refers to an area of study that does not meet these criteria. Although each area that we focus on constitutes an academic subject or profession, it could be argued that only a few have acquired disciplinary status, and that they are generally considered to be divisions of overarching disciplines.

The fields of communication discussed here are not exclusive. Almost all overlap with one or more of the others. It is true that the broad field is wide open, that it does not hold the same professional status as, say, law or medicine, and that it is not the exclusive domain of any discipline. While some might see this as a problem, it is the benefit of the discipline as a whole that it receives such extensive and multidisciplinary attention. The disciplinary fragmentation and overlap of the academic fields discussed in this chapter does not diminish their importance, and it is important to obtain some perspective of the fragmented, overlapping nature of organisational communication and the relationship between the disciplines and fields that constitute it. Communication students or practitioners will be confronted at some point by the particular theory or practice of each field, and it will be to their benefit to understand the scope, perspective and relationship of that field to all the others.

### 1.4.1 Business communication

Business communication can be traced back to the earliest times of commercial activity. Historical remnants of business-related writing, for example, have been found on Roman tablets. Business writing was taught in European universities as early as the 12th century. Later, at the direction of King Henry V of England, standardised English for official documents was formalised and, in 1586, Angel Day wrote an influential book on business correspondence (Krapels & Arnold, 1996). The principles of early business communication drew heavily on rhetoric, particularly the rhetorical traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries (Carbone, 1994).

The origin of modern business communication can be more specifically linked to the establishment of land grant colleges in the United States of America in 1863. Education in these colleges was more technical and career specific than that of other universities of the time (Krapels & Arnold, 1996). A manifestation of this education was the introduction of practical courses in business writing. The first such course was taught at the University of Illinois in 1902 as part of a business qualification and was the only subject that was mandatory for all students (Krapels & Arnold, 1996). As the American model of business gained precedence in business schools throughout the world, including South Africa, business communication secured a foothold in the business curriculum. Until the 1960s the communication that received the greatest attention in the field was written communication, interviewing and presentation skills (Krapels & Arnold, 1996).

Business communication can be defined as communication that is used to attain a business objective. Such communication is usually seen as conscious and intentional and as a tool which, when appropriately used, can help a business achieve its goals (Kensh, 1991). Many business communication courses have a skills orientation (Smeltzer & Suchan, 1991). The ultimate objective of the academic field is to establish and improve the communication skills of people engaged in business.

Business communication tends to be viewed as a business subject. Usually offered in faculties of business or management – less so in departments of communication or language studies – it is closely associated with business language courses such as 'Business English' or 'Business French' (Smeltzer & Suchan, 1991). Business communication is taught largely but not exclusively at undergraduate level. Although the origins of business communication are business writing and technical communication, the theory and methodology of the field is multidisciplinary, drawing from business, social science and language studies.

The organisational scope of business communication is not universal and focuses more on the communication that occurs within organisations defined as businesses and less on the communication practised by other organisations. The academic field does pay greater attention to communication that relates directly to business and less to communication that falls outside the business context. Most, but not all, business communication occurs within the organisational environment.

### 1.4.2 Management communication

Management communication, the newest of the academic fields discussed here, can be defined as management's use, adaptation and creation of languages, symbols and



signs for the effective and profitable management of the corporate enterprise. As with a number of other fields that fall within the scope of applied communication, management communication has its roots in rhetoric, although it also draws strongly from management. Management communication courses are primarily provided by business faculties but a small number of language and communication departments also offer courses in the field. Management communication is commonly presented as one course within a postgraduate business qualification, frequently as part of a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programme (Krapels & Arnold, 1996). It became firmly established only in the 1970s and the first journal on the subject was published in the 1980s. The field is considered to be 'the amalgamation of business communication and organisational communication within the traditional planning, leading, organising, and controlling functions of management' (Krapels & Arnold, 1996: 336).

Management communication is an interdisciplinary field that deals specifically with the communication of management and managers, communication variables that affect management, and the practice of communication by managers (Smeltzer, 1993). The dominant focus areas of this type of communication are, first and foremost, writing and, secondly, speaking and presentations. Some attention is also given to other topics that exist at the intersection of management and communication. Management communication is oriented more towards skills development and less towards theoretical knowledge (Krapels & Arnold, 1996). Communication, as it is generally viewed in management communication, tends to be seen as a means to an end, as a tool that may be well or poorly utilised by management.

All management communication occurs within the organisational sphere. By definition, management is an organisational phenomenon and therefore it exists entirely within the organisational context.

### 1.4.3 Organisational communication

Organisational communication has its roots in speech communication and communication studies. It was initially influenced very strongly by psychology and sociology, and became a distinct academic field after World War II. In the 1960s, organisational communication shifted its primary focus from the applied aspects of communication in organisations (such as writing, speaking and persuasion) to the broader role of communication in the organisation (in areas such as organisational behaviour and organisational theory) (Krapels & Arnold, 1996).

Traditionally, organisational communication dealt with communication as it exists within and between formal, hierarchical, public and private organisations and their environments. More recently, however, many organisations have taken on different forms that are more effectively characterised by outsourcing and decentralisation, or which function as partnerships or joint ventures. At the same time, technology has become increasingly important in the definition and operation of organisations. Consequently, organisational communication has extended its scope to embrace alternative forms of organisation and, increasingly, the technologies that have become so central to the functioning of organisations (Scott Poole, Putnam & Seibold, 1997). Organisational communication deals as much with the instrumental use of communication (functional

perspectives) as with the social construction of reality within the organisational milieu (interpretive perspectives).

Although organisational communication entails the communication of organisations in a holistic sense, there is some disagreement on the definition of the field. The most common division lies along the functional-interpretive divide. On the one hand, organisational communication is seen as the diffusion of meaning and information throughout the organisation and its environment. On the other hand, it can be described as the process of interaction through which the meaning and experience of the organisation are constructed, maintained, transacted and adapted. One of the reasons for this divergence is that many organisational communication scholars have different disciplinary backgrounds. It is therefore common that the academic field is perceived and defined differently by scholars with backgrounds in, for example, communication, management, sociology or business. Organisational communication is characterised by interdisciplinary approaches towards research and theoretical development, and it borrows freely from management, sociology, psychology, information science and other fields (Scott Poole *et al.*, 1997).

Until the early 1980s, the research methodologies used in organisational communication were predominantly positivist and quantitative. In the ensuing decades, however, qualitative, interpretive, cultural and critical approaches became commonplace. Although the variety of these research approaches initially seemed conflicting, all approaches are now widely accepted within the body of organisational communication.

Shelby (1993) recognises an important difference in the way that academics and practitioners understand organisational communication. Academics generally view it as the study of communication as it applies to any aspect, both internal and external, of the organisation's existence. Professional communicators and practitioners tend to define it as the communication that exists and is practised *within* the organisation – that is, as internal communication. Other than its use as the umbrella concept for all communication in the organisational milieu, 'organisational communication' is therefore commonly used for two separate fields: one is the academic study of the spectrum of communication in and around the organisation; the other is the professional practice of communication within the organisation.

Organisational communication is chiefly taught and researched within faculties of arts or social sciences and, most commonly, within departments of communication. Academic organisational communication generally focuses more on research and theory than skills and practice. While it addresses corporate and managerial issues, it also addresses issues that extend beyond the corporate context and it may critically evaluate corporate perspectives. Academic organisational communication does not necessarily cover in the same detail the areas of speciality that are identified within other academic fields but it is not limited by field boundaries. It focuses on the theoretical exploration of any topic that lies at the intersection of *organisation and communication*. Professional organisational communication, on the other hand, focuses very specifically on professional practice, methods, skills and applications, rather than on the theory of research.

#### 1.4.4 Corporate communication

Corporate communication has developed in parallel with a number of other academic fields that are discussed here but most specifically with public relations. Corporate communication flourishes as a functional corporate activity and as a field of academic study. Corporate communication is most commonly offered as an academic subject within faculties of business, marketing or management, and less so in departments of communication. Its usual title is 'corporate communication' but certain academic institutions also present it as a subtopic within courses of organisational communication, public relations or communication management.

The field has developed primarily from the need that has been identified within companies to address the full scope of communication both inside and outside the organisation, and to do so with a clear management perspective. Corporate communication is seen to cover various areas of the organisation's communication. It has been described as the technical information system of the corporation; the interactive, human resource aspects of organisational efficacy; the marketing of an organisation's products and image; the development and maintenance of the corporate image through design; and as the communication that is required to achieve the overall objectives of corporate strategy (Whittaker, 1996).

The field typically covers corporate image and identity, corporate advocacy and advertising, media relations, financial communication, employee communication, community relations and corporate philanthropy, government relations and crisis communication (Argenti, 1996). A definition of the academic field of corporate communication is offered by Van Riel (1997), who sees it as the study of the interdependency between organisational performance on the one hand, and corporate identity, reputation and communication orchestration on the other.

All corporate communication exists within the organisational context, both internal and external.

#### 1.4.5 Public relations

Public relations originated in the early part of the last century as a practical means of generating favourable publicity and interest in a topic, product or event. It was primarily practised as one-way persuasive communication, a practice that still occurs today. As a result, public relations has had and in all probability will always retain problems of credibility, even though the majority of public relations scholars and professionals are ethical, credible and able. Despite its origins as one-way communication, public relations today most commonly approached as 'participative dialogue' or two-way communication.

Public relations is an organisational activity. It exists as a business process and, in many cases, as a distinct department or unit within an organisation. It also exists as an outsourced function offered by consultants, specialists and public relations companies. In addition to being a profession and a professional activity, public relations is also an academic field. It is studied at a wide range of academic institutions, many of which offer courses that are accredited by the professional public relations body of a region. A strong link is therefore maintained between academic study in the field and an individual's recognition and accreditation as a public relations practitioner.

Public relations education ranges from training in career-based skills through a combination of skills and theory, to study at the theoretical level. Its poor academic foundation improved after the 1960s, and a substantial body of theory and research has been built up in the academic field ever since. Public relations is taught at technical, undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Technical training invariably focuses on skills, with undergraduate education as a mix of skills and theory, and postgraduate education focusing on theoretical assessment and development. The subject is usually taught in departments of communication or journalism, though it is frequently taught in a department of its own.

The Public Relations Institute of South Africa (PRISA) defines public relations as 'the management, through communication, of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders' ([www.prisa.co.za](http://www.prisa.co.za)).

#### Distinguishing between public relations and corporate communication

It is evident from the discussions on public relations and corporate communication that it is difficult to distinguish between the two fields. Each focuses on the management and implementation of organisations' communication, and in most instances they address exactly the same issues, use the same techniques and rely on the same theory. The difference lies more in the origins and emphases of the two disciplines than in their content and practice. Public relations originated in journalism, publicity and communication studies, while corporate communication originated in business. Both fields address management and communication issues but public relations is more closely aligned to communication and corporate communication is more closely aligned to business. Both fields are considered in this section because they are widely practised throughout the world and it is necessary to understand the scope and area of interest of each, even if they develop independently.

#### 1.4.6 Marketing communication

The evolution of marketing communication runs parallel to the evolution of marketing. Fundamentally, marketing communication is the communication element that is embedded in the marketing process. Perception of the nature of this communication has changed over time, as has perception of the nature of marketing itself.

Marketing has traditionally been seen as a transaction, with the marketing phenomena that contribute most directly to this transaction receiving the greatest attention, therefore the types of communication activity contributing most directly to the conclusion of a marketing transaction gained precedence. Traditionally, these have been advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity and, arguably, public relations. Not all academics and practitioners consider public relations as part of marketing mix. To differentiate between public relations practised as a corporate function and public relations practised as a marketing function, 'marketing public relations' or 'MPR' is often used to describe the latter.)

In the last three decades the marketing scenario has changed extensively. Digital communication is an integral part of each element of the marketing communication mix and today we see it as an **entirely** separate and unique branch of marketing

## Integrated Organisational Communication

communication. Marketing competition has increased and the perception of marketing has altered. Technology has intrinsically changed business, organisational processes and the way in which people live, work and play. Organisations utilise technology that makes detailed management of customer interaction and personal interaction possible. Mass media have diversified extensively and many have the capacity to interact individually with audience members on a mass scale. Almost every individual in the market has access to market information through a multitude of devices, of which the cellular phone is the most common. Populations are less geographically confined in their marketing activity, and the potential for communication within the market is extensive. In many economic sectors there has been a shift in market power towards the customer and away from manufacturers, resulting in a significant change in the way that people think about and use marketing communication. What was seen as a relatively rigid marketing communication mix of advertising, sales promotion, publicity and personal selling – with advertising invariably dominating this mix – has now altered.

Today marketing is widely seen as a process in which a single sales transaction constitutes a single event in an ongoing relationship between an organisation and its customers. More attention is given to repeat business with existing customers than the achievement of a one-off sale. Marketing communication is further seen as the achievement variable that exists in every aspect of the relationship between customer and business as opposed to a discrete set of techniques.

Whereas marketing communication was originally regarded as the management of the marketing communication mix, today it is seen as the far more fundamental process of building a resilient brand relationship through every area of interaction between the customer and the organisation. The interaction includes the traditional areas of marketing communication but it also focuses on the management of the total communication process. Continuing to address planned messages (such as those that are delivered through advertising), marketing communication also includes product service and unplanned messages (Grönroos, 2000):

- *Product messages* are those that the product itself conveys through its reliability, functionality, ease of use and design.
- *Service messages* are delivered through the service process, and include the behaviour of service personnel, the customer's experience of the service process and the quality of service.
- *Unplanned messages* include those that the organisation sends out inadvertently, messages that sources outside the organisation, such as fellow customers, the press and interest groups, send out.

At its most elementary, marketing communication may be defined as 'the various types of planned messages used to build a brand' (Duncan, 2005: 7). More commonly practised today as 'integrated marketing communication', it can also be defined as traditional media marketing plus the communication aspects of the delivery and consumption of goods and services, customer service, and other customer encounter (Grönroos, 2000).

The academic field of marketing communication originated in a number of disciplines and, with some exceptions, has been consolidated in an ongoing process determined more through practice than through theory formulated within the academic world. Certain elements of marketing communication, such as advertising or public relations, have their academic origins in art, language, journalism or behavioural studies, which are more at home in faculties of arts or the social sciences. Other elements of marketing communication, such as those linked to business strategy, market segmentation or database development, have their academic origins in business and commerce, with the result that they are more usually studied in faculties of commerce or business.

Reflecting its mixed origins, the academic field of marketing communication is commonly offered by different faculties: business or commerce on the one hand, and arts or social sciences on the other. This is also the case where the subfields of marketing communication are offered as separate subjects. It is possible to find marketing communication in all its forms being taught in departments of journalism, communication or marketing, while individual subjects such as advertising may even be presented by language or art departments. Moreover, it is not unusual to find these subjects taught simultaneously by two departments in a university, for example in the arts and the business faculty.

The academic field of marketing communication now typically includes the study of the role of communication in the greater organisation and in marketing, branding and brand development; the communication mix; relationship marketing; and integrated marketing communication. Marketing communication is studied at the overall level of marketing communication as a whole, and at the levels of its composite parts. This is because marketing communication is an extensive field and an industry, with career opportunities in marketing communication management and in the separate fields that comprise it. Marketing communication and its subfields are offered at both theoretical and skills levels by universities, colleges and other academic institutions.

## Selected fields of communication: Boundaries and relationships

In 1989, Annette Shelby wrote 'Organizational, business, management, and corporate communication: an analysis of boundaries and relationships, an article published in *Journal of Business Communication*, in which she identifies relationships and boundaries between organizational communication (which she identifies as two separate fields), business management and corporate communication. Using criteria similar to those of her analysis, the fields have been re-assessed. Different titles are used in some cases, and the original title has been expanded to include public relations and marketing communication.

Shelby's analysis of communication fields evaluates each field on the grounds of variables that Shelby terms *dyad*, *collectivity*, *inside*, *outside*, *intervention*, *investigation*, *variables*, *skills*, *theory*, *method* and *discipline*. They are defined as follows.

*Dyad*, degree to which the field is characterised by dyadic communication, or the communication that occurs between two people.  
*Collectivity*, degree to which the field is characterised as communication from one to many people within a group or between groups.  
*Intervention*, degree to which the field is characterised as internal communication, occurring within an organisation.

4. **Outside:** Degree to which the field is characterised as external communication, occurring between the organisation and its environment.
5. **Intervention:** Degree to which the field is characterised as existing to achieve organisational goals (as functional).
6. **Investigation:** Degree to which the field is characterised as a study, the aim being to understand or describe the communication phenomenon.
7. **Analysis:** Degree to which the field is characterised by reductionism – that is, the attempt to analyse the communication phenomenon through the study of its parts.
8. **Synthesis:** Degree to which the field is characterised by holism and the generation of encompassing theories – that is, the attempt to analyse the communication phenomenon through the study of the whole and the contribution of the parts to the whole.
9. **Skills:** Degree to which the field is characterised by a focus on skills or craft.
10. **Theory:** Degree to which the communication field is characterised by systematic explanatory or predictive principles.
11. **Method:** Degree to which the communication field is characterised as a range of techniques.
12. **Discipline:** Degree to which the communication field is characterised as a discrete coherent field of study.

The second phase of assessment places each field's descriptors into contrasting pairs:

dyad	collectivity
inside	outside
intervention	investigation
analysis	synthesis
skills	theory
method	discipline

In the third phase of assessment, the coupled pairs are clustered into three classifying groups. Shelby (1993) names these groups *system*, *process* and *product*; but they are changed here for purposes of clarity. *System* is replaced with *scope*, *process* with *means*, and *product* with *goal*. These terms are defined as follows:

- **Scope criteria:** The fields' areas of interest.
- **Means criteria:** The methods by which the fields are studied and practised.
- **Goal criteria:** The fields' objectives.

Each classifying group is laid out as a matrix comprising two axes, with each axis comprising a coupled pair of descriptors, the first on the x-axis, and the second on the y-axis.

- Scope criteria comprise the *inside–outside* and the *dyad–collectivity* coupled descriptors.
- Means criteria comprise the *intervention–investigation* and the *analysis–synthesis* coupled descriptors.
- Goal criteria comprise the *method–discipline* and the *theory–skills* coupled descriptors.

Using Shelby's (1993) basic set of evaluation criteria, the fields that have been discussed above are specified in more detail below, with graphic depictions of these specifications and their comparisons provided in figures 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

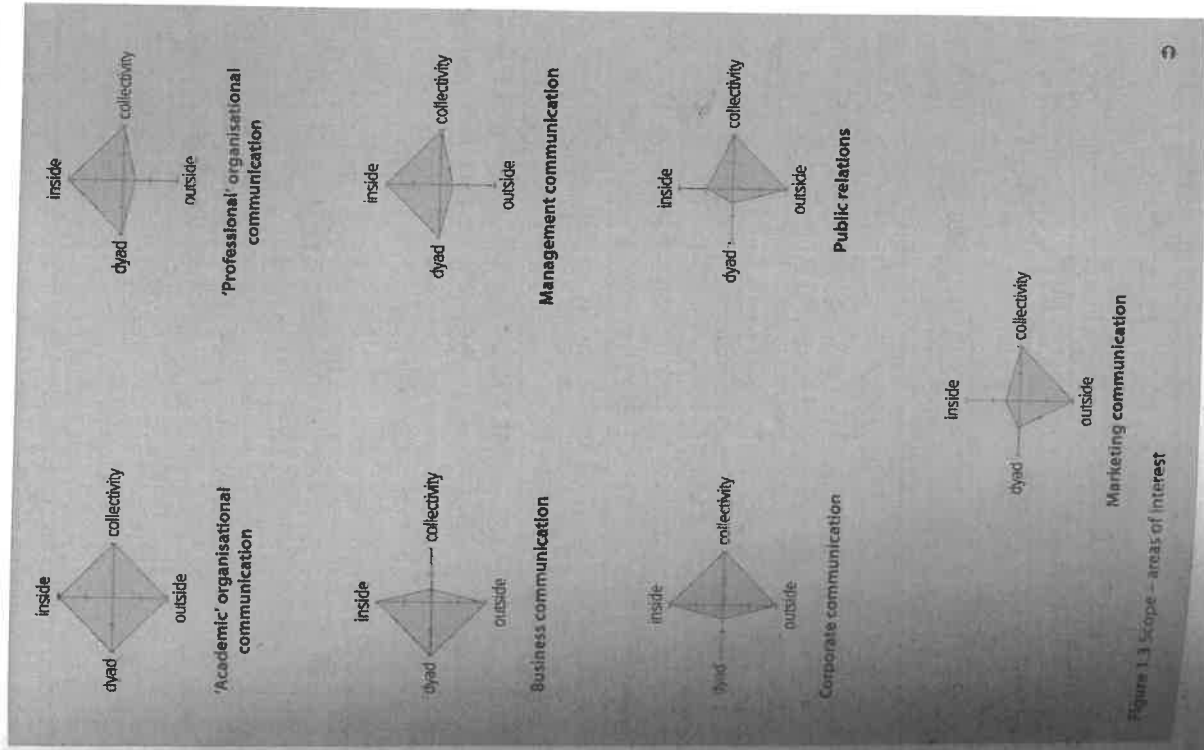


Figure 1.3 Scope – areas of interest

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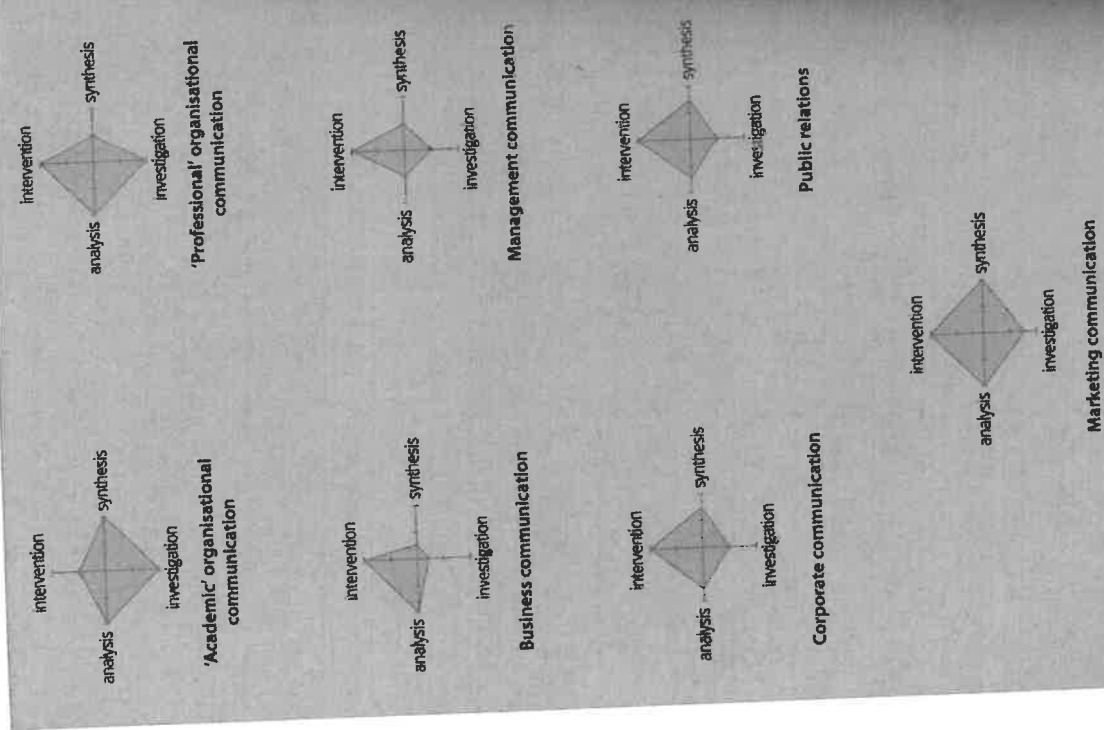


Figure 1.4 Means – methods of study and practice

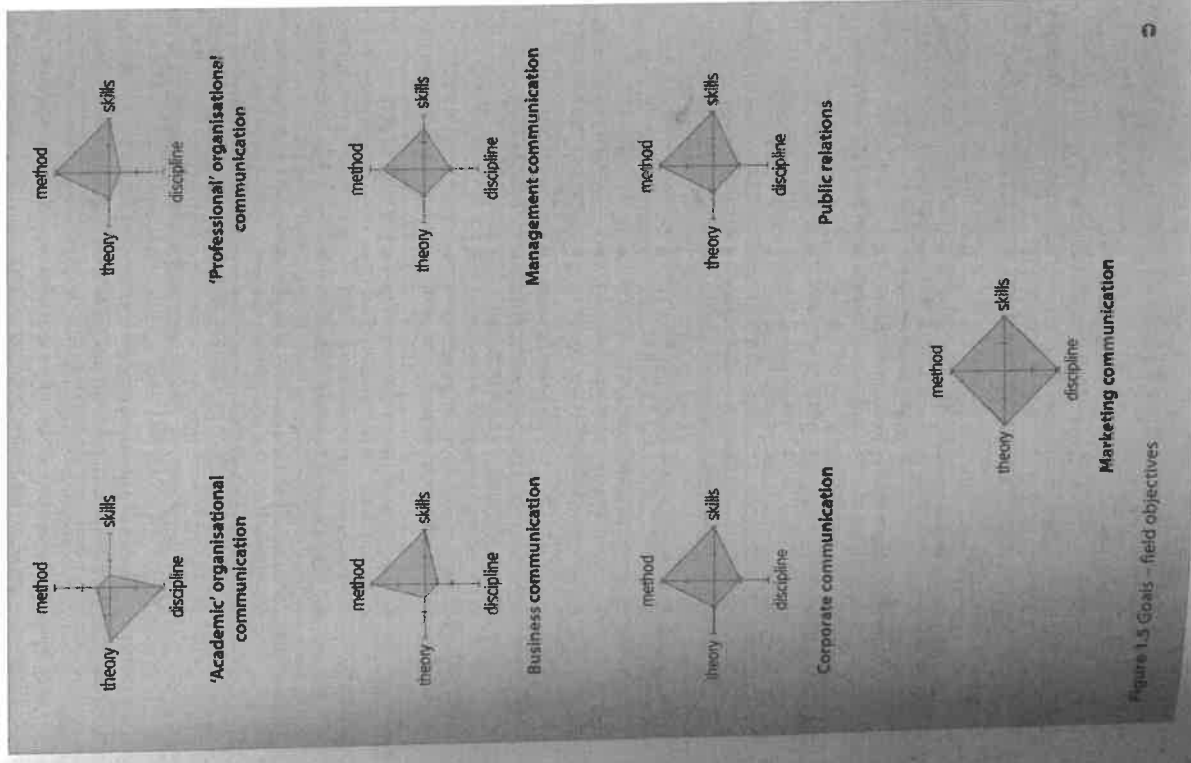


Figure 1.5 Goals – field objectives



The most prominent fields of communication in business and organisations have been discussed above. The relationships that exist between these fields, their boundaries and the areas in which they overlap can be understood in terms of their areas of interest (their scope), the way that they are studied and practised (their means), and their objectives (their goals). A summary of these relationships is provided in tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 1.1 The fields' areas of interest (their scope)

Field	Area of interest
'Academic' organisational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ internal and external communication embraces interpersonal, group and mass communication</li> <li>■ external communication forms smaller area of interest than organisations' internal communication</li> <li>■ interpersonal, group and mass communication focuses extensively on internal communication</li> </ul>
'Professional' organisational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ internal and external communication</li> <li>■ primary interest in written communication</li> <li>■ includes some oral communication</li> <li>■ dyadic communication is strongly emphasised</li> <li>■ small degree of interest in communication between groups</li> </ul>
Business communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ limited interest in external communication</li> <li>■ emphasis on internal communication</li> <li>■ communication at the levels of the individual and group</li> </ul>
Management communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ management of communication with all stakeholders, internal and external</li> <li>■ communication mostly oriented towards groups</li> <li>■ limited interest in dyadic communication</li> </ul>
Corporate communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ traditionally more active in external communication</li> <li>■ limited internal focus</li> <li>■ addresses communication at the interface between an organisation and its stakeholders</li> <li>■ emphasis on mass and group communication</li> <li>■ interpersonal communication forms a smaller, but significant, area of focus</li> </ul>
Public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ primary external, collective communication focus</li> <li>■ field now includes a small degree of internal communication to address the organisation's personnel</li> <li>■ dyadic communication has increased with the opportunities made possible by technology</li> </ul>
Marketing communication	

Table 1.2 Methods used in the fields (their means)

Field	Methods
'Academic' organisational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ reductionistic and holistic approaches</li> <li>■ explanation and description of communication in the context of the organisation</li> <li>■ intervention is not a universal priority in the field</li> </ul>
'Professional' organisational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ practical application is dominant</li> <li>■ far more intervention and analysis than synthesis and investigation</li> <li>■ a small degree of research, theoretical development and consolidation</li> <li>■ theory generally borrowed from other fields</li> <li>■ theory applied to situations of actual organisational communication practice</li> </ul>
Business communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ oriented towards practical intervention in practice</li> <li>■ aimed at better performance</li> <li>■ generation and integration of theory</li> <li>■ attempts to understand and describe business communication not extensive</li> </ul>
Management communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ strongly focused on the application of communication theories, methods and techniques of management</li> <li>■ greater emphasis on intervention and less on research or theoretical analysis and synthesis</li> </ul>
Corporate communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ traditionally focused on intervention</li> <li>■ extensive increase in research and theoretical development in the last two decades</li> </ul>
Public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ focused on practice and professional application</li> <li>■ has generated an extensive body of theory and research</li> <li>■ most theoretical interest on application in narrow areas of practice</li> <li>■ some theoretical interest also in the field as a whole</li> </ul>
Marketing communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ primarily concerned with intervention and effective practice</li> <li>■ characterised, as an academic field, equally by substantial research and theoretical development</li> <li>■ theoretical development in fundamental and applied areas</li> </ul>

Table 1.3 The fields' objectives (their goals)

Field	Objectives
'Academic' organisational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ a discrete, coherent field of study</li> <li>■ little attention given to methods and skills</li> <li>■ overwhelmingly focused on theory and theoretical exploration</li> </ul>
'Professional' organisational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ extensively focused on methods of practice and skills</li> <li>■ some disciplinary development</li> <li>■ embraces a significant body of theory that is primarily derived from other disciplines</li> </ul>
Business communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ overwhelmingly focused on method and skills</li> <li>■ demonstrates few of the characteristics of a discipline</li> <li>■ limited theoretical foundation</li> </ul>
Management communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ focuses fairly strongly on method and skills</li> <li>■ has a substantial theoretical base</li> <li>■ may be characterised as a discipline and a coherent field of study</li> <li>■ as a discipline, however, does not demonstrate the same depth as, for example, 'academic' organisational communication</li> </ul>
Corporate communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ strongly focused on the generation of effective and efficient skills and methods of operation</li> <li>■ demonstrates, through recent work, significant disciplinary traits with a sound theoretical foundation</li> </ul>
Public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ very similar to corporate communication</li> </ul>
Marketing communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ centrally focused on the efficient and effective operation of an organisation, particularly in relationships with customers or clients</li> <li>■ strongly focused on method and skills</li> <li>■ has a significant theoretical foundation</li> <li>■ comprises strong disciplinary traits</li> <li>■ disciplinary stature is understandable as it comprises other significant fields such as advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing</li> </ul>

### 1.5 The strategic role of communication

Before discussing in depth the strategic role of communication, it is necessary to explain what is meant by the word 'strategic' and what it means to define a strategy. In the sections that follow, strategy and its related concepts are defined and the various levels of strategy are identified. The relationship between communication and strategy, and the strategic role of communication in the organisation, are also discussed.

### 1.5.1 Defining 'strategy'

The term 'strategy' is derived from the Greek word *strategia*, meaning the art of war. The term was therefore first used in the context of warfare and it is only since the early 1960s that it has been applied to business management (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1995; Mansfield, 1997).

Chandler (1962: 13) articulated one of the first definitions of strategy in the business context, namely: 'The determination of the basic goals and the objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals.' Chandler's definition encompasses three main themes, namely:

1. Determination of goals and objectives (for example improving profitability or market share).
2. Adoption of certain courses of action (for example developing a new product).
3. Allocation of resources (for example natural, financial, technological and human resources).

A well-known conceptualisation of the strategy concept is Mintzberg's (1987) five Ps – five related definitions of strategy:

1. Strategy as *plan*: an intended course of action. This definition implies that strategy is forward-looking; it is developed in advance of the actions to which it applies. Strategy is intentional and purposeful (for example, a plan to cut labour costs might include automation of manufacturing processes).
2. Strategy as *ploy*: a specific manoeuvre to outwit an opponent. Strategy is developed with the intention to protect or support an organisation's competitive position. In this sense, strategy may take the form of announcements or threats in order to pre-empt competitive action. By implication, strategy as a ploy consists of announcements or threats of certain actions rather than the actions themselves (for example, a company announces its intentions to develop a new product in the hope of discouraging competitors from doing the same).
3. Strategy as *pattern*: strategy emerging through a stream of consistent actions. In some instances, strategy is not a preconceived plan but rather the result of a range of actions taken by an organisation. Therefore, strategy is detected in retrospect through looking back and discerning patterns in the organisation's behaviour (for example its tendency to headhunt individuals for certain positions as opposed to widely advertising the position).

Strategy as *position*: the mediating force between the organisation and the environment. Strategy is seen as achieving the best fit between the internal context and capabilities of the organisation and the characteristics and demands of the external environment (for example a niche strategy where the organisation has unique resources and capabilities to satisfy a particular need).

Strategy as *perceptives*: an ingrained way of perceiving the world. Strategy is equated to the character of an organisation – that is, an organisation's particular way of acting and responding which is shared by the members of an organisation (for example, some organisations are known as leaders in their industries, others as followers).

It is important to realise that one definition is not more important than another and that at any given point in time an organisation's strategy might display characteristics of any or all of the definitions.

### 1.5.2 Extensions of the strategic concept

The strategic concept is applied in a number of extended contexts, some of which are significant and warrant further attention. Those considered here are *strategic management*, *strategic planning*, *strategic thinking* and *strategic decision making*.

#### Strategic management

The strategic management literature is vast and there are numerous definitions, frameworks, models and approaches associated with strategic management. This section provides an overview of the main themes in the strategic management literature.

Strategic management can be defined as the coordination and monitoring of an organisation's strategy development and implementation processes. In a review of the strategic management literature, Katsoulakos and Katsoulakos (2007) identify three key strategic issues (also referred to as dimensions of strategy) that managers need to address: *value creation*, *responsiveness* and *responsibility*.

#### Value creation

To be profitable, an organisation needs to create more value than its competitors. Value means different things to different stakeholders. For example, customers want products or services that offer value for money, while investors want a good return on their investment in the organisation. Employees want job satisfaction, market-related salaries and fair treatment in return for their expertise and labour.

Over the last four decades there have been various approaches to strategic management for value creation. Traditionally, strategic management was seen as a series of sequential steps – that is, analysing the organisation's internal and external environment, setting goals and objectives, developing plans to achieve these objectives, implementing the plans, and monitoring the progress and success of implementation. This was known as the *planned approach* to strategic management (Chen, 2005).

The major drawback of the planned approach is that it is based on the assumption that the business environment is relatively stable and predictable. As this is rarely the case, the planned approach is too prescriptive and will not lead to optimal business decisions. As a result, organisations began focusing on obtaining a competitive advantage by configuring their value chains more efficiently than competitors with the *outside-in approach* (Chen, 2005; Katsoulakos & Katsoulakos, 2007). The value chain concept recognised the important role of all parties that are involved, from the development and processing of raw materials to the delivery of the finished product. The organisation is not necessarily directly involved in all the steps between the development of raw materials and the delivery of the final product. Its success is therefore dependent on the performance of other organisations in the value chain.

During the 1990s the emphasis shifted inward to the organisation's core competencies, those distinctive capabilities that set it apart from its competitors.

(the *inside-out approach*). More recent approaches focus on the learning capabilities (the *learning approach*) and knowledge assets of organisations such as the expertise and experience of employees (the *knowledge management approach*) (Katsoulakos & Katsoulakos, 2007). Because the external environment is changing rapidly, organisations need to adapt to these changes quickly. Thus organisations that succeed in acquiring new knowledge and skills quickly, or that tap into existing knowledge assets, are able to better adjust to new opportunities and challenges in the environment.

One of the most recent approaches to strategic management is the *stakeholder approach*. This approach is based on the relational view of the organisation, with the recognition that various groups and individuals are influenced by the actions of the organisation and that, conversely, these individuals and groups can have an influence on the actions of the organisation (Freeman, 1984). For example, government can influence an organisation's actions through legislation; suppliers can influence an organisation's manufacturing processes if they are not willing or able to provide the necessary materials.

#### Responsiveness

As the business environment became more volatile and unpredictable, there was increasing interest in a more dynamic or responsive approach to strategic management. Mintzberg (1994) was one of the first scholars to realise that there could be large differences between the strategy developed prior to implementation (*intended strategy*) and the strategy that is actually realised during execution (*realised strategy*). For example, due to environmental changes, some aspects of intended strategy might not be realised. Furthermore, Mintzberg (1994) points out that although strategy can be deliberate (*intended strategy*) it can also evolve through a learning process and from adaptation to environmental changes (*emergent strategy*). The concept of emergent strategy incorporates responsiveness in the strategic management process.

Responsiveness has not featured strongly in the traditional planned approach to strategic management but it can be detected in the inside-out (core competence), learning and stakeholder approaches to strategic management:

- The inside-out approach enables organisations to respond to a changing environment by reconfiguring their core competencies.
- The learning approach helps organisations to adapt through innovation – that is, learning how to do business better or differently in response to changes in the environment.
- The stakeholder approach enables organisations, through stakeholder engagement, to identify trends and issues, to act proactively and take corrective measures (Katsoulakos & Katsoulakos, 2007).

#### Responsibility

The responsibility dimension of strategic management involves the ethical behaviour of organisations and the *economic*, *social* and *environmental* impact of their actions. As society becomes more aware of the negative impact that organisations can have (for example fraud, unfair labour practices or pollution), pressure on organisations to

earn their 'licence to operate' increases. One outcome of this is the corporate social responsibility movement which promotes the triple bottom line approach (profit, people and planet) to business management. In the past, an organisation's strategies were geared exclusively towards profitability. Nowadays, organisations are held accountable for their negative impact upon – or positive contribution to – social and environmental well-being as well.

The stakeholder approach to strategic management is especially relevant to the responsibility dimension of strategic management. Previously, when the profitability motive was the only or most important consideration, shareholders/investors were one of the few stakeholder groups whose needs and concerns were taken into account. With the current emphasis on the triple bottom line, organisations now need to identify and engage with groups and individuals who experience the organisation's social and environmental impact as well.

### Strategic planning

Strategic planning is the process through which strategy is operationalised. In other words, strategic planning involves decisions on the implementation of strategy by various functions or departments in the organisation (Steyn & Puth, 2000). Strategic plans are implemented to improve the organisation's performance (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2002) and to provide staff members and stakeholders with information regarding the direction the organisation is intending to take (Schraeder, 2002).

However, strategic planning is not without its weaknesses. According to Schraeder (2002), the term 'strategic planning' typically conjures up images of a lengthy, elaborate and expensive process, reserved for the most senior managers. In today's changing environment, this is neither realistic nor ideal. The knowledge and expertise of staff members of all ranks should be incorporated in the strategic planning process.

Another weakness is the *fallacy of prediction* (Mintzberg, 1994). This refers to the assumption that the world comes to a standstill while the strategic plan is being developed, and will maintain its predicted course while the plan is being implemented. This assumption simply does not reflect reality.

### Strategic thinking

Strategic thinking entails the articulation of top management's broad vision of the future and the direction of the organisation (Steyn & Puth, 2000). Mintzberg (1994) refers to an integrated perspective of the enterprise and a 'not-too-precisely articulated vision of direction'. Strategic thinking is based on a systems view (or a holistic view) in the manner in which different parts of the organisation and the external environment influence each other. Furthermore, it is aware of the interconnectivity between the present and future. Strategic thinking enables organisations to recognise and take advantage of emerging opportunities – to be intelligently opportunistic (Liedtke, 1990).

### Strategic decision making

Strategic decision making underlies the development and implementation of strategy and is based on analyses of the environment, the organisation's resources

and culture, and stakeholder expectations (Steyn & Puth, 2000). In other words, various types of information are needed to make informed decisions. According to McNeilly (2002), the success of strategic decisions depends, among other things, on an effective communication system. It is insufficient to simply gather the information; a communication infrastructure is necessary to ensure that the gathered information reaches decision makers timorously. See *Strategy communication* for an in-depth discussion of communication's role in strategic decision making.

### 1.5.3 Levels of strategy

Organisations are generally characterised by hierarchical structure – layers of people with different degrees of seniority and managerial responsibilities working in different departments. Owing to this structure, different strategies are developed and implemented at the various levels. Furthermore, different stakeholders are addressed according to different levels of strategy. There are five levels of strategy, namely *enterprise strategy, corporate strategy, business strategy, functional strategy* and *operational strategy* (Steyn, 2007).

#### Enterprise strategy

Enterprise strategy is the broadest in scope and is not always formally or explicitly articulated. According to Freeman (1994), enterprise strategy identifies the organisation's relationship with society. In other words, it is concerned with the organisation's mission and role in society and is therefore primarily stakeholder oriented (Steyn & Puth, 2000).

In terms of the triple bottom line approach (see *Strategic management*), enterprise strategy is more concerned with an organisation's social and environmental impact – that is, its non-financial goals. It is specifically concerned with corporate governance, socially responsible behaviour, corporate citizenship and reputation (Steyn, 2007). Broadly speaking, enterprise strategy is aimed at building trust between the organisation and the society in which it operates.

#### Corporate strategy

Corporate strategy defines either the business domain in which an organisation operates at a certain point in time or the range of business opportunities that are available to the organisation (Freeman, 1994). Strategy at this level is seen as the responsibility of top management and the board of directors, and involves decisions such as the addition of new businesses (through mergers, acquisitions, internal development or strategic alliances) or the discarding of existing businesses (Wahidinjan & Clark, 1994). Corporate strategy is primarily concerned with the financial goals of organisations (Steyn, 2007).

#### Business strategy

Business strategy guides an organisation's efforts in establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage in a specific product, market or industry segment. In other words, business strategy is primarily marketing oriented. Some organisations might have more than one business strategy because they compete with different products

in various markets and industries. It is therefore important that the relationships between these business strategies and the priority accorded to each are clearly set out (Mansfield, 1997; Steyn & Puth, 2000).

#### Functional strategy

Functional strategies are developed for each functional area in an organisation, for example marketing, public relations, human resources and finance. The purpose of functional strategies is to indicate what each functional area must do to support the business and corporate strategies. The emphasis is on optimal utilisation of resources and coordination between functional areas (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Varadarajan & Clark, 1994).

#### Operational strategy

Operational strategy is concerned with short-term objectives and implementation strategies (actics) for a particular function. The emphasis is on the cost effectiveness of functions and operating units (Steyn & Puth, 2000).

It is important to realise that these levels of strategy are more conceptual than real in nature. In other words, in practice, the distinctions between the levels might not always be clear. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to determine at which level a particular issue should be addressed. Furthermore, the levels of strategy development and implementation depend on an organisation's structure (Mansfield, 1997; Steyn & Puth, 2000; Varadarajan & Clark, 1994).

#### 1.5.4 The relationship between strategy and communication

Moss and Warnaby (1998) explain the relationship between strategy and communication by distinguishing between two concepts: *strategy communication* and *communication strategy*. A third concept can be added, namely *communication of strategy*. These three concepts are interrelated and shed light on the various strategic roles of communication.

#### Strategy communication

Strategy communication was originally described as the role of communication in facilitating the development and implementation of the organisation's strategy (Moss & Warnaby, 1998). Traditionally, the communication function/department (and notably corporate communication/public relations) was seen only as a support function to the strategy-making processes of the organisation – that is, communicating the strategy in order for internal and external stakeholders to understand and accept it. From this perspective, the communication function is not integral to the strategic decision-making processes.

In recent years, there have been calls for the more direct involvement of the communication function in the strategic decision-making processes of the organisation. Steyn and Niemann (2008) suggest that communication practitioners should make a contribution to the formulation of enterprise strategy – that is, the level of strategy concerned with the organisation's relationship with society. The communication

function is actively involved in building and maintaining relationships with the organisation's various stakeholders (for example employees, suppliers, customers and clients, investors, government, pressure groups, the media, and so on). In order to build and maintain these relationships, the communication function is constantly scanning the environment for relevant trends and issues, and the stakeholders associated with them. The communication function is therefore well equipped to participate in decision making at the enterprise strategy level.

Likely (2003) proposes a model for strategic management that highlights how the communication function can contribute more directly to the development and implementation of strategy:

- *Defining organisational identity:* Communication functions such as internal branding and the management of stakeholder relations and corporate reputation help to define the organisation's identity, both internally and externally.
- *Providing information for the evaluation of the external environment:* Functions with 'external windows' are ideal for providing valuable information about the state of the external environment by means of environmental scanning. Steyn and Puth (2000) refer to this as the mirror function of corporate communication.
- *Providing information for the evaluation of the internal environment:* The internal communication function is ideal for the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the organisation's structure, information and communication systems, and management, therefore providing input into the strategy development process.
- *Focusing on the big picture during intended strategy formulation:* Owing to the boundary-spanning role of communication (interaction with the organisation's environment), this can point out cause-and-effect relationships, for example how a decision concerning one stakeholder group might have an (unintended) effect on another.
- *Acting as change agent during strategy execution:* Strategy execution requires the entire organisation to change in some way, for example by improving quality or productivity. The strategic role of communication is to help organisational members to understand the nature and implications of these changes.
- *Acting as an early-warning system of changes (discontinuity) in the external environment:* The contemporary business environment is characterised by constant change. It is crucial to identify these changes at an early stage so that the organisation's strategy can be adapted accordingly. Environmental changes differ in intensity and impact, thus the strategic role of communication might range from issues tracking and management to full-blown crisis management.
- *Identifying and illuminating emergent strategy:* Emergent strategy is formulated and implemented from the bottom up. In other words, changes are first made to operational strategy. Information about these changes should therefore be conveyed to the rest of the organisation so that alterations can also be implemented at the higher levels of strategy.
- *Providing information for the evaluation of actual realised strategy:* Besides evaluating specific communication programmes and campaigns, communication's boundary-spanning role enables it to provide top management and other functional departments with information that helps them to assess the achievement of various strategic objectives.



### Communication strategy

Communication strategy is an example of functional strategy – that is, the strategy developed by the communication function itself. This strategy is derived from the enterprise and corporate strategies, and provides the framework for the organisation's communication with its various stakeholders (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Steyn, 2007). Stated differently, communication strategy indicates what must be communicated to the organisation's various stakeholder groups. Developing a communication strategy is one of the strategic roles of communication, as the communication strategy contributes to the success of overall organisational strategy.

### Communication of strategy

Communication of strategy is necessary to ensure consistency (strategic coherence) between the different levels of strategy formulation (enterprise, corporate, business, functional and operational) and implementation in an organisation. During the formulation of intended strategy, communication of strategy takes place primarily from the top down. For example, corporate strategy is derived from enterprise strategy and operational strategy from functional strategy. However, during the formation and implementation of emergent strategy the process is reversed; communication of strategy now takes place from the bottom up. Changes are made to operational strategy, followed by changes to high-level strategies.

Also note that communication of strategy is closely related to the original definition of strategy communication, namely communicating the organisation's strategic direction to internal and external stakeholders. Regarding internal stakeholders, it is necessary to build a climate of trust and understanding between managers and employees in order for strategy to be successfully implemented. Employees have to take ownership of the organisation's strategy. Furthermore, messages to external stakeholders have to be aligned with the strategic intent (mission and vision) of the organisation.

## 1.6 Summary

This chapter is an introduction to some of the key issues in the discipline of organisational communication. The communication phenomenon is discussed, and it is noted that where an instrumental, pragmatic approach is taken, communication is commonly seen as a mechanistic phenomenon. Where a social, interactive approach is taken, communication is commonly seen as an interactional phenomenon. The chapter proceeds with an overview of organisations and a review of a number of prominent fields that deal with communication in the context of the organisation. The fields include business communication, management communication, organisational communication, corporate communication, public relations and marketing communication. Each one is briefly discussed, and the relationships between them are explored. In conclusion, the chapter addresses the strategic role of communication in organisations. The concept 'strategy' is explored, and the strategic role of communication in the organisation is discussed in depth.

### Activities

1. Identify one communication event in an organisation of your choice. This event could be internal or external, intentional or unintentional. First describe the communication event as a phenomenon of mechanistic communication and then describe the same event as a phenomenon of interactive communication. Compare the two descriptions and discuss the benefits of each in attempting to understand the communication event, its significance, causes and effects.
2. Define business communication, management communication, organisational communication, corporate communication, public relations and marketing communication.
3. Identify one or two communication functions, practices or events that clearly illustrate the nature of each of the following communication fields: business communication, management communication, 'academic' organisational communication, 'professional' organisational communication, corporate communication, public relations and marketing communication.
4. Using the criteria *area of interest, methods of study and practice and objectives*, differentiate between the fields of communication that are described in this chapter.
5. Briefly explain what is meant by the value creation, responsiveness and responsibility dimensions of strategic management.
6. Give examples of strategy at each of the following levels: enterprise, corporate, business, functional and operational.
7. Discuss the difference between strategy communication and communication strategy. To illustrate the difference, give examples of each.

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Communication integration can therefore be defined as the cross-functional process of creating and nourishing strategically determined relationships with stakeholders by ensuring that the messages to these groups are as appropriate and beneficial to the business relationship as possible, and engaging in purposeful dialogue with them (adapted from Duncan, 2002).

### 2.3 The evolution of communication integration

As a basic principle that guides communication planning and implementation, communication integration has its origins in marketing communication. It has however, expanded to include the full range of organisational communication fields on the one hand, and all areas of business and marketing on the other. Christensen *et al.* (2008), Cornelissen and Lock (2001), Duncan (2002), Duncan and Caywood (1998), Hutton (1996), and Van Riel (1995) suggest a time line for the evolution of communication integration that is illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Time line: The evolution of communication integration

Prior to the Industrial Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Most manufacture and trade was undertaken by individuals who dealt directly with each other at their own premises or at markets</li> <li>■ Relationships were direct and personal</li> <li>■ Communication was invariably interpersonal and was rarely mediated</li> </ul>
The Industrial Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The process of production was significantly changed from custom manufacture to mass production</li> <li>■ Communication was increasingly standardised and addressed to a mass audience</li> <li>■ Marketing communication lost its interpersonal nature as manufacturers and customers became less involved with one another</li> <li>■ Communication was increasingly mediated through agents, distributors, retailers and the mass media</li> </ul>
1920s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The first consistent attempt to co-ordinate communication was through the widespread implementation of 'house-style manuals'</li> <li>■ These offered clear and consistent guidelines on corporate design and corporate identity</li> </ul>
After World War II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Worldwide consumption increased</li> <li>■ Companies focused on selling and promotion</li> <li>■ While personal selling remained extremely important, marketing communication budgets swung strongly towards advertising, with it becoming common to find up to 70% of total marketing communication budgets allocated to it</li> <li>■ The rationale behind this shift was that advertising, through the media of the time, could reach large percentages of the market and was perceived to be extremely powerful</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 2 Communication integration

George Angelopoulos

if the process used for building brand relationships is not properly managed, it will produce confusion ... Unlike the auto industry ... it is virtually impossible to recall 1 000 000 relationships to replace a broken promise.

Duncan & Moriarty (1997b)

### 2.1 Introduction

From the previous chapter it is evident that all communicators in the broad discipline of organisational communication strive for coherence but that the discipline is characterised by fragmentation. Fragmentation exists in the practice of communication in perceptions of the broad discipline itself and in the many ways in which it is studied in the academic environment. As a response to such fragmentation and its consequences there has been a growing tendency to harmonise the separate aspects of organisations communication within a perspective that may be termed 'communication integration or 'integrated communication'. Communication integration has become a central concern of academics and practitioners in the field of organisational communication. This chapter deals with:

- its origins, evolution and practice.

This chapter addresses the broad topic of communication integration but does not focus specifically on *integrated communication* or *integrated marketing communication* (IMC), which are formalised approaches to the fields of corporate communication, public relations and marketing communication, and are discussed in later chapters. The discussion here addresses all aspects of integration, including some that exist within integrated communication and IMC.

### 2.2 Defining communication integration

Communication integration is the alignment of all of an organisation's message including those created by the procedures and behaviours of the organisation and its people, in order to communicate clearly, consistently and with continuity within and across formal organisational boundaries (Christensen, Morsing & Chertow 2008). Added to the idea of 'aligned messaging' is that of stakeholder interaction - a particular way of interacting with the organisation's internal and external stakeholders that includes the capability to 'listen' and build ongoing relationships in a purposeful way that is in accordance with the organisation's strategy.

1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite the dominance of advertising and personal selling, attempts to implement marketing communication programmes in a harmonised manner became commonplace</li> <li>The four Ps paradigm (product, price, place and promotion) dominated marketing practice</li> <li>Organisations realised that their marketing elements had to be co-ordinated to function effectively</li> </ul>
1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies demanded more value for the money spent on marketing communication</li> <li>Many companies cut back on advertising and increased expenditure on other areas of marketing communication</li> <li>Many companies noticed that the messages delivered through the various elements of their communication mix were often different, and sometimes at odds with each other</li> <li>Methods were sought to consolidate diverse marketing messages</li> </ul>
1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration was seen as the process of including and aligning more of the communication disciplines – not only advertising – in the marketing communication plan so as to achieve greater impact</li> </ul>
1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many organisations saw marketing as the establishment of a relationship between brand and customer</li> <li>Communication was understood to embrace all sources of information, including those that did not originate in the organisation itself</li> </ul>
2000s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concept of communication integration extended from product brands to the organisations that market products</li> <li>Organisations attempted to integrate all facets of their operations such as supply, finance and manufacturing, with the communication and technology that facilitated these processes becoming increasingly important</li> <li>Greater efforts were made to manage the corporate brand in all relations with customers and other stakeholders</li> </ul>
Currently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information technology becomes central to most relationships and communication, both internal and external</li> <li>The power balance continues to tilt away from the organisation towards its stakeholders, with ever-increasing access to information and more opportunity for anyone to initiate communication about the organisation</li> <li>Fragmentation continues in media (with unprecedented diversity in many of its forms, be they traditional, digital or social); social groupings (alliances and formations become increasingly fluid and fickle); audiences (increasingly accessed only on their own terms); devices (TV, tablet, computer, billboard, phone and others); and roles (every individual has multiple roles, such as employee, customer, ally, opponent, communicator, and so on)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication type, time and place is increasingly determined by consumers and less by communicators</li> <li>Great media diversity but also global consolidation in ownership and control of hard and software platforms, search engines, digital, traditional and social media</li> <li>Audiences' selective perception and cynicism about planned communication increases as they select, ignore, interpret, reformulate or reject messages in ways that are increasingly difficult to predict</li> <li>Society increasingly demands ethical norms and open scrutiny into what organisations say and do</li> <li>Organisations might initiate the conversation in everything they are, say and do but they can rarely control it</li> <li>Communication is only one part messaging; the remainder is interaction with any stakeholders on an equal footing, on communication platforms chosen by them and not by the organisation</li> <li>Organisations have to 'integrate everything and everyone'</li> </ul>
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Duncan (2002) identifies three primary areas where change and evolution have led to the need for integration: external market trends, trends within organisations and societal demands for organisational integrity.

**1. External market trends:** The modern marketplace is characterised by a number of factors that favour an integrated approach to organisational communication. The availability of products and services in almost every category has increased to the extent that there is a sense of product overload in the market. Few products offer intangible differences, and new innovations can be copied easily and cheaply. Owing to the availability of so many brands that offer similar value, consumers are less loyal to individual brands. As products in similar price bands differ little in terms of quality, customers tend to buy on price. Consumers have become more sophisticated in their knowledge of products and less trusting of companies' claims. Commercial messages have saturated the market, with the result that fewer have a genuine impact on the consumer. As economies become more service based and less product based, the interpersonal relationships that are required in services become increasingly important.

**Trends within organisations:** A number of trends within organisations have increased the need for integration. As organisations grow, the number of departments within them also grows, requiring better co-ordination. The existence of numerous functions that deal with communication in an organisation enhances the possibility of producing conflicting messages. Organisations' mission statements, which are generally believed to motivate their staff and instil a single-minded purpose in their activities, are often meaningless, with the result that organisations do not give staff to achieve goals single-mindedly. The attempt to integrate marketing communication efforts has led to the integration of all internal and external organisational communication efforts. Integration of communication has become a central theme in corporate and marketing communications and has expanded

to embrace all commercial, external and internal messages generated by the organisation. Information technology has generated a range of communication opportunities that were inconceivable in the early 1990s but these are frequently misused and in such cases are of little benefit.

3. *Societies' demands for organisational integrity*: There is a growing societal demand for integrity in organisations of all kinds, whether they are businesses, services or government organisations. Each organisation is a brand that is perceived either positively or negatively. All interaction between these organisations and their stakeholders, including the interaction that is inherent in the service, products and communication that these organisations provide, results in their brand images. A holistic, integrated approach to communication, as opposed to a range of separate messages, has more chance of projecting a brand image of integrity.

## 2.4 The principles of communication integration

The way in which communication is understood and the way in which it is integrated has evolved extensively over time. It originated as a perspective on the consistency of messages in planned communications and has evolved to the current view of consistency of communication in every facet of the organisation and its relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Given our current insights, what are the key principles of communication integration? It is possible to identify five: market orientation; message alignment from all sources; implementation throughout the organisation; positioning as a strategic imperative; and, finally, recognition of communication integration's limitations and avoidance of its pitfalls.

### 2.4.1 Market orientation

Organisations are managed from a variety of perspectives. Within competitive economies, one of the more successful perspectives is best described as a 'market orientation'. A market orientation is a way of thinking and organising in which the needs of the organisation's key stakeholders are held as the starting point of all decisions and actions.

A market orientation is most commonly associated with businesses that produce and sell products, but its principles are applicable to organisations of all kinds. Organisations that offer services or ideas can also have a market orientation and, in this context, their customers can better be described as clients, stakeholders or audiences.

Communication integration is a process of thinking and organising that helps an organisation become and remain market oriented. It ensures that a market orientation is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation. It is a practical method of identifying customer needs, aligning the organisation's attempts to meet these needs and maintaining a dialogue with customers and other stakeholders throughout the process. Communication integration is not a complete solution but it contributes significantly to the maintenance of good relationships with customers, clients and other stakeholders. In addition, integration contributes to the co-ordination of activities in the organisation that make such relationships possible.

In many organisations, communication is seen as the function of specialised departments such as Corporate Communication, Public Relations or Marketing. But communication is not only a specialised function; it is part of every interaction in the modern organisation and in the organisation's relationships with stakeholders. Communication is part of the normal work of anyone in an organisation, with managers working with their staff, shop-floor workers co-ordinating their tasks, the chief executive officer working with the board of directors or a telephonist dealing with customer queries. All these people might be focusing on something other than communication, but communication invariably plays a role in their individual functions and in the relationship between these functions and the organisation as a whole. Because communication integration deals with more than specialised communication functions, it is related to all communication generated both by the organisation and about the organisation.

### 2.4.2 Align messages from all sources

An organisation's stakeholders form their opinions of the organisation (and its products, services or ideas) from a range of messages that accumulate to form the dominant perceptions that affect their relationship with the organisation. Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) identify four types of messages: planned, product, service and unplanned messages.

1. *Planned messages* are delivered through the communication mix. This includes marketing communication and other areas of corporate communication that fall outside the marketing communication sphere, and can include advertising, sponsorship, public relations and marketing public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling. Under certain circumstances, digital communication may also be considered part of these planned messages. These communication messages can be directed at customers as well as internal and other stakeholder audiences, and are transmitted in a way that is most closely aligned to the messages that are intended by the organisation.
  2. *Product messages* are inferred from, and comprise everything embedded in, the organisation's product. These include the product's design, the way in which it works, any problems that it might have, its functionality, the satisfaction of owning it, the means of its acquisition and disposal, and its perceived value.
  3. *Service messages* exist in the experience of dealing with the organisation and its staff, agents and products. The behaviour of the organisation's staff, its service environment, and the systems and technology that are in place to support its service all communicate some message about the organisation.
  4. *Unplanned messages* are generated beyond the reach of the organisation. They consist of rumours, word of mouth from other customers and the content of media messages that are not generated by the organisation.
- Planned messages are, of course, easiest for the organisation to implement and control but they tend to have the least impact because they are often perceived to be biased. Service and product messages have greater impact because they are perceived as actual experiences of the organisation and what it does or produces. Unplanned messages



are usually highly believable because their sources tend to be perceived as unbiased. Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) point out that integration exists when planned messages (what the organisation says) are confirmed by service and product messages (what the organisation does), and further confirmed by unplanned messages (what unbiased observers say) about the organisation, its services and products. For the organisation's communication to be integrated, messages from all four sources must be similar, positive and strong. The greatest challenge of integrating communication lies in the alignment of messages from all four sources.

### 2.4.3 Implement throughout the organisation

Communication integration requires consistent messages supported by consistent actions throughout the organisation. In light of the work of Grönroos (2000) and Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1988) and others in service quality and marketing, it is possible to identify five specific locations in the organisation that are centrally important to communication integration. The processes and interventions that occur at these locations directly determine the organisation's communication, its integration, and stakeholders' ultimate perception of the corporate brand, which is the dominant and overriding perception that they have of the organisation. These locations are the points where the organisation's mission is translated into strategy; where strategy is implemented; where external relationships are planned and executed; where service is delivered; and where stakeholder expectations of the organisation, its products and services are formed.

#### 1. The location where the organisation's mission is translated into strategy

This is where strategic decisions for the organisation are taken. Processes and communication in this location are in the domain of the organisation's dominant decision makers and senior management.

For communication integration to proceed at this point it is necessary that management:

- has a clear understanding of the mission of the organisation
- has a clear understanding of customers' and other stakeholders' needs, wants and requirements of the organisation, its product and services
- is able to develop strategy in line with its mission and the market's needs so that the organisation can deliver what is required in five areas: organisational structure, management, knowledge, attitudes and outputs.

The communication competencies required at this location are primarily strategic but should also include some expertise in management, business and organisational communication.

#### 2. The location where the organisation's strategy is implemented

The location where strategy is implemented usually occurs at managerial level. Managers translate and implement the organisation's strategy into specific objectives for the divisions of the organisation that create, maintain and support its products and services. These divisions can include production, systems and technical operations,

management and supervisor support, finance, human resources and training, amongst others.

For communication integration to proceed at this location, it is necessary that the managers of each of these functions:

- effectively translate strategy into the operational requirements of their divisions
- know and understand how the work done by their division contributes to the delivery of the organisation's service or product
- keep in touch with the people who deliver the product or service to the market in order to remain aware of what is happening at the point of product or service delivery, what it is like to deal with the company at that point, and what external stakeholders' needs are at that point.

The communication competencies needed at this location are strategic and managerial, while some expertise is required in the fields of management, business and professional organisational communication.

#### 3. The location where the organisation's external communications are planned and executed

External communication is normally produced and maintained by specialist communicators and might incorporate advertising, public relations, direct marketing or any of the other areas of planned communication. Specialist communicators may work directly for the organisation, operate as freelancers or be employed by an externally contracted service vendor.

For communication integration to proceed at this location it is necessary that the specialist communicators:

- have insight into the organisation's communication aims and strategy
- understand customers' and other external stakeholders' broad expectations of the product and service category in which the organisation is engaged, and their specific expectations of the organisation, its product and service.

The communication competencies required at this location are at the communication management and task levels, and expertise is required in the fields of public relations, corporate and marketing communication.

#### 4. The location where the organisation's service is delivered to the consumer, customer or client

Service delivery occurs at every point of contact between the customer and the organisation, its product or service. These include all points of contact before, during and after the sale; all interaction with the organisation's representatives; actual experience of the organisation's service, product and routines; and all experience of the organisation's equipment and resources. Everything that happens inside the organisation that the customer or client does not directly experience is either unknown or mere speculation. All contacts here are 'moments of truth' – moments where the

### 2.4.4 Make integration a strategic imperative

Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) suggest ten specific strategies (or drivers) for marketing integration. Their model is discussed here in the context of communication integration because it is strongly centred on communication. It incorporates a comprehensive list of processes that assist in the alignment of the organisation's operations for the profitable delivery of products, services and ideas, to ultimately satisfy consumer needs, and to do so over the long term.

The first two strategies have a *corporate* focus.

#### 1. Create and nourish relationships rather than just make transactions

Maintaining existing customers is less expensive than acquiring new customers. To maintain a customer it is essential to know the customer well, use this knowledge when communicating with the customer and, through credible communication, strengthen the relationship.

#### 2. Focus on all stakeholders rather than simply customers or shareholders

A good relationship with all stakeholders, not only shareholders and customers, determines the long-term value of a brand and its profitability. To achieve this, the stakeholder perspective of public relations should be incorporated more fundamentally in the objectives of the organisation.

The next four strategies address *operational processes*.

#### 3. Maintain strategic consistency rather than independent brand messages

There is a communication dimension to all contact with a brand, and each area of brand contact should be infused with the 'big idea' behind the brand to ensure consistency and integrity.

#### 4. Generate purposeful interactivity rather than merely a mass-media monologue

While it is important to speak to customers, it is just as important to listen to them. The more possibilities there are for receiving feedback from customers, the greater the possibilities for integrating their needs into the organisation's planning and operations.

#### 5. Market the corporate mission rather than simply product claims

An organisation's mission contributes to the organisation only if it is integrated into every function of the organisation. Philanthropic and sponsorship activities that reflect the mission of the organisation contribute to strong stakeholder commitment.

#### 6. Use zero-based planning rather than adjust previous plans

Analysis and prioritisation of the brand's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (that is, a SWOT analysis) should precede all communication programmes. Communication functions that best and most cost effectively serve the campaign objectives are then selected. All communication strategies must be justified in terms

'truth' of the organisation is experienced. Each contact here is a message in itself and constitutes the reality of the organisation and its product in the mind of the customer. At this point, communication and its messages are largely embodied in the organisation's product and service. Service is delivered from many sources inside and outside the organisation, and some of these might be external suppliers or agents who are not in fact part of the organisation. Despite this, customers and other external stakeholders perceive the organisation, its service or product as a single entity, irrespective of the internal or external position of the people who represent it. It is therefore imperative that all elements in the supply chain operate as an integrated whole.

For communication to succeed at this location it must:

- meet or exceed the customers' and other external stakeholders' expectations
- present the product or service offering as a seamless entity.

The communication competencies needed at this location are at the task level, and some expertise is required at the implementation levels of marketing communication, business communication and public relations.

#### 5. The location where external stakeholder's expectations of the organisation, its products and services are formed

Although external stakeholders are the primary focus here, secondary effects on internal stakeholders must be considered when undertaking action at this point. Expectations originate from a number of sources:

- the wants and needs of stakeholders in general, and customers and clients in particular
- actual and perceived experiences
- unsolicited communication from sources other than the organisation and its agents
- the organisation's image
- the organisation's planned communication.

In many cases, the organisation has little influence on the formation of all expectations and is able to influence these expectations only through its repertoire of planned communication. Planned communication is generally suitable for making promises but in the long run the promises must be kept if the organisation is to sustain a level of expectation that will persuade the customer to return.

For communication to succeed at this point it must:

- only make promises that will be kept
- be sustained in the long run
- be supported by the messages that are conveyed in unplanned communication over which the organisation has little or no control
- be sustained by a strong and positive organisational reputation that can only be achieved through ongoing, satisfactory interaction with stakeholders.

The communication competencies necessary at this location are at the levels of strategy and communication management, and expertise is required in marketing communication, corporate communication, public relations, service management and customer relationship management.

### 1. The illusion of control

Communication integration implies the organisation's ability to understand all the factors that determine its relationship with its stakeholders and to be able to control them. In reality the ability of organisations to do this is limited – they might do so only some of the time or only in part. There are a few reasons for this.

The first is that the view that managers have of their organisation is at best a type of map that can never reflect the organisation in all its complexity. According to Christensen *et al.* (2009: 210):

...[w]hile the desire to produce a general overview of an object or a situation, including an organization's communication, is understandable, nobody ever meets an organization in full – neither its own members nor its external stakeholders. Nobody, therefore, is able to describe the organisation in its entirety.

The second reason is that the span of communication that the organisation controls is never the complete range to which stakeholders are exposed. People will frequently acquire different perspectives of the organisation, its products and services from sources other than the organisation, which has very little control over these alternative message sources.

Although communication integration strives for the co-ordination of all messages about the organisation, its products and services, its ability to control all communication is limited and will always be so. Total control of communication is illusory, and it is essential that communicators realise this limitation in order to be able to deal with the limited aspects over which they do have control.

### 2. Integration lies with the receiver, not the organisation

As much as communicators orchestrate their organisation's communication, perception of this communication is ultimately integrated in the minds of its recipients. No matter how carefully an organisation's messages might be formulated, stakeholders might perceive these messages very differently from the way in which the organisation intended them to be perceived. Moriarty (in Harris 1998: 293) observes that the brain gathers information from an untold number of contact points and assimilates it into one picture'. This picture is subjective and, to a greater or lesser degree, unique to each individual. It is rare that an organisation's messages will be accepted, perceived or integrated exactly as intended by the organisation.

There are a number of reasons that the messages formulated in the minds of an organisation's stakeholders often differ from those intended by communicators. People form perceptions of an organisation from different sources, of which the organisation is only one. As a result the array of messages about the organisation can differ substantially from those propagated by the organisation. Furthermore, receivers are not passive but are active, productive and creative (Christensen *et al.*, 2009). Their creativity means that messages are always judged and evaluated in terms of the recipient's individual state of mind, knowledge and experience.

In addition, the nature of consumers, markets and audiences has changed over time. In a globalised world, consumers are swamped with marketing messages, and many of them have become more distrustful, cynical, capable of grasping the

of the degree to which they advance communication objectives and contribute to a favourable relationship with customers. The mere adjustment of previous plans should be avoided.

The last four strategies relate to *organisational infrastructure*.

### 7. Use cross-functional rather than departmental planning and monitoring

A key concept in integration is the linking of expertise, knowledge and information across the breadth of the organisation. Expertise and customer information can be shared and customers can be treated consistently through management planning and monitoring across functions such as sales, marketing and customer service, without these functions actually being merged.

### 8. Create core competencies rather than merely communication specialisation and expertise

Communication managers must thoroughly understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual communication functions and methods so that they are able to select and apply them in the most appropriate way. Expertise in the individual fields of communication is less valuable than generalised expertise and the ability to plan and integrate comprehensive communication programmes. Specialised skills can always be outsourced.

### 9. Use an integrated rather than a traditional agency

Integration should preferably be overseen within the organisation rather than by external agencies, but where agencies are used, even in the execution of specialist functions, they should understand integration.

### 10. Build and manage databases to retain customers rather than simply acquire new ones

Information on customers' characteristics, transactions and other interactions with the organisation form the basis of a developed relationship between the organisation and the customer. This information must be collected, organised and shared within the organisation. Given the opportunities offered by modern technology, this has become far easier than was previously the case.

### 2.4.5 Recognise communication integration's limitations and avoid the pitfalls

Communication integration has its limitations and to achieve all that is possible through integration it is necessary to consider these. In addition, it is important to be aware of a number of pitfalls that can limit the success of an organisation's communication and integration. Those addressed here are: the illusion of control; that integration lies with the receiver, not the organisation; absence of communication; the time perspective; various types of communication; and the impact of unplanned communication.

intentions of marketers, and 'more adept at manipulating and integrating corporate symbols and messages into their own lives in ways that were not intended by the senders' (Christensen *et al.*, 2009: 212). The relationship that exists between consumers and stakeholder groups and the corporate messages to which they are exposed has become less intense and is increasingly subject to wide interpretation, reinterpretation and play. If communicators ignore this changed relationship, they test the gullibility of audiences and their messages can be more easily rejected as one dimensional or patronising (Christensen *et al.*, 2009; Thompson, 2004).

### 3. Absence of communication

In many instances where stakeholders require information about an organisation, the organisation remains silent and does not communicate. This is often the case when problems, emergencies or crises arise, or when the organisation is cast in a poor light. Organisations might feel that it is unnecessary to engage in communication, that no benefit can be gained from attempting to communicate, or that communication might actually have negative consequences. In some cases silence might not have serious consequences but, more often, silence has insidious effects that undermine the reputation of the organisation. Silence can also have serious and immediate consequences that negatively affect the organisation.

Grönroos (2000) points out that in certain circumstances the decision not to communicate acts as a message in itself. This is particularly the case during a crisis. Stakeholders often view an organisation which avoids communication as untrustworthy, uncaring about its public, or lacking respect (Grönroos, 2000). In these situations it is often better to convey negative information than not to communicate at all.

### 4. The time perspective of various types of communication

In planning communication activities it should be understood that all communication affects perceptions. If short-term campaigns clash conceptually with long-term ones the result is invariably negative. For the same reason, if communications have different objectives over a period of time, these need to be well co-ordinated to avoid confusion.

Specific types of organisational communication affect perceptions of the organisation in different ways. While all organisational communication has an impact, Grönroos (2000) points out that, generally, the impact of marketing communication is short term; the messages inherent in marketing are medium term and image, which is the accumulated 'residue' of all communication and interaction is long term. It is therefore important to consider the effect of different types of messages, as communication that might be effective in the short term could prove detrimental in the long term. For example, an effective advertising campaign for a defective radio might yield short-term sales but will prevent repeat purchases in the future.

### 5. The impact of unplanned communication

Planned communication is intended to yield certain results. However, Grönroos (2000) notes that an unforeseen outcome of such communication might be unplanned

messages that have either positive or negative effects. In the context of integration, unplanned messages must therefore be considered when planning and evaluating the communication of an organisation. Examples of unplanned results are a product name that is acceptable in most parts of the world but which has a negative connotation in a specific country, or the dress code of an organisation's representative that might be acceptable in some regions but inappropriate in others. It is therefore important that organisations assess all of their messages to see if any are inappropriate, and not focus only on their planned communications.

## 2.5 The management of communication integration

The implementation of communication integration is addressed in detail in other chapters of this book but it may be valuable at this point, and before integration is more specifically dealt with, to identify some general ways that it can be managed. Van Riel (1999: 11) describes four methods for managing communication integration or, as he terms it, communication orchestration. These are rules or directives; sequencing; routines; and group problem solving. These are not in themselves integration processes; they are methods for *managing* communication integration.

### 2.5.1 Rules or directives

Rules or directives are used to ensure standardisation in any area of communication practice. They include specified procedures, rules of communication practice, standardised information and standardised communication systems. The following are examples of rules and directives:

#### 1. Common house style

Van Riel (1997) notes that the common house style is one of the oldest forms of communication standardisation. 'House style' refers to the style of presentation that is accepted and used throughout an organisation. It originated in corporate design but has expanded to include many forms of organisational self-presentation. At its most basic, the common house style is a specification of the organisation's name, logo and corporate colours. In a more developed form, house style can include standardisation in many more areas of the organisation's presentation, including, for example, its architecture, symbolism or staff behaviour.

#### 2. Common starting points

Common starting points are a form of directive that is used to guide communication integration. Such points are described as 'central values which function as the basis for undertaking any kinds of communication envisaged by an organisation' (Van Riel, 1999: 12).

Common starting points create the priorities of a communication project. They do not dictate the procedures that must be followed in the project; these are specified in the next point dealing with operational guidelines. Common starting points can be applied to the planning frameworks of organisational units and to the people involved

implementation and evaluation sequence. Specific areas of the communication process that would be addressed include tasks, responsibilities and budgets.

Sequencing can also be implemented in the linking of communication processes to the organisation's broader operational cycle.

### 2.5.3 Routines

Routines are implicit protocols that structure the processes of communication professionals' tasks. Unlike the rules, directives or operational guidelines discussed above, routines are not overtly specified. They are processes that have become common practice through education, training or experience. An example is regular, informal discussion between a communications manager and the CEO of an organisation before communication strategy is developed and implemented, to ensure that communication is aligned with the organisation's overall objectives.

### 2.5.4 Group problem solving

A co-ordinating group might be required to oversee problems of integration when the process of communication integration becomes complex. Such a situation might result from the involvement of many people, the inclusion of different divisions of the organisation, or the inclusion of people with little communication expertise. Group problem solving is a more personal way of dealing with integration than the use of rules or directives, sequencing or organisational routines. Van Riel (1999) identifies three types of co-ordinating groups: steering committees; those undertaking annual or quarterly reviews; and those that make up *ad hoc* meetings.

#### 1. Steering committees

Communication integration could be implemented through the work of a steering committee that oversees communication as a whole, or that more specifically oversees communication integration. Such a group would not normally set overall communication policy or be responsible for the management of individual projects but would concern itself with the conformity of communications to specific principles such as integration. It should comprise senior members of all communication and related functions within the organisation to ensure that members who deal with communication are kept informed of current communication policies and practices.

#### 2. Annual or quarterly reviewing processes

Communication integration may be monitored on a regular basis through a review process that assesses an organisation's communication practice to ascertain whether it adheres to the principles of integration.

#### 3. Ad hoc meetings

Communication integration could be managed through a process of *ad hoc* meetings that address communication planning, co-ordination, implementation and evaluation.

in the communication project, whether they are employees of the organisation or outside suppliers of communication products and services.

These starting points can be used in a number of ways. If an organisation has many divisions, and some of these have names that are not identifiable with the parent organisation, a common starting point could be that the parent organisation's logo must be included in all divisions' communications, for example in letterheads, packaging and advertising. Similarly an organisation might adopt environmental sustainability as one of its core values. It can thus create, as a common starting point, a directive specifying that its promotional messages must include themes of environmental sustainability, or that all correspondence must be on recycled paper. The common starting points in these examples do not specify the exact form of communication; they specify only that the logo must appear in the communications of the first organisation, and that environmental sustainability must be integrated into the communication and operations of the second organisation.

### 3. Operational guidelines

Operational guidelines are specifications for the implementation of communication projects. These guidelines might highlight any areas of the communication project, including those that deal with integration.

Operational guidelines for communication integration can be implemented for every area of integration. The following are some examples:

- Guidelines could be specified for the selection of an advertising agency according to its ability to implement integrated campaigns.
- The number and variety of channels of interaction between audience and the organisation could be specified for the organisation's website.
- Specific procedures could be set for the transformation of every customer contact into a communication opportunity.
- The 'big idea', or central message, could be standardised for all promotional communication.
- Specifications could be set for the alignment of subsidiaries' communications campaigns with those of the parent organisation.
- The company could actively engage its stakeholders in a range of social media.
- Points of information capture and database use in the daily operations of the organisation could be specified.

### 2.5.2 Sequencing

Sequencing is the organisation of the planned communication process in such a way that each contributor in the process has an independent input that is given a specific time slot in planning, production and implementation. Sequencing is thus a carefully considered process during which communicators structure communication according to specific principles. In the case of communication integration, processes that ensure the co-ordination of messages, maximisation of dialogue with the audience, and ongoing focus on the needs of the audience are all allotted a position in the planning



These meetings should include individuals who oversee integration and the people responsible for its implementation.

## 2.6 The integration of corporate identity

The discussion above covers the topic of communication integration as it relates to the organisation as a whole. Communication integration can apply to the overall communication of an organisation or to narrower areas of communication within it, such as general marketing communication or specific aspects of advertising or public relations. To illustrate the application of communication integration to one specific focus area of communication, the case of corporate identity is described below.

Corporate identity is the self-presentation of an organisation through behaviour, communication and symbols (adapted from Van Rekom, Van Riel & Wierenga, 1991). Corporate identity is one of the more prominent aspects that many organisations consider when defining their relationship with customers, personnel and other important stakeholders. The application of this identity across the corporate enterprise is one of the more important aspects of communication that organisations must consider.

Corporate identity is applied through artefacts such as names, logos, graphics, colours, architecture, slogans, rituals and social attitudes, and similar presentation in all promotional material, across the organisational spectrum. Identity can further be integrated into the organisation's communication through the common application of these artefacts throughout its range of subsidiaries, products and services.

An organisation plans and implements a corporate identity for a variety of reasons. Olms (1989) has identified a number of the most important, which include the organisation's need to differentiate itself, its subsidiary companies, its products and its services from others. Corporate identity is used to generate a collective feeling of belonging among staff, and to strengthen links between the organisation and its stakeholders. The intention of a corporate identity might be to act as a guarantor of consistent quality and to contribute to the loyalty of customers and other stakeholders. Identity creates a coherent picture of an organisation and promotes recognisability and co-operation within the organisation's various departments. It furthermore acts as a symbol that economically communicates all that the organisation represents including its values, qualities, products and services. Einwiller and Will (2002) find that the integration of corporate identity is considered to be a prerequisite for success in the financial marketplace, the recruitment of suitable personnel, the creation of synergies between brands, co-ordination of multinational organisations, and the enhancement of an organisation's transparency.

Van Riel (1995: 39–47) identifies three main models for the application of integration) of corporate identity: *uniformity*, *endorsement* and *variety*. In practice corporate identity often incorporates elements from more than one model.

1. **Uniformity model:** The whole organisation, its subsidiaries and its brands have one identity. This model is mostly used in two situations. In the first, subsidiaries with degrees of autonomy are portrayed with the same identity to convey the size of the entire organisation. In the second, subsidiaries are portrayed as a whole because they are strongly linked or directly managed by the parent organisation.
2. **Endorsement model:** Subsidiaries have their own identities, while the parent organisation's identity is present in the background. This model is mostly used where the parent organisation has a strong influence over the management and operation of its subsidiaries. Although internal stakeholders might be aware of this relationship, it might not be evident to external stakeholders. The link is established to endorse the association between the subsidiary and the parent organisation.

3. **Variety model:** Subsidiaries have their own identities with no evident connection between each other or the parent organisation. Companies, their services and products tend to be presented as a multitude of brands with different identities. This model is usually applied where subsidiaries are viewed primarily as financial assets and where there is little managerial involvement by the parent organisation.

### Case study

#### Barloworld

Barloworld is a distributor of leading international brands and it provides integrated rental, fleet management, product support and logistics solutions. The core divisions of the group comprise Equipment (earthmoving and power systems), Automotive and Logistics (car and motor retail, fleet services, used vehicles and disposal solutions, logistics management and supply chain optimisation), and Handling (materials handling and agriculture). The company offers its customers flexible, value-adding, integrated business solutions which are supported by leading global brands. The brands represented on behalf of their principals include Caterpillar, Hyster, Avis, Audi, BMW, Ford, General Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota and Volkswagen, amongst others.

Barloworld has a proven track record of long-term relationships with its global principals and customers. The company has developed the ability to develop and grow businesses in multiple geographical locations. Many of these are challenging but have high growth prospects. One of Barloworld's core competencies is an ability to leverage systems and best practices across its chosen business segments. As an organisation it is committed to sustainable development and playing a leading role in empowerment and transformation. The company was founded in 1902 and currently has operations in 28 countries around the world, with approximately 60% of its 18 000 employees in South Africa.

Barloworld is a focused multinational corporation with revenues exceeding R43 billion. It has a primary listing on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) and secondary listings on the London and Namibian stock exchanges. Its history is briefly described in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 A brief history of Barloworld

1902	Major Ernest (Billy) Barlow forms Thomas Barlow Sons in Durban, South Africa, as an independent company based on the family business of the same name in England. Initially, the company sells woollen goods but within five years Billy Barlow expands the production to include engineering components.
1920-1930	The company grows and consolidates. In 1920, Barlow opens an office in Johannesburg and, in 1927, Barlow's eldest son, Charles Sydney (Punch), joins the company. Barlow becomes the official sales and service dealer for Caterpillar in South Africa. Two years later Barlow acquires the forklift dealership.
1941	Barlow shares are traded on the JSE for the first time. The opening price is seven shillings and sixpence per share.
1959	Barlow enters the motor business by acquiring its first Ford dealership.
1960	Barlow expands into motor vehicle retailing, steel, building materials, handling equipment, consumer electronics, and steel manufacturing and selling, with interests in the United Kingdom, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia. In 1969, Barlow lists its shares on the London Stock Exchange.
1970	Barlow acquires Rand Mines Limited and becomes Barlow Rand. The company adds cement, lime, stainless steel, televisions and paint to the product mix. Its reputation grows as a world-class company, while in South Africa it is the dominant player in many sectors of the economy, having interests in everything from food to mining.
1979	Punch Barlow dies. With the acquisition of Wrenn Brothers, the company moves into the United States of America.
1980	Barlow Rand diversifies into information technology, electrical engineering and textiles, as well as managing brands such as IBM and Mercedes-Benz in South Africa.
1984	The acquisition of J Bibby & Sons in the UK provides a major springboard for the company to further international expansion with its range of scientific products.
1989	Barlow Rand attains profits of R1 billion and has almost 240 000 employees. Expansion into Europe proceeds with the acquisition of Lamson in Belgium, Finanzauto in Spain and STET in Portugal.

1990-1994

During this period of political transition in South Africa, Barlow Rand unbundles its non-core businesses. A more focused and streamlined Barlow Limited is born.

1995-2000

Barlow Limited invests R5 billion in its business units to build the structure and operational capabilities needed for the 21st century. The company acquires Lanes Limited and Taubmann's in Australia, and the Ditch Witch franchise in Georgia, USA. It distributes Perkins in southern Africa and Caterpillar in Siberia. Barlow Limited changes its corporate identity to become Barloworld in 2000.

2001

The company expands its global reach with Freightliner acquisitions in the USA, three motor dealerships in Australia, a laboratory company (Protean) in the UK, and a cement business (Portland Holdings) in Zimbabwe. A new business unit, Barloworld Logistics, is launched.

2002

Barloworld celebrates its centenary. A medium-term goal of 2x4x4 is set - to double the value of the company for all stakeholders in four years. Disposals include PPC's stakes in Natal Portland Cement and Ash Resources, the UK coatings business, Robor Stewart & Lloyds steel distribution outlets, the Stemcor (South Africa) share, and the Mitsubishi motor dealerships in Australia. Barloworld celebrates the 75th anniversary of its relationship with Caterpillar.

2003

Barloworld acquires Northwest Arkansas and TexasArkana Freightliner truck dealerships in the US. Six motor dealerships are disposed of, and the sale of Henry Cooke in the UK marks the complete exit from the specialty paper business. Black economic empowerment (BEE) deals include the formation of a 50:50 joint venture to distribute DaimlerChrysler products in the greater Durban metropolitan area; the sale of Afripack to BEE investment consortium and the management of Afripack. These deals are in addition to BEE equity deals in Sizwe Paints and Shosholozza Steel Supplies. The company sponsors the Team Barloworld cycling team in international competition.

2004

Barloworld establishes a formal black economic empowerment policy. The Caterpillar dealership territory in Siberia, in partnership with Wagner, doubles. Acquisitions include the balance of Avis Southern Africa, International Colourant Corporation, and the Hyster dealership in the Netherlands.

2005

The Hyster dealership in Northern Ireland, Hamilton Brush, and the Budget franchise in Sweden, are acquired. PPC announces a one-million-ton expansion in cement capacity to meet rapidly growing demand in South Africa.

2006	<p>The Avis and Budget franchises in Denmark are acquired for consolidation in Scandinavia. The Steel Tube Division and the US and UK Handling leasing finance books are sold. The 2x4x4 target – the doubling of the value of the business for all stakeholders in the four years to September 2006 – is achieved. Barloworld announces a new target of doubling again by 2010.</p>
2007	<p>Barloworld restructures its major divisions from eight to four. PPC is unbundled. Coatings is also unbundled and listed on the JSE as Freeworld Coatings. Tony Phillips stands down as CEO and Clive Thomson takes over.</p>
2008	<p>Revenue is up by 18% and operating profit up by 31%. Barloworld announces a broad-based BEE transaction that includes its South African employees, community service groups, an educational trust and strategic black partners, achieving effective 29% empowerment of its SA operations. The Power business is segmented from Barloworld Equipment as a separate business unit with dedicated focus. International acquisitions are made in order to position Barloworld Logistics for future growth. The Leadership Development Centre is launched to facilitate and co-ordinate professional development programmes that enhance the ability of Barloworld employees.</p>
2009	<p>The economic downturn negatively impacts group performance. Operating profit is down 25% and headline earnings per share down 43%. Focus turns to cash flow and working capital management, with cash generated increasing 20%. The company positions itself for future growth by entrenching market leadership in many operations. The Team Barloworld cycling sponsorship ends. The Centre of Technical Learning is opened to provide the sustainable technical skills to deliver on its solutions-based value proposition to customers.</p>
2010	<p>Barloworld disposes of its Scandinavian car rental operation. Barloworld Automotive sells Subaru. The company reaches agreement to acquire the remaining 50% in its Russian joint venture. Barloworld Global Power System structure is announced so as to place necessary focus on the Power business.</p>
2011	<p>The Logistics division is integrated into the Automotive division.</p>

**Communication integration (1): Aligning all message sources**  
**The evolution of Barlow Limited**

By 1989 Barlow Rand had developed into a diversified conglomerate with interests in sectors as varied as food, computers and mining. Moreover, South Africa was becoming a democracy, which offered new opportunities and threats to its companies. Many of these companies had previously been severely constrained by social, economic and political restrictions. Barlow Rand faced the prospect of being perceived as a poor investment in the global economic environment, as did many other unfocused conglomerates. Between 1991 and 1994, Barlow Rand unbundled its non-core businesses, becoming more strategically focused and renaming itself Barlow Limited. In its new form the company concentrated on its core business – industrial brand management.

Between 1994 and 2000 the company underwent restructuring and consolidation. To structure the organisation for the global market and to modernise its operations, it invested R5 billion in its business units. This process included a comprehensive assessment of its business strategy, starting at the top.

Although it was highly profitable, having enjoyed 20% profit growth over a number of years, Barlow Limited was perceived as an 'old-style' South African conglomerate and there was insufficient clarity as to what type of company it actually was. Until this point, it had successfully followed a strategy of market leadership for its composite brands; its approach had included sales maximisation with a strong emphasis on the marketing mix, through careful application of segmentation, targeting and positioning in its brand management, and by striving for market share for its individual brands. In other words, Barlow Limited had been focused on brand development through transactional marketing, concentrating on exchange and the marketing mix.

The result of Barlow Limited's strategy had been successful: management of its composite brands, yet the benefits accruing to the holding company were not what they would have been. For example, it was not an employer of choice, and its shares were traded at a discount. Its image was weak and fragmented. Although it had successfully managed its composite brands, it had failed to successfully manage itself as a corporate brand. The Barlow Limited brand, as opposed to the brands of its products and services, had been allowed to drift and become vague.

**Barlow Limited becomes Barloworld**

The assessment of its business strategy led Barlow Limited to undertake fundamental operational change. It established its financial goal to be the delivery of returns above the replacement cost of capital, and proposed a new strategy: corporate brand leadership. The framework for building the company into a brand leader was termed 'value-based management' or VBM.

VBM is an integrated approach that aligns everything that the company does to ensure that value is continually created and enhanced for all stakeholder groups. It encourages employees to work more diligently and better ways of doing things, and ensures that management systems are fully aligned with the interests of stakeholders. VBM principles are applied to every facet of the business, from strategic decision making and policies on how to allocate capital, to the national value blueprints that indicate which businesses to fix, grow or exit.

The objective of VBM is to align processes and daily behaviour to create value for all stakeholders, as opposed to value for one stakeholder at the expense of another. The identified stakeholders are shareholders, customers, employees and the community. Specific strategies are devised to ensure and measure the value created for each stakeholder group. The overall strategy of corporate brand leadership was intended to develop the entire enterprise, improve stakeholder relationships and focus on the corporate brand. The ultimate objective was to provide greater brand equity and shareholder value – that is, to achieve far more than simply selling more products.

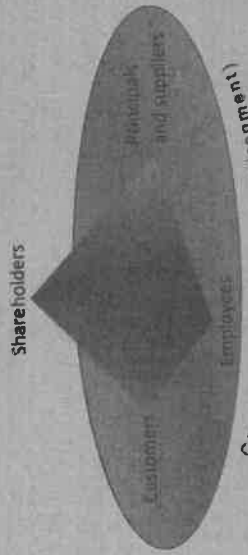


Figure 2.1 The stakeholders of value-based management

**Communication integration (2): Identity and branding**

To assist in the attainment of corporate brand leadership, a planned communication strategy was devised around Barloworld's corporate branding and identity. The corporate brand identity was developed in such a way that it would benefit, and in turn benefit from its association with, its composite brands. It was to lend synergy to all parts of the corporate endeavour and leverage further business.

It was to be clear, visible and based on fact. Brand associations were to resonate with customers, both logically and emotionally, in an environment in which brand messages are derived from myriad sources, both planned and unplanned, and where different brand messages fragment and confuse. The decision was taken to develop a single new corporate identity which was to evolve from the Barlow name and act as the foundation for the revised corporate brand. Its composite brands were to continue as before. At the outset of 2000, the organisation was Barlow Limited.

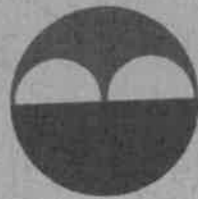


Figure 2.2 The Barlow Limited logo

By the end of 2000, Barlow Limited had become Barloworld, beginning a transformation that was to result in an integrated brand framework.



Figure 2.3 The Barloworld logo

Barloworld redefined its business as the management of leading brands through service, relationships and attention to detail in a way that made its customers' businesses excel. All brand communications – planned, product, services and unplanned – were to develop a brand image that not only reflected the complex and multidimensional nature of the business but that also implied that this complexity is Barloworld's strength, and that enduring trust is generated in the organisation's structure at every level, over the passage of time.

In 2000 and 2001, Barloworld ensured that all of its business units adopted the Barloworld name, endorsed its product and service brands with the corporate identity, and began an extensive programme of internal communication. At the outset, implementation was not trouble free. The new identity was applied with a lack of consistency, there were too many variations in logos, inadequate visual links between parts of the organisation, and many missed opportunities to display the stature of the parent company.

Several reasons lay behind the problems that Barloworld encountered. Their organisational structure was highly complex and unrelated to the structure of the composite brands. Also, many of Barloworld's brands were strong in their own right, with high levels of brand equity, so it was difficult to decide exactly how to relate them to the corporate brand.

To resolve these problems the CEO gave his unconditional commitment to the new brand and undertook to actively support it. In 2002, the brand structure was simplified and tailored to reflect the organisational structure. Corporate identity was given far greater attention and a standardised policy for its application was introduced. The application of corporate logos was standardised and greater prominence was given to the Barloworld identity. Identity was applied to subsidiaries and individual brands in one of four ways: corporate branding, company branding, endorsed branding and exceptional branding.

For corporate branding, the Barloworld logo is used without any mention of individual products. The logo represents the corporate centre, its centralised functions and the global representation of the company. However, operating units may use it if appropriate.



Company branding is the preferred identity for business units. It incorporates the identities of Barloworld and the subsidiary business unit. Major products, services and brands of the business unit can be shown on graphic applications such as stationery, signage or vehicles. The emphasis on the subsidiary or its products can change.

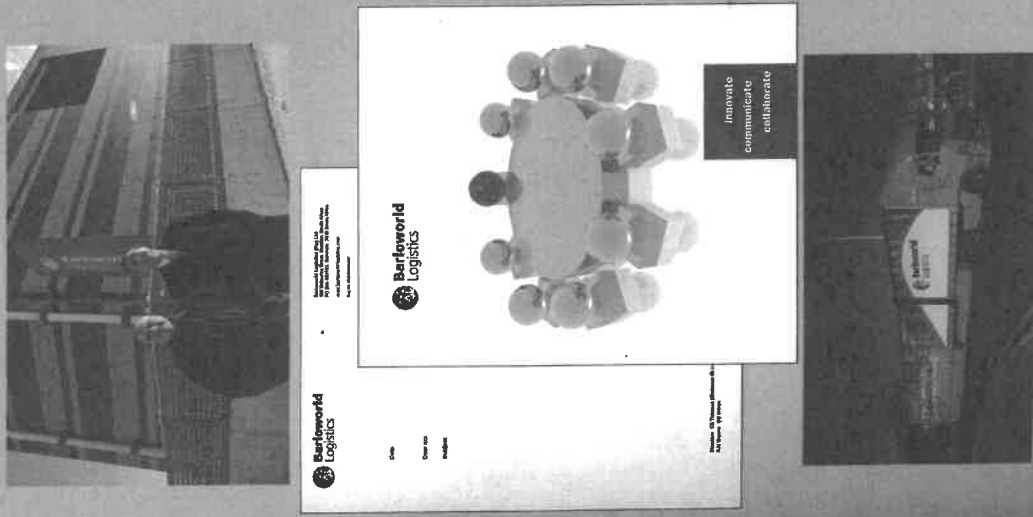


Figure 2.5 Examples of company branding applications



Figure 2.4 Examples of corporate branding applications



Endorsed branding allows priority to be given to the existing brand or business name, with a Barloworld endorsement. No other product names are included.

**Barloworld Agriculture**

**Barloworld Power**  
 Retler Pringle  
 Program Sales Representative  
 158 Main Road, Boksburg  
 1460 South Africa  
 Tel: +27 (0) 11 858 8200  
 Fax: +27 (0) 11 858 0451  
 pringle@barloworldpower.com

**Barloworld Perkins**  
 Retler Pringle  
 Program Sales Representative  
 158 Main Road, Boksburg  
 1460 South Africa  
 Tel: +27 (0) 11 858 8200  
 Fax: +27 (0) 11 858 0451  
 pringle@barloworldpower.com

Figure 2.6 Examples of endorsed branding applications

Exceptional endorsed branding retains the principal's branding of a business, as in the case of Caterpillar and Avis, with Barloworld endorsement being introduced as principals allow.

**Caterpillar**  
 Barloworld Endorsed Branding

**AVIS**  
 Barloworld Endorsed Branding

Figure 2.7 Examples of exceptional endorsed branding application

Barloworld understood that the transition of existing companies to the Barloworld identity was not a process that could be undertaken in a short time. A clear path for migration to the new identity was therefore carefully laid out. Each business unit could choose one of a number of design routes and had to select which elements to use from a specified 'brand toolkit'. This toolkit comprised specific logotypes, typefaces, colours, images and layouts. Certain of these elements were mandatory; others were optional. All areas relating to the content and style of Barloworld's identity were planned. Barloworld imagery, language, colours, layouts, text hierarchy, image cropping and aspects of architecture were specified.

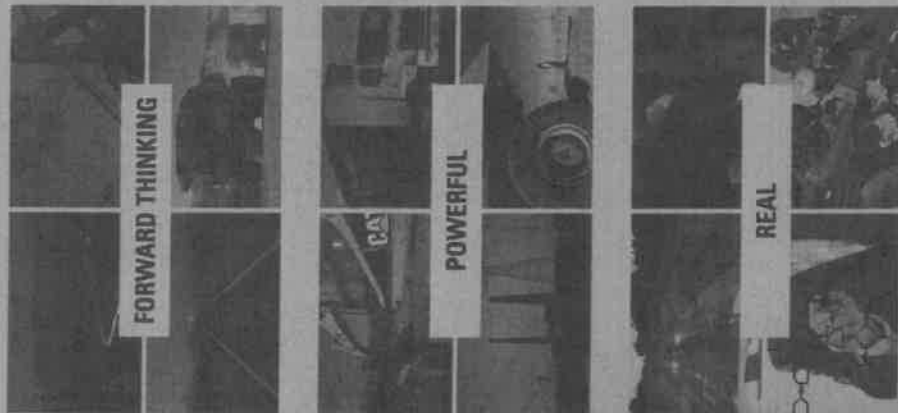


Figure 2.8 Barloworld imagery

**NOI**

Do you require any assistance?  
In the majority of instances we can deliver in  
approximately one week  
We have strong representation across the  
globe

**YES!**

Can I help?  
It will be delivered next Monday  
We have offices in 10 countries

**Figure 2.9 Barloworld language**

Barloworld revised its overall communication strategy to reinforce the new corporate identity. Communications were identified as investments, even though the return on these investments was difficult to ascertain. In a similar way to research and development, the communication budget was originally derived as a percentage of global revenue and fixed at 0.06%.

Priorities were set for specific elements of the communication mix. *Publicity* was to contribute to brand building through increased international coverage and to assist the subsidiaries to leverage business through association with the parent company. *Sponsorship* was intended to build global brand awareness in a way that would break through the clutter and remain relevant to the target market, with a successful cycling sponsorship project that would run for a number of years. *Advertising* was to be localised, with particular attention given to the financial media. A range of *internal communication processes* was developed to generate a sense of cohesion and common purpose among the personnel of Barloworld. The processes comprised certain aspects described above, such as common themes of identity across the organisation, and included an intranet, internal newsletters, platforms for feedback, interaction among units, and the increase in awareness of other areas of Barloworld's activities and organisation.



**Figure 2.10 Newsletters**

**Communication integration (3): Black economic empowerment**

Barloworld had planned to structure and align perception of the organisation through a wide-ranging strategy of integrated communication interventions. Although its planned communication strategy was generally successful, perception of the organisation was strongly influenced by events between 2000 and 2006 over which it had little control and which it was ineffectively positioned to deal with.

After the transition to democracy in the 1990s, one of the central policies of the South African government was the transformation of the economy in order to make it more representative of the demographics of the country. Most South African companies – Barloworld and later Barloworld amongst them – had a high percentage of whites and a far lower representation of blacks, coloureds and Indians in their ownership and management structures at the time of the transition to democracy. In order to change this, the government introduced the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act in 2003. Amongst other things, this legislation aimed to increase black ownership and management of companies operating in South Africa and increase the representation of previously disadvantaged groups in the racial composition of businesses and skilled occupations. In 2007, broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) Codes of Good Practice were introduced that allowed assessment of the BEE compliance of individual companies according to a BBBEE scorecard. This scorecard assigns ratings based on a company's progress in its elements of ownership, preferential procurement, employment equity, management control, enterprise development, skills development and socio-economic development. All public companies and state enterprises are bound to take account of a company's performance in terms of this scorecard prior to entering into any investment, procurement, licensing, partnership, sales or other business dealings with the company.

Barloworld Limited, and later Barloworld, had long been at the forefront of the drive to a more equitable economic dispensation in South Africa but by the mid-2000s the company was considered to be performing poorly in terms of its official BBBEE scores. Although it had implemented a BEE policy, entered into a number of related initiatives, and progress had been made in its operations, the company had not entered into a BEE ownership transaction. In 2006 and 2007 the chief executive of the Public Investment Corporation, the government's wholly owned investment institution for public sector organisations and the world's largest Barloworld shareholder, with 17% of its stock, singled out Barloworld for its lack of transformation. Barloworld was confronted with a situation in which, despite satisfactory business performance, it was not meeting the expectations of a significant range of its shareholders that included amongst them some shareholders, members of the business community, government and the broader South African society. The message that was presented was one that suggested that Barloworld had not transformed in terms of BBBEE.

A number of important changes were undertaken in 2007 to address this challenge. A black chairman was appointed and black representation on the board gradually increased to roughly half. In 2008, a R2.4 billion empowerment transaction was concluded. The company sold a 10% stake to black participants; this included strategic black partners, an educational trust, community group and all South African employees. This effectively brought black ownership of its South African operations up to 29%. Key executive appointments clearly identified goals (including identifying empowerment and transformation as one of the group's six strategic focus areas) and focused efforts to address

specialised, including that of communication professionals and all 'part-time' or 'non-professional' communicators.

Where in the structure of Barloworld do you believe that communication should receive particular attention to ensure that integration continues? Use the locations of communication intervention that are identified in Section 2.5.2 to guide you.

Olins (1989) (Section 2.6) provides a number of reasons for the design and implementation of corporate identity. Which of these reasons can you identify in the case study?

Van Riel (1995) (Section 2.6) suggests three predominant approaches to the application and integration of corporate identity: *uniformity*, *endorsement* and *variety*. How do these approaches conform to, or differ from, Barloworld's approaches of *corporate branding*, *company branding*, *endorsed branding* and *exceptional endorsed branding*?

Using the message types described by Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) (Section 2.4.2), would you typify Barloworld's BEE status as a *planned*, *product*, *service* or *unplanned* message?

Could the messages created by Barloworld's BEE status have been dealt with by actions, and particularly communication actions, other than those that Barloworld undertook from 2007 onwards?

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all elements of the BEE scorecard resulted in significant progress towards transformation. In addition to the activities of its enterprise development fund, in 2011 Barloworld participated with other companies to create the SA Supplier Diversity Council, an institution created to help businesses find black empowerment suppliers and to develop black businesses. In 2011 Barloworld had become the highest rated industrial sector company on the JSE in terms of BBBEE.

(Permission to use this case study was obtained from Jacey de Gidts, Head Group Communication and Marketing of Barloworld Group.)

## Activities

- Describe in your own words the main characteristics of communication integration.
- How have external market trends, trends within organisations and societies demands for organisational integrity contributed to the move towards communication integration?
- Describe how you would go about aligning messages from all sources in an organisation.
- Identify any organisation that you know fairly well. It may be a business, a government organisation, an NGO, a school or any other kind of organisation. Using the discussion of the *five junctures of intervention* to guide you, identify five specific locations within the structure of that organisation where communication integration should receive particular attention.
- You are the corporate communication director of a national bank. The bank has three major divisions, each with its own communication director. The directors, in turn, have several communication specialists who report to them, and a large number of non-communication staff who do not report directly to them but who share some communication tasks as a part of their overall responsibilities. You and the communication directors need to co-ordinate the communication of the entire organisation. How would you implement communication integration using *rules and directives*, *sequencing*, *routines* and *co-ordinating groups* to achieve your objective?
- Read the case study carefully and answer these questions:
  - Using the message types described by Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) (Section 2.4.2), would you typify Barloworld's branding and identity project as one that deals with *planned*, *product*, *service* and/or *unplanned* messages?
  - Identify the ways in which the integration of Barloworld's communication has paralleled the historical evolution of communication integration.
  - In Section 2.4, reasons for the move towards an integrated perspective of communication are noted. Identify as many of these in the case study as you can.
- How would you apply the 10 strategies of Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) (Section 2.4.4) to Barloworld, as it exists today, to ensure integration?
- Identify all communication message types that have been addressed in the Barloworld case study. Consider all communication, specialised and non-

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## CHAPTER

## 12

## Integrated communication measurement

Danie du Plessis and Norlé Thomson

The greatest degree of integration emerges from the cooperative efforts of the traditionally separate fields of advertising, public relations, promotions marketing, personal selling and direct marketing.

Duncan &amp; Caywood (1998)

## 12.1 Introduction

The principle of integration of organisational communication is well established; it is also the moving force behind this book. In the preface of this book it is stated that the starting point of our approach to communication integration is the corporate brand. This is the consolidated outcome of every message about the organisation received by a stakeholder, including planned, unplanned, service and product messages. Organisations should align these messages at strategic, management and functional levels, bearing in mind that communication integration, management and functional the corporate brand, occurs in the minds of all the organisation's stakeholders, not only those who manage the organisation or plan its communication.

Although many models are being developed to facilitate communication integration, the measurement of it is in its infancy. No single, ready-made evaluation instrument for measuring integration exists as yet. In most cases, certain elements of integration are measured, and in some cases existing models of integration are operationalised to serve as evaluation criteria.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a guideline for measuring the integration of organisational communication, which is discussed in terms of the following:

- a selection of models of communication relating to integration (with the aim of identifying concepts that can be used as criteria for integration)
- some communication integration systems (specifically the integrated marketing audit)
- a proposed instrument of measurement.

A case study by Barker and Angelopulo (2004) is included as an example of the operationalisation of some of the concepts that have emerged in the debate about communication integration.

## 12.2 Some integrated communication models

Authors and researchers approach the issue of communication integration from different angles and, depending on the point of departure, various models have developed over time. In this section, three of these are: - Duncan and Moriarty's (1998) brand equity model, Van Riel's (1995) model of organising and coordinating the communication process, and Ehlers's (2002) model for structuring integrated communication - are

briefly discussed to highlight some of the concepts that will form the basic building blocks for the attempt to develop a measuring instrument in the final part of the chapter.

**12.2.1 Duncan and Moriarty's brand equity model**

Described in detail in Chapter 2, the focus of this model is on integrated marketing communication (IMC). Nevertheless, it provides a workable framework for integrating communication in a broader context than simply the marketing of an organisation.

Duncan and Moriarty (1998) claim that the social and associated aspects of marketing and business in general depend on relationships, and therefore their model is based on understanding the role of communication in establishing and maintaining profitable stakeholder relationships. They see communication as the primary mechanism in the marketing process. Communication has always played a role in attracting and keeping customers and other stakeholders, but as the media and electronic technologies are advancing at such a speed, the benefits of understanding and applying communication theory and strategies to marketing are, according to these authors (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998), much greater.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) propose that each department and function in the organisation has a communication dimension, and that everything contributes to the brand message. They suggest that six areas in organisations can be better integrated, namely employees, customers and other stakeholders, corporate learning, brand positioning, creative ideas and corporate mission. Furthermore, these authors identify ten brand relationship drivers used by organisations that benefit from IMC (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997). These are divided into three categories:

1. Two drivers with a *corporate focus* (relationship management, stakeholder focus).
2. Four process drivers that represent *operational processes* (strategic consistency, purposeful interactivity, mission marketing and zero-based planning).
3. Four *infrastructural/organisational* drivers (cross-functional management, core competencies, data-driven marketing and working with an integrated agency).

In Table 12.1, the drivers are discussed in more detail to illustrate their relevance in the development of a measuring instrument.

**Table 12.1 Brand relationship drivers**

Corporate focus	Relationship management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is more cost effective to sell to current customers than to new ones</li> <li>■ Invest in and grow current customers</li> <li>■ Know the customers and use that information in communication with them</li> </ul>
	Stakeholder focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Quality relationships with all stakeholders help to avoid sending conflicting messages to overlapping stakeholders or customers</li> <li>■ Stakeholder priorities change constantly; for example, during a merger the financial community and employees might be the most important, whereas during a crisis the media become a critical stakeholder</li> </ul>

Process	Strategic consistency maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Recognise the communication dimensions of all brand contacts and the sources of these messages</li> <li>■ The more a brand's position is strategically integrated into all brand messages, the more consistent and distinct the identity and reputation will be</li> <li>■ There should be processes in place to ensure that all brand messages are consistent</li> </ul>
	Purposeful dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dialogue should be purposeful for both the organisation and the target audiences</li> <li>■ Interactivity is a form of integration</li> <li>■ A balance between mass, personalised and interactive media is necessary to enrich feedback</li> <li>■ Facilitation of customer feedback and dialogue ensure integration of the customer into the planning and operations of the organisation</li> </ul>
	Corporate mission marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Incorporate the mission into all operations to continually remind everyone what the organisation stands for</li> <li>■ A mission programme should be focused to develop a distinct presence rather than a fragmented one</li> </ul>
	Zero-based planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Planning should start with a SWOT analysis</li> <li>■ Findings are prioritised and addressed by marketing communication</li> <li>■ All communication objectives and strategies must be justified in terms of what needs to be done to manage relationships better</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	Cross-functional planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Relationship marketing is communication intensive at each level</li> <li>■ Cross-functional management is needed to plan and monitor messages for strategic consistency and inconsistency</li> <li>■ Internal groups should interact to ensure integration through the sharing of expertise and customer information</li> <li>■ There should be links to specialist departments to eliminate isolation but maintain specialisation</li> <li>■ Walls are broken down between departments and stakeholder groups, and institutionalise feedback and learning are facilitated</li> </ul>
	Core competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Managers should understand the strengths and weaknesses of marketing communication functions, evaluate them, and apply them in a mix that will maximise the cost effectiveness of each function</li> <li>■ Experts should produce materials but communication generalists need to plan and manage an integrated communication programme</li> </ul>



Infrastructure (cont)	Database management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Information is an integral part of integration</li> <li>■ The use of cross-functional processes requires tracking of customers and the support of a database management system that provides universal customer information and a corporate memory</li> <li>■ Personalisation of customers and stakeholders (and the relationship with them) relies on this information</li> </ul>
	Integrated agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An organisation making use of external agencies for communication functions should select an agency whose operations are explicitly based on the notion of integrated communication</li> </ul>

While these drivers were not operationalised by the original authors as measurement tools, Barker and Angelopulo (2004) used them as the basis for a model of communication integration evaluation for web-based marketing communication. In their article, the ten drivers are operationalised and serve as criteria for measuring the integration of web-based communication processes. A summary of the methodology developed by them is included as a case study at the end of this chapter.

### 12.2.2 Van Riel's model of organising and coordinating the communication process

Van Riel (1995) believes that, from a systems perspective, the communication process can be divided into these three sequential phases (see also Chapter 2):

1. *Input phase*: Preparation of communication activities (analysis and strategy).
2. *Thoughtful phase*: Execution of plans (decision making and implementation).
3. *Output phase*: Final expressions of forms of communication and their effects.

In each of these phases, there are controllable and uncontrollable factors. In the input phase, where preparation of communication activities is concerned, the processes are largely within the control of the organisation. Control thereafter increasingly declines in the other phases, with the least control over how the communication is accepted and reacted to by the target audiences.

Van Riel (1995) proposes a framework for organisations to stimulate co-operation among all relevant communication functions by defining the baseline of corporate communication – that is, by choosing one of three factors central to corporate identity as the primary corporate identity policy. This policy is generated by formalising three key issues in corporate communication policy:

1. *Definition of common starting points*: For the purpose of consistency, common conditions should be established for communication. The implication is that there should be a concrete statement from which '... central values can be translated clearly and consistently into all the forms of communication deployed by the organisation' (Van Riel, 1995: 162–163).

2. *Use of common operational systems*: If all communication functions in an organisation use the same operational system, it will be easier for the organisation to co-ordinate all forms of internal and external communication, for example in the same way that financial systems in an organisation are commonly applied and financial reporting is standardised. A way of doing this is to implement a system of computerised decision-making support systems.
3. *Co-ordination of decision making in communication*: Different methods of co-ordinating and orchestrating communication in organisations exist; however, there must be an intentional effort to co-ordinate communication. The effort can be carried out by:
  - a. one person in the organisation being put in charge of all communication functions
  - b. a steering committee, which ensures that all relevant departments are represented and participate
  - c. *ad hoc* meetings, in which several communication managers are grouped together in one location and are 'forced' to interact frequently, both privately and professionally.

As is the case with the Duncan and Moriarty model, Van Riel's model is not operationalised as a measuring instrument, although the basic principles and concepts contained in it could provide criteria for measuring integration of organisational communication.

### 12.2.3 Ehlers's model for structuring integrated communication

Ehlers (2002) proposes a framework for structuring integrated communication in South African organisations. In her model, the stakeholders of an organisation should be the starting point, and those employees able to influence interactions with other stakeholders should be considered as part of the stakeholder orientation (Ehlers, 2002).

Employees constitute various areas of expertise in an organisation, and genuine integration is possible only when cross-functional relations exist between the different parts of the organisation. Ehlers (2002: 339) proposes that an 'integrator' or 'team of integrators' that have a total stakeholder focus should be responsible for co-ordinating communication in the organisation. Integrated communication should be part of the organisation's strategic planning process, and those driving the integration should be multiskilled to be able to contribute effectively to that process.

Ehlers (2002) furthermore identifies databases (in line with Duncan and Moriarty's approach) as a central force in the integration process. When centrally kept, information collected from research and other sources can be stored and used by all concerned for effective planning. She proposes that 'traditional' marketing communication tools and 'traditional' public relations tools be combined to provide the integrator(s) with a vast menu of tools that they can apply in the processes of stakeholder management (Ehlers, 2002: 340–343).

Figure 12.1 illustrates this framework, which is also not operationalised as an evaluation model, but can contribute criteria for this purpose.

total communication efforts, as well as the extent or degree of integration. A number of methods and techniques have been developed to measure and evaluate IMC, but few of integrated communication. Kitchen and Schulz (2003) distinguish between IMC and integrated communication in the following way:

- *Integrated communication* is concerned with the corporate brand – that is, what the organisation is and what it stands for.
- *IMC* is concerned with individual product or service brands.

The methods and techniques developed for IMC measurement can nevertheless be used in integrated communication evaluation by being added to, adapted or expanded.

### 12.3.1 Dimensions of integrated communication evaluation and measurement

Duncan and Moriarty (1997a) point out that there are two ways of evaluating IMC, namely by evaluating the *process* and the *output* of integration. The process and output of *overall integrated communication* can also be measured and evaluated. There is also a third method – that is, evaluation of the *effects* or *outcomes* of integrated communication.

#### Process of integration

Integrated communication requires close co-operation and co-ordination between various functions, for example marketing, advertising and public relations. This is usually achieved by means of cross-functional teamwork. An aspect of evaluation therefore includes monitoring cross-functional planning (Duncan, 2002), the amount and nature of internal communication between functions, and the core competencies and views of the people managing the integration process (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a). Another aspect is the development of brand messages. A major theme in integrated communication is *message consistency*, therefore the process behind the development of brand messages, and the selection and integration of different communication media, need to be assessed (Duncan, 2002).

A third aspect is feedback from customers and other stakeholders. Complaints, suggestions and compliments need to be recorded, analysed and used to improve the organisation's integration efforts (Duncan, 2002). This element of the integration process is dependent on effective database management. It is also necessary to establish whether existing feedback mechanisms are effective and efficient.

#### Output of integration

There is a distinction to be made between the output and the outcomes of integration. This is in contrast to the view of Duncan and Moriarty (1997a), who believe that output refers to the results or effects of integrated marketing. Here, *output* is understood as the product of integrated communication (brand messages), while *outcomes* are understood as the effects of those messages on stakeholder relationships. In other words, the output of integrated communication refers to all messages (planned, product, service and unplanned – see Chapter 2) about an organisation received by various stakeholders. The emphasis of output evaluation is on the consistency of the actual brand messages rather than on the process behind developing them.

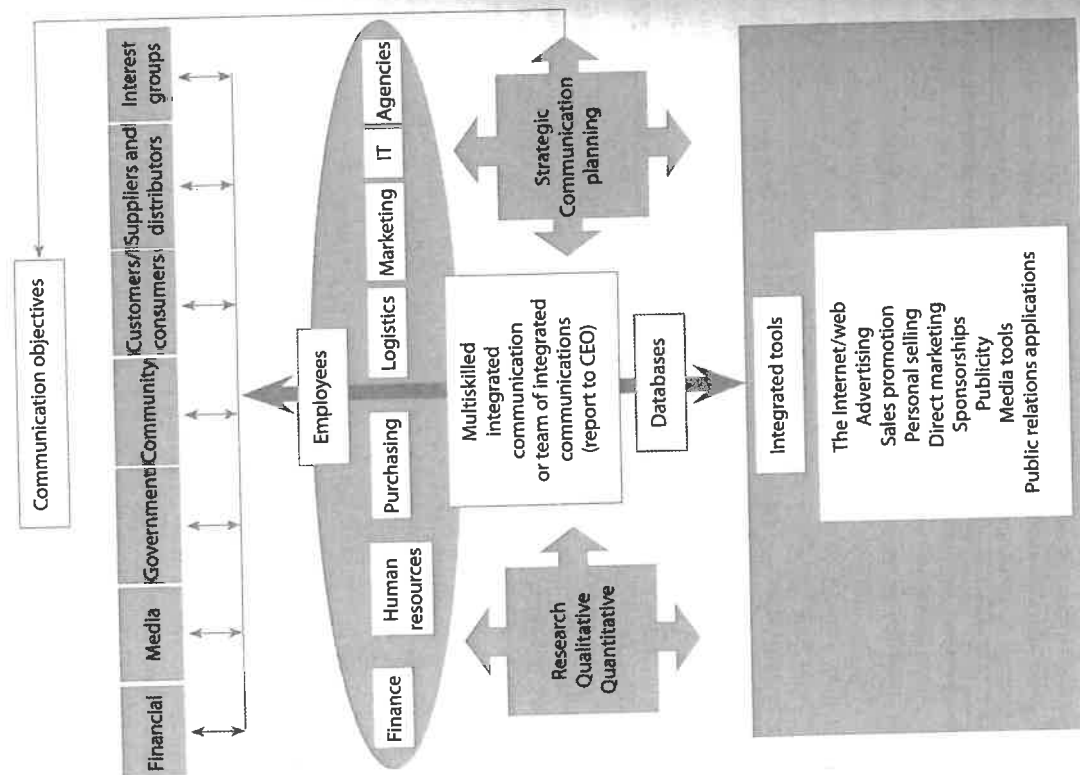


Figure 12.1 Ehlers's model  
Source: Ehlers (2002)

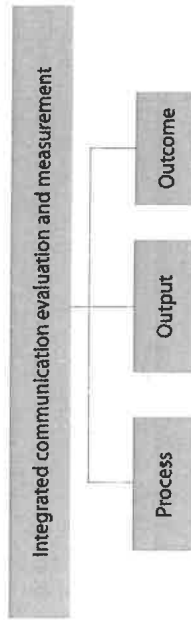
### 12.3 Integrated communication research methods

Chapter 11 evaluates various aspects of communication in an organisation. In this section, the emphasis is on evaluating the way in which the organisation integrates its

**Outcomes or effects of integration**

Integrated communication is concerned with the management of stakeholder relationships (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003; Murphy, Murphy, Woodall & O'Hare, 1999). To assess the success of such communication, the nature and quality of the organisation's relationships with various stakeholders have to be evaluated. In other words, the impact of the various brand messages must be measured. This impact can be understood in terms of changes in stakeholder attitudes and/or behaviour.

The three dimensions of the evaluation and measurement of integrated communication are depicted in Figure 12.2.



**Figure 12.2** The three dimensions of integrated communication evaluation and measurement

In the following sections, two types of audits are discussed – the integrated marketing audit and the stakeholder relationship audit. These audits were specifically developed for the measurement and evaluation of the various dimensions of IMC. However, they can also be used to evaluate the organisation's total communication integration efforts. Where applicable, additional methods and techniques (traditional and online) can be used to augment the measurement of IMC to the measurement of overall integrated communication.

**12.3.2 The integrated marketing (IM) audit**

The IM audit was developed in the University of Colorado's IMC graduate programme in the 1990s. It is an in-depth research method used to evaluate an organisation's relationship-building efforts (Duncan, 2002). Using both qualitative and quantitative research, the audit focuses on the elements and structure of the integration process (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a), as well as the output thereof.

**What is evaluated in the IM audit?**

Typically, the following aspects are evaluated and analysed in an IM audit (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a):

- Internal and external communication networks used to develop marketing communication programmes (for example networks between in-house experts and external agencies and producers).
- The relevant people's knowledge and awareness of, and concurrence with, marketing communication objectives (see the section below entitled *Who participates in the IM audit?* for a description of people involved).
- Identification and prioritisation of stakeholder groups.

- The organisation's customer database (the relevance and completeness of information gathered: is it updated regularly and systematically? etc.).
- All marketing communication messages produced in the last 12 months (for example advertisement, signage, news releases, sales promotion pieces and direct response mailings).
- Marketing managers', top management's and agency managers' knowledge of and attitude towards IMC.

**Who conducts the audit?**

An audit team is required to take responsibility for conducting an IM audit owing to its extensive nature. Team members must have a sound knowledge of marketing, marketing communication, marketing research, information systems, organisational management and change management. They must also understand the philosophy of integration. To ensure objectivity, they should be experts from outside the organisation (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a; 1997b).

**Who participates in the IM audit?**

Every person involved in the planning and/or execution of an organisation's marketing programmes is involved in the audit. Internally, this may include top management, marketing and communication managers, brand managers, product managers, customer service managers and divisional managers. Externally, the managers of marketing communication agencies whose services are used on an ongoing basis, customers, representative vendors and resellers typically participate in an IM audit. In short, a census (not a sample) is taken of each person contributing to the organisation's marketing communication efforts (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a).

**Research tools used in the IM audit**

Three primary research tools are used in the IM audit, as follows (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a; 1997b):

1. *Questionnaires* to determine the role players' knowledge of and attitudes towards marketing (communication) objectives, corporate and brand positioning, strengths and weaknesses of various marketing tools used, stakeholder priorities, key messages, use of a marketing communication database, and the integration and evaluation of communication efforts.
2. *Communication network interviews* to evaluate the nature of internal communication and information sharing between individuals and sections involved in the IMC process. Specific, closed-ended questions are used to interview all individuals involved in the organisation's marketing programmes with the intention of determining who communicates with whom, about what and how often.
3. *Content analysis* of all brand messages communicated during the previous year to evaluate the consistency between the various messages, and between these and marketing communication objectives.

In addition, interviews may be conducted with vendors, suppliers and other stakeholders. In the case of organisations operating in the retail sector, mystery shoppers are used

to evaluate the total shopping experience (appearance of the store, parking, signage, store navigation, facilities, staff uniforms, encounters with sales clerks, etc.). Mystery callers may phone the store to evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of customer service (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a). These shoppers and callers are unknown to the staff members of the shops that they visit or the organisations that they call.

Another frequently used research tool is contact point analysis. A contact point is any experience or encounter that a stakeholder has with the organisation (for example the store's appearance, an advertisement on television or in a magazine, consumption of a product or service, etc.). The audit team makes a list of all the contact points, and evaluates the communication efficacy of each (Duncan & Moriarty 1997a; 1997b).

#### Benefits of the IM audit

As mentioned above, the IM audit is an extensive (and often expensive) research method. However, it has many benefits. For example, the results of an IM audit may highlight differences in opinion regarding objectives, a lack of coordination between various units, or message inconsistency. Furthermore, it encourages the people involved in IMC to carefully consider the process, and increase their competency in the use of various marketing communication tools. Findings of the audit also give an indication of how resources should be re-allocated (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997a; 1997b).

#### Additional research methods for the IM audit

As described above, the focus of the IM audit is primarily on marketing communication. It is also acutely concerned with customer-client relationships, and less so with other stakeholder relationships. The addition of research methods and techniques that measure or evaluate other areas of organisational communication can easily expand this relatively narrow focus.

#### Online methods

Various online research methods can be integrated with traditional methods used in the IM audit. Alternatively, they can either augment or substitute the latter. The following online methods can be used (Barker, 2002):

- *Online surveys* (questionnaires) can be particularly useful when the audit team wants to survey large numbers of customers or other stakeholders.
- *Small groups of people—online focus groups*—can be interviewed online simultaneously.
- This method is effective both internally (groups of employees involved in IMC) and externally (groups of suppliers, vendors or even agency managers).
- *Online discussion groups* can be used to monitor various stakeholders' perceptions of the corporate and product/service brands.
- A content analysis of an organisation's *website* should form part of the content analysis of all the organisation's messages (that is, to measure consistency).

The advantage of using various research methods and techniques concurrently is that a rich array of qualitative and quantitative data can be collected. Nevertheless, there is also a challenge to this, namely aggregating the research findings in a clear and meaningful manner.

### 12.3.3 The stakeholder relationship audit

Brian Murphy and Andrew Murphy of Research Consultants Ltd in New Zealand developed the stakeholder relationship audit to measure the efficacy of IMC; in other words, the effects or outcomes of IMC on stakeholder relationships. Stakeholders include customers, employees, the community, shareholders and suppliers (Murphy *et al.*, 1999).

#### Research methodology

The stakeholder relationship audit uses attitudinal survey research to measure stakeholders' perceptions of their relationship with the organisation, and is conducted in these three phases (Murphy *et al.*, 1999):

- *Phase 1:* Key stakeholders are identified and a list is compiled of key issues relevant to each group. This can be done by means of environmental scanning—gathering information about events, trends and relationships in the organisation's external environment. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods can be used to obtain this information.
- *Phase 2:* A representative sample of each stakeholder group is asked to answer four standard questions regarding the respective sets of issues:
  - *Question 1:* How important are these issues in an excellent organisation?
  - *Question 2:* How well does the particular organisation perform on these issues?
  - *Question 3:* How well does the best competing organisation perform on these issues? (The competing organisation can be used as a benchmark—it operates under similar conditions as the one under investigation, and it is recognised for using 'best practice' in a particular industry.)
  - *Question 4:* How can the organisation improve its performance on these issues? The first three questions are answered on a 10-point rating scale (where 0 = extremely unimportant/poor performance, and 10 = extremely important/good performance). The last question is an open-ended question.
- *Phase 3:* Stakeholder responses to the first three questions are analysed by calculating the mean values (averages) for each question. Two gaps are identified by comparing the mean values of the three questions:
  - *The Performance Gap = Organisation Performance (Question 2) – Importance of Performance (Question 1).*
  - *The Best Practice Gap = Organisation Performance (Question 2) – Best Other Organisation Performance (Question 3).*

A positive value means that the organisation is perceived to over-perform, while a negative value means that the organisation is perceived to under-perform in a particular stakeholder relationship.

The stakeholder relationship audit can be used both for planning and evaluation purposes. The findings of the audit illuminate strengths and weaknesses in an organisation's relationships with stakeholders. IMC programmes can therefore be developed or adapted to build on strengths and correct weaknesses in stakeholder relationships (Murphy *et al.*, 1999).

Although this audit was initially developed to measure the efficacy of IMC, it can also be used to measure the effect of overall integrated communication. All relevant stakeholder groups (not only those affected by an organisation's marketing communication) can be identified, as well as a wide range of issues pertaining to each group. Consider the following example:

#### XYZ Ltd is performing a stakeholder relationship audit

In Phase 1 a number of stakeholders are identified, including customers. Research has shown that one of the key issues pertaining to customers is the company's response to complaints. In Phase 2, this issue is further investigated by asking four questions to a representative sample of customers.

- In Question 1, participants had to rate the importance of an excellent company's response (hypothetically speaking) to customer complaints on a scale from 1 to 10. The average response was 8.5.
- In Question 2, participants had to rate XYZ Ltd's response to customer complaints on a scale from 1 to 10. The average response was 6.
- In Question 3, participants had to rate the response to customer complaints of XYZ Ltd's closest direct competitor. The average response was 5.5.
- In Question 4, participants had to suggest how XYZ Ltd could improve its response to customer complaints. One was that XYZ Ltd should implement a system that records customer complaints more accurately.

In Phase 3, the responses to Questions 1, 2 and 3 are analysed by calculating the Performance and Best Practice Gaps.

- $\text{Performance Gap} = \text{Organisation Performance (Question 2)} - \text{Importance of Performance (Question 1)}$   
 $= 6 - 8.5$   
 $= -2.5$

The negative mean value indicates that XYZ Ltd under-performs on the issue of response to customer complaints.

- $\text{Best Practice Gap} = \text{Organisation Performance (Question 2)} - \text{Best Other Organisation Performance (Question 3)}$   
 $= 6 - 5.5$   
 $= 0.5$

The positive mean value indicates that XYZ Ltd performs slightly better than its closest direct competitor. However, it should take specific actions to match its performance to customers' expectations.

#### 12.4 Integrating traditional and online research

In the current era, information and communication technologies affect every aspect of people's lives in general, and the functioning of organisations in particular. Increasingly, the organisation's communication with various stakeholders (internal and external) takes place in the online environment (the Internet, intranets, e-mail, etc.).

Therefore, online research methods and techniques can be used to evaluate online communication.

This is not to say that traditional research methods and techniques have become obsolete, or that only online methods can be used to evaluate online communication and traditional methods to evaluate other forms of communication. On the contrary, the integration of traditional and online research methods presents unique opportunities for the evaluation of integrated communication. For example:

- The strengths of online research methods can be used to overcome the weaknesses of traditional research methods, and vice versa. For instance, online surveys are usually cheaper than traditional, paper-based ones. However, certain groups of respondents might not have access to electronic media, in which case the traditional method is still relevant.
- Online research methods offer access to sources of information that traditional methods cannot. For instance, online discussion groups can yield qualitative data about the organisation's communication with stakeholders that is difficult, time consuming and expensive to obtain through traditional methods.

The integration of traditional and online research methods and techniques also poses certain challenges. For example:

- Selecting the optimal combination of traditional and online research methods depends on the scope of evaluation and measurement required, as well as on the profiles of the various stakeholder groups targeted.
- The various traditional and online research efforts need to be co-ordinated properly to fulfil objectives, and to meet budgets and human resources requirements.
- A comprehensive picture of the organisation's integrated communication efforts must be formed through analysis and integration of the research findings.

#### 12.5 Measuring organisational communication integration

In Chapter 11, the methodology to evaluate the individual aspects of communication, such as corporate image, marketing and consistency of messages, was discussed. The purpose of the measurement of integration is to determine to what extent integration of communication is realised in the organisation as a whole. The example of such an instrument, as explained below, does not replace existing measurements, such as communication audits or the IMC audit, but aims to provide a bird's-eye view of mechanisms and procedures for communication integration.

This section integrates Duncan and Moriarty's (1998) brand equity drivers (as applied by Barker and Angelopulo in the case study at the end of this chapter), Ehlers's model (2002) and certain of Van Riel's (1995) concepts. It also examines the proposed development of a measuring instrument for determining the integration of organisational communication. Much of the effort toward communication integration is aimed at:

- consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation
- co-ordination of communication efforts and actions
- communication alignment with the strategic focus of the organisation



- stakeholder (including employees) orientation and differentiation
- sharing and free flow of information.

The first step in measuring communication integration is the appointment of a person (an integrator) or team responsible for communication integration (see Ehlers, 2002) and the regular measurement thereof. The strategic objectives of the organisation should form the basis of such evaluation.

A practical approach should be followed to determine to what extent the organisation's communication is integrated. The assumption is that the individual elements constituting organisation-wide communication are already assessed and judged to be functioning optimally. The following is an example of an instrument for determining (from a managerial point of view) whether integration is realised and effective.

**Example of a measuring instrument for evaluating communication integration**

- A Infrastructure for integration**
1. Well established and functional
  2. Established but not functioning optimally
  3. Established but not functional
  4. Exists informally
  5. Does not exist

Activity	Measurement				
	1	2	3	4	5
A person or group is responsible for communication integration (integrators)					
A formal policy regarding communication integration exists at the corporate level					
A formal policy regarding communication integration exists in every division of the organisation					
The organisation regularly makes a content analysis of visual corporate identity elements, measuring consistency					
The organisation regularly makes a content analysis of a sample of all messages originating within it, measuring consistency					
On a quarterly basis, the organisation updates criteria (derived from the strategic organisational objectives) to be applied in the measurement of message content consistency					
Mechanisms exist for interaction between internal groups (divisions)					

Activity	Measurement				
	1	2	3	4	5
Mechanisms are in place to facilitate interaction with stakeholder groups					
Mechanisms are in place to maximise stakeholder feedback					
<b>B Consistency</b> Two elements must exist: ■ A published and standardised visual corporate identity guideline (for colours, logos, etc.) ■ A content analysis of planned messages: 1. Perfectly consistent 2. Mostly consistent 3. Some variations 4. Varied 5. Extremely varied					
Dimension	Activity				
Visual corporate identity elements conform to standardised norms and standards	Stationery				
	Use of logos and names (in print and other public exposures)				
	Web pages				
Content of messages (based on a regular content analysis)	Print material (pamphlets, posters, advertisements, etc.)				
	Internal communication, marketing communication, public relations messages (sponsorships, publicity, etc.), etc.				

Dimension	Activity	Measurement				
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>C Coordination</b> 1. It always happens 2. It happens most of the time 3. It happens sometimes 4. It almost never happens 5. It never happens	Coordinating of planning across divisions					
	Cross-functional budget allocation					
	Sharing of information across divisions					
	Formal interaction between internal groups					
	Informal contact between members of divisions					
Zero-based planning	A SWOT analysis is done annually in all planning					
	Zero-based planning is done in every division annually					
	Organisation-wide, zero-based planning is done annually					
Create core competencies	In every division, employees are being trained in communication skills and competencies					
	Key members of staff (for example those who have contact with stakeholders) are trained to understand stakeholder behaviour					
	Staff members are informed about how the organisation functions across divisions					

Dimension	Activity	Measurement				
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>D Strategic alignment</b> 1. It always happens 2. It happens most of the time 3. It happens sometimes 4. It almost never happens 5. It never happens	Corporate mission					
	The corporate mission is incorporated into all operations					
	All staff members know what the corporate mission is					
	The corporate mission is regularly operationalised into clear, strategic organisational objectives					
	Clear strategic organisational objectives are communicated regularly to all staff members					
Strategic consistency	Strategic organisational objectives are clearly related to communication objectives					
	Strategic organisational objectives are formulated in such a way that all employees can relate to them					
	Strategic organisational objectives are operationalised so that all employees are able to apply them to what they are doing					
	Employees are reminded about what the organisation stands for (that is, its values)					
	Is the organisation's brand position strategically integrated into all brand messages (the 'big idea')?					
	Are the communication dimensions of all brand contacts consistent (not only the planned brand contacts)?					

**E Stakeholder orientation**

1. It always happens
2. It happens most of the time
3. It happens sometimes
4. It almost never happens
5. It never happens

Dimension	Activity	Measurement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Stakeholder focus	Are stakeholder changes monitored regularly?					
	Are stakeholder groups differentiated?					
	Are employees treated as important stakeholders?					
	Is message consistency to overlapping stakeholder groups monitored?					
	Do quality relationships exist with all stakeholder groups?					
Purposeful dialogue	Does the organisation interact regularly with stakeholders?					
	Is feedback from stakeholders maximised?					
	Are contact points with stakeholders prioritised?					
	Are contact points with stakeholders optimised?					
	Does the organisation strive toward a balance between mass, personalised and interactive media in its communication with stakeholders?					
Relationship management	Are current stakeholders being nurtured?					
	Is information about current stakeholders made freely available to all divisions of the organisation?					
	Do the various divisions make use of existing information about current stakeholders?					
	Are links with stakeholders being developed and built?					
	Are relationships with stakeholders personalised, based on organisation-wide available information?					

**F Information sharing**

1. Well established and functional
2. Established but not functioning optimally
3. Established but not functional
4. Exists informally
5. Does not exist

Activity	Measurement				
	1	2	3	4	5
Mechanisms to centralise information about stakeholders					
Mechanisms to maintain research information					
Mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation					
Mechanisms to ensure that cross-functional processes are geared toward a database management system that provides universal customer information and a corporate memory					

**G Interpretation of data**

The lower the average score, the higher the levels of integration. The ideal situation is to have each element as close to a score of 1 as possible. This example of a measuring instrument can be used as a checklist to determine, firstly, whether all elements that need to be addressed are in place and, secondly, to what extent the various integration procedures and mechanisms are functional.

**12.6 Summary**

For an organisation's communication to be integrated effectively, specific mechanisms and procedures should be in place. This chapter discusses the concepts developed by Duncan and Moriarty (1998), Van Riel (1995) and Ehlers (2002), which could provide criteria for integration. Existing measuring instruments for integration in different contexts are explored, and an example of the development of a measuring instrument is provided in the last part of the chapter.

For communication integration to occur in organisations, one of the main prerequisites is to appoint a person or a team to be specifically responsible for the process. The aims of the process are:

- to ensure consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation to coordinate communication efforts and actions
- to align communication with the strategic focus of the organisation
- to ensure stakeholder orientation and differentiation to ensure that information is free flowing and shared.

### Case study

#### Barker and Angelopulo's integrated web-based marketing communication model

Barker and Angelopulo (2004) propose an integrated web-based marketing communication evaluation model (IWMC) and apply it to the web-based marketing of the University of South Africa (Unisa) as a large institution. Their article demonstrates the possibility of measuring communication integration in a practical manner. The following is a brief summary of this article. (For details of the methodology used and the assessment of results, see the original article – Barker & Angelopulo, 2004.)

Using Duncan and Moriarty's (1998) conceptual framework (see Section 12.2.1) and other relevant research in the field of communication integration, Barker and Angelopulo operationalised the ten drivers suggested by Duncan and Moriarty. The authors assigned specific values to each of the criteria, and the constructs of each (and the items constituting them) were valued according to theoretical relevance. Assessing Unisa's integrated web-based communication against these ten IMC criteria resulted in the following scores for the different criteria:

1. *Stakeholder focus* Score 5.2 out of 10
2. *Relationship building* Score 7.5 out of 15
3. *Maintain strategic consistency* Score 8.1 out of 15
4. *Establishment of interactivity* Score 4.1 out of 10
5. *Market the mission* Score 2 out of 5
6. *Use zero-based planning* Score 4.3 out of 10
7. *Cross-functional planning and monitoring* Score 2 out of 5
8. *Create core competencies* Score 3 out of 10
9. *Become data driven* Score 6 out of 10
10. *Partner an integrated agency* Score 2 out of 5

The authors concluded that their proposed IWMC evaluation model does allow itself to be used as a measure to assess IWMC. The model's main benefits are that it offers the potential of evaluating multiple aspects of marketing communication integration on the internet with minimal effort, and allows measurement of the elements of integrated communication. However, certain weaknesses identified by the authors are the issue of subjectivity, the relative absence of comparable evidence and the lack of standardised benchmarking criteria.

(permission to use this case study was obtained from R. Barker and G. Angelopulo.)

### Activities

1. Study Figure 12.1 (Ehlers's model, page 430). Explain in two paragraphs why the block in the middle of the model (Multiskilled integrated communicator or team of integrated communicators) is so prominently placed in the model.
2. Distinguish between the following dimensions of integrated communication evaluation and measurement:
  - 2.1 Output of integration.
  - 2.2 Outcomes of integration.
3. You have been appointed as the convener of an IM audit team. This team has to conduct an IM audit for Simply Fabulous, a South African company that manufactures and distributes cosmetics and skin care products. A year ago, the

company decided to follow an integrated approach to its marketing communication activities. However, adopting an integrated approach has not yielded the results that top management anticipated. Explain the process that you would follow in doing an IM audit for Simply Fabulous, and how this audit might help you to identify weaknesses or problems in the organisation's marketing communication efforts.

4. Explain how the stakeholder relationship audit developed by Brian Murphy and Andrew Murphy can be used to evaluate the outcomes or effects of IMC.
5. Do you think that the example of a measuring instrument depicted in Section 12.5 is a realistic method of determining to what extent communication integration is realised in an organisation? Provide a substantiated argument in one page.

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# Integrated Organisational Communication

2nd  
Edition

*Communication is often described as the glue that binds an organisation, enabling interaction with its customers, agents and the broader public.*

Communication flourishes in organisations and is central to their activities and functions:

- as marketing communication, public relations, management communication, corporate communication, etc.
- in determining and implementing strategy, operations and processes
- in all interaction – interpersonal, mediated, digital and social
- as the foundation of corporate culture.

*Integrated Organisational Communication* 2nd Edition covers these aspects and addresses the growing need among students and practitioners for a book that takes a broad look at organisations' communication, and then delves into the detail. This book adopts a multidisciplinary approach to organisational communication, and while it takes cognisance of individual academic and professional disciplines, it avoids alignment with any one of these.

Key features:

- reviews the major communication disciplines
- focuses on an integrated approach to communication
- places emphasis on corporate branding, the communication foundations of the brand and alignment of all communication processes with the brand.
- adopts the perspective of the practising communication professional in an organisation
- relates theory to practice in areas such as research, implementation and campaign planning.

Everyone in the Communication industry should have a copy of this book.

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