



COMMENTARY

Corporate marketing myopia and the inexorable rise of a corporate marketing logic

Corporate
marketing
myopia

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Perspectives from identity-based views of the firm

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper seeks to outline the nature of corporate marketing myopia and to detail the salient characteristics of a corporate marketing logic. The notion of identity-based views of the firm is held to be highly meaningful to the comprehension of corporate marketing. In addition, the paper aims to broaden the understanding of the antecedents of corporate marketing by making reference to earlier, integrative endeavours (sensory integration, design integration, communications integration, branding integration and identity integration).

Design/methodology/approach – The commentary explains the nature, antecedents, and benefits of an organisation-wide corporate marketing logic.

Findings – A corporate marketing logic characterises those institutions, which realise that institutions and corporate brands can be important sources of differentiation. Moreover, it is held that organisations need to be involved in multi-lateral relationships *vis-à-vis* customers, stakeholders and with society at large. It is also mindful that an organisational marketing orientation should accord sensitivity to CSR/ethical concerns. A key precept of the corporate marketing logic is that it is institution-wide ethos which is enacted via an organisation's culture. A long and short definition of corporate marketing is provided.

Practical implications – Perceiving organisational marketing via the prism of identity-based views of the firm and utilising the new corporate marketing mix (the 8Cs of corporate marketing) affords a practical and pragmatic means by which senior managers can foster and maintain a corporate marketing ethos and culture.

Originality/value – A corporate marketing framework is introduced which is informed by: identity-based views of the firm perspectives; and by key corporate-level constructs.

Keywords Corporate marketing, Corporate brands, Corporate identity, Corporate image, Corporate marketing, Corporate social responsibility, Corporate strategy, Organisational change, Organisational marketing

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Autres temps, autres moeurs

In his celebrated *Harvard Business Review* article of 1960 entitled "Marketing Myopia", Theodore Levitt inveighed against policy makers who adopted a narrow

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conceptualisation of their organisation's *raison d'être*. All too often, according to Levitt (1960), the myopic mind-set of managers resulted in acute institutional malaise and the cause was the failure of CEOs to adequately answer the seemingly simple but, in reality, supremely difficult question: "What business are we in?". Moreover, in addressing this question, he averred that policy makers often failed to place customers at the forefront of their concerns. In short, corporate marketing myopia characterises a systemic failure of an organisation to embrace an institutional, stakeholder and societal/CSR orientation.

However, to me, half a century on, there is an urgent need for us to reappraise the traditional marketing orientation focussed on customers and/or products and services. As such, to me, there is a pressing need for many organisations to have, in addition, an explicit stakeholder, societal and institutional logic. Back in 1998, in an article in *The Journal of Marketing Management* I gave the label corporate marketing to this new area of marketing (Balmer, 1998).

A corporate marketing logic is one that should be underpinned by an organisational-wide philosophy (Balmer and Greyser, 2006). In this article I also wish to explicitly note the critical importance of culture. The importance of personnel – of people – was emphasised in my first article (Balmer, 1998).

With regard to the efficacy of having a supporting marketing-orientated corporate culture has informed the thinking on marketing for some considerable time (Webster, 2009) and informed the perspectives advanced by (Drucker (1954) and McKitterick (1957). For instance, the importance of a supporting culture is a significant stream of thought within relationship marketing (Hunt and Morgan, 1994; Grönroos, 1997; Coviello and Brodie, 1998).

In practitioner and in industry contexts, there appears to be a growing realisation that organisations *per se* are of growing importance in the field of marketing as a means of differentiation and competitive advantage. We can see this with the growing importance accorded by organisations to issues concerned with corporate reputation, corporate communication and the somewhat *soigné* area of corporate branding (Balmer and Gray, 2001; Knox and Bickerton, 2003; Aaker, 2004). In addition, we can note the burgeoning importance of corporate identity and identifications in its various forms to institutions *vis-à-vis* corporate identity and organisational identity. Moreover, there is a general appreciation by senior managers of the need to have a stakeholder, societal and ethical orientations.

Indicative of this shift towards an organisational marketing logic are to be gleaned from the contents of a speech recently delivered by Sohn Chongsrichan of Young and Rubicon, Thailand. Chongsrichan observed that while the first, and second eras of marketing respectively focussed on products and services, the current (third era) needs to focus on profit, people and planet. In this new era, marketing managers and their advisors need to ensure that the company is trustworthy, its brand admired, importance is accorded to sustainable development, and that a customer and stakeholder mind-set is adopted. There should be a realisation that both customers and employees are seen as co-creators in shaping an organisation's offerings. Moreover, there was, he said, a need to move away from a communications approach based on a company-customer dialogue to a communications triologue focussed on companies, customers and constituencies (Rungfapaisarn, 2011). Much of the previous, to me, chimes with having a corporate marketing orientation.

Of course, a not dissimilar perspective can be found within the earlier practitioner literature on the territory. For instance, 20 years ago the legendary Stephen King (1991) noted that a change of focus was taking place in terms of branding: company brands increasingly were becoming highly salient. King noted that in communication terms, stakeholders and customers were of importance, argued that personnel need to have a heightened role in brand building and concluded there was a need for Human Resources to work more closely with their marketing colleagues. He also concluded that marketing textbooks ought to be rewritten in order to reflect these developments.

To me, linking the marketing philosophy with the notion of identity based views of the firm (Balmer, 2008) can also be a highly salient route by which customers and stakeholders' needs can be gainfully met and, in addition, can be of mutual benefit and advantage to organisations and stakeholders alike.

Corporate marketing myopia: what is it?

To repeat, corporate marketing myopia characterises those institutions who fail to appreciate an institutional, stakeholder and a societal orientation, along with CSR/Ethics. Moreover, corporate marketing myopia pertains to organisations, which have failed to nurture and maintain a corporate marketing ethos and culture.

Of course, corporate marketing myopia may have the same debilitating effect as with Levitt's notion of marketing myopia. As such, a failure to diagnose corporate marketing myopia can lead to the waning of the organisation and, *in extremis*, might result in corporate demise.

The utility of a corporate marketing logic

Whereas Levitt argued that policymakers all-too-often failed to place customers at the centre of their strategic concerns, my perspective is somewhat more expansive. I argue for the need – indeed efficacy – for contemporary organisations to embrace a corporate marketing logic. Such a corporate marketing logic should:

- place stakeholders, customers along with societal, ethical/CSR concerns at the centre of their strategic deliberations in marketing (Balmer, 1998, 2001); and
- foster a constellation of identities that underpin a corporate marketing orientation. This should include an organisational wide philosophy, which is embedded in a corporate culture focused on customers and stakeholders. As such, the corporate marketing perspective accords especial importance to staff since a corporate marketing ethos is the responsibility of everyone within an organisation. This identity focussed approach draws on the perspectives outlined in my notion of identity based views of the firm (Balmer, 2008).

A key facet of corporate marketing is its temporal focus. This is because corporate marketing not only takes account of multi-lateral organisational and customer/stakeholder and societal relationships and engagements of today and tomorrow, but, importantly, of yesterday (Balmer, 2001). Burke's observation of the temporal relationships between the state and citizen also has a utility to corporate marketing. Burke states the following:

(it is) A partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are dead, and those are to be born (Edmund Burke, 1729-1797).

In the context of the previous, the heightened importance accorded to corporate-level constructs (corporate identities, corporate brands, corporate communications, corporate reputations, etc.) also bears witness to another profound shift in marketing thought over recent times. Thus, the marketing discipline has gradually broadened to encompass: a goods logic, a services logic and, now, a pronounced corporate and stakeholder logic:

Of course, some services operate at the corporate-level but others do not. For instance, British Airways is corporate services brand but its World Traveller service offering for economy passengers is most certainly not a corporate services brand.

On reflection, it is clearly evident that marketing has always had a discernable institutional character in terms of fostering, maintaining, and nurturing an organisational-wide customer orientation. However, and to reiterate, the corporate marketing perspective broadens marketing's remit so that it accords importance to stakeholders and takes account of societal and CSR/ethical concerns. Indeed, there are those institutions which have a central identity remit in ethical identity terms and need to be underpinned by an ethical corporate marketing ethos and culture (Balmer *et al.*, 2011). Importantly, too, is the imperative in terms of establishing a corporate marketing logic is the imperative of fostering an organisational-wide corporate marketing culture: to me, a marketing culture is more important than marketing management.

For me, and to repeat, the notion of identity-based views of the firm and, in addition, identity-based views of corporate brands (Balmer, 2008) is, a potentially, highly meaningful perspectives through which we can advance our understanding of corporate marketing. This is predicated on the notion that multiple identities inhabit as well as inform our comprehension of the modern organisation. As an institutional *gestalt*, corporate marketing is collectively informed by the multiple identities and identifications.

At this juncture, and before reflecting on the nature of corporate marketing, I wish to note that this article represents a highly personnel perspective on the corporate marketing domain. As such, it primarily draws on my first article on the territory "Corporate Identity and the Advent of Corporate Marketing" (Balmer, 1998) along with more recent individual and collaborative work in the field.

Corporate marketing and the definitions of marketing introduced by the American Marketing Association (AMA)

Curiously, perhaps, my initial and subsequent articulations of corporate marketing (Balmer, 1998, 2001; and Balmer and Greyser, 2006) appear to have presaged developments in North America. This can be seen in terms of the two, most recent, definitions of marketing offered by AMA (see www.marketingpower.com) The first thing to note here is that the AMA definitions refer to marketing *per se* whereas, from my perspective, I view corporate marketing to be a distinct-albeit very important-branch of marketing.

The 2004 AMA definition, for instance, acknowledges the importance of stakeholders as well as customers, whereas the AMA definition of 2007 notes the importance of society at large to marketing. The 2004 definition regards marketing as an organisational function and the same appears to be implicit in the 2007 definition. To me, a corporate marketing logic is best seen as a philosophy, which inhabits an

organisational wide culture. From the two definitions reproduced which follow, we can see how the AMA has recognised the efficacy.

The 2007 Definition of Marketing by the American Marketing Association:

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.

The 2004 Definition of Marketing by the American Marketing Association:

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

The previous being noted, the AMA definitions reproduced previous may be seen as another sign of the broadening of marketing and, in some regards, reflect earlier developments which have taken place in the UK and apart from my own musings on corporate marketing a number of prominent marketing scholars have also noted the increasing importance of stakeholders – and of a stakeholder orientation – within marketing (Greenley *et al.*, 2005; Padanyi and Gainer, 2004). Of significance, too, has been the work on CSR and stakeholders by marketing scholars (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2009). Also of note are the observations of Vargo (2011) in relation to the importance of stakeholder perspectives *vis-à-vis* the service-dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) and the observations of Frow and Payne (2011) who note that within the service-dominant literature the stakeholder perspective has received little attention.

To me, the stakeholder orientation of corporate marketing is a key corporate marketing precept (Balmer, 1998, 2001).

The inexorable rise of corporate marketing

The ascendancy, and to me the inexorable rise, of a corporate marketing logic complements marketing's traditional concerns with products, brands and services. Importantly, corporate marketing does not vitiate the need for organisations to have a strong customer orientation (as *per* traditional product/goods-oriented marketing). This being said, there is a case for many organisations to broaden the marketing philosophy so that it has an explicit institutional, stakeholder and CSR/ethical orientation.

However, at the corporate-level, importance needs to be accorded to stakeholders, employees and to societal concerns and CSR/ethical concerns in addition. This is coupled with the realisation that corporations (corporate identities) and institutional brands (corporate brand identities) provide meaningful identity platforms on which mutually beneficial corporate-stakeholder relationships are built (in an analogous fashion to products and services *vis-à-vis* more traditional approaches to marketing).

From my perspective, in terms of the on-going debate as to whether institutions should have a customer, shareholder, stakeholder or societal orientation/s, I am of the view, *mutatis mutandis*, that all four perspectives can be salient and are worthy of careful consideration: ultimately it is a question of degree and is dependent on context, including the identity context.

However, the institutional, stakeholder, CSR/ethical characterisation of corporate marketing has meant that there had to be a significant reappraisal in terms of both the foundations and precepts of marketing (Balmer, 1998, 2001). This includes a rethinking

of the nature of marketing in institutional contexts in terms of its properties, outcomes and consequences. As part of this reappraisal there has been a need to refashion the marketing mix so that it has a utility at the institutional-level.

The properties and outcomes of corporate marketing

The properties of corporate marketing include:

- (1) *Properties*: there appear to be five defining properties of corporate marketing:
 - An explicit institutional focus.
 - An organisational-wide customer, stakeholder, societal, CSR/ethical orientation.
 - Enacted via a corporate-wide philosophy and is underpinned by a corporate marketing corporate culture.
 - In institutional, identity, stakeholder, and in strategic terms, takes account not only of the present and prospective future but key aspects of the entities past.
 - In terms of governance is informed by identity based views of the firm.
- (2) *Outcomes*: five gainful outcomes of corporate marketing are:
 - The establishment of ongoing and multi-lateral positive organisational/customer-stakeholder and societal relationships.
 - The establishment and maintenance of trust, and the acquisition of meaningful and positive corporate reputations *vis-à-vis* stakeholders and customers.
 - The creation of shareholder and stakeholder value via the establishment of strong, salient and appealing corporate brands.
 - Institutional saliency in its markets (corporate survival and profitability).
 - The license to operate in terms of the organisation's societal, CSR/ethical responsibilities and sensibilities.

The differences between corporate marketing and traditional marketing are detailed in the following list.

The differences between corporate marketing and marketing

(see Balmer, 1998, 2001, 2009; Balmer and Gray, 2001; Balmer and Greyser, 2006).

Orientation

- *Corporate marketing*: a customer, stakeholder, societal, CSR/ethical orientation: it has an explicit organisational focus.
- *Traditional marketing*: a customer orientation.

Orientation: the temporal dimension

- *Corporate marketing*: a concern with customer, stakeholder and societal concerns relating to the past, present and prospective future.
- *Traditional marketing*: a concern with current customers and those of the prospective future.

Focus

- *Corporate marketing*: an institutional focus.
- *Traditional marketing*: a product focus (latter services and business to business focus).

Philosophy

- *Corporate marketing*: multi-lateral and mutually beneficial exchange relationships with current and prospective customers, stakeholders and society at large.
- *Traditional marketing*: bilateral and mutually beneficial exchange relationships with current and prospective consumers.

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Culture

- *Corporate marketing*: an organisational-wide culture, which has an explicit customer, stakeholder and ethical/societal orientation in terms of mutually beneficial multi-lateral exchange relationships based around the institution, the corporate brand, services and products.
- *Traditional marketing*: an organisational-wide culture which has an explicit customer orientation in terms of mutually beneficial exchange relationships based around services and service brands, products and product brands.

The broader temporal dimension

- *Corporate marketing*: focuses on the organisation's past, present and prospective future.
- *Traditional marketing*: focuses on the current positioning and prospective future one.

Ethical and societal concerns

- *Corporate marketing*: giving due regard to CSR/ethical and societal concerns are a central tenet.
- *Traditional marketing*: regards the previous concerns as optional (increasingly the latter is viewed as imperative).

Organisational function

- *Corporate marketing*: can be viewed as a coordinating function at the boardroom level owing to its specific institutional character.
- *Traditional marketing*: while it can and perhaps should be a board level concern quite often is viewed as a directorate concern (marketing directorate).

The corporate marketing mix

The latest version of the marketing mix represents an adaptation of my 2006 model which consists of six corporate marketing dimension and which were represented in the form of a sexpartite star. This is reproduced in Figure 1.



Figure 1.
Balmer's 2006 corporate
marketing mix

Source: Balmer and Greyser (2006)

In 2009, the six dimensions were extended to eight in order to accommodate the importance of:

- context; and
- custodianship (Balmer, 2009).

It is this latest version of the corporate mix, which will largely inform this article. As such, the eight dimensions of the corporate marketing mix encompass the following – with reference being made to key corporate level – constructs:

- (1) *Character (corporate identity)*: the institution's distinctive/defining traits.
- (2) *Communication (corporate communications)*: the articulation of the corporate marketing philosophy through institutional and corporate brand communications.
- (3) *Constituencies (customers and stakeholders)*: the focus of a corporate marketing orientation-also includes ethical and societal concerns along with a due regard of the past where appropriate.
- (4) *Covenant (corporate brand identity)*: the promises and expectations associated with a corporate brand name or marque.
- (5) *Conceptualisations (corporate reputation and image)*: the perceptions held of the organisation by customers and stakeholders.

- (6) *Culture (corporate culture)*: the corporate marketing philosophy as embedded in a widely held customer, stakeholder, societal, CSR/ethical orientation among organisational members. All organisational members have responsibility for upholding and enacting a corporate marketing orientation.
- (7) *Context (the interface with the business environment and with other identities)*: consideration of the political, economic, social, technological, ethical and legal environment and with supra and subordinate identities (country of origin, industry, suppliers, brands of subsidiaries- product and service brands, etc.).
- (8) *Custodianship (corporate marketing management)*: while everyone within an organisation has responsibility for the corporate marketing philosophy the custodians of corporate marketing reside with its senior managers.

Earlier corporate marketing mixes

Since 1998 I have introduced a number of corporate marketing mixes. These endeavours can be compared to various attempts in untying the Gordian knot in terms of articulating a meaningful, pragmatic and operational corporate marketing mix, which captures the key dimensions of the domain. These activities very much represent work in progress and earlier examples of these corporate-level marketing mixes are reproduced in Appendix 1.

To me, there are, however, three substantive differences that distinguish the corporate marketing mix from the traditional marketing mix (Balmer, 2009) in that:

- (1) The elements of the mix are broader.
- (2) The traditional mix requires a radical reconfiguration.
- (3) The mix elements have distinct disciplinary traditions, underpinned by key corporate-level constructs, and transcend/broaden traditional institutional boundaries.

The antecedents of corporate marketing

Based on my most recent analysis of the territory, I have expanded what, to me, are the antecedents of corporate marketing (see Balmer and Greyser, 2006 and Balmer, 2009 for earlier discussions on this point). Such an approach builds on the notion of corporate marketing as a Gestalt – a notion that was implicit in the 1998 article. This reappraisal of the field has led the identification of three factors, which have led to – what for me is – the inexorable rise of corporate marketing:

- (1) The integrative quest.
- (2) A developing marketing logic.
- (3) The efficacy of identity perspectives.

The integrative quest

Integration has been an on-going concern across a broad spectrum of corporate marketing related concerns and sub disciplines over recent and not-so-recent times. We can see this in terms of sensory integration, design integration, communications, branding integration and identity integration, etc.

The advent of corporate marketing (Balmer, 1998) in many regards is a *denouement* in terms of the various integrative endeavours which have characterised organisations since time immemorial and which, in more recent times, have informed scholarship relating to key corporate-level constructs. To me, integrative accomplishments represent critical milestones in corporate marketing's odyssey. The integrative quest has been a feature in terms of sensory integration; design integration; communications integration; branding integration and identity integration. Whereas sensory/ design/communication and branding integration represent microforms of integrations, identity integration – coupled with corporate marketing integration – are meta modes of integration. To me, corporate marketing subsumes and marshals these important integrative endeavours. The principal modes of integration are as follows:

- *Sensory integration*: relates to the age-old institutional concern *vis-à-vis* sensory corporate communication.
- *Design integration*: a traditional corporate concern in terms of the efficacy of coordinating the various design activities *vis-à-vis* corporate, graphic, product, textile design, etc. And corporate architecture, etc.
- *Communications integration – integrated communications*: since the 1970s there has been a concern within the marketing, communications and public relations disciplines with the coordination of communications, namely: corporate communications and total corporate communications.
- *Brand integration*: the gradual appreciation and identification by marketing scholars of different branding modes-product, services and corporate – and the links between them is another, significant, development and has led to new forms of brand architecture.
- *Identity integration*: since the late 1990s marketing scholars have noted the efficacy of identity multiplicity in revealing the corporation and, in addition to marketing, branding and design approaches to identity now embrace perspectives from organisational behaviour, sociology and communications (see Appendix 2 for a fuller description of this list).

A developing marketing logic

Over time, the marketing discipline has variously changed its focus. In part, this is in response to the changing power relationships in the marketplace.

Marketing has a shifting persona and there have been a number of attempts to comprehend the territory as applied to different contexts. The incremental growth of the marketing logic has seen marketing variously adopting a goods logic (product marketing), a services logic (services marketing) and, more recently, a corporate-level logic (corporate marketing). An analogous line of development can be seen in terms of shifting power in the marketplace, namely: marketers dominate, consumer-marketer balance, consumers dominate and, now, consumers and stakeholders dominate (Balmer and Greyser, 2006).

The efficacy of identity perspectives

To me, various identity perspectives have a utility to corporate marketing and this includes the notion that various identities should be in dynamic alignment.

An appreciation of the utility of identity alignment (corporate identity and corporate brand alignments) and a greater discernment of the utility of various forms of identities (corporate identity, corporate brand identity) and identifications: the latter marshalling social identity/group identity and corporate communications. To me, the adoption of a corporate marketing logic represents a natural culmination of the aforementioned developments. Furthermore, as I see it, of all the previous perspectives, identity and identification merits further scrutiny owing to its apparent saliency to the corporate marketing domain (Balmer, 2008; Balmer and Greyser, 2002).

The utility of identity and identification

To me, issues of identity and identification are of considerable utility in revealing, comprehending, and managing organisations. In particular, since the late 1990s, I have found there to be considerable merit in:

- adopting multiple identity perspective in scrutinising organisations;
- appreciating that while corporate identities and corporate brands have a symbiotic relationship they should *not* be regarded as identical constructs but should be regarded as distinct identity types. In very simple terms, corporate brands relates to what is promised and expected in identity terms whereas corporate identity is the delivery-the enactment of the promise. To me, for some time now, corporate brands can have a life of their own and, we should remember, corporate brands can be bought (the Jaguar brand was bought by TATA), sold (the Body Shop was sold to L'Oreal) and borrowed (consider the franchise arrangements within the Hotel sector-Hilton is a case in point); and
- comprehending the multiple, and highly significant, meanings associated with identification (Balmer, 2008) in terms of outward directed identification on the part of organisations (identification from the firm) and the associations individuals and groups have towards organisations (identification to the firm), corporate brands (identification to corporate brands) and their corporate cultures (identification with a corporate culture) and, in addition, their corporate brand cultures (identification with a corporate brand culture) and so on. These very rich perspectives of identification are currently unique to the corporate marketing domain.

Identity-based views of the firm

Mindful of the importance of both corporate identity and corporate brand identity the notion of identity-based views of the firm (Balmer, 2008) can inform both of the aforementioned identity types. This is detailed, in brief, in the following:

Corporate identity perspectives

- The identity of the firm (corporate identity).
- Identification from the firm (corporate brand communication).
- Identification to the firm (stakeholder identity identification).
- Identification with a corporate brand culture (stakeholder corporate brand cultural identification).

- The identity of the corporate brand (corporate brand identity).
- Identification from the corporate (corporate identity communication).
- Identification to the corporate brand (stakeholder corporate brand identification).
- Identification with a corporate culture (stakeholder cultural identification).

Appendix 3 provides a short overview of corporate identity, corporate brand identity and corporate identifications.

The defining characteristics of corporate marketing

In articulating what, to me, are the defining characteristics of corporate marketing I marshal my own thinking on the area since 1998. The following list of characteristics provides a more in-depth overview to that provided earlier on in this article. To me, the defining characteristics of corporate marketing can be characterised as having:

- (1) An explicit corporate – rather than product or service – focus.
- (2) An espoused corporate philosophy, which has an explicit customer, stakeholder, CSR/ethical and societal orientation (The need to balance stakeholder and customer needs with those of society). This philosophy should also be mindful that customers and stakeholders could, sometimes, be materially involved in value creation, namely: the co creating corporate brands for example.
- (3) Enacted via an organisational-wide culture where managers and employees embrace and enact a customer, stakeholder and societal philosophy in terms of their activities, strategies, behaviours, communications, and so on.
- (4) A concern not only with the present and prospective future but is mindful of the past (for instance, the inheritance bequeathed by organisational founders).
- (5) A corporate-level gestalt (adapting gestalt theory to organisational contexts based on the notion that critical breakthroughs can be achieved by considering the whole of something rather than focusing on individual elements. This is because corporate marketing is informed by the perspectives offered by key important constructs including corporate identity, corporate brands, corporate communications, corporate reputation, etc.).
- (6) Is multidisciplinary in scope (Marketing has always drawn on and synthesised different disciplinary perspectives and theories and corporate marketing is no different in this regard except that it is more strongly aligned to HR and organisational behaviour owing to its concern with the establishment of a strong corporate marketing culture and the realisation that responsibility for a corporate marketing logic resides with all personnel).
- (7) Acknowledges the dissipation of the traditional internal/external boundary divide of organisations (For instances, customers, employees and suppliers often have multiple roles *vis-à-vis* corporate identity: consumers, for instance, can also be – among others – an employee, investor, member, local politician).
- (8) Closely aligned to stakeholder theory (see (2)).

- (9) Accords increased prominence to personnel. All staff-managers and personnel-share responsibility for the enactment of the marketing philosophy, including the creation of customer value along with the delivery of the corporate brand covenant.
- (10) Applicable to business-to-business corporate marketing activities.
- (11) Applicable to all entities whether small, large or gargantuan and to organisations having difference modes of operation.

Linking key corporate marketing foci, the corporate marketing mix (the 8Cs), and identity-based views of the firm and corporate-level marketing constructs. Table I attempts to synthesise the previous perspectives and also shows the efficacy of identity based views of the firm to marketing. This is done by making a comparison with the corporate marketing mix elements, key corporate marketing concerns and with key corporate marketing constructs.

A new corporate marketing management framework

In a similar vein, I introduce a new corporate marketing framework, which builds on a good deal of the previously outlined material detailed in this essay. The model attempts to integrate:

- the 8Cs of the corporate mix; and
- accommodates the significance and inter-relatedness of key corporate-level constructs.

Note the importance of culture to the model: this reflects the notion that a corporate marketing logic needs to inhabit the culture of an organisation in a highly meaningful way. This being noted, the framework takes account of the three dominant perspectives relating to marketing (Darroch *et al.* 2009) in terms of:

- (1) An organisational-wide orientation with a supporting culture.
- (2) A strategic orientation in terms of which markets an organisation may beneficially serve (*vis-à-vis* corporate identity, corporate brands and context).
- (3) A specific institutional function (corporate marketing management).

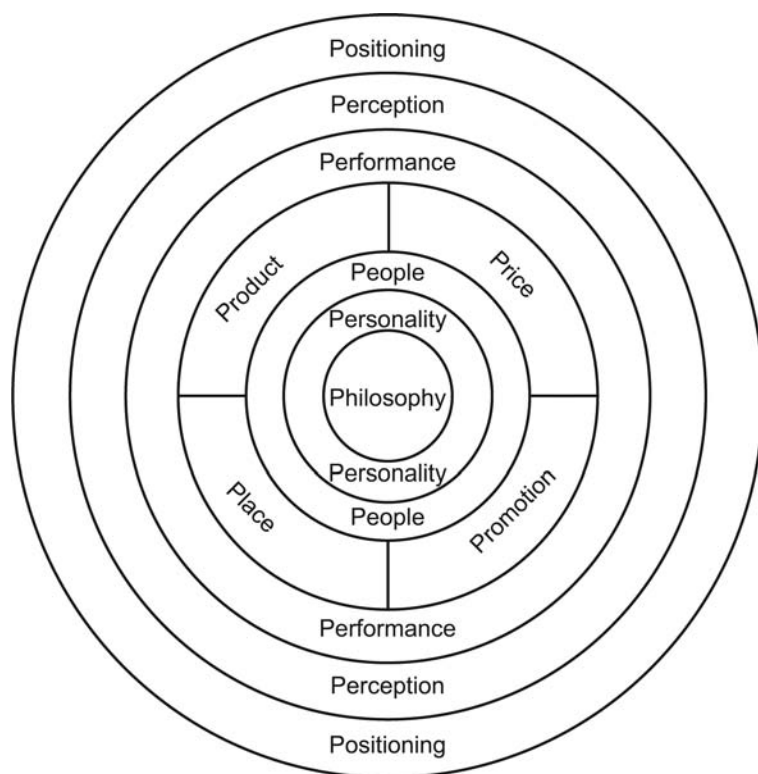
The model is shown in Figure 2. The very broad outline of the framework is inspired by an unpublished identity model of the late, and greatly missed, Professor Renato Tagiuri of Harvard Business School (Tagiuri, 1982). Professor Tagiuri kindly, and very generously for a number of years, acted as one of my informal mentors and whose work on corporate identity greatly informed my earlier comprehension of the corporate identity construct.

The dimensions of my framework are explained as follows:

- (1) *Corporate marketing philosophy*. The focus of the framework is the establishment and maintenance of a corporate marketing philosophy within organisations
- (2) *The corporate marketing philosophy*. Enacted via two key identity types and via corporate communications:

Table I.
Linking key corporate marketing foci, the corporate marketing mix (the 8Cs), identity-based views of the firm and corporate-level marketing constructs

Key corporate marketing foci	Corporate marketing mix element The 8 Cs	Identity-based view of the firm	Corporate marketing constructs and concerns
A focus on: what we indubitably are as an organisation	Character	Identity of the firm	Corporate identity
A focus on: what we say we are	Communication	Identification from the firm	Corporate communications
A focus on: whom we seek to serve	Constituencies (customers, employees, shareholders, partners, former owners, etc.)	The focus of identification from, with and to the firm, the corporate brand, and the organisation's/corporate brand cultures	Stakeholder management
A focus on: what is promised and expected of the corporate brand (this takes into account that individuals can accept as well as adapt the corporate brand promise and can "co-create" brand meaning by adapting the brand covenant for their own ends). As such the key bi-lateral relationships between institutional ownership of the brand – "legal ownership" and customer/stakeholder ownership, "emotional ownership" are acknowledged	Covenant	Identity of the corporate brand	Corporate brands
A focus on: what we are seen to be	Conceptualisations	Identifications with the firm	Corporate image Corporate reputation (also organisational identification and organisational image) Corporate culture
A focus on: what we feel we are	Culture	Identifications with a corporate culture	
In addition account may be taken of two additional elements (Balmer, 2009)			
A focus on: what non-concerns we must take account of for strategic purposes including supra-, subordinate and horizontal relations <i>vis-à-vis</i> countries, industries, and business partners, etc.	Context	Institutional identification	The political, economic, social, technological, ethical and legal environment + the impact of the identities, brands, reputations, of other institutions
A focus on: identity stewardship by senior managers, while realising that all organisational members have responsibility for the corporate identity and corporate brand identities	Custodianship	The management of the multiple identities of the firm	Identity management (in terms of both corporate identity and corporate brand identity)



Notes: The 11th dimension: Promise (relating to the corporate brand) was subsequently added by Balmer (in Balmer and Greyser, 2006) to accommodate the important corporate brand identity type

Source: Balmer (1998)

Figure 2.
A corporate marketing
framework

- character (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which equates with corporate identity and with the defining traits of an entity);
 - covenant (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which equates with a corporate brand and with the espoused promise/s associated with a corporate brand name and or marque); and
 - communication (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which equates with corporate communication and which is viewed as an outward bound mode of corporate identity and corporate brand identification directed at customers and stakeholders).
- (3) *Conceptualisations* (one of the 8cs of the corporate marketing mix, which equates with corporate reputation, and with corporate image).
- (4) *Constituencies* (one of the 8cs of the corporate marketing mix which equates with stakeholders and customers-the latter being a key facet of a corporate marketing orientation and logic).

The framework makes a distinction between internal and external stakeholders but notes that individuals may belong to both categories

- (5) *Employee identification*. This captures the important notion that organisational members may have a strong identification or alienation with a corporate identity (an entity) or with a corporate brand or might indeed be ambivalent *vis-à-vis* the previous:
 - context (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which equates with the political, economic, social, technological, ethical, and legal environment and which may influence the type of identification an employee may have towards a corporate entity or corporate brand).
- (6) *Customer and stakeholder identification*. This captures the important notion that customers and stakeholders may have a strong identification or alienation with a corporate identity (an entity) or with a corporate brand or might indeed be ambivalent *vis-à-vis* the previous:
 - context (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which equates with the political, economic, social, technological, ethical, and legal environment and which may influence the type of identification a customer or stakeholder may have towards a corporate entity or corporate brand).
- (7) *Culture* (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which here, equates with a positive identification towards the organisation and/or the corporate marketing ethos on the part of organisational members). Positive identification is seen to confirm the corporate marketing philosophy and, in addition, contributes to the entity's likely continuance.
- (8) *Culture* (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix, which here, equates with a negative identification towards the organisation, and/or the corporate marketing ethos on the part of organisational members). Negative identification is seen to disconfirm the corporate marketing philosophy and, in addition, undermines the entity's likely continuance.
- (9) *Culture* (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which here, equates with a positive identification towards the organisation and/or the corporate marketing ethos on the part of customers and stakeholders. Positive identification is seen to confirm the corporate marketing philosophy and, in addition, contributes to the entity's likely continuance.
- (10) *Culture* (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which here, equates with a negative identification towards the organisation and/or the corporate marketing ethos on the part of customers and stakeholders). Negative identification is seen to disconfirm the corporate marketing philosophy and, in addition, undermines the entity's likely continuance.
- (11) *Ongoing customer and stakeholder research*. This is necessary in order to determine the strength and type of identification towards the organisation, the corporate brand and the corporate marketing philosophy. Intervention is required from the corporate marketing department where there is negative identification.
- (12) *Ongoing employee research*. This is necessary to determine the strength and type of identification towards the organisation, the corporate brand and the

corporate marketing philosophy. Intervention is required from the human resources department where there is negative identification.

- (13) *Context* (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix which equates with the political, economic, social, technological, ethical, and legal environment and which strategic planners need to take cognisance of so that they can determine what changes-if any-need to be made to the organisation's corporate identity and corporate brand).
- (14) *Custodianship* (one of the 8Cs of the corporate marketing mix, which equates with the management oversight of the identities of the organisation along with the corporate marketing philosophy. Senior managers, can, do and need to change an institution's (a corporate identity's) and institutional brand (corporate brands) attributes. Whereas everyone within an entity has responsibility for the corporate marketing philosophy and for the corporate identity and the corporate brand it is the task of senior management to have on going custodianship of the aforementioned).

Defining the corporate marketing logic

I provide a short as well as a long definition of the previous since, to me, both have a utility in explaining the nature of the corporate marketing logic.

Short definition

Corporate marketing is a customer, stakeholder, societal and CSR/ethical focussed philosophy enacted via an organisational-wide orientation and culture. A corporate marketing rational complements the goods and services logic. It is informed by identity-based views of the firm: this is a perspective, which accords importance to corporate identities and corporate brands. The latter provide distinctive platforms from which multi-lateral, organisational and stakeholder/ societal relationships are fostered to all-round advantage.

Long definition/explanation

Corporate marketing is a customer, stakeholder, societal and CSR/ethical focussed philosophy enacted via an organisational-wide orientation and culture. A corporate marketing rational complements the goods and services logic. It is informed by identity-based views of the firm: this is a perspective, which accords importance to corporate identities and corporate brands. The latter provide distinctive platforms from which multi-lateral, organisational and stakeholder/ societal relationships are fostered to all-round advantage.

While its primary focus is on mutually advantageous multi-lateral organisation and customer/stakeholder partnerships of the present and future, a corporate marketing logic also has sensitivity to the institution's inheritance. The corporate marketing orientation is also mindful of its corporate responsibilities in societal, ethical and in CSR terms. All employees share responsibility for the corporate marketing orientation but senior managers-and the CEO in particular has ultimate stewardship of the corporate marketing orientation. The espoused benefits of a corporate marketing logic include the establishment of on-going and bi-lateral positive organisational/ customer-stakeholder relationships; the establishment and maintenance of trust, and the acquisition of meaningful and positive corporate reputations; the creation of

shareholder and/or stakeholder value via the establishment of strong, salient and appealing corporate brands; institutional saliency in its markets (corporate survival and profitability) and the license to operate in terms of the organisation's societal, ethical and CSR by virtue of the organisation's responsibilities and sensibilities in terms of the aforementioned.

Conclusion

To me, corporate marketing myopia is a potentially serious threat confronting many organisations. As such, I advance the view that traditional marketing philosophy requires broadening in order to accommodate the realisation. Corporate marketing is a customer, stakeholder, societal and CSR/ethical focussed philosophy enacted via an organisational-wide philosophy and orientation. An organisational marketing rational complements the goods and services logic. It is informed by identity-based views of the firm: this is a perspective, which accords importance to corporate identities and corporate brands. The latter provide distinctive platforms from which multi-lateral, organisational and stakeholder/societal relationships are fostered to all-round advantage.

I am not advocating that the goods and services marketing logic should be abandoned, rather, that these perspectives may be extended to embrace corporations and their institutional brands as sources of differential advantage. A key aspect of a corporate marketing logic is the need for this to be meaningfully reflected in the cultures of organisations.

To me, the ascendancy of a corporate marketing logic is inexorable. In an age when institutions and their corporate brands are increasingly meaningful to customers and stakeholders alike – and therefore can be a source of strategic benefit to organisations – marketing is obliged to adopt a more explicit corporate focus.

Finally, I can do no better than bringing this commentary to a close other than to say that a new age requires new ways or, as our Gallic colleagues would say: “*Autres temps, autres moeurs*”. What is this new way? It is the acceptance of a corporate marketing logic.

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Appendix 1. The earlier corporate marketing mixes: 1998, 2001

Various marketing mix frameworks, have been developed, by Balmer since 1998. The first corporate marketing mix (Balmer, 1998) entailed an extension of McCarthy's famous 4PS (product, price, place, promotion) so that this concept was applicable to corporate marketing: this resulted in 10 (see Figure A1) and then 11 Ps (see Table AI) of Corporate Marketing. In 2001 a new seven-part mix was introduced with the aim of simplifying the dimensions of the mix via reference to an acronym: HE²ADS². The seven dimensions encompasses what the organisation HAS, EXPRESSES, its AFFINITIES, what it DOES, how it is SEEN, its STAKEHOLDERS and ENVIRONMENT. This mix forms, of course, the mnemonic HE²ADS² (see Figure A2 and Table AII).

Appendix 2. The integrative quest vis-à-vis sensory, design, communications, brands and identity

- (1) *Sensory integration.* Coordinating the five senses (sight, sound, scent, touch and taste) may at first appear to be an obscure institutional concern but for certain institutions the five senses have been marshalled and integrated in order to encapsulate key corporate precepts. Most notable of these organisations is the Catholic Church but not dissimilar forms of integration can be found in other prominent institutions such as the British Monarchy, Oxford University and London Transport.
- (2) *Design integration.* Since time immemorial, the value of design coordination/integration has been a key feature of many institutions. For instance, this can be found within some of the church's older religious orders of the Catholic Church (viz: the Carthusians, Benedictines, and Franciscans). More recently, in the early nineteenth Century, many of the great railway and shipping corporations of Great Britain, Continental Europe and Northern Europe also adopted organisational-wide design integration (corporate, product, graphic, architectural, fabric, etc.), which accorded such institutions real distinctiveness. In the twentieth century, of especial importance vis-a-vis integrated design was the pioneering work of Peter Behrens at AEG (Germany); Adriano Olivetti at Olivetti (Italy) and Alan Parkin and Edward Johnston, among others, at London

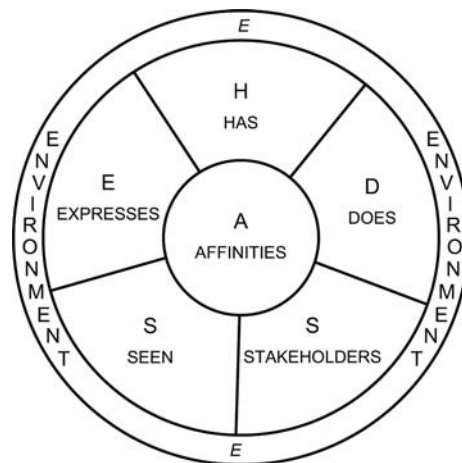


Figure A1.
Balmer's 1998 corporate marketing mix. The 10Ps of corporate marketing

Source: Balmer (2001)

Philosophy and ethos	What the organisation stands for, and the way it undertakes its work
Personality	The mix of subcultures present within the organisation: these contribute to the organisation's distinctiveness
People	Their importance to the organisation's identity (membership of sub-cultural groups); their interface with external stakeholders; their role in product and service quality
Product	What an organisation makes or does: its core business or businesses
Price	What it charges for its products and services, including the goodwill element in the valuation of its corporate and product brands; the price of stock; staff salaries
Place	Distribution channels, company's relationship with distributors, franchising arrangements, etc.
Promotion	A concern with Total Corporate Communications: the effects of the earlier-mentioned primary, secondary, and tertiary communication; includes visual identification and branding policy
Performance	How the organisation's performance is rated by its key stakeholders <i>vis-à-vis</i> the organisation's espoused philosophy and ethos, and how it is rated against competitors
Perception	Questions relating to corporate image and corporate reputation.
Positioning	Perception of the industry/country of origin may also be significant
Promise ^a	In relation to important stakeholders, competitors, and the external environment The expectations associated with the corporate brand name

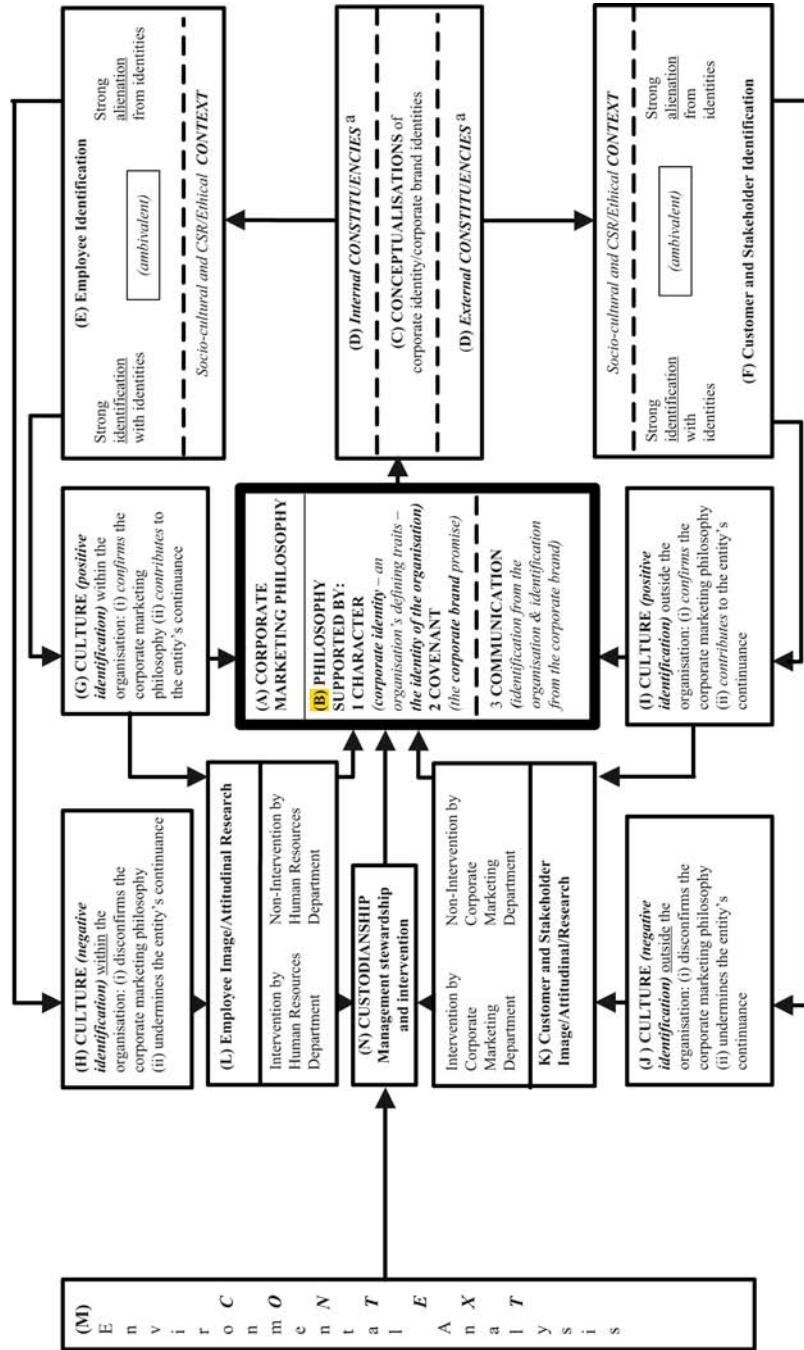
Note: ^aThe Promise dimension of the mix was subsequently added by Balmer (Balmer and Greyser, 2006) and encompasses the important dimension of the corporate brand

Source: Balmer (2001)

Table AI.
Explaining the 10 and
11 ps of Balmer's
corporate marketing mix
of 1998

Transport (England) in the early twentieth century. The work of the aforementioned took design integration to new levels of sophistication and which are still apparent today and give London's Transport system an especial distinctiveness.

- (3) *Communications integration.* Over the last four decades, a number of debates have taken place within marketing, communications and public relations scholars relating to integrated communications in terms of integrated marketing communications functions; integrated marketing communications and public relations and integrated communications in their totality in terms of total communications and total corporate communications.
- (4) *Brand integration.* Traditionally, the marketing literature has focussed on product brands and like marketing expanded so as to embrace service brands. The recognition of the importance of corporate brands resulted in a need to consider the relationship between institutional and product brands and to expand the notion of brand architecture. Again, British scholarship on the territory appears to have presaged research on the area in North America-important and significant that this is. Brand integration has led to the development, and articulation of new branding typologies, see Balmer and Gray (2001).
- (5) *Identity integration.* In recent years an integrative schema has been developed in terms of articulating the different strands of thought *vis-a-vis* identity and identification from marketing, organisational behaviour and graphic design perspectives.



Note: Individuals can be a member of an organisation's internal and external constituencies (for instance, as an employee as well as a customer)

Figure A2.
Balmer's second corporate marketing mix (2001): HE²AD²

H: What the organisation <i>HAS</i>	Includes the organisation's structure, history and legacy, property and equipment, reputation, investment interests in other organisations
E: What the organisation <i>EXPRESSES</i>	Integrates primary communication (products and services performance), secondary (formal communication policies), and tertiary communications (word of mouth, media communication, competitor communication, and spin)
E ² : The <i>ENVIRONMENTAL</i> context	Takes account of the Political, Economic, Ethical, Social, Technological etc. Environment and its impact on an organisation's corporate marketing activities/philosophy
A: The <i>AFFINITIES</i> of employees	Includes the degree of positive or negative associations with employees to various sub-cultural groups including corporate ones (old, new, ascendant, subsidiary, departmental)
D: What the organisation <i>DOES</i>	Includes all the elements of McCarthy's 4Ps mix with the exception of promotion (see <i>EXPRESSES</i>)
S: How the organisation is <i>SEEN</i>	Includes data regarding current perceptions of the organisation's image and reputation, and organisational awareness and profile; data on past performance, knowledge, beliefs, and expectations; salience of the corporate branding covenant
S ² : The organisation's key <i>STAKEHOLDER</i> groups and networks	Noting and prioritising the organisation's key groups, networks, and individuals in the context of the organisation's strategy, and in the context of different markets and situations

Source: Adapted from Balmer (2001)

Table AII.
Explaining the seven dimensions (HE²ADS²) of Balmer's second corporate marketing mix of 2001

Appendix 3. An overview of corporate identity, corporate brand identity and corporate identifications

Corporate identity

What the organisation is (in terms of an entity's distinctive and defining traits)

Corporate brand identity

What the corporate brand (name) stands for (it in effect serves as an informal contract between the brand (in the company/companies behind the brand) and its customers and internal/external stakeholders)

Corporate identifications:

Within corporate marketing contexts account needs to be given to the three meanings associated with identification in terms of:

- (1) How corporate identities and corporate brands communicate their espoused identity to customers and stakeholders, namely:
 - identification from a corporate identity; and
 - identification from a corporate brand identity.

- (2) The affinity (positive, negative or ambivalent) an individual or group will have with a corporate identity and/or with a corporate brand, namely:
 - identification with a corporate identity; and
 - identification with a corporate brand identity.
- (3) The affinity (positive, negative or ambivalent) an individual or group will have with a company (corporate identity) culture and/or with a corporate brand culture, namely:
 - identification with a company (corporate identity) culture; and
 - identification with a corporate brand culture.

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