Managing the Multiple Identities of the Corporation

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MANAGING THE MULTIPLE IDENTITIES OF THE CORPORATION

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Abstract
This article provides a framework intended to assist firms in understanding their corporation’s identities more clearly and managing them more effectively. In the wake of corporate acquisitions, mergers, and spin-offs, considerable senior management attention has been devoted to corporate identity and its communication to key stakeholder groups.

In many instances, a company’s efforts to find its identity and articulate it are based on a belief in a single monolithic corporate identity. Our research leads to a different view—namely that organizations have multiple identities. In fact we have delineated five kinds of identity, which can be examined in a framework termed the AC2ID Test™ (ACCID), namely the actual, communicated, conceived, ideal, and desired identities. These reflect respectively: the current, distinct attributes of the organization; what the organization communicates about itself; the perceptions of the corporation by stakeholders; the optimum positioning for the organization; and corporate vision from the perspective of the CEO or management board.

A key premise underlying the effective use of the AC2ID Test framework is that in any given identity situation management should understand each and all of the five identities. Further, management must be alert to critical misalignments among the identities, misalignments that potentially can seriously weaken a company. Nine specific case examples, drawn from a variety of industries based in different parts of the world, illustrate situations where such misalignments appeared to exist, and the management actions involved.
Our intent in this article is to provide a framework to assist companies in understanding and managing their identities more effectively. Recently, companies have been experiencing a period where the identity landscape has become more active and more crowded. For example:

- Mergers, spin-offs, acquisitions, and alliances have led to many new or meaningfully changed companies, in turn calling for new identities by name and/or business focus.

- The proliferation of dot.com and new technology companies created many new (and differentiated) company identities, albeit often short-lived.

- Some existing companies undertook “re-imaging” as they sought, substantively and/or via communications, to make their identities more technology-oriented.

Consequently, corporate managing of identity and image has become more salient, especially in and for the financial marketplace and for the media. In short, corporate identity has emerged as a “hot topic” for senior company management and those who advise them as well as for academics studying the territory.

In the wake of this activity has come the rapid growth of consultants in identity, branding, graphic design, communications, and image research—all asserting their competence in serving as advisors to senior management on identity issues. Each offers a useful perspective, but one formed dominantly from only a single discipline. Yet our experience points to diagnostic and prescriptive power from marshalling a variety of disciplines. So, while there is a growing consensus as to the salience and strategic importance of corporate identity, identity studies to date have not been characterized by models informed by multi-disciplinary perspectives harnessed within a single pragmatic framework. This article describes a model which seeks to fill this void and which meets the needs of senior managers and scholars alike.

The new framework is called the AC2ID Test™. This is an acronym which encapsulates what we have delineated as a mosaic of five identity types—namely, actual identity, communicated identity, conceived identity, ideal identity, and desired identity. The framework is grounded in our field research undertaken in the USA and the U.K., much of it conducted within the corporate identity industry; it also incorporates recent trends in identity scholarship. As such, the new framework encompasses a variety of disciplinary sources and time frames and also accommodates internal corporate as well as external perspectives. Our research indicates that prevailing corporate thinking considers identity to be a monolithic phenomenon. At most there is a view that a current corporate identity (or non-identity) needs to be recrafted to a new, typically vision-inspired, identity. Based on our research, we think the premise of a monolithic identity is narrow and inadequate. Management needs to have understanding across the five identities within the AC2ID Test. Furthermore, corporate leadership should recognize that multiple identities can co-exist comfortably within a company even if they are slightly different. However, meaningful incongruence between any two (or more) of the five identities can cause problems for a company with relevant stakeholders. (This will be treated below.)

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AC2ID TEST

Exhibit One depicts the five identities we believe are present in any corporate (or organizational) entity. These five identities are:

Actual Identity
The actual identity constitutes the current attributes of the corporation. It is shaped by a number of elements, including corporate ownership, the leadership style of management, organizational structure, business activities and markets covered, the range and quality of products and services offered, and overall business performance. Also encompassed is the set of values held by management and employees.

Communicated Identity
The communicated identity is most clearly revealed through “controllable” corporate communication. This typically encompasses advertising, sponsorship, and public relations. In addition, it derives from “non-controllable” communication, e.g., word-of-mouth, media commentary, and the like.

Conceived Identity
The conceived identity refers to perceptual concepts—corporate image, corporate reputation, and corporate branding. These are the perceptions of the company-its multi-attribute and overall corporate image and corporate reputation-
held by relevant stakeholders. Management must make a judgment as to which groups' perceptions are most important.

**Ideal Identity**

The ideal identity is the optimum positioning of the organization in its market (or markets) in a given time frame. This is normally based on current knowledge from the strategic planners and others about the organization's capabilities and prospects in the context of the general business and competitive environment. The specifics of a given entity's ideal identity are subject to fluctuation based on external factors—e.g., the nuclear power industry after Chernobyl, and industries affected positively and negatively by the September 11 World Trade Center catastrophe such as travel, transport equipment, security systems, etc.

**Desired Identity**

The desired identity lives in the hearts and minds of corporate leaders; it is their vision for the organization. Although this identity type is often misguidedly assumed to be virtually identical to the ideal identity, they typically come from different sources. Whereas the ideal identity normally emerges after a period of research and analysis, the desired identity may have more to do with a vision informed by a CEO's personality and ego than with a rational assessment of the organization's actual identity in a particular time frame.

Let us remind readers that even within one of our identity types for a particular company may reside several variations of that identity. For example, different stakeholder groups and different market segments may have somewhat different perceptions of a company (Conceived identity). Managers should be sensitive to these variations, but should be cognizant of the single identity type of which they all are a part. An extensive literature addresses corporate and brand image research, as noted in Exhibit A-1, with illustrative references.

The AC2ID Test is grounded in the premise that companies indeed have multiple identities, as just described. A corollary premise is that the lack of alignment (or "fit") between any two of the identities causes dissonance that can potentially weaken a company. This dissonance manifests itself as "a moment of truth", such as when corporate rhetoric (i.e., Communicated identity) is meaningfully ahead of or behind reality (i.e., Actual identity); where vision (i.e., Desired) is at odds with strategy (i.e., Ideal); or when corporate performance and behavior (Actual) falls short of the expectations held by key stakeholder groups (Conceived).

It is a task of the corporate leadership group to manage identities so that they are broadly consonant with each other. At the same time, naturally, management should be tracking trends in the business environment to inform its strategy (Ideal) and eventually affect corporate action and behavior (Actual). The framework of the five identities also takes into account the involvement and influence of various internal and external stakeholder groups. Table A below shows which stakeholders most impact each type of identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Identity</th>
<th>Key Stakeholder Groups Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Internal (those who &quot;make&quot; the company)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Communicated    | Internal (marketing, communications)  
|                 | Marketing partners (advertising agency, communications firms, etc.)  
|                 | Media (interpreting the company) |
| Conceived       | All external publics [vary in importance], e.g., financial community; government/regulatory sector; headquarters/local facility communities; customers/consumers |
| Ideal           | Internal (strategic planning, etc.)  
|                 | External (e.g., financial analysts; regulatory/legislative) |
| Desired         | Internal (CEO/Board) |
As shown above, identities emanate from different sources within and outside the company. Different management traditions and disciplines inform our understanding of identity. There are some identities which are formed by a company’s communications. Others grow from a corporation’s values and cultures, reflecting a company’s heritage or its current leadership. Some are influenced by a dominant business unit or the national mores and precepts of a corporation’s home country. In considering identities, company top management may want to be assured that the perspectives and disciplines employed are wide-ranging.

PERILS OF MISALIGNED IDENTITIES
We have noted the importance of managing an organization’s multiple identities to avoid potentially harmful misalignments. Let us describe nine situations where company identities were not in alignment, and how those firms either successfully acted to make appropriate adjustments (and confront a “moment of truth”) or they continued to struggle with the challenges of reconciling the misalignment.

In illustrating the AC/ID Test’s utility, we have adopted an approach that is pragmatic rather than exhaustive. As such we examine many but not all of the identity misalignments which may occur. Because an organization’s current position (Actual identity) is typically and logically a point of departure for any analysis of potential misalignment, our treatment encompasses all four identity interfaces involving Actual identity. We have included two Actual-Communicated identity misalignments because communication is the most frequent—and perhaps most tempting—avenue to try to change an Actual identity quickly. The allure of deploying a new Communicated identity in an attempt to rectify often deep-seated organizational problems is a common phenomenon. Let us note that an effective communications platform can assist in modifying an Actual image in strategic need of change, when supported by substantive change in corporate behavior. Otherwise there will be a misalignment—a distorted mirror—between the Communicated and Conceived identities, as shown in the Intel and Hilton examples. The nine companies that illustrate the identity pairs included are shown in Exhibit One on the appropriate connecting lines.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED:
ACTUAL AND Communicated
GEC was a name which symbolised Britain’s manufacturing of electrical systems and electronics for much of the 20th century. Recently, the company divested its defense division. As such, the actual identity of the company metamorphosed overnight from one dominantly oriented to electronics to one with its newer focus on information technology hardware. However, the GEC corporate brand name, despite enjoying wide esteem, reflected its past identity and did not communicate the radical change that had occurred. Consequently, the company adopted another historic brand name which was part of its portfolio of brands—Marconi: the latter was the company founded by Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of wireless transmission, whose firm had been acquired by GEC. Thus, having changed its Actual identity, the company was faced with a pressing need to bring the Communicated identity into alignment. The Marconi name not only reflected the new positioning more strikingly but also drew on the distinct identity strands of the organization’s heritage. Alas for Marconi, the strategy has not been successful and a new misalignment has emerged between the new positioning (Actual identity) and some yet-to-be disseminated altered strategic direction (new Ideal identity).

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED:
ACTUAL AND Communicated
The British Post Office encompasses mail delivery (the Royal Mail); retail offices that sell stamps, provide basic banking services, and distribute government benefit payments; and the sending and delivery of packages. In recent years, the British Post Office has been broadening its operations to the Continent. It is also anticipating partial privatization of some services. In these latter contexts, management believed the Post Office name would not adequately differentiate itself from other postal service entities using “post office” in their name. Further, confusion could be caused within the U.K. because “post office” is used for both the retail offices and the corporate umbrella organization. Thus the name Consignia was adopted for the umbrella entity, but three distinct divisions retained the traditional names Royal Mail, Post Office, and Parcel Force. This enables the company to enter prospective new markets under its corporate name. In essence, the new corporate name intends to reflect a potentially wider range of services in a larger geographic footprint, and permits potential global delivery systems under an
international identity. Also, should Consignia be partially privatized, it can be differentiated in the minds of the global financial community as an international firm. At the same time, the Post Office identifies only the retail outlets within the U.K. and provides clarity for consumers.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED: ACTUAL AND IDEAL

Prudential, the large British financial services group (not related to Prudential in the U.S.), in the mid-1980s confronted a substantial incongruence between the reality of its scope (Actual identity) vs. the widely-held perception (Conceived identity) that it was narrowly focused in life assurance (insurance). Olins (1990) describes the situation as one of stark contrast. Prudential was Britain's largest estate agent (real estate firm), beyond its strong insurance base. However, the latter dominated its image among stakeholders; further, its longtime "Man from the Pru" visual imagery reinforced its narrow roots. Olins' firm developed and implemented "a radical solution" in his words, via a design transformation built around the face of Prudence, long a symbol in the company's iconography. The new Prudential visual identity, supported by an extensive marketing communications program (Communicated identity), succeeded in bridging the identity gap over a period of years.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED: ACTUAL AND IDEAL

Volvo, the Swedish automotive and engineering group, faced an identity problem related to the firm's strategic goals. The Volvo group, in addition to its commercial division vehicle division, had a car division which enjoyed an enviable quality reputation for its brand name. However, Volvo cars were ranked twenty-third in unit sales volume worldwide. Industry projections pointed towards further consolidation within the automotive sector with predictions of only five to ten global car manufacturers remaining in a few years. However, Volvo's automobile brand values—principally based on safety—were becoming increasingly relevant to consumers. For its part, Volvo did not have the financial clout to support the car brand, especially in the U.S. market. Very simply, in the automobile industry, Volvo was a comparatively small company with a large brand. For the company's leadership, the ideal strategic solution was for the Volvo brand to be sold off and the proceeds from the sale to be reinvested in its other competencies of engineering and commercial vehicles. The Volvo group was sold to Ford, and joined their stable of other distinctive high reputation marques such as Jaguar and Aston Martin. In essence, the present and future of the Volvo car business were misaligned. Having addressed this issue, Volvo now faces another misalignment, that between its Actual and Conceived identities, because the destiny of its same-named cars resides in the hands of another corporation. This illustrates the point that realigning identities can be an ongoing management concern.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED: ACTUAL AND DESIRED

BP's (formerly British Petroleum), acquisition of Amoco, as with any merger, creates a corporate entity which embraces both organizations' multiple identities. However, BP's recent (post-merger) corporate positioning strategy emphasized its environmental activities and aspirations (Desired identity). However, to many this seems to be at variance with organizational reality and the Actual identity of the organization. BP is quintessentially concerned with oil exploration, refining, and distribution. The environmental activist group Greenpeace, for instance, pointed out that only 1% of BP's activities comes from sustainable sources. What is clear from the above is that the post-merger BP, while it may be less British and more American, and certainly more global in outlook, has not changed its core business which is oil exploration. Although BP has a stated corporate arm of being green-oriented, this environmental positioning (Desired) is an aspiration which (to us) bears questionable resemblance to near-term reality; BP's substantive ability to achieve its Desired identity is constrained, but it may be able to achieve relative "green" advantage over other energy firms.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED: COMMUNICATED AND CONCEIVED

Intel launched its advanced Pentium chip in 1994 on the wings of a marketing and communications program built on the widely-recognized success of the company's R&D-driven stream of components. The company had invested heavily in its well-known ongoing "Intel Inside" advertising campaign featuring a core message of the superiority of Intel-brand components. This communicated identity was supported by the company's track record of successful innovations. The Pentium chip was the latest entry in this line. However, during the fall of 1994, murmurs grew louder within the advanced user community that the Pentium chip was flawed for some complex computations, especially in scientific research. These user doubts and concerns were spread largely by E-mail.

Although aware of the concerns among part of
the user community, Intel did not undertake any public actions to rectify the underlying product problem. In late November, the situation burst into the public arena when news of the problem “migrated” into mainstream media, and very quickly escalated into a major mass media print and broadcast news story. The company characterized the concerns as exaggerated and the problems as likely to occur very infrequently; Intel would replace the chip only if its own analysis and judgment led it to a conclusion that the problem was serious. Very soon, as awareness and concern mounted about Intel’s Pentium chips, doubts were being cast by key stakeholders—e.g., manufacturers using Intel chips, distributors, end-users—on the reliability of Intel’s positioning (Conceived identity). Confronted with a deepening misalignment of its Communicated and Conceived identities, Intel within weeks changed its position (albeit grudgingly in the eyes of many) to one of greater responsiveness to customer concerns. Through these actions, the company gradually moved to restore its traditional reputation for developing and manufacturing high quality components.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED: CONCEIVED AND COMMUNICATED

Hilton is a world-renowned hotel chain brand. In the mid-1960s, the U.S.-based company suffered acute financial difficulties which led to much of its non-American operations being sold off, including the rights to the Hilton brand name internationally. The non-American operations were eventually acquired by the British entertainment group Ladbrookes. Both the U.S.-based Hilton and Ladbrookes used the Hilton brand name. Although consumers generally perceived “Hilton” to be one entity, in reality the brand was owned by two organizations. Over time, the two firms increasingly employed different communications programs to support the Hilton brand in their markets. This caused brand identity confusion for those consumers and/or business-to-business customers who used Hilton in both sets of markets. In identity terms, there was a gap between the widely-held perception of Hilton as a single entity (Conceived) and the two Communicated identities. By the mid-1990s, the two management groups realized that this misalignment was weakening the common meaning and values in the brand. In 1998, the two organizations entered into a formal marketing and branding alliance, including reservation systems, technology, marketing programs, and, most noticeably, visual identity.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED: DESIRED AND CONCEIVED

Body Shop, a cosmetic retailer (and manufacturer) had long positioned itself as a firm with pro-social values, principally through the voice of its founder/CEO Anita Roddick. The company’s Desired identity drove both its philosophy and its strategy. The positioning was reflected especially through the company’s environmentally-friendly product formulas. The growth and success of the company, and Roddick’s style and rhetoric, attracted considerable media attention. (At this time, the Desired and Communicated identities were in alignment.)

The company’s vigorous espousal of its values led to some external explorations of the company’s actual practices. Some of these suggested that the Body Shop was not living up to its own standards, leading to widely-reported accusations and debate about the validity of the company’s environmental and ethical credentials. The company undertook an ethical audit; the latter reported a number of inconsistencies between Body Shop’s statements of its policies (Communicated identity) vis-à-vis the underlying reality (Actual identity). Media coverage of the inconsistencies further fueled the debate, leading to a growing skepticism on the part of the public and a change in perceptions of the company (Conceived identity). In essence, the misalignments had their roots in the growing distance between the founder’s vision (Desired), supported by the company’s communications (Communicated) on the one hand and on the other hand eventual public perception (Conceived) that the company’s Actual identity was not as distinctive as claimed. (This is an illustration of the classic “promise/performance gap” Greyser (1974, 1999) has identified as a major corporate communications problem.)

The Body Shop experience indicates the multiple interfaces among the five identity types, interfaces which can point to perils for company reputation. Note also that its Actual identity seemed to migrate over time, further challenging efforts at identity alignment.

IDENTITIES MISALIGNED: IDEAL AND CONCEIVED

Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong’s longtime international airline, confronted a significant strategic identity issue in preparation for the 1997 changeover from British to Chinese control of Hong Kong. The company was generally seen as a quality airline, but one strongly associated with Hong Kong’s colonial past. A major
challenge for the future was for Cathay Pacific to be perceived as more Asian (rather than British/Asian) in order to strengthen its market abilities in Asia (including attracting a wider Asian customer base), as well as to reflect the changed political realities in Hong Kong. In short, the company needed to align its Conceived identity with its (new) Ideal identity. Cathay Pacific chose to undertake this identity realignment through a massive coordinated set of initiatives intended to transform the reality of the company (Actual identity) to achieve the new perceptions (Conceived) that would reflect the new strategy (Ideal) and permit communications (Communicated) based on the substantive changes. Among the initiatives were: adding aircraft capable of operating in medium-sized airports in Asian markets previously underserved by Cathay Pacific, appointing an increased proportion of Asian nationals (including managers), and changing the on-board food and service to reflect more closely the wider Asian customer base. In addition, Cathay Pacific’s visual identity was markedly changed to draw extensively from traditional Chinese imagery including calligraphy and symbolism.

From the above examples and many others we have studied, several additional observations should be noted:

• Multiple identities are pervasive-in public organizations as well as in the private sector, in product firms and service firms, and in global entities and more local ones.

• In merger and acquisition situations, senior managers need to be extra-sensitive to the even larger number of identities present, which in turn may call for harmonization. In our view, the Actual and Desired identities of each firm warrant special attention in terms of the culture and the leadership of the combined companies.

• Different identity types tend to inhabit different timeframes. Most noticeably, the Conceived identity lags behind the Actual identity because it often takes time for stakeholder groups to recognize incremental changes in reality. A major task for identity consultants (and a company’s communications partners) is to signal meaningful change via name changes, visual identification changes, and/or major corporate communications campaigns (usually explaining a company's changed activities, direction, etc.).

• Let us reiterate that often multiple identities can co-exist comfortably within a company even if they are somewhat inconsistent. For example, a CEO may articulate an identity toward which the company is still reaching (Ideal) through a strategy of broadening the company’s product line portfolio, but the company’s current identity (Actual) is still clearly understood.

CONCLUSION
In this article we have sought to provide a new framework-the AC’ID Test—to assist senior company management in researching, analyzing, and managing corporate identities. We have advocated the idea that companies have multiple identities, not a single identity, and have defined and described five principal types of identity. As described above, they reflect both internal and external perspectives. Our approach takes into account the roles of different stakeholders in shaping and interpreting the identities. We also note that identities derive from different management traditions and disciplines (e.g., communications, organizational behavior, strategy), further articulated in the Appendix, which describes the methodology and sources of our research.

We have illustrated with numerous examples how misaligned identities may represent perils for an organization. In turn, these misalignments may require management actions.

We believe that the AC’ID Test serves as a structure to aid management in understanding its company’s identities, and navigating the company through the complexities of identity change and realignment.

We recognize that in-depth examination of corporate identity occurs relatively infrequently, typically at a strategic “fork in the road” such as a major merger, acquisition, or divestment. In our view, however, because of changes in the business and competitive environment, regular identity reviews warrant a place on the senior management’s agenda. The ultimate guardians and managers of corporate identity reside in the boardroom.
EXHIBIT ONE
THE FIVE IDENTITIES OF THE AC'ID TEST

A
ACTUAL

C
COMMUNICATED

I
IDEAL

D
DESIRED

C
CONCEIVED

GEC
British Post Office

Prudential

Intel

Hilton

Volvo

B P

Cathay Pacific

Body Shop
APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The research reported here brings together several major strands of inquiry. The collaborative TransAtlantic identity study focused on the conceptions and analytic approaches on identity projects undertaken by leading industry consultants. Balmer’s extensive literature surveys explored the nature of identity, how organizations manage their identities, and “disciplinary schools of thought” (multiple roots) in conceptualizing identity. Greyser drew from his continuing development of Harvard Business School case studies in Corporate Communications, especially on identity and image issues, and also his field research on corporate reputation.

1. TransAtlantic Identity Study

With the cooperation and support of a leading global identity and branding consulting firm, we interviewed senior consultants in London and New York regarding their past and current approaches to conducting identity projects. Some 34 interviews were completed, also encompassing previous project experiences with other firms. In addition, the firm’s archival material on recent identity and branding projects was made available for study. Further, we examined published material from approximately twenty U.K. identity consultants regarding their principal methodologies.

In addition, the firm’s archival material on recent identity and branding projects was made available for study. Further, we examined published material from approximately twenty U.K. identity consultants regarding their principal methodologies.

2. Literature Review

The survey of the identity literature examined publications extending over a 50-year period, from both business and academic researchers in the U.S., U.K., and the Continent. Early examples include the seminal theoretical work of Kenneth Boulding (1956) and the pioneering applied studies of Pierre Martineau (1960). Three major comprehensive reviews provided a strong foundation for analysis-Kennedy (1977), Abratt (1989), and Balmer (1998). Other relevant sources include: Barich and Kotler (1991), Gray and Smeltzer (1985), Schultz, Hatch, and Larsen (2000), Van Riel (1995), and Whetten and Godfrey (1998). Analysis of the literature led to: a taxonomy of various identity audit techniques advocated by academics, which in turn permitted a comparison with the techniques employed by consultants; an assessment of the articulated components of corporate identity by different authors, permitting a comparison of the scope of identity audits; and a review of emerging theory regarding corporate identity interface(s), thus illuminating issues of congruence (i.e., alignment) across different types of identity.

3. HBS Case Studies

Over several decades, culminating in the development of his Harvard Business School MBA elective on Corporate Communications, Greyser wrote a series of case studies on identity and image issues confronted by corporations and other organizations (e.g., NASA). These clinical studies focused on how these entities were perceived by relevant publics and how they sought to change those perceptions through communications as well as policy initiatives. Additional field research addressed corporate reputation, derived principally from multi-attribute perceptions of companies in large-scale surveys.

A significant insight that emerged from analysis of all the strands was that corporate identity was in truth multiple identities. These identities were based on multiple disciplinary roots, via multiple routes, leading to the five types of identity incorporated in the AC’ID Test framework.

Exhibit A-1 delineates a range of concepts that constitute building blocks of corporate identity, shows the management roots/disciplinary origins for each, provides a brief explanation of the concept, and indicates the links of each to one or more of the five identity types. For each of these concepts there is considerable literature. Representative references have been included in Exhibit A-1 for each of them. Of particular pertinence to interested readers is the recent (2000) Schultz, Hatch, and Larsen volume The Expressive Organization. Its contents reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the fields related to identity.

We have described above the principal components of the research that led to the conceptualization and articulation of the AC’ID Test. Our goal has been to show how studies of both practice and literature combine to reveal a mosaic of five types of corporate identity incorporated in the AC’ID Test.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT ROOTS/DISCIPLINARY ORIGINS</th>
<th>OUR BRIEF EXPLANATION</th>
<th>LINKS TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FIVE IDENTITY TYPES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE IDENTITY</td>
<td>MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS GRAPHIC DESIGN</td>
<td>The mix of attributes which makes any entity distinct. See Balmer (1998), Marwick and Fill (1997), Van Riel and Balmer (1997).</td>
<td>ACTUAL COMMUNICATED CONCEIVED IDEAL DESIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE BRANDING</td>
<td>MARKETING ECONOMICS STRATEGY</td>
<td>Derived from an organization’s identity and encapsulated in a branding position statement which delineates the tangible and intangible attributes of the brand. Brand reputation serves as a company’s covenant with key stakeholders. See Keller and Aaker (1998), King (1991).</td>
<td>ACTUAL COMMUNICATED CONCEIVED IDEAL DESIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE IMAGE AND CORPORATE REPUTATION</td>
<td>MARKETING ECONOMICS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY STRATEGY</td>
<td>The perception of the organization by an individual, group, or groups at one point in time (image) over time (reputation) and the added value accrued from a positive reputation (esteem). See Boulding (1956), Gray and Balmer (1998), Greyser (1999), Worcester and Downham (1986).</td>
<td>CONCEIVED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS</td>
<td>MARKETING &amp; COMMUNICATIONS</td>
<td>The multi-faceted way by which organizations communicate. <em>Primary</em> (Product Performance, Organizational and leadership behavior); <em>Secondary</em> (Advertising, PR, Graphic Design, Sponsorship and other controlled forms); <em>Tertiary</em> (word of mouth, third party communications, and “spin”). See Balmer and Gray (1999), Bernstein (1984), Van Riel (1995).</td>
<td>COMMUNICATED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCEPT</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT ROOTS/DISCIPLINARY ORIGINS</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE PERSONALITY</td>
<td>MARKETING PSYCHOLOGY ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR</td>
<td>Very similar to the organizational identification concept but also includes the role of the founder’s personality in identity. See Olins (1978).</td>
<td>ACTUAL DESIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY/IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR</td>
<td>Traditionally focuses on an organization’s culture(s), with the emphasis on personnel’s commitment to the organization. See Albert and Whetten (1985), Dutton and Harquail (1994), Whetten and Godfrey (1998).</td>
<td>ACTUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE</td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR</td>
<td>The mix of values and sub-cultural groups which is a major element of an organization’s actual identity. See Hatch (1993), Hatch and Schultz (1997).</td>
<td>CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR</td>
<td>The role of an organization’s founders and leaders in shaping an identity. See Dowling (1993), Olins (1978).</td>
<td>ACTUAL DESIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE STRATEGY</td>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>The organization’s game plan. See Andrews (1980), Ashforth and Mael (1996).</td>
<td>IDEAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ARCHITECTURE</td>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>The relationship/s between the corporate entity/holding company and its subsidiaries in business units. See Stuart (1999).</td>
<td>ACTUAL IDEAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>GRAPHIC DESIGN</td>
<td>The system of visual identification used by the organization incorporated on products, staff uniforms, buildings, vehicles, etc. See Baker and Balmer (1978), Chajet and Schachtman (1991), Margulies (1977).</td>
<td>ACTUAL COMMUNICATED IDEAL DESIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCEPT</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT ROOTS/DISCIPLINARY ORIGINS</td>
<td>OUR BRIEF EXPLANATION</td>
<td>LINKS TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FIVE IDENTITY TYPES</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>CORPORATE IDENTITY INTERFACE</td>
<td>MARKETING/ MULTIDISCIPLINARY</td>
<td>Usually refers to the identity/image interface (the degree of congruence between organizational reality and external perception). Other &quot;key&quot; interfaces have been identified. See Abratt (1989), Balmer (1998).</td>
<td>ACTUAL CONCEIVED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE IDENTITY MIX(ES)</td>
<td>MARKETING/ MULTIDISCIPLINARY</td>
<td>The elements which make up an organization's identity. See Balmer (2001), Birkigt and Stadler (1986).</td>
<td>ACTUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT RELATING TO CORPORATE IDENTITY</td>
<td>MARKETING/ MULTIDISCIPLINARY</td>
<td>Articulates the various approaches to corporate identity: strategic, behavioral, communications schools, and the four graphic design schools. See Balmer (1995).</td>
<td>ACTUAL COMMUNICATED IDEAL DESIRED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ENDNOTES
1 The AC'/ID Test™ JMT Balmer 1999. The framework is also known as DR BALMER’S AC'/ID Test™ 1999.


2 CEO Lord Browne recently characterized the company as “global with British roots and headquarters,” at 8th International Corporate Identity Symposium in London, November, 2001.

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