



Understanding organisational culture and the implications for corporate marketing

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organisational
culture

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Abstract *The actions of employees such as service personnel are seen as being important in communicating a company's corporate values and goals, particularly where they interact directly with customers and other corporate audiences. Their beliefs, norms and values derived from the organisational culture influence their actions and the informal messages that they communicate. A mystique still exists around the concept of organisational culture. This paper attempts to rectify this by reviewing the literature relating to organisational culture, focusing on its definition, the factors which influence it and the arguments as to whether it can be managed. The paper highlights the complexity of the phenomenon and the need for corporate marketers to be more sensitive to this complexity in the development and execution of corporate communication strategies. This requires marketers to work more closely with researchers and practitioners working in the fields of organisational behaviour and human resource management.*

Introduction

Corporate marketing activities are publicly visible programmes and actions that companies undertake to communicate corporate activities that reflect the social responsibility, values and goals of the company. However, for many service organisations, corporate programmes may be negated or strengthened by the actions of service personnel in the delivery of a service during an encounter with a customer. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, 1988), in their analysis of why companies fail to meet customer expectations, highlighted the differences that can occur between the messages promoted through external communications and the actions of service personnel. Corporate marketing activities may raise the expectations of customers and other audiences beyond that which can be delivered by service personnel. There is therefore a need for those involved in the design and management of corporate marketing activities within service organisations to be aware of one of the key factors influencing the actions of service personnel, that is, organisational culture.

Normann (1991) saw no other component as being more crucial to the actions of service personnel and the messages they communicate than organisational culture. The service transaction is a social process where personnel are driven by the inherent beliefs, norms and values existing within the organisation. The service personnel are the face of the organisation, and a company's effective use of that face is dependent on understanding organisational culture.

In the field of corporate identity research, questions of culture have been included in the conceptual models of corporate identity/image formation

(Abratt, 1989; Balmer, 1997; Dowling, 1994). Lumsden (1990) also found that 75 percent of a corporate identity consultant's work was in understanding an organisation's culture. However, Balmer and Wilson (1998) stated that much of this is done in a superficial manner and fails to take account of the complexities of organisational culture. They also stress the need for marketers to be more sensitive to and have a greater understanding of organisational culture when discussing questions of corporate branding, corporate marketing programmes, and corporate identity management.

This paper therefore aims to clarify understanding of organisational culture by reviewing the extensive literature on the subject, focusing first on the definition and format of organisational culture, then the factors which influence it, and finally the arguments as to whether culture can be managed and potentially changed.

Definition of organisational culture

The concept of culture has principally stemmed from the study of ethnic and national differences in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and social psychology. A good summary of the many definitions for culture developed in each of these disciplines was given by the cultural geographer Haggett (1975, p. 238):

Culture describes patterns of behaviour that form a durable template by which ideas and images can be transferred from one generation to another, or from one group to another.

Three aspects of this definition need further explanation. First, the transfer of behaviour does not take place through genetics but instead takes place through the social interaction between members of a group. Second, according to the culture pattern theory (e.g. Benedict, 1934) the various elements of a culture tend to form a relatively stable harmonious system and therefore any cultural template is durable and slow to change. Third, the ideas and images of culture provide a guide for the conduct of acceptable behaviour. As such, many aspects of the culture are embodied in rules of various sorts; some are laws (e.g. against stealing) which are backed by official punishment for deviation; others are social norms (e.g. about what clothes to wear) which are backed by social disapproval and rejection of deviates.

Initially, within organisational theory, scholars used the culture concept as a metaphor to study organisations as forums in which meanings are constructed and expressed through social interactions. But as it became part of the vocabulary of management thinking, more and more researchers began to employ culture as a variable rather than as a "root metaphor", something an "organisation had" versus something "it was". Some of the earliest references to the concept of culture as an internal organisational variable are found in the literature of organisation development (Jacques, 1952; Harrison, 1972). Several researchers began to link various types of cultures (e.g. "strong vs weak") to certain outcome variables such as performance and internal integration (e.g. Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983). Thus, culture became a

mechanism with which to achieve managerial effectiveness and control (Barley *et al.* 1988; Peters and Waterman, 1982).

During these stages of development, a large number of definitions have been proposed for the concept of culture in the corporate setting. Some of these draw directly on the definitions from anthropology and the other root disciplines, others are specific to the corporate sector.

The more basic definitions do not aid understanding but simply provide a vague description to replace the term culture. These descriptions range from the “feeling in the organisation” (Tagiuri and Litwin, 1968) to the “rules of the game” (Van Maanen, 1976, 1979; Ritti and Funkhouser, 1982) to “how things are done around here” (Drennan, 1992). These simple descriptions contrast with the more all-embracing and more useful definitions produced by Schein (1991), Schneider (1988) and Kotter and Heskett (1992).

A pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and relate to those problems (Schein, 1991, p. 9).

Culture refers to: (a) the values that lie beneath what the organisation rewards, supports and expects; (b) the norms that surround and/or underpin the policies, practices and procedures of organisations (c) the meaning incumbents share about what the norms and values of the organisation are (Schneider, 1988, p. 353).

At the deeper and less visible level, culture refers to values that are shared by the people in a group and that tend to persist over time even when group membership changes. At the more visible level, culture represents the behaviour patterns or style of an organisation that new employees are automatically encouraged to follow by their fellow employees. Each level of culture has a tendency to influence the other (Kotter and Heskett, 1992, p. 4.)

These definitions outline some of the common key elements that appear in many of the definitions proposed for organisational culture. First, organisational culture is a shared phenomenon (see Tichy, 1982; Pfeffer, 1981; Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983). Culture, in this sense, is a learned product of group experience and is, therefore, only to be found where there is a definable group with a significant history. The group does not necessarily have to be a whole company. Companies can have multiple cultures (Kotter and Heskett, 1992) or subcultures (Wilson, 1997) usually associated with different functional or geographic groupings.

Second, the majority of authors, with the exception of Schein (1991), believe that there are two levels of culture, the visible level and the deeper, less visible level. Schein’s (1990) view is that the term culture should only relate to the “deeper” less visible level, although he does use visible evidence to understand and describe different cultures.

The visible aspects encompass behaviour patterns, the physical and social environment and the written and spoken language used by the group. Many of these have been researched using a semiotic approach by researchers such as Barley (1983), Manning (1979) and Van Maanen (1977).

The deeper, less visible level of culture relates to the group's values and what Schein (1991) calls their basic assumptions. The shared values consist of the goals and concerns that shape a group's sense of what "ought" to be. These notions, about acceptable norms, values and behaviour, can vary greatly in different groups; in some settings people care deeply about money, in others about customer well-being or employee well-being.

From a marketing perspective, some of these values may remain conscious and may be explicitly stated in a company's mission statement as the "dominant values of the organisation" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). However, if these values are not based on prior cultural learning they may also come to be seen only as what Argyris and Schon (1978) have called "espoused values", which predict what people will say in a variety of situations but which may be out of line with what they will actually do in situations where those values should be operating. Therefore the company's corporate marketing activity may say something about commitment to serving the customer, but its record in that regard may contradict what it says. Therefore the underlying values, assumptions and beliefs of organisational culture are more than simply strategic priorities and goals.

The third element relates to the manner in which new members learn the culture. A process of cultural socialisation arises informally from the existing employees and formally through induction training programmes. Harrison and Carroll (1991) explained that if an individual enters an organisation where employees work in an environment of strong group and peer pressure, the individual adopts the employees' norms. Whereas when the group pressures are weak, the individual is likely to accept the norms encouraged by management. There is therefore no guarantee that the service personnel interacting with customers will adopt or communicate the content of the internal corporate marketing messages.

Finally, organisational cultures tend to change slowly over time. Kotter and Heskett (1992) explained that culture evolves as a result of the turnover of group members, changes in the company's market environment and general changes in society. Wilkins and Ouchi (1983) quoted a number of examples of organisations claiming to experience great distress because the culture could not be changed or because its members would not change fast enough.

Developing these elements into a definition results in organisational culture being defined as the visible and less visible norms, values and behaviour that are shared by a group of employees which shape the group's sense of what is acceptable and valid. These are generally slow to change and new group members learn them through both an informal and formal socialisation process.

The nature of organisational culture

To fully understand the complexity of the organisational culture literature, it is necessary to explore the various perspectives of culture that have been adopted by the organisational behaviourists and other researchers in this field. Martin

and Meyerson (1988) identified the following three major perspectives in organisational culture research.

1. The integration perspective

This portrays a strong or desirable culture as one where there is organisation-wide consensus and consistency (Schein, 1991; Barley, 1983; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982). Espoused values are consistent with formal practices, which are consistent with informal beliefs, norms and attitudes. Cultural members share the same values, promoting a shared sense of loyalty and commitment. Where inconsistencies, conflict or subcultural differentiation occur, this is portrayed as being a weak or negative culture.

2. The differentiation perspective

This emphasises that rather than consensus being organisation-wide, it only occurs within the boundaries of a subculture. At the organisational level, differentiated subcultures may co-exist in harmony, conflict or indifference to each other. Van Maanen (1991), in his study of Disneyland, found groups of employees who considered themselves as being distinct. These sub-cultures related to different jobs, different levels of organisational status gender and class. Claims of harmony from management masked a range of inconsistencies and group antagonisms. Wilson (1997), in his examination of a bank, found a nested set of subcultures, the dominant influence being the service delivery team followed by the hierarchical status of the employees. What is unique about a given organisation's culture, then, is the particular mix of subcultural differences within an organisation's boundaries.

3. The fragmentation perspective

This approach views ambiguity as the norm, with consensus and dissension co-existing in a constantly fluctuating pattern influenced by events and specific areas of decision making. As stated by Frost *et al.* (1991), consensus fails to coalesce on an organisation-wide or subcultural basis, except in transient, issue-specific ways. Rather than the clear unity of the integration perspective, or the clear conflicts of the differentiation viewpoint, fragmentation focuses on that which is unclear.

Many of the studies in organisational culture focus on only one of these perspectives, arguing whether it and it alone is evident within the organisation (see Table I). As an example of this, Meyerson (1991) makes the point that much of the popular literature (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982) rests on the mistaken assumption that organisational culture consists of shared meanings and commonalities that are quite homogeneous, monolithic and organisation-wide. Little or no consideration is given to the potential existence of subcultures or dissension unless as an indication of a weak culture.

There are also major methodological differences between the three perspectives. Much of the research identifying consensus has involved small-scale qualitative research where the interviews have only been undertaken with

Table I.

The proponents of the
three cultural
perspectives

Integration perspective	Barley, 1983; Schein, 1991; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Pascale and Athos, 1981; Enz, 1988; Ott, 1989; Ouchi and Jaeger, 1978; Pennings and Gresov, 1986; Pfeffer, 1981; Pondy <i>et al.</i> , 1983; Sathe, 1985; Sergiovanni and Corbally, 1988; Jonsson and Lundin, 1977; Pettigrew, 1979; McDonald, 1991
Differentiation perspective	Van Maanen, 1991; Rosen, 1985; Louis, 1985; Young, 1989; Christensen and Kreiner, 1984; Bartunek and Moch, 1991; Brunsson, 1986; Riley, 1983; Cooke and Rousseau, 1988; Wilson, 1997
Fragmentation perspective	Kreiner and Schultz, 1993; Feldman, 1991; Meyerson, 1991; Levitt and Nass, 1989; Weick, 1991

the senior levels of selected organisations (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Barley, 1983). Such a methodological approach has been criticised for providing an incomplete picture of an organisation's culture, reflecting only what management hoped to see (Martin *et al.*, 1983).

Most of the studies identifying a differentiation perspective have tended to be quantitative, interviewing large numbers of subjects, using some form of standardised research instrument (Martin and Frost, 1995). This approach to cultural research has been criticised for its lack of depth and its inability to assess the unique characteristics of an organisation (Schein, 1991).

The proponents of the fragmentation perspective have tended to research specific incidents or issues, such as air traffic controllers operating on a foggy evening at a Tenerife airport (Weick, 1991), or policy analysts writing reports (Feldman, 1991).

Martin (1992) and Wilson (1997) argued that it is not the case that advocates of the various perspectives have simply sought and found cultural contexts that fit both their methodologies and preconceptions. Instead, any organisational culture contains elements congruent with all three perspectives. Martin and Meyerson (1988) also argued, using data from a variety of case studies, that any culture contains elements that can be understood only when all three perspectives are used. From a senior manager's/director's point of view, the integrationist perspective may be congruent with a manager's desire to see their values and policies shared and followed. Middle management may want to distance itself from senior management and therefore subcultures and a differentiation perspective may be more appropriate. Newcomers and disenchanted shop floor workers may fit in more with the fragmentation perspective.

Therefore, within a company there may be organisation-wide consensus on some issues, consensus only within certain subcultures on other issues and an ambiguous state on the remainder. Schein, in Frost *et al* (1991), suggested that there may be a core set of ideological guidelines within an organisation that require a minimal consensus and consistency, otherwise organisations would not function. Therefore consistency, consensus, harmony and integration may

occur, but within the midst of inconsistencies, ambiguities, conflicts, disruption and dissolution. This complexity can cause a major headache for those involved in corporate marketing and communications. At least as much effort needs to be put into understanding the cultural dimensions within the organisation as is currently put into researching the attitudes and opinions of external target audiences.

Factors influencing organisational culture

In assessing the nature of an organisation's culture, it is important for corporate marketers to understand the factors which underpin and influence culture. The most frequently cited groupings of factors (Schein, 1991) include the following.

1. The business environment

The general business environment in which an organisation operates helps to determine the culture. Society at large will influence opinions about work, money, status and different types of jobs. The writings of sociology and anthropology highlight the differences in cultural attitudes between geographical regions as well as differences between different levels of social strata. These differences will affect commitment, respect for managers, attitudes towards service and the customer.

The traditions of a particular industry will also have an impact; airlines have "a combination of military-establishment and pioneering enthusiast spirit" (Normann, 1991, p. 164). Banks and bankers have a risk-averse nature, whereas stockbrokers have a deal-oriented culture. These societal aspects provide the foundations upon which the corporate culture is developed.

Overlaid on these foundations is the specific market environment within which the organisation is operating. Within a market, the speed of change, the level of competitiveness, the value placed on people *vis-à-vis* technology and the demands of the customer will also influence the values, norms and behaviour of those who work within it. Many of the companies who have had greatest need for a culture change have been those who have lost their monopolistic position (privatised companies such as British Telecom) or where an industry-wide cartel had broken down (ICI) as the non-competitive market environment had impacted on employees and their attitudes (Drennan, 1992).

2. Leadership

Leadership is thought by authors such as Kotter and Heskett (1992) and Schein (1983) as having some influence on the culture of an organisation. However, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that it has the totally overpowering and guiding hand suggested by these authors.

Where there is evidence of a link between leadership and culture, it is in young newly created organisations. In new organisations, Pettigrew (1979) believes that the entrepreneur or founder influences the culture through his own ambitions, the interactive processes between entrepreneurs and their

followers and the more general processes through which purpose and commitment are generated and sustained. Schein (1991) saw the founder as having a critical role in reducing anxiety within a new group situation. As the founder's prescriptions of how things are to be done help to set standards of acceptable behaviour and best practice, they also help to structure the initially unstructured relationships among the new group members. If the founder is surrounded by colleagues and employees who are not willing to accept his initial assumptions, the process of culture development will involve conflict, negotiation, compromise, and in some cases, the removal of members from the group. Because of the power of a founder, the emerging culture may then reflect not only the founder's assumptions, but the complex internal accommodations created by subordinates to run the organisation "in spite of" or "around" the leader. When the founder steps down or dies, his or her successor is often faced with intransigence if there is a desire to change things in response to new circumstances. This may be due to the influence and respect given to the previous leader or it may be due simply to people's general inertia and unwillingness to change.

3. Management practices and the formal socialisation process

The manner in which a company is managed is likely to influence either positively or negatively the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of the employees. Before considering management practices, there is a need to distinguish between management and leadership. Kotter (1990) summarised many authors' definitions of leadership by stating that it is involved in the long-term direction of the company through the development of a vision and strategies for the future. The leader is then responsible for communicating through words and deeds this vision to internal and external audiences while motivating and inspiring the individuals who have to deliver it. Management, on the other hand, is generally described as being about the detailed planning, budgeting, organising, controlling and staffing of the organisation as well as *ad hoc* problem solving.

Within these management tasks, managers have control over a range of factors that apparently affect cultural transmission. The most important of these, highlighted by Harrison and Carrol (1991), are recruitment, formal socialisation procedures and the turnover of employees.

The types of people recruited can help to perpetuate a cultural orientation as recruiters will tend to find attractive those candidates who resemble present members in style, assumptions, values and beliefs. This form of cultural embedding operates unconsciously in most organisations.

Recruitment decisions will not always lead to a perfect match, because of the personnel available on the labour market and the information that is missed or remains hidden during the interviewing process. Therefore formal socialisation activities are undertaken to reinforce acceptable attitudes and behaviour within the organisation (Schein, 1968, 1991; Ott, 1989; O'Reilly, 1989). These activities include training, and particularly induction training, which is geared towards

providing explicit orientation for employees. Other techniques include systems of employee participation that rely on processes of incremental commitment, reliance on groups for control of members and comprehensive reward systems that use recognition and approval (O'Reilly, 1989). In a less explicit manner, employees learn from their own experience as to what the organisation values for promotions and salary increases as well as what the organisation punishes. Rewards and control systems reinforce behaviour that is deemed pivotal to success in the organisation.

The design of the organisation with its hierarchies and reporting structures is also seen as having an impact on the norms and values of individuals at different points within it (Schein, 1991). Harrison and Carroll (1991) consider the impact of different organisational forms, such as Japanese-style, governmental-bureaucratic form and collectivist-democratic form in their cultural transmission model. The findings are relatively inconclusive and tend to reflect national traits (e.g. the Japanese providing a stable corporate culture) rather than the design of the organisation. However, aspects such as decentralisation, empowerment of employees and recognition of unions all seem to have an impact on the elements of corporate culture.

4. The informal socialisation process

As all of the definitions of corporate culture identify the critical element of sharing within a group, it is important to consider how an individual behaves within the group context. From group dynamic theory, the individual in a group setting has basically three primary needs (Schein, 1969, 1991; Schutz, 1969; McGrath, 1984).

The first of these is to feel part of the group by developing a viable role and being recognised by other members of the group. This involves a compromise of maintaining a distinct and separate identity at the same time as being seen as a group member.

Second, there is a need to feel powerful, able to influence and control whilst accepting the needs of others to do the same. This can lead to conflict but can also help to formulate the roles of individuals within the group.

Third, there is a need to feel accepted by the group and to achieve the basic security and intimacy that comes with that.

These factors are important whether it is a totally new group that is being formed or where a new member is entering an existing group. Schein (1991) saw these needs as reflecting the basic human needs for security, mastery of the environment (influence and control) and love (acceptance and intimacy).

As a result of efforts to stabilise these needs and the personalities of the different group members, norms and standards arise and, ultimately, are consensually accepted and enforced. This takes time as people with different interpersonal styles and emotions cannot be expected to build shared meanings out of immediate interaction. Through working together, the group members gradually learn through interaction what each other's style is and how to accommodate it. To be accepted, new members will also attempt to behave in a

manner which is generally consistent and congruent with the established norms.

This socialisation process is supported by the telling of what has been termed myths, stories and legends (Schall, 1981; Meyer, 1981; Cohen, 1975; Martin and Powers, 1983; Schein, 1991) about specific situations and how they were handled (i.e. why certain people were sacked and why some were promoted). This reinforces patterns of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and it can also become a means of spreading a counter-culture or of revealing inconsistencies or absurdities in the main culture.

Organisational culture change

The culture of a group does evolve and change over time as a result of changes in the various influencing factors. However, the influencing factors and components of organisational culture are complex and intertwined. As a result, these evolutionary changes may be too slow for the market and the management. The question then arises as to whether changes in an organisation's culture or cultures can be managed.

There is significant debate between researchers on this topic, with some seeing organisational culture as another critical component by which strategic managers can influence and direct the course of their organisations (Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Tichy, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1991; Peters and Waterman, 1982). In many cases these are the same authors who see a desirable culture as one where there is organisation-wide consensus and consistency (the integration perspective).

Some researchers question whether organisational culture is indeed manageable because of the existence of subcultures, or even countercultures competing to define the nature of situations within organisational boundaries (Smircich, 1983). Although this may not rule out the management of culture, it may make it far more difficult and complex than the popular "newstand" texts suggest. As stated by Bryman (1984), no one genuinely seems to argue that cultures are absolutely inert and incapable of new directions. However, there is controversy over the degree of ease with which change can be introduced and managed.

There is also a debate as to whether the popular texts actually relate to culture or whether they simply relate to strategic directions and structures. Many of the changes discussed and championed as successful culture changes relate to improved entrepreneurship, the adoption of a customer or market orientation, teamwork or a financial discipline. Bryman (1984) described such orientations as superficial indicators of cultures, that would have been subsumed under umbrella terms like structure or strategy had culture not become so fashionable in recent years. Changes in the underlying values and norms that determine behaviour may not change and what companies may witness is merely behavioural compliance. As a result, the implied benefits of the adoption of such orientations may be short-lived.

Deal and Kennedy (1982), Kotter and Heskett (1992), as well as many others, focused on charismatic leaders or symbolic managers (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) as being the key ingredient necessary for a change in organisational culture. This ignores all of the other factors outlined as influencing factors such as recruitment, training, remuneration and organisational structure. Certainly, the initiative and commitment may come from a leader, but the organisational culture is shaped by more than simply the style of leadership.

Certainly from the lack of empirical results in the literature, the relative importance of each of the influencing factors is unclear and contradictory. What is clear is that each of the factors does have some influence to a greater or lesser extent. They also interact by reinforcing and weakening the influence of each other and therefore it is likely that each of the factors requires to be managed if culture is to be changed.

As stated by Schein (1991), culture operates as a set of implicit assumptions, which cannot change unless they are brought to the surface and confronted. Therefore change may come about by getting employees to surface and re-examine the assumptions they hold. The role of management is to identify and manipulate the culture-influencing factors that will motivate employees to re-examine and potentially change their own internal assumptions and values. In addition, managers are part of a company's culture and therefore their own values and assumptions need to be reviewed (Irons, 1993). Overall, managers and their activities may therefore only act as catalysts for change rather than as dictators of change.

Discussion

This paper, although clarifying the nature of organisational culture, has highlighted the complexity of the phenomenon. Organisational culture is multifaceted and complicated, encompassing a variety of forms, and is determined by myriad influencing factors. Therefore, a corporate communications manager's goal of having an organisation's corporate values and attitudes shared and reinforced by all personnel may be unattainable. If one considers the following quote from Olins (1991), this potential obstacle may raise major questions about corporate marketing as a whole:

The most important audience for any company is it's own staff. I cannot understand how people can say that the most important audience they have is the consumer. Because if you cannot train your own staff in what you are, in what you think, in how to behave, and in what your moves and precepts are, how the hell can you expect to train your customer? (Olins, 1991, p. 17).

Corporate marketers need to be more sensitive to the complexity of the values and behaviour of staff in the design and execution of corporate communication strategies. Staff and their behaviour and attitudes are influenced by more than simply the formal communication channels of the organisation, areas such as leadership, the business environment and the informal socialisation process also play a part. As a result, staff values and behaviour are slow to change, difficult to manage and may differ significantly from department to

department. This means that internal corporate communications activities need to be ongoing and continuous if they are to have any impact. One-off campaigns or communication events are unlikely to have any lasting effect on staff values and behaviour. Integration with other management activities is essential; for example, if an organisation's culture is to be influenced by senior management it is likely that in addition to corporate communications, significant changes may also be required in recruitment procedures, training, performance measurement and rewards. Although these areas may be seen as relating specifically to the activities of a human resource function rather than corporate communications, it is important that they are undertaken with the knowledge that they have an influence on the behaviour and values held by staff. As such, corporate communications personnel need to work together with other departments and functions in generating coherent messages and signals to staff, and in particular, to those service personnel who may influence the attitudes of external stakeholder groups.

There is also a need to more fully understand the role of these service personnel in the communication of corporate goals and values to other stakeholder groups. The organisational culture which exists within an organisation may have as much influence on external stakeholders through the behaviour and attitudes of service personnel as do the more formal corporate communications and visual identities. If this is the case and companies wish to communicate a coherent corporate profile to their stakeholders, then the choice may be between influencing the organisational culture of the service personnel or introducing greater standardisation of the service encounter through automated delivery or the use of scripts. Each of these approaches requires significant investment in time and money. As such, the communication role of service personnel is an area requiring vital research and one where marketers cannot work in isolation, there needs to be significant cooperation and communication with researchers and practitioners working in the fields of organisational behaviour and human resources management.

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