



# Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing

## Seeing through the fog

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**Abstract** *Outlines 15 explanations for the fog which has enveloped the nascent domains of corporate identity and corporate marketing. However, the fog surrounding the area has a silver lining. This is because the fog has, unwittingly, led to the emergence of rich disciplinary, philosophical as well as “national”, schools of thought. In their composite, these approaches have the potential to form the foundations of a new approach to management which might be termed “corporate marketing”. In addition to articulating the author’s understanding of the attributes regarding a business identity (the umbrella label used to cover corporate identity, organisational identification and visual identity) the author outlines the characteristics of corporate marketing and introduces a new corporate marketing mix based on the mnemonic “HEADS”[2]. This relates to what an organisation has, expresses, the affinities of its employees, as well as what the organisation does and how it is seen by stakeholder groups and networks. In addition, the author describes the relationship between the corporate identity and corporate brand and notes the differences between product brands and corporate brands. Finally, the author argues that scholars need to be sensitive to the factors that are contributing to the fog surrounding corporate identity. Only then will business identity/corporate marketing studies grow in maturity.*

### Introduction

“FOG IN CHANNEL – EUROPE ISOLATED”. So ran a famous headline appearing on the front page of *The Thunderer*[1] in the early 1900s. This headline has achieved some notoriety and is sometimes used as a metaphor for English insularity and isolationism. Using fog as a metaphor is apposite for “business identity studies”. The area may be broken down into three main strands – corporate identity, organisational identity and visual identity. As this article will reveal, there are numerous factors which have contributed to the fog that is enveloping business identity studies. In the author’s opinion, the “fog” has stunted the recognition of the strategic importance, as well as the multidisciplinary nature, of business identity. However, isolationism has a silver lining, in that it can result in scholars and practitioners achieving a high degree of creativity and innovation. This appears to have occurred in the broad area of business identity studies, where distinct schools of thought have emerged from national, and disciplinary, roots. However, what is becoming increasingly apparent is that the provenance to guide identity studies is not

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solely limited to marketing scholars. The current cross-fertilisation taking place among the various literatures on the broad area of identity studies has led the author to the conclusion that, in time, these distinct strands are likely to coalesce and give rise to a new cognitive area of management called corporate marketing.

A growing number of scholars are beginning to appreciate the multidisciplinary foundations of business identity. In the above context the various disciplinary, national and cultural approaches, when reviewed in isolation, may appear to be little more than a modest *tour d'horizon*. In their composite they represent a veritable firmament with the potential to form the key building blocks of a new area of management. However, while the area is likely to be enthusiastically embraced by marketing scholars since it supports a number of concepts that have a long lineage in the marketing discipline – branding, communications, image, reputation, and identity – these concepts, when applied to the corporate level, are invariably more complicated than when simply applied to products. Furthermore, such corporate concerns are inextricably linked to questions pertaining to corporate strategy and to organisational behaviour and human resources. As such, marketing at the corporate level requires a radical reappraisal in terms of its philosophy, content, management and process.

The article opens with a brief overview of the growing *consensus gentium* among many management/scholars with regard to the importance of the identity concept. This is followed by an examination of the 15 reasons for the cause of the fog. In focusing on these reasons it is hoped that marketing and management scholars will concentrate on the opportunities, rather than the difficulties, associated with the identity concept. What is clear is that the identity concept is particularly salient for a host of management disciplines and provides a new, supplemental lens by which an organisation's quintessential attributes may be revealed, nurtured, managed, influenced and altered.

### **The growing importance of business identity studies**

The last decade has seen a burgeoning interest among the business and academic communities in what the author calls, for the sake of expediency, "business identity". Business identity encompasses a triumvirate of related concepts and literature which are:

- (1) corporate identity;
- (2) organisational identity; and
- (3) visual identity.

It should be noted that business identity is viewed as encompassing institutions in the public, not-for-profit and private sectors as well as supra and sub-organisational identities such as industries, alliances, trade associations, business units and subsidiaries. A sign of the heightened importance attached to business identity can be seen in the number of management conferences and

articles devoted to the area. Of additional note are the special editions of journals devoted to the area including the *European Journal of Marketing* (1997), *International Journal of Bank Marketing* (1997), *Corporate Communications* (1999) and *The Academy of Management Review* (2000).

The saliency of the identity concept to contemporary organisations, and to management academics from various disciplinary backgrounds, has been articulated by Cheney and Christensen (1999). They observed that identity was a pressing issue for many institutions and that the question of identity, or of what the organisation is or stands for, cuts across and unifies many different organisational goals and concerns.

This interest in identity has led to the emergence of courses on the area. Courses in strategic business identity management have been offered at Strathclyde Business School since 1991 where an International Centre for Corporate Identity Studies was also established. A number of other leading business schools have also begun or are about to offer business identity studies as part of their degree courses, including Bradford, School of Management (UK), Cranfield University (UK), Erasmus Graduate Business School (The Netherlands), Harvard Business School (USA), HEC Paris (France), Queensland University of Technology (Australia), Loyola University, Los Angeles (USA), and Waikato University (New Zealand). Not surprisingly, the realisation of the saliency of business identity is reflected in texts by academics who, to varying degrees, focus on business identity (Bromley, 1993; Dowling, 1993; Fombrun, 1996; Van Riel, 1995). Articles are also to be found on the area in many business and academic journals and in a growing number of business and marketing handbooks and encyclopaedias (Balmer, 1999a; Cheney and Christensen, 1999; Tyrell, 1995). Recently, Whetten and Godfrey (1998) have edited a book which draws on several different academic traditions regarding identity. However, it adopts an overtly North American and behavioural stance on the area and marshalls little of the marketing literature that has been extant since the 1950s.

However, the rapid ascendancy of business identity has had the rather unfortunate effect of producing what the Scottish call a haar – a thick, sea fog. An examination of the literature on corporate identity and related areas has led the author to identify 15 contributory reasons for the fog. This article seeks, first, to explain the factors causing the fog, and second, to begin the task of revealing the horizon of business identity studies which has, thus far, been disguised.

### **Business identity: why the fog?**

While this article will largely focus on the business identity concept, it will also make reference to other related areas, namely corporate reputation, total corporate communications and corporate branding.

The 15 contributory factors which have created fog *vis-à-vis* business identity are illustrated in Table I.

1. The terminology
2. The existence of different paradigmatic views *vis-à-vis* business identity's *raison d'être*
3. Multifarious disciplinary perspectives re business identity
4. A failure to make a distinction between the elements comprising a business identity and the elements to be considered in managing a business identity
5. Disagreement with regard to the objectives of business identity management
6. A traditional lack of dialogue between Anglophone and Non-Anglophone scholars and writers
7. The traditional lack of dialogue between researchers from different disciplines
8. The association with graphic design
9. The effect of fashion
10. The inappropriateness of the positivistic research paradigm in the initial stages of theory generation *vis-à-vis* business identity
11. The paucity of empirical academic research
12. Undue focus being accorded to the business identities of holding companies/parent organisation
13. The emphasis assigned to Anglo-Saxon forms of business structures
14. Weaknesses in traditional marketing models of corporate identity/corporate image management and formation
15. A failure to make a distinction between the actual, communicated, conceived, ideal and desired identities

**Table I.**  
The 15 contributory  
factors for the fog  
*vis-à-vis* business  
identity

*First explanation for the fog: the terminology*

Providing an exegesis of the literature surrounding the family of concepts related to business identity is a difficult task. Existing literature reviews go some way in giving clarity in this regard (Abratt, 1989; Balmer, 1998; Fombrun and van Riel, 1997; Grunig, 1993; Kennedy, 1977).

What is clear is that the identity concept, in its various facets, is ubiquitous, but it can be used with reckless permissiveness among practitioner circles and, to a lesser degree, among scholars. The practitioner literature is replete with examples of where identity is initially defined in terms of the fundamental attributes of an organisation but often undergoes a dramatic *volte-face* with identity solutions being explained only in graphic-design terms. The existence of a trio of identity concepts is indicative of the perspicacity which needs to be accorded by identity scholars. The literature pertaining to the three identity concepts is still evolving as is the relationship between the concepts. A degree of symbiosis is occurring and the author shares Whetten and Godfrey's (1998) view of the efficacy of greater dialogue between management scholars from different disciplinary perspectives.

The literature covering the business identity domain not only makes reference to the triumvirate of concepts underpinning business identity (corporate identity, organisational identity and visual identity), but also embraces a wealth of other concepts comprising the corporate brand, corporate communication/total corporate communications, corporate image, corporate personality and corporate reputation. However, as several writers have remarked, there is a lack of consensus as to the precise meaning of many of the

concepts articulated above, and the relationships between them. Abratt's (1989, p. 66) insightful comment articulated below reflects the views of many scholars, including Balmer and Wilkinson (1991), Ind (1992), Olins (1978) and Van Riel and Balmer (1997):

Despite the voluminous literature the concepts remain unclear and ambiguous as no universally accepted definitions have emerged (Abratt, 1989).

The following authors provide an overview of the following concepts: corporate identity (Balmer, 1998); organisational identity (Whetten and Godfrey, 1998); visual identity (Chajet and Schachtman, 1998); corporate image (Grunig, 1993); corporate personality (Olins, 1978); corporate reputation (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997); corporate communications (Van Riel, 1995); total corporate communications (Balmer and Gray, 1999); and the corporate brand (Macra, 1999). The muddled use of the terminology has, perhaps, contributed more to the fog surrounding the business identity domain than any other factor. For the would-be novice of business identity studies, or indeed of corporate marketing, the concepts may, at first sight, appear to be impenetrable and their relationships Byzantine in complexity. The author, while recognising the above difficulties, is of the view that the emergence of a family of related concepts is indicative of business identity/corporate marketing's growing maturity. According to Watershoot (1995, p. 438), the making of listings and taxonomies is one of the primary tasks in the development of a new body of thought. Table II articulates the author's understanding of the principal concepts, the relationships between them and their place in the current understanding of business identity, including its nature, management, objectives and outcomes. Building upon Table II, Table III attempts to show the saliency of the identity and related concepts in addressing key organisational issues and questions.

One problem associated with some of the concepts is the analogy that is sometimes made between the human identity and personality and the corporate identity and personality. There are clear benefits, but also dangers, in assuming that corporate entities can be understood, explained and altered by applying the principles of social psychology (cf. Bromley, 1993). A couple of observations need to be made here. First, the use of metaphors pertaining to the human identity has been used by leading identity scholars, such as Albert and Whetten (1985), and is particularly prevalent in their text *Identity in Organisations* (Whetten and Godfrey, 1998). Many of these anthropological metaphors were introduced by practitioners for practical reasons. Alan Siegal's use of the "voice" (corporate communication) metaphor and Olins's use of the personality metaphor are perhaps the most obvious examples. For example, in Olins's text (1978) the corporate personality and its link with the human personality is more apparent than might be deduced from a reading of the recent literature. Olins hypothesised that organisations in their formative years often mirror the personality of the organisation's founder; and it is the organisation's founder or founders who, Olins argues, imbue the organisation with its distinctiveness. Once the founder has left there is a void (what the

Concept	Key sources	(a) Relationship to business identity (b) Summary of characteristics
Corporate brand	Aaker (1996), Balmer (1995, 1999), Ind (1996), De Chernatony (1999), Gregory (1997), Kapferer (1992), King (1991), Macrae (1999), Maathius (1999), ICI/IG Statement (See Appendix 1)	<p>(a) The acquisition of a favourable corporate brand is an espoused objective of business identity management. A corporate brand proposition should be derived from the organisation's identity.</p> <p>(b) The corporate brand mix consists of cultural, intricate, tangible and ethereal elements "C<sup>2</sup>.I.T.E." (Balmer, 2000). In this article, commitment has been added as a fifth element. This is because a corporate brand requires commitment from all staff, as well as commitment from senior management and in financial support. The corporate brand concept is related to the concepts of corporate reputation and corporate image which are also to some degree concerned with perception. <i>Vide infra</i>. Unlike product brands the focus of corporate brands is on (i) all internal and external stakeholders, and networks (ii) based on a broader mix than the traditional marketing mix and (iii) is experienced and communicated through total corporate communication rather than simply via the marketing communications mix. <i>Vide infra</i></p>
Corporate communication and total corporate communications	Aberg (1990), Balmer and Gray (1999), Bernstein (1984), Ind (1996), ICI/IG Statement (see Appendix 1)	<p>(a) The channels by which a business identity is made known to internal and external stakeholders and networks and which translates over time into the acquisition of a corporate reputation/corporate brand reputation.</p> <p>(b) Van Riel's influential corporate communication mix encompasses (i) management, (ii) organisational and (iii) marketing communications. Aberg and Bernstein broadened the "corporate communications mix" and included elements such as company products and behaviour. Balmer expanded Van Riel's concept to encompass those communication elements which cannot be controlled, entitling this "total corporate communications". Balmer and Gray concluded that total corporate communications consisted of three elements (i) primary communication (the communication effects of products and of corporate behaviour), (ii) secondary communication (in essence Van Riel's mix), (iii) tertiary communication (word-of-mouth and messages imparted about the organisation from third parties)</p>

(continued)

Table II. Overview of the main concepts

Table II.

Concept	Key sources	(a) Relationship to business identity (b) Summary of characteristics
Corporate identity	Abratt (1989), Balmer (1998), Balmer and Wilson (1998), Birkigt and Stadler (1986), Olins (1995), Schmidt (1995), Steidl and Emory (1997), Stuart (1998a, 1998b, 1999a) Tagiuri (1982), Tyrell (1995), Van Rekom (1997), Van Riel (1995), Van Riel and Balmer (1997), Wiedmann (1988), ICG Statement (See Appendix 1)	(a) The mix of elements which gives organisations their distinctiveness: the foundation of business identities. (b) Although there is still a lack of consensus as to the characteristics of a corporate identity, authors do, for the main, emphasise the importance of several elements including culture (with staff seen to have an affinity to multiple forms of identity), strategy, structure, history, business activities and market scope. The above perspective of the corporate identity concept is becoming more common within mainland Europe, the UK and the British Commonwealth, especially those from a marketing/communications background. (Often, corporate identity is erroneously used when referring to visual identity. <i>Vide Infra</i> ).
Organisational identity	Albert and Whetten (1985), Ashforth and Mael (1989), Dutton <i>et al.</i> (1994), Hatch and Schultz (1997), Whetten and Godfrey (1998)	(a) A key element giving business identity its distinctiveness ( <i>vide supra</i> – corporate identity and <i>vide infra</i> – corporate personality). (b) Refers to what employees feel and think about their organisation. Focuses on questions relating to organisational culture. Albert and Whetten's influential definition of organisational identity refers to those characteristics of an organisation which are central, enduring and distinctive. However, there is heated debate amongst organisational behaviourists regarding Albert and Whetten's categorisation of organisational identity. Relationship with corporate identity is beginning to be explored but the marketing perspective, especially from the Commonwealth and Europe, has made little in the way of inroads with Northern American scholars. Appears to have many similar characteristics with the concept of corporate personality and with corporate culture (cf. Fiol <i>et al.</i> (1999), <i>vide infra</i> ). It should be borne in mind that culture is sometimes viewed as a variable in corporate identity formation.

(continued)

Concept	Key sources	(a) Relationship to business identity (b) Summary of characteristics
Visual identity	Balmer (1995), Baker and Balmer (1997), Chajet <i>et al.</i> (1993), Dowling (1994), Henrion and Parkin (1967), Melewar and Saunders (1998, 1999), Napoles (1988), Olins (1978/1979), Pilditch (1971), Jenkins (1991), Selame and Selame (1975), Simpson (1979), Stewart (1991)	<p>(a) One means by which a business identity may be known or, indeed, disguised. An audit of an organisation's symbolism can also help in giving insights into an organisation's corporate identity/organisational identity. The most prominent aspect of a business identity change programme. The only part of a business identity which can be effectively controlled by senior management.</p> <p>(b) Balmer's analysis of the literature revealed that authors ascribe four functions to visual identity in that it is (i) used to signal change in corporate strategy, (ii) culture, and (iii) communication. Sometimes changes are undertaken in order to accommodate (iv) changes in fashion with regard to graphic design. Olins' useful categorisation of visual identity into monolithic, endorsed and branded categories has been widely adopted in the literature even though, as Olins admits, it rarely reflects organisational reality</p>
Corporate image	Abratt (1989), Bernstein (1984), Brown (1998), Bristol (1960), Boorsein (1961), Boulding (1956), Budd (1969), Craven (1986), Dowling (1986), Gray (1986), Gray and Smelzer (1985), Gray and Balmer (1998), Grunig (1993), Kennedy (1997), Lindquist (1974), Martineau, (1958), Spector (1961), Van Heerden and Puth (1995), Van Riel (1995), Worcester (1986/1997)	<p>(a) One of the espoused objectives of effectively (or non-effectively) managing a business identity, i.e. the creation of a positive (or negative) image.</p> <p>(b) There are three, broad, disciplinary approaches to corporate image drawn from psychology, graphic design and from public relations, see Brown (1998) and Balmer (1998). The concept is important but is problematic due to the multiplicity of interpretations and negative associations. Questions relating to its "management" are inherently problematic. Concept has largely been eclipsed by that of the corporate reputation both in the literature and in management parlance. <i>Vide infra</i>.</p>

(continued)

Table II.

Concept	Key sources	(a) Relationship to business identity (b) Summary of characteristics
Corporate personality	Abratt (1989), Balmer and Wilson (1998), Birkigt and Stadler (1986), Lux (1986), Olins (1978), Van Riel and Balmer (1997)	<p>(a) A key element which gives a business identity its distinctiveness and relates to the attitudes and beliefs of those within the organisation. Therefore, there appears to be a prime facie case for linking the concept to organisational identity and to the concept of corporate culture. <i>Vide supra</i>.</p> <p>(b) Olins postulated that an organisation's culture invariably develops around the organisation's founder and after the founder's departure requires management attention in order to fill what the author calls "the personality deficit". Authors who refer to the concept in their writing or models place the concept personality at the centre of business identity. The BBC study undertaken by Balmer leads to the conclusion that the corporate personality refers to the mix of corporate, professional, regional and other sub-cultures in organisations and that this "cultural mix" is a key element in giving distinctiveness to business identities. Clear links with the "differentiation paradigm of cultural studies". Organisational identification is, perhaps, a preferable concept in light of the difficulties associated with the notion that organisations have a personality in the same way that humans do. This concept has also suffered as a consequence of the vagaries of fashion.</p>
Corporate reputation	Bromley (1993), Caruana and Chircop (2000), Fombrun (1996), Fombrun and Van Riel (1997), Gray and Balmer (1998), Greyser (1999), Sobol and Farrell (1988), Weigelt and Camerer (1988)	<p>(a) One objective of effective business identity management is the acquisition of a favourable reputation among key stakeholder groups. This is believed to give the organisation a competitive advantage.</p> <p>(b) Fombrun and Van Riel provide six categorisations of corporate reputations reflecting the six distinct literatures on the area which variously focus on its financial worth, its traits and/or signals, its formation, reputational expectations and norms and on reputational assets and mobility barriers.</p>

Concept	Addresses key question	Comments/explanations
Corporate identity	What are we?	Also involves addressing a series of questions including: What is our business/structure/strategy/ethos/market/performance/history and reputation/relationships to other identities?
Organisational identity (corporate personality) <sup>a</sup>	Who are we?	The mix of dominant/ascendant subcultures within/transcending the organisation. Employees' relationships with myriad organisational identities (holding company, subsidiary/ies, departments, original, current and emergent identities). Professional, cultural, industrial, sexual identities, etc.
Visual identity (visual identification system)	What are the organization's symbols and system of identification?	Do the organisation's visual (and verbal) cues communicate what/who we are? What/who we were? What/who we wish to be? A mix of the above? Is there clarity or confusion? Does it reflect or possibly inform current strategy?
Corporate communication	Is there integrated communication?	In relation to management, organisational and marketing communications. Are they integrated in terms of management, philosophy and process?
Total corporate communications	Is there congruency re vertical and horizontal communication?	Vertical: between corporate communication, corporate actions, performance and behaviours and between third parties. Horizontal: as above but also congruency over time
Corporate image	What is the current perception and/or profile?	In relation to the immediate mental perception of the organisation held by an individual, group or network
Corporate reputation	What distinctive attributes (if any) are assigned to the organisation?	The enduring perception held of an organisation by an individual, group or network
Corporate brand	What is the promise inferred from/communicated by the brand?	Are these inferences accurate, reflected in reality (the promise/performance gap), shown in management commitment and underpinned/made explicit by effective communications? <i>Vida supra</i>

**Table III.**  
The saliency of  
identity and related  
concepts in addressing  
major organisational  
concerns

**Note:** <sup>a</sup>The traditional and/or preferred marketing description

author of this article calls “the personality deficit”). Over time it is the mix of subcultures (corporate, professional, national etc.) present within the organisation that fills this void and gives it a collective personality, albeit a personality of many different elements (cf. Balmer and Wilson, 1998).

As Gioia (1998) noted:

Like individuals, organisations can be viewed as subsuming a multiplicity of identities, each of which is appropriate for a given context or audience. Actually, at the organisation level, the notion of the multiple identities is perhaps the key (if subtle) point of difference between individuals and organisations.

He continued:

Thus, organisations can plausibly present a complicated multifaceted identity, each component of which is relevant to specific domains or constituents without appearing hopelessly fragmented or ludicrously schizophrenic as an individual might.

The notion of multiple identities will be further explored in the 15th reason for the fog.

*Second reason for the fog: the existence of different paradigmatic views vis-à-vis business identity's raison d'être*

There are three distinct perspectives on how the business identity concept should be defined and explored. The three perspectives are: functionalist, interpretative and post-modern. Gioia (1998) expounded the nature of the debate taking place in each of these philosophical schools with regard to organisational identity. Here the *modus vivendi* is to uncover why and how employees think and act in relation to their employer/organisation. These paradigms also inform thought within other fields of business identity and, of course, management studies generally.

The functionalist lens regards business identity as a social fact. Consequently, a business identity can be observed, moulded and managed. The key research issues centre on uncovering, describing and measuring a business identity. Observation and psychometric instruments are the preferred research tools.

The second paradigm, embracing the interpretative perspective, has, as its main focus, the understanding of how employees construct meanings regarding who they are within an organisational environment. Business identity is viewed as a socially constructed phenomenon with employees seeking to give some level of meaning to their work existence. The research focus is to uncover the meanings employees attach to their organisation. The study of organisational symbols underlines the methodical approach of this paradigm.

The final component of the troika of perspectives, the post-modern paradigm, seeks to disclose power-relationships regarding business identity. The emphasis focuses on complexity rather than on simplicity. Business identity is regarded as a collection of transcendatory perspectives about how organisational members view themselves. Provocation and reflexivity

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characterise the research process. The main research tools are language and discourse. While such schools may appear to be irreconcilable, as Gioia (1998) observes, they do give richness to the general understanding of the business identity concept as do other perspectives in this nascent area. This is a key leitmotif of this article and, the author argues, should characterise emerging *œuvre* pertaining to business identity studies.

*Third reason for the fog: multifarious disciplinary perspectives re business identity*

The literatures pertaining to business identity and particularly to corporate identity, organisational identity and visual identification, reveal a plethora of perspectives with regard to first, the scope of the various identity concepts regarding various management disciplines, and second, the shifting perspectives relating to the relationships between the three identity concepts. Figure 1 shows the various relationships that have been postulated in the literature. This illustrates the huge disparity between the nature and rôle of identity studies. On closer examination it becomes apparent that some of the narrower perspectives relate to what is more appropriately called visual identity. The final interdisciplinary approach represents the author's view that business identity studies will form the keystone of corporate marketing. Taking up the metaphor of the silver lining outlined in the opening paragraph of this article, it becomes apparent that, while there has been a traditional lack of agreement on the nature and rôles of identity, Figure 1 does show that the (business) identity is an omnipresent concept across a whole spectrum of management and marketing areas.

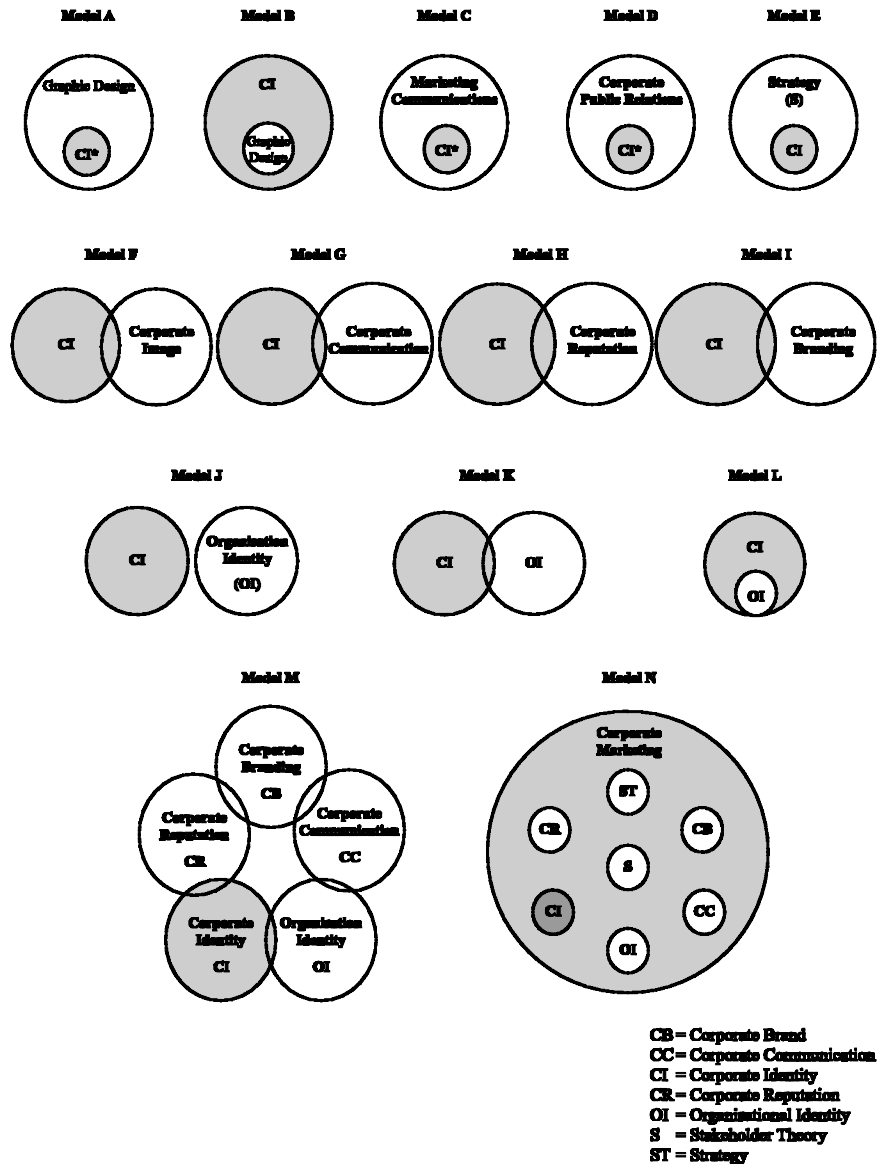
*Fourth explanation for the fog: a failure to make a distinction between the elements comprising a business identity and the elements to be considered in managing a business identity*

It should be borne in mind that business identity, in its various facets, may be seen as concept, philosophy and as a process. Concept and philosophy will be discussed in this section and the process will be examined under the fifth explanation.

The literature reveals a lack of consensus as to the elements which constitute a business identity (the business identity mix) as well as a failure to distinguish between the elements of the corporate identity management mix.

The approach taken by Balmer and Soenen (1999) appears to be the first to make a clear distinction between first, the elements comprising a business identity, and second, the elements required of its management. This business identity mix embraces a triumvirate of elements termed:

- (1) *the soul* (the subjective elements of business identity, including the values held by personnel, which find expression in the plethora of sub-cultures and the mix of identity types present within organisations);
- (2) *the mind* (the conscious decisions made by the organisation *vis-à-vis* the espoused organisational ethos, vision, strategy and product performance); and



**Figure 1.**  
The evolving  
relationships between  
corporate identity and  
other concepts/  
disciplines

\* = Largely concerned with visual identification systems and nomenclature. Otherwise concerned with the distinct attributes of the organisation.

- (3) *the voice* (this encompasses the multi-faceted way in which organisations communicate internally and externally to stakeholder groups and networks and which is normally called “total corporate communications”, viz. Balmer and Gray (1999)).

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An additional trio of elements melding with the above form what Balmer and Soenen call the business identity management mix.

The additional elements of Balmer and Soenen's identity management mix are environmental forces (the need to take cognisance of this), stakeholders (the need to be aware of stakeholders), and reputations (encompassing the reputation of the holding company, its subsidiaries and business units, the country-of-origin, and the organisation's partners, such as alliance partners).

Mention may be made of those other authors who have attempted to articulate the elements of a business identity. These include Birkigt and Stadler (1986), the Mitsubishi Model of Japan (n/d) and those by Schmidt (1995) and Steidl and Emory (1997).

Birkigt and Stadler's (1986) identity mix, which is assigned a good deal of importance in Van Riel's text (1995) and in a good deal of the subsequent literature, consists of a quartet of elements:

- (1) personality;
- (2) behaviour;
- (3) communication; and
- (4) symbolism.

It would appear that this mix articulates the elements by which a business identity is known. The mix emphasises the communications effect(s) of an organisation's behaviour, communication policies and visual symbolism. The mix is useful in revealing some of the major channels by which a business identity may be known and represents a distinct shift away from a categorisation of corporate identity in purely visual terms. However, in comparison to other, more recent, approaches, it is somewhat narrow in scope.

The primary objective of the Mitsubishi mix (n/d) is to reveal those elements that constitute a business identity. As with Balmer and Soenen's (1999) mix, this approach draws on a trio of elements. It is clear that a certain lineage may be inferred between the English and Japanese approaches. The Mitsubishi mix is segmented into what is called the mind identity (what the organisation is striving to achieve), the strategic identity (the type of strategy which will cause the mind identity to become a reality) and the behaviour identity (the range and types of behaviour undertaken by the organisation).

Schmidt's (1995) mix, originating from the London-based Anglo-German consultancy, Henrion, Ludlow and Schmidt, comprises a quintet of elements:

- (1) corporate culture;
- (2) corporate behaviour;
- (3) market condition and strategies;
- (4) product and services; and
- (5) communication and design

this clearly suggests it is a mix focusing on the management of business identity. As such, the mix takes cognisance of how an identity is revealed (through communications and design) but also assigns importance to market conditions.

Steidl and Emory (1997) have produced what is clearly a business identity rather than a business identity management mix. As with Balmer and Soenen it would appear that these two writers have been, in part, influenced by Sino/Nippon approaches to business identity and this is reflected in their choice of terminology. This Australian model is built around another trio of elements: the mind (the philosophy and strategy through which the organisation secures the support of customers); the spirit (the values of the organisation and the response this evokes amongst key stakeholder groups); and the body (the total physical infrastructure which is required to operate the business). Of note here is the emphasis accorded to “the body”, which is not encompassed by the other models. Rather surprisingly, “the body” does not encompass organisational structure. Thus, the author is of the view that a broader interpretation encompassing company structure would appear to be appropriate. The importance of structure is similarly noted by Balmer and Gray (1999), Ind (1996), Morison (1997) and Stuart (1998a, 1999b). The author’s new identity mixes, taking cognisance of the above, comprises four elements, and this is illustrated in Figure 2.

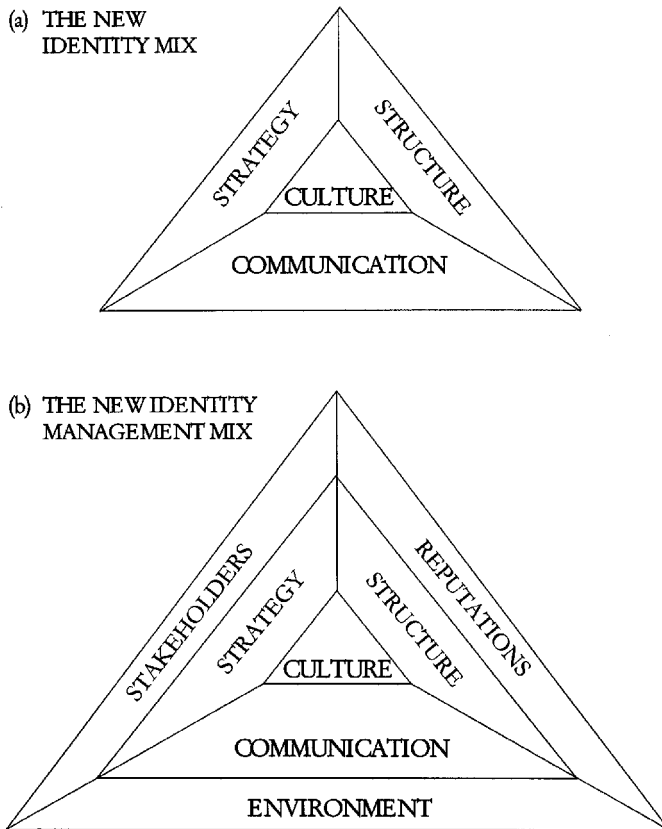
Unlike the approaches used by Balmer and Soenen, Schmidt, and Steidl and Emory, it has been decided to break with (at least from a British, North American and Commonwealth perspective) the practitioner legacy which uses the human metaphor. The four elements comprising this new mix are strategy, structure, communication and culture.

The need to make a distinction between the variables comprising a business identity and the task elements to be considered with regard to the management of a business identity mix is deserving of more attention by both scholars and practitioners than has been the case to date.

The implications of the author’s new mix and those of many of other mixes is that researching a business identity involves using Gioia’s (1998 p. 26) classification – marrying the interpretive lens (with regard to understanding personnel’s various affinities to different identities) with the functionalist lens (with regard to the above parts of the mix). Consequently, what is required is a further breaking down of boundaries between research paradigms. This process has implications not only for identity scholarship, but also for identity consultancy and management.

*Fifth explanation for the fog: disagreement with regard to the objectives of business identity management*

The literature reveals a wide variety of purposes and objectives associated with business identity management. Balmer’s (1995) initial literature review



**Figure 2.**  
Balmer's new identity  
mix and identity  
management mix

revealed that corporate identity change programmes were variously used as a vehicle to assist in:

- strategy formulation;
- culture-change;
- effective corporate communication;
- articulating a corporate strategy;
- articulating/changing the organisation's culture;
- acting as a platform for corporate communications; and
- ensuring that the organisation's visual identity is fashionable.

This is indicative of the multidisciplinary nature of the domain with the type of identity change reflecting the aspects of the organisation's identity that require attention.

Significantly, the effective management of a business identity has been regarded as imbuing an organisation with a favourable image (cf. Abratt, 1989;

Balmer, 1995; Birkigt and Stadler, 1986; Dowling, 1994; Steidl and Emory, 1997; Tyrrell, 1995; Van Rekom, 1997) and, more recently, the acquisition of a favourable corporate reputation coupled with business survival and profitability (Balmer and Stotvig, 1997; Van Riel and Balmer, 1997; Gray and Balmer, 1998). The objective of acquiring a favourable corporate image has fallen out of favour since the concept of the corporate image is fraught with difficulty (Balmer, 1998). The acquisition of a corporate brand, on the other hand, has been identified as an objective of corporate identity management (Balmer, 1999a). The ICIG statement reproduced in Appendix 1 cites a number of possible objectives in relation to corporate identity management, namely:

- fostering a sense of individuality;
- achieving differentiation in a competitive environment;
- providing disciplinary integration;
- providing a platform for coherent corporate communication;
- nurturing an image that is consistent with the organisation's defining ethos and character;
- nurturing understanding and commitment among stakeholders;
- attracting and retaining customers and employees;
- achieving strategic alliances; and
- gaining support of financial markets.

*Sixth explanation of the fog: a traditional lack of dialogue between Anglophone and non-Anglophone scholars and writers*

In addition to the lack of dialogue between scholars from different disciplines, a notable feature of the literature on business identity is how linguistic and cultural barriers have exerted an influence in the general understanding of the area. The most dramatic divide is between Anglophone and non-Anglophone nations. For instance, the literature on business identity emerging from mainland Europe appears to have developed quite independently from the North American literature, and also from that of the UK and the old (British) Commonwealth, and vice versa. An example of this is the French school of thought on corporate identity (Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1997). The Netherlands appears to be the exception to the rule, owing to the linguistic dexterity of the peoples of that kingdom. This can be seen in Van Riel's (1995) influential text *Principles of Corporate Communication*, which contains a veritable cornucopia of international sources.

Further afield, questions of language have hindered our understanding of Sino and Japanese approaches to the area. The current understanding of business identity in "Western" nations might need to undertake a further radical reappraisal, in order to accommodate what appear to be substantive differences of approach between "Western" and "Asian" scholars of business identity. Reference has already been made to the Mitsubishi mix. According to

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Steidl and Emory (1997, pp. 4-5), the Japanese approach to business identity adopts a radically different manner from that found in other nations. They refer to Motoo Nakanishi, the chairman of one of Japan's foremost business consultancies, who states that Japanese business identity change programmes are characterised by their longevity in planning and implementation, and that they are also dependent upon the CEO championing such a change. In contrast, Nakanishi comments that US identity change programmes reflect the character of the CEO to a greater extent than Asian approaches; are similar to Japanese programmes in their reliance on the CEO for their success; are more project-orientated and are short-term in scope. For their part, Johansson and Hirano (1999) point out that, in Asia, there is a higher degree of parallelism between individual and corporate objectives than in the West, cf., Balmer and Wilson (1998).

*Seventh explanation for the fog: the traditional lack of dialogue between researchers from different disciplines*

The business identity literatures encompass distinctive and not so distinctive schools of thought, business communications and corporate communications (Cheney and Christensen, 1999; Van Riel, 1995), graphic design (Olins, 1995; Schmidt, 1995), image and image-research (Brown, 1998; Barich and Kotler, 1991; Worcester, 1986/1997), marketing (Abratt, 1989), organisational behaviour (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Mael and Ashforth, 1992), public relations (Grunig, 1993), psychology (Bromley, 1993), reputation (Fombrun, 1996), and strategy (Gray and Smeltzer, 1985; Marwick and Fill, 1997; Morison, 1997). A multi-disciplinary approach is adopted by Balmer (1995, 1998), with a strong marketing/communications emphasis.

Despite the wealth of disciplines, the degree of cross fertilisation of ideas and insights from these literatures is comparatively slight. It would appear that business identity issues have, to a large degree, matured along narrow, vertical and disciplinary paradigms. There has been little in the way of multi-disciplinary holistic development. This may be placed in the context of the various business identity mixes articulated by Balmer and Soenen (1997), Birkigt and Stadler (1986), Schmidt (1995) and Steidl and Emory (1997) that clearly demand that a broad, multi-disciplinary, approach be adopted.

Mention may also be made of Whetten and Godfrey's (1998) book *Identity in Organisations*, where academics from a number of disciplines discuss various facets of the business identity world. However, there is a paucity of material emanating from British, Commonwealth and European sources in this text and, for the main, little from the marketing literature is marshalled. This may be contrasted with the recent marketing literature where organisational behaviourists, for instance, have made a significant contribution.

*Eighth explanation for the fog: the association with graphic design*

The importance accorded to graphic design in the business identity literature has exacerbated the confusion surrounding the area and may, in retrospect, be

seen to have exerted a deleterious influence regarding the conceptualisation of identity. In the past this has led to the business identity domain being narrowly conceived. Some writers with backgrounds in marketing and communication have accorded symbolism the same importance as other business identity elements such as behaviour and communication, viz. Birkigt and Stadler (1986). The emphasis accorded to graphic design in business identity studies has been perpetuated by many so-called corporate identity consultancies who are, to all intents and purposes, graphic design consultancies. Research undertaken by MORI revealed that significant numbers of managers in UK and Europe still equate UK-based corporate identity with graphic design (cf. Schmidt, 1995). Such has been the influence of graphic design that it has almost become axiomatic that any change of business identity will have an attendant change of visual identity. The author has not, to date, discovered a case where a corporate identity consultancy advising a client during a business identity change programme has not, as a minimum, tweaked the corporate logo. This is a curious state of affairs and again raises some profound questions. Wolff Olins (Europe's largest corporate identity consultancy) in their "Guide to corporate identity" produced for the UK weekly magazine *Marketing* (1990, pp. 19-24) made this very point.

Because of corporate identity's roots in design it will probably entail a new or revised logo design.

With the passing of ten years, little appears to have altered. For instance, the majority of personnel employed by corporate identity consultancies tend to have a background in graphic design. The author is of the view that the graphic design emphasis ascribed to business identity has thrown the area out of kilter. This has had the unfortunate effect of stifling a broader, more sophisticated and scholarly appreciation of business identity. The distinct corporate identity and organisational identity literatures, although somewhat parvenu in relation to the visual identity literature, have without doubt, made a profound contribution to the general understanding of business identity over recent years. What is required is for a more balanced appraisal to take place *vis-à-vis* the power of visual identity and of graphic design in what is starting to be known as the corporate identity mix/business identity mix. What is not refuted by the author is that visual identification does, unquestionably, have power. Van Riel (1995) pointed out the wide impact of visual communication when he wrote that the average lorry is capable of delivering 7-9 million visual impressions per year or about 60 per kilometre. Empirical work undertaken by Melewar and Saunders (1998) revealed the benefit of standardised global corporate visual identity systems. Furthermore, the use of what is known as "the visual audit" (an examination of the organisation's symbolism and brand structure) has been shown to be a most effective initial means of comprehending an organisation's cultures, power-base, strategies, and communication. As such, the visual audit may provide useful insights into an organisation's identity.

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However, whereas a visual audit may reveal symptoms of inherent corporate malaise, many organisations fall into the trap of resorting to the initiation of a new visual identity as a means of correcting what can be profound organisational difficulties. This may suggest a degree of naivety on the part of some senior managers and consultancies in failing to differentiate between the causes and the symptoms (visual-identity) of a weak inconsistent, negative or unwanted business identity. As a result of this approach, a number of authors tend to define corporate identity in prosaic terms, namely “what an organisation is”. While inadequate as a definition, it does help to distance the area from the narrow, graphic design, perspective.

The emphasis on the visual has had another, unfortunate, effect in clouding over the importance of the other senses of sound, scent, taste and touch. It would be perverse to suggest that visually impaired customers, employees or investors are unable to recognise, differentiate between or form opinions of organisations. Upon reflection it becomes apparent that the non-visual senses can be just as powerful in communicating the identity of a collective group. For example, the aural sense has a dominant role in the recognition of the identities of radio stations. The aural sense also helps to differentiate one nation state from another via the use of languages and national anthems. Important lessons can, in this regard, be learned from ancient institutions such as the Catholic Church, which marshals all the senses to forge an impressive panoply of signals to support the Catholic Church’s tenets and beliefs. Although the Catholic Church has in recent years offered a somewhat flaccid version of its identity, it is still possible to experience the effect of marshalling of all the senses in an experience which is unique to the Catholic faith. Thus, at a traditional, solemn, celebration of the liturgy at London’s Brompton Oratory, the church’s distinctiveness is communicated through, among others, symbolism (vestments, church furnishings, architecture, posture of clergy and laity), sound (Latin, Gregorian chant and polyphony), smell (incense), touch (holy water) and taste (taking the sacrament).

*Ninth explanation for the fog: the effect of fashion*

Vagaries in fashion in the use of concepts have played their part in thickening the fog surrounding the area. A would-be scholar of business identity studies has to show a good deal of perspicacity, not only in accommodating the rich variety of concepts in use, but also in exerting acute vigilance in their assessment of what he or she understands by the concept. The effects of fashion can clearly be seen in the 1950s and 1960s when much attention was focused on the concept of the “corporate image”. Yet, in the 1970s “corporate identity” grew in popularity and to some degree was used in preference to “corporate image”. The corporate identity/concept was not only used as a surrogate for “image management” but has been viewed by some authors, such as Dowling (1994), as being fundamentally concerned with visual identity. Others saw the concept as embracing the distinct characteristics of an organisation (Van Riel and Balmer, 1997). In recent years, reference to the

“corporate brand”, or what is sometimes termed “service branding” (cf. Balmer 1995; De Chernatony, 1999) has replaced reference to “corporate identity”. Of particular note is corporate reputation which, as a concept, has been in the ascendant over recent years and has almost eclipsed references to the corporate image in the literature and in management parlance. What is apparent is that too many practitioners and some scholars have tended to regard the emergence of a new concept as a replacement to what has gone before rather than considering each new concept for its potential in building on what preceded it and furthering, therefore, the general understanding of the creation, management and saliency of business identity.

*Tenth explanation for the fog: the inappropriateness of the positivistic research paradigm in the initial stage of theory generation vis-à-vis identity*

Undue attention has been given to measuring the outcomes and benefits of effective business identity management. Providing a firm foundation regarding the nature and/or driving forces of business identity will do much to lift the fog surrounding the area. In this regard the research paradigm of naturalism is perhaps more appropriate than positivism in explaining a phenomenon such as corporate identity, which has not previously been subjected to a great deal of empirical research, viz. Van Mannen (1985). Case studies can also be useful with regard to theory building research in the field of corporate identity. Oliver (1997) argued the importance of case study research, albeit in relation to corporate communication, and stated that formal theories do develop from case studies. Oliver is supported in her view by others, including Gill and Johnson (1991) and Yin (1984).

While some caution needs to be applied to the maxim found in Virgil's *Aeneid* “*ab uno disce omnes*” (from one learn all) it would perhaps be equally perverse to suggest the opposite, that nothing is gained from the findings of case studies. This is, after all, the *modus operandi* underpinning Harvard Business School's pedagogical approach.

Deshpande (1983) notes that quantitative methods are more suitable for theory testing than theory generation. Vankatesh (1985, p. 62) commented that the emphasis on empirical research, data analysis and quantitative modelling offers little potential for theory generation. As such, the author argues that marketing scholars should give a greater emphasis to qualitative and case study research.

*Eleventh explanation for the fog: the paucity of empirical academic research*

Three reasons are postulated by the writer as to why there has been a lack of published empirical research:

- (1) Until recently, the traditional lack of interest from all but a few management academics.
- (2) The difficulty in getting published in mainstream management journals.
- (3) The difficulty in undertaking research into corporate identity.

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Invariably, business identity issues encompass issues that are of particular sensitivity and have fundamental importance to organisations and their senior management. Therefore, researchers are likely to experience acute difficulty in researching changes of business identity which probe into the quintessence of an organisation's existence and which can propel to the fore issues of great sensitivity and political importance. In addition, new scholars are likely to have the wherewithall to extrapolate data and disseminate their findings through learned journals.

Although this traditionally has been the case, it is difficult to say whether this is a cause or effect *vis-à-vis* points (1) to (3). Perhaps all elements have made a contribution. What is encouraging is that more scholars are embarking on research into this business identity and this is represented in the burgeoning number of candidates embarking upon doctoral research in corporate identity. Significant empirical research to date includes that by Balmer and Wilson (1998) relating to the BBC and a major UK high street bank, Dutton and Dukerich's (1991) research on the New York port authority, Elsbach and Kramer's (1996) research in US universities, Gioia and Thomas's (1996) investigation relating to universities and Van Rekom's (1997) study focusing on a sector of the Dutch tourism industry.

*Twelfth explanation for the fog: undue focus being accorded to the business identities of holding companies/parent organisations*

The literature reveals a bias towards the identities of holding or parent companies, with insufficient attention being given to the identities of subsidiaries as well as to industrial identities, alliances, licensing arrangements and to federal types of organisational structures. An exception to the latter was Balmer's (1996) research which focused on BBC Scotland – a subsidiary of the BBC. The emphasis accorded to the identities of parent organisations has perhaps resulted in a far too simplistic categorisation regarding the relationship between subsidiaries, business units and the holding company. This can be seen in Olins's (1978) highly influential tripartite categorisation of business identities, which he calls monolithic, endorsed, and branded. Although this is a useful basic classification, it disguises the fact that parent-subsidiary relationships are invariably more complicated, as evinced by Kammerer (1989). Furthermore, insufficient attention is given to the industry-wide generic identities, with the exception of Balmer and Wilkinson (1991) and Wilkinson and Balmer (1996).

Upon reflection there are other identity types such as: the identity of alliances, including the "Star", "One World" and "Wings" airline alliances; the identity of consortiums such as the European Airbus and the sharing of a brand name by several important companies. Examples include the Hilton brand name, which is shared by Hilton Hotel of the USA and Ladbrokes of the UK, the Rolls-Royce brand licensed to car manufacturers VW/BMW (Germany), by the UK aero-engines group Rolls-Royce, the multiplicity of identities subsumed beneath the umbrella of the Virgin brand, and the Co-op

brand in the UK which serves as an umbrella brand for its labyrinthic organisational structure. The simplistic approach to organisational structure and strategy outlined above, and the graphic design bias has, in the author's opinion, served to obfuscate business identity's palpable affinity with corporate strategy.

*Thirteenth explanation for the fog: the emphasis assigned to Anglo-Saxon forms of business structures*

For the main, the various literatures of business identity focus on Anglo-Saxon forms of business identity which is characterised by short termism and where shareholders are accorded particular importance. Little has appeared in European journals with regard to non Anglo-Saxon forms of business identities. As such, it would appear that undue emphasis is accorded to vertical rather than to horizontal organisational structures.

There is prima facie case to suggest that existing Anglo-Saxon theories of business identity are inappropriate to certain organisational structures operating in other countries due to cultural and economic reasons. This can, perhaps, be most clearly seen in Japan and Korea. The traditional Japanese *keiretsu* structure which encompasses well known brand names such as Mitsubishi, Mitsui and Sumitomo differ from their Anglo-Saxon counterparts in that they invariably include financial services companies that can provide finance to other members of the *keiretsu*. Typically, each *keiretsu* structure contains:

- a commercial bank, a trust bank and a life insurance company;
- each group contains a trading company which supports other members of the group through the provision of such things as intelligence and project management;
- there is cross-shareholdings of such groups, which makes it difficult for a member of the group to be threatened with an aggressive take-over;
- in times of crisis, members of the *keiretsu* group will provide support, financial or service to the beleaguered company; and, finally
- there is a leading group of companies.

The Korean *chaebol* structure is similar to the Japanese *keiretsu* structure with the exception that first, members of the founding family still, in some instances, manage the company, and second, the *chaebol* does not contain powerful financial institutions or trading companies.

What is clear from the above illustration is that Eastern business relationships are more complicated than those witnessed in many Anglo-Saxon companies; that the visual/branding structure is invariably applied to a family of more or less autonomous companies rather than to a single commercial concern; that the notion of internal communications takes on a particularly important role *vis-à-vis* communication between members of the *keiretsu/chaebol* and that the external communication is more complicated. This is

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because each company of the group not only needs to support its own corporate communication efforts and reputation, but also that of the group. Here the group's reputation will appear to act as a powerful control mechanism, Balmer's (1998) DEAR Model (Decisions are Evaluated Against the organisation's/group's Reputation) may be of use in this regard.

It is important to recall that there are other forms of organisational structure operating in the West other than Anglo-Saxon structures. One approach prevalent in southern Europe and termed "the Latin approach" is, according to Cova and Aubert-Gamet (1997), based on the view that marketing institutions are less effective than proximate communities influencing peoples' behaviour. Cova coined the term "societing" to encapsulate this approach. A case in point is the Rhine model of organisations which, for obvious reasons, is prevalent in those nations bordering the Rhine. Here there are flatter, more community-focused structures.

In Germany, businesses are not dominated by big brand names. In a 1989 survey for *Business Week*, Germany accounted for only 3 per cent of the world's 1,000 largest companies. Germany's strength (and also that of Northern Italy) rests in its *Mittelstand*. These are small to medium-sized family businesses. In Germany the characteristics of such companies are:

- family owned;
- financiers or investors are not owners or controllers of the companies;
- the objective is long term survival; and
- stakeholders' groupings cannot so easily be broken down into internal and external stakeholders.

Interestingly, concern is shown to stakeholders of the future. Table IV provides a summation of the Anglo-Saxon and the Rhine and Asian approaches.

*Fourteenth explanation of the fog: weaknesses in early traditional marketing models of corporate identity/corporate image management and formation*

The fourteenth weakness identified by the writer is the weaknesses in many of the more influential conceptual models of corporate image/identity/reputation formation (Abratt, 1989; Dowling, 1986, 1993; and Kennedy, 1977). It would appear that in some of these models the writers confuse corporate identity with corporate image. While the writer is critical of some of the models, each of them makes a valuable contribution to the debate on the area. Certainly, several of these models were at the cutting edge of the debate on the area at the time they were published. These four models will be examined in turn.

*Abratt's model (1989)*

Abratt's conceptual and prescriptive model has the objective of explaining the corporate image management process and adopts an "outside in" focus (an image, reputation, focus) rather than an inside out (an identity, personality focus). Abratt's model is most useful in that it attempts to integrate the

Characteristics	Anglo-Saxon approaches	Rhine, <i>kieretsu</i> and <i>chaebol</i> approaches
Objective	Profit maximisation	Business survival and business longevity
Time horizon	Short-term	Long-term
Change of ownership	Potentially variable/volatile	Inherently stable
Responsibility	Management boards	Principles of subsidiarity <sup>a</sup>
Organisational structure	Hierarchical/vertical	Federal-horizontal
Desired organizational size	Medium-to-large	Small-to-medium
Management philosophy	To serve interests of current shareholders	To serve interests of current and future owners (family) and employees
Philosophy of financial institutions with a residual interest	Maximising their investment rights over the short term	Adopting long-term investor, partnerships
Philosophy re distribution of profits	Maximise dividend payout	Greater emphasis on re-investment
Shareholder characteristics	Emphasis on current investors, customers and other internal-external groups. Based on the notion that there exist clearly defined stakeholder groups	Blurring of boundaries between internal/external stakeholders. Also concerned with future members of stakeholder groups and networks
Identity structures	Emphasis on corporate relationship between holding company/subsidiary: increasing "top down"	Emphasis on group identity. Mutual concern with the family of autonomous companies. Sharing of brand name
Communication focus	Two dimensional/and horizontal. Internal/external. Emphasis on external groups	Three dimensional and horizontal and vertical. Internal/external/ groups and networks
Total corporate communication focus	Horizontal communication: consisting through current communication channels	Horizontal and vertical communications consistency re current, past and future communication channels

**Table IV.**

Differences between Anglo-Saxon business identities and others as conceptualised by the author

**Note:** <sup>a</sup> See: Pius X, Pope (1931) *Encyclical: Quadragesimo Anno*: "It is an injustice and at the same time a great evil and disturbance of right order to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies". This structural approach of the church has not only been adopted by business organisations but is an espoused philosophy of the European Union

problematic concepts of corporate personality, identity and image. This appears to be the first time that this has been done. The writer shares Abratt's view that an understanding of the three concepts is useful in determining the nature and importance of corporate identity management.

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With hindsight, scholars may question a number of aspects of the model. For instance, culture is regarded as one component of the corporate personality rather than enjoying a more important and central role in corporate identity formation. The rôle of culture has been highlighted in the recent literature, viz. Balmer and Wilson (1998) and Hatch and Schultz (1997).

The model also appears to assign too much importance to formal communications and visual symbolism in image formation. It does not include a feedback mechanism between the third and the second part of the model, suggesting that the management philosophy is not altered in response to feedback from personnel. It also fails to show the effect of environmental forces and regards corporate image(s) as the ultimate goal of identity management.

An important feature of this conceptual model is the articulated corporate image/interface which has been an influential concept (cf. Balmer, 1998b; Stuart, 1998b). Abratt's model has been highly influential and has been developed as a basis for other models (see Stuart, 1998b). The model contains several salient elements that have withstood the test of time and still informs the current debate relating to corporate identity. Without doubt, Abratt's work marked a watershed in the field of business identity studies. However, Hatch and Schultz (1997) have presented a cogent argument questioning the saliency of interface concept. They argue that internal/external boundaries have become blurred owing to increased interaction among internal and external groups and also due to the fact that individuals belong to multiple stakeholder groups and networks. However, many marketing scholars would concur with Abratt that the interface concept is salient. Indeed, Balmer and Soenen (1999) built on Abratt's interface in developing "The ACID Test of Corporate Identity Management<sup>™</sup>" [3].

#### *Dowling's model (1993)*

Dowling's conceptual and prescriptive model whose principal focus is again on the "outside in" accords particular emphasis to corporate image (in effect a revised version of his 1986 model). As with Abratt, this model has been particularly influential in Commonwealth countries. The model appears to draw a good deal from Kennedy's (1977) model. At the heart of Dowling's corporate image formation process is a corporate vision statement which impacts upon the organisation's strategy and organisational culture. Dowling, unlike Abratt, assigns a greater importance to culture.

Dowling postulates that image formation is not only dependent on the multifaceted way an organisation communicates, but is also influenced by super and subordinate images. He cites the examples of country-of-origin and the image of an organisation's brands.

There are several weaknesses with Dowling's model in that there is some inconsistency between the title of his paper, "Developing your company image into a corporate asset", and his model which refers to the creation of corporate images. Second, Dowling's approach to culture, which he regards as a single entity and as the glue which holds the organisation together, has been

challenged by Hatch and Schultz (1997) and by Balmer and Wilson (1998). Recent empirical research by Balmer and Wilson (1998) revealed that an organisation's identity comprises a mix of sub cultures – professional, national as well as corporate. What is a little surprising is that Dowling makes no reference to corporate identity. What is clear is that Dowling's work has helped to keep "corporate identity" on the agenda of management and marketing scholars. As such, his work is of inestimable value.

*Kennedy's model (1977)*

Kennedy's model may in one regard be seen to be of greater research significance than the two aforementioned models since it was, in part, derived from empirical research. Kennedy's model replicates her findings that staff are of crucial importance in corporate image formation. She concludes that an employee's perception of a company will be influenced by such things as company policy, company products and pay structures. The lack of reference to the concept of the corporate identity in the model is attributable to the fact that the concept of the corporate identity was not in common usage at that time.

In retrospect, Kennedy's model can, however, be criticised. She does not address the question as to whether consistency of perception and actions among senior managers is necessary. This would appear to be a prerequisite before any attempt can be made to "manage" the image of personnel. What is rather sad is that the content of Kennedy's article was not embraced by other scholars.

*The models in perspective*

The traditional marketing models replicate many of the causes for the "fog" outlined in this article. In summary, the major weaknesses with many of the models referred to above and, indeed, many other models, are that they:

- are conceptual (with the exception of Kennedy);
- assign inordinate attention to visual symbolism and to corporate communications;
- do not give enough attention to questions of culture and, where they do, the approach is often simplistic;
- do not give enough attention to the effects of the external environment (political, economic, ethical, social and technological) and the influence of various super and subordinate reputation types, including those of the industry and country-of-origin;
- are concerned with image-formation rather than with identity-formation;
- regard the acquisition of a favourite perception of the corporation as being an end in itself, with the assumption that this will be sufficient to ensure profitability, business advantage and survival rather than a crucial variable underpinning the above;

- fail to note that a resultant corporate image may be negative, unwanted as well as favourable (also applies to reputation);
- do not deal with the question of company profile;
- assume that there will be a singly held corporate image among all stakeholder groups and, by implication, networks;
- the earlier models make no reference to reputation or to corporate branding and in some cases to corporate identity;
- adopt a narrow perspective regarding the objective of identity/image management or process and fail to adopt a broader approach which encompasses business advantage, profitability and survival, as objectives;
- for the main, adopt a narrow marketing perspective on the area;
- do not accord sufficient importance to corporate structure and the fact that organisations often are subsidiaries with recognisable identities or/and belong to supraorganisational groups with distinct structures;
- are based on the notion that it is possible to control the entire corporate identity formation process relatively easily, quickly and by management dictat;
- do not take into account business to business relationships;
- emphasise linearity and simplicity rather than intricacy and complexity;

Of note is Stuart (1999b), who provides a comprehensive overview of corporate image and corporate identity models. From her examination of existing models she devised a more definitive model of the corporate identity management process.

*Fifteenth explanation: a failure to make a distinction between the actual, communicated, conceived ideal and desired identities*

Recent research undertaken by Balmer and Soenen (1999) within British and North American identity consultancies[2] revealed that most identity change programmes adopted a narrow, “vision-driven” approach. Most identity change programmes reflected the vision of the CEO. The research showed that identity change programmes had an overtly corporate communication and graphic design emphasis. This appears to reflect the view that original identities can be changed quickly, easily and by management fiat.

The researchers concluded that consultants, practitioners and scholars should identify several identity types.

In this article, the lead author and researcher has given greater prominence to perception (image and reputation) than was originally the case. As such, a new category type, “conceived identity”, has been introduced, thus making a total of five identity types. The revised approach detailed below has been called “Dr Balmer’s AC<sup>2</sup>ID Test”<sup>®</sup>[3]:

- (1) the *actual identity* (internal values, organisational behaviour, activities, market scope, performance and positioning);
- (2) the *communicated identity* (the various organisational messages conveyed via primary, secondary and tertiary communications: “total corporate communication”);
- (3) the *conceived identity* (the images/representations, reputational profile held of the organisation by stakeholder groups and networks);
- (4) the *ideal identity* (the optimum positioning for the organisation in a given time frame); and
- (5) the *desired identity* (the vision as articulated by corporate founder and/or the chief executive and management board).

Ideally, the five identity types should be in close alignment. If they are not in alignment then some form of identity change will be required (cf. Balmer, 1995). The above may be viewed as a new methodology for corporate identity change programmes. This new approach marshals the distinct disciplinary perspectives which are crucial to an understanding of a business identity, namely business activities, scope, culture and performance, communication, perception, strategy and leadership. The original as well as the expanded version of the various identities usefully form the mnemonic ACID/ACCID. Both approaches are respectively called “The ACID Test of Corporate Identity Management<sup>™</sup>/Dr Balmer’s AC<sup>2</sup>ID Test<sup>™</sup>”[3] – which is outlined below. As with any acid test, the aim here was to craft a vigorous and conclusive test to establish worth and value.

The point to note from this final explanation for the fog is that organisations are shaped by multiple identities. “Dr Balmer’s AC<sup>2</sup>ID Test<sup>™</sup>”[3] reveals one lens by which multiple identities may be revealed. Another is the research undertaken by Balmer and Wilson (1998). Their research revealed that organisations consist of an amalgam of organisational, professional, national and other forms of identity. The implication flowing from the above is that revealing, examining and managing a business identity is a complex and time-consuming activity.

#### *Seeing through and avoiding the fog*

The irony of *The Times* headline “Fog in channel – Europe isolated” is not so much that Europe was isolated, or that England was isolated, but that many sides were cut off. Using the fog metaphor for business identity studies, it becomes apparent many scholars have, to date, been cut off from other disciplinary, philosophical and national schools relating to business identity.

There is the additional danger that identity scholars might become “cut off” by failing to draw on the relevant literature which has existed since the 1950s. Over time, the business identity literature has the potential to acquire increased breadth and depth. Table V reflects the above point. It shows how many of the

Reason	Indicative of complexity rather than confusion	Indicative of a multidisciplinary approach	Insights with regard to	Research possibilities
1. Terminology	Yes. Concepts refer to the nature, objectives, and management of identity	Yes. Particularly with regard to marketing, and organisational behaviour	The need to transcend disciplinary boundaries	Yes. The nature, relationship and management of the domain <i>vis-à-vis</i> individual concepts
2. Paradigmatic views	Yes	Yes	Saliency of the identity concepts	Various – reflects the traditions of individual research paradigms
3. Multifarious disciplinary perspectives	Yes. Identity issues operate at different levels within organisations and are of equal concern to graphic designers as well as to CEOs	Yes. Figure 1 is self-explanatory	The saliency and centrality of the identity concepts	Yes
4. Elements of a business identity <i>vis-à-vis</i> the elements required of its management	Yes	Yes	The fundamental difference between (a) the elements comprising an identity (b) the elements to be considered re its management	Yes. Provides two fundamental research foci
5. Differing objectives	Yes	Yes. Disciplinary approaches tend to be narrowly conceived	The various types of chance programme and disciplinary concepts re the identity concepts	Yes. Saliency of the identity concepts to a variety of organisational concepts
6. Anglophone and non-Anglophone dialogue	Yes	Yes. Distinct approaches found in various national groupings, for instance the nations of the old Commonwealth	Practitioner, disciplinary methodological and pedagogical insights	Yes. Marshalling/building on these distinct traditions/ approaches

(continued)

**Table V.**  
The 15 ways of seeing through the fog re business identity/corporate marketing

Table V.

Reason	Indicative of complexity rather than confusion	Indicative of a multidisciplinary approach	Insights with regard to	Research possibilities
7 Different disciplines	Yes	Yes	Saliency of concepts	Yes. Multi-disciplinary/ collaborative research
8 Graphic design (importance of human senses)	Yes. When placed in the context that all the senses are important	Yes. As per column 1	The individual importance of the senses to various organisational types	Yes. Possibilities re the rôle(s) of individual senses re business identity
9 Effect of fashion	No	No	No	Yes. Understanding the factors which cause practitioners to embrace/ drop a concept
10 Positivist research paradigm	N/A	N/A	Universal laws re business identity	Yes. Building on case-study research and other "qualitative" approaches
11 Paucity of empirical research	Yes. Difficult in gaining access indicative of the sensitivity/ political nature of identity change programmes	N/A	N/A	Yes
12 Focus on holding companies	Yes. The various forms of business identities	N/A	Various types of business identities – subsidiary and super organisational. Their nature, structure and management	Yes – very wide
13 Anglo-Saxon emphasis	Yes. Little attention given to non Anglo-Saxon business structures	N/A	The saliency of the identity concept/philosophy in a global context. Adapting the identity/identity mix accordingly	Yes – very wide

(continued)

Reason	Indicative of complexity rather than confusion	Indicative of a multidisciplinary approach	Insights with regard to	Research possibilities
14 Models	Yes. Potentially when placed in the context of the emergent literature	Yes – as per column 1	Complexity and multidisciplinary nature of identity, its formation, and management	Yes. Most models are conceptual
15 Actual communicated, conceived, ideal and desired identities	Yes. Reveals the complexity of identity change programmes – several different identity types need to be revealed. All identity types should be in alignment	Yes	The need to reveal the five identity types as per column 1	Yes. With regard to operationalising “Dr Balmer’s AC <sup>2</sup> ID test <sup>(6)</sup> [3]. Case study work would seem to be appropriate

15 reasons for the fog outlined in this article may, upon further reflection, be indicative of business identity's complexity, and multidisciplinary nature.

In addition, many of the 15 explanations offer insights regarding the saliency of the identity concept to various management disciplines, Anglo-Saxon, European and Asian business structures and organisations of every hue. This includes virtual organisations/brands such as airline alliances.

Table V also outlines the various research possibilities afforded by each of the 15 points. What is clear is that the 15 points in their totality reveal the importance of the identity concept and bring to mind Gioia's remark (1998, p. 17) that:

The concept of identity, which is germane to conceiving what it is to be human, also is central to conceptualisation of one of the most complex and fascinating of human creations, the work organisation.

*What is a business identity? What is a corporate brand?*

So what is business identity and how does it relate to or differ from an organisation's corporate brand? Drawing on Table IV, and the third explanation outlined earlier, the following definition is offered *vis-à-vis* the characteristics of identity:

An organisation's identity is a summation of those tangible and intangible elements that make any corporate entity distinct. It is shaped by the actions of corporate founders and leaders, by tradition and the environment. At its core is the mix of employees' values which are expressed in terms of their affinities to corporate, professional, national and other identities. It is multidisciplinary in scope and is a melding of strategy, structure, communication and culture. It is manifested through multifarious communications channels encapsulating product and organisational performance, employee communication and behaviour, controlled communication and stakeholder and network discourse.

The above definition may be seen to complement the influential view of Albert and Whetten (1985), who noted the saliency of identity in that it is central, distinctive and enduring. (C,D,E). In the author's estimation the driving forces of identity are "L V T E":

- L – Leadership (CEO and board-level).
- V – Values.
- T – Tradition.
- E – Environment .

With regard to Albert and Whetten's definition it is felt that the word "evolving" might perhaps replace "enduring". Albert and Whetten's definition is, perhaps, a too rigid interpretation of the concept. The author's perspective also mirrors the view of Gioia and Thomas (1996), who took issue with Albert and Whetten's view that a business identity was enduring. These authors also had doubts as to whether identity was distinctive. It appears that most scholars agree that identity is a central concept to organisations of every type.

With relation to the defining characteristics of a corporate brand and its relationship to corporate identity the following explanation is offered:

A corporate brand involves the conscious decision by senior management to distil and make known the attributes of the organisation's identity in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition. This proposition underpins organisational efforts to communicate, differentiate, and enhance the brand *vis-à-vis* key stakeholder groups and networks. A corporate brand proposition requires total corporate commitment to the corporate body from all levels of personnel. It requires senior management fealty and financial support. On-going management of the corporate brand resides with the chief executive officer and does not fall within the remit of the traditional directorate of marketing.

The three virtues of corporate brands are that they:

- (1) C = Communicate.
- (2) D = Differentiate.
- (3) E = Enhance.

The corporate brand proposition may be used as a template for evaluating an organisation's activities in line with the corporate brand proposition.

Table VI compares the attributes of corporate brands with product brands: there are crucial differences between the two major branding categories and it is important to note the differences.

### Rethinking marketing: who are the organisation's customers?

From a marketing perspective, it becomes apparent that the traditional focus on the external environment, controlled communications, branding, visual identification and image-research have, for the main part, focused on product-level rather than on corporate-level concerns.

However, over recent years, marketing scholars have begun to focus on corporate concerns to a greater degree than hitherto. Along with such moves has been recognition of the importance of personnel and, more importantly, the importance of culture. As with other scholars, the question of culture has confronted marketing scholars with important epistemological and ontological issues.

A shift towards corporate level concerns is evinced by several ascendant areas of marketing such as relationship marketing, services marketing,

	Product brands	Corporate brands
Management	Middle manager	CEO
Responsibility	Middle manager	All personnel
Cognate discipline(s)	Marketing	Strategy/multi disciplinary
Communications mix	Marketing communicator	Total corporate communications
Focus	Mainly customer	Multiple. Internal and external stakeholder groups and networks
Values	Mainly contrived	Those of founder(s) + mix of corporate + other sub-cultures

**Table VI.**  
A comparison between corporate and product brands

international marketing, marketing for non-profits, integrated marketing communications, corporate public relations and, more acutely, in relation to corporate and to services branding. The author is of the view that these developments may point the way to the emergence of a new marketing and management paradigm entitled corporate marketing studies.

It is worth noting that implicit and explicit references to corporate marketing (organisational marketing) in the marketing literature is far from new. Well over 30 years ago, Kotler and Levy (1969) concluded that the marketing concept should be broadened to cover any entity. In a more recent article by Kotler and Mindak (1978), it was argued that there should be a marriage between marketing and public relations.

The later article provided means by which marketing could be accommodated at the corporate level. Kotler has also been concerned with what he calls a company's marketing image which, he argued, improved attitudes towards an organisation by stakeholder groups (Barich and Kotler, 1991). British writers have also mirrored their North American colleagues in emphasising the importance of corporate concern.

One author of note with regard to corporate marketing is the English corporate communications writer and consultant, David Bernstein. Bernstein (1984, pp. 146-55) concluded that the integration of corporate philosophy, identity, and image would form the basis of a new area which he called organisational marketing.

Several leading UK marketing scholars have also focussed on corporate concerns in relation to "excellent" companies and stakeholder relations. The need for organisations to engage in relationships with a plethora of stakeholders was the focus of research undertaken by Greenley and Foxall (1996). Doyle (1992), commenting on the nature of excellent companies, observed that there is a tendency to over-simplify the question of shareholder value and to confuse the *de jure* and *de facto* ownership of a business. He argued that the long-running success and viability of an organisation depends upon the capacity to satisfy a coalition of stakeholders. Doyle's conclusion may be regarded as one of the key objectives of corporate marketing management. What is becoming increasingly apparent is that an organisation's customers are not simply the end users of products – they include other constituencies and even, in the estimation of the author, include those stakeholder groups of the future who are not yet born. The recent statement by the Anglo-Dutch Shell Group reflects the broader perspective regarding organisational customers.

We cannot be accountable solely to our shareholders or customers. Our business touches too many lives for us to evade our wider rôle in society. We must communicate our values and demonstrate that we live up to them in our business practices (in Lewis, 2000)

The above quote may be seen to mirror some of the key attributes of effective business identity and corporate identity articulated earlier and also encapsulates the basic philosophy underpinning corporate marketing as envisaged by the author. This will be discussed in the next section.

**Rethinking marketing: rethinking the corporate marketing mix**

At this point in time, with the lifting of the fog, it is possible to see a bridging of the divide between management disciplines. This is leading to the cross-fertilisation of ideas and insights between disciplinary, national and ontological traditions. The same process appears to be taking place within marketing. Questions of corporate brand and corporate reputation management have emerged as major concerns for organisations and their senior management.

There is renewed interest in stakeholder theory and an increased emphasis in corporate rather than marketing communications. There is also a broadening of the marketing concept. Table VII contrasts the conceptualisations of corporate marketing with McGee and Spiro's (1990) conceptualisation of marketing.

Marketing and communication scholars have mirrored these developments. In recent years there have emerged distinct corporate identity, corporate communication (total corporate communication) mixes. The corporate marketing mix has received little attention with the exception of Balmer (1999a). Balmer extended McCarthy's (1960) four Ps to ten Ps, so as to encompass the myriad elements which need to be orchestrated when the marketing concept is applied at the corporate level (see Appendix 2). However, there is a problem with this mix in that unlike McCarthys four Ps, the ten Ps are difficult to recall.

	Major components of marketing (McGee and Spiro, 1990)	Major components of corporate marketing (author's conceptualisation)
Orientation	<i>Customer</i> Understanding customer wants, needs and behaviours	<i>Stakeholders</i> Understanding present and future stakeholders' wants, needs and behaviours
Organisational support	<i>Co-ordinated organisational activities</i> Undertaken to support customer orientation elicited above	<i>Co-ordinated organisational activities</i> Undertaken to support stakeholder orientation elicited above
End focus	<i>Profit orientation</i> Focus on profit rather than on sales (needs to be adapted for not-for-profit organisations)	<i>Value creation</i> Profit maximisation is a primary but is not the only focus, also includes business survival as well as tempering the above, where appropriate, in meeting
Societal obligations	<i>Community welfare</i> An obligation to meet consumers' and society's long term interests	<i>Future stakeholder and societal needs</i> Balancing current stakeholder and society needs with those of the future showing sensitivity to organisational inheritance where applicable (mutuals, partnerships, etc.)

**Table VII.**  
The major components  
of marketing and  
corporate marketing

**Table VIII.**  
HEADS<sup>2</sup> – a new  
corporate marketing  
mix

HEADS <sup>2</sup>	Applicable concepts	Original corporate marketing mix elements "10Ps"	List of elements
H – What the organisation HAS	Corporate identity	Philosophy	Organisational structure <i>vis-à-vis</i> subsidiaries/business units. History – legacy. Alliances and partnerships; property and equipment; corporate subsidiaries and corporate (and corporate brands); reputation; product brands stakeholder (company) interest in other companies
E – What the organisation EXPRESSES	(a) Integrated marketing communications (b) Corporate communications (c) Total Corporate Communications (d) Corporate PR	Promotion	Integrating primary (products, services); secondary (formal communication); tertiary communications (word of mouth/spin)
A – What are the dominant/mix of AFFINITIES held by employee groups	(a) Organisational identity/identification (b) Corporate personality (c) Differentiated view of corporate culture (sometimes subsumed within corporate identity) (See "H" above)	People <sup>a</sup> Personality	Various sub cultural groups including corporate (old, new, ascendant, subsidiary, departmental). National/regional/local and professional, sub cultures and so on
D – What the organisation DOES	(a) Corporate identity (b) Corporate profile	Product, Price, Place, Performance	Includes all elements of McCarthy's mix with the exception of performance. Mix elements require a radical rethinking so as to encompass organisational concerns
S – How the organisation is SEEN by key STAKEHOLDER groups and networks	(a) Corporate image (b) Corporate reputation (c) Corporate brand (d) Stakeholder theory	Perception Positioning People <sup>c</sup>	Includes (a) data re current perceptions of the organisation (image) and organisational awareness (profile) among key stakeholders; (b) data re past performance, knowledge, beliefs and expectations of the organisation (reputation) and perceptions of the saliency value of the corporate brand. Individuals, groups and networks which transcend traditional internal/external organisational boundaries

**Note:** <sup>a</sup>People = falls into two categories

They are, in many regards, fundamentally different than the original four Ps in that, typically, each P is broader in scope. As a means of circumventing this problem and with the didactic needs of marketing faculty in mind, a new mix has been created forming the mnemonic HEADS<sup>2</sup> (S encompasses two elements) Table VIII outlines the six elements forming the HEADS<sup>2</sup> mnemonic and places this alongside Balmer's original ten Ps: it also shows the interdisciplinary nature of corporate marketing. The author is in no doubt that the corporate marketing mix will require further reflection and re-working.

## Conclusion

To date, the horizons of business identity and corporate marketing studies have appeared to be fuzzy and obscured by fog. It is hoped that this article will enable scholars to be aware of the reasons for the fog and, perhaps, to continue to account for this in their quest to see the vast and imposing sky which represents the domain of corporate marketing studies. What is clear from the literature is that a growing number of management scholars no longer view business identity as a chimera but rather as a crucial research activity which is of strategic import in that it helps to comprehend an entity's quintessence.

The author hopes that this article has made a contribution to the general discussion regarding business identity and corporate marketing. Clearly there is scope for further debate. As Churchill (1942) remarked, this is not the end, but is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

## Notes

- 1 *The Thunderer* the traditional nickname assigned to *The Times* of London newspaper.
- 2 The research was undertaken as part of "The Transatlantic Identity Study" which was sponsored by the Anglo-American branding consultancy Enterprise IG. The ACID Test of Corporate Identity Management<sup>™</sup> has been successfully used on a number of major corporate branding projects, see Allen (2000).  
The author gratefully acknowledges the support given by Enterprise IG and the assistance given by his research assistant, Mr Guillaume Soenen. The author is also indebted to Professor Stephen A. Greyser (Harvard Business School) who generously served as special advisor to this study.
- 3 The ACID Test of Corporate Identity Management<sup>™</sup> – J.M.T. Balmer, 1998. Dr Balmer's AC<sup>2</sup>ID Test<sup>™</sup> – J.M.T. Balmer, 1999.

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**Appendix 1. The ICIG'S statement on corporate identity**

Every organisation has an identity.

It articulates the corporate ethos, aims and values and presents a sense of individuality that can help to differentiate the organisation within its competitive environment.

When well managed, corporate identity can be a powerful means of integrating the many disciplines and activities essential to an organisation's success. It can also provide the visual cohesion necessary to ensure that all corporate communications are coherent with each other and result in an image consistent with the organisation's defining ethos and character.

By effectively managing its corporate identity an organisation can build understanding and commitment among its diverse stakeholders. This can be manifested in an ability to attract and retain customers, achieve strategic alliances, gain the support of financial markets and generate a sense of direction and purpose.

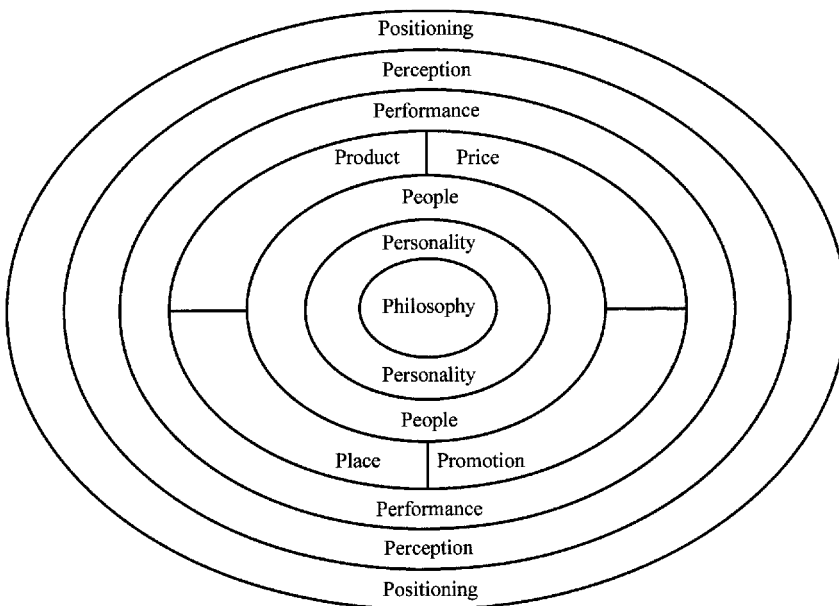
Corporate Identity is a strategic issue.

Corporate identity differs from traditional brand marketing since it is concerned with all of an organisation's stakeholders and the multi-faceted way in which an organisation communicates.

*(This is a revised version of the original statement penned by the author along with other identity scholars and practitioners at Strachur, Loch Fyne, Argyll, Scotland, UK on 17 and 18 February, 1995.)*

**Table A1.**  
The Strathclyde  
Statement

**Appendix 2. The ten Ps of the corporate marketing mix**



**Figure A1.**  
The ten Ps of the  
corporate marketing mix

Source: Balmer (1998)