Bridging corporate communication and marketing narratives for organizational success: how collaboration happens

Cecilia Casalegno - Chiara Civera - Elena Candelo
Raoul Romoli Venturi

Abstract

Framing of the research: This research adopts a multistakeholder approach to investigate how corporate communication and marketing link and overlap to deal with new pressing challenges in business and society. Under a multistakeholder perspective, these two functions, traditionally defined with their own clear and definitive goals, must work together. While the beneficial effects of such cooperation are clear in theory, there are a number of practical issues to be looked at and solved to favour effective value co-creation.

Purpose of the paper: Our paper aims to outline clear boundaries and effective overlaps between corporate communication and marketing in terms of tasks, target audience, media usage, and message contents to explore whether and how synergistic collaboration between the two functions is needed and works in multinational enterprises (MNEs). We will identify which situational contexts, topics, and trends favor or prevent managers' collaboration and interaction. In doing that, we will also outline the main driving forces and challenges.

Methodology: We employed a qualitative approach, incorporating focus groups and elite interviews with corporate communication and marketing executives from multinational enterprises across various industries.

Findings: The paper's findings outline the strategic relevance of corporate communication in guiding corporate strategies and actions, the integration between corporate communication and marketing in defending brand reputation, and the support of corporate communication to marketing in reformulating advertising campaigns according to a multi-stakeholder perspective.

Research limitations: Although our findings have been validated among a variety of industries and their representative leaders, they are still based on a limited sample of MNEs, so their generalizability may be limited.

Practical implications: We provide several practical suggestions to corporate communication and marketing managers on how to establish proactive and long-term collaborations between the functions by aligning the strategic planning of marketing actions and corporate communication toward a multi-stakeholder perspective.

Originality of the paper: Based on empirical observations, our paper provides new insights into how integrating corporate communication and marketing can enhance strategic and multi-stakeholder significance.

Key words: *corporate communication; marketing; reputation; multi-stakeholder approach; holistic purpose.*

1. Introduction

As the business environment becomes more complex and interconnected with societal expectations, firms increasingly adopt a new holistic purpose focusing on social, environmental, and economic improvements (Freeman, 2017). This has led to the evolution of business functions and their responsibilities, including marketing and corporate communication. On the one hand, marketing scholars advocate for marketing to provide genuine value to customers through engaging and creating value for multiple internal and external stakeholders (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Kotler *et al.*, 2022; Pfajfar *et al.* 2022; American Marketing Association, 2017; 2022), therefore creating challenges for a business function that has been traditionally purely oriented to customers and shareholders for a long time (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, communication scholars recognize that corporate communication is evolving from being just a support function for brand values and message delivery (Birkerton, 2000) to playing a pivotal role in shaping firms' success based on integrated value creation with multiple stakeholders (Illia and Balmer, 2012; Siano, 2012; Van Ruler, 2020). In this regard, exploring the intricate interplay between communication and organizations' strategic objectives is fundamental (Balmer and Gray, 1999; Invernizzi and Romenti, 2011) and, particularly nowadays, supporting the marketing strategic and tactical shift toward a multi-stakeholder orientation becomes urgent and relevant, both theoretically and practically (Belasen and Belasen, 2019; Joshi and Yadav, 2018; Lane Keller, 2019; Porcu *et al.*, 2020). In this context, it is no longer viable to craft compelling marketing campaigns in isolation from the broader corporate communication strategy; instead, these two domains must be seamlessly interlinked to increase and protect corporate image and brand reputation to remain robust and resilient in a dynamic, multi-stakeholder, and digital era.

However, while, theoretically, striving for an effective synergy between marketing and corporate communication is vital (Illia and Balmer, 2012), strong emphasis must be put on the effectiveness of collaboration and interaction between functions, as there is a potential risk of misalignment and overlapping in practice (Cornelissen, 2004; p.115); that is why navigating the terrain requires caution. An incorrect overlap between marketing and corporate communication can weaken corporate and brand reputation and destroy value for the firm and its stakeholders.

Indeed, marketing and corporate communication are separate business functions with different aims and languages (OCIP, 2023). On the one hand, communication managers speak to a broader audience formed by citizens (Illia and Balmer, 2012; Siano, 2012) by employing a more rational, strategic, and information-based language. On the other hand, through a more emotional narrative, marketing communications target customers to align them with organizations' products, services, and ideas (Porcu *et al.*, 2020). Then, a question arises as to whether and how these two functions, with apparent clear domains and evolving strategic significance within firms and corporate culture (Kitchen and Schultz, 2011; Kliatchko and Schultz, 2014), integrate by blurring the boundaries to support each other

in creating multi-stakeholder value and meet a more holistic business purpose (Illia and Balmer, 2012).

Cecilia Casalegno
Chiara Civera
Elena Candelo
Raoul Romoli Venturi
Bridging corporate communication and marketing narratives for organizational success: how collaboration happens

Therefore, our paper aims to outline clear boundaries and effective overlaps between corporate communication and marketing regarding target audience, media, and message contents to explore whether and how synergistic collaboration between the two functions is needed and works in multinational enterprises (MNEs). We will identify which situational contexts, topics, and trends favor or prevent managers' collaboration and interaction. In doing that, we will also outline the main driving forces and challenges.

To meet our research aim, we conduct two focus groups with sixteen top corporate communication and marketing managers of five MNEs operating in the automotive, food and beverage, and service industries and deepen the subject by interviewing through semi-structured élite interviews technique conducted face-to-face two top marketing managers and two top corporate communication managers selected among the sample.

Our findings first outline that corporate communication strategically guides corporate strategies and actions. Second, we demonstrate that corporate communication and marketing integration is needed when defending brand reputation. Third, our findings reveal that corporate communication supports marketers in reformulating advertising campaigns according to a multi-stakeholder perspective.

Through our findings, we wish to foster the debate about how corporate communication can boost both strategic and tactical managerial decisions (Belasen and Belasen, 2019) and provide early insights about how integrating corporate communication and marketing can strengthen firms' roles as social actors (Siano, 2012; Illia and Balmer, 2012; Aksoy *et al.*, 2022).

Our findings allow the discussion of current and future implications for marketing and corporate communication managers to clarify the domains of responsibility of the two functions and shed light on the key role of collaborative interactions between managers with different backgrounds applied to different contexts. Theoretically, we strengthen the idea that corporate communication plays a key role in supporting the definition and deployment of corporate and business strategies at its core and that marketing, in its new configuration, can only operate with the validation and endorsement of corporate communication. Such a view contrasts with ideologies - which appear to be quite popular, especially among practitioners - positing that one function is more relevant and compelling than the other (Illia and Balmer, 2012) and supports that integrating the two perspectives should be a top strategic priority.

The remainders of the paper unfold as follows. Sections 2 and 3 discuss the theoretical background of corporate communication as a strategic function and marketing as an evolving discipline under the lens of a multi-stakeholder approach. Section 4 describes the adopted mixed qualitative methodology based on focus groups and élite interviews. Section 5 reports the findings from focus groups, and the triangulation of élite interviews and theoretical background supports our discussion. Eventually, we conclude

with theoretical and managerial implications, which open the avenues for further research.

2. Corporate communication: a strategic and multi-stakeholder function

The transformation of corporate communication's role within organizations, from its initial ancillary position to its current status as a vital strategic function, reflects a profound shift in how businesses perceive and prioritize communication management. Christensen and Cornelissen (2011) have observed that communication was often relegated to the periphery of organizational decision-making processes for years. However, the strategic importance of effective communication has become increasingly evident over time. This shift did not happen overnight; it was a gradual process that required communication managers to assert their value and relevance at the organizational board level since corporate communication evolved into a critical pillar of corporate strategy (Cornelissen, 2004; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011; Baccarani and Golinelli, 2015; Van Ruler, 2020).

In particular, Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004) noted how communication and marketing were closely intertwined, with communication supporting the delivery of marketing messages to external audiences. However, as the business landscape grew more complex, marked by a focus on how firms act sustainably (Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011), increased stakeholder scrutiny, and the rise of digital media, the need for strategic communication became undeniable (Van Ruler, 2020). Organizations recognized that communication needed to encompass a broader array of functions, including reputation management (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004), crisis communication (Coombs, 2020), and stakeholder engagement (Romenti, 2010; Romenti *et al.*, 2022). This change has made communication a crucial factor, more independent, interdependent, and prominent, in cultivating and safeguarding an organization's reputation, shaping its values, and representing its worth (Heide *et al.*, 2020; Romenti *et al.*, 2022). Internal and external communications are essential in building, preserving, and enhancing an organization's reputation (Casalegno, 2023; Romoli Venturi *et al.*, 2022; Casalegno and Civera, 2016). Effective corporate communication reinforces stakeholder perception of an organization's commitment to sustainability and responsible corporate citizenship when integrated effectively (Romoli Venturi *et al.*, 2022). Communicating an organization's sustainability practices and achievements to stakeholders enhances its reputation as a socially responsible entity, in line with the principles of corporate social performance (Palazzo *et al.*, 2020). This alignment between communication, sustainability, and reputation strengthens stakeholder trust and enhances the organization's standing as a good corporate citizen, as Mirvis and Googins highlighted in 2006.

The evolution of communication within organizations, from its ancillary role to its current strategic significance, is inextricably linked to adopting a

multi-stakeholder approach (Illia and Balmer, 2012; Varey, 2010). Indeed, as articulated by Stakeholder Theory (ST) scholars (Freeman *et al.*, 2010), the multi-stakeholder perspective posits that organizations do not exist in isolation; instead, they are embedded in a complex system of relationships with various stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors, communities, and regulatory bodies. This perspective underscores the idea that creating wholly valid and effective communication without a robust understanding of and preparedness for the multi-stakeholder landscape is impossible. The multi-stakeholder approach also needs a broader view of organizational communication. It extends communication beyond mere promotion and marketing efforts to encompass reputation management, ethical conduct, social responsibility, and sustainability practices (Civera *et al.*, 2018; Palazzo *et al.*, 2020; Casalegno, 2023).

Cecilia Casalegno
Chiara Civera
Elena Candelo
Raoul Romoli Venturi
Bridging corporate communication and marketing narratives for organizational success: how collaboration happens

Effective communication can shape perceptions, promote collaboration, establish relationships, and facilitate internal and external decision-making, aiming to ensure that responsible decisions are made (Morsing and Schultz, 2006) and enhance and protect both corporate image and brand reputation (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007) by engaging stakeholders through constant dialogue (Greenwood and VanBuren III, 2010). Therefore, corporate communication and marketing aims seem to converge, given that brand reputation enhancement belongs, by definition, to marketers because of its significant influence on brand equity (Joshi and Yadav, 2018).

3. Marketing: between misperceptions and multi-stakeholder approach

Over the years marketing scholars have outlined key traditional marketing criticisms, applied to its myopic and dichotomous value creation process and the consequent stakeholders' misperceptions (Bhattacharya and Korschun, 2008; Cluley, 2016; Dalsace and Markovitch, 2009; Kashif *et al.*, 2018; Laczniak and Murphy, 2012; Marino *et al.*, 2020; Sheth *et al.*, 2006). The theoretical thinking of stakeholder theorists has greatly affected also the marketing discipline over time: ST scholars have particularly considered traditional marketing processes as short-sighted and static (Freeman *et al.*, 2010) and argued that this has led to negative and sometimes incorrect perceptions and criticisms of marketing as a business discipline (Kachersky and Lerman, 2013), reducing its credibility (Marino *et al.*, 2020).

The criticisms moved by ST and marketing scholars to traditional marketing processes are mainly centered on a purely firm-centric nature of traditional marketing anchored to profit maximization, with a one-way focus on customers, ignoring other stakeholders involved in the social, environmental, and economic contexts as well as their role in creating value (Bhattacharya and Korschun, 2008; Laczniak and Murphy, 2012). Such a perspective perpetuated the so-called silos thinking (Kull *et al.*, 2016), which does not allow marketing managers to interpret impacts, risks, and benefits arising from the interdependent relationships with and between all other stakeholder groups (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015).

In the current complex business landscape, however, there is a growing need to adopt more human, stakeholder-based, participatory, and

integrated forms of business thinking that encompass economic, social, and environmental value creation in marketing (Fry and Polonsky, 2004), creating a fertile ground for its conceptual and practical evolution.

In the same attempt, for instance, Philip Kotler moves from a marketing conceptualization that puts customers at the center of the marketing value creation process (2003) to postulating that a human-centric approach drives marketing objectives beyond merely selling to customers (2022). He advocates for a deeper understanding of customers by considering their humanity, values, desires, and pain points because of the increasing stakeholder overlapping in a highly complex society that relies on stakeholders' interconnectedness (Casalegno *et al.*, 2020; McVea and Freeman, 2005). This approach encourages companies to build customer relationships rather than merely engaging them in concluding transactions. Kotler emphasizes the importance of adapting marketing strategies to the changing dynamics of the business environment. The traditional 4 Ps' framework of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion is no longer considered sufficient, and a more holistic approach to both strategies and tactics is needed (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015). Thus, marketing scholars position marketing as a social force with the power to improve firms' communities and engage broader groups of stakeholders because customers have multiple roles in society (Aksoy, 2022; Hult *et al.*, 2011; Sheth *et al.*, 2006).

Coherently with stakeholder thinking, a stream of marketing scholars have argued that companies that include and engage various stakeholder groups within the marketing value creation process are more likely to determine intended and unplanned consequences of marketing actions (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Fry and Polonsky, 2004; Heath *et al.*, 2017; Kotler *et al.*, 2022; Sheth *et al.*, 2007).

Not surprisingly, in 2013 (confirmed, then, in 2017), the American Marketing Association (AMA) reworked the definition of marketing, expanding the boundaries of the value creation process without, of course, questioning the centrality, along with other stakeholder groups, of consumers: "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large". Including customers, partners (a group with stakeholders linked to the company by a long-term relationship based on trust), and society at large reflects a clear stakeholder orientation within the marketing value creation process.

The need to make the marketing approach consistent with the multi-stakeholder orientation has resulted in the development of a discipline named Stakeholder Marketing. In 2011, Hult and his colleagues defined it as "the set of activities within a system of social institutions and processes to facilitate and maintain value creation through exchange relationships with multiple stakeholders" (p. 57). Thus, marketing managers must recognize that the value creation perspective of marketing should extend to a plurality of stakeholders to include the interdependent relationships that permeate the ecosystem. This can transform marketing value creation processes, making them impactful for the firm, customers, and the context.

In this sense, the evolutionary and multi-stakeholder marketing process is understood as a social force that integrates business and society (Sheth *et al.*, 2006). It is charged with the power and responsibility to influence the well-being of the ecosystem. This is the most innovative aspect of stakeholder marketing, which accommodates and adapts to corporate responsibility practices naturally and coherently; an aspect that scholars have deemed necessary to investigate since 2008 (Bhattacharya and Korschun, 2008) and which still requires theoretical and practical investigation, to understand how the impact of marketing actions on stakeholders echoes in the entire stakeholder ecosystem, thus in the industry and society (Civera and Freeman, 2019).

Corporate Marketing, as a distinct branch of marketing research focused mainly on corporate brand (Balmer, 2008; 2011), has already fully embedded such a perspective by being conceptualized as having "an explicit institutional, stakeholder, societal orientation and CSR/ethical ethos" (Illia and Balmer, 2012; p. 423; Balmer, 2011). This resonates with the need for traditional marketing to actualize such a corporate philosophy and stakeholder culture - more coherently with the corporate and corporate marketing communication goals - in their goods and services, advertising, and distribution processes, which, growingly, need to respond to multi-stakeholder instances, rather than just customers' (Bhattacharya and Kkorschun 2008; Porcu *et al.*, 2020).

In this context, marketing, which traditionally focused merely on product promotion, must increasingly rely on corporate communication to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with stakeholders while creating customer value. The synergistic relationship between marketing and corporate communication has come to the forefront, highlighting the need for these functions to work together effectively to fulfill their respective strategic and tactical roles.

Therefore, we aim to explore whether and how synergistic and collaborative processes between corporate communication and marketing work in the context of MNEs.

4. Marketing and Corporate Communication

The evolution of marketing mentioned above indicates a closer connection with the corporate communication function. This puts significant pressure on the role and tasks of corporate communication on multiple levels. First, it affects the target of communication messages. To provide genuine value to customers and engage multiple internal and external stakeholders, the target audience of marketing broadens and overlaps with that of corporate communication (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Kotler *et al.*, 2022; Pfajfar *et al.*, 2022; American Marketing Association, 2017; 2022). That is the case, for instance, of employer branding strategies and activities, where marketing and corporate communication - and human resource management - integrate their efforts to engage and align talents' and employees' values with the overarching brand narrative since they are recognized as the main brand ambassadors (Mishra *et al.*, 2014; Suomi *et*

al., 2021). Second, regarding the channels of communication messages. As marketing channels have expanded to include digital and social media platforms in an omnichannel logic, transparent, homogeneous, and consistent communication with customers and stakeholders has become increasingly relevant (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, corporate communication and marketing are closely related, with corporate communication serving as the strategic conduit through which marketing messages are conveyed and relationships are nurtured (Cornelissen, 2004; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011; Finne and Grönroos, 2009). Third, regarding the contents, such as keywords, of communication messages. Given that new frontiers of marketing entail that the contents of marketing messages are appealing and persuasive to customers while having multiple stakeholders as a critical audience (Jahdi and Acikdilli, 2009), new meanings and values that integrate broader stakeholders' issues should become a core part of marketing communication contents and tone of voice (Lane Keller, 2019; Porcu *et al.*, 2020). A marketing language that emphasizes stakeholder-centered topics such as sustainable development, social well-being, ethics, humanity, and responsibility beyond just emotions (Kotler *et al.*, 2022; Laczniak and Murphy, 2012; Villarino and Font, 2015) needs the validation and endorsement of a more informative tone of voice typical of corporate communication, to create coordinated messages that prevent any misperceptions that may arise among stakeholders, as they might see the brand as inauthentic (Hewlett and Lemon, 2018).

5. Methodology

To accomplish our goal, we employ a qualitative methodological approach based on focus groups (Morgan and Kreuger, 1993) and semi-structured èlite interviews (Bernard, 1988; Harvey, 2011). The focus group methodology provides in-depth information thanks to interactive discussions and original ideas through brainstorming (Goldman, 1962; Morgan and Kreuger, 1993). Furthermore, it enriches the conversation about the topic by allowing the observation of group dynamics when participants relate to discussing the topic (Cousins, 2009). It has been assessed as beneficial for our study since both the moderators and the group members are particularly interested in the proposed subject and are mindful of the attitudes, beliefs, and opinions expressed during the research period (Morgan and Kreuger, 1993).

We conducted two rounds of focus groups in October 2023 and November 2023, each lasting 95 minutes and 112 minutes.

Participants were combined in an organized manner based on the research topics they had to deal with and provided their perspectives and opinions, leveraging the advantages of their professional experience (Gibbs, 1997). That is why group members were recruited to include executives of corporate communications and executives of marketing departments in equal amounts, per each of the five selected multinational companies based in Italy. In particular, given the complexity of the MNEs' organizational structure based on global-regional-country-brand levels,

we selected participants from the corporate communication function who have responsibilities at a country level (in our case, Italy) and the executives of the marketing department who deal with specific products or product lines' brands, to more effectively understand and outline synergistic interactions between corporate and marketing strategies and tactics. To gather diverse perspectives, we chose participants from five leading medium-sized and large Italian MNEs operating in the automotive (2), the food and beverage (2), and the business service industry (1) in the B2C sector for the manufacturing enterprises and the B2B for the business service company. We opted for this choice for two main reasons. First, organizationally speaking, in medium-sized and large MNEs, marketing and corporate communication are typically two distinct strategic areas; therefore, their roles and responsibilities are effectively observable. Second, on the one hand, the selected industries are amongst the largest manufacturing industries within the European landscape (Eurostat, 2021), and the business service company is representative of the B2B sector in a growing service field of sustainability and digitalization for value co-creation in the B2B service marketing (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2023).

Two leading co-authors moderated the focus groups via Microsoft Teams conference call to understand whether and how corporate communication and marketing managers interact and collaborate around different issues that arise in the company.

Therefore, the discussions were conducted using pre-defined tracks (Goldman, 1962), and a guide based on three scenarios was set up according to the theoretical assumptions presented above, positing more effective synergies between corporate communication and marketing functions. We, therefore, asked participants to begin their discussions by presenting the following hypothetical and yet very practical situations: 1) the need to revise the corporate communication strategy to clarify values to their stakeholders; this served as a starting point to argue whether and how corporate communication increases its strategic importance and provides guidance to corporate strategies and actions (Illia and Balmer, 2012); 2) the need to deal with a brand reputation issue and take action; this functioned as an argument to debate about whether and how synergistic collaboration between corporate communication and marketing happens when brand reputation issues arise (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004; Aksoy *et al.*, 2022); 3) the need to restructure the advertising strategy for a core brand; this served as a starting point to investigate whether and how marketing collaborate with corporate communication to reformulate advertising, according to a multi-stakeholder marketing perspective (Bhattacharya and Kkorschun 2008; Porcu *et al.*, 2020). The two leading co-authors moderated the sessions based on such scenarios to collect managers' views on whether and how corporate communication and marketing create synergies to deal with the proposed three issues.

The first focus group involved eight members: One executive of corporate communication (coded as CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4) and one executive of the marketing department (coded as M1, M2, M3, M4) representing 4 MNEs in the automotive (2 MNEs) and food and beverage industry (2 MNEs). The second focus group involved eight members, different from those selected

Cecilia Casalegno
Chiara Civera
Elena Candelo
Raoul Romoli Venturi
Bridging corporate communication and marketing narratives for organizational success: how collaboration happens

during the first focus groups, to enhance the coverage and the effectiveness of results: One executive of corporate communication (CC5, CC6, CC7, CC8) and one executive of the marketing department (M5, M6, M7, M8) representing 4 MNEs operating in the automotive (1, same company as the first focus group), food and beverage (2, same companies as the first focus group) and business service industry (1).

Furthermore, to clarify the more or less synergistic processes and tactics that emerged from the focus groups, we conducted four online semi-structured élite interviews (Bernard, 1988; Harvey, 2011) in October 2023. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviewees were selected from the focus group participants in the figure of two heads of corporate communication and two heads of marketing departments in the automotive and food and beverage industries.

All focus groups and interviews were recorded with the consent of all participants, transcribed verbatim, and kept secure in a folder protected by the leading co-authors' laptops.

6. Findings and discussion

This section discusses the responses gathered through focus groups around the three proposed scenarios, supported by opinions and perspectives collected from the élite interviews.

Each scenario allowed us to discuss the boundaries between marketing and corporate communication in terms of tasks, audience, media usage, message contents (including the tone of voice), and situations of overlaps and synergy between the two functions by outlining specific driving forces and challenges of collaboration.

6.1 Strategic relevance of corporate communication in guiding corporate strategies and actions

Scenario 1 was presented to the participants of both focus groups to gather their perceptions about the process adopted to revise the corporate communication strategy and clarify key values for the stakeholders. The interactions in focus groups 1 and 2 began with CC1, CC2, and CC6 intervening first to clarify the complexities of MNEs' organizational structure, making it harder for interactions between marketing and corporate communication managers to happen smoothly. This appeared quite obvious by observing a group dynamic, for instance, in the very first salutation between CC2 and M2, who, despite being part of the same MNE and supposedly being required to work together, greeted each other as follows "Hi! It has been quite a long while!". Surprised by what it signaled as a perceived distance between the two participants, we started by involving them in describing the adopted process to revise the corporate communication strategy. In particular, CC2 outlined complexities based on different domains that separate corporate communication - which provides the guidelines for the strategy revision from a global perspective - from brand marketing communication - which enacts such guidelines

coherently with the market's expectations. CC6 from focus group 2 confirms the same: "As corporate communication managers, we have the task of setting a new strategy about how to deliver correct messages to build and protect the image of our corporate brand". CC4 strengthened the assertion: "Of course, guidelines to keep consistency among the different levels of communication should be delivered even to marketers." However, despite marketers not rejecting this opinion, M4 added that the marketing function needs to keep the pulse of the situation on markets and to follow trends, fads, and predilections, keeping daily relationships with customers at the core of their priorities, even if in contrast with the long term communication strategy, because: "in the end, results matter!" (M4, focus group 1).

However, during focus groups, some opinions shed light on how corporate communication and marketing are evolving and sometimes integrating to decide on approaching the market in line with core values and society's expectations. This is where social responsibilities force a greater synergy between corporate communication and marketing, even if marketing results are apparently compromised. For instance, M2 drew attention to a specific product campaign in which they strategically decided to discontinue the production of a particular color. Although this color is still the most requested on the market and customers keep asking for it, it reminds the human mind of the monotonous and lifeless aspects of existence, which the corporate strategy aims to avoid. This marketing strategy was implemented in line with corporate communication guidelines and the goal of sharing more colored human values, which are essential for both corporate and product brands. The élite interview with M2 allowed for a more comprehensive discussion of such a case, outlining that, despite the marketing manager tended to present their function as more predominant than corporate communication, in the name of environmental and human-based values driving societal expectations nowadays, each of the two functions must align. Corporate communication strengthens its role as a strategic guide for corporate strategies and actions. This confirms the increasingly strategic role of corporate communication (Cornelissen, 2004; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011; Van Ruler, 2020) as crucial in shaping an organization's values and representing its worth to all the stakeholders (Heide *et al.*, 2020; Romenti *et al.*, 2022), especially when societal expectations, linked to human values for instance, exert pressures on organizations and their markets (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Porcu *et al.*, 2020).

The case discussed by M2 sheds light on a balanced synergy between corporate communication and marketing in the interest of social responsibilities, where there is no strategic predominance of one of the two functions. This result is confirmed by CC8 and M8, who argued that their corporate communication strategy has changed upon various inputs from digital marketing that reported confusion about the product and its values in the market and its societies. Accordingly, corporate communication and marketing strengthened their synergies and restructured the corporate communication strategy based on clearer information sharing about product values. This is where corporate communication serves as strategic guidance for adapting the language and the content of marketing

messages, stemming from the awareness that stakeholders' roles overlap (Casalegno *et al.*, 2020; McVea and Freeman, 2005). Indeed, as M1 posited: "Customers are citizens, and corporate communication must support us in a new multi-stakeholder approach".

6.2 Corporate communication and marketing collaborate in defending brand reputation

Scenario 2 was presented to the participants of both focus groups to gather perceptions about the need to deal with brand reputation issues and take action. In this case, we noticed a greater willingness from corporate communicators to share their experiences. This perfectly aligns with the literature, which links corporate communication actions to the building and the protection of the brand's (both corporate and product) reputation (Argenti and Drukenmiller, 2004; Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007; Candelo *et al.*, 2019). Even during this scenario, CC1 and M1 in focus group 1 began the discussion by mentioning a specific situation when their MNE had to deal with a potential crisis in a product's brand reputation. To anticipate the risk of such a potential crisis that was hitting most of the food and beverage industry brands in 2016, the marketing department of the product's brand and the corporate communication opted for closer collaboration by designing a cross-functional strategy. That was to safeguard, in particular, one of their flagship brands by communicating that products would not have removed one ingredient - even though the public was asking to do so - by demonstrating and explaining to the audiences that it was not harmful to people and the environment because the MNE as a whole used certified supply and processes to extract and produce it: "Our renowned corporate reputation helped to protect our product brand, it is a matter of credibility. Since we were (and still are) sure to be right, while all our competitors removed that ingredient, we did not, and we were proven right in the end." (CC1). The strategy was based on various media and communication tools, resulting in different approaches. Corporate communication relied on PR and media relations, while marketing used advertising and labeling. In corporate communication, an informative and scientific tone was used, whereas marketing required a persuasive and engaging tone to reach the target market effectively.

In focus group 2, CC7 and M7 declared that marketing and corporate communication should always work together around critical topics that might affect brand reputation in ethics and sustainability. However, as M7 stated: "Sometimes we tailor specific marketing actions to protect our brand reputation by cooperating directly with the CSR function". The fact that marketing, in this case, avoids synergy with corporate communication and interacts directly with the sustainability/CSR function is discussed by CC7 as a major flaw in building a holistic and coherent brand and corporate reputation, operating against the integration of voices, as described by CC7, CC1, and CC8, that any organization aims at. This highlights a criticism that scholars have already recognized as key to addressing to prevent possible damage to brand reputation when corporate communication and marketing act as separate voices (Hewlett and Lemon, 2018).

Accordingly, both élite interviews conducted with CC1 and CC7 outlined the strategic importance of corporate communication when dealing with brand reputation issues, highlighting possible struggles for two orders of reasons. The first one relates to the above and refers to situations in which marketing autonomously decides to take actions by involving directly other functions rather than corporate communication, such as sustainability. This also emerged from the discussions during focus group 1, when CC2 explained that a marketing campaign centered on sustainability through a famous testimonial - an environmental activist - was conducted autonomously by the marketing department with successful results in terms of product brand reputation. In CC2's opinion, the campaign would have sorted better effects for the whole corporate reputation if marketing had involved corporate communication, at least in the choice of the testimonial, also considering the opportunity linked to an activist given that the industry is affected by negative stakeholders' perception about sustainability impacts. The second refers to the lower budget that corporate communication can dispose of compared to marketing. This aspect was also argued during the first focus group when CC4, because of lower budgeting, even defined corporate communication's role in brand reputation issues as subordinate and sometimes underestimated.

However, marketers in both focus groups, particularly M4, M5, and M8, pointed out that marketing and corporate communication have precise responsibility domains in dealing with brand reputation issues: it is the responsibility of the marketing function to gather perspectives and insights from the market, thanks to an omnichannel presence and, according also to CC5, corporate communication dictates the guidelines especially in crisis moments when it must coordinate the various messages to prevent a fragmented brand image, confirming Hewlett and Lemon's view (2018).

6.3 Corporate communication supports marketing in reformulating advertising campaigns according to a multi-stakeholder perspective

Scenario 3 was presented to the participants of both focus groups to gather insights about the process implemented when marketers need to reformulate an advertising strategy for a core brand. The interactions in focus groups 1 and 2 were more linear than in the other two scenarios. They began with marketers 5 and 6 in focus group 2, for instance, arguing that compelling storytelling for a new advertising campaign should be written synergistically with the corporate communication team, especially to avoid some misperceptions related to marketing (i.e., around packaging, production processes) when including key topics such as sustainability and ethics in advertising campaigns. The need to collaborate and be endorsed by corporate communication was identified as strategic in choosing a language that, although emotion-based, should now incorporate some informational keywords according to a multi-stakeholder approach that used to belong merely to corporate communication.

This confirms the view of scholars supporting an evolution of marketing toward a multi-stakeholder approach and engagement (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Bhattacharya and Kkorschun, 2008; Fry and Polonsky, 2004; Heath *et al.*, 2017; Kotler *et al.*, 2022; Sheth *et al.*, 2007).

This is also confirmed by M7 in the élite interview, who described that the 2021 advertising campaign launched by their marketing team operating in the food and beverage industry fully integrated the corporate sustainable values into the product. This, in turn, allowed positive impacts on all the business functions, including corporate communication, sustainability, and marketing. Indeed, differently to what happened in the situation described in scenario 2 by CC2, CC7 highlights that thanks to the synergistic work underlying the campaign, the corporate communication used the same testimonial with the same messages for a coherent spreading of sustainable values also at a corporate level.

Eventually, C8 and M8 agree that when corporate communication and marketing are synchronized, the brand's values are effectively conveyed in the advertising campaigns. This ensures that there is no risk of compromising the brand values while maintaining creativity in the advertising, and it can also lower the risk of misperceptions.

7. Concluding remarks

Our main findings emerge according to each scenario and suggest that:
- Corporate communication has a predominant strategic relevance in revising the corporate strategy according to sustainable values, while marketing's task is to keep the market's pulse and inform about customers and citizens' rising new concerns and expectations. The two functions are keener to operate in synergy when sustainable values (environmental, human-based, and responsibility issues) need to be embedded in the corporate strategy and communicated accordingly. In this regard, we outline a central challenge for the marketing function, as the short-term results might be compromised to establish and communicate a wholly sustainable and purpose-driven long-term corporate strategy.
- Marketing and corporate communication establish synergic relationships and major overlaps are detected when firms are called to protect their brand reputation in situations of potential reputational crises. That is when, even though corporate communicators have the task of coordinating various messages and marketers need to gather insights and perceptions from the market, the two functions align PR, media relations, advertising, and other forms of promotions (i.e., labeling) in addressing their respective informative and persuasive goals of communication. The main challenges of such an integration lie in a typical higher budget assigned to the marketing function, which can cause marketers to collaborate with other key functions to handle potential reputation crises (such as sustainability or CSR) without involving corporate communicators. This can create information imbalances between corporate communication and marketing, which might harm the brand in the long term.
- Corporate communication and marketers work in synergy in reformulating an advertising campaign when it is driven by sustainability, responsibility, human-based and environmental values.

That is where the marketing message contents integrate their typical emotional and persuasive tone of voice with more informative contents, adapted and endorsed by corporate communicators. Challenges of such integration emerge when marketers put too much emphasis on sustainability-based language. Corporate communicators need to mitigate this attitude to avoid risks of greenwashing and stakeholders' misperceptions.

Table 1 summarizes the description of corporate communication and marketing boundaries in terms of tasks, audience, media usage, and message content as well as the driving forces and the challenges of synergic overlaps between the two functions applied to the three specific situational contexts that we used to gather managers' perspective on the topic.

Cecilia Casalegno
Chiara Civera
Elena Candelo
Raoul Romoli Venturi
Bridging corporate communication and marketing narratives for organizational success: how collaboration happens

Tab. 1: Corporate communication and marketing boundaries and overlaps

	Corporate Communication	Marketing	Overlap/Synergy
Revise corporate strategy according to sustainable values	*Task*: keep consistency across all communication levels *Audience*: communities, media, intermediaries, customers, suppliers, employees, governmental institutions, citizens *Media usage:* PR and media relations *Message content*: informative tone of voice around sustainable values	*Task*: keep the pulse of market trends and expectations *Audience*: keep relationship with customers and citizens daily *Media usage*: digital and traditional media *Message content*: adapted from corporate communication, engaging tone of voice around sustainable values	*Driving force*: sustainability, environmental, human-based values, responsibility *Challenges*: marketing (short-term) results may be compromised in favor of a longer term sustainable driven corporate strategy
Defend brand reputation	*Task*: winning public support via coordinate and consistent communication messages *Audience*: communities, media, intermediaries, customers, suppliers, employees, governmental institutions, citizens *Media usage*: PR and media relations *Message content*: informative tone of voice around scientific and verifiable information	*Task*: keep the pulse of market insights and perceptions *Audience*: customers and citizens *Media usage*: digital and traditional media, labeling *Message content*: adapted from corporate communication, engaging tone of voice to convince that brand reputation is safe	*Driving force*: potential brand reputation crisis *Challenges*: misalignment of budget (marketing operating with higher budget) and direct interactions between marketing and other functions (sustainability or corporate social responsibility) without informing or involving corporate communicators
Reformulate an advertising strategy	*Task*: endorse and coordinate effective storytelling *Audience*: communities, media, intermediaries, customers, suppliers, employees, governmental institutions, citizens *Media usage*: PR and media relations *Message content*: informative tone of voice around	*Task*: write wholly valid storytelling (endorsed by corporate communicators) *Audience*: customers and citizens *Media usage*: digital and traditional media, *Message content*: engaging, emotional and informative tone of voice	*Driving force*: sustainability, environmental, human-based values, responsibility *Challenges*: too much focus around the language of sustainability by marketers should be mitigated by corporate communicators to avoid greenwashing

Source: elaboration of the authors based on the findings

7.1 Theoretical contributions

Our research strengthened some existing theoretical views, outlining critical difficulties in turning theory into corporate communication and marketing practice.

First, our study supported that corporate communication holds vital strategic importance in shaping strategic and tactical managerial decisions (Belasen and Belasen, 2019; Cornelissen, 2004; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011; Romenti *et al.*, 2022) and strengthening and protecting corporate and brand reputation through a desirable higher synergistic interaction with marketing (Heide *et al.*, 2020; Illia and Balmer, 2012; Van Ruler, 2020).

Second, our findings broadened the discussion on the changing nature of marketing, moving beyond traditional boundaries and adopting a holistic approach (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Bhattacharya and Kkorschun 2008; Fry and Polonsky, 2004; Heath *et al.*, 2017; Kotler *et al.*, 2022; Sheth *et al.*, 2007), for which we suggested that corporate communication might provide guidance and facilitate. Furthermore, we provided early evidence on how marketing and corporate communication integration can strengthen firms' roles as social actors (Siano, 2012; Illia and Balmer, 2012; Aksoy *et al.*, 2022).

Indeed, corporate communicators and marketers involved in focus groups and élite interviews agreed that synergistic collaboration between corporate communication and marketing is enforced by the need to develop a multi-stakeholder approach to cope with a multifaceted and complex business environment and the awareness that stakeholders' roles overlap. This strengthens the idea that to evolve from being a pure firm-centric function-oriented to customer satisfaction only to be a multi-stakeholder discipline that creates value for customers by engaging all stakeholders (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Hillebrand *et al.*, 2015; Hult *et al.*, 2011), marketing needs the validation and the endorsement of corporate communication. That is to shape coordinated messages that prevent misperceptions among stakeholders, as they might see the brand as inauthentic when spreading values that are not immediately associated with traditional marketing goals (Hewlet and Lemon, 2018). In this sense, the convergence of key topics related to sustainability, responsibility, and ethics between marketing and corporate communication follows a circular process that typically begins in the marketing department, when digital marketers explore the sentiment and the potential risks of brand reputation damages and continues in the corporate communication department that sets or refreshes the corporate values that marketing messages will have to incorporate eventually. Ideally, stakeholders' pressures on responsibility and sustainability function as a catalyst for more effective synergic interactions between corporate communication and marketing, both strategically and tactically.

Third, we strengthened the idea that integration between corporate communication and marketing appears fundamental in potential crises affecting the brand reputation (Argenti and Drukenmiller, 2004; van Riel and Fombrun, 2007) by clarifying domains in that, typically, to be effective, corporate communication intervenes to protect the corporate image by

restructuring relationships with stakeholders while acting with marketing in protecting the product brand image.

Eventually, our findings contributed to confirm one key difficulty and outline two novel challenges of synergic overlap between the two functions through an empirical-based perspective, which appears to be needed when studying integration between corporate communication and marketing (Aksoy *et al.*, 2022; Palazzo *et al.*, 2020; Romoli Venturi *et al.*, 2022):

a) a traditional attitude to treat corporate communication and marketing, even theoretically, as ultimate enemies in terms of budget and relevance of topics, as also raised by Illia and Balmer, 2012 and Varey, 2010; b) sometimes marketing urges to convey emotion-based messages that include sustainable topics by bypassing the interactions with corporate communication, increasing, in turn, the risk of brand reputation crises or diminishing the impact that a marketing campaign can have on the overall corporate reputation; c) developing a multi-stakeholder approach through a cross-functional strategy requires a long-term collaboration between the two functions because spot messages and activities in this regard might increase the misperception of marketing in terms of greenwashing.

7.2 Managerial implications

Our study provides several managerial implications.

First, when sustainability and related topics such as responsibility, environmental, and human-based values are embedded in corporate strategy and advertising campaigns, marketers and corporate communicators can benefit from synergic strategic planning. In particular, it is advised that, in the first case, marketers support communicators by gathering insights from the market in terms of citizens' and customers' expectations around sustainability thanks to their social media engagement. In the second case, an effective strategic planning of a sustainability-driven advertising campaign is achieved by integrated storytelling, written by marketers and endorsed by communicators, to avoid the risks of greenwashing misperceptions.

Second, it proposes that marketers and corporate communicators collaborate to identify potential risks of reputational crisis. Once risks are acknowledged, corporate communication and marketing deal with their own responsibilities in engaging the audience and media at corporate and brand levels by creating separate messages with informative and persuasive tone of voice. It is advisable that marketers, given the higher budget at their disposal, avoid acting in silos thinking and interact with business functions that can sustain brand reputation before and during crises (such as sustainability or CSR function) without involving corporate communicators. Excluding the corporate communication function from strategic decisions that entail sustainable matters is, indeed, counterproductive for the sake of brand reputation in the long run.

Eventually, it encourages marketers and corporate communicators to exchange information constantly through meetings aimed at sharing their own strategic plans. This is a practical way to provide each other with guidance and strategic assistance in the corporate strategy (re)definition,

in protecting brand reputation, and in formulating multi-stakeholder advertising campaigns that are aligned with the corporate identity.

7.3 Limitations and further research

While arguing for higher interconnectedness of corporate communication and marketing, we acknowledge that processes are fragmented, and it is challenging to model interactions between the two functions, mainly because our sample is limited and the functions are shaped differently in many MNEs, particularly on the corporate communication side. To improve the common understanding of the alignments and misalignments between corporate communication and marketing, we call for further systematic studies that analyze and organize the factors hindering and facilitating effective collaboration between the two functions. Furthermore, other studies could examine how interaction processes are established and identify best practices among a larger sample of multinational enterprises in different geographies.

References

AKSOY L., BANDA S., HARMELING C., KEININGHAM T.L., PANSARI A. (2022), "Marketing's role in multi-stakeholder engagement", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, vol. 39, n. 2, pp. 445-461.

AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION (2017), *The Definition of Marketing,* www.ama.org

AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION (2022), *The Definition of Marketing*, www.ama.org

ARGENTI P.A., DRUCKENMILLER B. (2004), "Reputation and the corporate brand", *Corporate Reputation Review*, vol. 6, pp. 368-374.

BACCARANI C., GOLINELLI G.M. (2015), "The non-existent firm: relations between corporate image and strategy", *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management*, vol. 33, n. May-Aug, pp. 313-323.

BALMER J.M.T. (2008), "Identity-based view of the corporation: insights from corporate identity, organisational identity, social identity, visual identity and corporate image", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 42, n. 9/10, pp. 879-906.

BALMER J.M.T. (2011), "Corporate marketing myopia and the inexorable rise of a corporate marketing logic: perspectives from identity-based views of the firm", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 45, n. 9/10, pp. 1329-52.

BALMER J.M.T., GRAY E.R. (1999), "Corporate identity and corporate communications: creating a competitive advantage", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal,* vol. 4, n. 4, pp. 171-6.

BELASEN A.T., BELASEN A.R. (2019), "The strategic value of integrated corporate communication: Functions, social media, and stakeholders", *International Journal of Strategic Communication,* vol. 13, n. 5, pp. 367-384.

BERNARD R. (1988), "Unstructured and semi structured interviewing", in *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology,* Sage Beverly Hills, CA, pp. 203-223.

BHATTACHARYA C.B., KORSCHUN D. (2008), "Stakeholder marketing: Beyond the four Ps and the customer", *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 27, n. 1, pp. 113-116.

BICKERTON D. (2000), "Corporate reputation versus corporate branding: the realist debate", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, vol. 5, n. 1, pp. 42-48.

CANDELO E., CASALEGNO C., CIVERA C. (2019), "Enhancing Retailer-Consumers Relationship Through Everyday Sustainability: McDonald's in Italy", In *Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1186-1208), IGI Global.

CASALEGNO C. (2023), *Advertising. Tecniche, strumenti, regole tra una rivoluzione e l'altra*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

CASALEGNO C.G., CIVERA C. (2016), *Impresa e CSR: la "non comunicazione" di successo. regole per una gestione responsabile delle relazioni* (pp. 1-199), FrancoAngeli, Milano.

CASALEGNO C.G.N., CIVERA C., MOSCA F., FREEMAN E. (2020), "Circular economy and relationship-based view", *Symphonya*, vol. 1, pp. 149-164.

CHOWDHURY N., BALARAMAN P., LIU J. (2023), "The evolution of B2B strategies in the rise of value co-creation and service management", *Journal of Strategy and Management,* vol. 16, n. 4, pp. 708-732.

CHRISTENSEN L.T., CORNELISSEN J. (2011), "Bridging corporate and organisational communication: Review, development and a look to the future", *Management Communication Quarterly,* vol. 253, pp. 383-414.

CIVERA C. (2018), *Integrated Company Responsibility in the Food and Beverage Industry*, Giappichelli, Torino.

CIVERA C., FREEMAN R.E. (2019), "Stakeholder relationships and responsibilities: A new perspective", *Symphonya. Emerging Issues in Management*, n. 1, pp. 40-58.

CIVERA C., CASALEGNO C., MOSCA F., MAPLE P. (2018), "Customers' judgments and misjudgments of corporate responsibility communication: A cross-country investigation of the effects on confidence and trust within the banking sector", *Psychology and Marketing,* vol. 35, n. 2, pp. 138-149

CLULEY R. (2016), "The depiction of marketing and marketers in the news media", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 50, n. 5/6, pp. 752-769.

COOMBS W.T. (2020), "Situational crisis communication theory: Influences, provenance, evolution, and prospects", *Crisis communication*, vol. 23, pp. 121-140.

CORNELISSEN J.P. (2020), "Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice", *Corporate Communication*, Sage, London, pp. 1-336.

CORNELISSEN J. (2004), *Corporate Communications: Theory and Practice*, Sage, London.

COUSIN G. (2009), *Researching learning in higher education: An introduction to contemporary methods and approaches,* Routledge, New York

DALSACE F., MARKOVITCH D.G. (2009), *Is marketing becoming a dirty word?: A longitudinal study of public perceptions of marketing*, Groupe HEC, Paris.

EUROSTAT (2021) Business in the manufacturing sector. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Businesses_in_the_manufacturing_sector#:~:text=The%20largest%20EU%20subsector%20in,%2Dtrailers%20(Division%2029).

FINNE Å., GRÖNROOS C. (2009), "Rethinking marketing communication: From integrated marketing communication to relationship communication", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, vol. 15, n. 2-3, pp. 179-195.

FREEMAN R.E. (2017), "The new story of business. Towards a more responsible capitalism", *Business and Society Review,* vol. 122, n. 3, pp. 449-465.

FREEMAN R.E. (2010), "Managing for stakeholders: Trade-offs or value creation", *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 96, n. 1, pp. 7-9.

FRY M.L., POLONSKY M.J. (2004), "Examining the unintended consequences of marketing", *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 57, n. 11, pp. 1303-1306.

GIBBS A. (1997), "Focus groups", *Social Research Update*, vol. 19, n. 8, pp. 1-8.

GOLDMAN A.E. (1962), "The group depth interview", *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 26, n. 3, pp. 61-68.

GREENWOOD M., VAN BUREN III H J. (2010), "Trust and stakeholder theory: Trustworthiness in the organisation-stakeholder relationship", *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 95, pp. 425-438.

HARVEY W.S. (2011), "Strategies for conducting elite interviews", *Qualitative Research*, vol. 11, n. 4, pp. 431-441.

HEATH R.L., PALENCHAR M.J., MCCOMAS K.A., PROUTHEAU S. (2016), "Risk management and communication: Pressures and conflicts of a stakeholder approach to corporate social responsibility", In *A stakeholder approach to corporate social responsibility* (pp. 121-140), Routledge, New York.

HEIDE M., VON PLATEN S., SIMONSSON C., FALKHEIMER J. (2020), "Expanding the scope of strategic communication: Towards a holistic understanding of organizational complexity", In *Future directions of strategic communication* (pp. 124-140), "Routledge.

HILLEBRAND B., DRIESSEN P.H., KOLL O. (2015), "Stakeholder marketing: Theoretical foundations and required capabilities", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* vol. 43, pp. 411-428.

HEWETT K., LEMON L.L. (2019), "A process view of the role of integrated marketing communications during brand crises", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal,* vol. 22, n. 3, pp. 497-524.

HULT G.T.M., MENA J.A., FERRELL O.C., FERRELL L. (2011), "Stakeholder marketing: A definition and conceptual framework", *AMS Review*, vol. 1, n. 1, pp. 44-65.

ILLIA L., BALMER J.M. (2012), "Corporate communication and corporate marketing: Their nature, histories, differences and similarities", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal,* vol. 17, n. 4, pp. 415-433.

INVERNIZZI E., ROMENTI S. (2011), "Strategic communication and decision-making processes: Toward the communication oriented organisation. Academicus", *International Scientific Journal,* vol. 3, pp. 12-27.

JAHDI K.S., ACIKDILLI G. (2009), "Marketing communications and corporate social responsibility (CSR): Marriage of convenience or shotgun wedding?", *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 88, n. 1, pp. 103-113.

JOSHI R., YADAV R. (2018), "Exploring the mediating effect of parent brand reputation on brand equity", *Paradigm*, vol. 22, n. 2, pp. 125-142.

KACHERSKY L., LERMAN D. (2013), "Bridging marketing's intentions and consumer perceptions", *Journal of Consumer Marketing,* vol. 30, n. 7, pp. 544-552.

KASHIF M., FERNANDO P.M.P., ALTAF U., WALSH J. (2018), "Re-imagining marketing as societing: A critical appraisal of marketing in a developing country context", *Management Research Review,* vol. 41, n. 3, pp. 359-378.

Cecilia Casalegno
Chiara Civera
Elena Candelo
Raoul Romoli Venturi
Bridging corporate
communication and
marketing narratives for
organizational success: how
collaboration happens

KELLER K.L., BREXENDORF T.O. (2019), *Strategic brand management process,* Handbuch Markenführung, pp. 155-175.

KELLER K.L. (2020), "Consumer research insights on brands and branding: a JCR curation", *Journal of Consumer Research,* vol. 46, n. 5, pp. 995-1001.

KITCHEN P.J., SCHULTZ D.E. (2011), *Raising the Corporate Umbrella: Corporate Communications in the 21st Century,* Palgrave, New York.

KLIATCHKO J.G., SCHULTZ D.E. (2014), "Twenty years of IMC: A study of CEO and CMO perspectives in the Asia-Pacific region", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 33, n. 2, pp. 373-390.

KOTLER P., DUBOIS B., MANCEAU D. (2003), *Marketing management.* 11e éd. Upper Saddle River NJ.

KOTLER P., PFÖRTSCH W., SPONHOLZ, U. (2022), *H2H Marketing human to human marketing. Dall'orientamento al cliente all'orientamento all'essere umano*, a cura di Ancarani F. Piccin-Nuova Libreria, Padova.

LACZNIAK G.R., MURPHY P.E. (2012), "Stakeholder theory and marketing: Moving from a firm-centric to a societal perspective", *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing,* vol. 31, n. 2, pp. 284-292.

MARINO V., RESCINITI R., D'ARCO M. (2020), "It's all about marketing! Exploring the social perception in the Italian context", *Italian Journal of Marketing*, vol. 2020, n. 1, pp. 7-23.

MCVEA J.F., FREEMAN R.E. (2005), "A names-and-faces approach to stakeholder management: How focusing on stakeholders as individuals can bring ethics and entrepreneurial strategy together", *Journal of Management Inquiry,* vol. 14, n. 1, pp. 57-69.

MIRVIS P., GOOGINS B. (2006), "Stages of corporate citizenship", *California Management Review*, vol. 48, n. 2, pp. 104-126.

MISHRA K., BOYNTON L., MISHRA A. (2014), "Driving Employee Engagement: The Expanded Role of Internal Communications", *International Journal of Business Communication,* vol. 51, n. 2, pp. 183-202.

MORGAN DL., KREUGER R.A. (1993), "When to use focus groups and why", in Morgan D.L. (Ed.), *Successful Focus Groups*, Sage, London.

MORSING M., SCHULTZ M. (2006), "Corporate social responsibility communication: stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies", *Business Ethics: A European Review*, vol. 14, n. 4, pp. 323-38.

OSSERVATORIO PER LA COMUNICAZIONE D'IMPRESA PIEMONTE (OCIP), (2023), *La Comunicazione Professionale, In cammino verso identità e autonomia,* Luiss University Press, Milano

PALAZZO M., VOLLERO A., SIANO A. (2020), "From strategic corporate social responsibility to value creation: An analysis of corporate website communication in the banking sector", *International Journal of Bank Marketing,* vol. 38, n. 7, pp. 1529-1552.

PFAJFAR G., SHOHAM A., MAŁECKA A., ZALAZNIK M. (2022), "Value of corporate social responsibility for multiple stakeholders and social impact-Relationship marketing perspective", *Journal of Business Research,* vol. 143, pp. 46-61.

POLONSKY M.J. (2005), *Stakeholder thinking in marketing* (Vol. 39, No. 9-10), Emerald Group Publishing.

PORCU L., DEL BARRIO-GARCÍA S., KITCHEN P.J., TOURKY M. (2020), "The antecedent role of a collaborative vs. a controlling corporate culture on firm-wide integrated marketing communication and brand performance", *Journal of Business Research,* vol. 119, pp. 435-443.

ROMENTI S. (2010), "Reputation and stakeholder engagement: an Italian case study", *Journal of Communication Management,* vol. 14, n. 4, pp. 306-318.

ROMENTI S., COLLEONI E., MURTARELLI G. (2022), "23", Corporate branding between corporate, stakeholders, and society", *Research Handbook on Strategic Communication*, pp. 335-347, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.

ROMOLI VENTURI R., CASALEGNO C., DE PALMA P. (2022), *Comunicazione integrata e PR: istruzioni per l'uso: strategie, strumenti e tecniche nel secolo della trasparenza,* FrancoAngeli, Milano.

SHETH J.N., SISODIA R.S., BARBULESCU A. (2006), "The image of marketing", in Sheth J.N., Sisodia R.S. (2015), *Does Marketing Need Reform?: Fresh Perspectives on the Future M.E. Sharpe*, Armonk, NY, pp. 26-36.

SIANO A. (2012), "La comunicazione per la sostenibilità nel management delle imprese (Communication for sustainability in business management)", *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management*, vol. 30, n. Sep-Dec, pp. 3-24.

SUOMI K., SARANIEMI S., VÄHÄTALO M., KALLIO T.J., TEVAMERI T. (2021), "Employee engagement and internal branding: two sides of the same coin?", *Corporate Reputation Review,* vol. 24, pp. 48-63.

VAN RIEL, CBM AND FOMBRUN C. (2007), *Essentials of Corporate Communication,* Routledge, London.

VAN RULER B. (2020), "Communication theory: An underrated pillar on which strategic communication rests", In *Future directions of strategic communication* (pp. 39-53), Routledge, New York.

VAREY R.J. (2010), "Locating marketing within the corporate communication managing system", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, vol. 4, n. 3, pp. 177-190.

VILLARINO J., FONT X. (2015), "Sustainability marketing myopia: The lack of persuasiveness in sustainability communication", *Journal of Vacation Marketing,* vol. 21, n. 4, pp. 326-335.

Academic or professional position and contacts

Cecilia Casalegno
Associate Professor of Management
University of Torino - Italy
e-mail: cecilia.casalegno@unito.it

Chiara Civera
Associate Professor of Management
University of Torino - Italy
e-mail: chiara.civera@unito.it

Elena Candelo
Full Professor of Management
University of Torino - Italy
e-mail: elena.candelo@unito.it

Raoul Romoli Venturi
Co-founder Romoli Venturi & Partners Srl
e-mail: raoul.romoliventuri@gmail.com