Chapter 16

Applying the Corporate Identity in Mega Universities' Web Sites

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ABSTRACT

It can be seen that due to increasing importance of public relation efforts, mega universities started to assign more place to corporate identity elements in their web pages. Those universities also include visual corporate identity in their web pages. Those institutions may differentiate themselves from other universities only via their corporate identities. Corporate identity studies are of importance for increasing awareness on the institution and promoting recognizability. The aim of current study is to reveal the way mega universities utilize web pages as public relations tools in order to provide information on their corporate identities to the target audience. As a consequence of this examination, practices are revealed which are implemented by mega universities with tremendous target audience in order to take attention of the target audience and introduce the institution.

INTRODUCTION

Corporate identity is considered as an image work which helps the corporate stand out among the other corporates. The image work, behaviour and communication activities aiming the internal and external target audience are consequences of the corporate idendity attempts. In other words, corporate idendity is used as a means of self-expression. It is the only way that corporate can only express itself to the target audience, it is recognized and it can distinguish itself from the others. Corporate identity gives a clear image exactly about what the corporate is. Therefore, well-managed corporate identity practices provide competitive advantage. Besides, it is also noted that corporate identity practices provide many other benefits, e.g adding value to the corporate and the product line, gaining

the trust and loyalty of the clients, attracting the high qualified staff and increasing motivation of the staff. (Balmer&Wilson, 1998; Christensen & Askegaard, 2001).

Corporate idendity is defined as positioning various features of a corporation. It especially satisfies the expectations and claims of the staff on what the corporate is. Corporate identity efforts focus on corporate values, mission, client-corporation relationships and visual presentation of the corporation (Mukherjee&He, 2008). Von Riel (1995; 29) defined the strong corporate identity in several ways:

* Raising motivation among employees
* Inspring confidence among the company's external target groups
* Acknowledging the vital role of costumers
* Acknowledging the vital role of financial target groups

Corporate identity defines the ability of the corporation to reflect its characteristics. Corporate identity should be addressed in relation with marketing efforts. Corporate identity is a concept which has emerged together with terms of corporate image, corporate reputation and the efforts to form a corporate brand. Agrenti (2003; 58) describes the company's identity is "the visual manisfestation of company's reality as conveyed through the organization's name, logo, motto, products, services, buildings, stationary, uniforms, and all other tanginble pieces of evidence created by the organization an communicated to variety of constituencies".

Corporate identity works are significant in many ways; it defines the basic structure of the corporation with regards to economy, social and symbolic meanings, it positions the corporation at the basis of economical and social change relative to the other corporations, competitors, suppliers, distributors, clients and the government; when considered carefully, it provides us the basic structure, e.g. expectations, images, definitions

and actions. Mukherjee&He (2008) handles the corporate identity in four different dimensions:

* perceived identity attractiviness
* perceived identity similarty
* perceived identity distinctiviness
* perceived identity prestige

According to Gordon (1998; 85), "corporate identity is a combination of more than the sum of these parts: mission statements and corporate philosophies; logos, letterhead, and annual reports; advertising; internal perception programs; and external communication and public perception of company image.

Gordon (1998), with the mission statements of the institution's objectives and business principles, values and beliefs are defined. Annual reports are an essential marketing tool to persuade investors and to introduce the institution in outside.

Recently, it is observed that graphic design practices in corporate identity studies have started to gain more importance. Corporate identity is generally used as synonym of the corporate logo, amblem, visual description (von Riel&Balmer, 1997; Arangeti, 2003). The most important one among the corporate idendity designs is logo and amblem. The font and size of the letters of these items should be well-matched to the colours of the corporation. A well-designed corporate identity has a positive effect on the target audience. Therefore, it is important that these designs should be developed in a way to describe the corporation in an integrated framework. Corporate identity works should include the following designs:

* Logo
* Letterhead
* Business cards
* Websites
* Presentations
* Brochures
* Slogans
* Office documents

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