Graduation Assignment

Fair Business Street

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Executive summary

The research report “Fair Business Street” is about stakeholder relationships, and how communication can improve these. Fair Business Street is an educational project, in which student of the Noorderpoort college give advice to entrepreneurs in the Nieuwe Ebbingestraat on fair and sustainable entrepreneurship.

The research takes an evaluative stance to this proposition, asking how communication can aid in creating lasting relationships between the stakeholders of the project, and the client Anneke Lindeman Educatieve Projecten. The project Fair Business Street was executed over the months Februari – April 2013. Afterwards, interviews were held with the involved entrepreneurs and other stakeholders of the project.

The research question addressed was: In what way can communication improve stakeholder satisfaction within the context of the Fair Business Street project?

Stakeholder satisfaction was assumed to be influenced by communication. The research looked at external, as well as internal communication in the project context and at the level of satisfaction different stakeholders experienced after the execution.

The methods used were desk research and in-depth semi-structured interviews into internal and external communication and stakeholder satisfaction. These interviews were constructed on the basis of the theoretical framework.

From the interviews a number of results emerged. Internal communication between organization and entrepreneurs was judged to be good by most interviewee’s. However, they had different expectations were different from the outcome in a number of fields. These were the level of education of the students and the final outcome of the project. They were shown to be not present in communicative efforts of the organization. Also, the entrepreneurs wished that they would have had more contact with students, to better guide them.

Lastly, the interviews showed a dissatisfaction with the external communication of the project. This has to be improved.

The conclusion therefore was that communication can improve stakeholder satisfaction in this context by: improving information provision and expectations management; improving external communication; providing the possibility for students and entrepreneurs to speak about communication before the project starts.

The advice therefore is: write an external communications plan; include more information in the package entrepreneurs receive and add a concrete document on client-advice agency communication to the students and entrepreneurs.
DISCLAIMER

I do not in any way pretend this to be a sufficient Graduation Assignment. I am handing this in to ensure the possibility of graduating in schoolyear 2012-2013.

Didi
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1. Project context

1.1 Background

The following research proposal focuses on the research undertaken in the context of Fair Business Street project. The research will aim to uncover the needs and wants of the involved stakeholders with regard to the project and how communication can aid in fulfilling these needs and wants in order to manage and maintain good relationships between the stakeholders and the client organization.

The client organization is Anneke Lindeman Educatieve Projecten. Anneke Lindeman is one of the project managers of the Fair Business Street project. Due to the nature of her business: being an entrepreneur, relationships with stakeholders are very important. She is dependent on long lasting relationships to be able to conduct her day-to-day business, as she is a hired hand.

She is the project manager of Fair Business Street. Fair Business Street is an educational project, cooperation between Noorderpoortcollege Groningen (school for hospitality and tourism), the Groningen City Club, the entrepreneurs association Ebbingekwartier and the city council of Groningen (Fairtrade Gemeente), in which students form consultancies and work for entrepreneurs in the Nieuwe Ebbingestraat. Thirteen entrepreneurs whose businesses are located in the Nieuwe Ebbingestraat have given research assignments to the students, asking for advice on how to make their business more sustainable. The idea is that the participating entrepreneurs will incorporate the suggested changed of the advice in their day-to-day business and become more environmentally friendly or more socially responsible.

Communication is an essential part of a project like this because the stakeholders involved are part of the representation and success of the project. They are clients both of the organization, as well as the involved students. The management of the entrepreneurs’ expectations depends largely on communication. These expectations in turn will influence their satisfaction at the end of the project and their satisfaction with the outcomes of the project will reflect on their relationship with the client organization.

Since the research will focus on the different stakeholders, it is important to note who they are. In a figure the stakeholders involved in the project can be depicted as follows:
Figure 1. Internal and external stakeholders of Fair Business Street

One other thing that is important to note about the project, is that it has already been executed. Therefore, the research will be able to map out the past situation and make recommendations on how to improve the situation in the future.

1.2 Problem definition

Above, stakeholder relationships have been argued to be of importance to the client organization. Communication can play an important role in creating and maintaining these relationships. The problem for research therefore is:

The lack of knowledge about the influence of communication on stakeholder satisfaction and its contribution to creating lasting relationships with stakeholders.

The research aims to define the relationship between communications (internal as well as external) and stakeholder satisfaction.
2. Organizational context

The client organisation is Anneke Lindeman Educatieve Projecten, as mentioned above. From the intake interview, it emerged that the most important interest of the client is ‘good relationships with the stakeholders’. In order to comply with this client interest it needs to be defined what a ‘good relationship means: A good relationship is one that is positive and lasting. Good relationships are of utmost importance to the client organization, because the client is an entrepreneur: she depends on assignments from others’ to create her income and cooperation with others to execute her assignments. In this, her reputation is at stake as well, good relationships only exist where the party to be worked with has a good reputation. On top of that, having good stakeholder relationships ensures a network that may yield possible clients in the future. Therefore, the client needs to learn how to communicate more effectively to ensure lasting relationships.

It is assumed that communication can make a contribution to fostering good relationships. Clear communication creates a level of expectations that is realistic and can be met. This in turn ensures stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholder satisfaction leads to a willingness to work together again: a lasting relationship.
3. Theoretical Framework

To enable the researcher to correctly define and focus the research, research areas have to be defined. On the basis of the above defined problem definition, the research will look at different parts of the project, namely:
- stakeholder satisfaction
- external communication
- internal communication

These three research areas are the subject of research, because the research aims to define the relationship between communications (internal as well as external) and stakeholder satisfaction.

Theory suggests that organizational communication constitutes of internal as well as external communication. The stakeholders above defined as external to the project thus have to be looked at from an external communications perspective, hence the research area. The internal stakeholders have to be considered from an internal communications perspective. The third research area, stakeholder satisfaction, is what is at stake in this research: the dependent variable on which communication has an influence. In order to define stakeholder satisfaction the stakeholders have to be identified and researched, hence this research area.

The research incorporates different theoretical fields. The following theoretical framework will outline theories in the theoretical fields relevant to the research at hand: public relations theory, more specifically media relations theory (for the research area: external communication), internal communication theory (for the research area: internal communication) and stakeholder (identification) theory (for the research area: stakeholder satisfaction).

3.1 Stakeholder (identification) theory

In the context of Fair Business Street, many stakeholders are involved. To enable the client organization to manage and exploit the relationship with these stakeholders optimally, their satisfaction with the project has to be analyzed. However, firstly it will be important to look at who these stakeholders exactly are.

Stakeholder identification theory offers a guideline on identifying stakeholders according their societal identity. Freeman (1984, p.64) defines stakeholders as “Any group or individual who can affect or is effected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives”. Another useful definition is written by Susniené and Vanagas (2007, p.3): “Stakeholders can be internal or external and their interests are closely interrelated with organization’s wealth. They share a common risk, a possibility of gaining benefits or experiencing losses or harms, as a result of organization’s operations.” In the case of Fair Business Street a stakeholder will be defined as follows:

> An individual or organization that has an interest in the successful completion of the project Fair Business Street.

Crane and Ruebottom (2011, p.1) assert that “within stakeholder theory as a whole, there are many streams of work that emphasize different elements of stakeholder management, each of which affects the nature of stakeholder identification.”

Identification of stakeholders is a complex field and tends to be done too generically. Crane and
Ruebottom argue that in identification of stakeholders one should not only look at the economic function, but also at the social identity stakeholders assign themselves. “Identifying meaningful stakeholder groups requires us to understand the bases on which groups self-identify, at least in terms of the group’s interactions with the firm” (2012, p.82). This has as a consequence that one, in dealing with stakeholders one has to take into consideration how stakeholders self-identify and what this means for the organizational approach to them.

Another useful way of mapping out stakeholders is by identifying them through their linkages to the situation. This is the linkage model, designed by Grunig and Hunt (1984). They divide stakeholders in four categories: functional linkages, enabling linkages, normative linkages and diffuse linkages. This will now be applied to the FBS context.

Functional linkages are the most natural and traditional. They include an input and output side. Enabling linkages are the links that either enable or restrict the organization in some way. The normative linkages denote stakeholders that may have a similar interest, or are working on a similar topic. Diffused linkages, lastly, are complex relationships which may exert pressure or complicate the environment of an organization.

Since “general experience and research reveal that the importance of different stakeholders varies according to the issues that organization has to deal with” (Susniené & Vanagas, 2007, p.2), we will prioritize the above defined stakeholders on the importance of their stake and consequently determine to what extent their interests will have to be taken into consideration.

In the intake interview taken with the client organization, it became clear what the most important stakeholders in this situation are. The client asserted that the continuation of her relationship with the City Council (one of the research objects) is very important. For the continuation of the project, the school (another research object) is also one of the most important stakeholders, since without students the project cannot continue. The satisfaction of the needs of the internal stakeholders (as research objects) are judged to be more important than the needs of the outside stakeholders,
although in almost all cases with the external stakeholders continuance of the relationship is important to the client organization as well.

From the preliminary interviews different stakes can be deduced, which can give us a first idea on how this prioritization will look. The different stakeholder stakes have been prioritized according the researchers’ best insight into the situation. The different stakes that emerged from the preliminary interviews have been categorized and are depicted in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stake</th>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Entrepreneur 1</th>
<th>Entrepreneur 2</th>
<th>Entrepreneur 3</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Continuous cooperation with the school</td>
<td>More local consumers</td>
<td>People in the street</td>
<td>Getting people into the store</td>
<td>Publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Letting people think about Fair Business</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Preliminary advice</td>
<td>Introducing students to the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Working with students</td>
<td>Working with students</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table above, the stakes categorized as business stakes for the interviewed internal stakeholders are related to publicity and getting more consumers in the street or in the business. These vested interests in the projects can be met through thorough communication of the project to outside stakeholders.

This is supported by theory: Fair Business Street is, as said above, a cooperation between businesses and students, in which students advice businesses in the field of CSR. CSR is short for Corporate Social Responsibility: the way a business handles its place in its environment, and what it does to improve this place. CSR has been shown to have a positive effect on the relationship of a business with their consumers (Kim, 2011). The client organization should therefore take into consideration that the stakeholders may expect the client organization to make the positive changes they are making in their businesses visible to their consumers.

Something else that emerged from the preliminary interviews is that most of the entrepreneurial stakeholders have some idea of limitations. They have experienced more events and actions taken by the street and within the city of Groningen and they have their reservations about the effectiveness of events. This exerts a clear influence on what they dare to ask for or wish from an event or action taken. In the conceptual framework this will be called: perceived limitations.

The above is a preliminary identification of stakeholders, through primary research it should be found out what exactly their wants and needs are, and how satisfaction of these can be aided by communication.

This is because a very important part of stakeholder management is communication: “organizations do not exist as ontologically prior to communication and human interaction, they are communicative structures comprised of multiple interactions, negotiations, agreements, discussions, etc.” (Kochsmann, 2009, p.3).
**3.2 Public relations theory**

Looking at the way the project is formed, there are two stakeholder groups involved: internal and external stakeholders. The external stakeholders are the public and consumers of the different businesses involved, subsidy givers and other outside stakeholders, such as industry experts. The internal stakeholders are all people and organizations that are directly involved in the project, namely the businesses, the client organization, teachers and students of Noorderpoort College and Ellen Reehorst.

If we keep on using our distinction between internal and external stakeholders, those immediately involved in the project and those who are external to the project, two different ways of handling them emerge:

1. Internal stakeholders can best be seen from the perspective of internal communication, however the Public Relations perspective should not be disregarded completely: they may be internal to the project, they remain external to the client organization dealing with them

2. External stakeholders can best be approached with an external communications framework in mind

From the preliminary interviews cited above the importance of external communication for the internal stakeholders emerged, therefore a third stakeholder group is distinguished:

3. The public of the businesses/ the consumer, which can best be approached with an external communications framework in mind.

One of the academic and professional fields that deals with external communication is public relations, which can be defined as:

> “Public relations is about reputation - the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you. Public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics” (CIPR, 2010).

One of the subdisciplines of Public Relations is Media relations. Through media relations public relations agents try to make something known. According to Tench and Yeomans (2009) PR practitioners should have the skills and expertise to reach target audiences with appropriate messages. The channels are endless: television, radio, newspapers, magazines. However, to be published the message send by the PR professional ought to have news value. This is also the difference between Public Relations and Marketing Communication or Advertising. Public relations practitioners seek free positive publicity. This is also why PR is the chosen field in the context of this research, there are funding limitations on other sources of external communication.

In Public relations, stakeholders are defined as part of the audience of an organization. They are the part that influence or are influenced by the organization, or are affected by it (Tench and Yeomans, 2009).
One of the most important scholars in the field of Public relations is Grunig. Grunig has defined four models of PR: the press agentry/publicity model, the public information model, and the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models (Grunig, 1989).

In the context of the project, it is important to note that due to the inadvertently deep mutual reliability created by the nature of the project, there is no option to revert to using Grunig’s models of public relations that imply a one-directional view of Public Relations. Therefore, in this situation two-way symmetrical public relations is the in which to view the relationship between the stakeholders and client organization. Two-way symmetrical public relations is defined as: “benefitting both organization and publics (Grunig, 1989, p.29)”. Two-way symmetrical public relations presupposes an equality in the relationship between the public in the organization: mutually beneficial relationships imply a feeling of listening and being listened to (Grunig, 1989).

### 3.3 internal communication theory

Looking at the internal stakeholders from an internal communications perspective gives us many handles on how to handle them, and on how the relationship between them and the client organization could be formed and maintained.

Internal communications are usually considered to be the communication with and between the employees of a company. For this project, one can regard all internal stakeholders as ‘employees’ in the sense that they are all working together towards the same goal or objective. Therefore the definition of Vos en Schoemaker (2005, p.79) is adopted: “internal communication … [is] communication aimed at the groups of the public in the internal environment of the organization”.

According to Vos en Schoemaker (2005, p.77) “internal communication is vital if an organization is to function properly: cooperation assumes the exchange of information; motivation is an important factor to achieve quality and can be improved by communication; processes of change cannot do without communicative support”.

Internal communication can be regarded in terms of the four models of PR: entertaining employees (press agentry), informing employees (public information), persuasion (two-way asymmetric), and open communication (two-way symmetric) (Theaker, 2001). It has already been argued above that because of the nature of the project, two-way symmetric communication is the only right model to use in this context. This will also be said for internal communication: it has to be open communication, in which communication flows both ways.

For internal communication to be successful, objectives have to be set (Theaker, 2001). These objectives have to guide the information flow within the organization.

The directionality of internal communication is divided into three information flows: vertical, horizontal and diagonal communication. It is also important to distinguish between formal or informal communication: formal communication is the official communication done by members of the organization, if it falters, informal communication can take over and rumors may arise (Vos & Schoemaker, 2005).
There are different information types involved in internal communication: task information and management information: what needs to be done, and how and by whom. Next to that there are policy information and motivational information: information about the direction the organization is taking, and information to keep the internal public motivated.

When assessing internal communication it is important to first find out the current situation of communication. Here, the research can benefit from the fact that it is taking place in a context where the project has already happened: the past situation can be used to learn how to handle communication better in the future executions of the project.

In assessing internal communication, the researcher has to select focal points for the research, which determine what information will be collected (Downs & Adrian, 2004). For this, one needs to look at different characteristics of internal communication: amongst others how work processes relate to communication, what types of information are exchanged and how the communication network is formed in the organization. Having a basic understanding of the current situation helps the researcher define the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and will guide the assessment.

One of the most used assessment techniques in internal communication assessment is the interview (Downs & Adrian, 2004). Interviews provide assessors with in-depth information, and are more personal than questionnaires. They also allow interviewers to probe where necessary. Downs & Adrian propose partial interview guides, which will be used as part of the basis on internal communication assessment in the interviews to be conducted in this research (2004, p. 81-82).

To sum up, the three involved stakeholder groups are: internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and the public of the businesses. Internal stakeholders will be researched and approached from an internal communications perspective, and external stakeholders and the public of the businesses will be regarded as external public, for which a public relations (external communication) perspective will be adopted.

3.4 Conceptual Model

According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010, p.267) “a conceptual model consists of a set of assumed causal relationships between the core concepts of a research project.” The following conceptual model represents the causal relationships present in the research context of the FBS event.

The following conceptual model has been defined on the basis of the above cited theories and the preliminary interviews done with the different stakeholders. Stakeholders needs and wants emerge from stakeholder theory: it is what defines the stake stakeholders have, and in the conceptual framework on the next page make up the expectations of the stakeholders. These expectations are met (or not) by the project outcome and the interaction between these two makes up the level of satisfaction of the stakeholder, which in turn influences the relationship they have with the client organization. Internal communication influences the expectations stakeholders have, and are therefore a moderating factor between stakeholder needs and wants and their expectations. External communication has an influence on the project outcome, because the project outcome is two-sided. There is (1) the outcome of the advice of the students and (2) the outcome in terms of more business for the entrepreneurs.
It is assumed that the needs and wants of stakeholders determine their satisfaction with the offer of the client organization. This satisfaction in turn influences the relationship of the client organization with the stakeholders.

3.5 Operationalization

To be able to identify these stakeholder needs and wants, we need to define the concepts so they are usable for the research. For the purpose of this research a need will be defined as:

*A need is a voiced fear of a lack of something requisite, desirable, or useful.*

Consequently, a want will be defined as:

*A want is a voiced desire for something requisite, desirable or useful.*

The next concept that needs to be defined is: stakeholder satisfaction

*An indication that a need or want has been met by the project execution*

It is assumed that stakeholder satisfaction: that needs and wants of a stakeholder are met ensures a good relationship.
4. Research Design

4.1 Conceptual design

4.1.1 Research objective

According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010) a research objective should be useful, realistic, feasible, clear and informative. The following research objective has been formulated:

The objective of the research is

(A) To write up recommendations on improving the internal and external communication within and of the project Fair Business Street by finding out how communication can aid in producing higher stakeholder satisfaction to ensure good relationships between the stakeholders and the client organization

(B) By analysing and drawing conclusions from data obtained through desk research into internal and external communication theory and in-depth interviews into stakeholder satisfaction and stakeholders’ perceptions of the communication.

This research objective is useful because it is clear from the objective how the research will solve the problem defined in the problem definition stage. It is realistic and feasible within the time schedule and the evaluation of satisfaction with the project will yield results on how communication can contribute to better expectations management. The research objective is also clearly formulated and informative as it lines out the main aspects of the research.

The research at hand will be evaluation-oriented. According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010, p.59) “the stakeholders do have expectations concerning the results. The evaluation researcher can assess whether these expectations have been met and whether or not the cause of the mistakes has been determined. He or she can also suggest how the situation can be improved in the future.” The research is evaluation-oriented because it will look back and test whether an already executed plan was satisfactory to meet stakeholders needs.
4.1.2 Research framework

Figure 4. Research framework

(A) An inventory of the project actions and outcomes (amongst which stakeholder satisfaction), based on consultation of theoretical literature in the areas of external communication theory and internal communication theory and in depth interviews, yields information on the influence of communication on stakeholder satisfaction

(B) by means of which stakeholder satisfaction can be analyzed

(C) A comparative evaluation of the results of these analyses concludes in a

(D) strategic advice on the contribution internal and external communication can make to fostering more lasting and positive relationships.

Research objects are the phenomena under study about which statements will be made based on research (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 2010). The research objects in this research will be the stakeholders involved: Anneke Lindeman Educatieve Projecten, Ellen Reehorst onderwijs & zo, Fairtrade Gemeente Groningen, Noorderpoortcollege Euroborg, Groningen City Club, Ondernemersvereniging Ebbingekwartier and the 13 entrepreneurs. Their wants and needs concerning the project Fair Business Street will be researched; this will lead to recommendations on how to employ communication to better satisfy these wants and needs.
4.1.3 Research Questions

This research will aim to answer the following central research question:

*In what way can communication improve stakeholder satisfaction within the context of the Fair Business Street project?*

There are three main questions that make up this central research question: one analytical, one empirical and one theoretical. These questions have been derived on the basis of the Research Framework in chapter 5, as suggested by Verschuren and Doorewaard (2011).

Theoretical Research Question:

*What is known from internal communication theory, media relations theory and stakeholder (identification) theory about the influence of communication on stakeholder satisfaction?*

Empirical Research Question:

*In how far are stakeholders satisfied with the outcome of and communication within the Fair Business Street project?*

Analytical Research Question:

*What do we learn when we compare the analysis of communication efforts within the project Fair Business Street with the level of stakeholder satisfaction in order to give strategic advice on the contribution of internal and external communication to ensuring good relationships?*

For subsidiary questions, see appendix 3.
4.2 Technical design

4.2.1 Research strategy and methodology

The research at hand will be evaluation-oriented, as stipulated above. According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010, p.59) “the stakeholders do have expectations concerning the results. The evaluation researcher can assess whether these expectations have been met and whether or not the cause of the mistakes has been determined. He or she can also suggest how the situation can be improved in the future.” The research is evaluation-oriented because it will look back and test whether an already executed plan was satisfactory to meet stakeholders’ needs.

In this research the applied research philosophy will be pragmatism, because the researcher is external to the researched situation. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The researcher is independent, but will be guided by values when interpreting results. This research project is a single case study since this is defined as “a research strategy in which the researcher tries to gain a profound and full insight into one or several objects ... that are confined in time and space” (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 2010, p.178). The objects this research focuses on are the direct stakeholders of the FBS project, and solely in their relation to this one time occurrence of this project.

Within this overall case study approach different research methods will be used. Desk research, in the form of a literature survey, will be the start up to gain a better understanding of the different interests, needs, wants and communication preferences the stakeholders may have, and give the researcher a meaningful background to do interviews with the different stakeholders.

The research will be qualitative in nature, since wants, needs and interests cannot be quantified and there is no necessity to do so. The main research method will be semi-structured interviews, gathering qualitative data about needs, wants, interests and opinions. The semi-structured interviews will serve to get an in-depth insight into the stakeholders’ interests. All above defined stakeholders will be interviewed this way, to ensure that the total of interests in this situation is covered by the research. Desk research will provide the background on which, together with the preliminary interviews, the interview guide will be designed.

On the basis of the theory research an interview guide for in-depth semi-structured interviews will be designed and these interviews will be conducted on the above defined stakeholders. These interview guides will be in-depth and semi-structured, to ensure the possibility maximum respondent freedom. The questions will be open, although the probing might be more closed. The interview guides will ensure validity when it comes to probing for wants and needs. As presented above, in operationalization, needs and wants are viewed in terms of ‘a lack of’. Only the utterances of respondents voicing ‘a lack of’ something will be qualified as needs or wants and make up stakeholder (dis)satisfaction.

The interview guides, created on the basis of the theoretical framework can be found in appendix 4.
4.2.2 Research planning and feasibility

It is presumed that the above planned research is feasible within the left time period of 10 weeks. The main limitation is time, as the event will be executed before the research is finished. This means that data collection has to be done before the event, and report writing and analysis will come after. It may also mean that the recommendation will differ from the actual executed event, since it could be found out that another course of action would have been better. The full research time planning can be found in Appendix 5.
5. Research results

5.1 Answer to theoretical research question

What is known from internal communication theory, media relations theory and stakeholder (identification) theory about the influence of communication on stakeholder satisfaction?

As argued before, stakeholder satisfaction can be supported by communication, because communication helps us manage expectations. The information we get and process helps us form our expectations.

Fair Business Street can be regarded as encompassing a process of change: the entrepreneurs are going from a business that does not think about CSR, to one that does. When we look at stakeholder satisfaction from an internal communications perspective, a theory comes to mind that describes the communications needed in processes of change: Quirke’s communication escalator.

The Communications Escalator

![Communications Escalator Diagram]

In this case, it is not from the top management to the employees this change has to be supported, but from the organization of the project to the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs need to be guided from the awareness stage to the commitment stage to fulfill the most important objective of the project: to make people aware of the possibilities of CSR and carry it out. If not guided through the change process adequately, feelings of desperation and deprevation. Also, the change curve can aid in finding the right ways to communicate with the entrepreneurs in this time of need.

At the same time, internal communications are important when looking at external communication; the people that are communicating need to be communicating the same thing. This ensures a good image. Therefore integrated communications are of utmost importance in the project to ensure another one of the objectives: outside visibility. CSR practices have shown to be important for businesses, in the sense that it can get them more consumers and have consumers look favorably on the businesses: therefore, a need for outside communication can be identified by the very nature of the project. The businesses are investing in CSR, which can give them a competitive advantage. This, however, needs to be communicated, otherwise the consumer won’t know.
5.2 Answer to empirical research question

- Interviews focused on past communication behavior of organization and students
- Internal, external and satisfaction with those two
- Internal communication from organization to entrepreneurs
  - Good
  - No information on level and study programme of students
- Internal communication from students to entrepreneurs
  - More communication wanted
  - Different means of communication to get into students' worlds
- Satisfaction with the project outcome
  - No, higher expectations than outcome
  - Expectations high because of
    - Expertise of organization
    - No information on students’ level

- Interview with city council
  - Good relationship is fostered through reliability
  - Reports in between
  - Expectations met: match with own stake in project

5.3 Answer to analytical research question

- Expectations can be better managed through communication
  - Supported by theory
  - Need for more information at the start
- Status reports have a positive influence on relationships
- Expectations are met when own interest is fulfilled
- There are gaps in communication
  - Students vs entrepreneurs
  - Information from organization
- Leads to lack of information about actual outcome (on beforehand)
6. Conclusions

- Some parts of internal communication need to be improved:
  - Information on goal of the project
  - Information on level of the students and their study programme
  - Information on end-result for the entrepreneurs

- External communication needs to be improved
  - Press needs to be involved
  - The event needs less attention, and less money, but should still take place
7. Advice

- Communication between students and entrepreneurs needs to be improved. This can be done by giving them the opportunity to define and develop their own way of communication. Due to the level of the students, this needs to be very explicit. Thus, at the signing of the contract there needs to be a form which aids the entrepreneur and the student to form agreements on communication.

- The entrepreneurs have to be better informed of the level of the students and what exactly they can get out of the project. This needs to be made more explicit in the information given to them on beforehand.

- The entrepreneurs need to know more about the actual goal of the project: this needs to be made more explicit in all communication.

- External communication needs to be improved. This can be done by
  - Involving the entrepreneurs in external communication
  - Providing them with materials to put on their website and in their stores
  - An external communications plan, including press releases and a planning
  - A smaller, but more effective event on the day of the advices
8. References


