

Oliver, S. M. (Ed.) (2005). *Handbook of corporate communication and public relations: Pure and applied*. London, England: Routledge.

Reviewed by: Donald Alexander

Modern corporations and their corporate communication advisors face challenges unthought of by academics and practitioners even 10 years ago. These include World Wide Web driven activists, high level community expectations of good corporate citizenship, more intense scrutiny from investors and analysts on reputation and governance issues, employees with access to information previously only held by senior management, a more culturally diverse workforce, and technology that allows for more direct, one-on-one communication, and less reliance on media mediated channels.

This handbook, published in the United Kingdom, is culturally in tune with Australian and New Zealand values, and utilises extensive academic and practical research as the basis for its extensive analysis of current corporate communication practices. In the words of general editor Oliver, It is the corporate communicator who has to be fully aware of changing environments, major trends, opportunities or threats to the development or survival of an organization.

Divided into four sections: Corporate Communication at National Level, Corporate Communication at International Level, Managing Image, Identity and Reputation, and The Future is Now, chapters cover an extensive array of matters that today's communicator faces. These include best practice in the contentious area of change management, knowledge management and the fundamental changes technology is bringing to the field, the governance issues associated with listed and unlisted family enterprises, the latest thinking on communication audits by the leaders in the field (Tourish and Hargie), Kitchen on corporate reputation, whilst Varey assesses methodological issues for corporate communication research. As senior management becomes increasingly aware of the vital importance of communication as a core skill, there is discussion on developing a cross-disciplinary approach to an integrated corporate communication (ICC) strategy where all functions (marketing, finance, production) work toward a common agreed purpose.

There are specific sections on issues and crisis management and business continuity with emphasis on the role that the internet now plays in managing responses, and the impact of terrorism on corporate public relations is covered. This brings these core skills of corporate communication right up to date and offers very relevant best practice ideas.

Where this handbook takes a new direction and stands out for its innovation is in the chapters on visualising the message, especially with future generations becoming more reliant on screen messages; the discussion on the role of democracy (LEtang); language as a corporate asset (a new field and thoroughly researched by Dhir and illustrated by a case study on the development of a corporate language policy in an international environment), and the increasingly important role of creative thinking. These chapters will be welcomed by researchers and developers of curriculum material as they open up further areas of development and study.

With the move to rapid globalisation, the chapters on China, global branding, and the Greek Olympic Games as a case study on international public relations are relevant and highly useful for practitioners who are daily faced with new markets and new cultures. Morley discusses the global village, and Dolphin covers recent research on the relationship between organisational and international stakeholders. It is also pleasing there is a specific chapter on ethics, but many of the other chapters reinforce the vital importance of ethical best practice in the corporate communication field and how it informs reputation, leadership, brand and governance.

This book will be highly useful and practical for mid to senior level practitioners and post graduate students studying public affairs topics, and also those academics responsible for postgraduate subjects. It comprehensively covers nearly all the core strategic skills required by the 21st century corporate communicator.

Purchase information: This book is available from all good booksellers, or can be purchased direct from Taylor & Francis at: <http://www.routledge.com/>

About the reviewer: Donald Alexander is Senior Lecturer, Public Relations and Organisational Communication, School of Communication, Charles Sturt University, and course coordinator for the undergraduate Public Relations and Organisational Communication degree. Donald holds a law degree from the University of Otago (1971) and an MA (Communication-Organisational Communication) from CSU (awarded in 1997). He is currently enrolled in the CSU PhD programme where he is researching leadership communication.

Prior to CSU Donald was at Central Queensland University, Mackay campus, where he was also coordinator of the Public Relations and Organisational Communication degree and was also sub-dean for the Faculty of

Informatics and Communication at Mackay. While at CQU he was also responsible for getting PRIA accreditation for the CQU undergraduate degree.

Prior to commencing an academic career Donald has worked at senior management levels at AMP and American Express and also was principal of two consultancies, Network Communication in Melbourne and Pacific Strategies in Sydney. Donald has been a member of the Victorian Executive of the PRIA, a member of the NSW executive as chair of the education committee for a number of years and was NSW President for 1997-98. He served on the University of Technology-Sydney Arts and Humanities Advisory Council where he assisted with a major course review in 1997.

Donald has also held positions as Public Relations Manager for Australia for Nissan Motor Company and worked in corporate communications in Australia and New Zealand for Comalco Limited.