



Corporate Communications: An International Journal

Trends and developments within corporate communication: an analysis of ten years of CCIJ

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EDITORIAL

Trends and
developments

Trends and developments within corporate communication: an analysis of ten years of *CCIJ*

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to analyse the trends in the papers which have been published in *Corporate Communications: An International Journal (CCIJ)* over the past ten years. The analysis will focus on the region of the world the (first) authors come from and on the topics of the paper.

Design/methodology/approach – All papers published in Volumes 5 to 14 of *CCIJ* have been listed and analysed on the country where the first author comes from and the subjects of the paper.

Findings – In the first part of the last ten years, authors predominantly come from the Anglo-Saxon world (UK, USA and Australia); whereas, in the last period 45 per cent of the papers come from authors from continental Europe. The subjects of the papers show a bigger interest in corporate identity, reputations and corporate social responsibility in the last period, whereas internal communication and change communication remain important over the whole last ten years.

Originality/value – This overview is the first of its kind to be published in *CCIJ*. It shows the growing importance of the journal in the last ten years and the development of the journal into an important journal in the study of corporate communications.

Keywords Corporate communications, Publications, Serials

Paper type General review

This editorial is the first of a new decade and a new era, and offers a good opportunity to look back over the past ten years. The decade behind us was characterised by enormous turmoil within society. We commenced by wondering whether our computers would survive Y2K. There were the incidents of big corporate fraud at Enron, Ahold and Parmalet. And we are currently in the middle of a global economic financial crisis. All these events have a clear relevance to corporate communication. In particular, the global financial crisis will encourage organisations to increase their efforts to create a more effective implementation of corporate communications, as it is obvious that many of the problems organisations are facing involve gaining legitimacy from stakeholders and acting from a genuine corporate identity, and these are the basic fundamentals of corporate communication.

Corporate Communications: An International Journal (CCIJ), published its fifth volume in 2000, and the current issue is the first issue of the 15th volume. The first 11 volumes of the journal were overseen by the Founding Editor, Professor Sandra Oliver. I took over the reins in 2006, starting with Volume 12 (2007). The start of a new era is a good point in time to look back at the past ten years. I will do this on the basis of several analyses I have made of the papers that were published in the last ten volumes



of *CCIJ*: the regions of the world where the (first) authors came from and on the subjects of the papers that have been published.

The 264 papers published in the journal (excluding editorials) between 2000 and 2010 emanated from all the regions of the world. However, three quarters of the papers' (first) authors are from the UK, North America or continental Europe. If we divide the ten years behind us into three periods (2000-2002, 2003-2005 and 2006-2009), we see a number of interesting developments (Figure 1).

More than 40 per cent of the papers originated in the UK during the first period, which could easily be explained by the fact that the journal's publisher (Emerald) is based in the UK, and that the founding editor was British. Papers from North America are at a constant level (slightly above 20 per cent) during all three periods. There is a remarkable increase in papers from continental Europe, which increased from almost 20 per cent from 2000-2002 and 2003-2005 to almost 45 per cent in 2006-2009. During all three periods, almost 10 per cent of *CCIJ*'s published papers were from Asia and Australia. Although there is (naturally) no editorial policy concerning what papers are accepted from which region, I think that this is in line with the development of corporate communication. The dominant position of the UK during the first period might be due to the fact that corporate communications was already an established field of practice and science in Anglo-Saxon cultures in 2000, whereas in continental Europe this has only emerged during the last years of the past decade.

When we look at the subjects of the papers that have been published in the last ten volumes of the journal, we see that almost 25 per cent of the published papers deal with internal or change communication. A total of 20 per cent of the published papers deal with external communication processes, including branding and public relations. Of the papers, 14 per cent deal with corporate social responsibility and another 14 per cent with corporate identity, image and reputation. Of the published papers, 7 per cent deal with financial communications and investor relations. Another 7 per cent of the papers deal with the various professions within the field of corporate communications. Finally, 6 per cent of the papers deal with language and intercultural issues, another 6 per cent

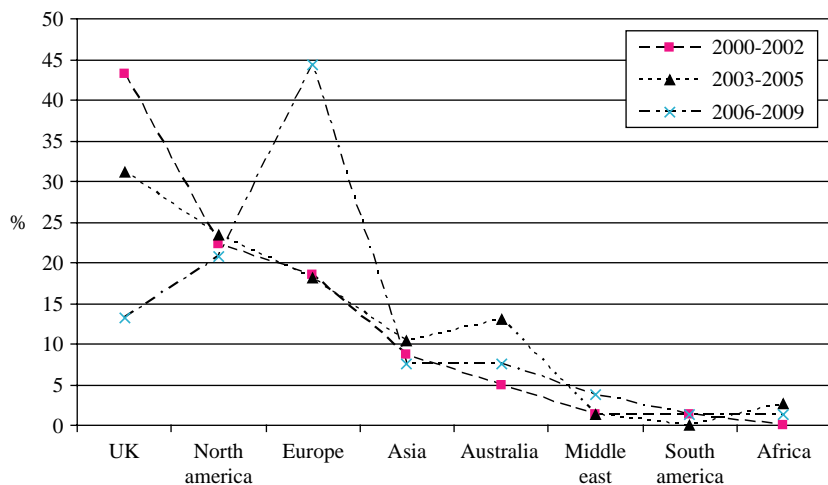


Figure 1.
Home regions of authors
(first author) during the
last ten years

with ICTs and 4 per cent of the papers have crisis communications and/or risk communication as their subject.

On examining these figures, I conclude that the journal reflects what has taken place within society during the last ten years. Internal communication and change communication are important to the field of corporate communication because the internal organisation ultimately dictates what is communicated externally (living the brand, employees as brand ambassadors). Furthermore, the importance of branding processes and other external communications to the field of corporate communication is reflected by the large number of papers published on those subjects. The significance of corporate identity, corporate reputation and corporate social responsibility is highlighted by the enormous growth of papers concerning these subjects during the second part of the last decade. Specialised areas such as investor relations and crisis communications have remained important throughout the last ten years. Communication management and the position of the professional who works within corporate communications was popular during the first half of the last decade, but disappeared almost completely during the second half.

Reflecting upon the subject matter of the publications during the last ten years and those of the years to come, we can clearly see that the field of corporate communications is growing rapidly. Corporate communication has expanded from the Anglo-Saxon countries into continental Europe. It would be valuable, if we were to see more papers from emerging economies such as India, China and Brazil, however, I think that this will follow as a matter of course when these countries develop their industries and realise the importance of good stakeholder relations and the profits that may be gained from good corporate communications.

Another trend that we are witnessing and which we certainly would like to advance is the rigorousness of the research that is presented in the papers. The field is not only developing into an important professional asset for organisations, but we can also see a movement towards a mature field of science, both in the research methods employed and in the conceptual papers. It is the task of the editorial team to further encourage this trend and thus develop the journal into the standard academic journal for corporate communications.

The importance of a strong theoretical foundation to the research that is presented in a manuscript, the rigorousness of the research method underpinning the papers that are published and the double-blind review procedure that the journal employs should make the journal suitable for an ISI ranking. *CCIJ* is currently under review at Thomson for an ISI ranking. This means that we will also streamline our manuscript and review policies. To ensure the double-blind procedure, self-references in manuscripts should be avoided. Manuscripts submitted with self-references will be desk rejected, and the author(s) will be asked to resubmit the paper without these references.

Furthermore, we have a new Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) that has commenced work on this issue. We thank the members of our former EAB for their work and their commitment to the journal, and we hope that the new members of the EAB will help to develop the journal even further.

Finally, it is of particular interest to discuss the trends for the next decade. It is certain that the developments that were in evidence in the papers we have published during recent years will continue. Corporate identity, reputation and corporate social responsibility will almost certainly remain significant during the coming years,

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along with branding processes. The rise of the utilisation of social media in society will also be of great interest to the corporate world. The corporate world is changing as a result of the financial crisis. The transparency of organisations will be an important issue in the years to come, as well as internal and change communication.

Undoubtedly, there will be many new developments in our interesting field of study and I am looking forward to explore these new and present themes concerning corporate communication with our readers and with the authors who make the journal what it is.

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