THESIS
INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION
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Preface

When we were told to search for an interesting traineeship, the first thought that popped in my head was Hudson. In my mind, a traineeship at this renowned consultancy firm would provide the perfect mix between my previous study area, Corporate Psychology, and my current studies, Multilingual Business Communication. As a serious player in the consultancy and Human Resources field, I could not resist the opportunity to combine HR with communication. The best of both worlds, you could say. I picked the place, now the only thing that had to be done, was getting in.

I contacted Hudson’s Marketing department, but unfortunately, all the vacancies were filled. I continued my search, and via Recruitment and Selection, I got in touch with Nikola Trbovic, Senior R&D Consultant.

At first, I was quit hesitant to work at the R&D department. During my years of training in psychology, I got acquainted with recruitment and selection, career development and other HR related aspects, but R&D was a completely unknown world to me. I have to admit, I had some preconceived notions about Research & Development, and imagined it to be a very boring and tedious field. However, thanks to Nikola’s enthusiastic explanation, I changed my mind and decided to take on the challenge.

The beginning of a new learning experience…

This dissertation is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter tells the story of Hudson as a company. Furthermore, I will zoom in on the R&D department in particular. The second chapter revolves around the theoretical framework concerning communication and integrated communication. The third chapter reveals my personal activities and experiences at Hudson. The final chapter will discuss recommendations concerning integrated communications at Hudson.
I Company Presentation: Hudson

1.1 Introduction

When I started my internship at Hudson, I often had to explain to my environment that I was working for the company formerly known as De Witte & Morel. Nine out of ten times, the response was: “Ah, the recruiting agency”. De Witte & Morel may have started out as a recruiting agency but today, Hudson Belgium is part of the Hudson Highland Group Inc, a company listed on the stock exchange (NASDAQ). As one of the leading consultancy firms, they offer innovative solutions for recruiting, talent management and corporate efficiency in general. Instead of criticizing the way companies do business, they try to align their method of working to that of their clients. Their creed: “From great people to great performance”.

1.2 A little bit of history: past, present and future

1.2.1 The foundation

The company was founded in Ghent, in 1983, by Ivan de Witte – who is still CEO of the company – and his former business partner Maarten Morel.

\[\text{“The beginning was not so difficult, especially with the unbounded confidence that we would succeed.”} \]

\[
\text{Ivan De Witte (CEO)}
\]

Ivan De Witte, a psychologist, worked at Sidmar during the seventies, where he managed a team of 500 executives. Having some experience in the business and human capital world, he decided to found his own company, together with Maarten Morel. The birth of “De Witte & Morel” was a fact.

In the early years, “De Witte & Morel” mainly focused on recruitment and training. But as with most starting companies, business didn’t take off as easily as they had hoped. It wasn’t until a couple of years later that they were able to close more accounts, partly thanks to the network Ivan De Witte built through his good relationship with the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. The goal of this international academic school is to help develop professional management skills by conducting research and by offering management courses.

\[\text{1 Internal document: 25 years De Witte & Morel / Hudson}\]
1.2.2 Ernst & Young

During the late eighties, De Witte & Morel found a third partner, Willy Musschoot. The early nineties were a difficult period for the company, and Musschoot left. This left the remaining CEO’s with the daunting task of looking for a new partner/investor. However, they opted to sell to an industrial partner: Ernst & Young. The famous name “De Witte & Morel” became part of Ernst & Young Management Consultants in 1996. Ernst & Young, a service provider, focuses on audit, tax and finance issues. E&Y wanted to diversify its activities, and expand their Human Resources Department. The name “De Witte & Morel” was preserved, since it had become a benchmark in the Belgian HR business.

1.2.3 Acquisitions

Between 1997 and 2001, the company took part in a large number of acquisitions and mergers, thanks to the financial support of a strong Ernst & Young. The goal of many of these acquisitions was to strengthen De Witte en Morel’s presence throughout the whole of Belgium and to gain more expertise in different HR fields. An overview:

1997: Acquisition of Meeremans & Bloemen (West-Flanders)
Fields of expertise: Compensation and benefit policy and recruitment and selection

1998: Acquisition of Alexandre Tic (Brussels – French-speaking market)
Field of expertise: Executive search

1999: Acquisition of De Cock & Nicasy (Limburg)
Field of expertise: Recruitment & selection

2001: Acquisition of Baeten Consulting (Ghent)
Qualitative reinforcement of the headquarters in Ghent

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2 Internal document: 25 years De Witte & Morel / Hudson
3 Internal document: 25 years De Witte & Morel / Hudson
De Witte & Morel stayed under the wings of Ernst & Young for a period of five years. In 2001, Ernst & Young sold De Witte & Morel to the American holding group TMP World, “the largest independent firm focusing on recruitment advertising and communications.”

Since De Witte & Morel was very ambitious, they wanted to discover and dazzle the international market. The worldwide group TMP was the perfect vehicle to establish these goals. With offices in 34 countries at that moment, and being one of the only international Human Capital Solutions companies, TMP was the ideal candidate.

After two years, the TMP group Worldwide split up in Monster and Hudson Highland. Since then, all the Human Resources consultancy activities were grouped under the name Hudson Highland Group. This group is quoted on the stock exchange as HHGP.

Since January 2008, the name “De Witte & Morel” disappeared and dissolved into the name “Hudson”. With this new name, the company wanted to accentuate its international dimension. This was translated in international service providing, integrating know-how from other countries and continents and following international developments intensively.

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4 Appendix 1: Article: “Een nieuwe dimensie in HR consultancy.”
1.3 Hudson: geographically

Worldwide, the Hudson Highland Group is active on four continents: North and South America, Europe and Asia. 3600 people can call Hudson their employer. They provide more than 20 countries (140 offices) with customized service solutions (see Figure 1). 

Figure 1: Hudson globally

Hudson Belgium (which resorts under Hudson Europe), holds 7 regional offices, with 310 employees. Their core activities consist out of Recruitment and selection, Talent Management and Interim Management. The R&D department is located in Ghent (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Hudson Benelux

Starting off as a company primarily focusing on recruitment and training, Hudson has come a long way. Over the years they diversified their activities and are now providing global Human Resources Solutions in an international environment: recruitment and selection, talent management, research and development. Hudson is now market leader on the Belgian market as a human capital solutions provider.

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5 Internal document (intranet)
6 Internal document (intranet)
1.4 Company structure

1.4.1 Hudson Ghent

The office in Ghent where I did my traineeship consists out of three large departments: The Recruitment and Selection department, the Talent Management department and the Research & Development department. The R&D department is situated between the two other departments. They provide tools to both divisions, and can be seen as an entity that connects both sections (Figure 3).

1.4.2 Hudson Research & Development department

In 1997, the strategic decision was made to establish its own R&D department. The development of an in-house knowledge centre, also designed to underline the unique identity of the organization, offers the possibility to be flexible. Responding to the specific needs of the client is easier when you can develop your own tools.

In 2000, the R&D department was set up within De Witte & Morel. At the time, this was unique in the Human Resources world. Since 2000, the R&D department has grown from three to fourteen people and has seen a strong expansion of its activities. The team is made up primarily out of psychologists and IT experts. The head of the department, Mr. Etienne Van Keer, assisted by his personal assistant Mrs. Isabel Everaert, supervises three managers.

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7 Internal document : intranet
8 Internal document: 25 years De Witte & Morel / Hudson
Mr. Jeroen Bogaert manages the **consultants**: Mr. Nikola Trbovic, Mrs. Ellen Volckaert, Mrs. Takkie Marichael and Mrs. Emily Van Delm. The consultants come up with new ideas for tools or models; they work out new methodologies or develop existing tools and models. As Mr. Trbovic said: “our main job is to think … a lot.” On a regular basis (mostly weekly), the consultants sit together during a consultant meeting and they brainstorm about possible opportunities, they analyze competitors, make up SWOT analysis, etc… Furthermore, they meet with clients, they introduce the company and they try to find out what the client is looking for, in order to provide them with a suitable and customized solution. Takkie Marichael, my traineeship counselor, keeps personal contact with clients and Hudson employees. She offers support and follows up the use of tools.

![Research and Development Team Ghent](image)

Mr. Danny Jacxsens is responsible for the **CSA platform**. The CSA platform (Competency Scan Advanced) is an automated test system for administering reasoning ability tests, personality questionnaires and simulation exercises. Mr. Tom Keerschaver and David Dierckens make up the rest of this team.

Finally yet importantly, Mr. Giovanni Pysson is responsible for the **CSO platform**. Competency Scan Online is a Web application, keeping track of vital aspects of the assessment process. It has been designed to be a secure application that makes it easy to organize the most important aspects of an assessment. In a very easy way candidates can be invited to fill in online assessment exercises, either at home or in a controlled environment.
1.5 Vision and Values

As I was interviewing Nikola Trbovic, I wondered if the values and vision of Hudson had a real, concrete impact on the daily working life of employees: “Although I don’t think about it every second of the day, it is a big part of working at Hudson. The values proposed and appreciated by the corporation are values that are respected by all employees. Everybody tries to keep these pillars in mind and acts accordingly.” Next, these pillars and values will be discussed in detail.

1.5.1 Vision

The way corporations treat their business partner, suppliers, customers and other stakeholders is in great part defined by their organizational vision, values and their corporate mission. The vision of a company summarizes who the company wants to be and where the company is heading. It is designed to be a guideline that should unite all employees and activities and motivate them to move forward in the same direction. A corporate vision is usually formulated in an abstract manner.

Hudson’s vision is simple but strong: “Striving to be the best in helping employers and organizations to be successful through their human capital, through their employees.” People are the key factor. Human Capital has become the most important attribute in order to gain competitive advantage. Hudson wants to be the best in helping companies attract and keep the best possible talent. They offer solutions to companies and want to stimulate their growth and success by supplying them with the best-qualified staff. Corporate success through people.

The R&D department has developed a vision of their own: “To develop and offer innovative ‘product solutions’ to create a competitive advantage for Hudson, added value for our customers and a positive candidate and user experience in times of War for Talent.”

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9 Appendix 2: Interview Nikola Trbovic
11 Internal document: intranet: mission and values
1.5.2 Mission Statement

A vision is usually translated in a mission statement, a formal written document, which captures an organization’s unique, long-term purpose, practices and core values. It is considered to be the cornerstone of every organization and the starting point of strategic initiatives. In sum, the start of all organizational life.\(^\text{12}\)

Although a mission statement can indeed be an important managerial instrument, research has shown that its power depends on the extent to which it is communicated to the employees.\(^\text{13}\) The efficient communication of all elements in a vision, mission statement and values to employees is important to have the desired effect. That is one of the reasons why efficient internal communication is so important.

According to Bartkus et al. (2000)\(^\text{14}\), mission statements have the power to communicate the organization’s direction and purpose, to serve as a control mechanism, to guide and focus decision making, to create a balance between the competing interests of various stakeholders and to motivate and inspire employees. Usually, the mission statement consists of two parts. The first part consists of the company’s goals and objectives (see vision above), the second part usually maps out the direction and strategy for achieving these goals and how the employees need to conduct themselves.

Hudson’s goal is to become the best at helping their clients being successful. They want to realize this through a number of actions:\(^\text{15}\):

1. **Specialization**: functional and industry-specific: they want to build up expertise and knowledge in a large spectrum of areas, in order to help as many clients and organisations as possible.

2. **Knowledge sharing**: Hudson researches many topics and cases, often in cooperation with scientific institutions such as Vlerick Management School. They want to share this knowledge with clients and prospects, for example, through Lighthouses (seminars).

3. **Global reach with local touch**: Hudson has the advantage of being part of an international corporation, and thus having the strong financial support they need to be present globally.


\(^{15}\) [http://hudson.com/vision.asp](http://hudson.com/vision.asp)
However, they also want to operate locally. They adapt their work methods to the local market and consider the cultural differences between countries.

4. **Innovation**: Without innovation, there is no growth.

5. **Operational excellence**: They wish to deliver the best solution possible to their clients.

6. **A superior employment experience**: The goal of the company is not only to satisfy their clients and stakeholders but also to nurture their own, in-house talent. They offer their employees a flexible and challenging work environment.

1.5.3 Values

“Operating philosophies or principles that guide an organisation’s internal conduct as well as its relationship with the external World. Core or corporate values are usually summarized in the mission statement”

Corporate values are very important to any organization. It is how people describe a company, and often they play a central role in advertising campaigns and motivational programs for employees. They also determine what the members of the organization find important, what they stand for. That is why values determine whether an employee fits in in the company, and whether or not clients identify with the organization. A strong corporate culture creates a recognizable and positive perception of the company among its customers and employees. Next, the five corporate values of Hudson will be discussed, based on my personal experiences during my traineeship.

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As I experienced myself, integrity is indeed one of the most important values at Hudson. They never promise clients something they won’t be able to deliver. Because of this value, they are able to build strong relationships with their clients and contact persons, based on trust.

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<th>2. RESPECT: Treating everyone with unswerving respect, courtesy and justice.</th>
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Respect results out of the first value, integrity. The goal of being ethical is to have respect for

16 [http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/core-values.html](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/core-values.html)

your clients as well as for your employees and colleagues. By acting respectful, a long-term relationship can be built.

3. COOPERATION: Working as a team and sharing knowledge with a view to continual improvement, development and innovation

My personal opinion is that certain things could still be improved on this front. I noticed that knowledge is indeed shared within teams, but there are some difficulties concerning the sharing of information between teams. For example, I noticed that within the R&D department, the consultants and the IT professionals had some difficulties in aligning their activities. Furthermore, during my interview with Eefje Denayer, she mentioned that it often occurs that team members start developing communication initiatives, without sharing their thoughts and ideas with her. This often leads to unnecessary or just plain wrong results.

4. EMPOWERMENT: Being able to provide operational excellence on the basis of innovation and leadership at every level.

This is absolutely true. Hudson is very innovative when it comes to developing tools and methodologies, thanks to their in-house R&D department. Developing a tool to fulfil a specific need of a client, a tool that hasn’t been developed anywhere else, indeed shows a great capability of being innovative and flexible. Being able to respond quickly to market changes and demands has become a highly appreciated quality amongst clients.

5. RESPONSIBILITY: Meeting our commitments to colleagues and clients, always with a clear understanding of the necessity and responsibility inherent in these commitments.

Again, a value I have seen put into practice during my internship. Deadlines are very important, they need to be met, in order to maintain their trusting relationship with clients and colleagues.
1.6 Activities

Hudson Belgium strives to build a relationship with their clients and wants to assist them during their search for new employees. With 25 years of experience and more than 60 experienced consultants, the Human Resources field holds no more secrets. Worldwide, they provide 5 different services to their clients (Figure 5). They are active in seven different sectors, each subdivided according to different function types.

1.6.1 Recruitment and Selection

Finding competent employees has become increasingly difficult. Since Hudson Belgium started out as a recruitment agency, it has become their area of expertise. Although Hudson is now also focussing on other parts of HR, the R&S department still generates a large part of the revenue. Clients know their reputation in this field and wish to cooperate with a company that has built up advanced skills and competencies in this field.

The Hudson recruiters offer customised solutions to their clients. They have adopted a systematic work method: depending on the profile, they use different methods of recruitment (f.e. campus recruitment, advertising in specialised magazines, use of databanks, executive search). Furtermore, depending on the client’s wishes and needs, different R&S tools are applied (assessment centers, simulation exercices, reasoning ability tests). For example, by using an assessment center in the recruitment process, the assessor can determine if the candidate obtains the required skills and competencies for a specific function. An assessment center can consist out of role playing, intray exercices, presentation exercices, a group assignment, and many more.

The recruiters stay in close contact with the client and offer them feedback on a regular basis, in order to involve them in the process and to keep them informed.

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18 Internal document: intranet
19 Internal document: intranet
In short, Hudson disposes of a large array of tools, all scientifically based and methodologically sound. By offering tailor-made assessment centers and well-controlled computerised tests, companies get the guarantee that they will get the talent they are looking for. Furthermore, by building a relationship with the clients based on trust, organisational excellence and respect, their reputation in the field of R&S gets stronger with every client they help.

1.6.2 Consulting and Talent Management

For years, Hudson has been known as having an excellent reputation in the field of recruitment. However, in order to keep a competitive edge, the company has expanded their core activities and are also focussing on other areas of Human Resources. Recruiting is only the first step in the management of talent. Once this talent is attracted, it needs to be developed and nurtured. The same goes for the organisation in general: companies need to stay aware of changes in the marketplace and adapt their work methods accordingly. Compensation management, talent development, organisational development: from now on, Hudson offers their expertise in these fields as well.

- **Compensation and Benefits Management**
  Companies can grow through their human capital. Attracting the current population of employees can no longer only be done by simply rewarding them with classical financial compensations. Employees have become increasingly more demanding. As a consequence, a company’s monetary policy needs to encompass more than just a basic salary. A companies workforce is no longer solely motivated by a steady salary. Employees wish to participate in variable remuneration as well. The Hudson Comp & Ben specialists advise their clients in matters such as individual salary positioning for employees and top executives, implementing a variable wages system in the company, setting up benefit plans, providing stockrelated rewarding, etc …

- **Competency Management**
  Next to the monetary aspects, organisations need to get more out of their employees in order to stay on top. Having motivated and talented employees is necessary to help meet the company’s goals and objectives. The consultants at Hudson offer clients help in developing a strategy to work on the development of employee competencies in a
structured manner. They help in directing the changes within the organisation in line with the organisation’s vision, mission and strategic objectives.

In order to offer clients a suitable strategy, the Hudson consultants use the 5+1 Competency Model (developed by the in-house R&D department). This model is a consistent method to map out the competencies currently present in the company and the competencies desired and necessary for the company to grow. This method can be combined with a development center, where employees gain insight in their own strengths and weaknesses, and where action plans can be drawn up to improve their current qualities, competencies and skills.

**Employees: Assessment and Development**

Every company needs to make decisions concerning their workforce. Gaining insight by assessing employees on a regular basis on who is performing well and who is not is necessary to take appropriate steps. By assessing the performance of employees, current functioning and potential development is mapped out. Hudson wants to assist management in these assessments by offering their expertise and tools.

One of the tools to assess employees can be an Assessment Center, developed by Hudson. An AC is not only used in a recruiting context, it can also be used to determine the current level of competencies of the employees. Furthermore, AC’s are often combined with simulation exercises, psychological tests and interviews. The use of a combination of these tools offers a higher validity than when only one of these is being used. Hudson disposes over an extensive library of assessment exercises, each set in a specific context, focusing on different departments and different levels. Client can thus choose the assessment center they find to be the most similar to the work environment in their company.

Of course, merely determining the competencies is not enough. That is why Hudson also offers Development Centers to their clients. The purpose of a development center is to offer the employee insight in his/her own strengths and weaknesses. Based on these results, a concrete action plan can be set up. When employees sense that the company wants to invest in them and offer them possibilities to develop themselves, this will have a positive effect on employee satisfaction and retention.
Managers: Assessment and Development

Uniting the workforce and instilling the company’s vision, mission and values in the employees can only be achieved if the company can attract qualified managers. Managers need to lead the way and manage their team in the desired direction. Making sure that managers adhere to the vision and values of the company stimulates internal branding with employees.

Hudson helps with implementing and developing plans that are cost effective, relevant and efficient, in order to address both the individual development, the team’s development and the economic output. They offer their clients workshops, seminars (Lighthouses) and coaching, which is usually based on the results of the development centers.

Organisational development

Besides providing advice concerning development on an individual level (employees and managers), Hudson also provides advice on an organisational level: how to change and improve the organisation. Setting in place an appropriate Human Resources policy has become very important to any company. The consultants develop innovative organisational structures and business cultures. An organisational audit helps to determine if the core activities are in line with the company’s strategic objectives. Based on the audit, the consultants offer advise on how to optimise and redesign new organisational structures. Not only the structural aspects are adresses. The relational aspect is of equal great importance. By adjusting the attitudes of employees and by stimulating motivation and organisational commitment, Hudson tries to align the thoughts of the employees with the organisational values, vision and desired culture. Possible interventions could be workshops on the values of the company, teambuilding weekends, etc.

Change Management is another important part of the OD department. During mergers, takeovers and any changes in culture, it is important for a company to deal with this in an appropriate manner.
1.6.3 Interim management and contracting solutions

In some cases, it may be possible that expertise is only necessary during a limited period (when organizational changes or a crisis needs to be managed for example). Interim Management can then provide flexibility, speed, focus, objectivity and a serious return on investment. The difference with traditional temporary agencies such as Randstad and Adecco is that Hudson is only interested in interim Managers. The core focus of Hudson is the mid market professional space: young professionals to senior management roles. Thanks to Hudson’s excellent expertise, innovative tools and specialization in a wide range of functional disciplines, they place over 7300 professionals in temporary roles each year.

1.6.4 Market Insights

Last, but not least, Hudson strives to conduct ongoing research and extend their knowledge concerning everything that affects the performance of employees. They also share their knowledge with professionals, through seminars (Lighthouses), articles and publications as well as through specific case studies.

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20 Internal document: intranet
21 Internal document: intranet
1.7 Clients

Hudson has clients in the financial sector (banks), the pharmaceutical and healthcare sector (Baxter), the technology and IT sector (SAP), the consumer and retail sector (Inbev), the professional services sector (Deloitte) and the semi public and public sector (Selor).

During my internship for example, I had to work on a revision of the paper and pencil tests for Selor, the recruitment and selection department of the federal government. In the banking industry, Dexia, ING and KBC are one of the prominent clients Hudson is proud to have. In order to keep growing and keep a competitive edge, Hudson is always looking for new opportunities in every possible market. Vacancies in accounting, human resources, legislation, sales or logistics, it doesn’t matter, Hudson finds the perfect match.

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22 Internal document: presentation Hudson
1.8 Products\textsuperscript{23}

The R&D department in Ghent is the best-developed R&D department in Belgium within the area of Human Resources. The decision to develop a tool can follow from a specific demand of a client or from brainstorming sessions during consultant meetings, based on current changes or innovations. Next, you can find a brief summary of all the tools Hudson has to the disposal of its employees and clients.

![Figure 7: Products offered by Hudson](image)

1.8.1 Recruitment and Selection: the tools

Almost everyone that has ever applied for a job has been confronted with reasoning ability tests. These tests consist out of a wide array of questions and are usually administered by computer.

Hudson has developed its own reasoning ability tests: the RATs. As can be derived from the name, we can distinguish two different kinds of tests: the reasoning tests and the ability tests. The reasoning tests measure tree kinds of reasoning skills: abstract reasoning skills (A-RAT), numerical reasoning skills (N-RAT) and verbal reasoning skills (V-RAT).

The ability tests on the other hand measure more specific skills and competencies, such as Technical Insight (T-RAT), Spatial Insight (S-RAT), etc.

The reasoning ability tests exist in a large variety. In total, Hudson has 13 different reasoning ability tests at its disposal, each designed to measure a specific kind of reasoning ability on four different levels, going from worker level to Senior Management.

\textsuperscript{23} Internal document : intranet
Besides these Reasoning Ability Tests, Hudson offers a whole range of in-house developed tests and questionnaires. A brief summary:

- **Personality tests: BAQ and PAQ (worker level)**
  The Business Attitudes Questionnaire (BAQ) is a personality questionnaire. It describes the personality of a candidate using the Big Five dimensions (Hofstede): emotional stability, extraversion, openness, altruism and conscientiousness. Currently, there are four versions: the BAQ|F ull, BAQ|S(hort), BAQ|FL(ight) and BAQ|SL(ight). The BAQ|F ull is the full version, with a total of 300 items. The BAQ|S(hort) consists out of half of the items in BAQ|F. The light versions are more simplistic versions of the questionnaires, and can be used during pre-testing occasions. The Professional Attitudes Questionnaire (PAQ) is a personality questionnaire specifically designed for the worker level.

- **Motivational Test (Motivational Drives Questionnaire)**: see chapter 3 for a more extensive elaboration on this subject

- **Interviewing guide: Interview manager**: a tool, designed to standardize interviews, and make them more objective and accurate.

- **Assessment Centers**

- **Simulation exercises**, often used during assessment centers

**1.8.2 Talent Development**
Corporate Culture Assessment, Team Competency Assessment, Talent Engagement etc…: these are all tools applied to develop talent in the entire organization. These tools mainly focus on improving the company's ability to retain qualified and talented employees, by offering them possibilities to develop themselves on an individual level as well as on an organizational level.
1.9 Competitive positioning of Hudson

1.9.1 The company in general: Hudson (TMP) worldwide
Since Hudson Worldwide is an internationally active company, it competes on an international basis with other Human Resources Management corporations. As depicted in figure 8, the top three most successful HRM organizations are McKinsey (a renowned consultancy agency, with more than 85 offices in more than 46 countries), the Boston Consulting Group (a global business consulting firm, active worldwide and specialized in strategic consulting) and Bain & Company (a global consulting firm).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009 RANK</th>
<th>FIRM</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>HEADQUARTERS/LARGEST OFFICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>McKinsey &amp; Company</td>
<td>8.410</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Boston Consulting Group</td>
<td>8.044</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bain &amp; Company</td>
<td>7.530</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Booz &amp; Company</td>
<td>6.560</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>5.979</td>
<td>London/New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oliver Wyman</td>
<td>5.927</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Roland Berger StrategyConsultants</td>
<td>5.873</td>
<td>Munich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Monitor Group</td>
<td>5.821</td>
<td>Cambridge, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A.T. Kearney</td>
<td>5.485</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>OC&amp;C Strategy Consultants</td>
<td>5.233</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Hudson worldwide: competitive positioning

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24 www.vault.com
1.9.2 Hudson Belgium

Hudson is a very special case within the Human Resources area because of its R&D department. It is very difficult to position them within the Belgian market. They are the only company with a well established Research and Development team, so comparing figures is tricky. Most Human Resources Solution providers focus on either consulting or on development.

Nonetheless, according to the Trends top 30.000\textsuperscript{25}, Hudson - considered as being a recruitment and selection agency - takes eight place in the ranking according to revenue. Its top competitors are Randstad, Adecco, T-groep, Robert Half and SD Worx. However, this positioning should be taken with a grain of salt. Randstad, Adecco and T-groep for example specialize in interim work, so they are not operating in the same professional pool as Hudson.

At Hudson, the R&D consultants brainstorm regularly about the competition in their field, the field of R&D and the development of tools. Two important competitors are Cubiks and Cebir, since they too combine the development of tools and models to be used in the HR field and consulting.

1.9.3 Competition analysis: Cubiks\textsuperscript{26}

Cubiks is an international HR consultancy company that combines consulting expertise with services and online products. They have offices throughout Europe and deliver competency-driven assessment, selection and development tools for organizations in over 50 countries. Their products are multi-lingual and they operate in the private as well as in the public sector, like Hudson. Some of their clients in Belgium are Agoria, Alcatel, HDP and Kodak. Their

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\textsuperscript{26} [www.cubiks.be](http://www.cubiks.be)
team is - just as the R&D department at Hudson, multi-disciplinary, consisting of occupational psychologists, HR consultants and IT professionals.

**Strengths and weaknesses**
Like Hudson, they offer a wide range of personality tests, reasoning tests, interview guides, competency frameworks, assessment centers and 360° feedback. They do not only focus on recruitment and selection, but have also gained expertise in the field of talent development.

With regard to their website, they have a professional looking website, which is easy to find and easy to navigate. A very strong point is that there are practice tests available online, as well as practice leaflets. Furthermore, case studies are available for almost every product or service.

Nevertheless, these strengths, their work methods seem to be not as scientific as Hudson’s is. There are not always indications of used scientific sources. Furthermore, they have lower quality standards than Hudson and their variety of ability tests is much more limited than Hudson’s offer. Finally, their personality test has not been updated in the last couple of years.

**1.9.4 Competition analysis: Cebir**

Cebir is a company that develops programs and psychological tests for the selection of personnel. They focus mainly on selection, but also provide their clients with extra-professional applications such as career planning. The team resembles the composition of the R&D team at Hudson: they too have psychologists, consultants, IT professionals and a helpdesk.

Cebir offers many of their tests online, just like Hudson and has a large assortment of tests and exercises. Furthermore, next to R&D, they are also active in the R&S field and offer assessments and consulting to their clients. They focus on medium and large companies. Some of their clients are Torfs, Group 4 Securicor, Securitas, Volvo, Accent, Unique and Vediom.

**Strengths and weaknesses**
At Cebir, they have a strong psychometrical knowledge, which contributes to high quality tests. Furthermore, their psychologists program the tests partly themselves, so they do not fall

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27 Appendix 3 : SWOT analysis CEBIR (internal document)
28 www.cebir.be
into the pitfall of bad communication with their IT staff, and lose time in the process. Moreover, their spectrum of tests is impressive and they base their tests more on scientific research. When looking at their means of communication, they have a fully developed website. The website contains a lot of relevant information, but doesn’t really have an attractive layout. However, they still have a website; the Hudson R&D department does not.

Next to these strengths, Cebir does have some weaknesses as well. For one, Hudson is slightly more commercial and more flexible in the customizing of their tests. Furthermore, Cebir focuses on R&S and less on talent management, an area that is becoming increasingly more important.  

1.9.3 Summary

In short, though Hudson has many competitors in many fields because of their wide range of Human Resources activities, they are still the market leader in Belgium (Figure 10), especially when it comes to reputation and image. They are being perceived as professional and innovative. This trustworthy image gives them an edge on their competitors. Furthermore, they have become a household staple in the minds of many people, as proves the short survey Hudson conducted concerning the top of mind recall of consultancy and recruitment firms. The name De Witte & Morel was mentioned the most (see figure 11).

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29 Appendix 4 : SWOT analysis Cubiks (internal document)
31 Internal document: Intranet
1.10 SWOT analysis Hudson Belgium

A SWOT analysis is an excellent instrument to make an environmental analysis. The internal as well as the external environment of the organization are taken into account. By using this method, the weaknesses and strengths of the organization are clarified and can become the topic of debate and discussion. Goal is to position the product and company more clearly.32 Next, I will go into further detail concerning the SWOT analysis of Hudson Belgium.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Origin</th>
<th>Strengths (to achieve the objective)</th>
<th>Weaknesses (to achieve the objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(attributes of the organization)</td>
<td>- R&amp;D department</td>
<td>- More marketing campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Innovative tools</td>
<td>- Optimize website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus on local implementation</td>
<td>- Use image of R&amp;D more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hudson’s reputation</td>
<td>- Pricing is higher than most of the competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The international scope</td>
<td>- Better communication between teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Different domains of expertise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Origin</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(attributes of the environment)</td>
<td>- Gaining market share due to crisis</td>
<td>- the pitfall of waiting what will happen during the crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Shorter tests without losing on quality</td>
<td>- Demoralization due to effects of crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- International scope of Hudson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: SWOT analysis Hudson Belgium

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1.10.1 Strengths

It is obvious that the Research & Development department can be considered as a strength. By having an in-house R&D department, Hudson can provide customized solutions to their clients and can develop truly innovative tools and methodologies. By having the expertise to develop and adjust their own tools, they can offer flexible solutions. If a client wants to adapt a certain test, the in-house R&D department can do this quickly.

Furthermore, Hudson focuses on local implementation. An internal group financially supports them, but they still operate locally. By considering the differences in culture between countries and companies, they adjust and adapt their work methods, communication and customs to their own market.

Of course, Hudson has built up an excellent reputation. Their reputation is so strong that the need for a real communication and marketing department has been obsolete for a long time.

In addition, of course, their different domains of expertise give them a strong advantage as well. They started of in the recruiting field, but are now focusing on a more general application of their expertise.

1.10.2 Weaknesses

As I mentioned before, De Witte & Morel/Hudson does not have a longstanding marketing and communication tradition. The need never arose. Nevertheless, with competition getting stiffer and the current crisis, marketing and communication on a more professional level could be a way to stay on top.

Related to this is the current state of the website. For the moment, the website is not structured well enough. It needs to become more user-friendly and more attractive. In addition, the image of the R&D department has not been exploited enough. Since it is one of Hudson’s Unique Selling Propositions, this should also be marketed and communicated more extensively.

Furthermore, the pricing policy at Hudson is higher than that of competitors. Now, in times of crisis, this may cause problems.
Last but not least, *communication within the organization* (internal/employee communication) has still to be improved. The communication between management and employees and amongst departments is not always, what it should be.

### 1.10.3 Opportunities

Many opportunities are awaiting Hudson. They could benefit from the *crisis* by gaining a larger market share. In times of crisis, many companies cut back on their marketing and communication activities. Maybe this would be the perfect opportunity for Hudson to expand their marketing efforts and to win over new clients.

Concerning the *tests*, *shortening* some of them could be a good idea as well. Organizations want to work with easy to administer and time efficient tests.

In addition, thanks to their *membership of a large international group*, the world is Hudson’s oyster. They can expand their activities even more, by reaching more countries.

### 1.10.4 Threats

During the meetings, I had the impression that everybody is *waiting* for the crisis to end. I think it would be a good idea to prospect new clients, even though they do not have the means right now to take advantage of the services of Hudson. By establishing a relationship with them now, Hudson can be ready for when the crisis ends.

Of course, the crisis has had his effect on Hudson as well. A couple of offices needed to be closed, and although everybody seems very cheerful, I think the threat is still in the back of their heads. The company therefore needs to make sure that *morale* amongst employees stays up. This could be done by communicating successes throughout the whole company, in order to send out the signal that Hudson is still going strong.
II Theoretical background: Integrated Communication

2.1 Introduction

Communication: it is an essential part of being human. It is something we all have in common. One would think that, since we all do it and we do it constantly, that we would be experts in it. Nevertheless, as we all know, nothing is further from the truth. It seems a simple concept, easy enough to execute, but communication often is the biggest obstacle in our relations with other people and can have serious consequences.

2.2 Communication in general

In order to understand the importance and dynamics of integrated communication, we need to understand what communication is all about.

2.2.1 Defining the concept

There are many definitions of the concept communication. The word communication is derived from the Greek word “koinoonia” and the Latin word “communion”, which both can be translated in “community”: sharing something, being connected. The basis of communication is the interaction between two or more parties. A grasp out of the vast array of definitions and meanings:

“The exchange of messages taking place between people who are aware of each other’s immediate or mediated (possible) presence. This symbolic information is given, received and interpreted partially on a conscious and partially on a subconscious level.”

In addition: “Communication is the process of transferring information from one source to another. Communication is commonly defined as “the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions or information by speech, writing or signs. It can be perceived as a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of thoughts, feelings or ideas towards a mutually accepted goal or direction.”

Communication can be seen as the exchange process of messages. These messages need to be encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver. Both sender and receiver give feedback to each other. The goal is to exchange information and to make sure that the receiver interprets the message as it was intended.

### 2.2.2 Communication models

Although communication is a very complex given, many scientists have tried to capture the dynamics in a graphic representation: a communication model. The most simplistic model is the linear model, where communication is regarded as being a one-way street. Messages get transported relatively intact to the receivers. The most commonly used communication diagram of this type is the communication model by Shannon & Weaver (see Figure 13) \(^{36}\). They classify the message sender as the active decision maker, who determines the meaning of the message. The receiver is considered to be a passive target.

![Communication Model Shannon & Weaver (1949)](image)

The approach to communication has definitely evolved over the years. Human communication is more complex. Message receivers are rarely mere passive consumers of the communication message. According to Nicoll (1993)\(^ {37}\), message receivers will attribute a specific meaning to the message. The attributed meaning can be influenced by several factors such as the context in which the message occurs, the personal frame of references of the receiver and the credibility of the sender\(^ {38}\).

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This evolution is also reflected in the use of communication means. Whereas traditional communication channels where one-way processes (television, radio, etc…), more and more companies are now including other, two-way methods into practice (such as the Internet), since clever marketers have noticed the desire within their customers and clients to interact and to let their voice be heard.

### 2.2.3 The importance of communication in an organization

In the past decades, communication has grown in importance. Organizations have realized a long time ago that paying attention to communication, internally as well as externally, can really pay off.

The reason why communication has become so vital for an organization to survive is threefold: First, the world is getting increasingly smaller: thanks to innovative technology, people stay in contact with anyone in the world, no matter where they are located. As a more negative consequence, direct contact between producer and consumer or even between employer and employee diminishes. In order to maintain a relationship with consumers, communication needs to be revised and updated. The use of new technologies requires a revising of communication channels and how to use them most effectively. Second, society has become more complex. Changes happen overnight, it seems like everything and everyone is in movement. Changes need to be communicated clearly, to the external as well as to the internal world. Third, organizations are increasingly dependent of their environment. Society demands of organizations to be very transparent in their activities. Being visible to the external market, creating a positive image and distinguishing oneself from competitors is key in order to survive the harsh competitiveness on the market.

Change, complexity and competition caused organizations to take communication very serious and to integrate it in the company’s strategy and goals³⁹.

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2.2.4 The communication process in the organization

Effective communication depends largely on an effective and thorough planning. Communication needs to be organized. That is why a communication plan is of vital importance to any organization. Inherent to a communication plan is that it involves a series of long-term based activities. The basic model of communication can be depicted as followed:\textsuperscript{40}:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{communication_plan.png}
\caption{Communication plan: the planning process}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{40} Olschoorn, A. & van der Velden H. (2007). Elementaire communicatie: strategie, beleid en uitvoering. ThiemeMeulenhoff
First, information about the internal (who is the organization, what are our goals, which means of communication do we have at our disposal) as well as the external environment (who is our competition, what groups will we target) need to be gathered and poured into a SWOT analysis.

When the first stage is completed, the target groups need to be identified, the communication objectives need to be determined and a strategy need to be designed: who communicates about what and when, through what medium, in which style, etc.…

After having established the strategy, the organization needs to decide on the core message they want to diffuse and send into the world. The message needs to attract attention and differentiate the company from other organizations in the market. It needs to be understandable and recognizable.

In addition, finally yet importantly, the company has to decide on what communication methods and means they will use. The nature of the message, the target groups, budget, frequency and continuity often determines the choice of communication methods and means.
2.3 Integrated communication

2.3.1 Defining the concept

Communication is important, integrated communication even more so. The concept of integration has existed in marketing literature for decades, but really putting it into practice is relatively new. In order to see what the benefits are, let us first define the concept:

“The integrated vision states that communication needs to be tuned across domains and their activities. Corporate communication can be seen as a management tool to adjust internal and external communication. It is the perfect way to develop the ideal image.”  

Integrated communication can help in branding a company and its products. Branding essentially means: instilling a certain idea, thoughts or emotions associated with the company or the product in the minds of important stakeholders. By integrating communication, one message, one image and one brand can be created.

“IMC is a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing a profitable relationship with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging purposeful dialogue with them.”

Integrated communication also focuses on building long lasting relationships with customers and clients. In order to be able to integrate all messages and to be able to reach different target groups in an efficient way, it is necessary to communicate with these target groups.

“The management instrument by means of which in the most effective and efficient way all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are adjusted to each other, in such a manner that a positive point of departure is established in respect of the target groups with which a dependency relationship exists.”

Integrated communication also focuses on internal communication. Establishing a good reputation and image to the outside world has significant effects on sales and corporate results, but employees are the living billboards of the company. Employee communication therefore needs to be integrated with other forms of communication as well.

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In short, the concept of Integrated Communication has been defined in many ways throughout the years, with no clear consistency. According to me, integrated communication can be seen as a planning process with the goal of creating a synergetic effect between communication expressions. Creating a unified message and adjusting all communicative expressions so that they appeal to their specific target groups but still portray a cohesive and consistent image of the company. Communication happens all the time: everything a company does or says, is send into the world and influences people’s perception of the company. The public and stakeholders get bombarded with messages on a permanent basis. These messages should be consistent and support the company’s ideal image and reputation.

2.3.2 The importance of integrated communication

An organization needs to find a balance in order to achieve its objectives. A balance between what the organization stands for (its values, its mission, its vision) and how they are portrayed whilst executing their activities. That is why many companies have finally understood the importance of integrated communication. Coherence and consistency are keywords when it comes to integrated communication. Image has become of big importance to competencies, due to the aggressive and competitive nature of the contemporary markets. Integrated communication contributes to this image.

A large scope of activities is essential for the prosperity of an organization: technology, R&D, markets, products… The link between all these activities is human capital. Through communication, cooperation between employees can be established, as well as interaction with external groups. This brings us back to our central concept: integrated communication. Integrated communication has blossomed into a very popular concept these recent years. IMC started out as a vague model and evolved into more concrete and practical theories. This growth has been stimulated by three factors: fiercer competition, a more demanding public and technological development. Products and services are becoming more and more homogenous and competition is all around. Companies need to position themselves better and need to distinguish themselves from the competition. Creating a positive image can grant them a competitive edge. Furthermore, the public has become increasingly more critical.

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towards organizations and products. Simple product information is no longer enough to grab the client/customer’s attention. In addition, using different communication channels, without integrating them, leads to a disintegration of communication efforts. In order to counteract this disintegration, corporate communication puts in place a cohesive network of internal and external communication, in order to develop a positive image formation in the minds of groups.

Since organizations need to communicate with a large array of stakeholders, they need to find a way to appeal to these different target groups, but still conveying the same, coherent message. If not, confusion will be all-around. Different elements of communication should therefore be designed and combined in such a way that they work together to create a cohesive and consistent message and image. Furthermore, the use of multiple communication expressions has a serious positive impact on the memory. According to the encoding variability principle\textsuperscript{46}, presenting information in varied contexts causes information to be encoded in different ways. Different memory paths are formed, which means more possibilities to trigger the memory. An integrated communication program can be an effective way to create, maintain and strengthen the brand associations in the memory of stakeholders and the public.

2.3.3 The stakeholders
Since companies have dependent relations with many groups (see figure 15)\textsuperscript{47}, knowing who your stakeholders are is crucial for effective communication.

Every stakeholder has different needs and stakes in the company. By focusing on different details, to satisfy the different needs of these different groups, but by sending out the same message, an organization can develop a cohesive image.

Most stakeholders fall into the following categories: shareholders (investors), employees, clients, government, media, professional organizations, competitors and trade organizations\textsuperscript{48}.

2.4 Elements of integrated communication

According to some authors, such as Vos and Schoemaker (2007), integrated communication can be split up into three large fields: concern communication, internal communication and external communication.

2.4.1 Concern communication: creating a policy framework

Concern communication entails all internal and external communication activities that contribute to the desired positioning of the organization. By tuning all areas of a company, such as marketing, advertising, personnel management and strategic management, concern communication contributes to the climate in which the company operates and the goodwill of shareholders because of that climate.

Key is a common policy framework, which is translated into concrete starting points and guidelines for all communication activities. This framework gives meaning and direction to all organizational activities and acts as a guide for communication, internally as well as externally. Concern communication revolves around diminishing the gap between the ideal image formation (by the company) and the perception by the public. This can be done by creating shared values, formulating strategic principles and developing a distinguishing corporate and product identity. One way to do the latter is by designing a unique house style for the company.

The company’s house style

One of the most powerful tools an organization holds is its visual identity. A corporate visual identity consists of a name and/or a logo, typography, colors, a slogan, etc …

As I mentioned earlier, it has become very important to distinguish one’s own company from the rest. A personal house style can make an organization pop out of the crowd and can create brand recognition. A house style can be seen as a visual representation of the company, contributing to the formation of the desired image and the recognizability of the organization.


A house style consists out of two coherent components: corporate design (style of the house) and corporate behavior (the style of the company: how does it behave). Consistently implementing certain house style elements such as logos, colors, fonts, etc… gives the organization the opportunity to create unity and uniformity. This can have a positive influence on the public. All the activities of the company are connected, which results in a recognizable and cohesive whole. Also for the employees, the house style can deliver positive results. The unity between departments improves. Furthermore, by using these elements consistently, the recognizability of the company will prosper as well.

Two elements of the house style that were important during my traineeship are the color palette and typography and the name/logo. The color palette is the company’s colors and the allowed color combinations. The name/logo is the graphical form of the name of the organization. A logo needs to succumb to a number of demands: it needs to be clear and readable, recognizable, not too trendy so that it can stand the test of time, applicable on different surfaces and communication forms and permanently readable and visible. Furthermore, also the typography makes up a large part of the company’s house style; which fonts to use…

To sum up, concern communication deals with all organizational aspects on a strategic level. You can imagine it as a God like figure (usually top management) that decides on which instincts humans will be born with, how they will generally behave, at what moment in time they will develop other skills, etc … It is then up to the people themselves to live their lives, according to those set rules.

Hudson too has a specific house style. The specifications and guidelines can be found in appendix 5.
2.4.2 Internal communication

“... or employee communication are the communication transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign the organization, to implement designs and to coordinate day-to-day activities”.

An organization cannot be integrated externally without being integrated internally. This integration presents a great challenge to the implementation of an integrated communication plan. External communication is most effective when internal communication is well tuned and spreads the same message. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that implementing an effective internal communication policy increases job satisfaction and employee performance.

The most important rule is that employees need to be considered as the most important stakeholders in an organization by management. They are the human capital of the company and the living advertising billboards of the company. Management plays an important role in the implementation of internal communication policies. Research has shown that internal communication is most effective if there exists a trusting relationship between management and employees. Management therefore needs to be proactive in building relationships, by offering useful instructions, helpful advice, facilitating dialogue and sharing organizational news with their subordinates.

Furthermore, efficient employee communication stimulates organizational identification. Employees identify themselves more with the organization when the communication climate is open: active participation stimulates feelings of being part of a group. Not only the appreciation of participation by a company is important, also making employees feel like they are being taken seriously stimulates organizational identification and internal branding - instilling the values of the company in the employees, so that their thoughts and behavior are in line with the company’s vision.

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Next to the communication climate, the kind of information delivered to employees also plays a significant role. Employees need to receive information concerning the individual level as well as concerning the organizational level (see figure 1655).

![Diagram of internal information]

Figure 16: Types of internal information (Tyler, 1999)

### 2.4.2.1 Internal communication: methods and means

Meetings, memo’s, intranet, newsletters, annual reports… these are all means for internal communication. Top management needs to support internal communication since information often trickles down from the highest regions. If management only uses mails to communicate with their employees and for example disregards the intranet, employees will follow in their footsteps.

**Intranet**

Intranet is an internet within a company. It is a closed circuit, and is only accessible to employees. It is a very efficient communication tool. Information gets diffused very quickly, and is visible to everyone. Furthermore, the information stays accessible for a long period. Being an interactive medium, it can be used for different purposes:

1. communication: email, exchanging documents with colleagues
2. sharing knowledge
3. database: practical information,
4. archiving

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Of course, the question remains: does every employee check the intranet daily or regularly? It is not enough to install an Intranet in a company and say: well, our internal communication is working like a charm. Employees need to be stimulated to read the intranet. This can be done by keeping in mind some simple principles:

- Put personal information on the intranet, such as upcoming birthdays, the menu of the restaurant, holiday schedules, etc…
- Use fixed sections. That way, everyone can find the information they require quickly.
- Make it as user-friendly as possible.
- Install a message board, where people can congratulate colleagues on their birthdays etc

**Other ways of communicating to and with employees**

People usually prefer interpersonal communication forms over formal or impersonal communication. In order to determine the most effective communication mix, it is important to take into account following elements: the internal communication culture, the internal target group segmentation and the goals and means at your disposal.

The following methods and means can be applied:

- **Newsletters**: the goal is to inform employees of the latest organizational news. Usually, a newsletter is quit short and simple.
- **Message boards**: message boards are a very inexpensive way of keeping employees informed and stimulate interactivity. However, more often than not, message boards are positioned badly, in a dingy room where no more than 10 people frequently pass by.
- **Social year report**: this report explains the social policy of the previous year. Topics can range from human resources policy to healthcare and recreational policy.
- **Introduction brochure**: whenever a new employee joins the firm, it would be handy to be able to offer them a brochure with a summary of all the most important aspects of the organization. Practical information, a tour round the company, introduction day, etc
- **Meetings**
- **Memos**: these are sent by direction, management of department heads. The goal is to inform personnel, but many employees only glance at it before sending it to the paper bin.
- **Emails**
2.4.3 External communication: Marketing and Public Relations

The goal of external communication is to establish relationships and inform stakeholders (Public Relations) and to entice in order to sell more products (Marketing).

Public Relations can be defined as “... the form of communication management that seeks to make use of publicity and other nonpaid forms of promotion and information to influence feelings, opinions or beliefs about the company, its products or services, or about the value of the product or service or the activities of the organization to buyers, prospects or other external stakeholders.”

Marketing can be described as “… 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.” One can also see the concept as “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organization objectives.”

In the field of communication, many different terms and concepts have been brought to life: marketing, PR, branding, etc... Moreover, often they are presented as being the same. This is not the case in practice. Marketing and Public Relations do share many attributes and characteristics, but also differ on many areas. Let us start with the resemblances: they both deal with sending messages to the public and persuade them, within an organization, they are the two fields that are focused on the external environment the most, and they both seek to cooperate with the media, public opinion. However, the scope of their activities and the objectives they strive after are completely different. Marketing deals with product development, psychical distribution of the product or service, retailing, price setting, etc … The main goal is to sell, by focusing on the Unique Selling Propositions of their products or services.

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56 Website American Marketing Association:  
http://www.marketingpower.com/AboutAMA/Pages/DefinitionofMarketing.aspx

57 Website American Marketing Association:  
http://www.marketingpower.com/AboutAMA/Pages/DefinitionofMarketing.aspx
Public Relations on the other hand are more concerned with influencing the media, dealing with government, building and nurturing investor relations and employee relations. We can consider PR as a soft form of marketing. The goal is not so much to sell, but to build a strong reputation and positive image. Through Public Relations, the company wants to help the public to better understand how the organization works, create name awareness, instill a positive image in the minds of stakeholders and diffuse information in order to be transparent.

2.4.3.1 Marketing and Public Relation tools used by Hudson

The Marketing Mix is a well-known concept. It includes advertising, internet, direct marketing, sales promotion, personal sale, fairs and sponsoring. Public Relation tools on the other hand are tools that convey a message to the public and media. The main goal is not to sell products or services, but to inform the public and to create a positive image and reputation. For example, press releases, press conferences, press events, interviews, press maps, media partnerships; sponsoring, participation in competitions, such as manager of the year, etc …

The methods used by Hudson will be further explored next.

Although Hudson does not want to market itself intensely to clients and candidates, they do try to reach their external target groups (clients and candidates) by using several Marketing and Public Relation channels. Mainly, they target two large groups: candidates (by order of their clients) and clients.

Clients are organizations, CEO’s, Human Resources Managers, etc … that wish to outsource certain human capital related activities and ask Hudson to do this for them. Candidates are the people that want to work for a certain company or whose interest is raised by a specific job vacancy. Hudson therefore can be seen as the intermediary between employers and employees.

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59 Appendix 19: Interview Eefje Denayer
Marketing to candidates

Organizations who wish to recruit outside or inside the company, can appeal to Hudson to find the perfect person for the job. Attracting the attention of candidates and selling the vacancy to them has been a topic of scientific research for many years. Research has focused on the characteristics of the sender, the message and the used media.

When it comes to the sender, characteristics that will be likely to impact positive outcomes (responses from candidates) are credibility, competent, trustworthy and well trained. Since recruitment and selection is Hudson’s area of expertise and they have built a credible, trustworthy and competent reputation in this HR field, using their services can be beneficial to the number and quality of candidates that respond. The client’s company gets associated with Hudson and vice versa, rubbing of their reputations.

Concerning the message, research has shown that the content needs to contain realistic job previews that provide both positive and negative content. By using a realistic job preview, candidates can self-select even before they have entered the recruitment procedure. This is also beneficial to the client, since time and money is being saved by not having to assess candidates that are not suited for the function.

Concerning choice and use of media, effectiveness seems to be associated with the match between communication requirements and media richness. Rich media, such as personal contact, gives the opportunity to communicate two-ways, the ability to convey a multitude of cues (verbal and non-verbal communication), the ability to convey a sense of personal focus and language variety.

Let us now return to the marketing mix used by Hudson to reach potential candidates.

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Job advertisements in magazines
Advertisement plays an important role in initial organizational perceptions. Especially the content and aesthetic qualities of a job advertisement influence the attitude of the reader regarding the company as a future employer. By including information, such as the company’s values, required abilities and information concerning salary, training, travel and vacations, advertisements can influence the effectiveness of the ad: readers can determine whether they fit in the picture. This makes advertisements responses much more trustworthy and delivers better-qualified candidates. Hudson publishes job advertisements in magazines and on websites such as Jobat, Vacature, etc.

The website
Hudson posts all available vacancies on their website. Posting vacancies on websites has become an excellent recruitment tool. Nevertheless, scientific research has shown that certain elements are important in order to attract readers to visit the website. Some of the most important features are overall site usability, navigation and aesthetics. When visiting the Hudson Belgium website, candidates immediately see a button reserved especially for them.

Job fairs
Job fairs can be very lucrative in terms of marketing your own company and that of your clients. Research has shown that candidates often appreciate rich media more than text-only channels. For one, the communication is two-ways, candidates can ask questions and get an immediate and personal response, the presence and warmth of the recruiter may also influence the attitudes of the client, etc. Hudson attends the large job fairs, such as Talentum and Career Launch. When they have vacancies for specialized functions, such as an engineer function, they sometimes attend specialized job fairs, but this does not happen very often.

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63 Appendix 6: example of job advertisement on Jobat.
Ads in campus magazines
Whenever clients are searching for young potential or graduate students, Hudson can decide to advertise in campus magazines, in order to reach the target group in an effective way.

Website Vacature and Jobat
Banners and movies can be used to expand Hudson’s visibility and to inform readers in a more practical way about selection procedures, how the company works, etc. These banners and movies can therefore be considered to be tools to build and maintain Hudson’s reputation (Public Relation tools), and ways to attract future clients to the Hudson website.⁶⁵

Marketing and Public Relations to clients and prospects
Hudson’s primary target market consists of course out of clients and future clients: organizations, CEO’s, Human Resource officers, etc…. Without them, the company cannot function. In order to reach their clients, the communication department combines marketing methods with public relations.

Advertisements (Marketing)
Hudson does place ads in specialist magazines, such as HR magazine, to promote the image of Hudson (PR), but this makes up only a marginal part of the communication budget. They do not launch real marketing campaigns, except when something very important is happening, such as the name change dated a few years ago.

Memberships (PR)
The largest chunk of the budget goes to membership and sponsoring. Membership promotes again the network of Hudson. They are member of VOKA, VKW and the Personnel managers club in Antwerp. Thanks to these memberships, they can attend a vast array of seminars and receptions. By attending formal and informal events, Hudson consultants can build relationships and expand their personal and professional network.

### Sponsorships (PR)

Sponsorships can be seen as promotional actions by which both the sponsor as the sponsored benefit in a marketing relationship: the sponsored receives funds which he can invest in the event, the sponsor gains visibility and is able to connect to its target groups in an emotional way.\(^{66}\).

The goal of sponsoring is threefold, according to Sandler & Shani (1993)\(^{67}\): reaching corporate objectives (image related), marketing objectives (brand promotion, sales promotions) and media objectives (reach target markets, gain visibility).

Important when choosing an event to sponsor is that the performance of the sponsored event contributes to the image of the sponsor.\(^{68}\) Sponsoring can happen on different areas:
- sport sponsoring: AA Gent
- art and cultural sponsoring: Bozar
- scientific sponsoring: Vlerick
- non-profit sponsoring
- television sponsoring
- nature sponsoring

Especially sport and cultural sponsoring has become very popular\(^{69}\), a trend we also see at Hudson. They sponsor cultural and sport events and have engaged in scientific sponsoring, such as their cooperation with Vlerick Management School. They have an outstanding relationship with this institution. They conduct research together and of course, Hudson consultants can attend events organized by Vlerick.

When it comes to sport sponsoring, the company has a close relationship with the soccer club AA Gent. Not only since CEO Ivan De Witte has a special bond with this club, but also to provide clients with tickets and an opportunity to get to know Hudson on a different, more informal level.

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In addition, they have a tie with the cultural world. This year, they sponsor Bozar. Hudson receives a list of performances and they can order tickets, which they can then offer to clients. The company chooses to sponsor cultural as well as sport events, since the preference of clients can differ. AA Gent tickets for the sport fans, Bozar tickets for the more culturally inclined clients.

A good image is no longer a luxury but a necessity. These kinds of events are popular and they reach many people. Furthermore, tickets can be required and offered to clients. Sponsoring thus offers many possibilities when it comes to relationship marketing.

- **Seminars (PR)**
  Hudson organizes seminars as well. The Lighthouses are the perfect example. The goal is to share knowledge and expertise with clients and prospects. They do not commercialize or market products during these seminars. Informing and providing clients with an opportunity to learn something new trumps the selling of products during these occasions. The lighthouses are free.

- **Webinars (marketing)**
  When Hudson comes up with a new product that they do want to market, they prefer to organize a Webinar, an online seminar. That way, interested clients can learn more about the possibilities of the new tool, in the comfort of their own office or home. Webinars have the advantage that they can increase contact with clients past, present and future. Whenever something new comes up, a webinar is organized and announcements are sent out. After the presentation, clients can review the information at their own pace by accessing the PowerPoint presentation online.\(^{70}\)

- **The Hudson Academies (PR)**
  In order to use the Hudson tools effectively, Hudson provides training sessions for clients. These sessions are an extra service provided by Hudson. After Hudson has implemented certain organizational structures and introduced new tools, it is imperative that clients know how to use these tools. Increasing the client’s knowledge on how to use the tools

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and methods will influence the effect of the interventions made by Hudson in a significant way. Each session revolves around a specific theme and clients pay 500€ per session.

- **Participating in competition related events (PR)**

  Hudson also participates in the Human Resources Management Night. This event was born with the intention to give the HR community in Belgium the possibility to meet other HR professionals and to exchange views. Furthermore, the event tries to revalue the HR profession by acknowledging and rewarding the most innovating HR projects and the most remarkable HR professionals. By sponsoring this event, Hudson exposes itself to professionals within their own field of expertise.  

**Conclusion**

Integrating both concern communication, internal and external communication has become a necessity for companies who want to build and maintain a strong reputation and image. Since customers are bombarded daily with messages, companies want to attract their attention. Attracting attention can be done by being consistent in the message they send to the internal and external world.

In the third chapter, I will go into detail concerning my traineeship at Hudson.

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71 [http://www.hrm-night.be/](http://www.hrm-night.be/)
3.1 Introduction

When I started my traineeship, my trainee counselor, Takkie Marichael, wasn’t at the office. In order to make my arrival as smooth as possible, Ellen Volckaert welcomed me, and introduced me to the team. Furthermore, she told me about the general activities within Hudson and gave me an outline of the company’s structure. Since my counselor was absent, I spent my first day working on an assignment sent to me by email by Emily Van Delm, who was also absent. The next day, Takkie arrived and we sat down to discuss my internship. She proposed to focus on communication during my stay at Hudson. Eventually, this was translated into three different main tasks:

- The development of a new folder, concerning the Motivational Drives Questionnaire.

- The adaptation of the Tools For Talent Overview Exercises, a booklet with information concerning all the tools provided by Hudson.

- Adjusting the Hudson website (Belgium)

During all my assignments, I got a limited amount of information to work with. I had to work independently and look for information myself.

In what follows, I will describe my main assignments in detail.
3.2 Case study I: Motivational Drives Questionnaire, the brochure.

My first and main assignment was to design a new folder from scratch concerning a newly developed tool: the Motivational Drives Questionnaire.

3.2.1 Background information

The Motivational Drives Questionnaire [MDQ] is a new tool, developed by the Hudson R&D department. This tool is the perfect example of an instrument that has been developed in the absence of a concrete demand of a client. The consultants saw an unexplored opportunity in the field of motivation. In times where it is getting increasingly harder to attract talent, it is important to explore all kinds of possible determinants of behavior and performance. Since research has shown that performance is not only linked to competencies and skills, but is also highly correlated to motivation, this tool can be a helpful instrument to clients who are looking to attract the best talent for their organization.

The MDQ is founded on scientific research, such as the hierarchy of needs by Maslow (figure 17\textsuperscript{72}) and the Career Anchors by Schein (Figure 18\textsuperscript{73}). Furthermore, the tool was developed in cooperation with several universities across the country.

The MDQ measures the motivational drives of a candidate in a work related environment.

The tool measures management skills of candidates on five domains: information management, task management, people management, interpersonal management and personal management.

\textsuperscript{72} Internal document: Scientific research on MDQ
\textsuperscript{73} Internal document: Scientific research on MDQ
The questionnaire consists out of 105 questions, and is available in three languages (Dutch, English and French). After having completed the questionnaire, the candidate receives a descriptive report, with detailed information about his/her motivations (see figure 20).

3.2.2 Briefing

During the beginning of my second week at Hudson, my traineeship counselor, Takkie Marichael, briefed me about the MDQ. She asked me to design a brochure from scratch. I was free to do what I wanted, but I had to keep some guidelines in the back of my head.

First, I needed to include the major features of the MDQ in the brochure. In order to find this information, she referred me to one of the consultants for further details.

Second, lay-out wise, I had to restrict myself to the Hudson approved color palette, pictures and fonts, which contributes to the unified message and image of Hudson.

3.2.3 Let’s get started

After the briefing, I started to research the MDQ. I found a couple of documents, with some theoretical background, I read some proposals, and I searched the Worldwide Web for scientific research concerning motivation and motivational questionnaires.

After gathering all the information, I sat down with Emily Van Delm, one of the consultants who was closely involved in the development of the MDQ. She offered me some information on the most important features of the MDQ. With all this information in my head, I started to work on the brochure. I have to admit, it was harder than it seemed at first.
The first problem was that I had to make it in InDesign, a desktop publishing software application, which can be used to create posters, flyers, brochures, magazines and books. This was a big hurdle to take. I had never worked with it before, and had to ask for help. Tom Keerschaver, an InDesign expert, helped me through the basics, and I got started.

First, I looked up some information on how to design a folder in the most effective way possible: “A folder is a commonly used tool for internal as well as external communication. Often, the size is limited (only 1 or 2 A4 pages) and the content is centered on one general topic. The goal of a folder is to introduce a topic and to give the reader the opportunity to see the global picture. Details are limited, the text is short and concise and often illustrated by pictures”.

Furthermore, a folder can consist out of a number of elements:

- Title and subtitle/introductory sentence: these two elements indicate the content of the folder. A good title and sentence can draw the attention of the audience (AIDA).

- Text: the different parts of text should visually look like a unit. This creates clarity. Furthermore, the text should focus on the most important information for your target group. By leaving out overly detailed information and getting to the point, you can evoke desire in the reader to learn more about the product and could lead to a purchase. (AIDA)

- Each unit should be clearly recognized by a headline. The headline sums up what the text will tell the reader. This motivates the reader and arouses his interest (AIDA).

- Illustrations: Again, these draw the attention, establish rapport with the reader and support the power of the text. (AIDA)

- Feedback stimulus: including a phone number or a website address stimulates the person to take action (AIDA).

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The AIDA principle

Since scientific research has shown that the AIDA principle is an important factor in print communication, I used this principle as a starting point. The A(ttention) I(nterest) D(esire) A(ction) principle is an acronym often used in marketing literature (see figure 21)\textsuperscript{75}. These four principles allow a general understanding of how to target a market effectively.

Step 1: Attention

The headlines

The easiest way to grab someone’s attention is by using a catchy headline text. A good headline can increase advertisement efficiency. Readers use headlines to scan the pages. By scanning the pages, readers determine whether the information is of interest to them\textsuperscript{76}. A headline text should be short enough, unusual, surprising and should focus on the main benefit of the product. Verbs and adjectives work better than nouns.\textsuperscript{77}

In my first draft, I came up with the front-page title: “Motivational Drives Questionnaire: Inzicht in motivatie” and the second page title: “Motivatie onsluieren”\textsuperscript{78}.

I presented these titles to Jeroen Bogaert, Emily Van Delm and Ellen Volckaert, three of the consultants. Since Jeroen has encountered many clients, I thought his point of view could contribute significantly to the quality of the headlines, since he knows what clients want. Jeroen found that “Inzicht in motivatie” was not strong enough to draw the attention of the clients. He suggested: “what drives a person to perform.” I changed it into “de drijfveer achter prestaties”, and later on in “inzicht in de drijfveer achter prestaties” (final draft).

Furthermore, the second-page title was also changed into “Person-Organisation fit”, and later on in “Person – Job fit” (final draft), since this would appeal more to clients than “Motivatie onsluieren”\textsuperscript{79}.


\textsuperscript{76} Bleske, G. (1996). Setting the stage for the reader, Schematic Frames and reader learning; the effect of headlines. Department of Journalism, School of Communication.

\textsuperscript{77} Bleske, G. (1996). Setting the stage for the reader, Schematic Frames and reader learning; the effect of headlines. Department of Journalism, School of Communication.

\textsuperscript{78} See appendix 8: First draft MDQ brochure

\textsuperscript{79} See appendix 9: Second draft MDQ brochure
Step 2: Interest

Structure and Unique Selling Propositions

In order to persuade clients, you need to raise their interest. You need to persuade them that the product will meet their needs and will improve the quality of their work and the performances of the organization.

In order to raise interest, I needed to know which elements the client values the most in a tool and develop a clear and organized structure. Based on the literature I had read on the subject of the MDQ, I identified the following aspects as the most important features of the tool:

- Performance,
- Efficiency,
- Time-and cost saving,
- Reflecting a strong and desirable corporate image

FIRST DRAFT

After having determined the most important features of the MDQ, I came up with a general structure of the folder:

- Title front-page: “Inzicht in motivatie”
- Title second-page: “Motivatie onsluieren”
- Introduction
- Toegevoegde waarde
- Wat?
- Waarom MDQ?
  - Efficienter werken
  - Meerwaarde
  - Eenvoudige en snelle afname
  - Wetenschappelijk onderbouwd
- Illustrations

Next, I started to work on the text. I included the most important features of the MDQ in the section “toegevoegde waarde”.

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In my first draft, the section “toegevoegde waarde” consisted out of the following elements
- Hoe men omgaat met informatie
- Hoe men omgaat met het managen van taken
- Hoe men omgaat met het managen van mensen
- Hoe men omgaat met interpersoonlijke relaties
- Hoe men omgaat met zichzelf

Review by Jeroen Bogaert:
When revising my first draft, Jeroen argued that the texts were too long. He advised me to use more white space and make more use of bulleting, in order to get a cleaner layout. Jeroen pointed out that when clients read a brochure, they first skim the text very quickly. The use of space, summarizing titles and bullets makes the folder more attractive and easier to read. In addition, he found the information concerning “toegevoegde waarde” as too abstract and he thought it would not interest the readers. Therefore, I went back to work, and created the second draft.

SECOND DRAFT

In the second draft, I adjusted the structure and certain parts of the text, keeping in mind the recommendations made by Jeroen. The structure of the second draft:
- Title front-page: “De drijfveer achter prestaties”
- Title second-page: Verder investeren in Human Capital
- Introduction: “Person – Organisation fit”
- Toegevoegde waarde
- Wat?
- Waarom MDQ?
  - Efficiënter werken
  - Person – Organisation fit: prestatie verbeteren
  - Interesse tonen in kandidaat
  - Wetenschappelijk onderbouwd
  - Ruime toepasbaarheid

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80 Appendix 8: First draft MDQ Brochure
81 Appendix 9: Second draft MDQ Brochure
In addition, following Jeroen’s advice, I changed the text of the section: “toegevoegde waarde”. I replaced the abstract description of what the MDQ measures by a more attractive visual representation of the measured domains.

**Review second draft by Jeroen, Elllen and Emily:**

Jeroen suggested changing the “Person – Organisation fit” title into “Person – Job fit”. Ellen and Emily changed some sentences, but did not give feedback on structure or layout.

Finally, I took into account the remarks made by the three consultants, and made the following changes:

- I placed the “wat?” section before the “toegevoegde waarde” section. I thought it was more important to first tell readers what the MDQ was exactly, and then go further into detail about what the tool could mean for them.
- I designed a figure, illustrating the dimensions measured by the MDQ. When designing the figure, I used the colors approved by Hudson, in order to keep in line with the integration of the house style in all the means of communication.
- I changed the title to: “Person – Job Fit”
- I reduced the number of illustrations

**THE FINAL DRAFT**

The general structure of the third and final draft was changed into the following:

- Front-page title: “Inzicht in de drijfveer achter prestaties”
- Second-page title: “Person – Job Fit”
- Wat?
- Toegevoegde waarde?
- Waarom MDQ?
  - Efficiënt
  - Prestatie bevorderend
  - Wederzijds engagement
  - Wetenschappelijk onderbouwd
  - Ruime toepasbaarheid
- Illustrations

The final draft can be found in appendix 10.
**Step 3: Desire**

It is not enough to simply demonstrate the benefits, the client needs to want and desire the product. In order to get the client ready for action, he first needs to associate the product with positive emotions. By making use of the house style and color palette of Hudson (see figure section “wat?” final draft), I tried to portray the image and reputation Hudson holds. By remembering people that Hudson is the provider of this tool, I wanted to link the positive associations people hold about Hudson to the MDQ. The MDQ needs to be seen as trustworthy and effective.

**Step 4: Action**

After having attracted their attention, raised their interest and desire, it was necessary to urge clients to take action. This can vary from asking for more information to purchasing the product. I included a point of contact at the bottom of the third page. If the reader is interested, he knows immediately whom he can address for more information.

Furthermore, I based my draft on other, already existing and used folders. With the encoding variability principle in mind, I used elements of existing communication means in my folder. The goal was to trigger the memory of readers and to create a consistent and cohesive brand image (synergy of persuasive voices).

**Conclusion**

At first, when Takkie assigned me to design this folder, I felt a bit lost. I had never worked with InDesign, I did not have any experience on how to design a folder from scratch and the information that was given to me was very limited.

However, as the days went on, and I started to learn more and more about the tool and InDesign, I started to really like my task at hand. In addition, the input of the other consultants was a great help to me. I have never encountered clients and did not know what their most pressing needs are and what clients are looking for in a tool. Since Jeroen has dealt with many clients in the past, he knew which words would raise their interest and what elements would persuade them to use this new tool. In the end, 3 versions were made of the MDQ brochure, over a period of three weeks.

You can find all three drafts in the appendices 8, 9 and 10.

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82 Appendix11 : existing brochures concerning Hudson tools: BAQ, interview manager, RAT
3.3 Case study II: Overview of the exercises

3.3.1 Background information

My second big project was updating the overview booklet of the exercises Hudson has to offer. The current overview looked outdated, and contained a lot of repetitive information. Furthermore, the color scheme was not yet adapted to the new in-house style. The consultants use this overview when talking to clients about the tools Hudson offers. It should be an easy way for clients to learn more about the assortment of tools, and should give them a clearer idea of what these tools entail, how they look like, etc … in order for them to make an informed decision. In addition, in-house personnel can also use the booklet. R&D develops so many tools and methods, that the overview could be a useful tool for consultants to brush up on the qualities and characteristics of every tool.

3.3.2 Briefing

Takkie Marichael briefed me on this assignment. She asked me to make the overview more accessible and more attractive to clients. She informed me on where I could find some information about all the tools, and I got started.

3.3.3 Let’s get started

Step 1: finding the information

I started by looking up all the relevant information concerning the wide variety of tools Hudson has to offer. Writing about something means you first have to know what the tools entail. I researched preexisting folders concerning the BAQ, Interview Manager and the RAT\textsuperscript{83}, I looked up research concerning these tools and I completed most of the questionnaires and tests myself.

Step 2: forming a general idea

First, I outlined the general structure of the overview. The old overview did not really have a clear structure, which made it difficult to find a specific tool. I decided to divide the overview in 4 big chapters: the reasoning ability tests, the personality tests, the motivation test, and the simulation exercises. This would allow clients to search in a more effective way.

\textsuperscript{83} Appendix 11: existing brochures concerning Hudson tools: BAQ, interview manager, RAT
Furthermore, in order to integrate the existing folders with the overview, I decided to use the existing folder pictures and layout of the front pages as divisions in the overview. However, Takkie and Ellen did not think this to be a good idea in the end, so I dropped the idea.

Second, I reviewed the old texts. I adapted certain sentences, I deleted repetitions and I made the layout more attractive. When rewriting the texts, I kept in mind that many of the future readers were not necessarily going to be psychologists or people that are familiar with psychological terms. I adapted my writing style so that every person, experts or lays in Human Resources jargon, would understand the content of the texts.

When it came to structure, I made sure that the same structure was present in all the chapters:

1. What are …: this chapter outlines what the tool measures. For example, the Reasoning Ability Tests measure the potential and capacities of a candidate.
2. Types: For example, within the Reasoning Ability Tests, we can distinguish three different groups: the abstract, the numerical and the verbal tests. I explained the goal of each of these types.
3. Practical examples of the tests: I included screenshots of the test itself and recapitulated what the test measures, keeping in mind that not everyone will read the overview entirely, but that many readers would just flip to the part that they are interested in.

**Step 3: InDesign**

First, I decided on the color palette. I based myself on the house style of Hudson.

Second, I tried to keep as much white space as possible. I wanted to keep the layout tight and clean enough so that the information would not overwhelm readers. A balance between the right amount of information and an attractive layout was my main goal.

**Step 4: reviewing**

I presented my first draft to Takkie Marichaels and Ellen Volckaert. Takkie gave me the advice to include less color and make the layout cleaner. Ellen advised me on the content, and recommended that I placed the screenshots on the same page as the explanatory text, in order to make the overview more compact.

The first and second draft can be found in the appendices 12 and 13.
3.4 Case study 3: the website

3.4.1 Background information

The red line through my three main projects was integrated communication. Hudson, as most companies, wants to send a consistent message out in the world. My main task was thus to make sure that concept, layout and content all portrayed the same message: professionalism and innovation.

3.4.2 Briefing

Takkie Marichael asked me to update the Hudson website (Belgium) and to adjust it. She thought the layout of the homepage was not very clear and structured. She asked me to propose a different structure, especially concerning the instruments Hudson has to offer to its clients.

Since websites have two basic functions, to persuade and to inform, this means can be of great importance to a company. The World Wide Web has become a valuable addition to any advertising strategy. Silk, Klein & Berndt (2001) argued that a company’s website is one of the principal points of contact with key audiences. Websites therefore need to be:

- easy to find (a logical address)
- accessible
- fast
- interactive
- suitable for the desired image
- a good application of the house style
- user-friendly: easy navigation, good internal links
- a clear structure
- short and readable texts
- clear illustrations
- up-to-date

3.4.3 Let’s get started….

**Step 1: global outline**

I made a global outline of the website’s current structure. Keeping in mind that a website needs to be visually attractive, I came up with the idea to use more graphics and less plain text, to attract the visitor’s attention.

When visiting the current homepage, seven large divisions can be seen: krutering en selectie, assessment centers, development centers, competency en reward management, outplacement en career guidance, leadership development and interim management.

When clicking on the “professional recruiting” button, a new window opens and you can choose from four different sections: methods of recruitment, recruitment procedure, our specializations and our unique assets. Most of my adaptations are situated under this particular section.

**Step 2: adaptations**

My suggestion was to add an extra button under “recrutering en selectie”: “the R&D department”, since they play a crucial role in the recruitment and selection process and they are one of Hudson’s Unique Selling Propositions. According to the American Marketing Association, the concept of USP can be seen as “an approach to develop an advertising message that concentrates in the uniquely differentiating characteristic of a product or organization, that is both important to the customer and a unique strength of the advertised products or company when compared to other competing products or organizations”.

Furthermore, certain tools portrayed on the website are no longer being used on a regular basis, such as the Career-Fit Indicator. I proposed to remove these links, in order to offer the clients accurate and up-to-date information.

Another large adjustment I suggested was to add an extra button on the homepage: “Tools”. Here, an overview of all the tools could be given, with some extra information and a visual element, like a screenshot of the tests. I thought this to be a good idea to reduce the abstract nature of the description of the texts and to offer readers a clearer image of what the tests are.

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85 Appendix 14: global outline existing website.
all about. Instead of using just text to give an overview of all the tools, I suggested to use the 5+1 competency model figure. By clicking on the text presented in the circle, for example: “talent acquisition”, the reader would get an overview of all the tests Hudson provides to recruit new talent.

Concerning the overall structure of the website, I advised to change the names of the buttons. Throughout the website, many different names were being used to describe the same concept. In order to keep the website visually attractive and easy to navigate, I suggested using the same name for the same concepts.

For example, “recrutering en selectie” entails the same as “professionele rekrutering”, but both terms were being used on the website. In order to avoid confusion, I opted to use the term “Professionele reclutering”, and no longer make use of the term “recrutering en selectie”. Similarly, the terms “development centers”, “competency and reward management” and “leadership development” were being used on the website, but were not grouped together. Since all these concepts are associated to talent management and development, I suggested to group these three terms together, under one same denominator: “Talent Management”.

The main idea was that, for example, if a CEO is thinking of contracting Hudson to attract new employees, he can visit the website, and without having to know what all the different terms mean, he can just click on “professionele reclutering”. After clicking, he can now access all the information necessary when one wants to recruit new candidates. He can find all the tools and methods available at Hudson, and can read more about the content of these tools and how to use them. On the other hand, let us say he wants to stimulate the development of his managers. Now he can click the button ‘talent management’, and can choose from three different areas: development centers, leadership development and competency and reward management.

Furthermore, I thought the site was not very interactive. Interactivity is a crucial component of integrated communication. In order to know what the target group wants and needs, dialogue with clients need to be facilitated and relationships need to be built88.

For example, one could offer the readers the possibility to fill in an example of a test, and afterwards, they would be able to receive a report of their results. Again, to provide them with a clearer and more concrete view of the test.

Furthermore in the spirit of making the website more interactive, I suggested to create a message board, where clients could leave their impressions concerning the tools, the seminars, etc … This could stimulate the image of the company, since personal experiences persuade more than information provided by the company.

In addition, I suggested adding a space where innovations and news could be posted. For example, if a new tool is designed, this news could be posted, in order to inform readers immediately of this new opportunity.

An overview of my suggestion can be found in appendix 15.

Conclusion
Since the end of my internship, the website has been updated. The layout and general structure of the website need to be the same in all countries, and management in the USA have designed the structure (concern communication), so my suggestions to change the structure of the website were impossible to execute. Maybe in the future, my adaptations could still come in handy.
3.5 Other assignments

3.5.1 Tools for talent
Emily Van Delm, one of the consultants asked me to translate a presentation from English to Dutch and French. Because this was my very first assignment, it gave me a chance to learn more about the tools Hudson has to offer to its clients.

3.5.2 The Learning Styles Questionnaire
The LSQ (Learning Styles Questionnaire) was developed in the context of online development tips. Hudson wants to provide organizations with a tool to help them develop the competencies and skills of their employees.

A learning style refers to a persons preferred way of learning, the way of learning someone feels most comfortable with. By setting up an online forum, employees can gain insight in their own learning style, which enables them to autonomously manage and optimally organize their own learning style process. After having completed the questionnaire, employees receive a feedback report and get tips on what learning methods would appeal to them the most. Also, the rapport suggests what questions the employee could ask him/herself to optimize their learning process.

Hudson identified eight different learning styles, each built around three bipolar key-learning dimensions that characterize the way in which people learn. These three dimensions are:

1. a social dimension
2. an experimental dimension
3. an input dimension

Based on these three dimensions, people can be an experimenter (learning through trial and error), a designer (likes to be confronted with new and challenging issues), a realist (breaking down a problem in smaller parts), a philosopher (wanting to understand the system behind a problem), a practitioner (learning about practical and technical issues), a brainstormer (brainstorming about problems in an associative and random order), an absorber (learning through observation and listening) and an academic (learning through theoretical and abstract input).
Emily asked me to design a drawing that will be used in those rapports. For each type, I designed a figure. This would make it easier for employees to see what a certain type means\textsuperscript{89}.

\subsection*{3.5.3 Selor}
Ellen Volckaert, one of the consultants, asked me to review the paper and pencil versions of the reasoning and ability tests for Selor. This review consisted out of comparing the paper and pencil versions with the electronic versions. Any inconsistencies needed to be reported to Danny Jacxssens, one of the IT specialists.

\subsection*{3.5.4 Assisting in consultant meetings}
During these consultant meetings, usually once a week, several topics were attended to. A grasp out of the topics:

1. \textit{Competition analysis: Thomas International.}
   Lies, another intern, prepared a competition analysis on Thomas International. Based on the information she collected about the company, the consultants brainstormed over the opportunities, weaknesses, strengths and treats of Thomas International. Based on this brainstorming session, they formulated opportunities for Hudson.

2. \textit{Analysis of the financial report of Hudson}
   During this session, we talked about the financial numbers of Hudson. Since many of the consultants are not acquainted with accountancy and financial numbers, the report was analyzed and explained.

3. \textit{Market relevant literature}
   Since we are currently experiencing a financial crisis, all the consultants, as well as the interns, were asked to read the articles: “Managing in uncertain times: strategies and practices for high performance\textsuperscript{90}” (Accenture) and “When good management shows: creating value in an uncertain economy\textsuperscript{91}.” (Accenture). The idea was to read these articles and analyze the text in order to come up with recommendations and potential plans of action for Hudson and the R&D department.

\textsuperscript{89} Appendix 16: Figures LSQ
\textsuperscript{91} Appendix 18: When good management shows: creating value in uncertain times.
IV Recommendations concerning Integrated Communication

4.1 Introduction

During my interview with Eefje Denayer, it became clear to me that Hudson does not have a longstanding history of strategic and planned communication. This seemed odd to me, since almost every large company has a professional communication and marketing department nowadays. But, indeed, the main reason for this lack of communication processes is the strong reputation Hudson holds. Instead of focusing on formal communication strategies, they use their extensive network to gain clients. Nevertheless, now being part of an international corporation, U.S. headquarters are starting to see the advantages of a well-thought communication strategy. That is why the website was set up and research is being done on the profitability of communication strategies.

Since communication is a relatively new concept within the company, integrated communication is still a long-term goal. This is why I would like to make some recommendations, in order to speed up the process of integration. Of course, I will only make recommendations concerning areas that I have experienced during my traineeship.

4.2 A lack of integrated communication

One of the reasons why strategic communication has never been a priority for Hudson/De Witte & Morel, was the lack of support coming from the hierarchy. According to Duncan & Mulhern (2004), top management should be willing to change policies that form a barrier for the implementation of an integrated marketing plan. According to Eefje Denayer, CEO Ivan De Witte has always been against rigid rules. However, now that the company is going international, surviving without a clear set of rules regarding communication will prove to get harder and harder. Efforts on this front have to be taken.

First, management needs to realize that integrated communication can play an essential role in the company. There exist correlations between integrated communication, customer satisfaction and brand and business performance.

92 Appendix 19: Interview Eefje Denayer
Second, at the moment, the market is very hostile and dangerous. Due to the crisis, many companies are in trouble, and now would be the ideal time to expand their market share. Research has shown that a hostile market can be a good stimulant to implement integrated communication. By integrated communication messages, the message gets across faster and easier, which could mean a more efficient use of budget.

By conducting research on the advantages of integrated communication, management could be persuaded. Return on investment is very important for the higher end of the hierarchy, so by measuring more accurately the effects of communication, management could become more receptive for the idea of implementing a strategic communication plan.

Using databases is essential for implementing an integrated communications strategy. By gathering information on all target groups and sharing this information across organizational departments, the organization can meet the needs of their clients in a more effective way.

4.3 Internal Communication

4.3.1 Intranet: importance and problem

Intranet can be a very useful way of establishing unity across departments. Unfortunately, Hudson employees only visit the Intranet to check the menu of the week. Problematic, since Intranet is one of the most important sources of information to employees and one of the most effective ways to create unity between departments.

Functions of Intranet can be:
- communication: sharing knowledge, emails
- database: practical information, such as the house style of the company and client information,
- archives: documents, contracts,…

Since most of the company related information is placed on the hard disk of the computer network, many employees don’t see the need to consult the intranet. Contracts can be found on the hard drive, and every department has its own disk, where they save information that cannot be accessed by other departments. If all this information where to be placed on Intranet, more people would have a reason to visit it.
Factors affecting the usage of intranet

People’s perception of technology affects their attitudes and their acceptance of technology. Davis proposed two kinds of perceptions:\(^\text{94}\):

1. Perceived usefulness: the perception that using the intranet will improve the performance of a certain task
2. Perceived ease of use: the perception that using the intranet will be possible with little effort.

Once again, the technical support of management is very important for the acceptance by employees. It motivates employees to comply with the management policy when management sends out the message that usage of Intranet will be beneficial to their work quality. For example, offering educational programs, personal encouragement to use the intranet, providing a user-friendly software and providing help functions can improve the usage of intranet. As users perceive greater usefulness of intranet, they tend to use intranet more often.

Some tips to make intranet more popular:

- Always use the same sections and limit the amount of sections to keep the structure clear
- Easy access to information: make it easy to retrieve information. When employees need to look for hours before finding the information they want, the willingness to use Intranet will diminish greatly
- Use short messages
- Make the intranet more interactive: give employees the chance to post comments or news
- Give away tickets of sponsored events and post the winners on the intranet
- Communicate clearly on what information can be found on intranet
- Post birthdays on the intranet
- Whenever something new is added to Intranet, an automatically generated message could appear in the mailbox of the employee.

If Intranet is used more often, it can lead to a flattening of the hierarchy, since everyone can distribute and communicate their ideas. Now, emails from top management and U.S.A

headquarters are distributed through mail. If these messages would appear on Intranet, more people would access it.

4.3.2 Internal communication concerning the communication policy

According to Eefje, many employees do not know that, when initiating a communication project on their own, they need to contact the communication department and ask for advice. Due to a lack of integrated communication and the fact that employees, are designing folders without there being a demand for it, and without adhering to the house style, communication is getting seriously fragmented. Employees design their own brochure and present this to their clients. This of course is problematic, since the communication department has no control over the layout and message of the folders.

This problem is linked with the lack of usage of the intranet by employees. The house style can be found on the intranet, as well as Hudson approved pictures and layouts. By stimulating employees to explore the intranet more often, they will realize that, when initiating a communication project, they need to adhere to some rules and these rules can be found on the intranet. If not, they need to contact the communication department.

4.3.2 Internal cross-departmental communication

Here again, problems arise: consultants who don’t know which tools Hudson has to offer, people working on the same project, not knowing what the others are doing. By implementing meetings between departments on a regular basis, this problem could become obsolete. Also, by using the intranet, to post novelties, progress on projects and problems, internal communication amongst employees could be stimulated more. Again, management needs to steer their team members in the right direction.
4.4 External Communication

4.4.1 Folders

As I mentioned before, the house style is a very important element to build a cohesive and distinctive image. Nevertheless, this can only happen if all employees adhere to these rules. For the moment, this is definitely not the case at Hudson. Many departments or employees take it upon them to design new folders and brochure, without collaborating or asking advice from the communications department. Furthermore, they do not use the color palette as frequently as they should.

Furthermore, the color palette has recently been updated and modernized, which contributes even more to the problem. Different colors are now the trademark of Hudson. Changing the house style can be onset by a number of reasons:

1. a change in policy (concern communication)
2. a merger
3. development of new products
4. upgrading the old house style to more contemporary standards

The latter reason is the reason for Hudson to change its house style. Making the colors more contemporary can contribute to a more modern image, but it can also cause confusion amongst the employees. Whilst implementing the new house style, the communication department has 2 options: a total implementation, immediately: this is very costly, since every expression of communication made prior to the change needs to be updated immediately, or a gradual implementation: not so costly, but very confusing.

My recommendation is that the communication department should communicative more clearly about their house style, and communicate that it is not ok for departments to design a brochure or folder on their own initiative, without consulting the communications department.

4.4.2 Website

Since top management in America determines the layout and structure of the website, it is very difficult to change it substantially. As I mentioned in chapter III, I would try to make the site more structured and appealing, by using more graphical elements, and more different communication methods: videos, testimonials, etc … Also, the interactivity of the website could also be improved.
Moreover, measuring the return on investment of communication efforts in a more systematic way can help improve the reluctance of certain managers when it comes to marketing and communication. In addition, by measuring the performance and results of communication against objectives, the communication department can adjust and modify the current strategy, and improve its results.
5.1 What did I learn on a professional level?

I learned that I still have to learn many things. Learning about theories, models and concepts at University was very interesting and helpful, but putting all of this into practice hasn’t been easy. Especially when it comes to communication, people seem to think that “the rules” are so obvious that it is simple to communicate. I was one of these people. However, after my internship, I realized that communication is a complex process, a process that demands a lot of attention, research and many, many trials.

Second, I learned that I need to ask for help sooner. I have always been an independent person, and although this is often strength, it can be a weakness as well. For example, during the briefings, I received a limited amount of information. Instead of looking up information on my own for days, I should have consulted experts on the subject, in order to get the work done faster.

Third, I should have tapped more into my theoretical knowledge of certain subjects. Making a link between theory and practice has not been easy for me.

However, I have to say that my projects where very interesting. It was the first time that I had to design a folder from scratch. It is also very exciting that my design will be used all over the world.

5.2 What did I learn on a human level?

On a human level, I learned that I cannot close myself of too much from my environment. When I am working, I tend to create my own little world. I am so focused on the task that I forget there are other people around me.

Furthermore, I experienced again that I like an environment where I can work independently. However, I also learned to ask for help sooner. Instead of looking for information on my own, and taking days to do so, I could have reached out for help faster, and saved time in the process.
5.3 MTB program

Thanks to the accountancy courses, I was able to understand the explanation given about the financial report of Hudson. In addition, the classes in corporate communication and the guest speakers helped me in the communication department. Nevertheless, I have to say that the information most valuable for this traineeship was provided by my education in psychology. Understanding the tests, knowing what it was all about really helped me a lot.

To sum up: My five weeks at Hudson flew by. I regret not having had more time to finalize all the projects I started. My first week was a little chaotic, since my traineeship counselor was not present the day I started working at Hudson. I felt a little lost and had to work very independently. However, it was a very interesting experience: I got to know a little bit more about the R&D world and gained experience in the field of communication.
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Books

Articles


Appendix 1: Article: “Een nieuwe dimensie in HR consultancy”
Appendix 2: Interview Nikola Trbovic
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