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Abstract

Competing with product attributes has become more difficult because more companies have access to same technologies, and that is why brands have become the focus of strategies in many companies. Conventional brand marketing has limited its communication goals to communicating with consumers or customer companies, when audiences for the corporate brand are wider. The corporate brand is able to communicate a larger set of issues to a wider range of audiences, such as customers, media, government and financial audiences. In addition to external benefits, the corporate brand also has internal functions in facilitating employee identification with the company.

Strategic alliances often influence the corporate identity, on which the corporate brand statement is based, as well as important brand communication channels. When these changes take place, firms must review their corporate brand to ensure that audiences still receive a positive message that is based on reality. The way a company presents itself through the corporate brand is mainly responsible for the corporate image formed by audiences.

The purpose of the study is to examine how an industrial company can manage its corporate brand during a strategic alliance. The subject is researched with the help of a case company, a Finnish manufacturer of printing, newsprint, and specialty papers. The company had a period of cooperation with a competitor, where the strategic alliance entailed some of the manufacturing operations of the partners, and the sales operations which were handled through a jointly owned sales network.

The main findings of the study were that a company that is involved in a strategic alliance must:

- reduce managerial and power imbalance to balance the relative influences of the partners
- create effective feedback channels to keep its multiple identities aligned
- manage organisational identities with effective internal marketing to ensure employee behaviour that supports the corporate brand
- use a branded approach to protect its corporate brand and to reduce identification problems
- ensure a consistency in corporate brand communications throughout the corporation, or reduce the involvement of certain parts of corporation with the corporate brand if achieving consistency is impossible.

Key words	Corporate brand, alliances, corporate identity, corporate image
Further information	