MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Te Pou Aro Kōrero

School of Communication, Journalism & Marketing

115.277

National Expedition

The Image and Identity Tour

Study Guide, 2019

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Introduction

Welcome to 115.27 Special Topic: National Expedition - The Image and Identity Tour.
You can visit our School homepage at: http://communication.massey.ac.nz/ to learn more about CJM staff and their areas of expertise.

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I am a Professor of Communication in Te Pou Aro Kōrero/ School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing (Wellington). I have taught postgraduate courses at Massey University, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Macau, Northeast Normal University in Changchun, Jilin Province, China, and on behalf of Massey University in Shenzhen, China. I've taught undergraduate courses at Massey University, Winthrop University in South Carolina, and also at Penn State and Northeast Normal University. My qualifications include a Master of Business Studies (Hons) and a PhD in Management and Communication.

Beyond the University, I have worked in a research capacity for clients such as IBM, the New Zealand Police (the Traffic Camera Office and Police Communications), Presbyterian Support, Inland Revenue, Air New Zealand, BNZ, ANZ, businesses within Telecom Corporation, including Telecom Directories Ltd and Telecom Networks and Services Ltd, and New Zealand Licensing Trusts. Specific areas in research and consulting have been communication auditing, communication management, organisational development, communicating corporate strategy, benchmarking, business writing, information management, managing change, internal communications, stakeholder relations and performance appraisal systems.

My research has been funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, the Department of Labour/ MBIE and the NZ Health Research Council and the Ministry of Health.

Scope of the Course

In this course you explore manifestations of companies' image and identity in order to assess how successful tourism and hospitality industry branding is at engaging the attention of people new to the country and culture. You examine the identity of the service-providing organisations and brands you encounter, reviewing organisational image and identifying how effectively companies appear to communicate what they offer.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this special topic offering will:

1. Obtain insights into how successful tourism and hospitality industry providers are at engaging the attention of people new to the country and culture
2. Understand how theory of organisational identity gives insights into service-providing organisations
3. Be able to explain companies' image in identifying their ability to communicate what they offer.

Learning Experience

The course is an intensive two-week experience in which you explore issues of image and identity among tourism providers across New Zealand, undertake reflective activities, and assess how your observations match with relevant theory from your previous studies related to communication, marketing, or related areas. The majority of each day is spent visiting relevant industry organisations, engaging in field observations and assessments, and participating in group discussion with other students, industry hosts, and Massey staff on the tour. These activities are situated within an intense itinerary of travel by private coach.

While not on field visits or travelling, you will have access to the online course Stream (Moodle) site, to complete your assignments, participate in the course forum, and interact with your academic supervisor. All assessment and feedback will be recorded on the Stream site.

You are required to bring your own laptop, and internet access will be provided at each accommodation site during the two weeks to enable research and engagement with Stream. A pre-departure orientation module and some pre-learning activities must also be completed online during the weeks leading up to your arrival in New Zealand. While the weeks leading up to your arrival in New Zealand will undoubtedly be busy, your first two weeks in New Zealand are likely to be even busier! So it is crucial that you complete these pre-departure orientation and learning activities before the programme starts.

Your Experiential Learning

The course is a unique learning experience with a strong emphasis on independent study and team work outside of a classroom environment.

You are expected to be highly proactive in your learning process, by means such as:

1. Thorough independent research and preparation ahead of each of your industry visits;
2. Your careful study of the assigned readings in your Study Guide during the expedition;
3. Your active and professional engagement with industry speakers during visits;
4. Group discussions with your co-students and the learning facilitator before and after visits; and
5. Regular reflections submitted to the course coordinator over the two-week period.

Planning and Preparation Time en Route

Given the nature of this expedition you will of course be spending a considerable amount of time on your bus. You can use this time productively to hold small group discussions about how you plan to make the most of the time available to you in the site visits. Time on the bus is a very good opportunity for you to ensure that everyone in your small study/ meal preparation group fully understands their various roles in information-gathering, such as by planning which questions you intend to put to company speakers you will meet, etc.

During your bus tour you need to be well organised to ensure you will be able to complete your forthcoming course assignments that are due after the expedition. Your onsite facilitator will be available to assist with questions, but it is each student's responsibility to ensure they are fully informed of the itinerary and assignments.

By the end of the bus tour you should have completed preliminary drafts of all three of your required assignments for this expedition course.

Industry Visits - Speakers

It is important to understand that in this experiential learning course, your industry visits are **not** traditional university style lectures. Instead, speakers will be practising professionals from a range of tourism organisations whom you will mainly meet in their own place of work. These may range from small family owned and operated businesses to regional and national tourism offices.

As such, each visit is unique and it will reflect the culture and nature of the business or organisation. In some cases, your visit there may entail a formal presentation with PowerPoint slides followed by an opportunity to ask questions.

In other situations, you may not receive a formal presentation. Instead, your visit may entail an informal dialogue between you and the speaker. You need to be prepared for any eventuality of this kind and to **take a proactive role** to ensure you get good information.

It is important that in your small study/ meal preparation groups you undertake careful preparation prior to each visit. In particular, your group will have prepared a collection of probing questions exploring issues of company image, identity, brand, and marketing for you to ask if there is an opportunity to do so.

You are expected to be both proactive and professional when meeting with industry speakers, to ensure you gain the most from each visit.

All industry speakers whom you will hear have been told about the focus of your course and given the set of questions below to guide them in their talks (if they wish to follow this kind of approach – though this is up to them).

1. The students are exploring issues of image and identity – how does your organisation set out to project its image to current clients and/ or prospective clients?
2. What are the major challenges you face in terms of image outside the organisation, how people see you?
3. How successful do you think you are at building a strong image for clients and potential clients?
4. What would you say are your major successes in communication and marketing generally?
5. How do you assess the nature of the competition you face from other providers/ organisations?
6. Would you say that people who work in your organisation have a strong sense of identity in terms of their membership of your organisation or what they are trying to achieve there?
7. Are there ways in which you try to strengthen a sense of organisational identity among organisation members?
8. How important to you is the brand of your organisation or its key products?
9. What are the kind of things you do to protect and enhance your brand?

Industry Visits – Student Preparation and Visit Protocol

The nature of this experiential learning course requires you to work both individually and in small groups throughout the course. You have only a very limited time on your two-week expedition to get a lot of preparation and research done, to enable you to do justice to your site visits, and to your assignments. You have a very tight schedule of assignments to complete during July which you need to carefully plan for.

Each evening you are expected to set aside time for academic work. Your learning facilitator will be on hand to assist you in preparing for and reflecting on the visits, but you are responsible to engage closely with the readings (see below) and to undertake online research into the organisations you will visit.

At the start of the course you will form small groups of four or five individuals. Each of you will take on different roles to prepare for, participate in, and reflect on each visit together.

Before each visit:

Set aside time as a group each evening to reflect on the day's visits and to prepare for the coming day's visits. To prepare for the visit, your group should designate **roles** for group members who will:

- Undertake study of the set course readings to determine any guidance on what questions might be asked,
- Research the presenting company online in respect of their marketing, branding, identity and image,
- Take responsibility for constructing probing questions to ask beyond the questions for speakers as set out above,
- Ask the initial and follow-up questions during the visit,
- Produce a transcript or at least comprehensive notes on what the presenter said in response to particular questions.

During the visit:

Ensure that you take your own notes to make the most of the information the speakers provide – this will be useful for your assignments.

Your learning facilitator will select one student to represent the class at each visit. If you are selected as the representative, you should introduce yourself to the speaker, ensure you record their name and title correctly, and answer any questions that the speaker may have about your group or the programme you are participating in.

At the end of the meeting please thank the speaker for taking the time to speak to the class.

The student representative at each visit is not responsible for asking all questions during and after the speaker's talk; that is up to each individual student or the representatives from your study groups.

After the visit:

Discuss the visit in your small groups. What main points did you take away from the speaker? How are these points similar or different from other speakers you've met? How does the information relate to theory and the reading you have done? Is it consistent with the research you did into the organisation prior to the visit?

Nominate a student in your group to:

- Write up findings from the presentations and any follow-up Q&A session and group discussion for the benefit of the other members in your group.

At least every second day you should also email your academic supervisor reflecting on your experiences on the tour as per instructions for Assignment #1 Essay on a Reflective Journal, below.

Prior Reading

While site visits and engagement with industry professionals comprise the primary input on this experiential learning course, any additional printed or web resources will be provided on Massey's online learning management system, Stream, for this course. Please ensure that you download the readings shown below **prior to your arrival** in New Zealand. You need to save them on your own laptop to ensure that you are able to read them regardless of internet availability and speed while on tour.

Week	Reading
May 20 to May 26	Johansson, J.K., & Carlson, K.A. (2015). *Contemporary brand management* (pp. v-vii, 2-25). California: Sage
	Balmer, J.M.T., & Greyser, S.A. (2003). *Revealing the corporation: Perspectives on identity, image, reputation, corporate branding, and corporate-level marketing* (pp. ix-xi, 53-65). London: Routledge.
May 27 – June 2	Motion, J., Davenport, S., Leitch, S., & Merlot, L. (2013). Corporate reputation and the discipline of public relations. In C.E. Carroll (Ed.). *The handbook of communication and corporate reputation* (pp. v-vii, 62-71). United Kingdom:Wiley-Blackwell.
	Steidl, P., & Emery, G. (2012). *Corporate image and identity strategies: Designing the corporate future* (pp. v, 1-19). Australia: Business & Professional Publishing.
	Argenti, P.A. (2009). *Corporate communication* (6th ed.) (pp. xvii-xx, 71-107). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
	Olins, W. (1990). *Corporate identity: Making business strategy visible through design* (pp. 5, 27-45). United States of America: Harvard Business School Press.
June 3 – June 9	De Bussy, N. (2009). Reputation management: A driving force for action. In J. Chia, & G. Synnott (Eds.). *An introduction to public relations: From theory to practice* (pp. v, 222-247). Australia, New Zealand: Oxford University Press.
	Fombrun, C.J. (2012). The building blocks of corporate reputation: Definitions, antecedents, consequences. In M. Barnett, & T.G. Pollock (Eds.). *The Oxford*

	handbook of corporation reputation (pp. vii-ix, 94-113). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
	Katz, J.E. (2008). Mainstreamed mobiles in daily life: Perspectives and prospects. In J.E. Katz (Ed.). *Handbook of mobile communication studies* (pp. vii-ix, 433-445). Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: The MIT Press.
June 10 - June 16	Franzen, G., & Moriarty, S. (2009). *The science and art of branding* (pp. v, 108-122). Armonk, New York, London, England: M.E. Sharpe.
First week of Expedition	Dowling, G. (2001). *Creating corporate reputations: Identity, image, and performance* (pp. xi-xii, 29-48). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
	Langer, R., & Varey, R.J. (2008). Corporations as storytellers – stakeholders as image builders: Towards impressive corporate communication. In T.C Melewar, & E. Karaosmanoğlu. *Contemporary thoughts on corporate branding and corporate identity management* (pp. v-vi, 205-230). England: Palgrave Macmillan.
June 17 – June 23	Podnar, K. (2015). *Corporate communication: A marketing viewpoint* (pp. v-vii, 157-176). London, New York: Routledge
Second week of Expedition	Hatch, M.J., & Schultz, M. (2008). *Taking brand initiative: How companies can align strategy, culture, and identity through corporate branding* (pp. v-vi, 3-19). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Assessment and Assignments

Assessment Type	Weighting	Due Date	Link to Learning Outcomes
1 Essay on a Reflective Journal	30%	2 July	LOs 1 & 2
2 Company Assessment: Image & Identity	30%	9 July	LOs 2 & 3
3 Simulated Report to Service Provider	40%	16 July	LO 3

Assignment #1: Essay on a Reflective Journal

During the tour each day you should write a reflective journal in which you record then comment on what you have encountered that day. At least every second day email your academic supervisor up to 200 words summarising your reflections on your recent experience on the tour. The seven or so emails to your supervisor comprise a basic foundation for the essay that you will write on your journal for your assignment one. In that subsequent essay you add your later thoughts and commentary on what you engaged with on the tour.

Possible Questions to Reflect On And Write About Each Day As you engage with the questions below, try to reflect on your personal reactions to what happened during the day, rather than just reporting what happened. Write in the first person: "I felt that …. I realised that … I learnt something new to me … I saw something in a different way … I really liked … I really disliked … I want to find out more about … I think this will be useful to me in …"
What was the highlight of my tour experience today and why? What in particular made this experience special for me, such as what did I learn?
Did I have an achievement today that I was proud of, possibly such as showing leadership in our group, or asking a presenter some good question(s)?
Did I experience any culture shock or anxiety today, and if so, what seemed to cause this?
What might I do differently in today's experience if I had the chance to do it again? How might information or insights I obtained during the course of today possibly feed into how I write one of my assignments for this course?

On your Stream site you will find a collection of readings on image and identity. This first assignment asks you to demonstrate an ability to connect the theory you read in these readings, and what you have encountered during the tour. Include a minimum of references to **three** readings you have been supplied with, or other readings you source yourself, in this first assignment.

You have on-campus access (when in Wellington) and online access to the resources of the Massey University Library which has strong collections in relevant topic areas.

In your Essay on a Reflective Journal assignment you will write a reflective essay on your experiences during the tour and ideas regarding the issues you have identified using the prescribed essay format below. The basic structure of your essay comprises:

- Title page with a full descriptive title, along with your name, date, etc.
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices (if any)

You can use headings and subheadings throughout the body of your essay. Please start each major new section on a new page.

In your **introduction** section you outline your essay, pointing to main issues you are discussing in it and providing sufficient context to enable the reader to understand the situation you are describing.
Your **discussion** section develops your argument and supports your ideas with relevant theoretical points from the literature (i.e., sources recommended in this course or identified by your independent research). This is the body (main part) of your essay which should contain the synthesis of your experiences and theory in a cohesive and logical argument that demonstrates critical thinking and understanding of the issues under discussion.
In your **conclusion** section you state the major findings or points that you have identified and provide an overall summary of your argument.

Ensure that you provide a list of references of works that you have cited at the end of your assignment. APA style is preferred, but if your home university has trained you in a different style you are welcome to use that, so long as you use just one style consistently.

Your assignment should not exceed 2000 words. **Please include a word count at the end of your assignment.**

You may also find the following Massey University YouTube videos useful in improving your academic writing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOEmM5gmTJM	APA referencing: the basics
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFGNKJruxdg	Report writing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Bkk3PVjDMI	Essay writing

Marking Guide for Assignment #1

The following is a general guide to how your assignments will be marked.

Clear, engaging and informative title (5%) _____

Introduction including your essay outline (10%) _____

Discussion (overall structure, content and quality) (30%) _____

Synthesis and argument, integration of ideas and sources (10%) _____

Critical thinking, understanding of issues (10%) _____

Conclusion (10%) _____

Referencing – in-text & reference list (APA format preferred) (5%) _____

General (20%) _____

(Layout, tone, presentation, writing style, punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc.)

Total Mark Awarded _____

Spelling

In reading this study guide you will have noticed that NZ spelling differs somewhat from US spelling (organization-organisation; program-programme; labor-labour, etc.). Or in NZ, practice is the noun, while practise is the verb. You are welcome to use either US or NZ spelling in your assignments – but be consistent in using either one, not both in the same assignment!

Assignment #2: Company Assessment: Image & Identity

In this report you select one organisation you encountered on the tour and write a report on it to your academic supervisor, exploring issues of image and/ or identity pertaining to that organisation. For the purposes of this assignment you do not need to give the organisation's actual name, hence you can give it a made-up name if you wish. As in your first assignment, *Essay on a Reflective Journal,* this assignment requires you to refer to the literature you have been supplied with. Ensure that you use and cite at least **five** of the sources that are available to you on Stream or other sources that you have located.

You also have the opportunity to access further relevant literature via the Massey Library especially via online means. In your report you will be seeking to provide an assessment of some key aspects of this organisation's communication or marketing processes that you observed or obtained information on during your tour.

Some useful sources for you to read:

University of New South Wales. (n.d.). *Writing the Case Study.* Downloaded on 26 November 2018 from https://student.unsw.edu.au/printpdf/226

Monash University Library. (2007). *How to Write the Case Study*. Downloaded on 26 November 2018 from www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/quickrefs/27-case-study.pdf

Available from the Massey University Library:

Swenson, S.C & P.J Holland. (1986). *How to Analyse and Write Case Study Reports: A Guide for Business Students*. Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press.

You may also find it useful to view the Massey University YouTube presentation on *How to Write a Case Study* here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEYb2VRsWQU

In your Assignment #2 you complete a report addressed to your academic supervisor using the prescribed business report format below. The basic structure of your report comprises:

- Covering letter (addressed to your academic supervisor)
- Full descriptive title
- Executive summary
- Contents page
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

- References
- Appendices (if any).

Place headings and subheadings throughout the body of your report and start each major new section on a new page.

In your **discussion** section you will need to provide a logical and well-argued defence of your conclusions and recommendations. The discussion and analysis section of your report is therefore the most substantial section and is where your theory and references are found.

Your reader will be looking for evidence that you have successfully incorporated appropriate communication, marketing or organisational theory into your discussion. The most straightforward way to do this is to cite some of the writers whom you have found particularly helpful. You will need to describe areas of concern, define any terms used, use theory to support any points you make and relate theory to the organisation's actual situation in a practical way.

In your **conclusions** section you state the major findings or issues that you have identified.

In your **recommendations** section you suggest anything that realistically might result in resolution of problems or ways in which improvements may be made, giving specific advice about what is needed for the future.

Ensure that you provide a list of references of works that you have cited at the end of your report. APA style is preferred, but if your home university has trained you in a different style, you are welcome to use that, so long as you use just one style consistently.

Your report should not exceed 2000 words. **Please include a word count at the end of your report.**

Marking Guide for Assignment #2

The following is a general guide to how your assignments will be marked.

Accompanying letter (5%) _____

Executive summary (10%) _____

Introduction including your report objectives (10%) _____

Discussion (structure, content, quality) (30%) _____

Conclusions (10%) _____

Recommendations (10%) _____

References (5%) _____

General (20%) _____

(Layout, tone, presentation, writing style, punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc.)

Total Mark Awarded _____

Assignment #3: Simulated Report to Service Provider

In this assignment you complete a report using a prescribed report format as if from a communication or marketing consultant, written for the benefit of an organisation you found information on during and following your tour. For the purposes of this assignment you do not need to give the organisation's actual name, hence you can give it a made-up name if you wish. As with your Assignments #2, the basic structure of your report comprises:

- Covering letter (addressed to an organisation's manager/ made-up name)
- Full descriptive title
- Executive summary
- Contents page
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- References
- Appendices (if any).

Your assignment needs to be based on a point of view that you will have developed about the organisation's communication and marketing practices. Your aim is to be **tactful, thoughtful** and **constructive** to help the business run more effectively. Place headings and subheadings throughout the body of your report and start each major new section on a new page.

You will need to provide a logical and well-argued defence of your conclusions and recommendations. The discussion and analysis section of your report is therefore the most substantial section and is where your theory and references are found. Your reader will be looking for evidence that you have successfully incorporated appropriate communication, marketing or organisational theory into your discussion section. The most straightforward way to do this is to cite in the **discussion** section some of the writers whom you have found particularly helpful. You will need to describe areas of concern, define any terms used, use theory to support any points you make and relate theory to the company's actual situation in a practical way.

Your **conclusions** sum up key issues that you have earlier identified in the discussion, while your **recommendations** deal with similar issues by giving specific advice about what is needed for the future. Ensure that you provide a list of references of works that you have cited at the end of your report. APA style is preferred, but if your home university has trained you in a different style, you are welcome to use that, so long as you use just one style consistently.
Your report should not exceed 2000 words. **Please include a word count at the end of your report.**

Marking Guide for Assignment #3

The following is a general guide to how your assignments will be marked.

Accompanying letter (5%) _____

Executive summary (10%) _____

Introduction including your report objectives (10%) _____

Discussion (structure, content, quality) (30%) _____

Conclusions (10%) _____

Recommendations (10%) _____

References (5%) _____

General (20%) _____

(Layout, tone, presentation, writing style, punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc.)

Total Mark Awarded _____

Frequent Comments on Assignments

1. Make your title positive in tone so that it does not focus, for example, on “this company’s current difficulties.” Instead, try to indicate that you are taking a positive new approach
2. In your introduction, don’t describe your findings or provide recommendations
3. Avoid using lists in formal academic writing. Lists tend to fragment your writing and make your argument more difficult to follow
4. If you do use a list on some rare occasion, ensure that you use parallel structure, so that each item begins in a similar fashion, each flowing logically from the initial statement
5. Check your grammar, spelling or punctuation
6. Cite your source of information
7. Use complete sentences rather than sentence fragments
8. Avoid over-use of passive voice of the verb (e.g., “It is believed that …” instead of “We believe that …”)
9. Your writing is awkward or ambiguous and needs rewording for better clarity
10. This item is not cited in your list of references
11. Avoid “run-on” sentences. Break this into two or else use a conjunction (joining word)
12. Avoid one-sentence paragraphs in formal academic writing (except when you especially need to stress some point)
13. This sentence or paragraph contains more than one main idea
14. Use capitals when and only as needed, such as for proper nouns
15. Too much material from another source is being quoted or paraphrased here
16. Use a page reference when quoting directly from some source
17. When you cite some research, give a source of reference
18. When you cite a reference, be explicit about what use you are making of it
19. When you cite some theory, show immediately and explicitly how it applies in your situation
20. Use the APA system of citing your references, or else be consistent in using some other referencing style
21. Check the differences between the essay’s **conclusion** and the report’s **conclusions**
22. Number your conclusions and recommendations and put them in descending order of priority
23. More like a recommendation than a conclusion. Keep them separate
24. More like a conclusion than a recommendation. Keep them separate
25. Your conclusions section is too brief and does not do justice to the issues in your discussion
26. Write your conclusions and recommendations on a “no surprises” basis. This means that you cover (or at least foreshadow) everything in these sections in your discussion section.

Further comments:

Further Information on Report-writing

As shown earlier, your report consists of these elements:

Covering Letter. Your report must be accompanied by a covering letter. The covering letter or memo hands over the report, explains who authorised it, and states how to contact you for further discussion. The letter or memo is attached to the report. Use a standard business format for your letter such as the example provided below.

Title page. This gives a full descriptive title for your report, author, recipient and date, briefly and informatively.

Table of Contents. This lists each section of the report and their page numbers. The covering letter and title page do not need to be included in this listing, but everything else (including the references) is required.

Executive Summary. This section contains a brief statement of the problem or proposal covered in your report, relevant background information, some concise analysis and a short overview of your main conclusions and recommendations.

Introduction. The introduction states the "problem", i.e., the issue at hand, the relevant background to the problem and the specific objectives of the report. Any required context is sketched in at this point. Do not state any report findings in this section.

Discussion and analysis. This section comprises the main bulk of the report and analyses the problem or issue in some logical sequence. Normally this section contains a series of main ideas, each with its own heading. The reader will expect you to state the assumptions you are making, and to discuss the various possible solutions and their advantages and shortcomings.

The Discussion is the only section in which you include theory or academic references. Ensure that you use only relevant theory that helps you to provide some insights into the organisation you are assessing.

In this section you explain and defend your interpretation of the issues involved. Your introduction has stated particular objectives. These should be thoroughly dealt with here. It is in this section that the person reading your assignment will expect to see you referring to the writers whom you found helpful while writing the report. For example, if you wanted to mention a point made in the article written by Laurie Lewis in the April 20XX issue of the *Journal of Business Communication*, volume XX (2) you might cite it along the following lines:

> Achieving successful planned change at work is nearly always a challenging process, and communication problems are quite typical (Lewis, 20XX).

Another way of citing this author is:

Lewis (20XX) argues that achieving successful planned change at work is nearly always a challenging process, and communication problems are quite typical.

Include a page reference for your quotation only if you reproduce the *exact* words used by that author, for example, Lewis (20XX) states that "Implementing planned change is almost always difficult" (p. 128) and goes on to say that communication problems are quite typical.

Then in your reference list at the end, you provide a complete description of where your reader can find this article:

Lewis, L.K. (20XX). Communicating change: Four cases of quality programs. *Journal of Business Communication, XX,* 128 – 155.

Conclusions. Your discussion and analysis lead you to specific conclusions which you state concisely in this section. Ensure they are securely grounded in the points you made in the discussion, and are consistent with the objectives of your report. Please number your conclusions and arrange them in order of priority from greatest to least importance.

Recommendations. Following your conclusions you usually make recommendations for action. Recommendations flow naturally from your conclusions and their purpose is to fulfil the objectives of your report. As with the conclusions, please number them and put them in order of descending importance. They should give specific details to be implemented and often will answer the who, when and where questions as to who should implement any change, when any such improvements might be needed, etc.

References. In this section, you collect together all the sources of information that you have referred to in the report. List those sources in alphabetical order in some consistent style such as the one shown below.

Sample References

Bland, V. (20XX). ET phone the office: Managing evolving telecommunications. *Management (N.Z.) XX*, X, 48 – 50, 52 – 54.

Cascio, W. (20XX). Managing a virtual workplace. *Academy of Management Executive, XX,* 81 – 90.

Conaway, R.N. & Fernandez (20XX). Ethical preferences among business leaders: Implications for business schools. *Business Communication Quarterly, XX*, 23 – 38.

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Appendices. In this section, you gather together any bulky or complex material unsuitable for the discussion and analysis section. Many graphics, tables, and lists are best included here. Number appendices, give them titles, and arrange them in the order in which they appear in the text.

The above shows the required order in which you *present* the sections of your report. The probable order in which you will *write* these sections is very different, however, and may be like this:

a. Appendices (if any)

b. Discussion and Analysis

c. Conclusions

d. Recommendations

e. Introduction

f. Executive Summary

g. References

h. Table of Contents

i. Title page

j. Covering letter or memo

APPENDIX 1: Sample Report

55 Beach Rd
Maxiview Beach
Wellington 6012

Phone: 04 555 5555
Email: consultme@ihug.co.nz

7 April 20XX

Mr B. Whitmore
Factory Manager
Excelsior Chocolates Ltd
P.O. Box 12-345
UNIVERSITY CITY 6034

Dear Mr Whitmore

I have enclosed my report prepared in accordance with instructions contained in your letter of 20 March 20XX.

As requested the report covers communication issues that have a bearing on the difficulties you are experiencing in establishing an effective night shift. These issues are also relevant to your day shift staff and to future efforts to increase production. I have made recommendations for action steps to help overcome the problems discussed.

Should you wish to discuss any of the findings or recommendations in my report at any time, please contact me at the email or phone number shown above.

Thank you for your instructions.

Yours sincerely

BM Bartley

Bronwen M. Bartley
Communications Consultant

An examination of communication and management issues at Excelsior Chocolates Ltd.

Prepared by
Bronwen M. Bartley
Communications Consultant

for

Mr B. Whitmore
Factory Manager
Excelsior Chocolates Ltd

April 20XX

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1.0 Executive Summary

Excelsior Chocolates is seeking ways to integrate two different groups of employees (permanent production workers and student part-timers) who have been having difficulties in working together but who both have distinctive skills and strengths as well as specific limitations. The report identifies communication issues that have contributed to the current challenges. It also examines ways in which the positive characteristics of both groups can be combined and further improved. Communication between supervisory staff and student workers is proving problematic and the night shift is developing habits which, while giving greater productivity in the short term, are causing conflict with permanent semi-skilled staff. With clear guidelines and objectives the students' energy and creative drive can be better utilised. High priority should be given to developing written procedures, guidelines and parameters for all production areas. The factory manager should take the opportunity to spend time on the night shift to obtain first-hand information on the situation that is occurring there. Supervisory staff and the factory manager should be offered training in specific communication skills to enhance their existing skills. Ultimately a decision can be made on whether to persevere with a mainly student staffed night shift at present, or to introduce more permanent staff to that shift. Improved procedures once in place must be effectively communicated to all new staff through an induction programme.

2.0 Introduction

This report is commissioned by Mr B. Whitmore, Factory Manager. Its purpose is to examine problems Excelsior Chocolates is experiencing in successfully integrating two different groups of employees (permanent production workers and student part-timers) who work together on production shift work. Both groups have particular skills and strengths as well as specific disadvantages.

The main objective of this report is to determine communication issues contributing to the difficulties and examine ways in which the positive characteristics of both groups can be combined and focused. The desired outcome is to increase productivity without sacrificing product quality, workplace safety or incurring additional maintenance and down-time costs due to inappropriate use of aging production plant.

An assumption is made that the proposed new factory machinery will not after the current work practices, except in terms of plant reliability and that in future the product will still be made in the same way, requiring the same skill levels as at present. It is therefore assumed that recommendations in this report will remain valid once the new plant is installed.

3.0 Discussion and analysis

3.1 Introduction

Slinn (20XX) believes that the effectiveness of any organisation depends on how well it manages its internal and external communication. Further to this he adds that as organisations expand, adding departments, or as in the case of Excelsior additional shifts, communication barriers may arise which are new and different to those previously experienced by the company. Adding a night shift primarily composed of a group which is different to that which normally undertakes the work is presenting some new challenges for management as well as the opportunity to maximize the strength of that group.

3.2 Culture clash

Every organisation has its own way of dealing with the world, and working out its problems. This underpinning value position is known as the organisation's 'culture'. Schein defines organisational culture as:

> The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (20XX, p.3).

Schein (20XX) also notes that sub-cultures can be embedded in the overall culture and these may be in conflict with each other. Indeed, according to Schein (XXXX) managing the internal integration of multiple cultures is a major management function. Exactly how (and to what extent) such subgroups should be integrated is a question specific to each organisation because each organisation is unique.

The permanent staff embody the 'parent' culture developed at Excelsior over the years in response to its internal and external environment and management. The student part-timers bring the values and culture of their university world to their work at Excelsior. Therefore their views of how the work should proceed are informed as much by their University culture as by the existing culture at Excelsior.

Schein (20XX) also maintains the question of whether the organisation should enhance its cultural diversity to remain flexible in the face of environmental turbulence; or to create a more homogenous 'strong' culture, becomes one of the toughest strategy decisions management confronts. This is certainly a key question for the management at Excelsior as the student part-timers bring a whole new dimension of creativity and enthusiasm to the job, generating higher production levels and new ways of doing the work. Unfortunately they also bring some over-exuberance and lack of understanding of the long-term consequences or side effects of their actions.

By imposing a greater adherence to existing norms and practices the initiative will be progressively squashed out of this group. This seems to have been the case in the past when the part-timers were a much smaller group and were scattered

through the work-force. If this occurs, the benefits they bring in terms of energy, creativity and enthusiasm will be lost, to the detriment of the company. However allowing the student group to over-ride the existing culture as is currently happening on the night shift, may be just as detrimental to the company. Short-term productivity gains may be offset by loss of valuable permanent staff such as Isobel Reti, shorter life for aging machinery, quality problems and developing unsafe working practices.

3.3 People at work obtain information from their peers

Associated with the idea that there may be different cultures embedded within the overall company culture is the notion that people are most likely to exchange ideas and communication with those who share similar characteristics. Rogers and Kincaid (20XX) assert that people who are similar in some characteristics (such as gender, age, values, attitudes, status, education etc.) also share common meanings and a mutual value position. As a result communication between them will be more effective and will thus reinforce the desire to communicate further with each other. The converse is also valid, people who are unalike will have difficulty communicating with each other, and their communication will not be as easy promoting misunderstanding, frustration and friction.

A preference for interpersonal communication between people who share similar characteristics is significant in the workforce at Excelsior because members of the different groups are being influenced by their peers in their own 'group' on how to do the job and how to behave, rather than on information provided by their supervisors or individuals of the other group.

The night shift staff, being mainly students, communicate their own ideas amongst themselves and have, as a result, developed a different approach to the work. There do not appear to be formal written procedures in place for such things as how machinery will operate, safety standards and so on. In the absence of a formal communication system for procedures, informal interpersonal communication is used to transfer information. As noted above, if interpersonal communication is problematic between groups, there are gaps in shared understanding, or they just cannot be bothered dealing with each other, there is no way of standardising the procedures used throughout the company. This will lead to different work practices and eventually uneven quality.

3.4 Perceptions sometimes lead to misunderstandings

The problems Ms Reti is experiencing in effectively communicating with the student part-timers are partly due to the fact that she is dissimilar from them in both status and culture group. As she readily agreed to staffing the night shift with students and acknowledged the productivity drop with students in the past, she is unlikely to have approached the night shift from a negative stance. However she did have the perception that the workplace might 'turn into a playground' and is now feeling that her misgivings have been borne out.

Aligned with the concept that people receive the most influential information on how to do their jobs from their peers, is the idea that perspective determines perception of and reactions to other group members and group processes (Pace &

Foules, 20XX). Perceptual barriers (such as stereotyping, preconceptions, and first impressions) will operate to some extent to thwart effective communication in groups (Steers, 20XX). Perception can also contribute to competition and conflict developing in the group.

Once conflict starts it can quickly escalate. Tubbs (19XX) explains that this occurs in part because our perceptions are distorted by defensiveness. At Excelsior the working practices accepted as the norm by the permanent production workers are threatened by the more dynamic approach of the student part-timers. The anger expressed by the permanent staff can partially be attributed to a defensive reaction to threats to their established patterns.

Staffing shifts entirely with workers from either the permanent staff or student part-timers will produce homogenous groups less prone to internal conflict, however it is undesirable to try and eliminate all conflict in groups. Napier and Gershenfeld (20XX) note that groups who have dissenting members are often more productive than those who habitually agree. Tubbs (19XX) mentions the usefulness of conflict in preventing stagnation, stimulating interest, airing problems and resolving tension, demarcating groups and in determining group norms. Opposing ideas is a good way of testing and improving on them (Tubbs & Moss, 20XX).

Management needs to be aware of levels of conflict and how it escalates. Personality clashes must be differentiated from differences of opinion. As conflict rarely resolves itself, groups that are trained in conflict management are better able to channel it productively. The ability to achieve consensus is a particularly valuable skill in teamwork. When people do not agree with a decision they are unlikely to support it.

3.5 Towards understanding

Given that problems are currently being experienced in communicating with the night-shift students, and having explored some reasons for the difficulties, the question remains as to how diversity can be harnessed and channelled.

Timm (20XX) believes that changes in organisational communication can come about through management actions and lists three interventions that can bring about improvements in group functioning. These are, in ascending order of difficulty: increasing awareness and sensitivity to the way individuals 'come across' to others, teaching principles and standards of appropriate communication behaviour to others and inducing changes in individuals' attitudes towards communication and interpersonal relations. The last two are more difficult to implement because they need long-term and on-going emphasis from management.

Specific action steps are listed in the Recommendations Section. These relate to ensuring there are clear formal procedures and expectations about the work process. Other recommendations relate to ensuring there is effective understanding and communication between all areas of the business.

4.0 Conclusions

1. There is a separate sub-culture on the night shift that does not gel well with the existing company culture. The practice of having mainly students on the night shift may need review, at least in the short term until more effective communication is in place, which allows better control but does not stifle enthusiasm.

2. Due to a lack of effective formal communication and procedures, workers are obtaining information on how the job should be done by communicating with their peer group.

3. Communication between supervisory staff and student workers is proving problematic. This is partly due to the sub-culture that has developed on the night shift and is a problem that needs urgent attention.

4. As a result, the night shift is developing habits which, while giving greater productivity in the short term, are causing conflict with permanent semi-skilled staff. In addition the night-shift practices may trade short term productivity gain for longer term problems with premature machinery failure and product quality.

5. With clear guidelines and objectives the students' energy and creative drive can be utilised by placing them in temporary groups or teams with permanent staff to work on specific aspects of the job, with a view to improving productivity, and standardising operations. The permanent workers working on teams should be drawn from both day and night shifts to ensure common practices are developed for and relevant to both shifts.

5.0 Recommendations

1. The factory manager should personally spend several evenings on the night shift. Part of that time should be in company of the production supervisor. During this time he will be able to speak to many different staff members in person. This will enable a better understanding of the practical difficulties being experienced, and allow him to make a personal assessment on how significant the difficulties are. As a result of this personal experience a decision can be made on whether to persevere with a mainly student staffed night shift at present, or to introduce more permanent staff to provide a steadying influence.

2. Difficulties being experienced must be discussed with all members of the night shift. Individuals must have a chance to explain what problems they are having, as well as ideas they have for improving the work. The objective of such a meeting would be to "clear the air" and allow people to see the effect their actions and attitudes have on others. This session should be mediated by a trained facilitator who can ensure a positive and non-threatening (safe) environment for the exchange of views.

3. High priority should be given to developing written procedures, guidelines and parameters for all production areas. These procedures can be the outcome of specific tasks given to small teams formed to complete short-term tasks. The purpose of developing teams is to improve understanding and communication between groups and break down barriers between them. A further outcome is to combine experience and a fresh view in examining work processes.

4. Where parameters are developed they must be formally communicated both verbally and in written form. Placards should be placed in relevant places to remind workers of relevant matters such as machinery speed or safety cautions such as prohibiting throwing objects.

5. Once procedures are in place, these must be effectively communicated to all new staff through an induction programme. The formal communication system should be the primary source of reference and influence in the specifics of doing the job. Training will be on an interpersonal basis but the guidelines laid down must be communicated at the outset.

6. As a preliminary to forming teams some simple team-building exercises are helpful to breaking down barriers between people. This does not need to be elaborate or expensive, but should be fun. Further sessions could be held on conflict resolution in future.

7. Supervisory staff should be offered training in specific communication skills such as active listening and conflict resolution. This does not imply criticism of current performance, but rather an opportunity for enhancement of existing skills to assist in a new environment. For the same reasons the Factory Manager may also wish to attend the same training.

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Comment by Frank Sligo on this assignment:

This is an excellent report that was done for a postgraduate class in business communication and scored highly. As it stands it is somewhat longer than permissible in respect of your assignments – a word count from Introduction to the end of the Recommendations reveals about 2,200 words. I have edited some material out of the Discussion section that dealt with groups and teams. About the only substantive comment I had to make on the assignment was that the last conclusion (#5) was more like a recommendation than a conclusion, and hence should have been worked into the following section. Otherwise the assignment was difficult to fault.

The covering letter that accompanies your report and any appendices are not counted in your word limit.

Typical Mark Allocations

90-100 A+	1% of students (or fewer): An exceptionally excellent performance
85-89.99 A 80-84.99 A-	A and A minus may be awarded to possibly 8-12% of students: Excellent work, very difficult to criticise in any way. Suitable for reproducing as model answers.
75-79.99 B+ 70-74.99 B 65-69.99 B -	22-28% of assignments may fall in the B+, B and B - category. These assignments demonstrate very good command of theory and practice
60-64.99 C+ 55-59.99 C 50-54.99 C-	60-70% of passes may be in the C+ to C- category. Assignments show a fair grasp of theory and practice and show basic competence.
40-49.99 D 0-39.99 E	Fail. Assignment does not show competence in either or both of theory and practice.

Most graders will follow the practice of supplying either a letter grade or a numerical mark to each individual assignment graded.