Full Length Research Paper

South African corporate communication practice and its obstacles for future progression

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This article forms part of a series of studies conducted by Corporate Communication International (CCI) in various countries. This article reviews the structures, practices, and trends amongst South African corporate communication professionals - with the view to determine whether or not they are fulfilling this role and identify the obstacles to future progression of the profession. A mixed method, sequential transformatory research strategy was used in in-depth interviews with the Corporate Communication Directors or equivalent of 26 companies out of the 500 best-performing South African organizations. Although corporate communication professionals in South Africa do deal with stakeholder relationship management in their practice of corporate communication and perceive their role as being strategic, this function is often not implemented and is the major obstacle to the advancement of the field of corporate communication in South Africa. The value of the article lies in the fact that the CCI study was conducted in South Africa (the first country in Africa), which highlighted the actual practice of corporate communication in South Africa and identified the obstacles to the advancement of the field.

Key words: Corporate communication, roles, functions, transparency, issues management, benchmark study.

INTRODUCTION

Communication strengthens an organization and expresses its values. In doing this, an overall strategic mode of thinking is fostered within the organization (Grof, 2001). This strategic mode can also be seen as the organization’s ideology. For corporate communication professionals to fulfil this role, they have to become an integral part of strategic management, and contribute to strategy development and implementation. This contribution largely constitutes providing a source of information about an organization’s environment. For Ni (2006) an essential question in corporate communication is the impact it has. This is not always understood because of a lack of knowledge of best practices, or because of mis-matched expectations amongst managers. Most managers are not trained to recognize the value of corporate communication (White and Vercic, 2001), while others have come to expect best practice from corporate communication (Steyn and Puth, 2000). This is also evident in the inclusion of Chapter 8 in the King III Report on Governance released in 2008, dealing with stake-holder relationship management, which is a central role of corporate communication. However, it remains the responsibility of corporate communication professionals to demonstrate their value by reducing costs (Heath, 2001) through safeguarding the organisation from unnecessary costs or losses from crises and by enhancing financial performance through fostering relationships with stakeholders. The role of corporate communication is however not limited to enhancing financial performance, but also on assisting the organisation in being socially and environmentally responsible. Bikker and de Regt (2001) conclude that more and more communication professionals are accessing boardrooms: corporate communication is becoming increasingly more intertwined with the overall business and its strategies.

The core question for every corporate communication researcher is how corporate communication works, what

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they do in, to, and for organizations, stakeholders and society at large. Skinner and Mersham (2008) amplify this notion by reiterating the corporate social responsibility of organizations in South Africa stating that “The ongoing development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the African continent owes much to developments in South Africa which continues to host the most extensive practice of public relations on the continent. One of the most important and earliest debates concerned the social role of corporate activity in South Africa during the apartheid era.” Skinner and Mersham (2008) outline the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in this regard, comprising a global framework for eradicating poverty and achieving more equitable development in areas such as healthcare (especially HIV/AIDS), education and poverty in South Africa. Corporate organizations are thus becoming more involved, stakeholders are more concerned, and society is looking towards corporate organizations for alleviation of the social, economic and community development issues and challenges.

Recent trends, according to Steyn and Puth (2000), indicate a clear shift in preference in using the term ‘corporate communication’ rather than ‘public relations’ in South Africa, as the latter has negative associations (from the way in which PR (public relations) was practiced in the past). However, in their view, PR and corporate communication are the same thing. Therefore, both PR and corporate communication originated from a tradition of press agentry and publicity in which terms such as ‘public relations’, ‘public affairs’, and ‘corporate communication’ were used to describe the management function whereby an organization communicate with its stakeholders. Although corporate communication may not be practiced from a tradition of press agentry and publicity, the terms used to describe the work of corporate communication professionals have remained to some extent.

Furthermore, the role, value, influences and impact of public relations or corporate communication have also changed. Wright’s (1997) study suggested that managers and executives consider corporate communication to be significant to their organizations. However, most of those surveyed, did not know what corporate communication actually achieved in their organization. In South Africa, a similar study was conducted by Steyn and Puth (2000): it also found that CEOs and top management did not always understand the strategic role of the corporate communica-tion professional, although it was expected of them. This confirms that corporate communication is an often misunderstood occupation whose value and impact are questioned by those not in the know. The field needs to prove its usefulness and value, and to position itself in the way that other corporate functions – such as marketing and finance – have done. The subject of this study is an important one, as the success of the corporate communication function in South Africa greatly impacts the fate of the profession, both in South Africa and throughout the continent in the years ahead.

Theoretical orientation

The systems theory is the predominant theory underpinning corporate communication. The systems theory proposes that mechanical, organic and social systems can be defined by their interactions with their environment. There are three main system theory perspectives that may be applied to the business context: the mechanistic, the organic, and the adaptive. This study uses the adaptive perspective, with the emphasis on the organization as a social, cultural entity. Buckley (1967) proposed a process or adaptive systems model with particular emphasis on the role of feedback initiating change in the system. When an organization realizes that activities designed to increase profits have become outdated, it begins to see itself as practicing within a social and cultural context. At this point, interaction and communication with this context begins. The adaptive view is mostly associated with an open system, which enables professionals to fulfil a function or management role, and provides a framework for considering an organization in its context. This has the effect of making organizations examine external forces, as well as internal processes and structures.

Holtzhausen et al. (2003) argue for a Western dialogic model of corporate communication which emphasises the culture within an organization as well as the organization’s ‘persona’. For these authors, the South African landscape is typical of the postmodern society: it is diverse and has many interest groups with differing value systems and goals. For them, the corporate communication practitioner’s work is social and organizational activism: the practitioner becomes involved in grassroots movements or resists organizational powers that attempt to marginalize stakeholders who have less power. This supports the reflective paradigm of corporate communication in which companies need to consider the continuous adjustment of corporate decision processes to society’s norms and values. Viewing corporate commu-nication as reflective emphases the importance of an organisation’s legitimisation within society (Van Ruler and Verčič, 2005).

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Corporate communication defined

Corporate communication is defined as ‘the overall planning, execution and evaluation of an organization’s communication with both external and internal publics – groups that affect the ability of an organization to meet its goals’ (Grunig, in Steyn and Puth, 2000). This term is, as we have seen, synonymous with ‘public relations’ which is, according to PRISA (the Public Relations Institute of
Roles in corporate communication

The skills required by individuals who are managing communication between organizations and their stakeholders are numerous. Such individuals have to be technically competent and have the wisdom to make decisions for the benefit of the organization and all its stakeholders. The communication manager should not only be a facilitator between management and stakeholders, or an internal problem-solver, or, indeed, a member of top management; he or she should rather be an organizational activist.

Transparency and corporate communication

Transparency is an essential dimension of the environmental analysis through which contemporary companies understand themselves and their communication strategies. A recurrent theme in writings on the contribution of corporate communication to a better society is the concept of ‘enlightened choice’ (Heath, 2006). This involves the notion that corporate communication can and should participate in an ongoing provision of knowledge and insight, and thus help citizens, consumers, and other stakeholders to make decisions that are in the common good (Motion and Weaver, 2005). Corporate communication, in the literature, is charged with the obligation of securing a balanced flow of information about all matters of social relevance concerning companies and social institutions. In this view, a central dimension of a good and just society is the availability of information that limits ambiguity and complexity, and thus helps to reduce the potential for abuse of power, fraud, corruption, and other types of corporate or institutional evil. Corporate communication is thus committed to providing and circulating information in order to build or rebuild trust and healthy stakeholder relations - and promote transparency.

Integrated communication

The concept of integrated communication has to do with unity of effort across the organization. It does not refer only to consistency of message – the ‘one look, one voice’ approach – but includes unity of rationale behind the organization, unity of organizational procedures, unity of organizational purpose, and unity of achievement within the organization. In essence, integration leads to the greater integrity of an organization, because the organization that is seen as a whole (rather than as made up of incongruent, autonomous functions), is perceived as being more sound and reliable than a company that does not have these attributes. This is imperative for sustainable relationships with stakeholders (Niemann, 2005).

The changing socio-political and economic landscape of South Africa

Holtzhausen (2005) found that South African organizations seem to be aware of the ability of the environment to decide their survival – hence so many organizational efforts at social upliftment and economic empowerment. These initiatives have both a real and a symbolic value for professionals who are managing and building corporate reputations. In Hotzhausen’s study, the corporate communication professionals emphasized the social value of what they were doing – rather than their contribution to the organization’s financial bottom line, as mentioned earlier.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research combined quantitative and qualitative research processes. The research paradigm employed was a sequential transformatory mixed method, qualitative strategy – a research strategy which is characterized by the collection of quantitative or qualitative – or both – types of data along the lines suggested by the theoretical perspectives guiding the research.

The sampling design used was convenience or purposive sampling. The 500 best-performing South African organizations were identified, based on data provided by Fletcher (2007) – all organisations originated in South Africa. Fletcher used criteria such as size, growth, profitability, and the economic impact of organizations. A total of 30 organizations were selected from each of three segments identified by Fletcher: primary, secondary and tertiary. From these, a total of 26 organizations availed the opportunity to gather the data.

Research instrument

A structured questionnaire, adopted from the US Corporate Communication International Practices and Trends Benchmark studies, was amended to suit the South African business and corporate communication industries. It consisted of 30 questions, 19 of which were quantitative, and 11 qualitative.

Data analysis

The quantitative data was analysed with the assistance of the
Table 1. Demographics of participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>57.7%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-39 years</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years and older</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric (complete school qualification)</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-school diploma</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honours</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University of Johannesburg's Statistical Consultation Services (Statkon). The quantitative analysis was based mainly on descriptive statistics to gauge percentages and frequencies of certain variables. The qualitative analysis was based on the qualitative data analysis model used by Huberman and Miles (1994, in De Vos, 1998), which proposes four processes to be applied to the data: reduction, display, conclusion-drawing, and verification. The qualitative analysis was conducted according to identified themes, and by highlighting similarities and differences, as well as exceptions.

FINDINGS

The demographics of participants

The study found that 58% of corporate communication directors (or their representatives) were female, with 43% of the participants aged between 40 and 49. The organizations studied seem, therefore, to prefer younger corporate communication professionals. Some 90% of the participants had a three-year degree or postgraduate qualification, and of these, 54% possessed a postgraduate qualification (Table 1). Around 40% of the 26 participants had undergraduate qualifications that were made up of a combination of communication studies, journalism, public relations, and advertising. One participant heading a corporate communication department had no formal qualifications, but had worked herself up in the organization. Although this is an extreme case, it reminds one of the controversies in corporate communication circles about whether or not people need a formal qualification, particularly in corporate communication or a related field in order to practice in this line of work. Furthermore, some of the participants’ qualifications were in law, business, economics, and even geography and engineering.

Firmagraphics

The organizations studied represented 30 different sub-sectors of South African business, including education, telecommunication, the media, the financial sector, manufacturing, and the retail and wholesale sectors. The organizations studied cover a broad spectrum of sectors in which corporate communication was examined.

The selected organizations' total company turnover for the 2006/2007 financial year varied from a low of R30 million to a high of R160 billion per annum (ZAR R1 = ± US$7). In five cases, participants could not provide information on their company’s annual turnover – information which is vital in corporate communication. Neither the demographics of the participants nor the firmagraphics of the organization influenced how corporate communication was defined or described, and how the impact of transparency and issues management were articulated.

Definition of corporate communication

Participants were asked to explain what they understood by “corporate communication”. The single most important similarity among participants’ views of the nature of corporate communication was the emphasis on communication with internal and external stakeholders. This was followed by emphasising communication about the organization (Setting the tone and image of the company through communication). One participant indicated that corporate communication requires a proactive disposition.

When it came to marketing and branding, the emphasis was on both internal and external branding. The predominant idea was that “Branding is at the centre of it all” – followed by, as one participant put it, “It is all about understanding and knowledge of the organization through branding and marketing, which is quite different”.

The question of managing information attracted the least emphasis. The single similarity between participants in this regard was that corporate communication was about the “management of perceptions".
Table 2. Functions performed by South African corporate communicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic integrated communication</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring environment and anticipating consequences</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message composition</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media relations</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues management</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investor relations</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet communication</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet communication</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communication</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input into organizational strategic decision making</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information gathering and distribution</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, image &amp; reputation</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Relations</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event management</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database management</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis communication</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate social responsibility</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate advertising</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branding</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The implications of the aforementioned are that, among the participants in this study, there are little appreciation for the role corporate communication plays in strategy and strategy development. The important responsibilities for corporate communication professionals were marketing, as well as their technical functions (such as writing media releases, making contact with journalists, preparing publications and organising media conferences).

The functions performed by corporate communication professionals

Some 90% of participants identified strategic integrated communication as their most prominent function – followed by other functions (not supplied on the list) unique to their departments, corporate identity, image and reputation, and crisis communication (Table 2). The lowest scores (some 58% of participants) were for database management and fostering cultural diversity.

The roles of corporate communication

To better understand the role of corporate communication in contemporary South Africa, participants were asked to indicate their own roles from a list of 14 items. Some 92% of the participants saw being driver of company publicity, manager of the company’s reputation and image, integrated communication strategist, and advocating or engineering public opinion as the most important roles they performed (Table 3). Other roles that were considered important in more than 80% of responses included giving counsel to the CEO, and branding and managing public perceptions of the company’s brand. Customer relationship management came out as the least important role, with only 50% of participants seeing this as important.

Perceptions about the nature of the role of corporate communication

Participants were asked to indicate whether the roles of corporate communication outlined above are strategic, managerial, or technical in nature. In 14 of the possible roles, participants perceived their role as being somewhere between managerial and strategic. The importance of corporate communication professionals in technical roles was seen only when it came to driving the company’s publicity, in branding and brand perception management, in corporate philanthropy, in management of employee relations, and in support for marketing and sales. Being the source of public information about the company, branding and brand perception management, and management of employee relations were all functions that were seen to pertain to management.
Customer relationship management scored the lowest when it came to preferred roles. This corresponds with the fact that marketing related activities, although often performed by corporate communication professionals, are not regarded as key roles of corporate communication.

**Titles and reporting lines**

The titles designated to corporate communication professionals covered permutations of the following roles: communication, corporate communication, marketing, and strategic management. In only 7 instances did “corporate communication” appear in a title along with the term “marketing manager”. Titles tended to be specific and descriptive such as “Group Transformation Manager”, “Manager: Corporate Affairs” and “Group Director: Sales and Marketing”. The majority of participants (72%), who were the top communicators in their respective organizations, reported to the Chief Executive Officer. The other participants reported to the Managing Director, Chairman, Director: Clients and Marketing, General Manager, Chief Operating Officer and Hub Manager. It is clear that corporate communication is considered as important in these organizations with direct access to top management.

**The impact of transparency on the practice of corporate communication**

Three themes were identified as key aspects of how the participants viewed the impact of transparency on the practice of corporate communication in their organizations. The overwhelming similarity found was that participants were highly sceptical or cynical about their organization’s commitment to transparency as the company’s practice or philosophy. Although some efforts were made to promote transparency, “It raises more questions than it answers” and “it is all window-dressing because it suits management”, were all-too-common themes. An interesting difference was the ambivalence towards selective commitments of organizations to transparency, in contrast to an approach of “window-dressing purposes”.

Some participants declared transparency to be integral to their companies’ values, because “It plays a major role when we communicate our values and reputation”, and also because “It forms a major part of our strategic positioning as a company”. Nonetheless, respondents were cautious: although transparency remained a cherished value, it had to be managed carefully.

Almost a fifth of the participants declared that there was “No need for transparency”, despite the local and global drive towards greater transparency in all aspects of organizational governance and practice. A number of participants mentioned that transparency also requires a high level of ethical communication and conduct. In one instance a participant said, “Communication must assist with the institutionalization of governance principles”.

**Issues management in South Africa, and corporate communication**

Three categories were identified by participants as having implications for corporate communication in the context of issues management:

**Economic development**

The most important economic issue having implications for corporate communication was general awareness campaigns on economic issues relating to individuals and
the organization. Second in importance was the need to communicate the organization’s strategic positioning regarding economic projects, with the view to identifying their potential advantages for the organization on both the economic and political fronts. Thirdly, there was the need to use communication about these projects to “Promote the company’s image, reputation and credibility”. An exception was “It is more about how the government should communicate about these things”.

Corporate communication was seen as facilitating the empowerment processes and as being able to contribute to the empowerment of the intended beneficiaries by developing their inherent potential, their skills, their leadership potential, and affirming their culture, and providing role models and an ethical culture. Only one participant mentioned the issue of sustainability in pointing out that a company’s corporate communication strategies have “A huge educational role in creating the conditions for sustainability”.

Around 13% of the respondents did not see any benefit or role for corporate communication in economic development: “Our role is very limited and we are just too occupied with other priorities”.

Social issues (HIV/AIDS, violence and crime, Broad Based Economic Empowerment)

In the view of Skinner and Mersham (2008) the African corporate communication professional is at the cutting edge of social change. The practitioner is increasingly charged with communicating development messages and facilitating the development process in contexts where traditionalism and western oriented globalism meet. The most important social issue identified having implications for corporate communication, was the emphasis on awareness campaigns. For another group of participants the focus was on attempting to understand the complexities of these issues through corporate communication projects. Only one participant mentioned that their campaigns were all about enhancing awareness around social issues as part of an integrated communication strategy.

A number of participants (27%) acknowledged the important role of corporate communication in facilitating empowerment. This includes the role of their corporate social investment programmes, skills development, providing relevant information, and leadership development projects. In only one instance did a participant mention that these social issues were all being dealt with strategically: “Our whole strategy is aiming at being proactive. Several projects are being managed on most of these issues”. In only one instance was the opinion expressed that social issues were the government’s responsibility. Some participants indicated that they had no need to know about social upliftment programmes, and they simply did not see a role for corporate communication in this regard.

Community development issues (poverty, illiteracy, technology)

As with economic development and social issues, the emphasis when it came to community development was on the role that corporate communication plays here. The overwhelming response was that simple awareness was enough, or “It is awareness about our reputation and image, because we must be seen to be caring”. In other responses, the emphasis was on sporadic communication without a formal plan, or on corporate social investment, or on awareness campaigns with strong educational programmes. Another fairly similar response was, “We have several systems in place in the company to deal with these issues, but not necessarily through our corporate communication programmes”. Only in one instance was the response, “These issues are all part and parcel of our integrated communication strategies”.

Integrated communication

We identified three themes with regard to what integrated communication is, and named it as, “The Nature of Communication”, “Theme Other” and “Theme No Idea”.

The central idea expressed (with some variations) by participants was, “We should speak with one voice about the company and its activities”. Other significant ideas were, “All our communication must be aligned to support the company’s strategic intent”, and “Management must have goals supported by integrated messages”. Participants also saw the following ideas as important: “Making communication understandable”; “It is all about open communication”; and “It is 360-degree communication, but I am not sure how it works”. Only three participants indicated that they had no idea what integrated communication was about. One participant said simply, “It is difficult to describe”.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Respondents realized the importance of corporate communication as a field that contributes to the functioning of an organization. Participants’ views of the role of corporate communication within the organization were generally superficial. They saw the role of corporate communication within the organization as being largely related to publicity, which supports their limited comprehension of strategic integrated communication. On the other hand, respondents realized that within the organizational context, growth towards integrated communication cannot be ignored – and also that corporate communication has a strategic role to play.

However, some inconsistencies became apparent between the emphasis on strategic integrated communication and role and function identification of corporate communication within the organization. This is attributable
to participants’ superficial understanding of strategic integrated communication.

Awareness campaigns received a lot of attention and support from participants – but they could not clearly articulate how such campaigns aligned with the strategic context of corporate communication and that of the organization as a whole.

Participants were overwhelmingly sceptical about their companies’ commitment to transparency in both philosophy and in practice. Furthermore, there was a definite ambivalence among participants between selective commitments to transparency and transparency as a window dressing approach to transparency. Participants mostly had a fair understanding of the socio-political and economic issues at work in South Africa – but could not say how these factors related to strategic corporate communication.

In the light of these conclusions, the following recommendations can be made:

The participants’ lack of understanding of the dynamics of communication and how these manifest in the organizational context may be as a result of not having suitably trained professionals. This is evident in participants’ limited understanding of their strategic function. The recommendation is therefore to appoint suitably educated and experienced individuals to these positions, where their education and experience is based on the two-way symmetrical paradigm of corporate communication.

There is a high level of awareness among participants about their role within the organization, but there is a lack of understanding about how to use this to the company’s practical advantage and benefit. It is therefore recommended that corporate communication personnel be encouraged to engage in continuous education in order to improve and update their capacity as well as become members of relevant and active professional associations.

Participants have limited insight into issues affecting the organization and its relationship with its stakeholders. The organization can therefore not be regarded as a learning, adapting entity which is able to respond to organizational challenges and implement changes so as to constantly build long-term strategic relationships with its stakeholders. It is recommended that organizations adopt a learning culture where communication professionals are able to harness the expertise of colleagues and predecessors. Again, continuous professional training programmes needs to be in place to assist in dealing with this challenge.

It was apparent that there is a general breakdown of communication and a lack of teamwork to ensure consistency and strategic alignment, as well as direction, in corporate communication departments. This could have significant implications for the ability of the organization to build and maintain long-term interactive relationships with its stakeholders. Corporate communication professionals should therefore get a better understanding of the environment in which their organization operates coupled with the issues affecting their organizations and stakeholders.

LIMITATIONS

The target population of this research included all profit driven companies as outlined in the 500 best-performing South African organizations (a publication released annually of those companies whose performance exceed that of others based on set criteria in South Africa) as an attempt to have a representation of the three sectors and industries outlined in the publication. Those sectors and industries that fall outside of the scope of this publication did not form part of this research.

This study focused on 26 profit driven businesses having a person or department dedicated to corporate communication in South Africa. Thus, organizations that do not have a dedicated corporate communication department, other types of organisations, and those outside of South Africa are excluded from the study. Furthermore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the total population of corporate communication professionals.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This research attempts to delineate the attitudes and perceptions of a select group of corporate communication professionals with regard to how it is practiced in their respective organizations. As a result, some obstacles to the advancement of corporate communication in South African organizations became apparent, with little understanding of why these obstacles exist. Further research is necessary to gain an improved perspective on some explanations for these obstacles.

REFERENCES


