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JMM – The International Journal on Media Management

Editorial

Dear Reader

Welcome to the new issue of JMM – The International Journal on Media Management.

The papers in this issue cluster around legal, regulatory and governmental themes. We are again happy to be able to present the work of a number of distinguished authors. Each of the contributions allows the reader to gain interesting insights and detailed information on different fields of concern in the above topics and within the general context of media management.

Broadband Internet infrastructure promises to revolutionize the range and variety of services available to consumers in accessing interactive media content. Ruth de Backer and Bharat Rao lead off this issue with an overview of legal and business issues related to broadband. In their contribution they discuss how it will impact future innovation in the industry.

Shahid Akhtar, Mahesh Kumar Malla and Jon Gregson analyze in their paper the role new information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play in achieving goals such as transparency, accountability and good governance. After a short outline of these concepts, the paper probes into both the advantages and disadvantages of the growing utilization of ICTs in the general framework of globalization and democratization, with a focus on the developing world and the Asian continent. It is argued that by increasingly using ICTs and taking on a role as spokespeople for civil society, the Asian media has the potential to promote good governance practices and values.

It is a known fact that there is a high correlation between the level of telecommunication infrastructure represented by teledensity and the level of economic

power represented by GDP per capita. The problems and actions for the growth of teledensity in 48 least developed countries (LDCs) are being discussed, as well as the opportunities for utilizing communication technologies to solve prior problems in those countries. However, the study submitted by Victor W. Mbarika suggests that increased investment in telecommunication technologies is not a major factor for growth of teledensity; higher GDP and higher contribution of the service sector share to GDP in the least developed countries play a more important role for growth of teledensity.

In his article, Tadeusz Kowalski delivers an in-depth examination of what happened to the media market in Poland in the process of the so called “media internationalization”. It is an example of the shift from a highly ideologically motivated concentration into an also high, but mainly capital driven concentration. The general development enabled diversity of expression but as the author points out, “there is no good dinner free of charge”: there are indications of conglomerates lead by foreign media, for which Poland is only a market of secondary meaning thus bringing along the danger of “recycled content”.

Drawing on results from a historical study of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, the article written by Sune Tjernström argues the need to develop present theories of the media firm for media management research. Doing this, agency theory is identified as a powerful tool for the analysis of the behavior in public service organizations.

The research paper written by Sanghee Kweon explores how news magazines deal with mergers and acquisitions in the 1990s unstable social phenomenon. One of many

findings of examining the coverage of mergers based on types of mergers, government policy, and news focus of three U.S. magazines was that news organs tend to cover media mergers differently than non media mergers.

In his essay “Building Dynamic Capabilities”, Dan Steinbock describes the development of the Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition. The paper aims to explain why the WSJE was able to launch and stabilize a successful subscription model, a feat that most of its direct and indirect rivals have failed to accomplish.

In the new media environment, communication has become an even more important factor for a company’s success. This issue of JMM is rounded out with a paper submitted by Markus Will and Victor Porak. Using a survey of 150 corporate communication web sites, they examine the question whether known offline communication models are also used for online communication. In addition, it is shown that in corporate communication web sites, content is distributed using a classical target group rather than a community driven approach.

We hope you will enjoy this collection of contributions. The JMM Editorial Team gives heartfelt thanks to all those who helped to make this journal a successful and internationally known publication since its foundation one year ago. We are proud of the JMM’s success and will give our best to provide our readers with interesting new findings in this research area in the future as we did in the past.

*Beat F. Schmid
Peter Glotz
Peter Gomez
Dörte Wittig*

Corporate Communication in the New Media Environment

A survey of 150 corporate communication web sites

Markus Will and Victor Porak, mcm institute, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

Corporations are increasingly faced with challenges caused by the development of new media. The internet is changing business models, value chains and distribution systems. Additionally, the internet increases the value of communication in the so called “economy of attention”, regarding the difficulty for corporations to reach their target group’s windows of attention. Today’s predominant problem is no longer the production of goods and services, but their communication [Schmid, 2000]. The logic behind these approaches is: If the target groups of companies don’t know both, the products and the companies behind the products, they might not want to buy those products. If they don’t know the (corporate) brand which is today predominant for buyers choices they won’t rely on the company (You don’t buy books online, you buy at amazon.com). Therefore communication becomes a more important factor for the success of a company.

In the past years many companies created their own web site to serve as a communication platform with their target groups. Corporate web sites are used for online communication with various target groups of a company. They are usually structured according to certain business and communication models giving a site its structure. As various communication models are well known for offline communication, we wanted to find out, whether these were also used for online communication. In addition to that we investigated whether corporate web sites offer interactive services and whether content is distributed using a classical target

group or a community driven approach (see also Will/Geissler [2000] for the implications of the internet on corporate communication).

In a first step we will introduce a communication model, which was developed at the Center for Corporate Communication, which is based on distinguished author’s approaches. Step two will explain the research questions for this paper and show the conducted survey. In step three results will be discussed, and conclusions will be drawn.

I. The model

This article is not about the various implications of the internet for business in a narrow sense of meaning. It examines the influence of the internet on business and communication with a wider sense of meaning: We take an holistic communication model from the old economy “for granted” and research, whether this is applied or even adapted to the internet. Thus, we do not examine, which instruments are being used by corporations for their corporate communication, and what their organization looks like, but we analyze, whether such complex models are used for corporation’s web-based communication.

The chosen communication model differs from classical communication science models in being focused solely on corporate communication. The chosen model from Will [1999, 2000], is based on similar approaches from distinguished authors such as Argenti [1998]

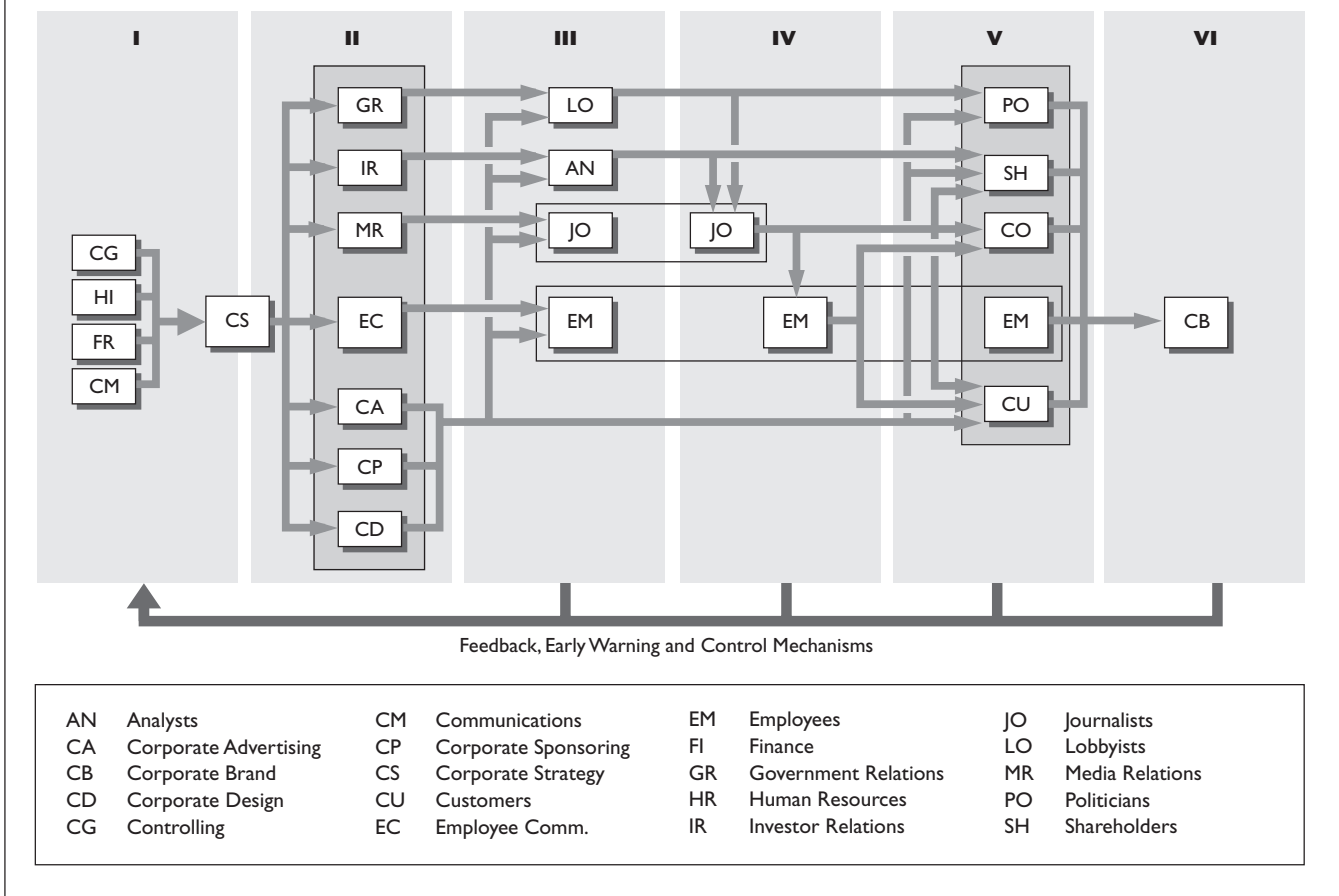
and van Riel [1995, 1997]. Argenti, for example, names several functions of corporate communication, as there are media relations, financial communication, employee communication, corporate image and identity, corporate advertising, government affairs, etc. The messages, created by these communication functions, are communicated to specific constituencies. These functions are integrated in the larger context of a corporate communication strategy model. The corporate communication strategy model describes the communication process – where an organization creates specific messages for certain constituencies and measures the respond of each constituency, which is compared to the intended reaction. Argenti distinguishes primary and secondary constituents for organizations. Primary constituents are employees, customers, shareholders and communities. Secondary constituents are media, suppliers, government and creditors.

The process aspect, the different constituencies and the communication functions can be found in the chosen model.

The model is based on the fact that corporations communicate their corporate strategy (CS) via an integrated communication process, the corporate marketing or corporate branding process, in order to achieve maximum value for the corporate brand (CB).

For such process, the corporation must take all communication instruments consisting of seven different functions into consideration (phase 2), anticipate the differences between intermediary target groups and their inter- and intrarelations (phases 3 and 4), in order to examine the influences on the five ultimate target groups and their inter- and intrarelations (phase 5). Moreover, there are multiple options for feedback and early warnings [see Geissler, 2000] from different phases, which could be folded into the strategy process.

Figure 1: The Communications Model (Will 2000)



The above mentioned structure of corporate communication was the target of another study of the center for corporate communication [see Will/Probst/Schmidt, 1999].

II. Survey

Research Questions

Having chosen the communication model the goal was to investigate whether online communication are structured in the same way as offline communication – if the offline communication model is being applied to online communication, if online communication aim at the same target groups as offline communication, if online communication differ depending on whether a company’s activities are mainly in new economy’s business, and if online communication offer new possibilities for target groups to interact with the company.

The research questions were:

- 1) Is the chosen model for offline-communication being applied to online-communication?
- 2) Is the concept of target groups being applied to the online-communication rather than the concept of communities?
- 3) Does online-communication of new economy corporations differ from the one of old economy corporations?
- 4) What possibilities do online-communication offer in terms of interaction?

If the chosen offline-communication model is applied to corporate web sites this would mean, that we can identify a similar structure in terms of a functional division into investor relations, media relations, employee communication (as far as it can be investigated on the web – usually employee communi-

cation is done via the intranet) on the corporate web site.

If the concept of target groups is applied to a corporate web site, the click path of a user browsing through the site wouldn’t influence the content and the representation being displayed. Entering via investor relations and clicking through to media relations produces the same results as entering via product communication and clicking through to media relations. The web site would be static.

If there is no difference between online-communication of old and new economy corporations, their web sites would look quite similar in terms of content, structure and applied techniques. On the other hand we wanted to find out which techniques in terms of interaction possibilities are used on corporate web sites.

Sample

150 listed companies out of three different stock market indices have been chosen for the survey. We assumed that listed companies have a more serious online communication due to their strong need for good investor and media relations. Three different indices have been chosen for the purpose of dividing the study into:

- old economy companies, which are professionals in their offline communication and have or had to catch up with online communication,
- new economy companies, which know the possibilities of online communication but have to catch up learning the communication business, and
- e-commerce companies that are specialized in using new media and should therefore have optimized their online communication.

We conducted a full survey of three major stock market indices: the EuroStoxx50, containing the largest European Companies; the Euro New Market (EuroNM), containing the largest Euro-

pean New Market Companies, which are more or less internet start-up or biotech companies and from which we chose the 50 top market capitalization firms¹, and finally the Fortune e-50, containing large us-based e-commerce and information technology companies. The evaluation took place in april, may and june 2000.

Questionnaire

In order to answer the research questions, a questionnaire has been developed that was used to evaluate the web sites of the chosen companies. The questionnaire was partly based on the business or corporate communication model mentioned above. Regarding the field of new media and internet we added blocks for communication support, interactivity, technology, etc. to get a holistic view of today's corporate communication web sites. Divided into three major parts, the questionnaire focused on the offered communication services, the communication support, the interaction and on the underlying target group or community model. The focus of the questionnaire lies on what communication is offered to which tar-

get groups, how it is organized on the web site and what interaction possibilities exist for users.

III. Findings

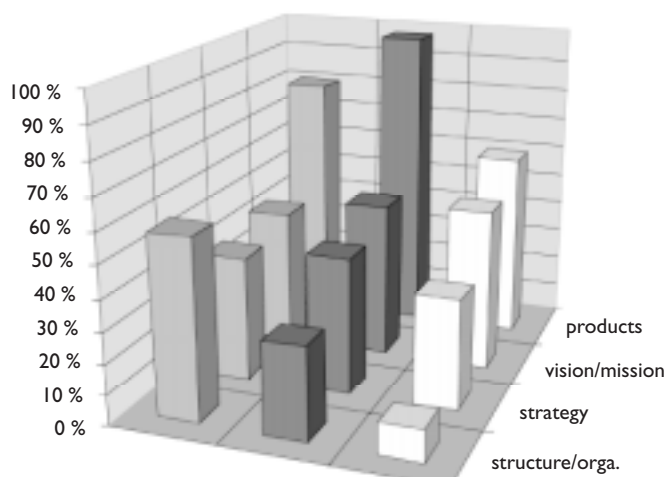
The questionnaire featured over 80 attributes that have been evaluated for each of the 150 web sites. The following attributes delivered the most interesting results: image building, target groups, job offers, interaction, dialogue and feedback. We will pick these attributes and present them in the following paragraphs.

a) Corporate Brand building elements

The objective of corporate communication is to achieve a corporate brand, a reputation or image of the company in order to build trust, to be attractive for potential employees and to generate value for investors. Although the main purpose of corporate communication – according to the used model – is the communication and explanation of the corporate strategy in order to build a positive image within the most important target groups, data seem to confirm that online communication is mainly product focused and that only few of the companies inform for example about their vision/mission and strategy, or structure and organization. These are only a few items that generate or influence a corporate brand – we have chosen to show these because gathered data showed the most significant differences between the three stock indices.

While 80% of the EuroStoxx 50 companies inform about their products and 58% about their structure/organization, only 44% inform about their vision/mission and 40% do so for their strategy. Even 98% of the EuroNM companies inform about their products, while 50%

Figure 2: Brand building elements



| | products | vision/mission | strategy | structure/orga. |
|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|-----------------|
| ■ EuroStoxx 50 | 80 % | 44 % | 40 % | 58 % |
| ■ Euro NM | 98 % | 50 % | 44 % | 30 % |
| □ Fortune e-50 | 60 % | 52 % | 36 % | 10 % |

¹ Market Capitalization of EuroNM, measured on the 28th of march 2000, at <http://www.the-bulls.com>

inform about their vision/mission, 44% about their strategy and only 30% about their structure/organization. The Fortune e50 companies offer even less information, like only 60% of them inform about their products, 52% inform about their vision/mission, 36% inform about their strategy and only 10% show their structure/organization, as can be seen in figure 2.

Most companies don't do a good job in building their online corporate brand – under these conditions, it is difficult to get an image of most companies if you just look at their web sites.

b) Target Groups

In the classical offline world a distinction was made between corporate information that was generated for specific target groups and messages that were generated for intermediates and gatekeepers. Unless a company offers special web sites (extranets) for investor, analyst and media relations (which actually very few do), the information published on a corporate web site is accessible to all users. In that case a clear distinction between target groups and gatekeepers is not possible any more.

As mentioned above, the internet changes business models, value chains and distribution systems. The most crucial change for communication though is that various target groups access the same web site at the same time. Formerly corporate communication just knew where to publish information in order to reach a certain target group. That is no longer valid in new media because somebody interested in the strategy of the company might be interested in the stock price as well as in job offers. The formerly clear distinction between target groups seems to dilute in the new media environment. Instead of speaking of target groups we tend to speak of communities – mostly communities of interest [see Will/Geissler, 2000; Lechner/Schmid, 2000; Schmid/Eppler/Lechner/Schmid-Isler/Stanoevska-Slabeva/Will/Zimmermann, 1999 and Porak/Einwiller/Geissler, 2000].

All of the 150 companies use the same strategy to communicate with their different target groups. They offer target group categories on their web site and let the user choose the content according to its temporal role – so somebody interested in stock prices or analyst ratings will click on the “investor rela-

tions” button, while somebody interested in the latest press release might click on the “media relations” or “press” button.

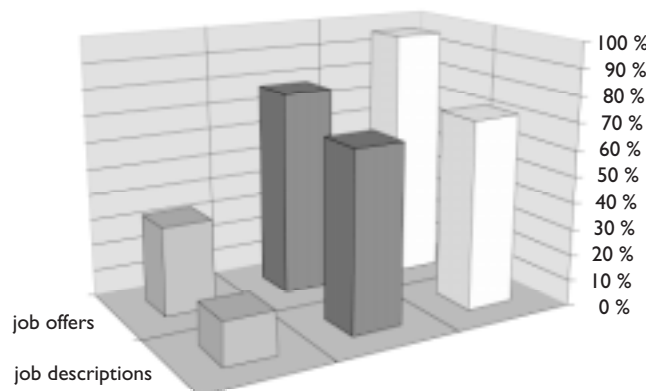
None of the evaluated companies gave its web site a structure according to different communities of interest, like intersections between target groups (For example a customer could be at the same time an investor of the company). In order to accomplish such demands, corporates would need to offer multi access portals for various communities that automatically adapt content and layout of corporate messages and other information [see Porak/Einwiller/Geissler, 2000].

c) Employee Communication

One of the tasks of employee communication is the communication with and the acquisition of potential employees. Corporate web sites usually do not offer employee communication, because this kind of communication is generated for internal use only and should not be published for general public access. Internal communication is therefore generally published in intranet web sites which cannot be accessed without authentication. Corporate web sites should therefore at least show a job offer section so that interested potential employees can opt for a job.

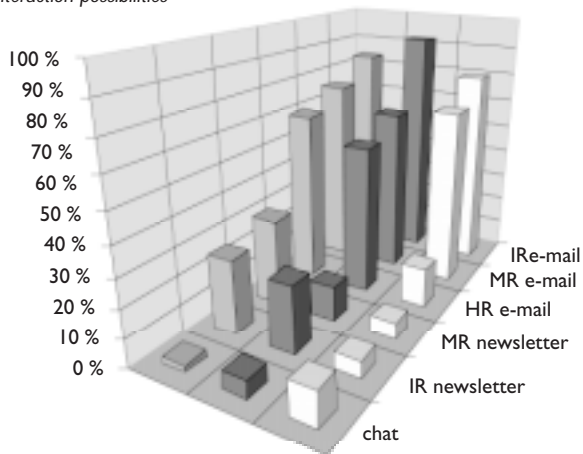
While most of the classical EuroStoxx 50 companies don't publish job offers on the internet (only 34%), many of the EuroNM companies (78%) and fairly all of the Fortune e50 do so (96%). While many of the companies publish job offers on their web sites, fewer add a detailed job description. The job descriptions follow the same pattern: While only 16% of the EuroStoxx companies offer job descriptions, 68% of the EuroNM companies and 72% of the Fortune e50 companies offer detailed job descriptions – often with contact persons and the possibility to reach in a CV. While the EuroStoxx50 companies overall offer good and often better com-

figure 3: Information for high potentials



| | job offers | job descriptions |
|----------------|------------|------------------|
| ■ EuroStoxx 50 | 34 % | 16 % |
| ■ Euro NM | 78 % | 68 % |
| □ Fortune e-50 | 96 % | 72 % |

Figure 4: Interaction possibilities



| | IR e-mail | MR e-mail | HR e-mail | MR newsletter | IR newsletter | chat |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------|------|
| ■ EuroStoxx 50 | 74 % | 66 % | 60 % | 30 % | 26 % | 2 % |
| ■ Euro NM | 82 % | 58 % | 52 % | 12 % | 24 % | 6 % |
| □ Fortune e-50 | 70 % | 62 % | 14 % | 6 % | 6 % | 12 % |

munication services in the fields of Investor Relations and Media Relations, they seem to avoid online job offers.

d) Interaction & Dialogue

The most advanced feature new media offer is the possibility for interaction and dialogue over time and distance. By looking at the dialogue possibilities offered on corporate web sites we wanted to find out how these are presently offered for use.

The contact possibilities, corporate web sites offer, can vary from simple postal address information and telephone and fax numbers, over e-mail contacts to newsletters (sometimes even personalized), database systems and chat rooms. As simple postal addresses and telephone and fax numbers cannot be counted to interaction and dialogue items in new media, we focused on newsletters, e-mail contact possibilities and chat rooms.

As shown in the table below, all major communication functions feature mail-in accounts. The possibility to contact somebody directly via e-mail was only offered in very few cases. A lot fewer of the companies offer newsletters. Al-

though not very difficult to implement, personalized newsletters just occurred in a few cases. Fairly none of the companies offer online chat utilities.

e) Feedback

One feature that distinguishes online communication from classical offline communication is the possibility for users of the corporate web site to immediately interact with corporate communication by giving direct feedback. On one hand side this is a great opportunity for both: the user, member of a certain target group or community, can directly tell what he or she thinks about the web site and can make suggestions what could be better or just ask a question, the corporate communication team can directly observe, how their communication work within the different target groups, learn from them and adapt their communication. On the other hand direct communication with target groups means a lot of work for the corporate communication team, which has to analyze the feedback and react to demands.

Besides manually generated feedback, it can also be generated automatically through the user's interactions on the

web site. The web server logs click path and the time users stay on single pages, using session ids or cookies. More sophisticated tools can even track all of users interactions with the site, like the buttons which were clicked, etc. By analyzing these log files the communication team can learn a lot about the behavior of users on the web site and react according to evaluated data. As it is impossible to take a look at those automatically generated log files from an external point of view, we focus on feedback possibilities.

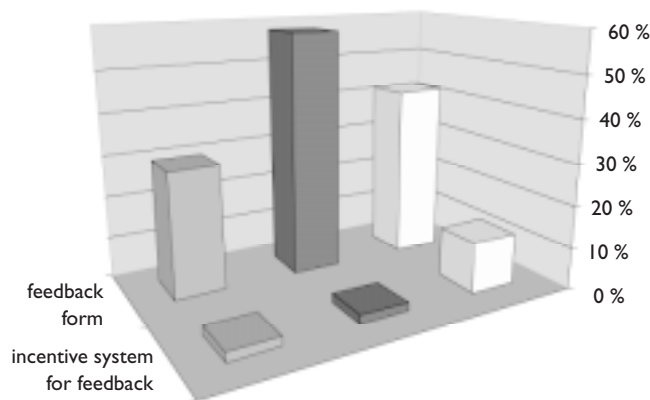
Some companies came up with feedback forms that can be filled in by users. While only 30% of the EuroStoxx 50 companies offer a feedback form, 58% of the EuroNM companies and 42% of the Fortune e50 do so. On most of the sites it was rather difficult to find a feedback form and fairly none of the companies offer an incentive for filling in the form. Only two percent offer an incentive system for feedback such as a sweepstake. Fairly none of the companies does advertising for their feedback so that even users willing to fill in forms won't find them.

IV. Results

As mentioned above, it is impossible to describe all of the survey's results in this article and we were forced to pick out some of the most interesting details. We focused on the issues of how the image of the company is being generated through the corporate web site, whether target groups or communities are addressed, if and how job offers are placed, which types of interaction & dialogue are supported and if users can generate any feedback to the corporate. Let's have a look at the five most important results:

Firstly, the corporate strategy itself is not really communicated to various communities. However, most of the companies explain their products. These observations contradict the communication model, which postulates that the

figure 3: Information for high potentials



| | feedback form | incentive system for feedback |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ EuroStoxx 50 | 30 % | 2 % |
| ■ Euro NM | 58 % | 2 % |
| □ Fortune e-50 | 42 % | 12 % |

corporate strategy is transformed into the corporate brand by using all type of communication: corporate and product communication. Thus, it seems as if both types of corporations (new and old ones) consider the internet as a tool rather for product information than for corporate information.

Secondly, the older corporations offer professional communication services such as videos from press conferences or financial calendars on the web. Thus, these type of companies use the modern technological opportunities for old type general communication instruments. Their communication doesn't really offer added value by using the possibilities of new media.

Thirdly, the newer corporations use the internet sophisticatedly. Their web sites often offer added value by an enhanced use of the possibilities of new media. These companies try for example to attract potential employees or customers via the net. Thus, these types of companies often use modern technological opportunities more efficiently. However their communication services – from a classical point of view – are often inferior, except for job offers, newsletters and chats.

Fourthly, all of the reviewed web sites use the concept of target groups and none of them use the concept of communities. Thus, all evaluated web sites are structured fairly in the same way: the user has to choose whether he or she wants to get financial information, press releases, etc. None of the web sites adapts in a way that content and layout dynamically adapt to the users interactions or to the user's changes of roles.

Fifthly, the offered communication support services in terms of interaction are only present in a few cases and fairly none of the reviewed web sites offers direct communication mechanisms as chat or direct customer support etc. These are only used occasionally for special issues.

Conclusions

In our view, there are some major conclusions to draw from the survey: The first is that off-line communication models are principally being applied the same way in on-line communication. The second, however, is that both types of corporations adjust parts of the technological opportunities for either old type of instruments or old type of

target groups. The third conclusion is that both types of companies still focus on targets rather than on communities.

So far, most corporations still seem to have a strict line between marketing and corporate communication [see Will/Probst/Schmidt, 1999; a survey amongst the Eurostoxx 50 corporations] – most web sites are predominantly product-driven and offer inferior corporate communication. Web-based communication so far has more or less been driven by marketing rather than by communication. In consequence, the success for web-based communication is measured by the ability to attract consumers, but not by any ability to interest journalists or other catalysts for a corporations web-site.

The emergence of new media will increase the requirements for both an integrated and holistic view for communication as a strategic management function. Corporate Communication will have to learn how to take advantage of the use of new media – communication models and services will have to be adapted to the new environment in order to communicate with new target communities. The organization of the communication department (marketing and corporate communication) and communication processes need to be adapted to support those needs.

In consequence, the one should learn from the other in terms of instruments and both should advance their media-driven approach [see Porak/Geissler/Einwiller, 2000]

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Calendar of Events

January

01/27/2001 - 01/28/2001

7th International Conference on Communications

Indian Institute of Technology,
Kampur, India
<http://www.iitk.ernet.in>

February

02/01/2001

New Media and the interconnection of media in publishing firms

Frankfurt, Germany
<http://www.managerakademie.de>

02/15/2001 - 02/17/2001

Society for Consumer Psychology Winter Conference

Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
<http://fisher.osu.edu>

March

03/08/2001 - 03/10/2001

E-Commerce 2001

Hawaii, USA
<http://www.e-comprofits.com>

03/12/2001 - 02/13/2001

Workshop on Information and Organizational Design (EIASM)

Brussels, Belgium
<http://www.eiasm.be>

April

04/04/2001 - 04/05/2001

The 8th World Business Dialogue "PLANET NET - Strategies for a New Economy"

University of Cologne, Germany
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