

Developing Stakeholder Communication in a Non-Profit Organization

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<p>This master's thesis examines communication and marketing in a Finnish non-profit organization. The aim is to evaluate the quality and the effectiveness of communication from the membership's and other external stakeholders' viewpoints. The thesis provides knowledge of the stakeholders' opinions and needs, as well as concrete ideas how communication and marketing could be developed.</p> <p>The literature review introduces the key concepts related to communication, marketing, stakeholder relationships, and image building. Also communication and marketing in practice, as well as special features concerning communication and marketing in non-profit organizations are described.</p> <p>The research method was mixed methods including both quantitative and qualitative approach. The empirical part included three parts: a survey for individual members, a survey for other important external stakeholders, and two focus group interviews for member organizations. The surveys were conducted between November 2013 and February 2014. The focus group interviews were arranged in February 2014.</p> <p>The main findings of the research show that the organization has succeeded well in its stakeholder communication. Communication is perceived reliable and professional, and quite fresh, humane and fast. The research indicates that the stakeholder magazine, the websites and the newsletter contain useful and interesting information.</p> <p>Based on the research results, several development ideas have been planned. The development areas relate to the visual appearance of the magazine, the newsletter and the websites; the structure of the websites; and the use of social media channels. Also targeting of marketing activities need to be developed.</p>	
<p>Keywords communication, marketing, stakeholders, image, non-profit organizations</p>	

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1 Introduction

Stakeholder relationships are crucial to all kinds of organizations, as without stakeholders they can not do their business. Good stakeholder relationships require knowledge of stakeholders' needs and interests. This information helps organizations to plan and develop their communication so that communication can increase stakeholders' satisfaction with the organization, strengthen the relationships, and improve the image.

Non-profit organizations have an important role in society. They compliment the public and the private sectors by driving issues and providing services that the state, municipalities and private companies do not offer. Also the great number of associations in Finland speaks to the meaning of the third sector. There are 120,000 registered associations in Finland, of which 70,000 are active (Harju). The non-profit organizations have 15 million individual members, which is threefold the Finnish population (Siisiäinen 1996b, 41-43 in Harju). Those individual members are an important stakeholder group for non-profit organizations.

The individual members are essential also for the organization studied in this thesis. As the organization is an umbrella organization with other organizations as members, its member organizations and partners are important stakeholders as well. To be able to improve its stakeholder relationships, the organization needs information about the stakeholders' interests, needs and opinions. This thesis strives to develop stakeholder communication of the target organization by examining how satisfied the individual members and some other external stakeholders are with the current communication and marketing activities. Also the member organizations were included in the research.

As this thesis is a commissioned project, the real name of the organization can not be used. Therefore, it is called Organization A. For the same reason, some parts of the research questions and results are confidential. This thesis report includes the results in the extent that does not reveal confidential information. The comprehensive results are

introduced in the separate research report, which is a confidential attachment to this report. (Attachment 1)

The thesis report starts with the introduction of Organization A and the thesis topic in section 2. This section explains also the aims and objectives of the research. Section 3 consists of the literature review introducing the theoretical background for the research. The main concepts include communication, marketing, stakeholder relationships and image. Section 4 explains communication and marketing from a more practical approach. It introduces different communication and marketing channels and tools, as well as special features concerning communication and marketing in non-profit organizations. Section 5 describes how the empirical part was conducted, and section 6 the main results of the research. Section 7 presents the conclusions combining the results and the theoretical part. Finally, section 8 introduces the development ideas generated from this thesis.

2 Topic introduction

This section will introduce the target organization and the background situation of the research. Also the aims and objectives, as well as the research problem and research questions, are discussed.

2.1 Organization A

Organization A is a Finnish non-profit organization with 30,000 individual members. Its stakeholders are individual members, member organizations, employees, the board, sub boards, the media, decision makers, and other non-profits operating in the same field. Organization A has 24 employees, of which three are working with marketing communication. The organization operates as an umbrella organization, and the individual members are joined to it through the 24 member organizations. Membership is very diverse and consists of individuals representing many age groups, locations, fields, and professions. (Organization A 2014.)

Organization A uses several communication channels: a member magazine, a monthly newsletter, the internet, an intranet, an extranet, information booklets and other publications, as well as social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and discussion forums. As marketing channels, Organization A has used magazines, radio, the internet, the social media, as well as exhibitions and other events. Communication and marketing are guided with the communications strategy, which supports the implementation of the overall business strategy and is aligned with the mission, vision and values. More detailed objectives and activities are introduced in yearly action plans. (Organization A 2014, Organization A 2013.)

2.2 Background situation

The communication function of Organization A is influenced by many stakeholder groups. The different internal stakeholder groups, such as the board, sub boards, and employees, as well as member organizations, had different and partly contradictory expectations on how communication and marketing should be run. For

communication function, this caused a lack of confidence and raised many questions: Are they doing the right things? Do they have the appropriate resources? How can they define and explain what is important? Which operations and channels should they concentrate on? What are the individual members' needs, expectations and interests? Are the individual members satisfied with communication, even though there is only a little direct interaction with them? In addition to the unclear expectations, the diversity of the membership was seen as an extra challenge. (Rajalahti 2013.)

In spring 2013, Organization A decided to make a research about its communication. The aim was to discover what is working well and what is not, as well as how communication and marketing should be developed in future. Research was needed to clarify the communication operations and to ascertain the expectations and needs of the key target groups. Instead of many contradictory demands from different internal stakeholder groups, it was important to find out the needs, expectations and interests of the individual members. As member organizations are an important link between the organization and its individual members, member organizations, as well as important external stakeholders, were also included in the research. To get an objective viewpoint, the research was decided to be made as a commissioned project. It was ordered from Haaga-Helia, and its details were discussed and decided in a joint workshop in autumn 2013. The memo of the workshop is attached to the separate research report which is a confidential attachment of this thesis. (Attachment 1 in attachment 1)

2.3 Aims and objectives of the research

The aim of the communication and marketing research was to evaluate the quality and the effectiveness of communication in Organization A from its membership's and other external stakeholders' viewpoints. The focus of the research was the communication and marketing channels.

The objective was to find out what in Organization A's communication and marketing is working well and what not so well, and to provide the organization with knowledge of its members' and other external stakeholders' opinions and needs. The objective was

also to offer concrete ideas about how communication and marketing should be developed in future.

The research problem was to find out how satisfied the individual members and other external stakeholders are with Organization A's communication and marketing.

The research questions were:

- How do the individual members perceive Organization A's communication, communication channels and marketing?
- How do the other important external stakeholders perceive Organization A's communication, communication channels and marketing?
- How do the member organizations perceive Organization A's communication and marketing according to the results of the member survey?

3 Literature review

In this section, theoretical background of the research area will be introduced. The section will explain the key concepts related to communication, marketing, stakeholder relationships and image, such as organizational communication, marketing communication and stakeholder engagement, as well as identity and image. Communication and marketing in practice, as well as special features concerning communication and marketing in non-profit organizations, will be described in section 4.

3.1 Communication

According to Åberg (2000 in Juholin 2013, 23), communication is a process or an event, where the state of matters is interpreted by giving it a meaning, and where that interpretation is shared with others via interactive delivery networks. Also Fill (2009, 41) determines communication as a process by which individuals share meaning. This process requires that each participant is able to interpret the meaning embedded in the messages, and that information is transmitted to and from all participants. According to Juholin (2013, 23), communication is a technical process, but refers also to relationships between people and meanings emerging in those relationships.

3.1.1 Communication process

Communication process is often described with the simple linear model from 1940's. (See figure 1.) The process starts when a sender formulates and encodes the contents of a message. With encoding, the sender converts the message into an appropriate format for transmission. Then the message is transmitted through a communication channel, which is a route or a technology such as a microphone or the telephone line. Thereafter, a receiver decodes the message by converting it back into words and re-interprets the meaning. The process is influenced by many factors, such as language, skills, culture and emotional state of the sender and the receiver, as well as potential fault in the channel. These factors are called noise. In modern communication theory, the term 'noise' is used to mean all kinds of barriers that can distort the message or

prevent the delivery of a message so that it does not reach the receiver in its original form. Minimizing noise is essential to achieve effective communication. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 4-6.)

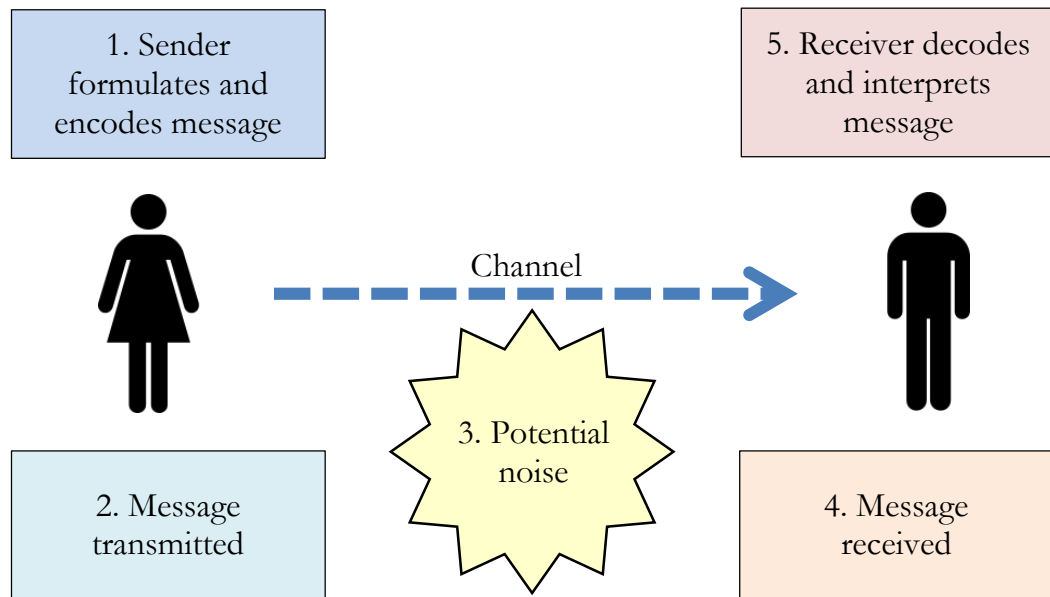


Figure 1: A simple model of the communication process (Adapted from Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 4)

As a one-way process, the linear model has been seen too simple. The first modification to it was to add feedback, which is defined as the receiver's response to the message. The response gives the sender a clue of how the original message was received. (Blundel & Ippolito, 2008, 8.) Varey (2002, 19) notes that both the traditional linear model and the two-way version are too narrow, because they see identity, meaning and knowledge as if they arise in the mind of an individual, and ignore effects of their environments.

3.1.2 Organizational communication

Organizational communication means all communication, both formal and informal, that an organization conveys. (Juholin 2013, 27.) As an academic concept, organizational communication refers to a field of study that includes different academic disciplines such as psychology, anthropology and organization studies, as well as professional special fields such as marketing, public relations and human resources (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 9). Corporate communication, in turn, is a management

function that provides a framework for coordination of internal and external communication, and aims to establish and maintain positive reputation among key stakeholders (Cornelissen 2014, 5).

There are many types of organizations: corporations, listed companies, public administration, societies, unions, and informal co-operation networks. The form of the organization creates a basis for its communication. (Juholin 2013, 25.) All organizations, both commercial and non-profit, need to communicate with various people and groups. The reason to communicate may be to get materials and services to start business activities, or to collaborate and coordinate with others to secure suitable distribution of products and services. (Fill 2009, xxiii.) Communication makes working possible and enhances the organization's culture, and a sense of community. All actions include communication in all kinds of organizations, and without communication organizations could not even exist (Juholin 2013, 23).

In organizations, the reasons to communicate are often explained by determining different communication tasks. According to Fill (2009, 9), the four key tasks for communication are: 1) to inform and make potential customers aware of an organization's offering, 2) to persuade current and potential customers into an exchange relationship, 3) to reinforce experiences, and 4) to differentiate organization and its products and services from competing products and brands.

Juholin (2013, 55-66) lists the main communication tasks as: daily communication, informing, building community, co-operation with other organizational units, image building, supporting marketing, lobbying and public affairs, as well as informal interaction. Daily communication includes all formal and informal communication and discussion needed to transmit information regarding everyday tasks, operations and responsibilities, and it is shared between employees, partners, customers, citizens, and sometimes also media. Informing is pre-planned, formal information sharing targeted to key stakeholders, and it is often one-way and neutral. It also includes internal and external sounding by which organizations can recognize changes and weak signals in their environment. Building community often refers to enhancing employee

engagement by creating cohesion between employees, but it is important also when dealing with other stakeholders such as customers, partners, and shareholders. Building community with stakeholders is explained in more detail in subchapter 3.3.3. Image building is introduced in chapter 3.4.

Another way to describe organizational communication is dividing it according to different dimensions. Blundel and Ippolito (2008, 9-11) introduce four key distinctions: 1) verbal and non-verbal communication, 2) one-way and two-way communication, 3) inter-personal and mass communication, and 4) internal and external communication. In verbal communication, messages are coded with spoken or written words, whereas non-verbal communication refers to gestures, body language, physical distance, as well as the use of visual media such as pictures and signs, and other sense stimuli such as sound and smell. One-way and two-way communication tells the direction in which the messages are delivered. In inter-personal communication, the participants are interacting directly in relatively small groups. In mass communication, messages are sent to large number of people via some sort of technology. Internal communication is shared inside the organization, whereas external communication involves the organization and people outside the organization.

In Organization A, the purpose of communication function is to support the organization to achieve its vision and strategic objectives. Other purposes include increasing the number of members and developing stakeholder relationships. (Organization A 2009.)

3.1.3 Changes in the communication landscape

In the 21st century, organizations face many new challenges which affect their communication. Three most fundamental developments include the mediating role of digital technologies, blurred organizational boundaries, and the rise of stakeholder thinking. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 174.)

The new media landscape has blurred the boundaries between content providers and consumers. Today, everyone with internet access can in theory become a global

publisher of content, and everyone having a mobile phone with camera can become a potential photojournalist or a documentary filmmaker. The new technologies have shifted the way dialogues occur, news about organizations are generated and spread, and stakeholder perceptions shaped and relationships built. For organizations it has meant a clear change from traditional communication models to more interactive and free-flowing conversations between members of an organization and between communication practitioners and people outside the organization. (Cornelissen 2014, 258-259.)

Within the organizations, the digital technologies have meant new and more flexible ways of working as people can carry out their work from their workplace and access their email and web-based information wherever they are. At the same time, organizations need to consider how they can minimize the loss of direction and motivation, and how they should deal with employees' usage of social media tools during the work hours. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 174.) The new technologies and social media are discussed more in chapter 4.1.

The second development affecting communication is blurred organizational boundaries. Organizations are increasingly creating inter-organizational networks across several independent organizations, and coordinating their activities through a combination of formal contracts and informal, trust-based relationships. For communicators this change has meant challenges in the way the networks are maintained and information sharing is guaranteed, but also protected from uninvolved people. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 180-181.)

The third change in organizational communication is the rise of stakeholder thinking, which highlights the idea that organizations should engage with many different people and groups. Focusing only on shareholders can lead to negative outcomes for other stakeholders, such as employees and consumers. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 183.) Stakeholders and stakeholder relationships are explained more in chapter 3.3.

3.2 Marketing

Kotler and Armstrong (2014, 27) define marketing as a social and managerial process by which individuals and organizations gain what they need and want by means of creating and exchanging value with others. In business context, marketing means creating value for customers and building strong customer relationships to get value from customers in return. Marketing includes selling and advertising, but also satisfying customer needs. According to Vuokko (2010, 38-39), marketing is a function, but also a mind set. Organizations use marketing to increase knowledge about and interest in themselves and their products and services. Achieving change in a particular target group requires that marketing actions are targeted correctly.

3.2.1 Marketing process

Marketing process can be divided into five stages: 1) understanding the market place and customer needs and wants, 2) designing a customer-driven marketing strategy, 3) constructing an integrated marketing program that delivers superior value, 4) building relationships and creating customer delight, and 5) capturing value from customers to create profits and customer equity. (See figure 2.) (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 27.)

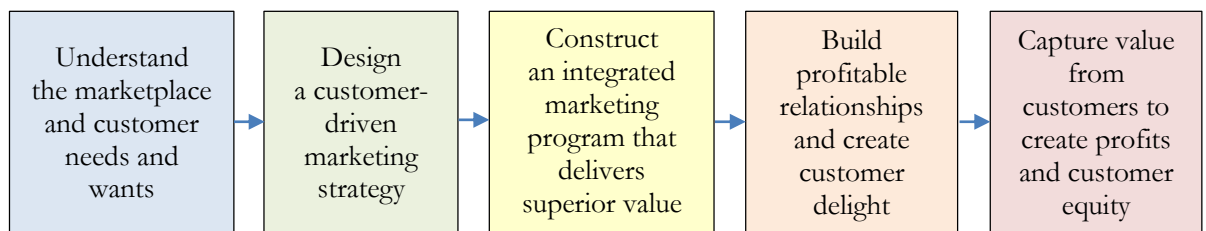


Figure 2: A simple model of the marketing process (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 27)

At the first stage, marketers should examine their target group's needs, wants, and demands; market offerings; customer value and satisfaction; exchanges and relationships; as well as markets. Needs can be physical, social or individual, and concern a lack of something. Wants are shaped by culture and personality, and directed to some product. When several people want a product, buying power increases and

wants become demands. Market offerings are a combination of products, services, information, or experiences offered to a market to meet consumers' needs or wants. Customers buy products or services according to their expectations about the value and satisfaction that various market offerings might provide. Satisfied customers are willing to buy again and share their good experiences to others. Exchange occurs when a person obtains a desired object from some other person by offering something in return. Marketing includes actions that aim to create, maintain, and grow desirable exchange relationships with target audiences. Market is a group of actual and potential buyers of a product or service. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 28-29.)

The second stage of the marketing process includes designing a customer-driven marketing strategy. Marketing management aims to find, attract, keep, and grow target customers by creating, delivering, and communicating customer value. In the marketing strategy, an organization decides its target market and value proposition, which is a set of benefits or values that customers are promised to get from the product or service. In the third stage, the promised value is delivered to target customers by transforming the marketing strategy into concrete actions. The actions form a marketing mix, which is a set of different marketing tools concerning the product, price, place, and promotion. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 30-31, 34.)

The most important phase of the marketing process is the fourth stage: building and managing profitable customer relationships. The relationships are built and maintained through customer relationship management (CRM), which includes managing detailed information about individual customers and customer touch points to maximize customer loyalty. In addition to customer relationships, organizations need also to build and maintain good partner relationships to be able to bring more value to customers. The last stage of marketing process involves getting value from customer in return. Satisfied customers stay loyal and buy more, which brings greater returns for the organization in the long run. This stage includes creating customer loyalty and retention, as well as growing share of customer, which means a share of the customer's purchases made of the company's products. A big share of customer's purchases

increases customer equity, which is the total combined customer lifetime value of all current and potential customers. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 34, 41-43.)

3.2.2 Marketing communication

Fill (2009, 5, 16) defines marketing communication as a management process which is used to get the various audiences engaged with the organization. Marketing communication, or promotion, is needed to communicate about the offerings of an organization to its target audience. It includes events planned by the organization, communication based on experiences about the products and services, as well as communication arising from unplanned experiences such as empty stock shelves.

Marketing communication has an essential role in an organization's exchange networks. It helps the organization 1) to inform and make potential customers aware of the offerings, 2) to persuade current and potential customers of the desirability of entering into an exchange relationship, 3) to reinforce experiences by, for instance, reminding people of the need or the benefits of past transactions, as well as 4) to differentiate itself from the competitors, which is especially important in markets where there are only few differences between products or services. (Fill 2009, 9.)

Varey (2002, 4) sees marketing communication as a coin with two sides. One side is an offer or expression which refers to marketing communication's task to provide information about business and products to chosen customer groups in an effective way. An inquiry or impression represents the other side of marketing communication, and refers to learning about the interests and values of other people and connecting this viewpoint to the interests of the organization.

Marketing communication consists of three elements: tools, media and messages. The main tools are advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling. Marketing communication messages are conveyed via different media such as internet. Tools and media should not be mixed as they have different purposes. (Fill 2009, 19.) Different marketing communication tools and media are introduced in chapter 4.3.

The target group determines what kind of marketing communication is appropriate. When planning marketing communication actions, organizations need to decide what will be said; how, when and where it will be said; and who will say it. Before that, organizations should know at what stage the target group stands and to what stage it needs to be moved. There are six buyer-readiness stages: 1) awareness, 2) knowledge, 3) liking, 4) preference, 5) conviction, and 6) purchase. Usually consumers go through all the stages before making a purchase. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 436.)

In Organization A, the tasks of marketing communication are almost identical with the tasks of communication. The difference is in the channels and the tone used in messages. Marketing communication's role is to help the organization to reach its vision, keep the current members, attract potential members, and increase awareness of the organization. (Organization A 2013.) The tasks are aligned with Fill's viewpoint of marketing's role as increasing awareness and persuading old and new customers.

3.2.3 Integrated marketing communication

In recent years, marketing and communication have moved closer to each other. Some of their functions are over-lapping although some functions are still separate. The common areas that both marketing and communication share are promotion, advertising, product publicity and image. Integrated marketing communication enhances the common areas and increases synergy. (Juholin 2013, 262.)

As early as 1978, Kotler and Mindak introduced different kinds of relationships between marketing and public relations. (See figure 3.) In model A, PR and marketing are separate functions with different purposes: marketing deals with markets and public relations with all publics excluding customers and consumers. In model B, marketing and PR are overlapping, and PR techniques are used in marketing to generate awareness and brand favourability in a cost-effective way. The model focuses on marketing of products and services, and excludes corporate PR activities such as communication for investors, employees and media. (Cornelissen 2014, 20-22.)

Models C and D, in turn, combine marketing and PR into one business function. Model C presents marketing as the dominant function that includes PR. In this model, integrated marketing communication is defined as a concept, which understands the added value that a comprehensive plan of different marketing communication activities provides, and combines the activities to achieve clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact. PR activities are limited to product publicity and sponsorship ignoring communication to stakeholders. In model D, the dominant function is PR, and it includes marketing. The role of marketing is to satisfy customers, which is only a part of a broader goal to satisfy all publics and stakeholders of the organization. Finally, model E represents integrated marketing communication where marketing and PR are merged into one external communication function. (Cornelissen 2014, 24.)

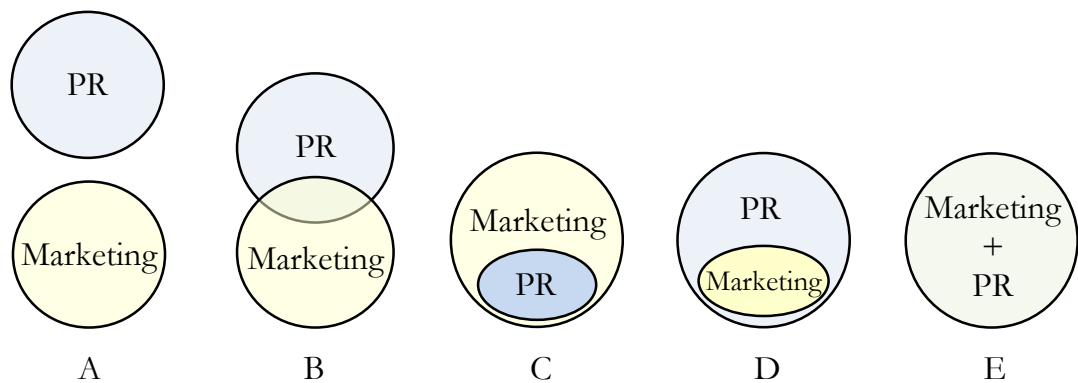


Figure 3: Different relationship types between marketing and public relations according to Kotler and Mindak (Cornelissen 2014, 20)

Cornelissen (2014, 24) states that today, organizations want to keep PR and marketing separate but actively coordinate their common programs. Therefore, most organizations use model B.

Kotler's and Mindak's models offer different approaches to integrate communication and marketing. The five models seem like a comprehensive set of alternatives, but actually many of them lack internal and stakeholder communication. In my opinion, they are activities which can not be ignored. Broadening the integration to human resources could help to involve all parties. As such, the best description of

Organization A is model D, where communication is the main function. This is because both communication and marketing actions are planned according to a communications strategy, and the function is directed by Head of Communications (Organization A 2009).

3.2.4 Changes in the marketing landscape

There are constant changes in the marketplace which affect organizations and need to be taken into account when planning and implementing marketing. Kotler and Armstrong (2014, 44-45) introduce four major developments that change the marketing landscape and challenge the marketing strategy: 1) the changing economic environment, 2) the digital age, 3) rapid globalization, and 4) the call for more ethics and social responsibility. The Great Recession experienced in the United States and the world economies in 2008 made consumers to rethink their spending priorities and reduce their buying. The changes in consumers' consumption habits and new consumer values were not just temporary, but seem to last for a long time. In response, organizations in all industries have aligned their marketing strategies to emphasize the value-for-the-money, practicality, and durability of the products. Some companies have cut their marketing budgets and decreased the prices. However, making cuts in the wrong places can cause long-term damage to image and customer relationships.

The second trend, digital technology, has affected the way people communicate, share information, learn, shop, and access entertainment, but also the way organizations bring value to their customers. Marketers have got new methods to learn about and track their customers, as well as new means of creating products and services that are tailored to individual customer needs. Digital technology has also generated new communication, advertising, and relationship-building tools. Today, consumers can take marketing content with them wherever they go and share it with friends. For marketers it means that they can no longer control the conversation concerning their brands. The most dramatic change is the growth of the internet usage, which has made online marketing the fastest-growing form of marketing. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 45, 47.)

The third change, globalization involves almost every organization in some level. Many companies have foreign suppliers or competitors, and internet retailers have customers from all over the world. Marketers need to decide how they will react to the global competitors, and to what extent they want to become global themselves. The fourth trend, the worldwide consumerism and environmentalism, has made corporate ethics and social responsibility, as well as eco-friendliness important issues for organizations. Marketers are expected to provide value in a socially and environmentally responsible way. Sustainable marketing answers to these demands, as it consists of socially and environmentally responsible actions that aim to get profit by meeting the present needs of consumers and businesses while also securing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 48-49, 604.)

As the fifth trend in the marketing landscape, Kotler and Armstrong (2014, 48) find the growth of non-profit marketing. Today, marketing is no longer a function that only companies use, but also an important part of strategies for non-profit organizations such as colleges, hospitals, museums, symphony orchestras, and even churches. One reason for this development is the Great Recession and the tightened budgets of the non-profit sector, which have forced the non-profits to put more emphasis to communication and marketing. Another reason is social media and new technology. Non-profit organizations have been among the leaders in understanding the value of electronic communications as a cost-effective way to reach target groups all over the world. (Boyer & McCallum 2012, 291, 300.)

Marketing is important to Organization A as well, as it helps it increase awareness and attract current and potential members. Marketing is based on the organization's strategy and values which emphasize sustainability (Organization A 2013).

3.3 Stakeholder relationships

To run their business, organizations have relationships with many kinds of stakeholders such as employees, customers, members, suppliers, and investors. These relationships can be dealt with in many ways. Organizations can inform and listen to

their stakeholders, and they can discuss and interact with their stakeholders (Juholin 2013, 53).

Cornelissen (2014, 44) and Varey (2002, 98) describe the term 'stakeholder' by using Freeman's definition from 1984, according to which a stakeholder is a person or a group who can affect or is affected by the organization. That is near to Juholin's (2013, 52) definition, which sees stakeholders as parties who can be affected by the operations of an organization and who can affect the operations themselves, or parties who the operations involve. Juholin separates the term 'stakeholder' from the Finnish word 'sidosryhmä', and explains that 'sidosryhmät' are known by the company, but stakeholders may be unknown and unexpected as well.

A stake refers to an interest or an involvement that a person or a group has in the organization. The stakes vary according to the person's or the group's specific interests, and may contradict with one another adding pressure on the organization to balance different stakeholder interests. Freeman has divided the stakes into three types: 1) equity stakes, 2) economic or market stakes, and 3) influencer stakes. Equity stakes refer to direct ownership of the organization, and they are held by shareholders, directors or minority interest holders. Economic or market stakes relate to an economic interest without ownership interest, and are held by employees, customers, suppliers and competitors. Influencer stakes are specific interests in the organization's actions without ownership or economic interest, and are held by consumer advocates, environmental groups, trade organizations and government agencies. (Cornelissen 2014, 44-45.)

As stakes, also stakeholders can be categorized. They can be divided into primary, secondary and marginal stakeholders, or into current and potential stakeholders (Juholin 2013, 114). According to Clarkson's (1995 in Cornelissen 2014, 45) classification, primary stakeholders are groups who are important for financial reasons, and secondary stakeholders are groups who generally affect or are affected by the organization, but do not have financial connections to the company. Charkham (1992 in Cornelissen 2014, 45), on the other hand, categorized stakeholders according to

their ties with an organization. Contractual stakeholders have formal agreement and legal relationship with the organization, which community stakeholders have not. Contractual stakeholders consist of customers, employees, distributors, suppliers, shareholders, and lenders, whereas community stakeholders include consumers, regulators, government, media, local communities, and pressure groups. I have noticed that in some cases, single stakeholders may also belong to more than one group, for example investors or suppliers can also be customers, and employees can be members of community.

According to the neo-classical economic theory, the purpose of organizations is to make profits for themselves and for their shareholders. This theory is demonstrated in the input-output model of strategic management, where suppliers, investors and employees contribute inputs to an organization, which then transforms them into outputs for customers. In this model, stakeholders have only financial interests in an organization. The socio-economic theory, however, highlights that an organization affects and is affected by all persons or groups who have legitimate interests in it. This interest can be financial, market-based or something else. In addition to investors, suppliers and customers, stakeholder groups consist of governments, trade associations, political groups and communities. (See figure 4.) An organization needs to consider and communicate with all the groups to secure its financial performance and acceptance for its operations. (Cornelissen 2014, 42-43.) The rise of stakeholder thinking, which was mentioned in subchapter 3.1.3, is aligned with the socio-economic theory, emphasizing the meaning of all stakeholder groups.

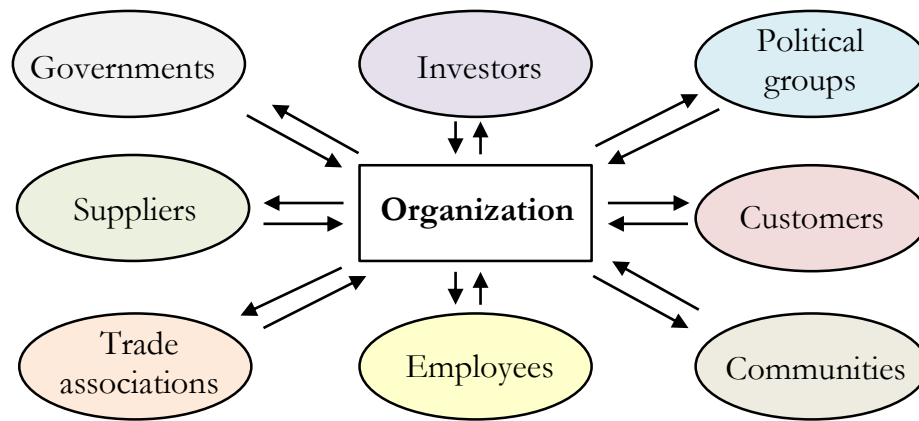


Figure 4: Stakeholder model of strategic management according to the socio-economic theory (Cornelissen 2014, 43)

Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar and de Colle (2010, 27-28) point out that stakeholder groups do not act independently, as the stakes of one group are connected to those of others. Instead of seeing the stakeholder interests opposite, they should be considered joint. Managers should find ways to serve the interests of all stakeholders, instead of wondering which group should be prioritized. Even if the interests conflict, an organization should seek for a solution that creates value for all.

In Organization A, stakeholders include many kinds of persons and groups, and their interests differ at least to some extent. The aim has been to customize part of the communication and marketing activities to meet the interests of different target groups, but so far, the share of tailor-made communication has been quite little (Organization A 2013). However, the idea of customizing communication and marketing is similar to the ideas of the socio-economic theory and the viewpoint of Freeman et al.

3.3.1 Stakeholder identification

According to the stakeholder model, organizations need to identify their stakeholders and deal with them based on their stakes. For example, financial information should be offered for investors and information of products and services for customers. It is important to pay attention to all stakeholder groups and their interests, and build a good reputation with them all. That requires identifying and analysing stakeholders,

their influences and interests. One way to do that is to use stakeholder identification analysis, which consists of five questions: 1) Who are the stakeholders of the organization? 2) What are their stakes? 3) What opportunities and challenges relate to these stakeholders? 4) What are the organization’s responsibilities to the stakeholders? 5) How should the organization communicate with the stakeholders to respond to their stakes and to take into account the challenges and opportunities? (Cornelissen 2014, 46-47.)

There are also several stakeholder classification typologies which can be used to categorize stakeholders. Grouping can be based on, for instance, stakeholders’ potential power to threaten or cooperate with the organization; stakeholders’ power and the level of interest; and stakeholders’ power, legitimacy and urgency. Two of the useful mapping tools are the power-interest matrix developed by Kamann in 2007 and the stakeholder salience model introduced by Mitchell, Agle and Wood in 1997. (Mainardes, Alves & Raposo 2012, 1864.)

The power-interest matrix categorizes stakeholders according to their power on an organization and the amount of interest in an organization’s actions. These variables form four cells in which stakeholders can be placed. (See figure 5.) (Cornelissen 2014, 50-51.)

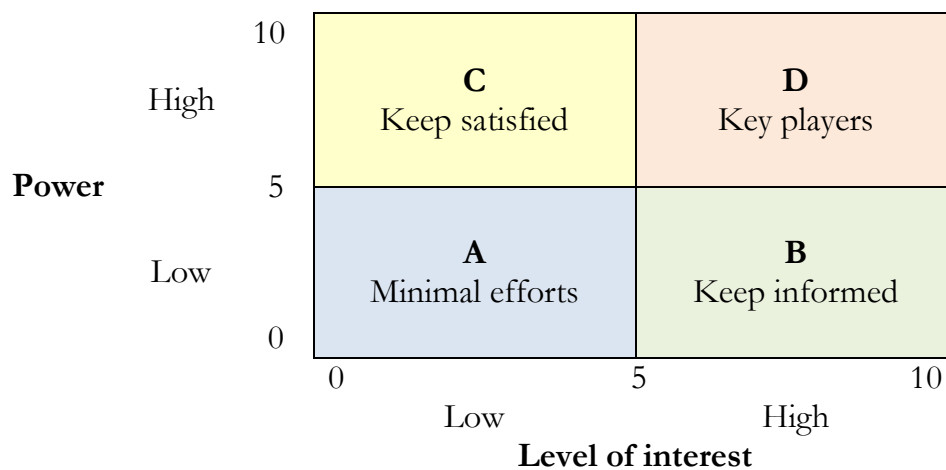


Figure 5: The power-interest matrix (Adapted from Cornelissen 2014, 50)

Key players in quadrant D have both power and interest in an organization, and therefore, require constant communication. Also stakeholders in quadrant B with high level of interest in the organization need to be regularly communicated with. The most challenging group is stakeholders in quadrant C as, even though they are not interested in the organization, they have power they can use against it. Stakeholders can also move from one quadrant to another if, for instance, their interests increase. (Cornelissen 2014, 50-51.)

Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997, 869, 874) introduced the stakeholder salience model in their theory of stakeholder identification and salience. In this model, stakeholder identification and categorizing are made according to stakeholders' salience, which is defined as visibility and prominence to an organization. The more salient the stakeholder group, the more actively it should be communicated with. Each stakeholder group possess one, two or all three of the following attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. (Cornelissen 2014, 47.) Mitchell et al. (1997, 868) state three features of the attributes: 1) Attributes are variables and able to change. 2) They are socially constructed and not based on objective reality. 3) An individual or a group is not necessarily conscious of possessing the attribute. The stakeholder salience model is demonstrated with three over-lapping circles and seven areas representing different stakeholder groups. (See figure 6.)

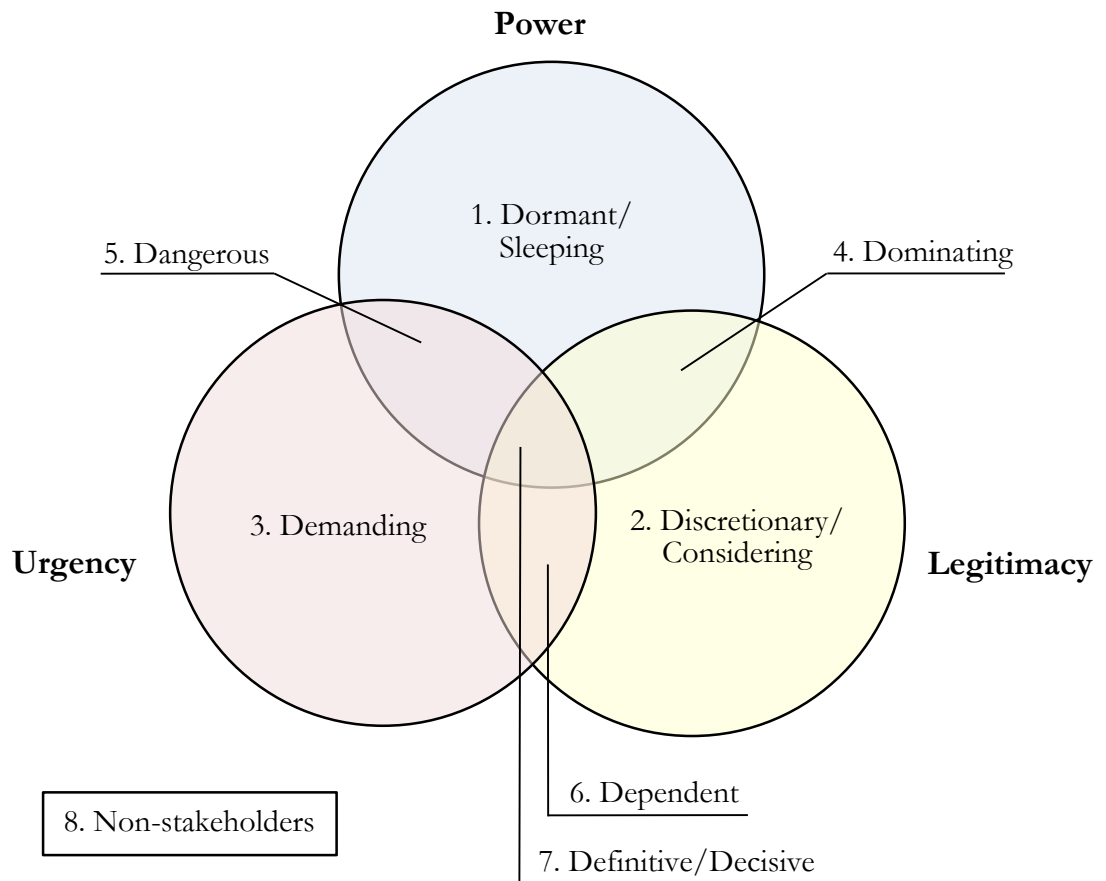


Figure 6: Stakeholder grouping according to the stakeholder salience model (Cornelissen 2014, 48; Jubolin 2013, 115; Mitchell et al. 1997, 874)

The model consists of seven types of stakeholders. The first three stakeholder groups, who possess only one attribute and have low salience, are called latent groups. The moderately salient groups, who have two attributes, are called expectant groups. The seventh group possessing all three attributes is highly salient and called definitive group. Persons or groups with no power, legitimacy or urgency are not stakeholders. (Mitchell et al. 1997, 873.)

The first latent group is dormant stakeholders, who have power to impact the organization but do not have formal relationship with it or urgent claims. They do not have much interaction with the organization, but they should be taken into account in stakeholder communication, as they might attain another attribute and become more powerful. One example of dormant stakeholders is prospective customers. Discretionary stakeholders form the second group of latent stakeholders. Their claims

are legitimate but not urgent, and they do not have power to affect the organization. These stakeholders can be, for instance, recipients of corporate charity. Demanding stakeholders form the third latent group. They have urgent claims, but no power or legitimacy to use them. This group could consist of a single demonstrator who does not get much publicity. (Cornelissen 2014, 47-48.)

The first expectant stakeholder group, group number 4, is dominant stakeholders, whose claims are both powerful and legitimate. They have strong influence on, and regular transactions and formal relationships with, the organization. Such stakeholders are employees, customers, owners, and major investors. Another expectant stakeholder group is dangerous stakeholders. They have powerful and urgent claims, but not legitimacy. These stakeholders might consist of unauthorized strikers, sabotaging employees, and terrorists. The third group of expectant stakeholders is dependent stakeholders. Their claims are urgent and legitimate, but they do not have power. Therefore, they try to get the other groups to take their matters forward. Such stakeholders are for example local residents. In the middle of the figure are definitive stakeholders, who have all three attributes: legitimacy, power and urgency. They include for instance active shareholders who feel that their interests are not served well enough. This group should be rapidly and carefully communicated with. (Cornelissen 2014, 48-49.)

Identifying different stakeholder groups helps an organization to analyse what the groups know about it, how do they consider its actions, products and services, and what kind of communication they need, and what do they expect from the organization in future. (Juholin 2013, 115.) In other words, an organization can determine which stakeholder groups can only be informed of decisions, and which groups require active listening and communication. Especially salient stakeholders with power and high interest need communication that keeps them supporting the organization. (Cornelissen 2014, 51).

Stakeholders of Organization A include individual members, member organizations, employees, the board, sub boards, the media, decision-makers, and other non-profits

operating in the same field (Organization A 2014). I mapped them based on my perceptions using the power-interest matrix. Accordingly, the key players (quadrant D) are individual members, member organizations, employees, the board, and sub boards. The stakeholders to be kept informed (quadrant B) include cooperating non-profits, and the stakeholders to be kept satisfied (quadrant C) decision-makers and the media. Competing non-profits are placed in quadrant A, and therefore, need only minimal communicational efforts. More comprehensive stakeholder identification requires deeper knowledge about stakeholders' interests and expectations. This thesis provides some information about individual members' and other external stakeholders' needs, and can be utilized when planning communication for these groups.

3.3.2 Stakeholder communication

Based on stakeholder identification and mapping, organizations can formulate their stakeholder communications strategy, and determine what kind of communication different stakeholder groups need. Cornelissen (2014, 51-52) introduces three strategies: informational, persuasive and dialogue strategy. (See table 1.) In the informational strategy, organizations try to raise stakeholders' awareness by providing and distributing information such as press releases, newsletters and reports. The persuasive strategy aims to change stakeholders' knowledge, attitude, and behaviour through campaigns, meetings and discussions. In the dialogue strategy, organizations and stakeholders reciprocally engage in sharing ideas and opinions by using active consultation and incorporation into the organization's decision-making process.

Table 1: Stakeholder communications strategies (Adapted from Cornelissen 2014, 51)

Stakeholder effects	Awareness	Understanding	Involvement	Commitment
Type of strategy	Informational	Informational/ Persuasive	Dialogue	Dialogue
Tactics	Press releases Newsletters Reports Memos Free publicity	Discussions Meetings Advertising and educational campaigns	Consultation Debate	Early incorporation Collective problem-solving

The informational strategy is described as a one-way symmetrical model of communication, where communication is one-way from an organization to its stakeholders without any listening or feedback system. Shared information is objective and does not aim to persuade stakeholders' attitudes or behaviour. The persuasive strategy represents a two-way asymmetrical model of communication, where both an organization and its stakeholders send information. However, the organization tries to change only its stakeholders' attitudes and behaviour, not its own business operations. The dialogue strategy, however, can be explained as a two-way symmetrical model, where communication is a dialogue instead of a monologue, and where views are shared reciprocally to gain mutual understanding between an organization and its stakeholders. (Cornelissen 2014, 52-53.)

Juholin (2013, 248-250) highlights the meaning of dialogue in stakeholder communication. According to her, stakeholder dialogue refers to all interaction between an organization and its stakeholders. Dialogue can be occasional or regular, and short-term or long-lasting. It aims at equal and appreciative conversation, open listening, and mutual understanding. Dialogue can be carried out for instance through seminars, panel discussions, surveys, and conversations. However, every stakeholder relationship does not need to be dealt with the dialogue approach, as different stakeholder groups have different communicational needs. Some groups require constant informing and participation, whereas some others do not want any dialogue. For example, members of an association might be happy to get a member magazine once a month, but investors expect regular information. Some people can be irritated if they receive too much information, and therefore, it should be possible to refuse from communication on demand. (Juholin 2013, 250.)

Organizations can use different stakeholder communications strategies with different stakeholder groups based on the interests and needs of each group. Stakeholder identification and mapping determine what kind of communication the stakeholder groups need. There are several communication forms to choose from. Communication can be direct or indirect, face-to-face, online, or written. Different forms are used together or alone depending on the situation. The most important groups should be

communicated to face-to-face, whereas less crucial groups can be communicated to via online channels. (Juholin 2013, 252-253.)

Different strategies require different communication channels. One way to choose the right channel is to apply the media richness theory, which refers to the channel's capability to change understanding within a certain time frame (Daft & Lengel 1986, 560 in Fill 2009, 48), and the capacity to process and convey 'rich' exchanges (Cornelissen 2014, 54). A 'rich' exchange includes the ability to provide instant feedback, the capacity to personalize and adjust messages according to responses, as well as the capability to express the message in different ways (Cornelissen 2014, 54).

The order of the communication channels, starting from the richest one, is: face-to-face communication, telephone, email, letter, note, memo, special report, flyer and bulletin. Face-to-face communication is the richest channel, as it helps to create personal connections. The least rich channel, called lean medium, is numeric and formal written communication, as it is slow and often impersonal and visually limited. However, lean media are cost-effective and a suitable choice for simple and routine communication. As the media richness theory was developed in the time before internet and social media, it is limited as such for today. The new digital media would be relatively rich on the list. (Fill 2009, 48-49.) The rich media, such as face-to-face consultations, meetings and personalized documents, are important in the dialogue strategy, and to some extent, in the persuasive strategy. The less rich media like impersonal written documents are usable in the informational strategy. (Cornelissen 2014, 55.)

I find the media richness theory a helpful tool when considering which communication channels to use. However, I think that a certain channel can be more or less rich depending on its technicalities, such as the size of a meeting, or the number of receivers in an email conversation. For example, a massive internal meeting including senior managers' speeches may offer employees only a slight possibility for a dialogue and personal connection, although the meeting occurs face-to-face.

In my opinion, the stakeholder communications strategies introduced by Cornelissen are a bit too narrow, and therefore, it is difficult to appoint the ones that are used in Organization A. In my view, Organization A uses the dialogue strategy only when communicating with the board and sub boards, but to some extent it suits also to communication with employees and member organizations. The persuasive strategy fits to member communication as a two-way model with a possibility to give feedback. However, I think the aim is not only to change the attitudes and behaviours of individual members, but to find ways to interact with them regularly. The informational strategy, on the other hand, is an appropriate strategy for communicating with the media and other non-profits. Different communication channels are introduced in chapter 4.1.

3.3.3 Stakeholder engagement

Communication and interaction strengthen stakeholder relationships and engage stakeholders with the organization. According to Juholin (2013, 59), an engaged person feels a sense of community towards the organization. Engagement is different for different stakeholder groups: customers engage in customership, partners in partnership, members in membership, and owners in ownership. Stakeholder engagement is essential especially for organizations whose business is based on voluntary work.

In recent years, more and more communication professionals have started to understand the importance of stakeholder engagement. In stakeholder relationships, the term 'management' has been replaced with the term 'collaboration', and the term 'exchange' with the term 'engagement'. Stakeholder engagement represents the two-way symmetrical model of communication as it highlights dialogue and consultation, as well as mutual relationships. It aims at further understanding of specific issues, and strengthening the goodwill and reputation of an organization. In the old viewpoint of stakeholder management, organizations tried to manage interactions with their stakeholders, dump the stakeholders' interests, and impact their attitudes and opinions. The stakeholder engagement approach instead aims at building long-term relationships, and finding those stakeholders who are open to direct engagement and possibly

collaboration. Furthermore, organizations using the stakeholder engagement approach are ready to adapt their activities to conform the expectations of their key external stakeholder groups. (Cornelissen 2014, 55-56.)

The opportunity to get information and influence an organization affects the stakeholders' degree of engagement (Juholin 2013, 60). Engagement is possible when stakeholders get positive experiences in relation to an organization, and feels that the organization is engaged with them and invests in the relationship. Also mutual trust is essential. (Vuokko 2010, 247-248.)

Cornelissen (2014, 57) notes that when organizations create stakeholder relationships based on trust, stakeholders are more likely to share information that can generate innovation; more likely to continue to transact with the organization; and more likely to become advocates who promote the organization to others. However, the benefits of stakeholder engagement depend on the used resources. The costs, time and other resources need to be in balance with the results of the stakeholder relationships.

Also marketing communication is used to engage with stakeholders. Fill (2009, 926) defines engagement as the use of marketing communication tools, media and messages to captivate stakeholders. According to him, engagement consists of intellectual and emotional elements. The intellectual element is used when engagement with an organization or a product is built on the basis of processing rational information. The emotional element refers to engagement which is based on emotional and expressive information. Communication should be balanced with rational information to meet stakeholders' intellectual needs, and expressive communication to meet the emotional needs. (Fill 2009, 233.)

The sector and industry affect how much organizations engage with their stakeholders, especially when it comes to non-market groups such as communities, interest groups and social movements. Cornelissen suggests that one reason for the difference is the dominant logic of senior management, which indicates how managers consider their business and what kinds of decisions, strategies and actions they make regarding their

stakeholders. The dominant logic is based on three optional logics. First, managers may find stakeholder cooperation hindering economic return. Secondly, managers may see that stakeholder cooperation helps them to create value and gain competitive advantage, good reputation and opportunities for innovation. According to the third logic, managers want to create social value also for other groups in society, and seek positive links between social and economic value. The dominant logic helps organizations to focus on certain stakeholder groups and to choose the way to engage with them. (Cornelissen 2014, 56-57.)

3.4 Image

Organizations do not communicate only to exchange information with their stakeholders, but also to symbolically build and project a certain image (Cornelissen 2014, 66). The three elements needed to develop an image are corporate personality, identity and image (Fill 2009, 391).

3.4.1 Corporate personality and identity

Individuals and organizations reflect their personalities through their identity, which is then conducted through communication, and perceived as an image in the eyes of external stakeholders. (See figure 7.) Corporate personality is a combination of the characteristics that identify an organization. It consists of two elements: culture, including core values and beliefs, and an overall strategic purpose. (Fill 2009, 391-392.)

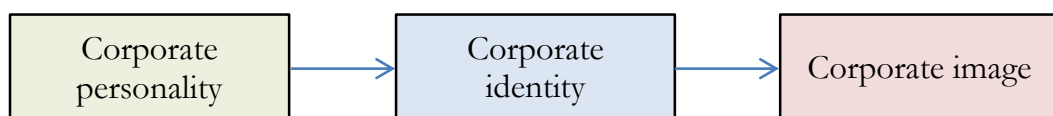


Figure 7: Elements of corporate identity (Shee & Abratt 1989 in Fill 2009, 391)

Fill (2009, 394) defines identity as a means by which an organization differentiates itself from other organizations. According to Cornelissen (2014, 67), corporate identity refers to building an image of an organization, whereas corporate personality concerns

deeper patterns of meaning and sense-making of people within an organization and consists of core values defining the organization.

The concept of identity concerns both strategic communication to external stakeholders and identification within an organization. Identity can be divided into three levels: social identity, organizational identity and corporate identity. Social identity refers to how individuals characterize themselves as members of a certain group. Organizational identity explains the distinctive features of an organization. Corporate identity is defined as an image about an organization that it wants to project to its external stakeholders. (Cornelissen 2014, 68.)

According to the model of corporate image management, developed by Birkigt and Stadler(1986 in Cornelissen 2014, 65), identity consists of three attributes: 1) symbolism referring to logos and a house style, 2) planned forms of communication including advertising, events, sponsorship and promotions, and 3) behaviour of employees that gives an impression on stakeholders. Organizations use these attributes to communicate and project an image of themselves to their stakeholders.

Corporate identity should be developed from an understanding of mission, vision and culture of an organization. The mission and vision explain what the organization is and what it wants to achieve, and the culture what kind of beliefs the organization has. The fourth dimension of identity are the characteristics that make the organization special, stable and coherent. Corporate identity should be based on organizational identity to ensure that it is truthful and not only cosmetic, and that it is shared by employees of the organization. (Cornelissen 2014, 66-67, 70.)

Corporate identity is near the term 'profile', which Juholin (2013, 61) defines as a target image that an organization wants to achieve. The Finnish word 'profilointi', launched by Åberg in 1989, refers to purposive actions to be made to create the target image.

3.4.2 Image and reputation

Sometimes, the terms 'image' and 'reputation' refer to the same matter. However, many authors, like Cornelissen (2014), Fill (2009) and Juholin (2013), keep them separate. Cornelissen (2014, 276, 278) divides image into two meanings: the general term 'image' and the term 'corporate image'. According to him, image means individuals' perceptions of an organization, product or service at a certain moment, and corporate image means the way an organization is perceived. Fill (2009, 399) describes corporate image as the perceptions that different audiences have of an organization after they have interpreted cues expressed by the organization.

According to Cornelissen (2014, 246), reputation or corporate reputation refers to a general evaluation of an organization compared to its competitors, which can lead to preference. Fill (2009, 400) defines reputation as individuals' reflections on historical and accumulated impressions of identity cues, shaped by possible actual experiences. He states that the difference between image and reputation is that reputation is developed during a long time, while image might be temporal and cursory. According to Juholin (2013, 62), image is a visual entity, whereas reputation includes actions, communication and a relationship network.

Despite of the several definitions, developing the image is beneficial to an organization. It provides three kinds of strategic advantages. First, a corporate image creates awareness and helps stakeholders to find and recognize an organization. Secondly, a corporate image can get stakeholders to favour and support an organization, and therefore, to buy its products and services or to invest in it. The third advantage is that by projecting a consistent image, an organization can avoid risks that the use of several conflicting images and messages could cause. (Cornelissen 2014, 64-65.)

A good reputation is valuable for an organization as it guarantees acceptance and legitimacy from stakeholders, and generates returns. It may also provide a competitive advantage, as it creates an asset that is difficult to imitate by competitors. (Cornelissen 2014, 68.) According to Fill (2009, 400), a strong reputation is strategically important for four reasons: 1) Reputation enables differentiation when products do not differ

from competitor's products. 2) Reputation helps an organization to survive in times of turbulence and to measure corporate value. 3) Reputation affects the share price of a company. 4) High quality in customer relationships correlates with a good reputation.

3.4.3 Building and managing reputation

All visible, audible and otherwise perceptible factors constantly influence the image and reputation of an organization. The factors can be concrete or abstract, and sometimes unconscious. In addition to a person's own perceptions, also other people's experiences and stories affect the image. (Juholin 2013, 62-63.)

Juholin (2013, 470) says that organizations try to affect the image their stakeholders have through reputation management, which consists of strategic actions aiming at conducting stakeholders' perceptions and expectations to a positive direction. That in turn, can strengthen organizations' stakeholder relationships. On the other hand, Juholin (2013, 62) notes that organizations cannot manage their reputation, but they can build it through sustainable business and open stakeholder dialogue. Also Fill (2009, 399) says that organizations can not change their image, but they can change their identity, and that way influence the image people have of them.

Building a favourable reputation requires four attributes: credibility, trustworthiness, reliability, and responsibility. Credibility may be developed through high quality products and services, and trustworthiness through good customer service. Reliability can be achieved by setting quality standards, and responsibility by focusing on service and values. (Fombrun 1996 in Fill 2009, 401.) To ensure that stakeholders have a favourable image of an organization, all communication from brochures and advertising campaigns to websites need to be in line. (Cornelissen 2014, 8).

An analysis of stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes towards an organization is a usable means to reveal a gap between organizational image and identity. The nature and size of the gap show what tasks need to be done to close the gap.

A communications strategy is required to pay attention to internal structure and communication, as well as to the needs of different stakeholder groups. The aim of the

strategy is to stabilize and equalize multiple images through consistent messages. The size of the gap and the number of stakeholders sharing the same perception form four different situations. (See figure 8.) 1) When many stakeholders have an image that is far from reality, a correction strategy can help to communicate a desired position and performance. 2) When only a few stakeholders perceive a large gap, a strategy of targeted adjustments would help to focus on particular stakeholder groups while maintaining the correct image of the majority of stakeholders. 3) When a small number of stakeholders have an image that differs only a little from reality, a monitoring strategy enables the organization to use resources elsewhere. 4) When a large number of stakeholders perceive an image with only a small gap, a maintenance strategy can keep the organization communicating as it has been. (Fill 2009, 402-403.)

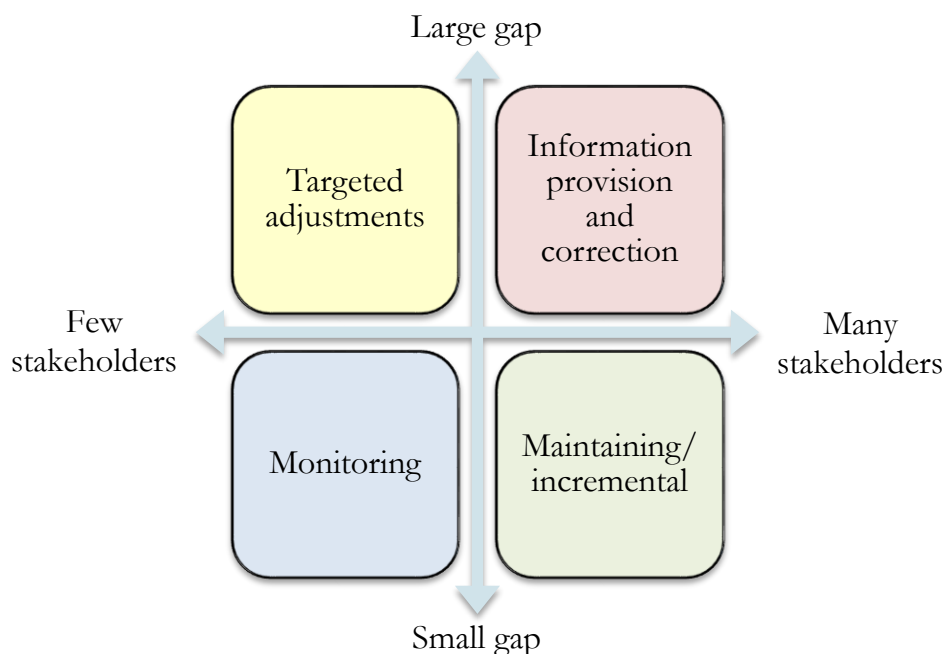


Figure 8: Corporate perception gap (Adapted from Fill 2009, 402)

To affect an organization's reputation it is important to achieve alignment and transparency between internal identity and external image. Alignment should involve an organizational culture experienced by employees, a corporate vision expressed by senior managers, and a corporate image or reputation perceived by external stakeholders. The alignment can be analysed with the toolkit developed by Hatch and Schultz, which contains a number of questions addressed to interfaces between vision, culture and image. At first, the interface between vision and culture is examined to find

out how managers and employees are aligned. A potential misalignment could show that employees do not understand or support a strategic direction of the organization. The second diagnosis concerns the interface between culture and image, and it reveals a potential gap between the values of employees and the perceptions of external stakeholders. This gap can confuse stakeholders and make it unclear what the organization stands for. In the third part of the analysis, the interface between vision and image is examined to see if managers are leading the organization in a direction that external stakeholders support. A potential misalignment would mean that external stakeholders have not been listened to in a sufficient way. (Cornelissen 2014, 76-77.)

Identity, image and reputation may be a bit confusing concepts as different authors discuss them in different ways. To clarify the concepts a short summary may be needed. According to my understanding, identity explains what an organization is, whereas profile expresses how the organization wants to be seen. Image shows how an organization is seen by its external stakeholders in a certain moment while reputation points out how stakeholders concern the organization in a long term. Identity and profile are organization-based concepts expressing the characteristics of an organization from its own viewpoint. Image and reputation, in contrast, describe the organization from its external stakeholders' perspective.

In Organization A, one of the strategic objectives of communication and marketing is to increase awareness of the organization among its current and potential members, partners, media representatives and decision-makers. It is also important that its reputation is aligned with its identity, and that the identity is based on mission, vision and values. (Organization A 2009.) These objectives are in line with Cornelissen's statements that corporate identity should be based on organizational identity and be developed from mission, vision and culture. He also noted that to affect a reputation organizations need to align internal identity and external image.

4 Communication and marketing in practice

This section will describe how communication and marketing are executed in practice by introducing different tools and channels to use when communicating with stakeholders. The section will also explain special features concerning communication and marketing in non-profit organizations.

Stakeholder identification and mapping determine what kind of communication each stakeholder group needs (Juholin 2013, 252). Also marketing actions should be targeted according to target groups to increase awareness and interest in the organization (Vuokko (2010, 38-39). Stakeholder groups' needs and interests affect to what kinds of communication and marketing channels an organization should choose. Different channels can be used alone, but many organizations use multichannel communication, where information is conveyed through several channels. Sometimes people get frustrated if they get the same message from many channels, but mostly the mix of channels makes communication more effective. (Juholin 2013, 47.)

4.1 Communication channels

According to Juholin (2013, 248, 253-258), stakeholder dialogue includes all communication and interaction with stakeholders. She introduces several forums to be used in this dialogue: face-to-face discussion and meetings, stakeholder events, crowdsourcing, letters, bulletins, email, stakeholder magazines, and open days. Also Blundel and Ippolito (2008, 7-8) have listed various communication channels: face-to-face meetings and conversations, letters, telephone, e-mail, blog, reports, posters, brochures, and video-conferences. Blundel and Ippolito note that due to the recent technological changes, some channels have declined, while some others have emerged. For example the use of telefax has decreased dramatically, and the use of text messages have increased in organizational communication.

I think both the list of Juholin and the one of Blundel and Ippolito should be continued with at least newsletters, the internet, an intranet, an extranet, and social media channels. In the context of this thesis, the relevant channels are magazines,

newsletters, email, websites, social media, and events. As newsletters are also used on marketing purposes, they are introduced in the next chapter under the headline 'Public relations'.

Magazines

The purpose of a magazine can be to inform stakeholders, promote products and services, or build an image. It is important to define the purpose and decide whether it is to inform stakeholders, to promote products and services, or to build an image.

Magazines can also serve all these purposes, but too market-oriented content may drive readers away. (Juholin 2013, 257.)

The content of magazines depends on the goals, frequency, and readers. If a magazine is published a few times a year, it can provide background information, but not news.

The content can be developed on the basis of readers' surveys. The most common subjects include news and topical issues, background information about events, plans concerning upcoming events, statements, new products and services, introduction of the organization and its employees, interviews, and professional issues. (Juholin 2013, 257-258.)

According to Juholin (2013, 257-258), the use of magazines has divided organizations into two groups: some organizations produce high-quality visual printed magazines, whereas some others have replaced them with online magazines. A printed version acts as a reminder of the existence of an organization, whereas an online magazine requires more activity from stakeholders to reach it. Stakeholders might also forget to read an online magazine, if it does not provide important information or a forum for discussion.

Online channels

Today, **web communication** is an essential part of stakeholder communication allowing organizations to target their messages more easily than in printed media.

However, interactivity and user experience should be considered more when developing websites and different web solutions. (Juholin 2013, 326.)

Juholin (2013, 326) notes that users get easily bored, if websites are not updated regularly. Therefore, she suggests that key stakeholders and customers would be directed to the extranet, which requires registration, but has more targeted content. The benefits of extranet are that it gives more information of the users, and enables to customize services according to the users' individual needs. It should provide the users with added value such as useful information and tailored services, as well as award loyal users.

In my opinion, organizations should consider carefully what information to publish on the internet and what on the extranet. Sometimes, it is difficult to enter in to an extranet, if users need to remember several usernames and passwords. On the open pages, information serves also potential customers, students and consumers, and affects organizations' image. Of course, customers' private information and personal services should be placed to the extranet sites. I think, both the internet and extranet sites should always be up to date, but the frequency for publishing new content depends on the organization and users. If the users visit the sites approximately once a month, it is not necessary to add new content every day.

Email is a combination of text-based and conversational communication. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 214). It is a popular channel, although a message overload has made some receivers frustrated, and increased the risk that messages are not read. Therefore, organizations should avoid mass emailing, and give receivers a possibility to leave from the mailing list. (Juholin 2013, 256-257.) Also Blundel and Ippolito (2008, 217) note the problems concerning the rise of junk email and the overloaded in-trays. That has caused stressful working practices, and blurred the line between work time and leisure time. Many senders expect unrealistically that their messages will be read, understood and replied in a short time.

However, email is a useful channel to maintain relationships and to send newsletters, notifications about website updates, as well as online questionnaires (Juholin 2013, 257). It can also be used in e-learning (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 215).

Social media includes all kinds of online and digital technologies, which enable people to create, share and exchange information and ideas. Different social media technologies have different kinds of interactivity, inclusion and the virtual presence of the users. The social media can be divided into six groups: 1) blogs where individuals can publish information in a diary or journal style, 2) collaborative projects such as wikis and social bookmarking applications which enable individuals to rate internet and media content, 3) social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn where people can create own profiles and present and share information, 4) content communities such as YouTube which are used to share media content, 5) virtual social worlds, and 6) virtual game worlds. Corporate blogging enables stakeholders to engage in direct conversation with the organization. Collaborative projects are suitable in internal collaborative work. Social networking sites offer a presence for organizations, but they also help to reach certain consumers, and strengthen their ties with the organization. Facebook and LinkedIn are popular among younger internet users, although their usage is growing. Content communities offer organizations great opportunities to reach users and position the brands. In virtual social worlds, organizations may advertise and promote their products. (Cornelissen 2014, 259-264.)

The social media provides organizations new ways to engage with stakeholders and to build reputational capital and brand equity. In social media, organizations can get more humane image and have a conversational voice, which create positive feelings, a favourable image and strong stakeholder relationships. The best benefits from the social media tools can be gained when communication professionals use them to engage in transparent and authentic interactions with stakeholders in a way that encourages them to become advocates of the organization. (Cornelissen 2014, 266-268.) Juholin (2013, 334) states that the social media has increased organizations' visibility, the number of website visitors, and the amount of information about

customers' behaviour. However, it also takes a lot of time from communication and marketing professionals.

According to Korteso (2014, 57, 62-63), the social media has changed customer relationships from proactive service to meta-active service, where organizations encourage their customers to participate actively by providing them information, forums and interfaces to construct new entities of information and own solutions. (See figure 9.)

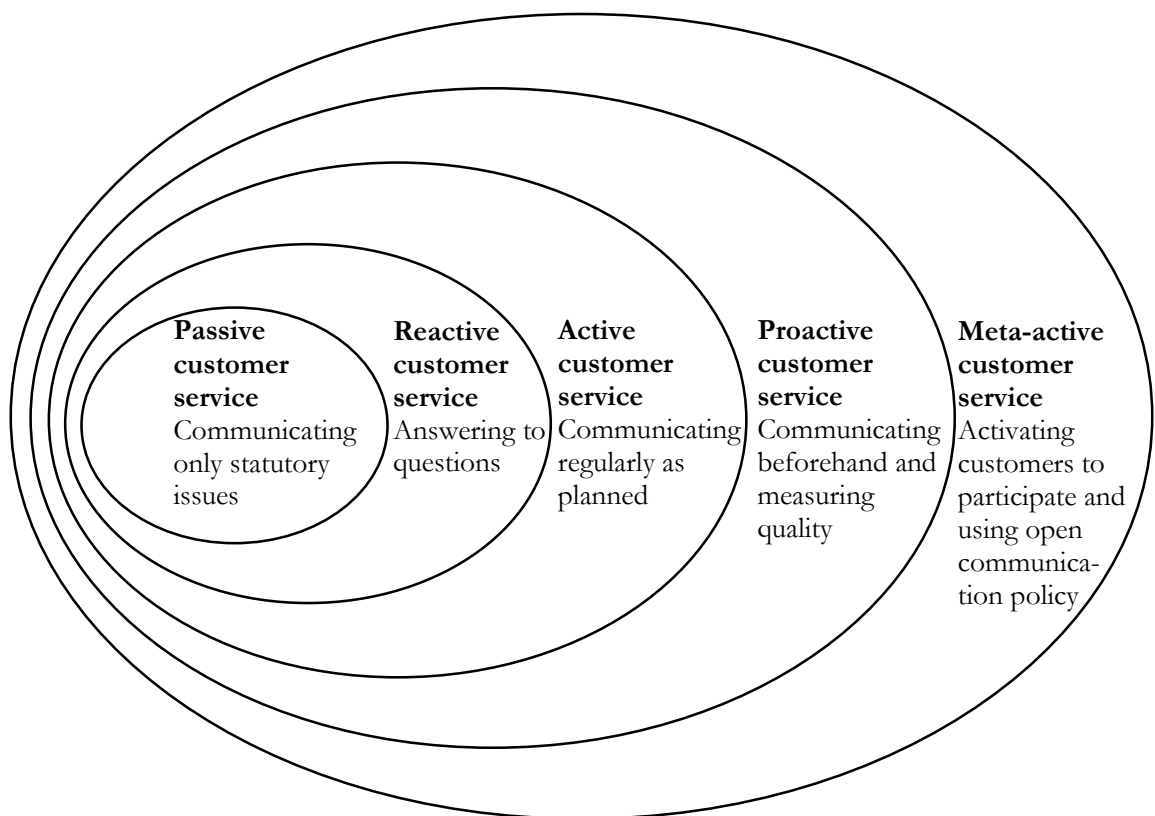


Figure 9: Social media and meta-active customer service (Korteso 2014, 62)

The social media require organizations to change from one-way communication to an interactive process which emphasizes community, sharing, stories, and dialogue (Juholin 2013, 334).

Events

Events and exhibitions enable organizations to interact intensively with their stakeholders (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 276). Events need to have a clear purpose, objective, and target group. Organizations should consider carefully the short-term and long-term objectives, a target group, timing, theme, as well as other alternatives for the event. It might be difficult to get participants in it as important people are asked to join in other occasions as well. The event type reflects the values of an organization. An event may be an introduction and discussion event during a lunch or a dinner, or it may consist of a concert, theatre performance or sport event. (Juholin 2013, 254-255.) Organizations can also attend business-to-business trade fairs or consumer-oriented exhibitions, which provide unique communication opportunities with many existing and potential customers. They are also useful channels for product launches. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 276.)

The communication channels used in Organization A include a member magazine published four times a year, a monthly newsletter sent by email, the internet site, an intranet site, an extranet site, information booklets and other publications, as well as social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and discussion forums. The organization also arranges or participates in events, but they are seen more like marketing channels.

4.2 Marketing communication tools and channels

A promotion mix or a marketing communication mix is a combination of the tools that an organization uses to persuasively communicate with its target groups. Different tools are advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 428-429.) Vuokko (2010, 171) divides marketing communication tools into personal selling, public relations, media relations, advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. In the context of this thesis, the most relevant tools are advertising, public relations, and direct marketing, especially in the form of online marketing.

Marketing communication channels can be personal or non-personal. Personal channels are communicated directly between two or more people, for example face-to-face, on the phone, via mail or email, or through text messages or chat. Non-personal channels deliver messages without personal contact using different media, events and atmospheres. Media include print media such as newspapers, magazines and direct mail; broadcast media such as television and radio; display media such as billboards, signs and posters; and online media such as email, websites and social media.

Atmospheres refer to designed environments which express certain qualities. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 438-439.) Organizations choose an appropriate media type according to media habits of the target group, the product or service to be marketed, a message to be delivered, and costs of the medium (Andreasen & Kotler 2008, 306).

Advertising

Kotler and Armstrong (2014, 456-457) define advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation or promotion of ideas, products or services. In addition to corporations, also non-profit organizations and professionals use advertising to promote their causes. Advertising aims to build customer relationships by communicating customer value. Other purposes are informing, persuading and reminding. Despite of the optimistic objectives, Fill (2009, 21) suspects its ability to persuade the target group to think or behave in a certain way. He also notes that it is difficult to measure its effect on sales, and that, due to a lack of credibility, consumers are less likely to believe in advertising messages than messages from other sources.

Nonetheless, advertising can reach big amount of people at a low cost per exposure, and be very expressive tool, as it enables the use of various visuals, print, sound and colour (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 443). Advertising can also develop awareness, values and associations towards a brand (Fill 2009, 483). The major media types used in advertising are TV, the internet, newspapers, direct mail, magazines, radio, new digital media, and outdoor advertisements. Organizations choose a mix of media based on the impact, message effectiveness, and cost of each medium. Some forms of advertising, such as newspaper and radio advertising, are relatively cheap, but some

other forms, such as TV commercials, can be very expensive. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 444, 466-467.)

Direct marketing

Direct marketing aims to target individual customers by delivering personalized messages, and to build one-to-one relationships by communicating customers directly and personally (Fill 2009, 22-23). Direct marketing can be carried out through direct mail and catalogues, online marketing, or mobile marketing. It is less public as it is directed to a particular person. It is immediate and can be customized to fit specific people. Direct marketing can also be interactive as it allows a dialogue between an organization and its target group. The forms of direct marketing include face-to-face or personal selling, direct-mail marketing, catalogue marketing, telemarketing, and online marketing. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 444, 521.)

Online marketing

Nowadays, all kinds of organizations market online. Online marketing can be conducted in five ways: 1) creating own web sites, 2) placing advertisements and promotions online, 3) participating in online social networks, 4) sending email, and 5) using mobile marketing. Organizations use their web sites to build customer goodwill, collect feedback, and support other sales channels, as well as to offer information, and create interest in the organization. In addition to own web sites, organizations promote their products and services by using search-related ads, display ads, and online classifieds. Online social networks and communities can be used in two ways: organizations can use the existing networks or create an own one. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 525, 528-529, 531.)

Email marketing is a growing online marketing tool. When it is used properly, it enables organizations to send highly targeted and personalized relationship-building messages regularly via email, such as e-newsletters. However, the explosion of unwanted spam messages has made many people irritated to commercial emails.

Therefore, organizations need to be cautious that they add value and are not intrusive. A good solution is to ask for a permission to send email marketing. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 532-533.)

Mobile marketing is conducted through mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, and other mobile communication devices by placing advertising, such as search ads, banner ads, display ads and videos, on the internet sites and the social media. With mobile marketing, organizations can reach and interact with their target groups anywhere and anytime during the buying and relationship-building processes. It enables organizations to engage the target group in the organization by offering immediate information, incentives, and choices at the moment they are interested in. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 533.)

Public relations

Public relations can be seen as a type of communication, but when it is used to promote products, people, places, ideas, activities, and organizations, it is also a marketing tool. In marketing context, it is defined as building good relations with an organization's various stakeholders by obtaining favourable publicity; building a good image; and handling unfavourable rumours. It can be conducted through news articles, events, written materials, audio-visual materials, and corporate social responsibility materials. The written materials include annual reports, brochures, articles, newsletters, and magazines. Audio-visual materials consist of DVDs and online videos. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 472-732.) E-newsletters and white papers are a combination of email marketing and public relations. The difference is in their goals: as marketing tools they are sales-driven and as public relations tools they are reputation-driven. (Fill 2009, 781.)

The main marketing tools that Organization A uses are advertising, online marketing and public relations. The used marketing channels are magazines, radio, the internet, the social media, and events such as exhibitions. Also newsletters are used, but they are

seen more like a communication channel which provides news and information about events and topical issues.

4.3 Communication and marketing in non-profit organizations

Non-profit organizations, such as associations and unions, form the third sector (Juholin 2013, 26). They are organizations which aim to gain their mission, so called social profit, instead of financial profit. However, they have also financial objectives such as covering costs, minimizing costs or deficit, or achieving some sort of financial surplus. To meet their costs, non-profits may collect member fees, arrange events with entrance fees, or raise funds with different campaigns. (Vuokko 2010, 20.)

Communication in non-profit organizations may be unselfish and based on universal values and goals. However, sometimes their communication reminds corporate communication as it aims to get publicity, and therefore, increase the number of advocates, members and donators. (Juholin 2013, 26.) According to Andreasen and Kotler (2008, 62), non-profits need marketing for the same reasons: to influence their customers or target groups, funding sources and volunteers.

With marketing communication non-profits try to affect people's behaviour, while corporations use it to promote their products and services (Juholin 2013, 261). Marketing is seen as a function which, on the other hand, creates and increases demand for products and services, and on the other hand, helps to compete about customers. Likewise corporations, non-profits compete against other service providers, but also against people's passivity. (Vuokko 2010, 51-52.)

There are several characteristics that separate non-profits' marketing from for-profit organizations: 1) Non-profits highlight non-financial targets. 2) Their exchange relationships with stakeholders are different: member organizations cover their costs with member fees, but other types of non-profits get their income from other people than people to whom they target their services. 3) In many non-profits, demand for services is higher than supply. 4) Most non-profits provide intangible services and philosophies instead of tangible products. 5) Their business is mainly measured on the

basis of business objectives, not financial results. 6) The meaning of voluntary work is important. (Vuokko 2010, 24-26).

Andreasen and Kotler (2008, 22-24) have listed almost similar special features affecting non-profit marketing: 1) Non-profits have to cultivate also the second target group, donators, besides of the primary target group. Various stakeholder groups make it difficult to develop strategies that satisfy everyone. 2) Non-profits try to influence their target groups' behaviours. 3) Benefits resulting from changed behaviours are often invisible. 4) Consumers are asked to change their behaviour even without any personal benefit. 5) Sometimes, non-profits try to achieve dramatic changes in target groups' attitudes or behaviours, such as to convert people who are against the issue to favour it. 6) It can be difficult to modify products or services to meet target group's needs. 7) As the benefits are often intangible, they are difficult to present in the media.

Stakeholder thinking has spread from private sector to non-profit organizations. According to Vuokko (2010, 30-32), enhancing the meaning of all stakeholder groups is essential for non-profits, and therefore, they should direct their communication and marketing to all stakeholders. Different types of non-profits have different kinds of stakeholder groups. In member organizations, they include members, potential members, local decision-makers, sponsors, and external customers. Stakeholder groups in charity organizations and interest groups are members, target people of the activities and their families, sponsors, donators, voluntary workers, and decision-makers. State and municipalities, on the other hand, target their business for residents, potential residents, labours, corporates, tourists, internal customers, decision-makers, the media, and other organizations in the same area.

From the different types of non-profits introduced above, Organization A represents a combination of a member organization and an interest group. As I have mentioned, its stakeholders consist of current and potential individual members, member organizations, the media, decision-makers, and other non-profits, as well as internal stakeholders such as employees, the board, and sub boards (Organization A 2014).

In Organization A, communication and marketing support the organization to gain its strategic objectives and vision. Support is needed especially to increase the number of individual members and to develop stakeholder relationships and services.

Communication and marketing have different roles and different tone of voice. In business communication, the organization aims to sound credible, assertive, professional, and easy to understand. In member communication, it highlights closeness, humanity, flexibility, speed and freshness. In marketing communication, the aim is to be seen as a creative, fresh, colourful and youthful organization.

(Organization A 2009.)

5 Conducting the research

This section will explain how the research was conducted by introducing the target groups and the research and data collection methods. It will also describe the research process used in the different parts of the research.

5.1 Target groups

The target group of the communication and marketing research consisted of all the almost 30,000 individual members, the 24 member organizations, as well as other external stakeholders. The other stakeholders were limited to the key external stakeholders containing other non-profit organizations collaborating with Organization A and/or operating in the same field.

5.2 Research method

Research method depends on the research objectives and research data that need to be collected. The two major ways of doing research in marketing communication are qualitative and quantitative methods (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 3). Mixed methods has become the third common research method in marketing, management and sociology studies (Johnson et al. 2007, 112 in Daymon & Holloway 2011, 349).

Qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative research method provides deep information from small, predefined group of people, while as quantitative research method explains how a particular part of population perceives some matter. Qualitative research seeks answers to questions how, what kind of, and why to understand people's thoughts and experiences.

Quantitative research is interested in questions what, how many, how much, and what percentage. (Juholin 2010, 73.) Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 7) explain that in qualitative research, the researcher tries to explore a problem by conveying varied perspectives of participants and mapping the complexity of the topic. In quantitative

research, the researcher aims to understand relationship among variables or to find out if one group performs better on an outcome than another group.

Qualitative and quantitative researches differ also by the role of the researcher. According to Daymon and Holloway (2011, 9-11), in quantitative research, the researcher stays distant from data to ensure objectivity of the study. In qualitative research, the researcher is subjective and actively involved in the research to enhance credibility of the study.

Daymon and Holloway (2011, 13) compare qualitative and quantitative research approaches in the following way: Qualitative research seeks to explore, understand and describe participants' experiences, as well as to generate theory from data. The used approach is widely focused, process-oriented, and context-bound. The sample of participants or informants is chosen by using purposive and theoretical sampling, and can be changed during the research process. The participants are bound to time and place. Data is collected by in-depth non-standardized interviews, observation, or documents. Data can be analysed by using comparative analysis, content analysis, ethnographic, or narrative analysis. The outcome of the research is a story, ethnography, or a theory. The quality of the research is dependent on its trustworthiness, authenticity, transferability, and validity.

In the same list, Daymon and Holloway (2011, 13) describe quantitative research as follows: Quantitative research aims to find causal explanations, test hypotheses, and make predictions. The research approach is narrowly focused, outcome oriented, and context-free. The sample consists of respondents or participants, chosen by randomized sampling, and is agreed before the research starts. Possible data collection methods are questionnaires, standardized interviews, structured observation, documents, experiments, and trials. Data analysis is statistical, and research outcome measurable and testable results. The quality of the research depends on its validity, reliability, and generalizability.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2011, 12-13), the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods are not absolute, but rather different ends of the same continuum. Instead of being seen as competing methods, their characteristics can be borrowed by one another. And sometimes, it is appropriate to use both of them in the same research project, as in mixed methods.

Mixed methods

Mixed methods is a combination of at least one quantitative and one qualitative method, where neither of them is inherently linked to any research paradigm (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989, 256 in Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, 2). Mixed methods is based on pragmatism, which makes it an applied, practical, and instrumental method. It is not necessarily influenced by any theoretical or philosophical traditions. The study is conducted in a practical and pragmatic way by using the methods and strategies that best suite to the desired goals. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 352.)

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 5) state six core characteristics to mixed methods research. 1) In mixed method, both quantitative and qualitative data is collected and analysed persuasively and accurately. 2) The two forms of data is mixed concurrently by combining them, sequentially by building one on the other, or embedding one within the other. 3) The researcher can prioritize one form of data or both of them. 4) The procedures are used in a single study or in several phases of a research program. 5) Procedures are examined within philosophical and theoretical framework. 6) The procedures are combined into specific research designs to plan the research execution.

Both Daymon and Holloway (2011, 350) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 13) remind that in mixed methods, the researcher needs to have good knowledge in both qualitative and quantitative approaches. They do not recommend mixed methods to new researchers due to its time consuming and complex nature. However, mixed methods has several advantages. Its multidimensionality enables the researcher to study many different aspects and levels in one research project. The researcher can use both confirmatory and exploratory questions, and hence both verify and generate theory.

Mixed-methods can also prevent some limitations of mono-method researches. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 351.)

Mixed methods is suitable for research problems, where one data source would be insufficient, results need to be argued, and findings need to be generalized. It is an appropriate research method also, if a second method is needed to support the primary method, a theoretical viewpoint needs to be explored, or if a research objective is best to be studied in multiple phases. (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, 8.)

Research designs are procedures which guide the researcher to decide how to collect, analyse, interpret, and report data (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, 53). The three main designs of mixed methods are 1) sequential exploratory design, 2) sequential explanatory design, and 3) concurrent design. In the first type, the findings of one method define the other method. Usually, the research is started with qualitative strategies to explore a particular phenomenon, and continued with quantitative strategies to expand and generalize the findings or to test the propositions or theory of the qualitative phase. In sequential explanatory design, the research is started by collecting and analysing quantitative data, and based on those results, continued with qualitative strategies to get more depth for the study. In concurrent design, also called triangulation, qualitative and quantitative data are collected, integrated and interpreted simultaneously. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 352-354.)

The purpose of the communication and marketing research of Organization A was to examine the functionality of the communication and marketing channels. The objective was to discover how the individual members and some other external stakeholders perceive the organization's communication, communication channels and marketing, as well as to find ways to develop communication and marketing. The target group was 30,000 individual members, the 24 member organizations, as well as other external stakeholders.

Quantitative approach was an appropriate method to explore the perceptions of a big population, in this case the almost 30,000 individual members, as well as to find

relationships among different variables. It was a suitable method also when investigating the perceptions of the other external stakeholders to be able to compare the results of the two target groups. Qualitative method is usable to get deep information from small predefined group, such as the 24 member organizations. Qualitative approach was chosen for three reasons: 1) The member organizations have more interaction with the individual members than Organization A, and therefore, their experiences are crucial. 2) It was essential that the member organizations will be engaged with the results of the member survey, as the results affect them directly due to the same audience and the same communication topics. 3) Cooperation with the member organization is important to Organization A. To give them voice was a chance to strengthen this relationship.

As the research required both quantitative and qualitative strategies, the research method was mixed methods. That enabled the use of the methods that best suited to the research objectives and the desired goals, and was not tightly connected to only one theory. The research design was sequential explanatory design, as the quantitative method was conducted before the qualitative phase, and the qualitative method was used to get deeper understanding of the quantitative results.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 71, 82-83, 85) has described the two phases of the sequential explanatory design. (See figure 10.) At first, quantitative data is collected and analysed. In the second phase, specific quantitative results are followed up by collecting and analysing qualitative data. At the end, the researcher interprets how the qualitative results help to elaborate and deepen the quantitative results. As the sequential explanatory design is conducted in two phases, it can be time consuming. It also requires the researcher to decide which quantitative results to further investigate, and what criteria to use in the sampling of the qualitative phase.

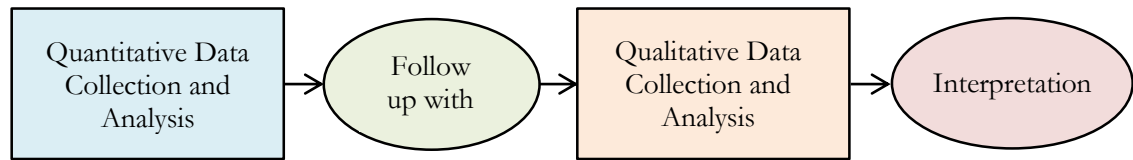


Figure 10: Two distinct phases of the sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, 69)

Usually, the participants for the qualitative phase are chosen from the same sample which has been used in the quantitative phase, because those persons are the best to provide more details about the initial results (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, 185). However, in the case research, the qualitative data was collected from a different population than the quantitative data. This was due to the reasons that were mentioned earlier: It was important to explore the member organizations' experiences and opinions as well, and to engage the member organizations with the member survey results. The aim was also to strengthen the cooperation and relationship with Organization A and its member organizations.

5.3 Data collection methods

By the basic principal, qualitative data is collected by asking open-ended questions, whereas quantitative research uses closed-ended questions. Qualitative data types can be divided into text data and images. Data collection methods include open-ended interviews, open-ended observations, private and public documents, as well as audio-visual materials such as videotapes, photographs and sounds. Some of the newest data sources are text messages, blogs, wikis, and emails. (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, 176-177.)

In quantitative research, data is collected by using instruments that measure individual attitudes or performance. Quantitative data can also be collected through structured interviews and observation with the predefined response categories and closed-ended questions. Other quantitative data sources are factual information from census data, attendance reports, progress summaries, and computer-based tracking data. (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011, 177.) Surveys are quantitative methods to collect awareness,

attitudes or behaviours of large population (Cornelissen 2014, 129-130; Juholin 2010, 119).

Interviews

Interviews can be arranged in several ways. The most common form is one-on-one interview conducted face-to-face, by phone or video conference, or as an online interview. Other interview types are focus groups, where group of people are interviewed simultaneously, and narrative enquiries, where participants' stories are analysed. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 222-223.)

Interviews can be divided into unstructured, non-standardized interviews; semi-structured interviews; structured or standardized interviews; and online interviews. In unstructured interviews, the questions are not determined beforehand, except one general question in the beginning. In semi-structured or focused interviews, questions are asked according to an interview guide, which ensures that all topic areas will be covered. Also sequential questions are asked when needed. Structured interviews include pre-planned questions that are the same to every participant. They remind written survey questionnaires, and are rarely used in qualitative researches. However, they can be used beside the other methods to ask background information such as age and number of purchases. Online interviews consist of text-, audio- and video-chats conducted synchronously in real time or asynchronously in non-real time. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 224-227.)

Focus groups

Focus groups involve a group of people who are interviewed by a researcher to get ideas, thoughts and perceptions about certain topics or issues. The aim is to see the topic from the participants' viewpoint. Focus groups enable to gather many different experiences and perspectives on the same subject. Another advantage is that each person's comments encourage other participants to state further responses, and

therefore, opinions may be elicited through the group interaction. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 242.)

Focus groups can be an appropriate method in mixed methods strategy alongside other research techniques. They can be used to generate findings that are then applied to when making a questionnaire. They can also be usable to seek in-depth data at the end of a survey. Focus groups are widely used in researches related to communications, marketing and advertising. They are used to examine behaviour and attitudes, to explore strategies and policies, to develop and understand relationships with products and services, to investigate corporate and industry issues, to examine social, political and environmental issues, as well as to test advertisements, and to evaluate corporate communications. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 243-244.) Some other purposes for focus groups are designing and improving programs, examining customer satisfaction, and evaluating business outcomes (Rennekamp & Nall 2000, 2).

According to the participants, focus groups can be divided into two types: pre-constituted groups and researcher-constituted groups. Pre-constituted groups consist of people who already form some sort of group. Participants may include professionals who share a same speciality, members of a project team, or members of the same association. However, a group of immediate colleagues or friends should be avoided as they may not want to reveal sensitive or private thoughts to others, and their history may lead them to a certain direction. Researcher-constituted groups are created by the researcher for the research purposes. As participants do not know each other beforehand, warming up may take longer time. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 245-246.)

The qualitative phase of the communication and marketing research was conducted with two semi-structured focus group interviews for the member organizations. The aim was to gather thoughts and opinions of the member organizations concerning the results of the member survey and to get deeper information about the satisfaction with Organization A's communication. Therefore, involving the member organizations to the focus group interviews helped to interpret the member survey results, as well as to engage the member organizations to the results. The focus groups were partly pre-

constituted and partly researcher-constituted groups, as the participants represented the same umbrella organization, but different sub-organizations. Most of the participants were executive managers or chairmen in their organization, and some of them had met in common meetings. However, many participants did not know the others beforehand. The focus groups are explained in more detail in subchapter 5.4.3 'Focus group interviews for the member organizations'.

Surveys

Surveys are structured questionnaires to collect numerical data about awareness, attitudes or behaviours of the population related to certain issues or circumstances. They may also be analytical and aim to explain why certain attitudes, behaviours and circumstances exist among a specific population. (Cornelissen 2014, 129-130). Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau (2009, 2) define survey as a systematic method to gather information from a group of people in order to construct quantitative descriptors of the attributes of a larger population. Quantitative descriptors are statistics that can be descriptive or analytic. Descriptive statistics express the size and distributions of various attributes in a population, whereas analytic statistics measure how two or more variables are related.

Surveys enable to compare the answers of different respondent groups, as well as to find out in what issues the perceptions of the target group differ from the aims of the organization. Surveys can also be used to recognize weak signals. (Juholin 2010, 119).

A questionnaire is the most common instrument to collect data in surveys. It consists of standardized questions sorted in a fixed order and often with fixed answer options. (Groves et al. 2009, 217.) Questionnaires can be executed as an online questionnaire, a phone interview, or a face-to-face interview (Juholin 2010, 74, 93).

The quantitative phase of the communication and marketing research included two surveys: one for the individual members and another for the other external stakeholders. The data collection method was an online survey, which was conducted

by sending a cover letter and a link to Webropol questionnaire by email. More details about the surveys and the questionnaires are provided in subchapter 5.4.1 'Member survey' and 5.4.2 'External stakeholder survey'.

5.4 Research process

The communication and marketing research of Organization A consisted of three parts:

- A member survey between November 2013 and February 2014
- An external stakeholder survey between November 2013 and February 2014
- Two focus group interviews for the member organizations in February 2014.

5.4.1 Member survey

The process of the member survey was started by planning the sampling and the questionnaire. Initial plans were made already in the joint workshop of Haaga-Helia and Organization A in September 2013. A more detailed planning was carried out in November 2013.

The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of the workshop memo and the introduction material of Organization A including organization values and guidelines, procedures and aims for communication, marketing and member services. Also the communication and marketing materials, as well as the results of the previous member service survey were explored. Clampitt (2009, 55-57) notes that developing a useful survey requires that the researcher knows relevant background information of the organization. That helps the researcher to judge the inevitable trade-offs and to find the best ways to administer the survey. The researcher also needs to understand the purpose and the aims of the research to be able to ask the right questions.

Fink (2003, 22-29) has written useful guidelines for asking survey questions.

Accordingly, the questions need to be purposeful, concrete and detailed. They should be written in conventional language using complete sentences. It is also important that abbreviations, jargon and technical expressions are avoided. When formulating the

questions, a great attention was paid to write clear and well articulated sentences. As the language used in the field of Organization A is not easy to understand for everyone, it was important to use standard language instead of professional jargon.

The aim of the survey was to discover how individual members perceive Organization A's communication and marketing, as well as how satisfied they are with the current communication channels. The questionnaire was formulated accordingly to measure general attitudes to communication, satisfaction to the communication channels and attitudes to marketing. The questionnaire included 25 questions which were divided into five groups: 1) background information, 2) needs and expectations concerning communication, 3) perceptions about Organization A's communication, 4) perceptions about the communication channels, and 5) perceptions about marketing. The questions concerning the communication channels included questions about the member magazine, the newsletter, the internet, an extranet for members, as well as social media and communication cooperation with the member organizations. In the marketing related questions, the respondents were asked about the visibility of marketing, as well as their opinions about marketing actions and publications.

The most of the questions were closed-ended single choice and multiple choice questions. In the multiple choice questions, Likert scale from 1-4 was used. The extremities were as follows:

1 = Not important at all, 4 = Very important,

1 = I get too little information, 4 = I get much information,

1 = Strongly agree, 4 = Strongly disagree, and

1 = I never read, 4 = I always read.

According to Bernard (1994, 297-298 in Berger 2014, 259), the idea of Likert scales is to divide a long list of possible scaling items into subsets that measure the various dimensions. The scales can vary from numeric scales of three, five or seven points to verbal scales such as agree-disagree, approve-disapprove and excellent-bad.

The questionnaire included also some open-ended questions where the respondents had a possibility to give direct feedback and development ideas about Organization A's communication and communication channels. The public version of the questions used in the member survey is in attachment 2. The full version of the questions is attached in the separate research report (attachment 2 in attachment 1).

The first draft of the questionnaire was tested by four persons. They were asked to comment especially on the language and the length of the questionnaire and to estimate the time they needed to answer to the questions. The draft was then adapted according to the feedback and sent to Organization A for their checking and approval. After small adjustments, the questionnaire was approved and ready to be used in the survey.

To be reliable, a sample needs to be representative and adequate in size. Random sampling is the most useful way to make the sample representative. There are three types of random samples: simple random samples, stratified random samples, and clustered samples. In a simple random sample, sequential numbers are assigned to each member of the population, and then the right amount of persons are selected by using a table of random numbers. The table of random numbers can be generated by computer. In stratified sampling, the population is divided into subcategories according to some relevant characteristic. Then, a random sample is chosen within each subcategory. In cluster sampling, the population is divided into natural groups, such as people living in a particular city, and then, the sample is selected within these groups. (Berger 2014, 264-267.)

It is difficult to find specific guidelines for the sample size. Berger (2014, 268) notes that in general, the larger the sample, the more accurate the findings will be. According to Juholin (2010, 73-74), this is because the sample size affects how well the sample represents the population, and too small sample increases a probability for errors. A couple of thousand is, however, a big enough sample to describe attitudes of the whole Finnish population, as long as the sample is representative. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 175), states that the sample size needs to be large enough to meet the

requirements of statistical tests. The sample should be a good estimate for the parameters of the population in order to reduce sampling error and to provide adequate power.

In the member survey, a special attention was paid to the representativeness of the sample to ensure the reliability of the research. The stratified random sampling was used so that the sample of individual members represented the membership structure of Organization A. In other words, the sample included the same percentage of members from each member organization than the member organization had members in Organization A. At first, the sample size was 1,000 members from the total population of 30,000 individual members. However, the sample size was doubled to 2,000 members in January 2014 to raise the amount of responses so that the results would be comparable according to the member organization. The sampling was obtained by Organization A, which sent the contact information of the sample to the researcher.

The first cover letter and a link to the Webropol questionnaire were sent by email in 21 November 2013. To get higher response rate, two reminders were sent to the respondents who had not yet answered in 28 November and 12 December 2013. In January 2014, the sample size was doubled to get enough responses from each member organization. The first cover letter and Webropol link to the total sample of 2.000 members were sent in 20 January 2014. The last reminder was sent in 29 January, and the survey was closed in 25 February 2014.

The results of the member survey are introduced in chapter 6.1 'Member survey'.

5.4.2 External stakeholder survey

The survey for the other external stakeholders was planned and conducted at the same time with the member survey. The survey was targeted for important external stakeholders excluding individual members and the media. Such stakeholders are, for instance, key persons and personnel of other non-profit organizations. The organization A already had a distribution list for such stakeholders. The list was

adjusted for the survey and sent for the researcher. The sample consisted of all the 172 persons in the list, and therefore, the sampling method was total sampling. Total sampling can be used in quantitative research if the population is small, such as employees of a certain organization (Juholin 2010, 73).

The aim of the stakeholder survey was to discover how external stakeholders perceive Organization A, and its communication and marketing, as well as how satisfied they are with the current communication channels. The same questionnaire, which was used in the member survey, was applied in the stakeholder survey according to the purpose of the research and the relevance to the target group. Organization A conducts a member service survey every second year including questions about the organization's image. To be able to compare the perceptions about the organization between the individual members and the other external stakeholders, the image questions were added to this survey. They were formulated with the same attributes than the questions in the previous member satisfaction survey in 2012.

All in all, the stakeholder survey included 11 questions, and they were divided into four groups: 1) perceptions about the organization A, 2) perceptions about the organization A's communication, 3) perceptions about the communication channels, and 4) perceptions about marketing. The questions concerning the communication channels included questions about the member magazine and open internet pages. Perceptions concerning other communication channels were not asked, as the external stakeholders are not the target group of these channels. Also background questions were excluded in the questionnaire due to the small sample size. The questions were formulated in a similar way than in the member survey. The most of the questions were closed-ended multiple choice questions with the same Likert scale from 1-4 than in the member survey. The public version of the questions used in the stakeholder survey is in attachment 3. The full version of the questions is attached in the research report (attachment 3 in attachment 1).

The stakeholder survey was conducted at the same time with the member survey. The first cover letter and the link to the Webropol questionnaire were sent by email in 21

November 2013. The first reminder was sent in 28 November and the second one in 12 December 2013. Two last reminders were sent in 20 January and 29 January 2014. The questionnaire was closed in 25 February 2014.

The results of the stakeholder survey are presented in chapter 6.2 'External stakeholder survey'.

5.4.3 Focus group interviews for the member organizations

On the basis of the member survey results, two focus group interviews were conducted for the member organizations of Organization A. The purpose was to arrange three interviews and to get eight member organizations in each of them. Therefore, all the 24 member organizations would have had a chance to participate in the interviews.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2011, 247), a normal size for focus groups is between six to ten participants. The more controversial or complex the topic is, the smaller the group should be. Sometimes group may consists of only three persons.

The member organizations were contacted by phone and asked to suggest potential dates for the interviews. However, synchronizing timetables of different member organizations turned to be very difficult, and therefore, only two focus group interviews were executed. Each member organization could decide the person who would represent it in the interview. The first focus group interview took place in Haaga-Helia premises in 12 February, and it had participants from four member organizations. The second focus group interview was held in the same premises in 24 February. Six member organizations had agreed to attend the interview, but unfortunately, at the end, only two of them could participate.

The focus group interviews were semi-structured interviews, where the questions were asked according to an interview guide. The interview guide included the main results of the member survey. Since the survey was not closed yet at the time of the interviews, the results were based on the situation in 10 February 2014. The questions were divided into seven categories: 1) general grade for communication, 2) communication topics, 3) perceptions about communication, 4) communication channels, 5) social

media, 6) perceptions about marketing, and 7) communication cooperation between Organization A and the member organizations.

Daymon and Holloway (2011, 250) divide focus groups into five stages: 1) introduction and basic rules, 2) “warm-up” stage, 3) outline of the discussion topic, 4) discussion stage including general and detailed questions, and 5) summing up. The two focus groups were started with an introduction and a warm-up stage, and thereafter, the researcher introduced the preliminary results of the member survey and asked the interviewees to interpret the results on the basis of her/his experiences. Sequential questions were addressed when needed to clarify the responses. At the end, the discussion was summed up, and the participants had a chance to give open feedback concerning Organization A’s communication.

As already mentioned, the focus group interviews were held in Haaga-Helia premises. The interviews were documented and recorded for the check-up afterwards. In addition to the researcher, also Haaga-Helia teacher Merja Drake attended the first interview and thesis supervisor Hanna Rajalahti the second interview. The results of the focus groups are described in chapter 6.3 ‘Focus group interviews for the member organizations’.

6 Main results

This section will introduce the main results of the member survey, the external stakeholder survey and the focus group interviews. The results that could reveal the real name of Organization A are excluded. Those parts include information related to the member organizations, the needs and satisfaction regarding different communication topics, as well as the content of different communication channels. The results as whole are introduced in the separate research report, which is attached to this thesis (attachment 1).

6.1 Member survey

The questionnaire of the member survey was sent to 2,000 individual members. Altogether, 449 persons replied to the survey, and therefore, the response rate was 22.5 per cent. This chapter introduces the results of the member survey regarding the answers of the total number of the respondents. The results were also cross analysed according to gender and age.

The major (87 %) of the respondents were women, and 13 % men. Every third respondent belonged to the age group 25-35 years. 22 percent was 45-55 years, and 20 percent 35-44 years. 15 percent represented the age group 55-65 years, and less than 6 per cent the group under age 25. Only 1.6 per cent of the respondents were 65 years or older.

The response rate of each member organization was in line with the number of individual members in that particular member organization. Therefore, the respondents represent very well the member structure of Organization A. A table of the response rates and the member structure is presented in the separate research report. (Attachment 1)

Perceptions of communication

According to the results, member communication in Organization A is reliable and professional. It is also found quite fresh, humane and fast, and there is not too much communication. However, every third respondent thinks that communication is not fast, and that it is somewhat boring. A little less than one third perceives communication to some extent rigid.

When analysed according to the respondents' gender, the results show that women perceive communication a bit more professional than men. On the other hand, men find communication a little faster and more humane and fresh than women.

Otherwise, there were no differences between genders. Based on the different age groups, the results did not indicate any remarkable differences in professionalism, speed, humanity and freshness of communication. Among the different age groups, the 55-64 years old members find communication less difficult to understand than the other groups. The respondents under age 25 years and 25-34 years see communication more boring. The members under age 25 years perceive it also more rigid. The respondents under age 25 years and 55-64 years think more often that there is too much communication.

Perceptions of the stakeholder magazine

The results indicate that the stakeholder magazine consists of useful and interesting articles. It is also perceived easy to read. However, more than every third respondent do not find the pictures interesting, and one third thinks that the magazine looks boring and the articles are somewhat boring.

When looking at the results according to gender, they indicate that women perceive the articles and the magazine's visual appearance a bit more boring than men. However, the differences between genders are not significant. According to the different age groups, the results show that the content of the magazine is most useful to the members under age 25 years. The articles are found least interesting and most boring

by the respondents in the age group 25-34 years and 35-44 years. The 25-34-year-old members perceive the visual appearance of the magazine more boring than the other age groups.

Perceptions of the websites

On the basis of the results, the websites contain useful information and important news. On the other hand, more than one third of the respondents have at least to some extent difficulties to find information, and 28 percent think that the sites look boring.

When the results were analysed according to gender, no remarkable differences in the answers showed up. Women think the websites include a bit more useful information and important news than men. They also find the visual appearance of the websites a bit more boring. According to the different age groups, the results indicate that the members under 25 years think the websites contain a bit more useful information than the other age groups. The 55-64-year-old respondents find information a bit more easily than the others. The members in the age group 35-44 years perceive the websites' visual appearance more boring than the other age groups.

Perceptions of the newsletter

The results indicate that the newsletter contains topical and useful information, and is easy to read. Only 18 percent find the newsletter too long. Almost every third perceive the visual appearance and the content of the newsletter somewhat boring.

When looking at the results based on gender, they show that women find more often that the content is useful, but the length too long. However, the differences between genders are not significant. Comparing the age groups, the results indicate that the 45-55 years old respondents find the content more topical than the other groups. The content is most boring according to the members under age 25 years. The 35-44-year-old members find the newsletter too long more seldom than the other age groups.

Interest in social media

The members were asked in what social media channel if any they would like to have a dialogue with other members. The results show that a little more than a half of the respondents do not find a dialogue necessary, and a little less than a half would be interested in it. As appropriate channels the members consider the websites, the Facebook profile and the member sites of Organization A, as well as the Facebook profile of the own member organization. Only two per cents of the respondents suggested other social media channels, such as LinkedIn.

When the results were analysed according to gender, there were no significant differences in opinions. When looking at the results based on the age groups, the members in the age groups 55-64 years and 35-44 years are less interested in social media conversation than the other groups. Two thirds of 55-64-year-olds and almost as many of 35-44-year-olds do not find a dialogue necessary. Instead, only one third of the members under age 25 years and 42 percent of the 25-34 years old members do not consider a dialogue necessary.

Perceptions of marketing

In the questions concerning marketing, the members were asked about the visibility and perceptions of marketing, such as campaigns, advertisements and announcements. According to the results, more than a half of the respondents have seen marketing on the websites of Organization A, and every third in exhibitions and other events. However, a little less than one third has not seen marketing at all. When the results were analysed based on gender, there were no remarkable differences between men and women. When analysed according to the age groups, the results show that the members of the age group 35-44 years and 45-55 years have seen marketing a little less than the others. Every second respondent under age 25 years and 40 per cent of 25-34 years have seen marketing in exhibitions and other events, which is more than in the other age groups.

The perceptions concerning marketing divide very evenly. A little more than a half of the respondents do not find marketing very creative, but neither boring nor rigid. A little more than a half considers marketing also somewhat fresh and colourful. The sentences about colourfulness, youthfulness and freshness divided the respondents more than other attributes.

When looking at the results based on gender, they show that women perceive marketing a bit more fresh and youthful than men. According to the different age groups, the results indicate that the members under age 25 years and 35-44 years find marketing more boring than the others. The respondents under age 25 years and 55-64 years perceive marketing most fresh and the members in the age group 25-34 years least fresh. The members under age 25 years and 35-44 years see marketing more colourful than others. Marketing is found most rigid by the respondents under age 25 and least rigid by the 55-64 years old members. The respondents in the age group 55-64 years find marketing also a little more youthful than the other groups.

6.2 External stakeholder survey

The questionnaire of the external stakeholder survey was sent to 172 persons. It was replied by 42 persons, and therefore, the response rate was 24.4. The questionnaire did not include questions concerning respondents' background information.

Perceptions of Organization A

At first, the external stakeholders were asked to evaluate different attributes describing Organization A according to their perceptions. The image attributes were the same which had been asked from the individual members in the previous member satisfaction survey. (See chapter 5.4.)

The respondents agreed most with the attributes growing organization, developing actively its services, professional, fair, ethical, and good customer service. They

disagreed most with the attributes assertive, close, forerunner, and attractive organization.

Perceptions of communication

The results indicate that the external stakeholders find communication of Organization A professional and reliable. The majority of the respondents do not think there is too much communication. Nor the majority perceive communication difficult to understand or rigid. Two thirds find communication somewhat humane, fast and fresh. On the hand, one third does not perceive it very fast, fresh or humane. Every third respondent thinks that communication is to some extent invisible. The sentences 'Communication is fresh', 'Communication is invisible', and 'Communication is fast' divided the respondents more than the other sentences. These results are similar to the results of the member communication survey.

Perceptions of the stakeholder magazine

The perceptions of the external stakeholders concerning the stakeholder magazine were very positive. Even 95 per cent of the respondents find that the magazine contains at least somewhat useful information, and almost as many see that it is easy to read. Almost 90 per cent find the articles at least to some extent interesting. On the other hand, every third thinks that the pictures are not very interesting.

When comparing the results of the external stakeholder survey to the results of the member survey, the external stakeholders seem to be a little more satisfied with the magazine than the individual members. For example, only 10 per cent of the external stakeholders perceive the articles somewhat boring, whereas one third of the individual members thinks that way.

Perceptions of the websites

The major part of the external stakeholders perceives that the websites contain useful information and important news. More than 70 per cent do not consider the visual appearance of the sites boring, and two thirds find information easily. However, every third thinks it is not easy to find information, and almost as many find the websites to some extent boring. The results are similar to the results of the member survey.

Perceptions of marketing

Almost 70 per cent of the respondents have seen Organization A's marketing, such as campaigns, advertisements or announcements, on the organization's websites. One third has seen marketing in exhibitions or other events, a little less than third in magazines, and every fourth in Facebook. Only less than nine per cent of the respondents had not seen marketing at all. That is remarkably better result than in the member survey, where every third respondent had not seen marketing at all. When comparing the results of the external stakeholder survey to the results of the member survey, the external stakeholders have noticed marketing in magazines and Facebook more than the individual members. However, the both respondent groups have seen marketing evenly in exhibitions and other events.

The external stakeholders perceive marketing creative, fresh, colourful and youthful. More than 70 percent find it at least to some extent creative, fresh and colourful. The majority do not perceive marketing boring or rigid. When the results are compared to the results of the member survey, it seems that the external stakeholders have more unified image of marketing, whereas the perceptions of the individual members are much more varied.

6.3 Focus group interviews for the member organizations

This chapter will introduce the most essential results of the two focus group interviews held for the member organizations. The comprehensive results including positive and

negative opinions and development suggestions are described in the separate research report (attachment 1).

In the focus group interviews, the results of the member survey were presented and the opinions of the member organizations regarding communication and marketing were collected. As the first focus group interview took place before the member survey was closed, the results shown in the interviews were preliminary results from 10 February 2014.

The focus group interviews brought out the parts of communication that Organization A has managed well and the parts that need to be developed based on the member organizations' experiences. The successful parts are member communication and cooperation between the member organizations and the communication function. Development areas include internal communication, online communication and targeting communication and marketing activities.

Perceptions of communication

At first, the preliminary results of the individual members' perceptions concerning communication in Organization A were introduced to the member organizations. Thereafter, the participants were asked to comment the results.

According to the comments, the member organizations find the results positive. They are satisfied with communication employees, but brought out the large number of email messages. They also suggested that humanity would be increased, for instance by using more case stories, comics and satirical cartoons. The member organizations also hoped for more pictures to the newsletter.

Communication channels

Next, the member organizations were provided with the preliminary results regarding the perceptions about the stakeholder magazine, the newsletter and the websites. The

member organizations were asked to describe what kind of feedback they have got from the individual members about the communication channels. They also told how they perceived the functionality of each channel themselves.

The comments showed that the member organizations would like to get clearer definition about the roles and purposes of different channels. They suggested more targeted content to the stakeholder magazine, and an opportunity to publish the magazine together with the magazine or pages of the member organization. They would like to have a chance to choose between different integration options.

The member organizations hope for clearer structure to the websites to make it easier for the individual members to find information. For the same reason, the search tool should be developed. They also asked to take into account the responsiveness of the websites, which ensures that the content is available in different devices.

The member organizations are satisfied with the content of the newsletter. However, they would like to get more pictures in it, and more active updating of the email addresses of the receivers.

Social media usage

Next, the participants were introduced with the attitudes of the individual members concerning a dialogue in the social media. They were asked to tell to what extent the member organizations themselves use social media channels. The comments showed that several member organizations use social media in their member communication. Some of the organizations find Facebook as a functional channel to increase awareness, but some organizations think it does not interest the individual members. The participants also mentioned that the disunity of the membership and different ages affect the social media usage.

Perceptions of marketing

Finally, the member organizations were provided with the results about the visibility and the perceptions concerning marketing. The participants were asked to interpret the results and suggest how marketing could be improved.

The interviews brought out that the member organizations would like to increase the visibility of Organization A. By more active attendance in public conversations the organization could get free media publicity, and therefore, free promotion. The participants would like to have clearer objectives concerning marketing. They hope for more search tool marketing and reaction to the activities of competing non-profits. They would also like to make marketing more humane, distinct and targeted.

Other issues

The other issues that came out in the focus group interviews related to internal communication. The member organizations told that, instead of member communication, Organization A should develop its internal communication, which influence indirectly also the member organizations' ability to handle their member communication. The participants would like to be informed about the upcoming events in an earlier stage by both the communication function and the other functions. They would like to decrease the amount of emails and increase the use of intranet. They reminded that when there are too many email messages, all important information may not be noticed.

7 Conclusions

This section will explain the conclusions drawn from the results of the member survey, the external stakeholder survey and the focus group interviews. Also the validity and the reliability of the research will be discussed.

The purpose of the communication and marketing research was to examine how well communication and marketing channels of Organization A are functioning. As the research focused on the channels used in communication with external stakeholders, the research was targeted to the individual members and other important external stakeholders. The research method was mixed methods, as it enabled the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, depending on which one suited best to the research objectives and goals. The quantitative method was used in the member survey and the external stakeholder survey, which aimed to collect perceptions of communication, the communication channels and marketing. The qualitative research included two focus group interviews for the member organizations, and aimed to get deeper information about the satisfaction with communication.

7.1 Perceptions of Organization A and its communication

The research showed that Organization A has succeeded quite well in its communication. Both the individual members and the other external stakeholders perceive communication reliable and professional and somewhat fresh, humane and fast. They were also satisfied with the amount of communication. However, the research brought out several development areas concerning speed, attractiveness and humanity of communication. The member organizations find member communication fresh and well organized, whereas internal communication needs some improvements.

The key external stakeholders were asked about their perceptions about Organization A. They find it as a growing and professional organization, which serves well its customers, develops actively its services and acts fairly and ethically. On the other hand, it could try to be more assertive, close and attractive. These results indicate that the operations of Organization A are responsible and the values implemented in

practice. However, as an organization it is quite invisible. With more active attendance in public conversations it could create an image of an assertive and humane organization.

As Cornelissen (2014, 70) says the corporate image should be in line with the organizational identity to ensure that it is truthful. It seems that the image of Organization A and its communication is somewhat in line with its organizational identity. However, as the organization wants to be seen also humane, close and assertive, these attributes should be reflected more in communication and marketing. Like Cornelissen (2014, 8) says: all communication needs to be in line to build a favourable image. Communication's role in image building is enhanced also in the communications strategy of Organization A. Also other actions should support the image, because as Juholin (2013, 62) states, all visible, audible and otherwise perceptible factors influence the image.

7.2 Perceptions of communication channels

According to the research, the individual members and other key stakeholders see that the stakeholder magazine includes useful and interesting content, and is easy to read. On the other hand, one third of the members and the other stakeholders do not find the pictures interesting. Every third member perceives also the visual appearance of the magazine and the articles boring. More than other age groups, the 25-34 years and 35-44 years old members find the visual appearance boring and the articles uninteresting. This can indicate that, although the services that Organization A provides are important, as communication topics they are not very interesting or colourful. The more difficult and abstract the topic, the more difficult it is to be expressed with attractive stories and pictures.

The content of the websites is perceived useful and important. However, the members and the other stakeholders have difficulties to find information, and the visual appearance of the websites is perceived to some extent boring. The member organizations brought out that the sites have unclear structure, too much marketing content and malfunctioning search tool. Paying attention to these problems would

make it easier to find information. Also the visual appearance of the sites should be developed. Also Juholin (2013,326) reminds that, although web communication enables organizations to target their messages more easily than in printed media, user experience is not enough considered when developing websites.

The newsletter is evaluated as a topical and useful channel, which is easy to read and has appropriate length. On the other hand, many of the members think that it looks boring. That explains at least to some extent why every second member only skims the newsletter. The other reason maybe the overload of email messages from which many people suffer. If people get a lot of email messages, they may not read them all. Blundel and Ippolito (2008, 217), Juholin (2013, 256-257) and Kotler and Armstrong (2014, 532-533) have written about the problems concerning the message overload. It has made many people frustrated to any commercial email, and increased the risk that messages are not read. Therefore, organizations should ensure that their message is valuable for the receiver, ask for permission before sending it and make it possible to leave from the mailing list.

The members under age 25 stand out from the research as an especial target group. They read the stakeholder magazine less than the other age groups, but find its content more useful than the other age groups. Under age 25 years old members perceive also the content of the websites more useful than the others. These results indicate that young members need information concerning the services of Organization A, but the printed magazine, the websites and the newsletter do not target them. Instead, as members under age 25 years and 25-34 years are more interested in a dialogue in the social media than older age groups, they should be reached through the social media channels. Also theory supports this conclusion. Cornelissen (2014, 263) has noticed that social network sites, such as Facebook, are popular among younger internet users. For organizations they offer a presence, but also help to reach certain consumers, and strengthen their ties with the organization. Therefore, the social media and especially social networking sites could help Organization A to reach younger members and potential members, and create stronger ties with them.

The social media could also make Organization A to look more humane, as according to Cornelissen (2014, 263-264, 267), in the social media, organizations can get more humane image and have a conversational voice, which create positive feelings, a favourable image and strong stakeholder relationships.

7.3 Perceptions of marketing

The research showed that the external stakeholders have seen marketing more often than the individual members. The stakeholders have seen marketing in magazines and Facebook, where the members have not noticed it. In exhibitions and other events the both group have seen marketing evenly. These results indicate that marketing has not been targeted in an appropriate way. One of the most important target groups is potential members. The results of the member survey indicate also how the potential members could be reached. Therefore, it is important to increase visibility among the individual members. That could also activate the passive members and create an image of an active organization. The importance of targeting has been explained also in literature. Kotler and Armstrong (2014, 436) stated that the target group defines what kind of marketing communication is appropriate. When planning marketing communication actions, organizations should decide what will be said; how, when and where it will be said; and who will say it. Before that, organizations should know in what stage the target group now stands and to what stage it needs to be moved.

The contradictory perceptions about marketing indicate the success of marketing as well. The attributes describing marketing divide the individual members quite evenly, whereas the other stakeholders have more unified perceptions. Especially, creativity, freshness, colourfulness and youthfulness separate the opinions of the members. The gender or the age group do not explain the difference. One reason might be that the members have seen marketing so little that they need to guess the answer to this question. The other reason could be the heterogeneous of the membership. As the attributes are emotional matters, the personality of the respondent impacts quite a lot the opinions.

7.4 Internal processes and communication

The internal processes and internal communication were not part of the research area. In this context, internal processes and internal communication refer to information sharing between Organization A and the member organizations, which have an indirect influence on member communication. Therefore, it is reasonable to pay attention to these issues as well.

The research showed that communication between Organization A and its member organizations is not planned and systematic enough. Too many issues are handled through informal channels and email. These problems could be solved by increasing the use of intranet and by sharing information about upcoming changes and events more regularly and in an earlier stage. The member organizations are satisfied with cooperation with the communication function, and see the problems in internal communication more as an organizational problem. They also hope that improved communication would increase the sense of community between the different member organizations.

7.5 Validity and reliability of the research

The quality of the research can be evaluated by considering the validity and reliability of the research. This research used mixed methods. The quantitative phase included the member survey and the external stakeholder survey, and the qualitative phase two focus group interviews.

Quantitative phase

Groves et al. (2009, 274) define validity as “the extent to which the survey measure accurately reflects the intended construct”. According to Daymon and Holloway (2014, 79) and Juholin (2010, 22), validity means that a measure or a test measures what it is supposed to measure. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 210) explain that validity can be considered in two levels: the quality of the scores from the instruments and the quality of the conclusions that are made from the results.

Reliability measures variability of answers over repeated conceptual trials, and ensures that respondents are consistent or stable in their answers (Growes et al. 2009, 281-282). Daymon and Holloway (2011, 78) explain reliability as the extent to which a research instrument will reproduce the same results or answer. In other words, it ensures that the results are replicable.

The validity of the member survey was improved with a good questionnaire and a representative sample. The questionnaire was planned carefully to ensure that it asked the right questions, and the questions were formulated with standard language to make them easy to understand. The questionnaire was also tested and approved before the survey to check its quality. To make sure that the sample was representative, a stratified random sampling was used so that the sample of individual members represented the membership structure of Organization A. The response rate of each member organization was in line with the number of individual members in each member organization. As the questionnaire included the right questions and the respondents were accurately chosen, the member survey measured what it was supposed to measure: the perceptions of individual members. That makes the survey valid.

The sample size of the member survey was 2,000 persons. That is high enough number to represent the total population of 30,000 members, especially when the sample is representative. As also the number of respondents represented the membership structure of Organization A, the survey was reliable.

The external stakeholder survey included partly the same questions than the member survey. The questionnaire included also image questions, which were the same than in the previous member satisfaction survey. These questions enabled to compare the results. Therefore, the survey asked the right questions, and measured what it was supposed to measure. The sampling method was total sampling of the population of 172 persons. As they represented themselves perfectly, the survey is replicable. Therefore, the external stakeholder survey was both valid and reliable.

Qualitative phase

As qualitative research is difficult to replicate, the validity of research is more important than the reliability. In qualitative research, validity includes three aspects: 1) internal validity, 2) external validity or generalizability, and 3) relevance, plausibility and credibility. Internal validity means the extent to which the results and the research account accurately reflect the social world of the participants and the researched phenomenon. External validity means that the results and conclusions can be applied in other context, settings or a larger population. Although generalizing is difficult in qualitative methods and the findings may not be generalized, the research procedures might be. Relevance means that the research needs to be meaningful and useful for those who make it and for those to whom it is made. Plausibility means that the claims made about the results are credible. Credibility can be gained by providing evidence for the claims. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 78-80, 83-84.)

The purpose was to arrange three focus group interviews for the 24 member organizations. Unfortunately, only two interviews were fulfilled, and they had only six participants altogether. However, the interviews were fruitful and offered information that was not disclosed in the surveys. They provided also an opportunity to the participants to bring out their viewpoints and experiences. Therefore, internal validity was not flawless, but neither moderate. As only six persons of the 24 potential participants took part in the interviews, the results can not be generalized to all member organizations. However, the research procedure, where the participants were first presented the results and then asked to interpret them and share their viewpoints, can be generalized. In that sense, external validity was gained.

The research was an instructive experience to the researcher as the research area was broad, and mixed methods a miscellaneous approach. The research was important to Organization A as well, as it provided important information about the stakeholders, which the organization can use when developing communication and marketing. The results are usable also when updating the communications strategy and yearly action

plans. These arguments show relevancy of the research. Most of the conclusions of the research were compatible with the theory. Therefore, the research was also credible.

8 Development ideas

In this section, concrete development ideas based on the research results will be suggested to improve communication and marketing in Organization A. The aim is to provide practical means to deal with the problems of each communication area. The aim is also to develop the overall image of communication by increasing the speed, attractiveness and humanity of communication.

8.1 The stakeholder magazine

The development areas in the stakeholder magazine are to make the magazine more attractive, and the pictures and articles more interesting.

- Organization A could pay more attention to pictures and illustrations, especially in the beginning of the magazine. The most of the pictures should be photographs of real people to increase humanity of communication. The people in the photographs could consist of various types of persons to demonstrate the heterogeneous membership. The use of pictures would make the whole magazine more attractive.
- The magazine could include more case studies and stories about the individual members to make the articles more interesting and humane. This could be used especially in the difficult topics to make them easier to understand.
- Different types of content could be combined more, for example by adding fact boxes, figures and pictures in the abstract topics, to make the articles more interesting.
- Statements and opinions of Organization A regarding the topic could be used besides the news articles and topical issues. This could increase the assertiveness and humanity of the magazine.

8.2 The newsletter

The development areas concerning the newsletter are to make the visual appearance more attractive and the content more interesting.

- Organization A could use more colours and pictures in the newsletter to make it look more attractive. However, the pictures may not be too large.
- The headlines and texts should be as short and incisive as possible to keep the text part short and the content quickly to read. This could attract members to read the newsletter.
- A content list with the headlines of the articles could be added to the beginning of the newsletter. The headlines would be links to the articles published later on the newsletter. This could make the newsletter look easier to read, and therefore, attract members to read the newsletter.
- Organization A should ensure that the lists of the members' email addresses are up-to-date to reach every member. This could be done in cooperation with the member organizations to ensure that both parties have the same information.
- All email messages sent by Organization A should have the same sender name and address to help the receivers to recognize the messages of Organization A from spam email.

8.3 The websites

The biggest development area of the websites is to make it easier to find information.

The other development area is to make the visual appearance more attractive.

- The structure of the websites should be improved. This concerns especially the front page. The structure should be developed from the users' point of view by considering what information the users are likely to look for.
- The important headlines and links should be located on the top of the front page to decrease the need for scrolling and to make it easier to find information.
- Also the search tool should be developed to make it easier to find information.
- The use of empty space could be less to make the content tighter and decrease the need to scroll down. At the moment, there is a lot of empty space, especially on the front page.

- The main picture could be smaller to take less space. This would also make the content tighter.
- The headlines should be short, incisive, and easy to understand.
- Boxes and lines could help to structure the content.
- Instead of illustrations, the use of photographs of real people, demonstrating the varied membership, should be increased. This would make the websites look more humane and attractive.
- Organization A should ensure that its websites work well in different devices.

8.4 Social media

The aim in developing the social media appearance is to reach young people.

- The content in the social media channels, such as Facebook, should be targeted for young people to make them interested in Organization A.
- Besides the topical content on the front page, there could also be permanent content and links to the websites. The permanent content could include instructions, tips, pictures, etc. This could make the content more useful, and ensure that the young people come back to the pages. Therefore, this could also strengthen their ties to the organization.

8.5 Marketing

The development areas of marketing communication are to improve visibility and to develop the image regarding creativeness, colourfulness and youthfulness.

- Like in communication, the use of photographs should be increased to improve the image and to keep all communication in line. The photographs and colours should be fresh.
- Organization A could take more actively part in public conversation to make it look more assertive. This could increase media publicity, and therefore, also visibility.

- Advertising should be targeted more carefully. Advertisements should be used in such places, which reach young and potential members. These places could be, for instance, the internet, the social media, public transportation, movie theatres and movies, as well as outdoor advertisements near to universities and other schools.

8.6 Internal communication

Although internal communication was not part of the research area, it is reasonable to pay attention to its problems too, as information sharing between Organization A and the member organizations influence indirectly member communication as well.

The development areas in internal communication are to decrease the use of email, and to improve the member organizations' ability to prepare to the changes.

- The number of email messages could be decreased by utilising more intranet channels.
- Communication plans should be published more often to improve the member organizations' ability to prepare to the upcoming activities and changes.
- Information concerning the upcoming activities and changes should be shared regularly also by other functions.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. The research report (confidential)

Attachment 2. The questions used in the member survey

BACK GROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender:
Female
Male
2. Age group:
Under age 25
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65 or older
3. The member organization:
xxx
4. Position at work life:
Manager
Specialist
Official
Worker
Entrepreneur or freelancer
Unemployed
Student
Retired
Something else
5. xxx

COMMUNICATION

6. How important it is to you that Organization A communicates about the following topics? (1 = Not important at all, 2 = Not very important, 3 = Somewhat important, 4 = Very important)
xxx
7. How much information do you get at the moment about the following topics?
(1 = I get too little information, 2 = I get quite little information,
3 = I get quite much information, 4 = I get much information)
xxx
8. How well the following sentences describe Organization A's communication?
(1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
Communication is reliable.

Communication is professional.
Communication is hard to understand.
Communication is fast.
Communication is boring.
Communication is humane.
Communication is rigid.
Communication is fresh.
There is too much communication.

9. What general degree would you give to Organization A's communication using the school grades 4 - 10?
10. Feedback and wishes concerning Organization A's communication

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

11. Organization A publishes a member magazine four times a year. How precisely do you read the magazine?
I read the magazine entirely or almost entirely.
I read the magazine partly.
I skim the magazine.
I do not read the magazine.
12. What kind of content do you read from the member magazine? (1 = I never read, 2 = I read rarely, 3 = I read occasionally, 4 = I read always)
- Editorial
News
Profiles
xxx
xxx
xxx
Information about events and training
Information about member benefits and services
Student pages
Swedish abstract
13. How do you perceive the member magazine? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
- The magazine consists of useful information.
The magazine consists of interesting articles.
The magazine describes well Stella's business area.
The articles are boring.
The pictures are interesting.
The magazine looks boring.
It is easy to read the magazine.
14. Feedback and wishes concerning the magazine

15. How often do you visit Organization A's internet pages (www.xxx.fi)?
- Once a month or more often
 - Every second or third month
 - Twice or three times a year
 - Once a year or more seldom
 - Never
16. What kind of information have you searched from Organization A's internet pages?
You may choose more than one option.
- News and events
 - xxx
 - xxx
 - xxx
 - Member benefits and services
 - xxx
 - Matters related to own membership
 - Organization A's organization structure and contact information
 - Member organizations
 - Member magazine
 - Newsletters
 - Blog
17. How do you perceive Organization A's internet pages? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
- The internet pages consist of useful information.
 - The internet pages consist of important news.
 - It is easy to find information from the internet pages.
 - The internet pages look boring.
18. Feedback and wishes concerning Organization A's internet pages
19. Organization A sends a digital newsletter by email once a month. How precisely do you read the newsletter?
- I read the newsletter entirely or almost entirely.
 - I read the newsletter partly.
 - I skim the newsletter.
 - I do not read the newsletter.
 - I do not receive the newsletter.
 - I have removed myself from the mailing list.
20. What kind of content do you read from the newsletter? (1 = I never read, 2 = I read rarely, 3 = I read occasionally, 4 = I read always)
- News
 - Organization A's campaigns
 - Events meant for all members
 - Regional events
 - Member services
 - Member benefits

21. How do you perceive Organization A's newsletter? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
- The newsletter consists of topical information.
 - The newsletter consists of useful information.
 - The content of the newsletter is boring.
 - The newsletter looks boring.
 - It is easy to read the newsletter.
 - The newsletter is too long.
22. Feedback and wishes concerning the newsletter
23. xxx
24. xxx
25. On which social media channel would you wish to have conversation with other members? You may choose more than one option.
- Organization A's internet pages
 - Organization A's Facebook page
 - Member organization's Facebook page
 - Organization A's Twitter profile
 - xxx
 - xxx
 - Some other channel, which? _____
 - I do not perceive social media conversation necessary
26. I would like that Organization A and my member organization would send more joint communication.
- Yes
 - No

MARKETING

27. Organization A produces many kinds of publications, such as xxx. How familiar are you with the publications?
- I have received publications, and I find them important.
 - I have received publications, but I do not find them important.
 - I have not received publications, but I find them important.
 - I have not received publications, and I do not find them important.
28. Where have you seen or heard Organization A's marketing, such as advertisements, campaigns, or appearance in the social media? You may choose more than one option.
- Fair and/or events
 - Magazines
 - Radio
 - Organization A's internet pages

Other internet pages
Discussion forums
Facebook
Twitter
YouTube
LinkedIn
Google
Somewhere else
I have not seen Organization A's marketing

29. How well the following sentences describe Organization A's marketing?
(1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
- Marketing is creative.
 - Marketing is boring.
 - Marketing is fresh.
 - Marketing is colourful.
 - Marketing is rigid.
 - Marketing is youthful.

Attachment 3. The questions used in the stakeholder survey

IMAGE OF ORGANIZATION A

1. How well the following attributes describe Organization A? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
 - Professional
 - Reliable
 - Approachable
 - xxx
 - Contemporary
 - Good customer service
 - Attractive
 - Open
 - Humane
 - Fair
 - Ethical
 - Actively developing its services
 - Providing various services
 - Growing
 - Flexible
 - Assertive
 - Easy to understand
 - Fast
 - Colourful
 - Straightforward
 - Fresh
 - Forerunner
 - Creative
 - Close

COMMUNICATION

2. How well the following sentences describe Organization A's communication? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
 - Communication is reliable.
 - Communication is professional.
 - Communication is hard to understand.
 - Communication is fast.
 - Communication is boring.
 - Communication is humane.
 - Communication is rigid.
 - Communication is fresh.
 - There is too much communication.
 - Communication is invisible.

3. What general degree would you give to Organization A's communication using the school grades 4 - 10?
4. Feedback and wishes concerning Organization A's communication

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

5. Organization A publishes a stakeholder magazine four times a year. How precisely do you read the magazine?
 - I read the magazine entirely or almost entirely.
 - I read the magazine partly.
 - I skim the magazine.
 - I do not read the magazine.
6. What kind of content do you read from the stakeholder magazine? (1 = I never read, 2 = I read rarely, 3 = I read occasionally, 4 = I read always)
 - Editorial
 - News
 - Profiles
 - xxx
 - xxx
 - xxx
 - Information about events and training
 - Information about member benefits and services
 - Student pages
 - Swedish abstract
7. How do you perceive the stakeholder magazine? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
 - The magazine consists of useful information.
 - The magazine consists of interesting articles.
 - The magazine describes well Stella's business area.
 - The articles are boring.
 - The pictures are interesting.
 - The magazine looks boring.
 - It is easy to read the magazine.
8. Feedback and wishes concerning the magazine
9. How often do you visit Organization A's internet pages (www.xxx.fi)?
 - Once a month or more often
 - Every second or third month
 - Twice or three times a year
 - Once a year or more seldom
 - Never
10. What kind of information have you searched from Organization A's internet pages?
 - You may choose more than one option.

News and events

xxx

xxx

xxx

Member benefits and services

xxx

Organization A's organization structure and contact information

Member organizations

Stakeholder magazine

Newsletters

Blog

11. How do you perceive Organization A's internet pages? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
- The internet pages consist of useful information.
The internet pages consist of important news.
It is easy to find information from the internet pages.
The internet pages look boring.

12. Feedback and wishes concerning Organization A's internet pages

MARKETING

13. Where have you seen or heard Organization A's marketing, such as advertisements, campaigns, or appearance in the social media? You may choose more than one option.
- Fair and/or events
Magazines
Radio
Organization A's internet pages
Other internet pages
Discussion forums
Facebook
Twitter
YouTube
LinkedIn
Google
Somewhere else
I have not seen Organization A's marketing

14. How well the following sentences describe Organization A's marketing? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree)
- Marketing is creative.
Marketing is boring.
Marketing is fresh.
Marketing is colourful.

Marketing is rigid.
Marketing is youthful.