

BEHIND A GREAT BRAND THERE IS A GREAT COMPANY

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Marketing: Set of activities of an economic and social character aimed at establishing an exchange relationship between supply and demand with a view to satisfying the needs and desires of individuals.^[1]

Corporate image: State of opinion that sums up the perception that a given public has of the organisation from the synthesis of its behaviour, its culture and its corporate personality.^[2]

¹ Dictionary J. Walter Thomson de comunicación, marketing y nuevas tecnologías. Madrid, Ciencias Sociales, 2003.

² Ibid.

Communication: Applied communication is essentially a strategic force. Communication is not only fitted in the general strategy of the company, just as finances, production or marketing, but it even contributes to defining the company and driving it, and making it realisable and controllable.^[3]

1. INTRODUCTION

At the present time, in every business organisation, there is the need, sometimes latent and at other times clearly perceivable to take company communication and management as the basic pillars on which the company must be grounded. The research conducted by the academic world in 2003, together with present experience in a multi-sectoral communication agency with a division specialized in communication for the ceramic sector, sheds light on the state of communication in the Spanish ceramic cluster, which evidences little professionalism of the communication people in charge. A study is involved of tendencies that should not be extrapolated to all the companies in the sector but that does respond to the situation of a great many of the small, medium-sized and even large companies in this sector.

In the research conducted, confusion is detected between the sales department and the marketing department. As most noteworthy situation, it highlights that companies do not have a Strategic Communication and Image Plan that includes objectives for the middle or long term, with assigned resources and mechanisms for evaluating the actions undertaken. Moreover, most of the companies in the sector have no marketing departments (according to data supplied by ASCER^[4] 23% of all the tile manufacturing companies. 200 companies account for 98% of the production associated with ASCER). And perhaps the most notable fact is that having a marketing department does not necessarily mean performing marketing.

2. COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT. A STRATEGIC VISION OF IMAGE AND COMMUNICATION.

In this sense we wish to propose going a step further than what has occurred so far in the ceramic sector, posing the issue of company brand image management as a comprehensive company function. A vision of communication that takes into account a range of public, strategic and conjunctural objectives, beyond the own clients, which concerns itself with keeping a climate of 'good terms' with all those groups with whom it has a common interest, known as *stakeholders* ^[5] (creditors, institutions, specifications writers, opinion leaders, mass media, shareholders, competition, own personnel, clients, citizens...).

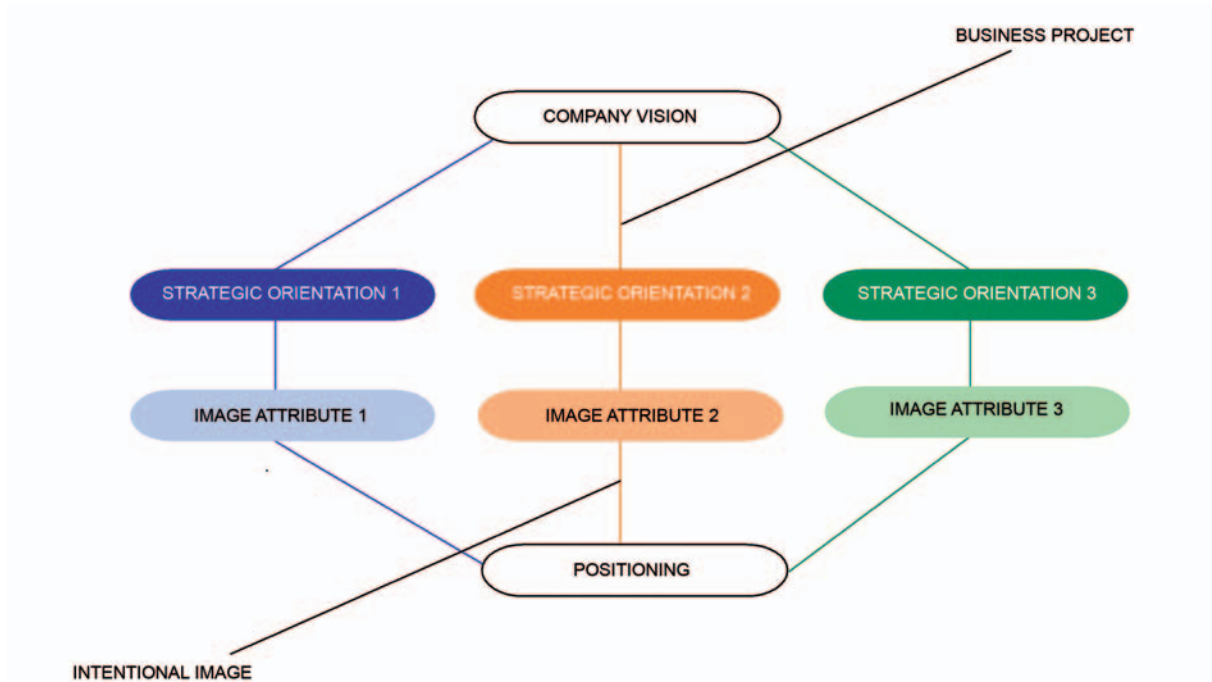
Thus, communication management (and no other company management, not even marketing or administration), together with top company management, is responsible for establishing the necessary tools that help highlighting all the strong points of the business project, stressing the strategic orientations chosen by the ceramic companies

³ www.javeriana.edu.co (Joan Costa).

⁴ Data supplied in September 2003 by ASCER. Spanish Ceramic Tile Manufacturers' Association created in 1977 under Law 19/1977 on Professional Organisations. It replaced and extended the activities of the National Union Grouping of Tile Manufacturing Industrialists (ANSIA), which ran from 1959 and which, in turn, had come from official recognition of the Tile Manufacturers Group, an organisation that emerged in the Forties.

⁵ Stakeholders: Public players involved or affected by the running of a company. At www.villafane.com (Justo Villafañe).

to contribute to generating the intentional image and strategic positioning that the project requires. Favouring the attainment of business goals, realising its business mission and approaching its business vision, its destiny. (Graph 1).



Graph 1.

Creating an attractive brand, of great value, which speaks the same language as the publics with which it maintains relations, with which it interacts, establishing the necessary emotional bonds so that after the experience of brand creation they identify with the brand, making it theirs since, after all, it is to them that the brand belongs and not to the company. And because, in short, *behind a great brand there is a great company*.

