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These processes assist employees to shift from the individual to the collective level and create an initial sense of belonging to the company. Once employees have developed a bond with the organization, the second stage of the process aims to encourage employees to identify with the corporate values, which in the two organizations we have studied is achieved through the process of 'inspirationalizing'. The final process of 'breaking new grounds' strengthens employees' bond with the corporate identity by promoting a positive image for the company and instilling a belief that employees' work is monumental. In return, the more employees identify strongly with the corporate identity the more the bonding process is enhanced. This study has a number of implications for both academics and practitioners.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMICS

This study implies that the process of encouraging identification with the desired corporate identity is dynamic. Pratt (2000) argues that most proposed frameworks for managing identification have been relatively static and focus on identification rather than identifying. The findings of our study support his view that identification is not a one-time, all or nothing process whereby individuals come to match their values with their organization. It is an ongoing process that requires adequate management attention. Our framework provides academics with further insight on processes that are actually applied in practice within creative organizations to satisfy the need for inclusion and create a community spirit. It also illustrates the complexity of this phenomenon. As this research is only in its infancy the authors encourage other researchers in the area to adopt inductive research designs in order to further explain the complex phenomenon of encouraging identification with the corporate identity by seeking insight of the same phenomenon into a broader category of knowledge-based organizations. This is because the case study approach applied in this research provides little basis for scientific generalizations (Yin, 1984, p. 20).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

The proposed identification management framework provides practitioners in the creative industry with new avenues for managerial action. Does it make sense for managers in the creative industry to solely focus on identifying and selecting people who fit the corporate values that the organization aims to stand for? Probably not.

Effective leaders should not only select the right mix of people but also create the conditions upon which employees can identify with and eventually 'live' the desired corporate identity. The understanding of the 'bonding', 'inspirationalizing' and 'breaking new grounds' processes is helpful because it can guide appropriate action and also provide explanations as to why some members may identify with the desired identity and others may not. However, understanding these processes is not sufficient per se; action must also occur. Practitioners need to realize that managing employees' identification with the corporate identity must be a systematic process, which needs careful planning and adequate management attention.

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tify with the desired corporate identity in practice, two well-reputed creative organizations were selected. The research identified three key processes as presented in Figure 1. The process of enhancing employee identification with the desired identity begins by creating a sense of belonging through various active and passive 'bonding' processes. These processes assist employees to shift from the individual to the collective level and create an initial sense of belonging to the company. Once employees have developed a bond with the organization, the second stage of the process aims to encourage employees to identify with the corporate values, which in the two organizations we have studied is achieved through the process of 'inspirationalizing'. The final process of 'breaking new grounds' strengthens employees' bond with the corporate identity by promoting a positive image for the company and instilling a belief that employees' work is monumental. In return, the more employees identify strongly with the corporate identity (the involved in), I wouldn't stay in a company where there is a dead-end'.

Interviewees argued that this process not only boosts employees' confidence in their work, but also enhances their trust in the company and encourages employees to identify with their organization's core values by verbally rewarding behaviour that supports organizational objectives. The case studies identified three main ways through the creative organizations studied encourage employees to value their contribution to their company's success.

First, interviewees identified the importance of providing employees with explicit encouragement, both throughout their work and for their achievements. Showing employees that they are in the right direction overtly helps them to be in a position to implement their ideas since they are operating in a criticism free environment where all ideas are taken into consideration.

Furthermore, respondents suggested that if employees are to identify with the desired corporate identity and reflect the core values and objectives through their behavior, they need to have adequate resources to perform their work and develop their creative thinking. The research has shown that there are two forms of adequate resourcing, namely contextual and conceptual. Contextual resourcing refers to those resources, which are necessary to the employees to perform their work, such as the appropriate software and hardware, money, time as well as facilities. On the other hand, conceptual resourcing refers to these resources, which are necessary for the development of employees' creative thinking, such as subscription to relevant magazines and journals as well as attendance to related seminars, conferences and activities. Finally, the creative organizations studied in this research are trying to create a sense of ownership, which is about creating a collective sense of achievement. They both encourage a corporate culture where every member working in a successful project gets recognition and feels proud of contributing to the organization's success. An architect from the multidisciplinary design consultancy noted that: 'I am quite happy. I have been with it since it started up in Glasgow. I feel more connection with achievement; I feel part of it'.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS

Over the years, scholars have highlighted the importance of employee identification with the corporate identity. Authors have also proposed several processes that organizations within the creative industry should take into account to encourage employee identification with their company's values, goals and objectives. In an attempt to explore how organizations actually encourage their employees to identify with the desired corporate identity in practice, two well-reputed creative organizations were selected. The research identified three key processes as presented in Figure 1. The process of enhancing employee identification with the desired identity begins by creating a sense of belonging through various active and passive 'bonding' processes.

The case studied also indicated the significance of employing a number of managers with academic backgrounds. The corporate identity's cofounder has written several books in the area of corporate identity while both founders in the second company are active in writing in design related magazines and talking at conferences and TV documentaries. The employment of experienced and knowledgeable individuals on supervisory or managerial positions implicitly provides employees with good role models with whom they can associate, helps them gain confidence about their work and enhance their commitment to organisational objectives.

BREAKING NEW GROUNDS

The internal process of 'breaking new grounds' strengthens employees' bond with the corporate identity by promoting a positive image for the company and instilling a belief that their work is monumental and will change the industry within which they operate. As the architect from the multidisciplinary design consultancy noted:

'I want to feel part of something that is going to lead to something good (both the company and the projects that I am involved in). I wouldn't stay in a company where there is a dead-end'.

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CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS

Over the years, scholars have highlighted the importance of employee identification with the corporate identity. Authors have also proposed several processes that organizations within the creative industry should take into account to encourage employee identification with their company's values, goals and objectives. In an attempt to explore how organizations actually encourage their employees to iden-

different. In the corporate identity consultancy the use of a cafeteria enhances employee communication since they can use their lunch break to learn what is happening in other projects or meet new members of the company. In the second company, its small size creates a more family-like environment and people often meet and exchange viewpoints in informal meetings after work. Respondents within both companies also emphasized the importance of the senior management showing concern about the welfare of their employees and being open for discussion when team members have problems with their work. This process, together with effective coaching, which refers to the way individuals share their knowledge, skills and capabilities when they are working in project teams, has been highlighted by respondents as processes that encourage the effective internal communication of the company's values and objectives and strengthens employees' bond with the organization. The case studies also revealed a passive bonding process, which refers to the subconscious development of bonds among employees. The open plan workspace in both organizations helped towards the development of a forum for discussion among employees. Interviewees regarded the design of a workspace that enhances an open flow of communication as important in encouraging them to identify with their organization. An architect of the multidisciplinary design consultancy highlights the importance of the open workspace: 'Open plan, relaxed environment, people are dispersed, there is communication, which is the only way to know how things are done in the office. Effective communication enhances the way you run the office other- wise things would take more time'.

INSPIRATIONALIZING

The bonding process described above creates a sense of belonging for the employees that successfully shift from the individual to the collective level in their working lives. However, senior management from the two case studies indicated that creating a community spirit per se is not adequate if employees do not also identify with the key values the organization aims to stand for. For the companies under study it was considered important to encourage employees to identify with the values of creativity and innovation. Senior management and project leaders were therefore constantly trying to infuse a belief of the power of creativity in an attempt to inspire people to do their best work and identify with the values of creativity and innovation. A graphic designer from the corporate identity consultancy highlighted the significance of this inspirationalising process: 'It comes back to the founders of the company, their strong belief in the importance of design and that comes across all the time when you talk to them, when you talk about projects, when you are briefed on jobs and that in return helps me to see that they are that much involved in the design process. It gives me the belief that we are doing something worthwhile and we are not just creating fancy identities'. We have identified two ways through which the creative organizations studied in this research try to communicate the core value of creativity to their employees. To begin with, senior management's actions in both organizations were aligned with the core value of enhancing creativity within their companies. Interviewees emphasized that creative organizations need to regard creativity as a priority through all their actions, rather than focus solely on the selling and marketing aspects of their businesses, if they want their employees to show a supportive attitude towards such values and align their behavior with organizational objectives. Respondents also highlighted the importance of role modelling as a means of encouraging employee identification with the values of creativity and innovation. People at supervisory or managerial positions need to show passion and faith in what they are doing and should communicate that to their employees to encourage identification with the corporate values and objectives. As all the interviewees noted, creative organizations need not only talk about creativity but also act upon it.

The process of enhancing employee identification with the desired identity begins by creating a sense of belonging through various active and passive 'bonding' processes. Developing a community spirit assists employees to shift from the individual to the collective level and creates an initial sense of belonging to the company. Usually this process occurs in the induction period of new employees or when projects require employees to work with colleagues they have never met before. Once employees have developed a bond with the organization, the second stage of this process aims to encourage employees to identify with the corporate values, which in the two organizations we have studied is achieved through the process of 'inspirationalizing'. The final process of 'breaking new grounds' strengthens employees' bond with the corporate identity by promoting a positive image for the company and instilling a belief that their work is monumental. In return, the more employees identify strongly with the corporate identity the more the bonding process is enhanced. The following sections explain in more detail how the organizations under study used each of the aforementioned processes to encourage employee identification with the corporate identity.

Bonding

The case studies illustrated that encouraging a bonding process among employees, which refers to individuals associating with others with whom they think they have similarities, assists employees to bond with each other and the company, helps to convey the message that the company values its employees and encourages discussions that can help to prevent stereotypes and the formation of cliques within the organization. The director of graphic design from the multidisciplinary design consultancy suggested that:

...as long as you get along with other people within the company and as long as the personalities are compatible then there is not a problem. It has to do with the individual rather than with his/her discipline. We also have a similar understanding of the design process. We get along with each other by communicating and listening to each other'.

Respondents indicated two forms of bonding processes that assist employees to shift from the individual to the collective level, namely active and passive bonding processes. Active bonding refers to conscious and deliberate actions planned by senior management within creative organisations to encourage the development of bonds among employees within a projectbased environment. A variety of active bonding processes has been identified within the two creative organizations studied for the purposes of this research.

These include processes that we have labelled as sensitizing, networking, showing concern about employees' welfare and coaching. Sensitizing refers to the informal and formal ways through which employees become aware of other people's abilities, skills and specialization and work status, so that their creative collaboration is enhanced. By doing so creative employees are in a position to understand how everybody else is performing on an individual basis, as well as to be aware of the way projects are evolving, their organization's

objectives and overall performance. A consultant from the corporate identity consultancy explained how this process occurs in a large organization: 'There are people who are focusing more on concepts than on the end development, and people who are more technical. Through experience, some people can work in multiple projects and others can work in one. The team is quite closely monitored and everybody knows how others are doing'.

Moreover, the active bonding process of networking occurs when employees within the company interact with each other to develop contacts with their fellow employees. The networking process encourages an open flow of communication within the organization and can help to minimize the formation of cliques and stereotypes about sub-cultures within the company. In both organizations, senior management encourages informal networking, although their approach is quite

zations ranging from directors and head of departments to designers, architects, consultants and project managers. A topic guide with open-ended questions was used to gain insights on the different ways through which senior management are perceived to encourage identi@cation with the desired identity. The use of a list of questions, which served as an 'aide memoire' covering the topics to be discussed, ensured the discussions, were not constrained to the predetermined topics and gave the authors the opportunity to explore other relevant topics or subject areas.

Site observation

Findings from the in-depth interviews were complemented by a month's observation in each company. Formal meetings, brainstorming sessions and informal interactions among employees within or across their divisions provided the authors with more information for understanding complex interactions and significant aspects of the employees' experience as organizational members.

Corporate documents

Documents that described the organizations' history and personnel practices, such as organizational charts, personnel manuals and company forms were also collected and analysed. Publicly available information about the organizations under investigation was gathered, which served as additional source of data.

Data analysis

The orthodox grounded theory research method was used in analysing the data generated by in-depth interviews and observation notes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This theory-building research method was chosen since the aim of the research was to discover and analyse behavior beyond a simple description of what people were doing in their natural settings. The main aim of grounded theory is to identify the emerging patterns of behaviors or processes in order to enhance the conceptual understanding of the authors and organize these emergent themes into a coherent framework explaining the problem or issue that confronts the people under investigation.

The following section illustrates the

main findings of this research. The three identified processes of 'bonding', 'inspirationalizing' and 'breaking new grounds' presented below have reached saturation, which grounded theory method defines as the reoccurrence of the same processes when new data are generated. Saturation of these concepts was evident when new data were generated from the second company and the same processes reoccurred.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research highlighted three main processes through which the creative organizations under study encourage their employees to identify with the desired corporate identity. These were identified as 'bonding', 'inspirationalizing' and 'breaking new grounds', which work together to produce a positive identification as shown in Figure 1.

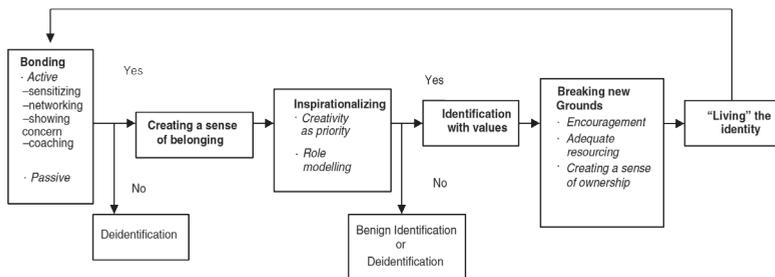


Figure 1: Managing Employee Identification with the Desired

offers employees the opportunity to share the satisfaction from completing tasks together and be proud of their organization's success. Mueller (1991) argues that human networks and the process of social networking are prime components of a properly balanced organizational system. In particular, creative organizations need to encourage informal happenings, since these will provide employees with an opportunity to socialize, allay anxieties, reduce ambiguities and convey the message that the company cares and values its employees.

Finally, there is a common view that employee identification with a desired corporate identity that values and projects creativity and innovation requires a strong culture of continuous innovation and alignment. Deal and Kennedy (1982) propose that in order to encourage employee identification, creative organizations need to develop a strong corporate culture. They argue that employees within a strong company culture know what is expected of them, how to act and also have a frame of reference within which they can pattern their behavior. Quinn (1985) notes that developing a culture of continuous innovation requires senior management to appreciate innovation and manage their company's value system and atmosphere to support it. Kanter (1983) adds that it is important to encourage a culture of pride in the firm's own achievement, reduce the layers of hierarchy within the organization and develop effective internal communication, providing employees with information about company plans and actions. Moreover, Robinson and Stern (1997) suggest that creative organizations need to adopt a process of alignment, whereby the inclination and actions of all employees are directed towards organizational goals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aforementioned literature review indicated the importance of employee identification with the desired corporate identity for building emotional contract within the organization and reviewed writings that illustrate ways through which employee identification can be encouraged within creative organizations. In an attempt to explore how creative organizations encourage employee identification with the desired corporate identity in practice, a case study approach was adopted. The case study approach is described as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context' (Yin, 1984, p. 23), 'aimed at better understanding complex phenomena' (Gummesson, 1993, p. 6). The case study research method was selected in this study for two main reasons. First, taking into consideration the complex nature of employee identification with corporate identity, as illustrated in the previous literature review sections, detailed exploratory research was required if the phenomenon and its management implications were to be understood. Secondly, employee identification is a process occurring within a creative organization and hence the research had to be undertaken within organizations rather than on the fringes of organizations. A qualitative approach was decided since this study seeks 'to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world' (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). Two creative organizations were selected as case studies for the purposes of this research. The first is an international corporate identity consultancy based in London with an annual turnover in the region of £17m. The company's four decades of experience in its industry and the various awards won throughout the years were the main reasons for selecting this organization as the first case study. The second is a cross-disciplinary design consultancy established in Glasgow with an annual turnover of £1m. The continuous publicity the company receives in the media portraying this organization as a leader in innovation and creativity in its industry was the main reason for selecting this creative organization as the second case study of this research.

Interviews with key employees

Thirty-seven in-depth interviews were conducted within the two creative organi-

identity and enhance commitment, enthusiasm and consistent staff behavior in delivering the core values and organizational objectives (de Chernatony, 1999). In addition, Balmer and Wilson (1999) note that organizations may have several sub-cultures and therefore 'a conscious effort needs to be made to align the various cultures in order that they support the overall corporate identity' (Stuart, 1999b). Hatch and Schultz (1997) also argue that employees are increasingly both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (eg, consumers, community members and/or members of special interest groups) and hence consistent messages need to be projected internally and externally about the organization.

ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY

An industry where employees have a pivotal role to play in influencing the reputations of their businesses, making employee identification a strategic necessity, is the creative industry. The creative industry comprises a diverse range of sectors, including advertising, architecture, design, software developers and other creative organizations. In this study, a creative organization is defined as 'any business entity, whose main source of income comes from the production of novel and appropriate ideas, processes, products, or services to tackle clients' problems or opportunities identified' (Andriopoulos, 2000, p. 734).

Over the years, several studies have explored ways through which senior management in creative organizations can encourage employees to identify with the desired corporate identity, the core values that their company aims to stand for, which in most creative organizations are based around the values of creativity and innovation (Amabile, 1998; Brand, 1998;

Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Kanter, 1983; Locke and Kirpatrick, 1995; Mueller, 1991; Quinn, 1985; Robinson and Stern, 1997; Stein and Pinchot, 1998; Sutton and Kelley, 1997). So how can creative organizations encourage their employees to identify with a corporate identity that is built around the values of creativity and innovation? To begin with, authors argue that senior managers within creative organizations need to lead by example and constantly communicate the company's vision internally. Stein and Pinchot (1998) suggest that creative organizations should focus on communicating and inspiring, on listening to and caring for employees and on leading by example. They argue that good leaders move creative employees from a selfish perspective to one that serves the common good and the shared vision and mission of the organization. Amabile (1998) also notes that managers need to be role models in order to support the values that the company stands for and encourage collaboration and communication within the organisation. Leaders should communicate the company's vision internally through a variety of formal and informal communication media (Brand, 1998; Locke and Kirpatrick, 1995). Leaders should also align their behavior with the core values their organization aims to stand for, even in informal settings, because every action is observed and interpreted by employees.

Leaders have constantly to 'sell' the vision and corporate values to their employees to enhance employees' identification with the corporate identity. Moreover, writers within the corporate creativity literature argue that employee identification requires breaking down stereotypes within creative environments. Taking into consideration that most creative organizations employ people from multidisciplinary backgrounds, Sutton and Kelley (1997) suggest that creative organizations need to break down stereotypes and unrealistic expectations that exist among their employees to encourage the value of creativity within their working environments. They propose that the formation of negative stereotypes can be minimized when employees work together, in close cooperation. Working together provides employees with better information about one another and encourages them to appreciate each other's strengths and weaknesses. It also

potential clients to encourage client referrals, media publicity and awards. It is therefore important that employees in creative companies identify with their organization, its values and the image they aim to portray, if they are to reflect the organizational objectives and brand values through their behavior. In addition, creative environments are usually team-based and hence employees need to be encouraged to identify with the desired corporate identity to avoid the formation of cliques and stereotypes within the organization. In this paper, we first review writings illustrating the value of employee identification and explore different perspectives on how organizations can encourage employee identification with the desired corporate identity focusing on the creative industry.

We then present our research findings in an attempt to explore how companies in the creative industry encourage employee identification with the desired corporate identity in practice. A case study approach was adopted and two well-reputed creative organizations were selected as the context of the study. The last section presents the main conclusions of this research and proposes implications for academics and practitioners.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE DESIRED CORPORATE IDENTITY

In an era in which job security no longer serves as the cornerstone of emotional contracts in the workplace (Kanter, 1983) managing members' identification with the desired corporate identity has been proposed as the critical management issue for this century (Cheney, 1991). With business trends such as telecommuting, virtual offices and hot desking, as well as decreasing amounts of managerial control, companies have to deal with the fact that employees are feeling less and less loyalty to the system of values and beliefs that binds the organisation together (Pratt, 2000). Managing employees' views of the corporate identity has therefore been proposed as an important part of the corporate identity management process. Authors argue that the more employees identify with their organization, the more likely they are to show a supportive attitude towards it (Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Stuart, 1999a), as well as to accept the organisation's core values and align their behaviour with organisational objectives (Littlejohn, 1989).

Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) suggest that organizations need to ensure that their employees have a positive image of their company in order for them to identify strongly with the desired corporate identity. As a means of encouraging commitment to the organization and its core values it has been proposed that employees need to internalize and adhere to the organization's values and norms in their attitudes and behavior (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Stuart, 1999a; de Chernatony, 1999).

At the same time organizations need to ensure that all their actions reflect 'what is distinctive, central and enduring about the organisation's identity' (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 259) to strengthen employee identification. In an attempt to identify management practices that promote employee identification, Pratt (2000) proposed a combination of 'sensebreaking' practices that break down meaning and 'sense giving' practices that provide meaning for organizational members. His ethnographic study of distributors for Amway, a network marketing organization, indicated that Amway creates a desire among their distributors to find meaning that originates from a discontentment about who one is through various 'dream building' processes.

This 'sensebreaking' practice then leads to a sense of identity-related discontentment that results in a drive to find meaning in the organizational identity. Whatever processes an organization uses to build employee identification with the desired corporate identity it is clear that senior managers are increasingly faced with the challenge to clearly define and communicate the corporate values internally, to encourage employee identification with the desired corporate

'Living' the Corporate Identity:

Case Studies from the Creative Industry

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abstract

Two case studies of well-reputed creative organizations examine the processes involved in managing employees' identification with the desired corporate identity. Findings illustrate that the creative organizations under study use the 'bonding', 'inspirationalizing' and 'breaking new grounds' processes to encourage employee identification with the key values and behaviors their organizations aim to project to their stakeholders. The proposed framework provides academics and practitioners with further insight on processes that are actually applied in practice to cater for employees' need for inclusion and create emotional contract with the desired identity.

INTRODUCTION

It seems not too long ago that corporate identity management was constrained to effective graphic design. Today, corporate identity is considered a significant management resource requiring effective planning and alignment of all the visual, communication and behavioral representations of the organization. It is now commonplace for corporations to operate sophisticated identity programs in their quest to build companies with 'strong' cultures and 'distinct' identities. Corporate identity programs involve 'the explicit management of all the ways in which the organisation presents itself to its audiences' including the products or services that they offer, the environments in which they make or sell the products, the ways through which they communicate what they do and the ways they behave internally and externally (Olins, 1995, p. 3). Successful corporate identity programs not only manage the aforementioned representations of the organization's character, but also effectively align them to encourage consistent corporate images. This process of alignment, especially in service organizations where it is the most junior staff who have contact with external stakeholders, requires employees to 'buy in' to the desired corporate identity, ie, the ethos, aims and values that present the sense of individuality differentiating the organization (van Riel and Balmer, 1997). Employees have the important role of communicating the corporate identity through their behavior (Birkigt and Stadler, 1986; Kennedy, 1977; Post and Griñn, 1997; Saxton, 1998) and hence the extent to which they identify with the desired corporate identity will influence the everyday images that they project to external stakeholders.

For the two creative organizations we studied, encouraging employee identification with the desired corporate identity was very much embedded in the management priorities of their senior teams. Companies in the creative industry depend highly on the quality of the projects their employees produce, the creativity of their work and their behavior when interacting with existing or