The Positioning of Public Relations Evaluation in the Belgian Public Relations Practitioner’s Landscape

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Abstract

Public relations (PR) evaluation is a hot topic among PR professionals and academics because of the rising pressure to justify their existence by means of tangible evidence (Gorpe & Saran, 2005; Lindenmann, 2006). However, practitioners still seem to judge their success by their ability to gain media coverage without verifying whether an actual behavioural or attitudinal change took place as a result of this media coverage (Xavier et al., 2005; Yin et al., 2012). Consequently, the need for evaluation on a more sophisticated level that proves the effectiveness of a PR campaign and the contribution to organisational goals is put forward in the academic literature (e.g. Macnamara, 2006a; Yin et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, relatively little information exists about this practice in Belgium. Moreover, existing research aims at mapping out the use of different methods, while the underlying motives of practitioners’ evaluation behaviour remain unclear. This study addresses these gaps in current research. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to assess the perception of Belgian PR practitioners towards evaluation research, the extent to which it is conducted, the motives that drive practitioners, and the barriers that are detected along the way. In order to do so depth-interviews have been conducted with seven PR practitioners from renowned international PR agencies. The findings show that PR evaluation is considered a critical component of the PR process, but also that evaluation fails to demonstrate the impact on the target audience and consequently the contribution to organisational goals. This is because evaluation remains largely limited to output level such as the calculation of AVEs and content analysis. Finally, this study reveals numerous constraints that slow down the adoption of outcome evaluation methods. The belief that impact of PR efforts on attitude and behaviour is immeasurable seems to be the main barrier.
1. Introduction

A current major concern in the field of public relations (PR) is the evaluation and measurement of PR activity. In order to justify its worth, public relations is under pressure to provide hard data as evidence of its effectiveness and how its achievements add value to strategic objectives of a company (Gorpe & Saran, 2005; Lindenmann, 2006). Traditionally, public relations has been regarded as an important activity for a company’s effectiveness and long-term success (Jerman & Zavrsnik, 2009; Kazokiene & Stravinskiene, 2011), but also an intangible corporate activity. This vagueness is no longer accepted as every business activity nowadays has to prove its purposefulness in terms of return on investment (Yin & Krishnan & Ean, 2012).

Despite the major importance of evaluation, academic literature agrees that it is still more a theoretical issue than it is practised (Xavier & Johnston & Patel & Watson & Simmons, 2005; AMEC, 2010; Yin et al., 2012). Moreover, practitioners seem to judge their success by their ability to gain media coverage without verifying whether an actual attitudinal or behavioural change took place as a result of this media coverage (Xavier et al., 2005; Yin et al., 2012). Advertising value equivalents and content analysis represents a sizeable portion of the methods used by PR practitioners, what limits the claims PR can make to contributing to organisational goals (Xavier & Patel & Johnston, 2004; AMEC, 2009; Yin et al., 2012). While it is commonly accepted that better evaluation tools are available, the question remains why these tools have not been widely employed (Baskin & Hahn & Seaman & Reines, 2010)?

Finally, the need for and lack of implementation of more sophisticated methods for measuring the impact of public relations efforts has been well documented in reports published by the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) in the US, by the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA), or by the Chartered Institute for Public Relations (CIPR) in the UK, while relatively little information exist about this practice in the rest of the European Union (Baskin et al., 2010). For Belgium in particular, no literature can be found on PR evaluation research. This raises several questions as to how Belgian PR practitioners perceive the importance of evaluation as well as on the evaluation methods applied by them and their motives and barriers concerning these methods. This study seeks to answer these questions, thereby addressing the gaps in current academic research. Previous research has been mainly quantitative and does not elaborate on the underlying reasons that explain current evaluation behaviour of practitioners.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Public Relations Evaluation

PR evaluation has received much attention for the past two decades in both academic and practitioner literature and today it is one of the hottest topics among PR professionals (Yin et al., 2012).

Traditionally, PR has been considered as an important activity for a company’s long-term success (Kazokiene & Stravinskiene, 2011). Harlow (1976, p.36) defines public relations as the “distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organisation and its publics.” In 1997, Baskin et al. already argued that this claim about PR practitioners contributing towards a better understanding between the public and the organisations has to be supported by tangible evidence. This demand for tangible results has grown in importance in recent years and today the major challenge for public relations consists of justifying its existence and being accountable by demonstrating in measurable terms how the results from its PR programmes benefit the organisations they serve (Lindenmann, 2006; Yin et al., 2012). This is further prompted by the economy that dictates the need for every business activity to demonstrate return on investment in order to survive and PR will not be exempt from this expectation (Watson & Zerfass, 2011).

PR evaluation is not only about proving something, but also about learning what happened and why it happened (Cutlip & Center & Broom, 2000). Assessing the effectiveness of PR campaigns provides practitioners not only with accurate information on where they stand in the eyes of their public, but also with the necessary insights to plan future PR activities (Baskin et al., 1997; Grunig & Grunig, 2001). Moreover, it allows companies to set up a benchmark that provides a barometer of a client’s presence in the marketplace (Judd, 1990).

PR practitioners who are not concerned with the evaluation of their efforts cannot speak with authority and therefore exclude the PR function from decision making and strategic planning on business level (Broom & Dozier, 1983; Baskin et al., 1997). Like Yin et al. (2012, p.42) put it forward: “Management demands hard facts, not intuition or guesswork.” That is also why this evaluation is of major importance to further build the credibility and influence of PR within organisations.
As most studies seem to focus on a quantitative approach to map the use of different evaluation methods, the PR practitioners’ perception of the importance of evaluation seems to be neglected. Though, a limited number of studies found that PR practitioners agree that evaluation is an important aspect of the PR process what corresponds with the general assumption made by academics (AMEC, 2009; Yin et al., 2012). As the perception of the importance of evaluation is a first important question to frame the use of evaluation methods, this raises the question as to how Belgian PR practitioners perceive the importance of PR evaluation.

As most companies are still developing their tools for evaluation, it is necessary to first get a proper foundation, before addressing measurement questions concerning social media an its emphasis on conversation. This study aims to clarify the use of traditional media to evaluate the effort of public relations.

*Research question 1: How do Belgian PR practitioners perceive the importance of PR evaluation?*

### 2.2. Levels of Evaluation

The widely accepted three-step Yardstick of Lindenmann (1997) has become the standard structure in literature to evaluate PR efforts. The three ascending levels of sophistication can be presented as follows. Level one is the evaluation of outputs, meaning the short-term or immediate results of a particular PR program or activity. In media relations, output is the coverage that appears in either traditional or new media (Lindenmann, 1997, 2006). The intermediate level is categorised as the evaluation of outgrowths (later renamed outtakes). Measuring PR outtakes means “determining if key target audience groups actually received the messages directed at them, paid attention to them, understood the messages, and whether they retained the messages and can recall them in any shape or form” (Lindenmann, 1997, p.397). As the ultimate goal of public relations campaigns is to influence behaviour in their favour, the final test is to measure PR outcomes (Center and Jackson, 2003). Evaluation on this level measures “whether the communication materials and messages which were disseminated have resulted in any opinion, attitude and/or behaviour changes on the part of those targeted audiences to whom the messages were directed” (Lindenmann, 1997, p.397).

After clearly outlining the different levels of evaluation, an organisation should determine in advance their objectives on each level of impact (Gorpe & Saran, 2005). Practitioners and academics unanimously agree that objectives play a pivotal role in public relations evaluation with some authors (see for example Gorpe & Saran, 2005) suggesting that objectives are the single most important ingredient in any kind of evaluation. It is impossible to measure the effectiveness of a PR campaign without knowing what you are measuring against (Lindenmann, 2006). These objectives should be as
quantitative as possible and address who, what, when, and how much the PR program is intended to affect (Lindenmann, 2006; AMEC, 2010). To set measurable objectives for a PR program it is important to first get a clear understanding of an organisation’s business goals, because without this understanding PR managers cannot achieve a company’s effectiveness (Jerman & Zavrsnik, 2009). In the end PR accomplishments always have to be linked to accomplishments of the organisation as a whole, which implies that objectives also have to be set on outcome levels to demonstrate true contribution to organisational goals (Lindenmann, 1997; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Xavier et al., 2005).

The setting of objectives at outcome levels is exactly the current problem reported by many researchers. Objectives are barely set on outcome level, because practitioners favour evaluation of program output over outtake and outcome evaluation (Xavier et al., 2005; Yin et al., 2012). Although academic studies have moved to new areas of research that focus more on outcomes evaluation, output evaluation remains a major force in PR evaluation. Evaluating output, however, simply confirms that coverage occurred in the media and in the best case that it is beneficial to the company. But what does that mean for the company? The real value is in evaluating outtakes and outcomes and if one is focused on output evaluation, it will always be hard to explain business impact (Xavier & Mehta & Gregory, 2006). The focus has to be on what happened as a result of the obtained coverage. To know the answer to these questions it is necessary to not only evaluate on output level, but also on outtake and outcome level. Academics aim at a measurement strategy that is a holistic, and integrated approach using tools from all three levels (Jerman & Zavrsnik, 2009).

Research question 2: What role do objectives play in the evaluation of Belgian public relations efforts?

Research question 3: At what level do Belgian PR practitioners evaluate public relations programs?

2.3. Evaluation Methods

To reveal the motives to keep up evaluation on output level and the barriers to evaluate on outcome level, it is necessary to first gain further insight in the most used methods in the current PR practice. Practitioners can select among an array of different methods to evaluate and demonstrate effectiveness and research shows that media monitoring, the calculation of AVE and content analysis are the most used techniques (AMEC, 2009).

2.3.1. Media Monitoring

Evaluation on output level starts with media monitoring. This is the most basic way to measure coverage volume as articles are simply collected, sorted by subject or date and counted regardless of the size or the quality of the story itself (Jeffrey et al., 2010). Because of this ease and simplicity, the
reliance on clip-counts to demonstrate PR effectiveness has long been a standard measurement employed by PR professionals (Baskin et al., 2010). Specialised literature agrees (Xavier et al., 2006; AMEC, 2010) that these days are over and that PR professionals have moved on to other additional methods to give a better indication of the value of PR efforts.

2.3.2. Advertising Value Equivalence (AVE)

Advertising Value Equivalence (AVE) goes beyond counting news coverage and explains how much money it would cost if they were purchased as advertising (Kee & Hassan, 2006). More specifically, it is calculated by multiplying column centimetres of editorial print media coverage and seconds of broadcast publicity by the respective media advertising rates (Jeffries-Fox, 2003). Calculating the AVE is a technique that has been around for many years and even today it is a widespread technique (AMEC, 2009; Yin et al., 2012). Despite its widespread use, the AVE model has become under severe criticism in the past two decades and it has been denounced as a measurement technique by three international PR bodies, i.e. the PRIA, the CIPR, and the IPR in the US. Macnamara (2000, 2006a, 2006b) and Jeffries-Fox (2003) show by means of a critical analysis that the method has a number of serious practical and ethical flaws and that it undermines the credibility and worth of public relations.

The overwhelming argument against AVE is that PR is not advertising and therefore should not be compared with it. Because advertising content is controlled and prepared by creative professionals for maximum impact, and editorial content is not, AVE can grossly overstate and misrepresent the value of publicity (Macnamara, 2000, 2006a). A first flaw is that AVE is calculated irrespective of the quality of the coverage resulting in the inclusion of neutral and even negative coverage. Furthermore, it can be that the organisation’s key messages are not included in the coverage or that editorial coverage is poorly presented for example with ambiguous headline or errors. In addition, editorial content can contain coverage of competitors including favourable references to or comparisons with competitors. Moreover, the portion of relevant coverage is not taken into account.

The company can have just a minor mention, while AVE takes the entire article into consideration (Jeffries-Fox, 2003; Macnamara, 2000, 2006b). Additionally to content issues, the two differ significantly in terms of placement. Editorial coverage can be in non-target or low-priority media, which means that the target audience is not reached. Even if it is placed in the strategically important media, it can be positioned poorly, for example in the back of a weekend attachment, which affects its impact (Macnamara, 2000, 2006a). Finally it is not possible to accurately calculate this cost as in many cases no advertising rates exist, what leaves the cost open for speculation. Also the negotiated
advertising rates are not taken into account. AVE calculations are usually based on casual advertising rates which are higher than the rates negotiated for advertising campaigns (Jeffries-Fox, 2003).

Even when editorial publicity meets all the above mentioned conditions, AVE in the first place measures a cost but not a value. This is because it involves no effort to measure the impact or effect of the content and they only measure the cost of buying equivalent media space and time for advertising (Macnamara, 2006a; AMEC, 2010).

On the other hand, some are convinced that comparisons of advertising value grossly undervalue favourable publicity. This is based on the claim that PR is more credible than advertising and therefore deserves a higher weight than straight circulation and audience (Weiner & Bartholomew, 2006). To solve this issue some practitioners go even further and apply multipliers to advertising rates to arrive at a figure often referred to as PR or editorial value (Jeffries-Fox, 2003). However, the use of these multipliers has been shown to be invalid and unfounded (Macnamara, 2006a; Weiner & Bartholomew, 2006; Eisenmann, 2012). This is because there exists little research comparing the credibility of news and advertising and the studies that do exist show no higher credibility of editorial publicity over advertising (Cameron, 1994; Hallahan, 1999; Macnamara, 2006a; Michaelson & Stacks, 2007; Vercic et al., 2008). A study from Michaelson and Stacks (2006) found that, at best, publicity can equal the effects of good advertising, but only when it is placed in the appropriate media, is well-positioned, favourable and when it contains the key messages. Therefore they indicate that one to one is the maximum multiplier that can be applied. On the other hand, Macnamara (2006a) does believe that some editorial can have a far greater impact and effect than equivalent advertising in some circumstances. Eisenmann (2012), however, points out in this view that unless there is a client-specific study to prove the impact of earned versus paid, the use of multipliers is not justified.

Despite the fact that it is commonly accepted in the PR literature that AVEs are rejected as a concept to measure the value of PR, many practitioners seem to be very attracted to it. One of the main reasons according to Macnamara (2006a) is the fact that PR consultancies experience huge pressure from their clients to provide AVEs. Jeffries-Fox (2003) explains that this is due to the fact that the method can put a monetary value on media coverage and allows media relations people to compare their results with advertising. In addition, clients see it as a tangible way to evaluate PR that is easily understood by others in the company (Xavier et al., 2005). Others mention the ease to determine this value (Macnamara, 2006a; Kee et al., 2006), including the accessibility of data (Cutlip et al., 2000), as primary motive.

However, little research has been conducted into the attitudes of PR practitioners concerning the specific use of AVEs. Much earlier research comes up with arguments that relate to evaluation on
output level in general, but not specifically for AVE. Most of the arguments are also made by Macnamara (2000, 2006a, 2006b) and are consequently not considered from the practitioners’ point of view. This study seeks to reveal the attitudes of PR professionals concerning the use of AVE in order to find an explanation for the further use of AVEs, but also to map the point of view of opponents.

Research question 4: How is the use of AVE positioned as an evaluation tool within Belgian public relations activities?

2.3.3. Content Analysis

A more reliable and relevant method for measuring media publicity advocated by academics is media content analysis (Macnamara, 2006b). Content analysis is, opposed to the calculation of AVE, a widely accepted and also widely used method to evaluate PR as it takes into account the quality of the coverage (Gorpe & Saran, 2005; Macnamara, 2006c; Yin et al., 2012).

This especially because content analysis allows to verify whether the target audience is reached and whether wide distribution is gained within those audiences. Moreover, content analysis allows to verify if this occurred with the right key messages. The presence of key messages and reach of target audience are key variables, but the literature agrees that multiple variables should be assessed when undertaking a content analysis. Also the placement of the article within these media and the positioning of the company within the article itself can be of major importance to determine success. Besides the presence of key messages, also the overall tone of the coverage, the illustrations, and the quotes can have an impact on your effectiveness (Macnamara, 2000, 2006).

The main strength of content analysis is that it can translate the qualitative material into quantitative data through the coding and classifying of specific messages (Gorpe & Saran, 2005), and that it does so in a way that is clear and repeatable (Macnamara, 2006c). Moreover, when conducted rigorously, it can provide insights into issues, trends, competitors, and likely impact and effects on audiences (Macnamara, 2000).

This is however the ideal scenario, since literature suggests that a lot of practitioners concentrate on the tonality of the article and do not consider other variables which makes that the analysis gives a distorted image (Michaelson & Griffin, 2005). Another flaw of this method is reported by Macnamara (2000) who indicates that content analysis is made casually and is based on personal judgement. To him, the method remains crude and rudimentary as it is difficult to assess how an article should be rated.
This study seeks to reveal the attitudes of PR professionals concerning the use of content analysis as an evaluation method in order to find an explanation for the widespread use and acceptance of this method. Moreover, the study also aims to map the barriers that come along with this method.

Research question 5: How is the use of content analysis positioned as an evaluation tool within Belgian public relations activities?

2.3.4. Outcome Measurement

Ultimately, however, content analysis does not indicate whether target audiences saw or heard the information and, if they did, whether it influenced their attitudes or behaviour (Macnamara, 2000). “Outputs only count what one has put out in terms of effort, they do not really connect with the goals and objectives of an organisation. So it is critical to think in terms of how one will achieve ‘outtakes’ and ‘outcomes’ with the programs, if one hopes to really affect change” (Paine & Draper & Jeffrey, 2008, p.5). Therefore, the impact and effects of media publicity can only be fully measured by conducting audience research on outcome level.

Still, literature suggest that this kind of evaluation is barely done (Xavier et al., 2005; Yin et al., 2012). Most of the studies report barriers that prevent practitioners to undertake evaluation in general, but few of them ask specifically what the barriers are to evaluate on outcome level. Though, limited studies have addressed this question and they found that especially insufficient time (Xavier et al., 2005), limited budget (Gaunt & Wright, 2004; Xavier et al., 2005, 2006), lack of knowledge and expertise to use the tools (Walker, 1994; Gaunt & Wright, 2004; Baskin et al., 2010) and lack of client interest (Fairchild, 2002; Baskin et al., 2010) are the most important reasons to not evaluate on that level. This raises the question to the existence of possible other barriers on this level and this study seeks to identify these barriers.

Research question 6: How is the use of outcome evaluation perceived by Belgian PR practitioners?
3. Methodology

Given the purpose of the study to reveal the attitudes of PR practitioners concerning PR evaluation, it is appropriate here to use a qualitative research design. This study employs depth-interviews as qualitative research method because it offers great detail about specific issues and richness of content. By gathering in-depth data on how people experience a given research issue, this method seeks to understand the how and why of human behaviour and decision-making (Pasadeos et al., 2011; Yin et al., 2012). Moreover it allows the researcher to reveal new ways of thinking about the topic under investigation (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

This study used non-probability sampling, namely a volunteer sample. Face-to-face structured interviews were conducted with seven PR practitioners in different PR agencies. They were contacted via e-mail or telephone and interview appointments were set at a time and location of their convenience. The interview sessions lasted 45 to 105 minutes and were recorded using an audio recorder and later transcribed for analysis. Due to the need for confidentiality, the identity of the respondent’s company could not be revealed.

The respondents were asked 10 open-ended questions which touched on their perception of the importance of evaluation in PR, as well as their level of evaluation and the use of corresponding evaluation methods. They were especially asked about their motives to conduct evaluation on a particular level or to apply a particular method and about the difficulties and barriers they face when carrying out evaluation activities (Yin et al., 2012).

The interview data was analysed by manually summarising and categorising the raw data into a number of themes corresponding to the research questions set in this study. Quotes were used to illustrate the main points.
4. Results

4.1. Importance of Evaluation

As reflected in the academic literature, PR professionals consider research and evaluation as an integral part of the PR process. All of the respondents indicate that they use evaluation techniques in some manner because they strongly believe that evaluation is necessary for several reasons.

Respondents unanimously agree that communication budgets are in general very difficult to defend as not everyone accedes the added value of communication for a company or organisation. One reason for this may be that they do not understand PR and especially this misunderstanding of public relations frustrates PR professionals. This is where the evaluation comes in. One respondent explains that: “Some clients do not know what to expect from PR and believe they should always measure it by means of increased sales. But public relations does not always look to sales as desired result, on the contrary, public relations can have numerous contributions to a company’s effectiveness in other ways.” Evaluation makes this clear and justifies the expenses made on PR by proving what is done with the PR budget. It provides hard data and, according to our respondents, it is the only indication that shows how well PR professionals have done their job. A term that often reoccurred from this point of view is the return on investment (ROI). There is a strong belief that ROI on communication has to be measured. As one respondent says: “We ask our clients to do an investment by spending money on us, so it is logical that they want to know what is has gained.” While ROI normally refers to the percentage of money returned for a given investment or a cost, they do not necessarily see this as a monetary value. This may as well involve intangible results such as positive reactions, a sudden ask for expertise opinion, a higher visibility in certain media, and so on.

Other than budgeting, assessing the effectiveness of PR is another important reason to evaluate PR. Thanks to this evaluation it is possible to determine if specific PR as well as company objectives are met. “By connecting PR to business objectives the long-term view on PR is emphasised and PR is brought into a broader corporate decision making process.” Not only overall effectiveness, but also more detailed insights are gained from evaluation. One respondent explains that it helps to discover the successful and unsuccessful parts of the campaign, and to determine the current situation at the end of the PR activity. This is valuable information for the management in order to understand issues, anticipate change and make better decisions to eventually achieve best practices. These insights also provide the basis of further planning as it can help to decide how a company can conduct further PR activities, especially because evaluation helps to determine priorities. PR professionals indicated that they need this kind of information to do their job more effectively.
Demonstrating accountability also increases the credibility of the profession. As was already mentioned, not everyone understands PR and therefore they are unaware of the value of PR. One consultant points it out as follows: “Due to their lack of knowledge of PR, clients believe everything is possible. They are convinced that the agency knows some ‘tricks’, but they do not seem to realise that communication is our job and the results are in proportion to our efforts. Presenting tangible results of our efforts and explaining the preceding process, increases our credibility significantly.” Coming up with these results, and not only intuition or guesswork, further strengthens the relations between the client and the consultant as this ensures more confidence from the client’s side.

Another important aspect of evaluating PR is setting up a benchmark. Companies want to know how they are performing in relation to their closest competitors. There are agencies who actually see this as one of the most important reasons for evaluation since “public relations is a part of your promotional plan and within this plan it is all about measuring yourself against your competitors.” Another respondent contradicted this by mentioning that setting up a benchmark says nothing about the effectiveness of a publicity effort. “A competitor could be outspending or under-spending the client, and the competitor’s program could be wasteful or efficient.”

Finally, all of them recognise that in the past years there has been a rising demand for evaluation. As brought up by the literature, they acknowledge the fact that the existence of a PR department or function can no longer be justified without coming up with tangible proof that they contribute to business goals and objectives. Additionally, they notice that there is a rising international pressure to justify PR expenditures. This because “other countries such as the UK are much further in terms of PR evaluation”.

To conclude, the interviewed PR practitioners agree that evaluation is standard practice. “If you do not allocate a part of your PR budget to evaluation, you miss a huge opportunity.” Ideally PR practitioners agree that 5 to 10% of the PR budget should be spent on evaluation.

4.2. Objectives

Most of the respondents indicate that objectives are of crucial importance to evaluate PR. As one interviewee stated: “Objectives determine success or failure, they provide the framework against which to be measured.” Despite the importance of objectives there was one respondent who claimed that they do not like to determine such things in advance as “PR is no exact science.” Another agency only worked towards specific goals if there was an evaluation on the long term as few of their clients in the B2B-sector saw results on the short term.
Those who do work with objectives admit that setting up specific objectives is not simple and that in some cases objectives are left rather vague. In this view one respondent said that “clients often have a problem and come to the agency with the vague wish to, for example, see a certain product appear in the media while this vague wish is not always further specified in concrete objectives.” Respondents indicated furthermore that PR objectives always have to be linked to business objectives. Though they notice that some clients are taking this rather lightly and still see the PR department as an isolated part of their company.

4.3. Evaluation Methods

Of the three levels available to evaluate public relations, practitioners continue to favour output techniques. Most agencies use a combination of methods, being media monitoring, calculation of AVE and media content analysis.

For a PR agency it comes down to understand the expectations of the client and to evaluate the PR activity in the context of them. Noble (1999) already discussed the importance of a user –and situation-dependent evaluation and today it still seems to be the key for PR evaluation. It happens that the client’s expectations are limited to a very restricted form of evaluating such as simply collecting press clippings, but agencies do mention that they always grant their wishes and do not try to impose other forms of evaluation.

4.3.1. Media Monitoring

As reflected in the specialised literature (Jeffrey et al., 2010), collecting press clippings is the most common way of evaluating PR. All of our respondents use media monitoring as an evaluation technique and for all of them these clippings are being collected by an external media monitoring agency. Nevertheless, PR practitioners only use this clippings as a basis for further analysis. The focus is not only on the amount of coverage, but also on the content of coverage.

4.3.2. Advertising Value Equivalence

The use of AVE seems to be common practice. It continues to be used and also defended in practice, despite the criticism this method has received from researchers and scholars (Macnamara, 2000, 2006a, 2006b; Jeffries-Fox, 2003).

It is very clear that PR agencies consider the use of AVEs as a win-win situation for both the agency and the client. On the one hand the client seeks measures to justify the agency internally. They explicitly demand a monetary value to present to their own senior management as this management
is “very numeric-oriented and wants to see a clear ROI, not a vague assessment of the results.” As already suggested by literature, the ROI of news coverage is always assessed in terms of advertising value (Yin et al., 2012). AVEs are a tangible way to outline the public relations process and it is easily understood by the rest of the company. Especially marketing and sales executive familiar with advertising, ask for advertising cost equivalents to compare their PR results with advertising. The pressure to provide this value is illustrated by one respondent: “The opinions concerning the use of AVE are divided, some believe it is an oversimplification, but we continue to offer this value to our clients because they explicitly ask for it and even demand them and this is the only way to give them a monetary value.” The reason why clients ask this value is because it makes them look good. Another respondent clarifies this further by explaining that it is a way of bragging with what you have achieved: “Coming up with high numbers of AVE and as a result high numbers of ROI makes the PR responsible in the company shine.” This gives the client certainty that their investment has paid off. On the other hand, it not only makes the client look good, AVEs also make the PR agency look good because AVE figures are often much higher than any PR budget. It shows that the PR agency has done something that they could never have done on their own. Both client and agency are driven by the strong desire to present an impressive monetary value that makes them look accountable and more credible.

Besides that, this is also an ingrained habit. “Evaluating PR outputs by calculating and AVE is a method we are familiar with and therefore we feel comfortable using it.” It is also an easy way to show how much value you can get from PR. The publicly available rating cards are easily accessible and by simply comparing the size of the article with the right size on the card you can determine your AVE. This means it is a fast way of obtaining results and apparently that is what clients want. “Clients expect to see immediate result of their investment, more complicated studies take too much time and leave them in limbo for too long.” This method is not only easy, it is also relatively cheap and that is certainly an important motive to use it.

Finally, the advocates of this method indicate that AVE is a reasonably good measure for the prominence of your media coverage as it is based both on circulation and media credibility. One of the respondents explained it as follows: “It provides a rough measurement that helps us to navigate our PR program toward higher profitability.”

Despite the strong attraction of AVE, PR professionals that use it do understand the limitations of AVE. They see it as a useful indication of success, but not a comprehensive measurement tool. As one respondent states it: “It is an arbitrary and impure way to evaluate PR”. Others see it as “a rough measure, that does not give the detail they need in terms of quality of media coverage.”
Another difficulty practitioners face when calculating AVEs covers the quality and the placement of the coverage. Should articles of poor quality, for example negative ones, be included in the calculation of AVE or not? Some split the total AVE to come to an AVE for positive articles and an AVE for negative ones and leave it up to the client to decide if they are going to include the value of the negative articles. And what about a coverage that only mentions the client in one sentence? Agencies are aware of these problems but they lack time to profoundly find out the best way to calculate AVE. That is why most of them rely on a media monitoring agency to calculate the AVE in a correct way. This media monitoring agency takes into account factors such as the tone of the article, the inclusion of key messages, etc. However, remarkable here is that the PR agencies are not aware of the exact formulas and methods used to calculate the AVE. “We have often tried to figure out how this value is calculated exactly, but they always fob us off by telling that they have sophisticated formulas and there is a whole process behind it that is too difficult to explain. They vaguely mention that they take into account negative articles, but nobody knows if this means that they let them out or just assign a lower value.” What they do know is that these monitoring agencies offer a cheaper and a more expensive option to calculate the AVE. The cheaper version implies that the full article is observed without taking into account the actual share of the client, while the more expensive one only calculates the share of the client. One respondent further clarified this: “The cheapest version is the standard approach and only when a client explicitly asks for it we use the more expensive one. This sometimes causes conflicts with the media monitoring agency because in case of the standard approach they can attribute a huge monetary value to an article in which the client is only a passing mention.” PR professionals stress the need for developing a standard so they can leave these time-consuming discussions behind them.

A third constraint acknowledged by PR practitioners is the impossibility to calculate an AVE for all media which leaves this method incomparable. Calculating an AVE for print and TV is easy and simply as it comes down on measuring the length of an editorial piece and assigning a value by calculating the equivalent cost of an advert. Only this becomes more complicated as advertising on websites comes in the form of flashing adverts and banners, none of which are easily compared to text based articles on the sites in question. That is why PR agencies do not calculate the value of online articles or assign a standard value. Some respondents see this standard value as ridiculous because “an article on a frequently visited website is worth much more than one on a rather unknown website.” Another option is to assign a score based on the number of visitors of a website. “This score can range from 1 to 10, indicating rarely visited websites opposed to frequently visited websites.” Of course this is not a monetary value which makes it impossible to internalise this value into the total AVE of all media coverage. Media monitoring agencies now offer a new formula to calculate this
value, but most agencies were not aware of this new service and stick to their own approach. Social media is an even bigger problem as a mention of an organisation on Twitter or in a Facebook status update could provoke a storm of interest, but how can this be measured when it is not possible to advertise on social media? In the digital age, PR professionals cannot afford to ignore social media, but there is no comparable AVE measurement.

Despite these barriers to calculate AVE, the appealing combination of ease, simplicity, and tangibility seems to convince PR professionals to keep using it. But because they are aware of these limitations and the rising pressure to banish this method, it seems that they feel ashamed for using them and try to justify their approach in several ways. Some do this by telling that they only calculate it when the client asks it, and that they do not use it as their standard approach. Opponents of the method realise how their colleagues try to talk their way out of it, but they see it as a rather simple excuse as most clients do ask to calculate this value. Others do calculate the value but inform their clients that AVE cannot be seen as a correct value as it is like “comparing oranges and apples.” It is then up to the client to decide how much importance he is going to attach to this value.

On the other hand, the opponents of AVE argue that editorial publicity and advertising are something completely different and it leaves comparison ridiculous. They seem to acknowledge the criticism that the academic literature has by confirming that the calculation irrespective the quality and placement of the coverage leaves the method invalid. One respondent clearly stated that “it is dangerous and even unethical to rely too much on AVE when we really know the limitations and irregularities.”

Another problem that goes along with AVE is that it cannot inform an organisation as to why a campaign worked or did not work. “It is just a monetary value without meaning that robs organisations of the opportunity to learn and improve.” They consider it an outdated and inaccurate measurement technique. Some go even further and see it as “amateurish in every way” and “a method that undermines the professionalism and credibility of the industry.” They urge their PR colleagues to move away from AVEs and to instead talk about how they achieved their established goals.

These agencies experience the same pressure from clients to calculate the AVE, but they believe a PR agency is an advice agency and should dare to educate their clients by pointing out the disadvantages of AVE and proposing other ways of evaluating PR efforts. This practitioner illustrates it as follows: “AVE is talked out of their head, instead we offer alternative ways to evaluate PR actions and clients appreciate this kind of honesty and new way of thinking.” Together we have to strive for a smarter and more honest approach and this begins with the agency that dares to speak up against common
practice of the industry. However, they are aware of clients who calculate the AVE themselves based on the input of the agency, but according to them client perceptions will only start to change if agencies change. They realise that calculating the AVE is a current practice today and they disapprove it in every possible way. Nonetheless they indicate that most agencies use AVE as a part of a wider series of measurements, which at least reduces the reliance on AVE as an overall measurement of PR value.

As if the calculation of AVEs does not cause enough problems, there is still the debate about whether not to apply a multiplier. The opinions are divided concerning the use of a multiplier to address the assumed higher credibility of a news article. Although PR professionals are convinced that editorial publicity has a higher credibility than advertising, some of them do not use this multiplier for several reasons. First of all some refuse to use it because the method lacks scientific proof. Besides that there is no industry standard. “Some people use no multiplier, others use two or three, and I have even seen some agencies use a ten, which is just absurd”, says one opponent of this technique. Others do agree with this assumption as the use of a multiplier leads to astronomical high numbers of PR value that are above all not comparable. There is a lot of discussion by which number the AVE can be multiplied. One agency mentioned that they consider each case separately and that they “would apply a number of 10 if it was justified in their eyes.” But when is this justified? Others believe it would be better to only calculate the AVE and to simply mention that the coverage is worth more instead of actually calculating the PR value. Ardent proponents of the use of a multiplier disagree because they believe that “the number of AVE is not high enough compared to what they have invested, clients want to see a huge value in Euro appear.” In this view one respondent said that “the potential for an over-exaggerated AVE is enormous, meaning agencies that stick to a basic AVE without a multiplier will always appear to fall short.” Those who do use a multiplier aim at achieving a standard so that the results of every agency are comparable.

The fact that PR professionals are looking for a standard to solve such issues instead of a new and more valid and effective way to measure the value of public relations efforts, demonstrates their urge to hold on to AVE. One respondent demonstrates this by mentioning that “PR professionals have not been trained to think beyond AVEs and they will likely continue to play a role in PR evaluation.”

4.3.3. Content Analysis

Driven by the realisation that AVE is an arbitrary way to demonstrate the effectiveness of PR actions and the growing demand of clients for qualitative analysis, PR agencies try to give a more “reliable image of what an article is worth” by conducting a content analysis of the coverage. This technique
seems to be one of the main techniques to evaluate PR. One respondent further illustrates this importance of content analysis by stating that “clients entrust we send their messages into the world and we only know if our approach worked by analysing the coverage that appeared.”

Our respondents indicate that PR is focussing on getting the key messages to the key target audiences and this preferably better than competitors do. That is why variables such as target audience penetration, placement, positioning, quality of the coverage, and share of voice are key criteria taken into account when conducting a content analysis. On the other hand, our respondents put a very strong emphasis on the fact that a clipping report is always custom made and the variables included in the analysis will vary according to the organisation/client concerned, as the analysis depends on the objectives of the client. One respondent told us that agencies who claim to have a standard analysis are fooling not only themselves but also their clients. Mentioning the frequency of the spokesperson quoted can be crucial for example if the company wants to clearly express their expertise, while it can be worthless for other clients who are more concerned with appearing in a certain type of publication. Despite the support for this evaluation method, practitioners detected some barriers along the way.

One major concern was put forward when discussing this item, namely the lack of standard and consequently the subjectivity that comes along with this kind of analysis. One interviewee clearly illustrated this by mentioning that “if a content analysis was done by ten people, they would all come up with a different outcome.” Especially the judgment of the tonality of an article seems to pose some problems. It starts with the question whether the coverage is beneficial, neutral, or adverse? Some agencies stick to this categorisation, while others work with scales to assess the tonality. Respondents seem to wonder loudly if “a six on scale corresponds to neutral or rather to positive?” And some articles may contain positive as well as negative elements which makes it difficult to put them in a category or assign a score. Assessing the article as a whole could be a solution, while others verify every aspect and add the number of positive and negative aspects to come to a final score. Even more important in this view is that an article can be positive, but that does not mean that it contains the preconceived key messages. One respondent illustrated it as follows: “If you want to position your product as cheap, but the article only covers the good quality of your product, then your article is positive but it does not contain the messages you want it to contain.” Some would still consider this as a positive article, while others would classify it in the negative category which “would leave outsiders confused as there are no negative points in the article.” Everyone has a different way of judging the tone of an article and the presence of key messages. Agencies in turn try to diminish this subjectivity by appointing one person that is responsible for the analysis.
Another problem with content analysis is the indication that shows whether the target audience is reached. Some use circulation, while others use readership. One respondent stated clearly that “circulation is not a good indicator because certain papers are read more or passed on more, for example in a family.” Others indicated that they prefer to work with opportunity to see (OTS) as this gives an indication of the number of times someone is likely to see a message. In this view one respondent mentioned that some of his colleagues seem to confuse OTS with actually seeing or reading the article. He urges his colleagues to be careful with the interpretation of this number as the probability that a receiver of a publication will see a given article is actually relatively small. Respondents do realise that OTS is a cumulative number and that consequently very big numbers are reported, but they are convinced it is a very good indication of the number of contact points you have reached.

As already put forward by Macnamara (2000), our respondents consider the main strength of content analysis to be the possibility to establish trends on the long term and to detect emerging issues that can affect the organisation. These findings allow the agency to act upon it, for example if “online coverage is growing enormously, it can be that in the next year more online actions will be executed.” In that way content analysis provides a good basis for further planning. These trends are also seen as a reflection of the public opinion and therefore immediately as an indicator of behavioural change and organisational success.

Because PR professionals lack the time and also the budget, they work together with media monitoring agencies to conduct content analysis. Some believe that these media monitoring agencies do not possess the necessary background information and feeling to execute certain analysis. They are for example not aware of the input, they do not know what key messages should appear and which message can be seen as positive or negative. Others invalidate this assumption by making clear that if they rely on a media monitoring agency to execute a content analysis they always brief them thoroughly. “Press releases and key words are being forwarded and more importantly, over the years PR agencies have built up a relationship with the monitoring agency so consequently they know the clients very well.” This relationship is also built on feedback which allows the monitoring agencies to refine their approach.

4.3.4. Use of Outtake/Outcome Evaluation Research

Most of the respondents do not evaluate on outtake or outcome level and they also defend why not. Measuring on outtake level makes no sense according to most of the practitioners, because even if individuals received the message and understood it, it does not say anything about the effect it has
on their attitude and behaviour and eventually the business outcomes. Some believe they measure on outtake level as they confuse impressions with awareness. They are convinced that widespread exposure to publics is likely to generate awareness among them.

PR practitioners consider evaluation on output level as sufficient because they are convinced that the impact of public relations on attitude and behaviour is either immeasurable or difficult to assess. One interviewee said: “The communications function has always been challenged to come up with measurable results, but some of the things you simply cannot quantify”. Their main concern is that the effect of PR cannot be isolated within the total communication mix, because at the same time there is advertising, promotions, event and so on. They conclude: “it is a fruitless attempt to measure the impact of PR on attitude and behaviour.” Furthermore it seems that this kind of research is not wanted by many as they have “an intuitive sense of what is working”.

Several other reasons can explain why the adoption of outcome measurement is slow. First of all PR professionals indicate that they lack the skills and knowledge to set up studies to measure outtakes and outcomes. This comes together with a lack of time to undertake this kind of research. Measuring PR outputs is usually a question of counting, tracking, and observing, while for PR outtakes and PR outcomes, more extensive analysis is required. This causes that measurement on this level has to be outsourced to specialised market research agencies, which implies a significantly higher cost while all respondents mentioned that their clients lack the budget to execute such research. Another interviewee said: “This is not an expenditure that clients traditionally like to spend, if they spend their money on such expensive studies there is no money left to execute the actual campaigns and eventually these campaigns are the key to achieve result”. Another respondent confirmed this point of view by mentioning that such research is just too expensive for what it brings in. “All you get from it is a extremely detailed overview, and this overview takes a lot of budget that could be spent on influencing your target audience.” The option of doing research in-house was also mentioned here, but then the question of credibility came up. Will people not be sceptical about the objectivity of a research project executed by professionals who have a particular interest in the outcome? An additional reason to skip this part of evaluation is that clients do not really judge the agency on changes on the level of outtake or outcome, so they reason that this kind of investment is not necessary because they are not seen as accountable for results on these levels.

Although the fact that most of them do not measure on this level, those who are only hold back because of resource constraints, do express an interest in this kind of research. As one interviewee said: “It can be very interesting, but it depends on the size of the project.” Others believe it is only possible to determine changes on this level on a long term. As they do not see measuring the isolated
impact of PR on attitude and behaviour as realisable, they aim more at measuring the impact of the total communication mix. Though one interviewee mentioned that “behaviour is the result of more than communication alone, others factors such as price can have an impact too.”

Others confuse the trends they determine from the content analysis of their media coverage as measuring outcomes. “If we detect that a company is being asked more and more to give their professional opinion over the years, we can say that they are perceived as an expert in that domain and that will likely have an impact on the attitude and behaviour of the consumers towards this company.” Though this remains an assumption as there is no real proof that attitude or behaviour is influenced in a positive way.

There are few agencies that are true advocates of measuring on outcome level and who effectively conduct evaluation research to assess the impact on publics. One proponent puts it forward that: “In today’s world, the main power of public relations is really about generating positive outcomes and not generating lots of output.” Another respondent confirms that “achieving positive coverage is one thing, but it cannot be a strategic business objective. With outcome analysis you can track if actual change has taken place among the target audience to meet one’s business objectives. For example if you want to know if your reputation is better today than at the beginning of the program such measurement will be needed.” Finally one interviewee also pointed out towards the dangers of this focus on output evaluation. “The rising pressure on PR practitioners to demonstrate their organisational value will push them to make successful claims that are unfounded by the evaluation data which further affects the credibility of PR as a profession.”

5. Limitations

First of all, there are some limitations that come along with the research design and the choice of the respondents. It is a qualitative study relying on depth-interviews with a limited number of respondents. This implies that the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population of PR practitioners. It is only an indication of possible trends. Therefore quantitative methods such as surveys should be used to establish valid and reliable results.

Furthermore, the sample includes only PR practitioners from PR agencies and not from companies, thereby presenting a limited view on public relations based on the consultancy environment. Future research should seek to confront those two point of views.

Additionally, participants were self-selected. As participation was voluntary, two opposites are more likely to participate. On the one hand it is arguable that those with strong views on the topic were
more likely to respond. On the other hand, professionals with little knowledge of current practices could be more tempted to participate in the hope to get a better view on evaluation methods.

Finally, concerning the topics investigated two limitations can be determined. This study focuses only on traditional media, while social media seems to pose an even bigger problem in terms of evaluation. Given the need for new measurement techniques on social media level, this is an interesting topic worth while investigating. A final limitation relates to the fact that this study does not discuss the possible methods to evaluate on outcome level, but only the perception of PR practitioners towards evaluation on this level. Further research should explore the use of these methods.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

On the one hand this study confirms a number of findings from previous academic research as Belgian PR professionals seem to act in a similar way as their foreign counterparts. On the other hand it gives a more detailed view on the established gap between theory and actual practice and it reveals some new trends.

The results of this study confirm that evaluation practices are embedded as a critical component in public relations. As opposed to McDavid and Hawthorn (2006), who claimed that assessing PR effectiveness is the most common reason to conduct evaluation, the interviewed PR professionals seem to put a larger emphasis on the demand for ROI by the clients. This corresponds to the findings of Watson and Zerfass (2011) that the use of the term ROI is widespread in the practice of public relations. Our respondents, however, see ROI also as non-financial outcomes, thereby supporting the suggestion of the CIPR (2011) that the term ROI is used very loosely among PR practitioners. This is because few PR programmes can be measured in the narrow financial sense of ROI which causes many PR practitioners to mistake ROI with the value of PR (Gregory & Watson, 2008). Generating awareness for example creates value, but may not immediately result in a demonstrable ROI. That is why some authors (Xavier et al., 2006) see it as an inappropriate measure for much public relations work. In this view Watson and Zerfass (2011) conclude that the term ROI needs a proper foundation in PR or the profession will discredit itself. However, assessing the effectiveness of the PR plan is still an important reason, thereby confirming the suggestion of Cutlip et al. (2000) that evaluation is not only used to prove something, but also to learn what happened and why it happened. As already said by Baskin et al. (1997), evaluation also contributes to the credibility of the profession. All of these above mentioned reasons seem to live among the clients too as the PR agencies notice a growing demand for evaluation.
Despite this importance of PR evaluation, it seems that evaluation still remains largely limited to output level. More specifically, AVEs and content analysis are being reported as the main methods to evaluate on this level. This finding corresponds to the results of earlier studies that determined a similar preference for media evaluation methods (Xavier et al., 2004, 2005; AMEC, 2009; Baskin et al., 2010; Yin et al., 2012). Accordingly, a huge gap can be established between the academic literature that has clearly denounced AVE as an evaluation method, and Belgian PR professionals that prefer AVE above outcome measurements. This is because PR practitioners prefer easy and relatively inexpensive methods that produce immediate results and which at the same time please the client because of the high monetary value. Especially this last argument seems to be decisive.

Agencies keep on using AVE because their clients specifically ask for it and they want to keep their clients happy. If the client is happy, they are happy, despite the fact that they realise that the use of AVE comes together with some major flaws. In this point of view Macnamara (2006a) indicates that it is unethical to present this misleading information to their clients. Moreover, Macnamara (2006a) claims that this demand is largely the fault of the PR industry stemming from its failure to come up with and adopt reliable valid ways of measuring its impact and effects. As there is no standard, clients impose systems convenient for them (Horton, 2006). The difficulty here is that a new approach will have to be easy and provide results as impressive as AVE, or they will continue to have a role no matter how much the industry protests against it (Blowers, 2006). PR practitioners will resist a new process of measurement, because this method makes them look good and they would never trade it for a new method that leaves them insecure about the outcome.

Furthermore PR professionals seem to rely heavily on content analysis. More specifically, this study points towards the growing importance of trend analysis. Macnamara (2006c) already confirmed in this view that trends in media coverage generally correlate with public opinion and therefore can be used as a barometer and an early warning system. But as Lindenmann (1997) already stated, while content analysis is of great value, it is only the very first step in the PR evaluation process. It is not the cure to the challenges that remain in evaluating public relations, especially because the method remains rudimentary because of its subjectivity. Still, the focus is no longer on the amount of media coverage, but on the content of this coverage. The widespread use of content analysis can therefore be seen as a start to a broader application of reliable and valid research methods.

Literature agrees that now it is time for PR professionals to undertake the evaluation of PR beyond the level of calculating AVE and content analysis (AMEC, 2010; Kazokiene & Stravinskiene, 2011). The adoption of outcome evaluation methods, however, slows down because of numerous constraints revealed in this study. Like Cutlip et al. (2000) already suggested, practitioners still believe that the
results and benefits of communications are too abstract and peculiar to be measured. Furthermore, they believe that the effect of PR cannot be isolated within the total communication mix thereby confirming the argument of Lindenmann (1997) that it is difficult to separate PR activities from marketing communications and from advertising. Another important reason implies that they do not believe they are accountable on that level, what makes that evaluation on outcome level is not seen as a priority by PR professionals (Baskin et al., 2010). Furthermore they indicate to lack the necessary skills as well as time, which supports the finding of Pohl and Vandeventer (2001) that the pressure to achieve sound levels of performance implies that little or no time is available for evaluation. Finally, there is a general reluctance by clients to invest in research. However, there is evidence that things are changing. A few respondents claim to conduct research on outcome level and those who do not do it because of resource constraints express an interest in this kind of evaluation. One respondent stated that “in today’s world, the main power of PR is really about generating positive outcomes and not generating lots of output” and it is a matter of time before his other colleagues share this point of view.

The most important established trend is the fact that media monitoring agencies seem to take over crucial parts of the evaluation process. These agencies are no longer limited to the delivery of press clippings, but they also offer services such as AVE calculation and even content analysis. As lack of time and expertise are important reasons for not evaluating, media monitoring agencies seem to be an easy solution. However, the use of these agencies comes along with some pitfalls. First of all, the more sophisticated the service offered, the higher the price. The danger here is that because of budgeting reasons the PR agencies chose the cheapest solution. And this cheap solution raises questions concerning validity as this is “the worst in quality”. Another problem that goes together with these services is that the PR agency passes responsibility to an agency that has no thorough knowledge of the client’s needs. Although PR agencies try to invalidate this assumption by indicating that these agencies are profoundly briefed, it seems obvious that they do not have the background and profound knowledge of one particular client. Michaelson and Griffin (2005) indicate in this point of view that the readers of the article should have in-depth knowledge of the client in order to correctly assess the quality of the coverage. Without this knowledge the analysis will be highly unreliable and inconsistent. Each media monitoring agency also uses its own formula which makes comparison impossible. The most worrying finding could be the fact that PR agencies are not aware of the exact formulas that are being used because of the reluctance of media monitoring agencies to reveal their methods.

While academics agree that objectives are the most important ingredient of evaluation, it seems that in practice this is not always the case. As practitioners do not believe that these things can be
determined in advance, they just want to “get the best out of it” without determining objectives in advance. But as Gorpe and Saran (2005) already indicated, “poorly stated objectives also lead to poor evaluation methods.” Besides that, our research confirms the finding of Macnamara (2006b) that many public relations plans have broad, vague, imprecise and often immeasurable objectives. They are not only vague, but have no link with general business objectives because practitioners appear to consider their work in isolation from the overall goals of their organisational employer or client (Xavier et al., 2006; Yin et al., 2012). This missing link with business objectives results in objectives especially aimed at output level. But as Hon & Grunig (1999) already indicated, objectives on output level do not reveal contribution to the organisation’s goals.

Another remarkable trend is the fact that PR practitioners seem to tangle the levels they are measuring on. Apparently this is not an exception as Center and Jackson (2003) suggested that one of the most common errors PR professionals make is the substitution of measures from one level for those at another level. In general it seems that our respondents believe that output success is equivalent to outcome success and therefore organisational success. Xavier et al. (2006) already indicated that this must be the case as PR practitioners keep focussing on outputs while they believe that the demonstration of achievements against organisational goals is important for PR evaluation. This is further illustrated by the fact that respondents confuse OTS with awareness. They are convinced that widespread exposure to publics is likely to generate awareness among them. But as Eisenmann (2012) puts it clearly: “Awareness exists only in people’s mind and must be measured in another way than using impressions as they are simply the number of people having the opportunity for exposure to a media story.” Moreover, they see trend analysis as an indication for behavioural change with the target audience as well as organisational success, while it can be at best a reflection of the public opinion. Xavier et al. (2004) conclude that such errors have the potential to reduce the credibility of PR evaluation.

To conclude, this focus on output measurement also has its consequences for the PR industry. The inability of PR practitioners to demonstrate contribution to company goals compared to other management functions places them in a weak position and “leaves the discipline open to cannibalisation by other more quantitatively focused sectors” (Xavier et al., 2005, p.423). This leads us to the conclusion that PR professionals will have to learn more sophisticated methodologies and move forward in line with other professions (Xavier et al., 2006). There is no point at relying on outdated and inaccurate measurement techniques to indicate so-called success, evaluation needs to be done using valid and reliable methodologies. Enhanced knowledge may not only solve the issue of tangling the levels of measurement, but also objectives may be set in an appropriate way at an appropriate level. Moreover, it will allow practitioners to conduct more analysis in-house or at least thoroughly verify the methods used by media monitoring. This will eventually also make them realise
that the real challenge is not to find standards for AVE calculation, but to search for new, reliable methods that demonstrate the true value of PR efforts and at the same time please clients as well as PR consultants. Finally enhanced knowledge should overcome the most important barrier for PR practitioners to not evaluate on outcome level, namely the disbelief that the impact of PR efforts and attitude and behaviour can be measured.
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Annelies Verstaen
Internship Delhaize Belgium
Multilingual Business Communication
Academic Year 2011-2012
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1. Delhaize Belgium

Delhaize is a Belgian supermarket chain that is part of the international Delhaize Group. The company was founded in 1867 by Jules Delhaize and his brothers in Ransart, near Charleroi. In 1957 Delhaize opened Europe’s first self-service supermarket at Elsene. From the beginning Delhaize focused on qualitative products and a pleasant shopping experience by offering attractive stores manned by friendly people. Today they continue to build on these historical strengths, but at the same time aim to be a contemporary and responsible company. While pursuing these objectives, Delhaize relies on their core values: determination, integrity, courage, humility, and humour.

At the end of 2011, Delhaize Belgium’s sales network consisted of 821 stores. With its different store formulas (Delhaize supermarkets, AD Delhaize, City Delhaize, Proxy Delhaize, Shop ‘n Go, Tom&Co and Red Market), Delhaize Belgium posted EUR 4.8 billion in revenues in 2011. At the end of 2011, Delhaize Belgium had a market share of 25.8%. In total the company employs more than 17,000 people.

I have done my internship at the department of ‘External Communication’. This department is mainly responsible for press relations, which ranges from writing press releases, organising press conferences and press trips, to giving interviews, arranging informal meetings, and much more. By building up strong relationships with journalists, they aim to support the brand and image of Delhaize, to reinforce sales, and to limit possible risks.

2. Description Tasks

The main purpose of my internship at Delhaize was to discover how a communication department works in practice. I participated in the everyday tasks of the external communication department such as the daily press screening, composing and updating press lists, maintaining contacts with journalists, etc. My time spent on these different tasks varied according to the need of the company and when possible I accomplished tasks that matched my personal interests. Besides these daily tasks I had two larger projects in the long-term, namely the summer action “Food of the World”, and my own research project concerning the promotion of the product assortment of Delhaize. Not only independent working was stimulated, but I also had the chance to use my creativity and to participate as a full-time employee of the communication department.
2.1. **Summer Event ‘Food of the World’**

My main project was promoting the summer event ‘Food of the World’ to journalists. Delhaize organises each summer an event to put their products in the spotlight. This year the products of the range ‘Food of the World’ were up. In a first phase I had to come up with a fun action that would make the journalists write about this action so that Delhaize gains free publicity. After a brainstorming session with the other team members we decided to divide the action into two phases. First of all, we sent a postcard to all journalists as a kind of ‘teaser’. Afterwards key journalists received a package including the products and the stickers. In a final phase I had to take the evaluation of this action for my account. Besides organising this action, I also had to brief the marketing department of our project by demonstrating our approach in a clear and visual attractive PowerPoint containing our purpose, key messages, and the different phases. But what were my exact tasks in these 3 phases?

**Postcards**

The goal of these cards was to tease the journalists and give them the impression we were on a journey around the world. It was my task to design these cards, which included the preparatory work such as buying high-quality photos and looking for the best printing office. Furthermore, I came up with a fun text to put on the back, also translated it into French and wrote it on every card. Finally, I composed a press list of target journalists to send my postcards to and eventually also the package. As Delhaize already had a list of food journalists, it was my task to search for appropriate journalists who write for children’s newspapers and magazines.

**Package**

The package consisted of an accompanying letter, the press release, products from the range ‘Food of the World’, matching recipes, and the sticker book with the stickers. I have written the accompanying letter and the press release myself in consultation with my supervisor. As it was impossible to send all of the products in the range ‘Food of the World’ we had to come up with an appealing range of products that are interesting enough to make journalists write about it. Therefore I had to contact the suppliers and discuss with them the product offer to eventually come up with the best products in terms of taste and that were especially exclusive for Delhaize. Once it was decided which products would fill our package, I started looking for some recipes that would fit with it. I also translated these recipes into French and made them more attractive by adding the right visuals. After the package was finished, I
made all the labels to put on the package. Additionally we had decided to close the packages with special tape of Delhaize and I had to take care of the design and delivery of this tape. Finally, the package could be sent and it was my task to communicate with the courier (in French) who was responsible for delivering the packages on time.

**Evaluation**

From the day that the press release was sent I kept track of the media coverage on this project. I made a presentation of the gained coverage in a PowerPoint with an overview of the number of articles and the free publicity that Delhaize gained in the context of this summer event.

### 2.2. Research Project ‘Promotion Product Assortment’

A next big task was a research project concerning the promotion of Delhaize’s product assortment to journalists. It was my task to evaluate the four existing ways to promote the product assortment of Delhaize to journalists by means of interviews with consumer journalists and to present my insights and suggestions in a clarifying document to the communication department. In the first place journalists shared their experiences with the existing ways of product promotion, not only for Delhaize, but also for their biggest competitors, which allowed me in the end to identify the best approach for Delhaize. Not only the approach, but also the content of this promotion was taken care of in my report. By identifying the different criteria that must be met before a product deserves a place in the newspaper, insight was gained into the expectations of journalists. These insights allowed me to explore new innovative ways to promote their product assortment. Finally, my report included a lot of practical recommendations, for example about organising a press conference and writing a press release.

### 2.3. Support of Press Relations

**Press lists**

First of all I had to create and update press lists. Obtaining good media coverage starts with contacting the right journalists, so this was a task of significant importance. This had to be done for example when Delhaize opened a new store and the local press had to be notified or when a new campaign is launched in the stores, such as ‘Back to School’.
Press releases

Furthermore, I had to write two press releases. While the first was in collaboration with my supervisor, I could independently work on my second one. This included also the preparatory work such as collecting information to add a quote.

Press conferences

In a first phase I had to attend two press conferences simply to observe. The main purpose here was to acquire knowledge to be able to organize a press conference myself. In a second phase it was my turn to take up an important part of the tasks to organise a press conference. The location was already arranged, so I was responsible for the whole process ranging from making up the press list to welcoming the journalists at the press conference itself. First of all I had to make up a press list and invite the relevant journalists. After sending this invitation I called every journalist to remind them of the press conference and to get an definitive answer about their presence. Furthermore I had to write a complete Q&A and also a speech for the spokesperson in cooperation with another trainee. Also logistics were a part of my job, this included for example ordering breakfast and lunch for the persons present, designing nametags and signposts and finally composing goodie bags for the journalists. During the whole preparatory phase we had several team meetings to discuss the state of affairs. On the spot I was responsible for the set up of material (e.g. roll-ups, tables, pointer, etc.), the welcome of the journalists and a good progress of the event.

Packages

Delhaize sends out packages from time to time to journalist to promote their product assortment and I was responsible for the preparation and sending of these packages. This implied ordering the right products and boxes, but also writing an accompanying letter and communicating with the courier.

Contact with the press

As I regularly answered the phone I got in touch with a lot of journalists and learned in that way their needs and their, sometimes vicious, approach to obtain information. I also had to contact them myself to inform them of new actions or events of Delhaize.
2.4. **Creation of PowerPoint Presentations**

In the context of my internship, I was responsible for making several PowerPoint presentations for the management. One of my biggest projects was to make a PowerPoint that would be used as a guide during an interview with the CEO and two important journalists. In a preparatory phase I had to look up all the articles that these particular journalists wrote about Delhaize in the past two years to eventually collect all the points of critique they made. This was the basis to work on as the PowerPoint further invalidated each point of criticism. To complete this task successfully I had to work together with different departments and assistants of the CEO to collect the necessary information. This ranged from visuals to resumes and strategic information such as results from recent market research. Due to confidentiality it is not possible to include this presentation in this report.

If the communication department worked out a new approach or procedure, it was my task to translate this into a clear PowerPoint to communicate this to the other departments or senior management. My supervisor also gives training to young potential employees and I had to make the presentations for this training. These training PowerPoint’s also involved preparing case-studies and collecting the necessary material to make the presentations entertaining, such as appropriate cartoons and movies.

2.5. **Crisis Communication**

Since the outbreak of a crisis is not something that you can control, this was an unexpected part of my job. A series of negative articles caused a stream of reactions on online news forums and social media and it was my task to monitor all these reactions and send an update every hour to the management. This update not only had to contain the reactions, but also the most important insights and points of view of the consumers. In cooperation with my supervisor we worked out appropriate reactions that contained the key messages to communicate in an accurate way with the consumers.

2.6. **Public Relations Evaluation**

After every important PR action I had to make up an evaluation in PowerPoint. This evaluation contained all coverage that appeared on this subject including the date, tone, circulation and advertising
value equivalent. An example of such a press coverage is included as annex classified under the theme ‘Food of the World’.

Besides this project based approach, twice a year Delhaize does an overall evaluation of their PR efforts. As this project was only assigned to me at the end of my internship, I could only take part into the beginning phase of this project. In a first exploratory phase I had to collect key figures such as the total number of actions, total number of articles and additionally, the total advertising value of these articles had to be calculated. Finally it was up to me to propose a visual attractive way to present these figures.

2.7. Daily Press Screening

My first task when I arrived each morning was the daily press screening and it took me about two hours to complete this task. An external media monitoring agency send me all the press clippings about Delhaize or competitors and I had to sort them according to subject and date. Additionally I had to screen the newspaper to make sure that no article was overlooked. Finally a clear overview was made to send to the management and this overview had to be added to the database every day.

2.8. Translations

My French-speaking colleagues sent me frequently little texts that had to be translated. This ranges from e-mails to short letters and even post cards.

2.9. Complaints Follow-up

Delhaize had received numerous complaints about one particular product and decided to write the customers a personal letter. I had to sort out the best way to approach these customers in order to clarify the problem and restore the trust.

2.10. Communication with Store Managers

A final task was the communication with the store managers of Delhaize. Journalists have to contact the communication department to get approval for filming in a store or for a photo shoot. Then it was my
task to search for an appropriate store by contacting the different store managers and letting the journalists know in time where they were expected.

3. Personal evaluation

This internship was a very instructive experience in several ways.

First of all, I have gained some general skills. One of the most important things I have learned is to be pro-active and hands-on. If you want to get things done you have to take control. For several projects I had to work together with other departments or colleagues of my own department and to assure a good progress of these projects, I had to monitor everything very closely and urge my colleagues to complete their tasks. As I frequently had to contact journalists who were not always easy to reach, I have learned to persist to achieve your goals, which in this case meant to use other creative ways to reach them. Furthermore I have learned to think from a broad perspective and to pay attention to details. Especially for the press conference this was of major importance, but also my PowerPoint’s had to be perfectly finished with the right visuals and flawless text. Additionally I got the chance to improve my French, both written and orally. Finally my creativity was being sparked for almost every task I had to accomplish. Not only my texts had to be fun and attractive, but also the visual output had to stand out in a special way. This challenge gave an extra dimension to my work.

Also specifically with regard to the communication domain, I have acquired knowledge and skills. I had the chance to write press releases under supervision, which implies a constant follow-up that allowed me to refine my approach. Not only press release, but actually the whole process of press relations was clarified to me. I have learned some tips and tricks to deal with the press, ranging from methods to get in touch with them to subjects that will likely inspire them to write about it. Originality and newsworthiness seemed to be key, what challenged again my creativity. Moreover I had the chance to explore the point of views of journalists themselves to eventually confront this with the approach Delhaize applies. By taking care of the evaluation at the end of every press action I was able to compare the different press actions in terms of results and eventually identify the strengths and weaknesses of each action.

Thirdly, I got to know my own strengths and weaknesses. One the one hand, this internship helped me to realise in what I stand out and what exactly the added value of my work is. On the other hand, I know
now what skills need to be improved. This knowledge can only be an additional strength to look for a job.

Finally I had the chance to work in a inspiring environment with nice colleagues. The pace was high, but this only made it an even more instructive experience as I have learned to cope with stress. I never had the feeling it was too much, because at the same time it was fun.
4. Attachments

4.1. Summer Event ‘Food of the World’

- Postcards (including text)
- Press Release
- Accompanying Letter
- Recipes
- Evaluation Press Coverage
Bonjour X (nom journaliste),

Notre tour du monde est fantastique! Un super voyage plein de découvertes au travers de différents pays. On profite pleinement du beau temps, de la bonne nourriture et des spécialités locales. Je te contacte dès qu’on rentre pour te montrer et te faire profiter de tout ce qu’on a découvert!

Salutations ensoleillées du X,

L’équipe Communication de Delhaize
DELHAIZE NEEMT HAAR KLANTEN MEE OP DEGUSTATIEREIS ROND DE WERELD

Een ontdekking van de wereld en voedingsgewoonten dankzij ‘Proef de wereld’, de grote zomeractie van Delhaize

Brussel – Van 14 juni tot 29 augustus 2012 organiseert Delhaize haar nieuwe grote zomeractie: ‘Proef de wereld’. Tijdens deze actie kunnen de klanten 216 stickers verzamelen waaronder ook speciale geurstickers om op die manier de culinaire tradities over heel de wereld te ontdekken. Het is ook het ideale moment om het ruime en unieke assortiment kwaliteitsproducten van de ‘wereldkeuken’ van Delhaize te leren kennen. Als voedingsexpert wil Delhaize haar klanten inspireren en de laatste culinaire tendensen laten ontdekken.

‘Proef de wereld’, een avontuur voor jong en oud

De vakantieperiode staat voor de deur. Dé gelegenheid voor Delhaize om haar nieuwe grote zomeractie te lanceren, een afspraak waar de klanten elk jaar halsreikend naar uit kijken. Dit jaar is het thema “Proef de wereld”, een degustatiereis rond de wereld. Een ludiek initiatief voor jong en oud om hen te laten kennismaken met wat men elders in de wereld eet.

Van 14 juni tot 29 augustus 2012 zal de klant een zakje met 5 stickers per aankoopschijf van € 20, ontvangen, 2 zakjes voor € 40, 3 zakjes voor € 60, enz. De actie is geldig in supermarkten Delhaize, City Delhaize, Tom&Co, Animal Center-Tom&Co, alsook in de deelnemende winkels AD Delhaize en Proxy Delhaize in België en Luxemburg. De klant kan hier eveneens van genieten wanneer hij gebruik maakt van de diensten van www.caddyhome.be of www.delhaizedirect.be. Hij krijgt de gelegenheid om bijkomende zakjes te verzamelen dankzij de producten die deelnemen aan de actie.

Op de website www.delhaize.be zal Delhaize ook heel wat spelletjes, quizzen en recepten voorstellen rond de wereldkeuken.

1 *Met uitzondering van de volgende producten of diensten : zakken of stickers van de gemeente, producten van de Nationale Loterij of Bpost, k’docards, Gift cards, of voor het heropladen van de GSM, van tabaksproducten, ingangen voor een pretpark, het ontwikkelen van foto’s, leeggoed of elke andere dienst.
216 stickers om de wereld en culinaire tradities te ontdekken


Dankzij het verzamelalbum kunnen de klanten hun stickers hierin plakken en ontdekken ze zo de culturele en culinaire bijzonderheden van de verschillende streken van de wereld. Het album telt maar liefst 64 pagina’s en is verkrijgbaar in de Delhaizewinkels aan 4.99 euro.

Een ruim assortiment kwaliteitsproducten van over heel de wereld

Als voedingsexpert wil Delhaize haar klanten een unieke en uitgebreide keuze kwaliteitsproducten aanbieden die betrouwbaar en ecologisch verantwoord zijn, en dit aan toegankelijke prijzen. Bovendien streeft de winkel er steeds naar originele wereldproducten te ontdekken om haar klanten te inspireren en hen nieuwe culinaire ervaringen te kunnen bieden. De rayon ‘Wereldkeuken’ is dan ook samengesteld uit 155 referenties van het eigen merk, van grote merken of nog andere exclusieve producten. Een ruim assortiment zodat de Delhaizeklanten volop kunnen genieten van koken met verschillende smaken van Azië, Indië, het Midden-Oosten, Maghreb, Afrika, Mexico, ... Delhaize heeft veel ervaring met zuidwest Azië en een perfecte kennis van de regionale specialiteiten. Daarom heeft ze de keuze van haar typisch Thaise producten nog verder uitgebreid: 16 referenties van het huismerk en 29 referenties in totaal verrijken daardoor het assortiment.

Je kan de wereldproducten ook in alle andere rayons van de Delhaize-winkels terugvinden. In de rayon verse producten kan de klant een tiental producten van andere landen ontdekken zoals humus, wokproducten, Italiaanse specialiteiten,... en dit zijn maar enkele voorbeelden. Verschillende soorten exotisch fruit en exotische groenten, zoals mango’s van Ivorkust of shimeji-champignons zijn beschikbaar in de winkelrekken van Delhaize. De beenhouwerij- en de visafdeling blijven niet achterop; de Delhaize-klanten kunnen er bijvoorbeeld verschillende soorten exotisch vlees ontdekken zoals springbok of een ruim gamma sushis. Je kan ook wegromen bij de Griekse of Oriëntaalse patisserie van de afdeling bakkerij/patisserie. Tot slot vind je in de wijnafdeling een ruime selectie wereldwijzen van Zuid-Afrika, Chili, Argentinië, Australië en zelfs China!

*: Bron AC Nielsen

Perscontact

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Als eerste de laatste info, dagelijks nieuwe ideeën, recepten of video’s? Ga naar www.delhaize.be of volg Delhaize op Facebook, Twitter of YouTube.
Mevrouw, Mijnheer,

Wij hopen dat u onze postkaart goed ontvangen hebt en dat u er even kon bij wegdromen! Zoals beloofd nemen wij opnieuw contact met u op om u mee te laten genieten van onze ontdekkingen en om het te hebben over deze zomer! De vakantieperiode staat voor de deur, een ideale gelegenheid voor Delhaize om haar nieuwe grote zomeractie te lanceren. Bovendien is dit een afspraak waar de klanten van Delhaize zo lang op gewacht hebben. Dit jaar werd de actie ‘Proef van de Wereld’ op poten gezet, die zowel voor jong als oud een degustatiereis rond de wereld is. Een ludieke manier om te ondernemen wat men elders in de wereld eet.


Dit evenement is eveneens de ideale gelegenheid om originele producten te (her)ontdekken van alle uithoeken van de wereld die zich in de rayons van de Delhaize-supermarkt bevinden. Als voedingsexpert wenst Delhaize haar klanten te begeleiden en hen de laatste culinaire trends te laten ontdekken. Ze stelt een ruim assortiment kwaliteitsproducten gewijd aan de ‘wereldkeukens’ voor. Dit assortiment is samengesteld uit huismerken, exclusiviteitsmerken en nationale merken.

De collectie bevat, naast de persmededeling, stickers en een verzamelboek, enkele producten die u de smaken van Azië, het Midden-Oosten, Mexico, Maghreb of Centraal-Afrika laten ontdekken. Wij hopen dat u ze met plezier zult uitproberen.

✓ **Sriracha Thaise saus met pepers – Flying Goose - Exclusiviteit bij Delhaize – 1,99€/200ml**
De Sriracha-saus is afkomstig van Thailand en heeft haar naam te danken aan de stad Si Racha. Ze bestaat uit pepers, azijn, look, suiker en zout. Ze heeft een smaak die zowel pikant als zuur is en kan worden gebruikt als dipsaus. Je kan er bijvoorbeeld zeefvruchten, alle soorten gefrituurde producten, … in dippen. Ze kan ook worden gebruikt om bereidingen op smaak te brengen. Dit seizoen is ze ideaal bij de BBQ.

✓ **Fijn gesneden kaffir citroenbladen – Delhaize – 1,10€/100g**
De vorm van de kaffir-citroen is minder regelmatig dan de citroen. Hij is kleiner, maar ook zuurder dan de citroen. Dit maakt hem ideaal om soepen en stoofpotjes op smaak te brengen.
Zwartpepersaus Stir Fry – Delhaize – 1,10€/195g
De Stir-fry-keuken is een wokkeuken, waarbij vlees en groenten op een hoog vuur snel worden klaargemaakt. Deze saus is ideaal bij deze schotels.

Fijn gesneden galangalwortel – Delhaize – 1,10€/100g
Rhizome lijkt op gember, wat de galangal een pikante, gepeperde en lichte citroensmaak geeft.

Zachte Ajvar – Baktat – 1,99€/300g
Een puree van paprika's en aubergines, op smaak gebracht met olie en kruiden om er een originele saus van te maken die heerlijk en verfrissend is. Deze smeulige puree kan worden gegeten bij een warme toast. U kan de puree mengen met room om er een originele pastasaus van te maken.

Saus voor fajita – Delhaize – 1,99€/430g
Pikante tomatensaus. De stukjes vlees laten bruinen in een pan en de saus eraan toevoegen. De tortilla's (Delhaize) opwarmen, ze plooi en vullen met de bereiding.

Saus voor tajine abrikoos en koriander – Alfez, Exclusiviteit bij Delhaize – 2,99€/350g
Tajine was oorspronkelijk traditioneel keukengerei van Maghreb waarin de verschillende ingrediënten op een zacht vuurtje worden gestoofd. Tajine betekent daarnaast ook een culinaire bereiding. Met deze tajinesaus abrikoos/koriander is het niet meer nodig om het keukengerei ‘tajine’ bij de hand te hebben. Vlees of gevogelte volstaan om een heerlijke schotel zoals ginder klaar te maken.

Moambe / Classic – Guinea’s – 4,58€/800g
Moambe is een typisch gerecht van de Centraal-Afrikaanse keuken en wordt zo genoemd in Congo. Dit is de saus die als basis voor de bereiding zal dienen en daarnaast moeten er ook nog kip en andere ingrediënten aan toegevoegd worden. Het gerecht dat met moambe samengaat is saka saka, een bereiding op basis van fijngedrukte maniokbladen.

Aarzel niet om contact met ons op te nemen indien u nog vragen zou hebben of als u de foto van één van de producten wenst te ontvangen.

Met vriendelijke groeten,
Het communicatieteam van Delhaize België

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Tom yam khung (Garnalensoep met citroengras)

Probeer dit recept en u zal begrijpen waarom de ‘tom yam’ zo populair is!

Bereidingstijd : 15 minuten  
Gaartijd : 5 minuten  
Moeilijkheidsgraad : gemakkelijk  
Kost : goedkoop  

**Ingrediënten voor 4 personen :**

- 1 zak bevroren garnaalstaarten « 365 » (500 g)  
- 100 g Parijse champignons  
- 1 klein rood pepertje  
- 3 stengels citroengras  
- 1 mager kippenbouillonblokje  
- 1 eetlepel Red Curry Paste (Delhaize)  
- 1 eetlepel kurkuma  
- 1 eetlepel rietsuiker  
- 1 eetlepel Minced Kaffir lime leaves (Delhaize)  
- 1 eetlepel Minced Galangal (Delhaize)  
- 4 eetlepels Fish sauce (Delhaize)  
- 2 eetlepels limoensap  
- 5 cl Kokosmelk (Delhaize)  
- 1 tuiltje verse koriander  

**Bereiding:**

- Pel de ontdooide scampi’s. Snijd de champignons, de rode peper en de stengels citroengras fijn.  
- Breng 1,5 l water aan de kook met het bouillonblokje. Voeg het citroengras, de rode peper, de “Red Curry Paste”, de kurkuma, de rietsuiker en de “Minced Galangal” toe. Laat 2 minuten sudderen.  
- Voeg de gehakte koriander toe en dien op.  

*Tip: begin met een halve lepel rode pasta curry als u niet goed tegen pikante maaltijden kan.*
Tom yam khung (soupe aux crevettes à la citronnelle)

Essayez cette recette et vous comprendrez aussitôt pourquoi le « tom yam » est si populaire !

Préparation : 15 min
Cuisson : 5 min
Difficulté : facile
Coût : bon marché

Ingrédients pour 4 personnes :

- 1 sachet de queues de crevettes crues surgelées « 365 » (500 g)
- 100 g de champignons de Paris
- 1 petit piment rouge
- 3 tiges de citronnelle
- 1 cube de bouillon de volaille dégraissé
- 1 c à soupe de Red Curry Paste (Delhaize)
- 1 c à café de curcuma
- 1 c à café de sucre de canne roux
- 1 c à café de Minced Kaffir Lime Leaves (Delhaize)
- 1 c à café de Minced Galangal (Delhaize)
- 4 c à soupe de Fish sauce (Delhaize)
- 2 c à soupe de jus de citron vert
- 5 cl de Lait de coco (Delhaize)
- 1 bouquet de coriandre fraîche

Préparation :

- Décortiquez les scampis préalablement dégelés. Emincez finement les champignons, le piment et les tiges de citronnelle.
- Portez 1,5 L d’eau à ébullition avec le cube bouillon émietté. Ajoutez la citronnelle, le piment, la “Red Curry Paste”, le curcuma, le sucre, le kaffir et le “Minced Galangal”. Laissez mijoter 2 min.
- Ajoutez les champignons et les scampis. Portez de nouveau à ébullition et laissez mijoter encore 2 min. Ajoutez la “Fish Sauce”, le jus de citron vert et le lait de coco. Rectifiez l’assaisonnement et retirez du feu.
- Ajoutez la coriandre hachée et servez aussitôt.

Astuce : commencez par 1/2 c à soupe de pâte de curry si vous ne supportez pas les plats très piquants.
Tex Mex vegetarische quorn wrap

Bereidingstijd : 5 tot 10 minuten  
Moeilijkheidsgraad : gemakkelijk  
Kost : goedkoop

Ingrediënten voor 4 personen :

- Fajita Cooking Sauce (Delhaize)  
- ijsbergsla  
- 2 teentjes knoflook  
- Mexicaanse bereiding Ducros  
- olijven culinaire schijfjes (Delhaize)  
- 1 pakje Quornblokjes  
- Spaanse bereiding Ducros  
- Thaise wokolie INT. COLLECTION  
- 4 Torti’Wraps (Delhaize)  
- 0,5 ui  
- 1 pakje wok met koolsoorten en prei  
- zure room 33% Luxlait

Bereiding:

- Verwarm de wok met wat olie en bak de ui en knoflook ongeveer 1 minuut. Voeg er de Quornblokjes en de wokgroenten aan toe en roerbak alles ongeveer 5 minuten.  
- Kruid het geheel met de Spaanse en de Mexicaanse kruiden.  
- Voeg er de olijfschijfjes aan toe.  
- Verdeel het vegetarische mengsel over de 4 wraps en rol ze op.  
- Snijd de wraps in twee en serveer met de zure room, “Fajita Cooking Sauce” en ijsbergsla.
Wrap végétarien Tex Mex au quorn

Préparation : 5 à 10 minutes
Difficulté: facile
Coût : bon marché

Ingrédients pour 4 personnes :

- Fajita Cooking Sauce (Delhaize)
- batavia
- 2 gousses ail
- Cuisine Mexicaine Ducros
- olives culinaires en rondelles Delhaize
- 1 paquet dés de Quorn
- Cuisine Espagnole Ducros
- Huile thaï pour wok INT. COLLECTION
- 4 Torti’Wraps (Delhaize)
- 0,5 ognon
- 1 paquet choux et poireaux pour wok
- crème épaisses 33% Luxlait

Préparation:

- Faites chauffer le wok avec un peu d'huile et faites revenir l'ail et l'ognon pendant 1 minute. Ajoutez les dés de Quorn et les légumes pour wok et faites cuire pendant plus ou moins 5 minutes.
- Assaisonnez le tout avec les épices espagnoles et mexicaines.
- Ajoutez les olives.
- Répartissez la préparation sur 4 wraps et roulez-les.
- Coupez les wraps en deux et servez avec la crème épaisse, “Fajita Cooking Sauce” et la salade iceberg.
**Kip Kerrie op Thaise wijze**

**Bereidingstijd:** 10 tot 30 minuten

**Moeilijkheidsgraad:** gemakkelijk

**Kost:** goedkoop

**Ingrediënten voor 4 personen:**

- 2 eetlepels arachideolie
- 2 eetlepels Fish sauce (Delhaize)
- 2 eetlepels Green curry paste (Delhaize)
- 600 g kippenblokjes
- 20 cl kokosmelk
- 2 eetlepels limoensap
- 1 eetlepel Minced ginger (Delhaize)
- 1 eetlepel Minced Kaffir Lime Leaves (Delhaize)
- 1 eetlepel olie
- 1 koffielepel vloeiabe honing

**Bereiding:**

Meng 600 g kippenblokjes met 1 EL “Green curry paste” en bak ze gedurende 10 min. op een hoog vuur in de wok in 2 EL arachideolie, onder voortdurend roeren. Leg ze daarna opzij. Verwarm 1 EL “Green curry paste” in 1 EL olie gedurende 5 min. op een matig vuur en voeg dan al roerend 20 cl kokosmelk, 2 EL limoensap, 1 KL vloeibare honing, 1 EL “Minced ginger” en 2 EL “Fish sauce” toe. Laat 3 min. sudderen. Doe er de kippenblokjes bij en bestrooi na 2 min. met 1 EL “Minced Kaffir Lime Leaves”. Dien onmiddellijk op met Thaise rijst en gestoomde peulen.
Curry de poulet à la mode thaïe

Préparation : 10 à 30 minutes
Difficulté : facile
Coût : bon marché

Ingrédients pour 4 personnes :

- 2 c à s huile d’arachide
- 2 c à s Fish sauce (Delhaize)
- 2 c à s Green curry paste (Delhaize)
- 600 g dés de poulet
- 20 cl lait de coco
- 2 c à s jus de citron vert
- 1 c à s Minced ginger (Delhaize)
- 1 c à s Minced Kaffir Lime Leaves (Delhaize)
- 1 c à s huile
- 1 c à c miel liquide

Préparation

Mélangez 600 g de dés de poulet avec 1 c. à s. de “Green curry paste” et faites-les sauter au wok, 10 min, à feu vif, sans cesser de remuer, dans 2 c. à s. d’huile d’arachide. Réservez. À la place, faites chauffer 1 c. à s. de “Green curry paste” dans 1 c. à s. d’huile, 5 min, à feu moyen puis, tout en remuant, ajoutez 20 cl de lait de coco, 2 c. à s. de jus de citron vert, 1 c. à c. de miel liquide, 1 c. à s. de “Minced ginger” et 2 c. à s. de “Fish sauce”. Laissez mijoter, 3 min. Plongez-y les dés de poulet et après 2 min, parsemez d’1 c. à s. de “Minced Kaffir Lime Leaves”. Servez sans attendre avec du riz thaï et des mange-tout cuits à la vapeur.
Index
- Results + Value
- Newspaper and magazine articles
- Online newspaper articles
- Sites, blogs, forums, social media

The Delhaize ‘Summer Event Food of the World’ appeared in at least:
- 7 Newspaper and magazine articles
- 3 Online newspaper articles
- 7 Online sources

*French, Dutch and English

RESULTS + VALUE

€ 99,132
- the total value of the free publicity Delhaize enjoyed in the context of the "Delhaize Summer Event Food of the World"

Newspaper Articles
- Calculation method: price of advertisement x 1.5*
- $96,132 € in avoided newspaper advertising cost!

*This is a conservative appreciation of the true value of a press article as opposed to an advertisement, since articles are in general a more valuable and noticeable than advertisements.
**Online**

- Very hard to value
- We assigned each article on the internet a standard value of €200
- Being mentioned on certain sites (widely read newspapers and magazines) is “worth” much more than just €200.
- Conservative estimation of the monetary value of the (Belgian) online articles on “Delhaize Summer Event Food of the World”: **2000 €**
4.2. **Support of Pres Relations**

- Press Release
- Accompanying Letter Package
- Q&A Press Conference
- Speech Spokesperson Press Conference
LEKKER GEZOND PICKNICKEN IN BRUSSEL DANKZIJ DELHAIZE

Delhaize, partner van piQniQ Brusselicious


Verse, gezonde en betrouwbare producten voor een Bio-piQniQ

Vanuit zijn sterke betrokkenheid bij wat leeft in de lokale gemeenschappen en zijn expertise in biovoeding, is Delhaize België hoofdpartner van het evenement piQniQ Brusselicious. Tijdens dit evenement, dat plaatsvindt rond het thema “Bio & Sustainability”, zullen picknickmanden ter beschikking gesteld worden voor de deelnemers die hoofdzakelijk gevuld zijn met kwaliteitsvolle, gezonde, duurzame en betrouwbare producten van het huismerk BIO van Delhaize zoals yoghurts, appels, salami, kaas en een glas biowijn. Deze picknickmanden zijn geschikt voor 2 personen aan de prijs van 12 euro per picknickmand. Bovendien zal er een wijnbar aanwezig zijn waar er zowel witte, rode als rosé biowijn van het huismerk van Delhaize kan verkregen worden. Deze picknick is kortom een ideale gelegenheid voor de deelnemers om gezellig samen te zijn met vrienden en familie en om tegelijkertijd de bioproducten van Delhaize te ontdekken.

Gecertificeerde biologische producten 15 tot 30% goedkoper

Delhaize België vervult een pioniersrol in België als het gaat om biovoeding. Al meer dan 25 jaar levert Delhaize authentieke en kwaliteitsvolle bioproducten die bovendien aan toegankelijke prijzen beschikbaar zijn. Deze producten worden namelijk 15 tot 30% goedkoper aangeboden dan de nationale huismerken. Met de jaren is het gamma Delhaize Bio fors uitgebreid en vandaag kan Delhaize als koploper in ons land 635 gecertificeerde biologische producten aanbieden, gaande van groenten en fruit, vlees, gevoelte, vis, kruidenierswaren tot wijn.

Delhaize neemt haar klanten mee op bio-ontdekkingstocht
Om het assortiment en de kwaliteit van haar bioproducten in de verf te zetten, organiseert Delhaize tijdens de Bioweek van 2 tot 10 juni een wedstrijd waarbij 200 picknickmanden kunnen gewonnen worden. Zo krijgt iedereen de kans om ze te ontdekken. De klanten kunnen online deelnemen aan deze wedstrijd op www.delhaize.be/brusselicious-wedstrijd en maken op deze manier kans op een picknickmand gevuld met verse, kwaliteitsvolle bioproducten.

Delhaize België


*: Bron AC Nielsen
Beste Mevrouw/Meneer,

Als voedingsexpert nodigt Delhaize u uit om kennis te maken met de rijke smaak van goede olijfolie. Wij hebben namelijk het genoegen u te melden dat Delhaize vanaf nu in exclusiviteit de olijfolie ‘Fruité Vert Léger’ van sterrenchef Peter Goossens verkoopt. Delhaize, dat kwaliteit en innovatie als essentiële criteria hanteert bij haar productkeuze, heeft gekozen voor een olijfolie die geselecteerd is door driesterrenchef Peter Goossens en Domaine du Bois Gentil, het enige merk dat 3 sterren ontving van het International Taste and Quality Insitute ‘Superior Taste Award 2012’ voor de “uitzonderlijke smaak” van haar olijfolies.

De olijfolie is voor 6,99 euro verkrijgbaar in een metalen designfles van 250 ml die de olijfolie optimaal beschermt en bovendien perfect in uw keuken zal passen. De prachtige uitgebalanceerde smaak van de ‘olijfolie Fruité Vert Léger Peter Goossens’ is het resultaat van de combinatie van vier olijvenvariëteiten: Salonenque, Grossane, Verdale en Aglandau. Je kan de olijfolie zuiver en puur gebruiken op pasta, gegrilde vis, gestoomde groenten en uiteraard op salades, want het is een smaakversterker als geen ander, een echte troef in de keuken. De olijfolie is niet enkel onberispelijk op vlak van smaak en kwaliteit, maar ook qua traceerbaarheid. Deze ambachtelijke olijfolie werd uit individueel vat geselecteerd uit de beste creaties, geheel volgens de oude traditie van de olijventeelt van de vallei van Les Baux de Provence in Frankrijk.

Aarzel niet om ons te contacteren als u meer informatie over onze producten nodig hebt.

Met vriendelijke groeten,

Het communicatieteam van Delhaize België

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**Q&A Persconferentie Lieten**

**Wie heeft het project opgestart?**
In januari 2012 stelde Frans Vanspauwen, de voorzitter van Sint-Vincentius Limburg het vernietigen van niet-vervallen voeding door supermarkten, aan de kaak. Naar aanleiding hiervan heeft het kabinet van Vlaams Minister Lieten vereniging Sint-Vincentius en verschillende andere supermarkten uitgenodigd en het voorstel gedaan om dit innovatief project op te starten. Als pionier op vlak van duurzaamheid is Delhaize de enige retailer die deze vorm van samenwerking aangaat. Delhaize engageert zich rond het reduceren van voedeloverschotten en heeft hier ook al andere projecten rond opgestart. Delhaize wilt zich blijven inzetten en innoveren om haar pionierspositie als duurzame onderneming te behouden.

**Hoe past dit project binnen de duurzaamheidsstrategie van Delhaize?**
Duurzaamheid is één van de drie strategische pijlers van Delhaize. In het kader hiervan willen we ons engageren om onze voedeloverschotten te reduceren en ons personeel en onze klanten bewust maken van de problematiek rond voedeloverschotten.

**Waarom willen andere supermarkten hieraan niet meewerken? Er valt uiteindelijk toch niets te verliezen als deze producten anders gewoon worden weggegooid?**
Het is niet aan ons om te antwoorden op vragen over de collega’s in de sector.

**Waarom in Limburg?**
Delhaize zag in het voorstel van Vlaams Minister Lieten een echte opportuniteit om op maatschappelijk verantwoorde wijze haar voedeloverschotten te reduceren.. Daarom hebben ons aangesloten bij dit project dat in Limburg opgestart werd.

**Is Delhaize onmiddellijk ingegaan op het voorstel?**
Ja, zonder twijfel. We zijn spontaan dit engagement aangegaan met het oog op een constructieve samenwerking met de betrokken partijen. Delhaize is een innovator en steeds op zoek naar nieuwe initiatieven om constructieve oplossingen te vinden voor bestaande problemen, zoals voedeloverschotten.

**Wat doet Delhaize nog om voedeloverschotten te reduceren? / Wat werd er vroeger gedaan met de voedeloverschotten?**
Delhaize past de strategie “preventie – reductie – conversie” toe.

2. Delhaize doneert jaarlijks reeds meer dan 200 000 maaltijden aan de voedselbanken. Dit is voeding die bijvoorbeeld niet meer op tijd in de winkel kon geraken door slechte weersomstandigheden of een slechte verkeerssituatie. Hier past ook dit project in, maar we gaan de scope verkleinen door de donatie te doen op het niveau van de supermarkt.

3. Voedsel dat niet meer geschikt is voor consumptie wordt waar mogelijk verbrand in biomethanisatieinstallaties waar de voeding in energie wordt omgezet.

### Waarom heeft Delhaize nooit eerder een gelijkaardige project opgestart? (afwachtende houding)
Jaarlijks doneert Delhaize reeds meer dan 200 000 maaltijden aan de voedselbanken. Het enige verschil is dat we de scope nu vergroten naar de supermarkten. Bovendien was de periode die de voeding nodig had om terug te keren naar de distributiecentra te lang. We waren dus op zoek naar een oplossing op winkelniveau. Dergelijk project vraagt een inspanning van de betrokken partijen, dit is niet altijd even evident. We zijn blij dat dit project tot een succes is uitgedraaid.

### Schenkt Delhaize aan nog andere partijen voedseloverschotten? Zo ja, welke?
Delhaize schenkt jaarlijks meer dan 200 000 maaltijden aan de Voedselbanken.

### Bestaan er nog gelijkaardige projecten? (bv door andere supermarkten)
Dit is een primeur voor België op het gebied van een georganiseerde top-down samenwerking tussen een supermarkt en een liefdadigheidsverengiging. Samen met alle partijen zijn we rond de tafel gekomen en hebben we een succesvol overleg gepleegd. Zo zijn we gekomen tot een win-win situatie voor zowel St-Vincentius als Delhaize.

### Ziet u het uitdelen van voedseloverschot als armoedebestrijding? Vindt u het niet stigmatiserend en vernederend voor de arme bevolking om herleid te worden tot lichamen die dringend gevoed moeten worden met voedsel dat dreigt te vervallen.
Het voedsel dat Delhaize schenkt aan Sint-Vincentius is nog perfect verkoopbaar en wordt ook gewoon uit de winkelrekken gehaald. Het is dus voeding die onze klanten ook kunnen aankopen. De voedselveiligheid van onze producten is onze hoogste prioriteit en de producten die in onze
winkelrekken liggen zijn kwalitatief hoogstaand. Het doel van dit project is om te vermijden dat voeding verloren gaat en het daarom een goede bestemming te geven.

**Wat doen jullie om jullie klanten te stimuleren om voedselafval te reduceren?**
We werken ten eerste op niveau van packaging. Meer en meer consumenten zijn bijvoorbeeld alleenstaanden en kleinere gezinnen, voor hen voorzien we kleinere verpakkingen. In ons magazine voorzien we voor onze klanten ook tips en trics om te gaan werken met restjes. Op onze website kan u ook tips terug vinden hoe u producten het best bewaard om ze zo lang mogelijk vers te houden.

**Bent u ervan overtuigd dat een dergelijk lokaal initiatief een positieve impact hebben op de voedseloverschot in België?**
We gaan dit project reeds uitbreiden naar alle Delhaize supermarkten in Limburg (Huidig: Sint-Truiden, Genk, Waterschei. Toekomst: Lommel, Neerpelt, Hasselt & Houthalen) en enkele supermarkten in de provincie Antwerpen (Kontich, Mechelen,Geel, Kasterlee, St.-Katelijne-Waver & Berlaar). Bovendien hebben alle partners de intentie om dit project te blijven uitbreiden. In de toekomst zal dit dus meer zijn dan een lokaal initiatief en de impact ervan zal zeker groeien.

**Waarom werkt Delhaize hier aan mee? Wat zijn de voordelen voor Delhaize?**
Duurzaamheid is één van de drie strategische pijlers van Delhaize. Voedseloverschotten hebben een drieledig effect.

1. Ten eerste betekenen ze een economisch verlies.
2. Maar de productie van voeding vraagt ook veel energie en grondstoffen. Wanneer voedsel niet meer geconsumeerd kan worden gaan deze allemaal verloren en leggen zo een onnodige druk op het milieu.
3. Ten derde is er ook een sociaal aspect aan voedseloverschotten. Door de huidige economische crisis zijn steeds meer mensen niet meer in staat om zich van een voedzame maaltijd te voorzien. Delhaize wil zijn verantwoordelijkheid opnemen en het goede voorbeeld geven om op een positieve manier een verandering te maken.

**Zie u ook nadelen aan het project?**
Dit project biedt een positieve oplossing voor een bestaand probleem en creëert een win-win situatie voor alle betrokken partijen. St-Vincentius kan diegenen die op hen een beroep doen een ruimer en meer gevarieerd aanbod aan voeding geven. Delhaize verkleint zijn aandeel aan voedseloverschotten.

**Waarom Sint-Vincentius?**
Sint-Vincentius is een liefdadigheidsvereniging die zich inzet voor de zwaksten in onze samenleving. In januari 2012 stelde Frans Vanspauwen, de voorzitter van Sint-Vincentius Limburg het vernietigen van niet-vervallen voeding door supermarkten, aan de kaak. Naaraanleiding hiervan heeft het kabinet van Vlaams Minister Lieten vereniging Sint-Vincentius en verschillende andere supermarkten uitgenodigd en het voorstel gedaan om dit innovatief project op te starten. Delhaize zag dit initiatief als een mooie opportuniteit en is hier direct op ingegaan. Bovendien is St-Vincentius een intenionale vereniging die nationaal georganiseerd is. Bovendien zijn er 342 lokale conferenties. Dit maakt de uitbreiding van het project organisatorisch gemakkelijker.

Hoe gebeurt de verdeling van de opgehaalde voeding?
Het proefproject liep gedurende mei en juni in drie. Iedere namiddag komt Sint-Vincentius naar de Delhaize Supermarkten in Sint-Truiden, Genk en Waterschei. Hier nemen ze drie soorten producten mee: verse voeding met de gele afslagsticker die St-Vincentius uit de rekken gaat halen, droge voeding die is klaargezet in de reserve en ten derde ook brood uit de diepvriezer. Tijdens de ophaling wordt de koude keten steeds respecteerd. Voedselveiligheid is zeer belangrijk voor Delhaize en hier zijn dan ook strikte procedures rond opgesteld. Hierna nemen ze deze voedingswaren mee naar hun vestiging. Daar komen dagelijks verschillende gezinnen naartoe om deze voeding op te halen. Sint-Vincentius zorgt er voor dat de goederen op een eerlijke manier verdeeld worden. Wat niet wordt uitgedeeld tijdens de dagelijkse bedelingen wordt ingevroren en wordt meegegeven tijdens de grote bedelingen die één- of tweeemaandelijks gebeuren.

Welke producten mogen meegenomen worden?
Alle producten die in snelverkoop zijn, gelabeld met een gele afslagsticker “Afslag artikel” mogen meegenomen worden op de laatst verkoopbare datum. Tijdens de ophaling wordt de koude keten steeds respecteerd, hier zijn ook strikte procedures rond opgesteld omdat voedselveiligheid onze grootste prioriteit is. Daarom ook mogen enkel de producten worden meegenomen die staan op de lijst die onze medewerkers hebben opgesteld in overleg met het FAVV(Federaal Agentschap voor VoedselVeiligheid). Voeding die verse producten bevatten, zoals rauwe eieren en zuivelproducten en daardoor gemakkelijk bederfbaar zijn mogen bijvoorbeeld niet mogen meegenomen. Producten waarvan de houdbaarheidsdatum overschreden is worden door onze medewerkers uit de rekken gehaald en mogen onder geen beding worden meegenomen.

Wat is de mening van Delhaize in de discussie rond de labelling van houdbaarheidsdata “Te gebruiken tot” en ”Ten minste houdbaar tot”.

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Deze labelling is wettelijk geregeld. Voedselveiligheid is één van onze grootste prioriteiten. Delhaize kijkt er dan ook op toe dat deze wetgeving strikt wordt gevolgd.

**Hoe zit het met de voedselveiligheid?**
Het FAVV (Federaal Agentschap voor de VoedselVeiligheid) heeft meegewerkt aan de procedures die de medewerkers van Delhaize hebben opgesteld. Omdat de voedselveiligheid altijd een prioriteit is voor Delhaize werd hier veel aandacht aan besteed bij de opstart van het project. Voeding die verse producten bevatten, zoals rauwe eieren en zuivelproducten en daardoor gemakkelijk bederfbaar zijn mogen bijvoorbeeld niet mogen meegenomen. Ook producten waarvan de houdbaarheidsdatum is overschreden worden door onze medewerkers uit de rekken gehaald en mogen onder geen beding worden meegenomen.

**Wordt er enkel voeding opgehaald?**
Delhaize heeft een zeer groot aanbod aan verse voeding en het gaat dan ook voornamelijk om deze producten. We merken zeer nadrukkelijk op dat er nooit alcohol kan meegenomen worden uit onze winkels. Uitzonderlijk kan het zijn dat er non-food zoals shampoo kan meegenomen worden zoals voor promotie-acties die afgelopen zijn.

**Zal het project nog uitgebreid worden? Wordt dit initiatief ook in andere steden georganiseerd?**
Tijdens de maanden mei en juni liep er een proefproject in de drie Delhaize supermarkten van Sint-Truiden, Genk en Waterschei. Omdat dit zowel door St-Vincentius als het personeel (en de klanten) van Delhaize positief geëvalueerd werd hebben we besloten om dit initiatief verder te zetten. Het is ambitie van de betrokken partijen dit project verder uit te breiden naar in totaal 13 winkels. Dit zijn alle Delhaize supermarkten in Limburg (Huidig: Sint-Truiden, Genk, Waterschei. Toekomst: Lommel, Neerpelt, Hasselt & Houthalen) en enkele supermarkten in de provincie Antwerpen (Kontich, Mechelen,Geel, Kasterlee, St.-Katelijne-Waver & Berlaar).

**Ziet u het project op lange termijn standhouden? Wat zijn de succesfactoren van dit project?**
Ja, het engagement van de vrijwilligers van Sint-Vincentius is bewonderingswaardig. Bovendien zijn ook het personeel en de klanten van Delhaize uiterst positief over dit project. Delhaize en Sint-Vincentius zijn er in geslaagd om een win-win situatie te creëren. Sint-Vincentius kan diegenen die op hun beroep doen een ruimer en meer gevarieerd gamma aanbieden. Delhaize vermindert hierdoor de creatie van voedseloverschotten.
Wat denken jullie van de actie/ veroordeling van de Muffinman?
Wij verkopen geen producten die de houdbaarheidsdatum hebben overschreden. Dit is bij wet verboden.

Bent u niet bang dat andere mensen ook zullen proberen om aanspraak te maken op deze producten? (ze kunnen gratis uitgedeeld worden aan armen, waarom mogen wij ze dan niet meenemen?)
De producten die Delhaize meegeeft aan St-Vincentius zijn producten die in snelverkoop zijn. De klanten van Delhaize kunnen ze dus reeds aan een verminderd tarief meenemen. Bovendien komt St-Vincentius pas vanaf 16u zodat de klanten van Delhaize steeds de eerste keuze hebben en daarnaast neemt St-Vincentius nooit alle producten mee die in snelverkoop zijn. De klanten van Delhaize kunnen dus ook naar de voedselophaling voedsel aan een verminderde prijs kopen.

Hoeveel voedseloverschot is er exact per jaar? (er wordt overal wel vermeld dat er 150 ton wordt weggegeven aan voedselbanken, maar wat gebeurd er met de rest of is er geen rest?)
Hier wordt niet over gecommuniceerd.

Wie is er verantwoordelijk voor de controle van de producten die worden meegenomen? (juiste producten, zeker niet overdatum, ..?)
Omdat voedselveiligheid onze grootste prioriteit is, liggen in onze winkels nooit producten waarvan de houdbaarheidsdatum overschreden is.

Waarom wordt het project niet uitgebreid naar alle winkels?
Het project wordt in een tweede fase reeds uitgebreid naar 10 andere winkels in Limburg (Lommel, Neerpelt, Hasselt & Houthalen) en Antwerpen (Kontich, Mechelen,Geel, Kasterlee, St.-Katelijne-Waver & Berlaar). Er is tijd en organisatie nodig zodat beide partners zich kunnen organiseren om verder uit te breiden.

Tot waar gaat de verantwoordelijkheid van Delhaize voor de voedselveiligheid.
De producten die St-Vincentius meeneemt worden altijd geregistreerd. Zo garanderen we dat ze altijd traceerbaar zijn. Delhaize is verantwoordelijk voor de producten tot ze getransformeerd worden. Dit wilt zeggen ingevroren of verwerkt in een gerecht.
Goedemorgen iedereen,

- Welkom, mevrouw de Minister, de journalisten, de vrijwilligers van Sint-Vincentius en de medewerkers van Delhaize en alle andere aanwezigen. Welkom iedereen. Voordat ik het engagement van Delhaize binnen dit proefproject wil toelichten, wil ik eerst Elke De Bal, de directrice van Delhaize Supermarkt Sint-Truiden en haar ploeg van harte danken voor het ontvangst en voor de voorbereidingen binnen dit project., alsmede haar collega’s van de Delhaize Supermarkten in Genk en Waterschei.

- Duurzaamheid is één van de strategische prioriteiten voor Delhaize. Meer dan ooit wil Delhaize haar rol als innovator op vlak van duurzaamheid opnemen om de samenleving duurzamer te maken en dit via verschillende concrete initiatieven, dit past binnen de visie die we op lange termijn hebben ontwikkeld. Delhaize neemt een pioniersrol in met betrekking tot duurzaam ondernemen in België. We vinden het daarom ook belangrijk om onze verantwoordelijkheid op te nemen en het goede voorbeeld geven. Het is dan ook niet toevallig dat Delhaize als eerste bedrijf in dit proefproject stapte. Dit project biedt ons een unieke kans om een win-win situatie te creëren: St-Vincentius kan zijn aanbod verruimen en Delhaize reduceert de creatie van voedseloverschotten.

- Dit project is een primeur, zowel bij Delhaize zelf als in België. Door de huidige economische crisis zijn steeds meer mensen niet meer in staat om zich van een voedzame maaltijd te voorzien. De vrijwilligers van Sint-Vincentius komen dagelijks voeding ophalen in drie Delhaize Supermarkten in Sint-Truiden, Genk en Waterschei. Hier nemen ze drie soorten producten mee: verse voeding in snelverkoop uit de rekken met de gele afslagsticker, droge voeding die is klaargezet in de reserve en ten derde ook brood uit de diepvriezer. Dagelijks kunnen zo gemiddeld 20 voedselpakketten* per winkel uitgedeeld worden aan personen die er echt behoefte aan hebben. Deze pakketten kunnen onder andere vlees, vis, desserten, brood, vers fruit en bereide maaltijden bevatten. We zijn blij u te kunnen meedelen dat dit project zal uitgebreid worden naar een totaal van 13 winkels. Dit zijn alle Delhaize Supermarkten in Limburg en ook enkele Delhaizes in de provincie Antwerpen. We hopen van harte dat de verdere uitbreiding naar een even groot succes zal worden als het pilootproject in de drie supermarkten in Limburg.

- Naast dit project heeft Delhaize ook andere initiatieven gerealiseerd met betrekking tot de reductie van voedseloverschotten.Hiervoor hebben we een drie-ledige strategie: preventie-donatie-conversie.
1. In een eerste stap gaan we voedseloverschotten vermijden door onze leveringen aan te passen op maat van de supermarkten.

2. Een tweede stap is donatie, de Voedselbanken ontvangen jaarlijks reeds meer dan 200 000 maaltijden vanuit de distributiecentra van Delhaize.

3. Het voedsel dat niet meer consumeerbaar is gaat waar mogenlijk naar bio-methanisatie installaties, waar het omgezet wordt in energie.

Bovendien communiceren we dit ook naar onze consument door middel van onze verpakkingen, tips&trics te publiceren in ons magazine en bewaaradvies via onze website.

- Delhaize wil een goede band hebben met alle betrokken mensen, niet alleen met klanten in onze winkels maar ook met de buurt. Dit project past bovendien perfect binnen ons engagement om nauwer samen te werken met de local communities. Het engagement van de vrijwilligers om voedsel bij Delhaize te komen halen en uit te delen aan de mensen die op hun een beroep doen is een inspiratie voor Delhaize en haar personeel om zich te blijven inzetten voor de gemeenschap waarin ze functioneert. Daarnaast zorgt dit project er ook voor dat de bewustwording rond voedseloverschotten groeit bij ons personeel en de consument.

- Dit project is een win-win voor iedereen:
  - Voor de vereniging Sint-Vincentius en haar begunstigden omdat zij nu een groter en meer gevarieerd voedselaanbod hebben.
  - Voor Delhaize omdat we onze voedseloverschotten kunnen reduceren op een maatschappelijke verantwoorde wijze.
  - Personeel en de klanten van Delhaize en de consument in het algemeen worden bewust gemaakt van de problematiek rond voedseloverschotten.

- Ik geef nu graag het woord aan Vlaams Viceminister Lieten, die meer details zal geven over het vervolgtraject van dit proefproject.

Termen te vermijden:

- VOEDSELAFVAL
- AFVAL
- VERSPILLING
- CHARITY
4.3. Complaints Follow-up

Beste,

We hebben uw opmerking over de aanwezigheid van wormpjes in een vis (naam van de vis), die u teruggestuurd heeft naar de winkel..., goed ontvangen.

Eerst en vooral willen wij ons verontschuldigen voor het ongemak dat u heeft ondervonden. We geven u graag wat meer informatie over dit onderwerp.

Delhaize werkt in zijn assortiment verse vis enkel met kwaliteitsproducten die vers uit de zee komen en niet worden diepgefroren voor ze de winkel bereiken. Hierdoor kan Delhaize de kwaliteit en smaak van haar verse vis voor 100% garanderen. In uitzonderlijke gevallen kan het zijn dat er wormpjes in de vis zitten, aangezien deze ook aanwezig zijn in het zeewater waar de vissen in leven. Gelukkig zijn de wormpjes helemaal niet gevaarlijk voor de mens, aangezien vis altijd wordt gebakken of gekookt voordat ze gegeten worden en de wormpjes dus uitgeschakeld worden.

Dat is een natuurlijk fenomeen dat we niet altijd kunnen vermijden, hoewel we met ons strikt controlesysteem alles in het werk stellen om dit te voorkomen. De visfilets worden zorgvuldig onderzocht op een lichttafel om eventuele wormpjes op te sporen. Soms kan het echter gebeuren dat er wormpjes door de mazen van het net glippen omdat ze moeilijk zichtbaar zijn door hun kleur of de plaats waar ze zich bevinden. In dit geval willen wij ons excuseren.

Bedankt dat u dit voorval gemeld heeft. Dankzij dit soort opmerkingen kunnen we de situatie van nabij opvolgen in de supermarkten en snel en efficiënt reageren indien nodig. We kunnen zo de opvolging verzekeren van de kwaliteit van de producten die we verkopen.

Indien u in de toekomst nog een probleem ondervindt met een product dat we in onze winkels verkopen, aarzel dan niet om het ons te melden.

We verzekeren u dat onze onderneming erop toeziet dat de kwaliteitsproblemen tot een minimum herleid worden om koste wat het kost ongemakken te vermijden zoals u ondervonden heeft.

In de hoop dat we u ook in de toekomst nog als klant mogen verwelkomen, tekenen we met de meeste hoogachting.