



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

The importance of internal communication in corporate rebranding

Case Study: Nors

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by

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Abstract

For a corporate rebranding to be successful, it is fundamental that the employees of the company understand and support the new corporate brand from a very early stage. The aim of this thesis is to understand if the three chosen dimensions, (1) internal branding, (2) continuity of brand elements and (3) internal communication, have a positive impact on the employees' acceptance of the new brand.

A qualitative study was developed, in which the case study of the corporate rebranding of Grupo Auto Sueco to Grupo Nors was analyzed. Five semi-structured interviews were conducted, with respondents from different business areas, including the holding.

The results show that internal branding was important in the communication of the new message. However, for those employees who have worked longer in the company it has not been so easy to feel a connection with the new corporate brand, even though the essence of the former brand is reflected in the new brand. Internal communication was fundamental to guarantee that all employees felt involved in the building of the new brand since the beginning. In order to accomplish that, different internal communication channels were used, such as e-mail and face-to-face meetings, to invite employees to participate in workshops and interviews, where their input on the new brand was taken into account. In the final phase, tests with internal target groups were ran to analyze and study their reaction to the new brand.

Keywords: corporate rebranding, internal communication, internal branding, internal communication channels

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Introduction

The importance of corporate brands is irrefutable considering they are the ultimate link between a variety of stakeholders (Balmer and Gray, 2003). To change that, to rebrand a brand with meaning not only to consumers but also to employees, is not an easy decision (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004) and it may not have the intended results.

One of the most important markets of an organization, that is easily overlooked, is the internal one, the employees. They are the ones who build a brand but to do so in an effective way, they need to be inspired by it. For that to happen the companies need to be able to transmit them the brands' ambition and values (Deal and Kennedy, 1982 *apud* Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). In a corporate rebranding this communication between management and employees has even a more important role because if employees have an early involvement and are aware of the changes since the beginning, and follow the development of the brand, they will feel more passionate about it and will most likely support it (Merrilees, 2005).

Although of extreme importance, the direct relation between the concepts of corporate rebranding and internal communication lacks some development in the literature.

Given the above reasoning, the purpose of this paper is to deepen the relation between internal communication and corporate rebranding and verify if a well-developed internal communication positively influences the acceptance of the new brand by employees. In the light of the model proposed, the corporate rebranding of Nors, that occurred between 2011 and 2013, is analyzed, in order to answer the research questions proposed: (1) Did the use of internal branding have a positive impact on the employees' acceptance of the new brand?; (2) Which of the internal communication channels used were the most effective?; (3) Was there a continuity of brand elements?; (4) Did internal communication have a positive impact on the employees' acceptance of the new brand?.

The document is divided in five chapters. In chapter 1, the literature review about corporate rebranding and internal communication is exposed. In chapter 2, the research model is described and the methodology is defined. In chapter 3, the case study is exposed and the main findings are presented. In chapter 4, the findings are discussed. Finally, in chapter 5, further research avenues are outlined and limitations are referred.

Chapter 1

Literature review

1.1. Corporate brands

Considered one of the most fascinating phenomena of the business environment in the twenty-first century (Olins, 2000; Lewis, 2000; Hatch and Schultz, 2001, Newman, 2001 *apud* Balmer and Gray, 2003), the importance of corporate brands is irrefutable, considering they are the ultimate link between a variety of stakeholders including employees, management and consumers and the organization (Balmer and Gray, 2003).

According to Aaker (2004), a corporate brand is the brand that defines the organization and will deliver and stand behind the offering of a company. It is expected that a corporate brand will have a (1) rich heritage, (2) assets and capabilities, (3) people, (4) values and a (5) performance record (Aaker, 2004). Balmer (2001) summarizes the roles and the strengths of a corporate brand: (1) communicates the brand's values, (2) differentiates a company from its competitors and (3) strengthens the esteem and loyalty that stakeholders feel towards the organization. The corporate brand relates the different stakeholders,

the products and services of a company to each other through their relationship with the brand (Hatch and Schultz, 2003).

Balmer and Gray (2003) adapted a scheme presented by Balmer himself in 2001, in which the main characteristics of a corporate brands are compiled:

	Corporate brands
Management responsibility	Chief executive
Functional responsibility	Most/All departments
General responsibility	All personnel
Disciplinary roots	Multidisciplinary
Brand gestation	Medium to long
Stakeholder focus	Multiple stakeholders
Communications channels	Total corporate communications

Table 1: Characteristics of a corporate brand (Balmer and Gray, 2003)

A corporate brand requires the alignment of, among others, (1) the brand values, (2) the identity, (3) the corporate strategy, (4) the vision, (5) the communication and (6) the stakeholders' commitment (Balmer and Gray, 2003).

It is also important to refer that the success of a corporate brand depends upon the support of the whole organization, from top to bottom and across all organizational departments (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). It is fundamental for a company to understand that corporate branding is about belonging (Hatch and Schultz, 2003).

1.2. Corporate rebranding

Deciding to advance with a corporate rebrand is not an easy decision and it may not be the solution to some problems (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). Rebranding considerations include (1) the comprehension of the advantages and

disadvantages, (2) having the certainty about the message that a rebranding stands for and (3) the verification that the stakeholders understand and support the change (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). A corporate rebrand is considered a very strong formal signal to the stakeholders that something about the corporation changed (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006) and that they will need to adapt to a new mindset and culture (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). It is an extremely expensive process and it may significantly influence corporate reputation so it is crucial that a decision to rebrand is based in strong theory and research (Clavin, 1999 *apud* Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

Muzellec and Lambkin (2006, p. 805) define rebranding as the “creation of a new name, term, symbol, design or a combination of them for an established brand with the intention of developing a differentiated (new) position in the mind of stakeholders and competitors”. It is a “disjunction or change between an initially formulated corporate brand and a new formulation” (Merrilees and Miller, 2008, p. 538).

The definition of rebranding by Muzellec and Lambkin (2006), it can be branched in two parts. The first one related with the possible changes occurred in the marketing aesthetics. The second part of the definition is about the positioning of the company and whether it suffers any alterations in the course of the rebranding. There are two degrees of rebranding proposed, taking into consideration the two dimensions presented and the degree to which changes can occur in each one: (1) evolutionary or (2) revolutionary rebranding.

In an evolutionary rebranding, the changes in the aesthetics and in the positioning of the brand are fairly minor and hardly perceived. For example, Galp Energia, a portuguese energy company went through an evolutionary rebranding in 2016. Ricardo Miranda, brand creator in the agency responsible for the rebranding, states that “it is a refinement of an identity that already exists and that does not change in its essence. We continue to see the flame that is a G,

the orange color, the reference to energy. All of them, the brand components that we already knew, are still there. To the naked eye, it is a smooth evolution” (see Figure 1) (<https://www.dinheirovivo.pt/buzz/galp-a-vista-desarmada-e-uma-evolucao-suave/>).



Figure 1: Example of evolutionary corporate rebranding – Galp Energia

(<http://www.logotipo.pt/blog/>)

On the contrary, in a revolutionary rebranding the changes are major and clearly identified in the aesthetics and in the positioning and, as a consequence, the corporate brand is redefined. In 2002, Royal Mail – a postal service company in the United Kingdom – went forward with an revolutionary rebranding “in order to convey that its business was more than mail” (<http://www.businessinsider.com/14-brands-that-had-to-reverse-their-horrible-attempts-at-rebranding-2012-3?op=1>) (see Figure 2). Unfortunately, the new name, Consignia, was derided and considered “one of the most unpopular brands in UK corporate history” (http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/146210/consignia-go-royal-mail-rebrand?src_site=marketingmagazine#) mainly because it was an “invented word and confused the public about its role” (<http://www.yourprojector.com/blog/blog/2014/09/rebranding-u-turns/>). The brand was not well received by the public because “an iconic name and brand was being swapped for a nonsense word that conveyed no meaning at all”

(<http://www.designagency.co.uk/blog/2015/4/22/the-five-worst-rebrands>). Less than two years later the name returned to the old Royal Mail.



Figure 2: Example of revolutionary corporate rebranding – Royal Mail becomes Consignia (<http://www.designagency.co.uk/blog/2015/4/22/the-five-worst-rebrands>)

In a rebranding it is important to analyze the brand architecture of the organization and to identify in which level the rebranding occurred, to understand if it affects other levels of the hierarchy. Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) present three levels at which a rebranding can happen: (1) corporate, (2) business unit and (3) product, being the first two levels considered corporate-level rebranding. There is no rule that defines if a rebranding at a corporate level will influence the products level or vice-versa. For example, when the product brand Sumol suffered a rebranding in 2015, it did not affect the corporate brand Sumol+Compal which remained as it was. In 2009, when SONAE went through a corporate rebranding, it influenced its business units (SONAE Sierra, SONAE MC, SONAE SR, ...) but it did not affect its product brands as Worten or Sport Zone.

Regarding the brand architecture – the organizational structure of the brand portfolio that specifies brands roles and the nature of relationships between them (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000) –, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) developed a brand relationship spectrum, a tool to help understand how to employ sub brands and endorsed brands.

The model is firstly divided into four basic strategies: house of brands, endorsed brands, subbrands and branded house, having each different sub strategies (see Table 2). The position in the spectrum will define the strategy implemented for the different brands and, consequently, the position that the different brands will have in the customer’s mind.

Although Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) do not present a conclusion regarding this subject, it is possible to deduce that in a branded house a corporate rebranding will have a deep impact on the whole organization as it represents a company’s identity as a whole. However, in a house of brands, where sometimes “corporate brand associations are avoided” (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006:807), a rebrand at a corporate level may not have that much influence in lower levels.

Brand Relationship Spectrum	House of Brands	Not Connected
		Shadow Endorser
	Endorsed Brands	Token Endorser
		Linked Name
		Strong Endorsement
	Subbrands	Co-drivers
		Master Brand as Driver
	Branded House	Different Identity
		Same Identity

Table 2: Brand Relationship Spectrum (Aacker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)

1.3. Internal communication and internal branding

Internal communication is among the fastest growing specializations in public relations and communication management (Verc'ic', Verc'ic' and Sriramesh, 2012). Different factors contributed to this development, being globalization and the economic crisis among them, which resulted in permanent restructuring of companies. These factors led to a reduction of employees trust in management

and, consequently, their loyalty towards the organization in which they work has also decreased. Thus, the function of internal communication has become critical in order to engage and motivate employees.

Richard Dolphin (2005) defines internal communication as the communication between the managers and the employees of an organization and, according to Welch and Jackson (2007), it reflects the capacity of managers to build relationships with and between internal stakeholders.

An effective internal communication is a prerequisite for organizational success (Ruck and Welch, 2012). Managers have long recognized the importance of internal communication; however, it is seen from the perspective of management rather than the employee. Minimal attention has been given to what employees would like their organization to communicate (Ruck and Welch, 2012). But internal communication merits close attention, as employees may be the most important audience for a company's organizational communication and corporate branding efforts (Christensen and Askegaard, 2001). Indeed, employees are considered one of the most trusted information sources about an organization (Dortok, 2006).

Positioning internal communication within the corporate communication, Welch and Jackson (2007) define internal corporate communication as the communication between an organization's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to (1) promote commitment to the organization, (2) a sense of belonging to it, (3) awareness of its changing environment and (4) understanding of its evolving aims. Welch (2011) states that the connection between internal corporate communication and organizational engagement is a psychological state that links employees to their organization.

The role of internal branding is to create an emotional connection between employees and an organization. It is fundamental, for the success of a company,

that the workers have the brand vision in their minds and support that vision (Mitchell, 2002).

Bergstrom, Blumenthal and Crothers (2002) point out three goals to internal branding: (1) communicate, in an effective way, the brand to the employees, (2) convince them of its relevance and worth and (3) link every job in the organization to the delivery of the brand essence. At a corporate level, internal branding has the important role of unifying employees of different group companies so they can understand their place in the “big picture” and can contribute to its success and growth.

But the effort to build an internal brand should not be sporadic; the company should incorporate the branding into everyday experiences in a way that employees can “live” the brand at all times (Mitchell, 2002).

1.4. Internal communication channels

According to Jan Gooding, responsible for internal engagement during the rebranding of Aviva – a multinational insurance company, the employees “have to feel valued and respected throughout the whole process if you’re going to be successful. Your employees are the people who make the transition a positive one for your customers. Telling them the news first and involving them in the process is a vital part of that.”

<http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/1081775/british-airways-building-brand-inside>). The crucial role that employees play during a corporate rebranding is an indicator of the importance of internal communications, although there is no guide to build a strategic internal communication plan neither which channels should be used.

For internal communication to achieve its goals, it is mandatory that the communication channels work properly (Stegaroiu and Talal, 2014). McLuhan (1964, *apud* Men, 2014, p. 269) refers that “the medium is the message” because

each channel of communication engages different audiences in different ways and it will influence the scale and the pace of the communication.

Stegaroiu and Talal (2014) describe two types of internal communication channels: verbal and nonverbal. While in the first one the information is transmitted to others by spoken or written words, in the second one the information is shared without the use of words but by the analysis of nonverbal signals as, for example, the body language.

With the development of the Web 2.0. era, the panorama of communication as a whole was significantly altered. Interactive communication tools such as blogs, bulletin boards and social networking sites have been progressively used by organizations which benefited the communication with employees and, consequently, their engagement (Crescenzo, 2001 *apud* Men, 2014).

Despite the new technologies, “face-to-face is the most preferred medium because it improves the chances of communication being understood as it was meant” (Stegaroiu and Talal, 2014, p. 64) and is the most effective because by being a two-way communication allows “an immediate response on both sides” (Stegaroiu and Talal, 2014, p. 66) and also “allows nonverbal communication and immediate feedback and reflects the willingness of the management to listen to employees” (Men, 2014, p. 279).

But the effectiveness of communication depends of the acquaintance of both the sender’s and receiver’s functionalities of a channel (Belch and Belch, 2007 *apud* Lipiainen, Karjaluoto and Nevalainen, 2014).

1.5. The role of employees

Many times companies overlook one of their most important markets: the internal one, the employees who can make a brand come alive. The role of employees is changing and they need to be recognized as a brand’s ambassadors (Hemsley, 1998 *apud* Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) due to the fact that they

are, most of the times, the point of contact between a company and their audience and have a strong influence on the perception that the consumers have on both the brand and the organization (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). But to have a strong and positive influence, employees must be inspired by the purpose and the identity of the brand so they can care and believe in it.

Due to the important role of employees in the construction of a brand, it is necessary to encourage bottom-up communications and feedback (Weal, 2014) so that the organization can communicate with the employees in an effective way. Employees have two main relationships at work: (1) with their immediate supervisor and (2) with the organization (Masterson *et al.*, 2000 *apud* Sluss, Klimchack and Holmes, 2008). Organizational identification is the degree in which the employees are connected to the organization and is associated with job satisfaction, job involvement, turnover intentions and in role and extra-role performance; the level of engagement that employees feel towards the company they work in is influenced by the policies developed by the organization (Masterson *et al.*, 2000 *apud* Sluss, Klimchack and Holmes, 2008).

People are the core of the brand (Bergstrom, Blumenthal and Crothers, 2002). So it is imperative the practice of an effective internal communication to enhance trust between managers and employees in order to engage and kindle them (Mishra, Boynton and Mishra, 2014).

Chapter 2

Research Model and Methodology

2.1. Research Model

The research model presented in this study was adapted from the research model developed by Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova (2014) (see Figure 3). To build the model, the authors based themselves in previous models presented by Merrilees and Miller (2008) and Miller and Merrilees (2011 *apud* Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014).

The authors claim that before the analysis of the rebranding process it is important to understand its (1) context (for-profit vs. non-for-profit), (2) specific objectives and (3) triggers (urgent vs. non-urgent; proactive vs. reactive).

The process of rebranding is composed by three sub-processes: (1) brand re-visioning, (2) stakeholder buy-in and (3) rebranding implementation. How well the organization implement these three phases determines the success of the rebranding.

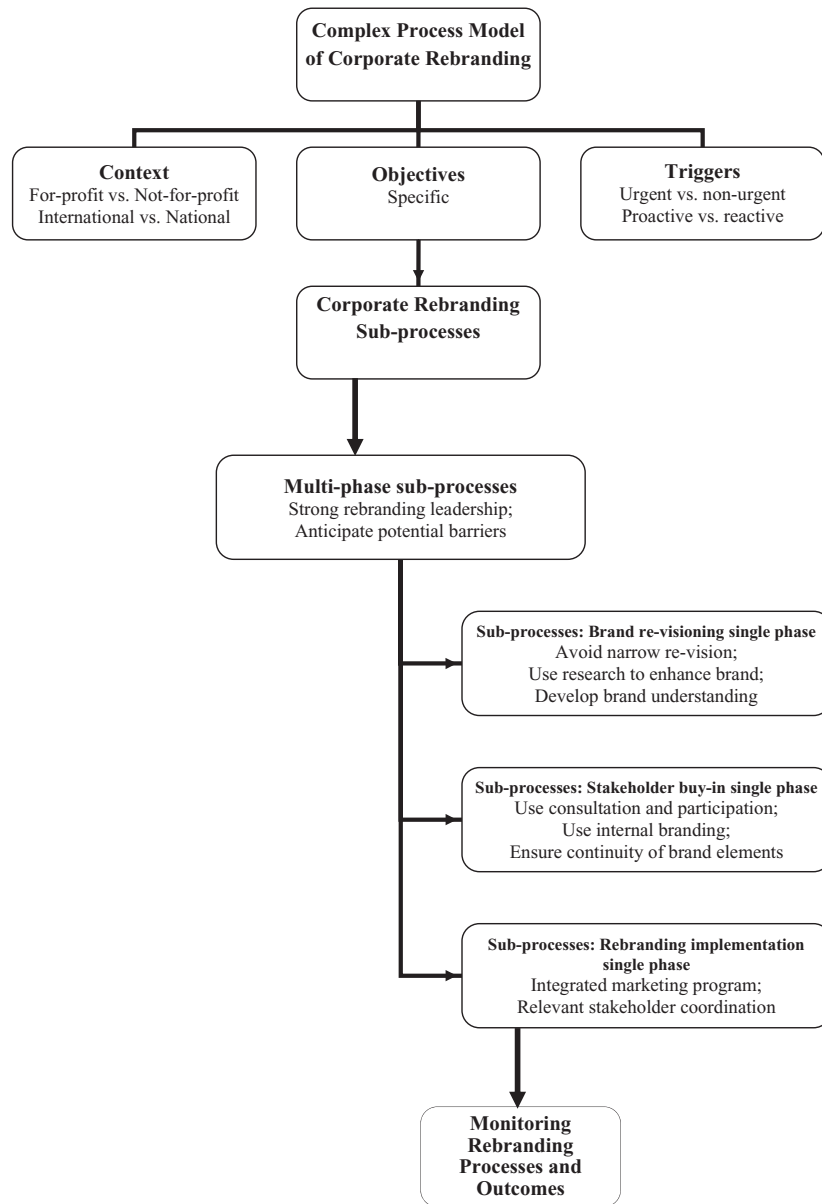


Figure 3: A new general complex process model of corporate rebranding (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014)

After a thorough review of the literature, Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova (2014) propose six major enablers – factors that ease the phases of the rebranding process (see Table 3) – and five barriers – factors that interfere with the phases of corporate rebranding (see Table 4). In their opinion, and after the analysis of different corporate rebranding articles, “the literature fails to provide a comprehensive explanation of how enablers and barriers influence corporate rebranding” (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014, p. 266). These enablers and barriers can be one-phase or multi-phase, depending if they influence one or more of the three sub-processes of the rebranding process.

Strong rebranding leadership (Multi-phase)
Developing brand understanding (Phase One)
Internal branding activities (Phase Two)
Continuity of brand attributes (Phase Two)
Stakeholder coordination (Phase Three)
Integrated marketing programme (Phase Three)

Table 3: Summary of major corporate rebranding enablers (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014)

Autocratic rebranding approach (Multi-phase)
Stakeholder tensions (Multi-Phase)
Narrow brand re-vision (Multi-Phase)
Inadequate research (Multi-Phase)
Inadequate customer consideration (Phase Two)

Table 4: Summary of major corporate rebranding barriers (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014)

The last stage of the process is the monitoring of the rebranding processes and outcomes.

After the review of the model and its enablers and barriers, the model through which the case study will be developed was constructed (see Figure 4).

The “Context”, “Objectives” and “Triggers” are dimensions which help to contextualize the corporate rebranding.

This model focuses only in the importance of the internal stakeholder buy-in to the success of the corporate rebranding. The two variables that influence this phase of the process are the (1) internal branding activities and the (2) continuity of brand attributes, explained below.

Internal branding activities / Use internal branding

“Behavioural support emerges once managers and employees develop an understanding of the revised brand and corporate branding responsibilities, and commit to the rebranding effort. (Merrilees and Miller, 2008; Schultz and Hatch, 2003)” (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014, p. 276).

Continuity of brand attributes / Ensure continuity of brand elements

“In strong outcome cases, the revised brand maintains continuity with past brand meaning (Alford, 1998; Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). Research suggests that this continuity encourages key stakeholders to endorse the revised brand (Alford, 1998; Merrilees and Miller, 2008)” (Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014, p. 276).

With this model we want to understand if the appropriate development of these parameters has a positive impact on the acceptance of the new corporate brand by internal stakeholders.

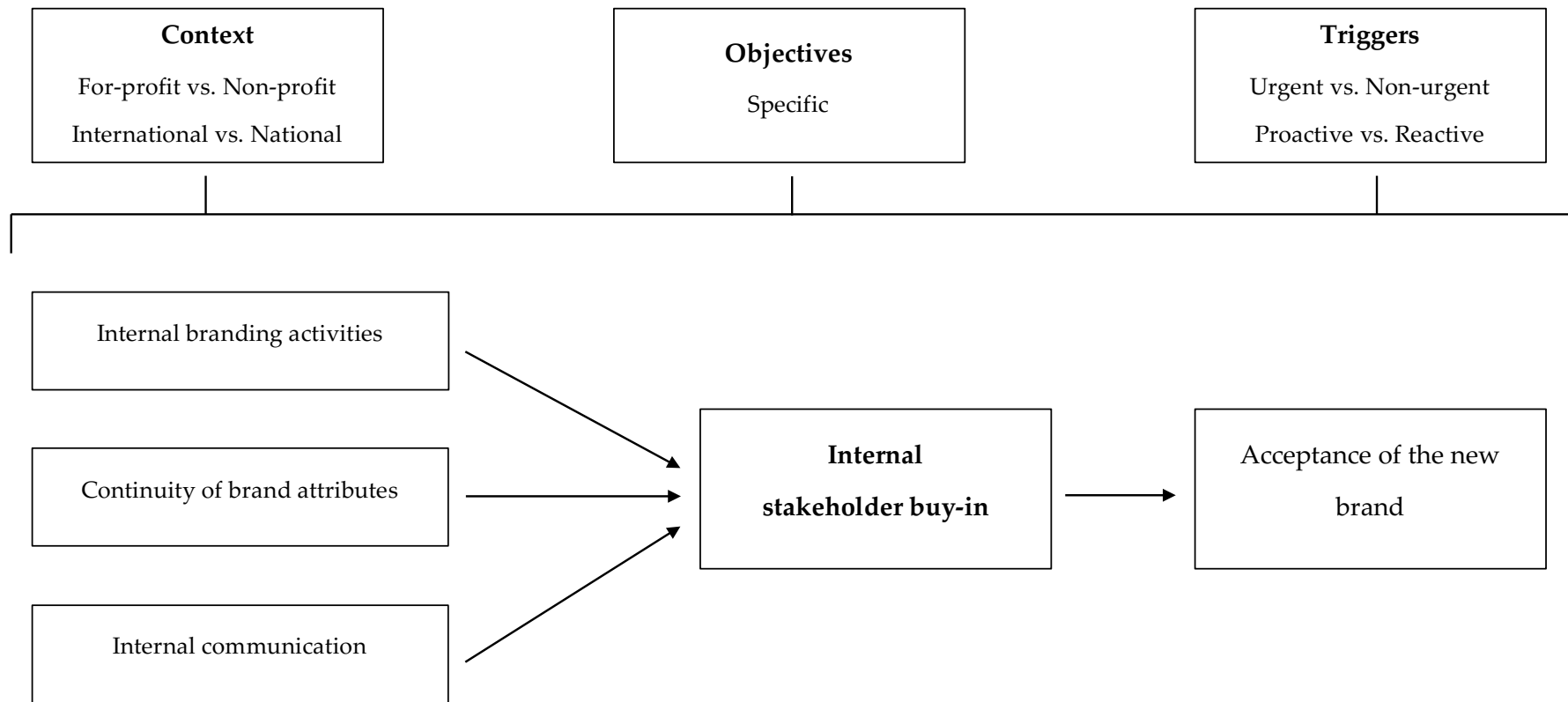


Figure 4: Research Model (source: Author, adapted from Miller, Merrilees and Yakimova, 2014)

2.2. Methodology

In order to further establish and develop the relation between internal communication and corporate rebranding the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: Did the use of internal branding have a positive impact on the employees' acceptance of the new brand?

RQ2: Which of the internal communication channels used were the most effective?

RQ3: Was there a continuity of brand elements?

RQ4: Did internal communication have a positive impact on the employees' acceptance of the new brand?

To try and answer these questions, the case study of Nors was developed. According to Yin (1994, p. 9), a case study as a research strategy is used when "a "how" or "when" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control". Data collection for case studies may come from different sources, being one of them interviews, a qualitative method, considered one of the most important. (Yin, 1994).

Qualitative research methods are used when the researcher pretends a better understanding of a particular topic from the perspective of the participants (Rosenthal, n.d.), in this case, the perspective of the employees concerning the internal communication carried out in the corporate rebranding process.

Research interviews is one of the chosen methods, as they provide profound understanding of a phenomenon and explore the opinions of individuals on specific matters (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008). To present coherent and solid findings, an interview script was designed, according to the

model previously presented. The quality of the data received from interviews is dependent upon the thought put into the process of preparation of the interview (Rosenthal, n.d.) so its construction was one of the most important steps since the development of the case study is dependent on its results.

Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) analyze three types of research interviews: (1) structured, (2) semi-structured and (3) unstructured. For the development of this case study we decided to use a semi-structured interview since this type of interview allows the discovery of relevant and important information to the participants that may not have been formerly considered by the researcher. Guided by key questions, the interview can deviate to seek more details about certain topics. In this case this last aspect was significant as detailed insights of the corporate rebranding are of extreme importance to the development of the case study (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008).

Regarding the questions, they ought to be open-ended, neutral and understandable in order not to bias the answers of the interviewed (Rosenthal, n.d.). Below we present the script of the interview (see Table 5), displaying the purpose of each question.

Demographic data	Age
	Gender
	When did you start working in...?
Internal branding	Do you enjoy working in Nors?
	Do you feel a strong connection with the brand?
	Do you know the mission and values of the brand? Do you know what the brand wants to transmit to its external audience?
	Did you understand the real goals behind the rebranding process?
Continuity of brand elements	In your opinion was the result of the rebranding a positive one?
	Do you feel that there was a continuity of the brand Auto Sueco to Nors?
	Do you identify yourself more with the old or with the new brand?
Internal communication	Do you consider that your superiors have played an important role in the transmission of the mission and values of the new brand?
	Did you feel involved in the creation of the new brand?
	In your opinion, did employees accept well the new brand?
	To what extent may internal communication have favorably influenced the behavior of the employees towards the new brand?

Internal communication	When and how did you learn that Auto Sueco was going through a rebranding?
	Which internal communication channels did the brand use to communicate the process?
	Did you follow that process?
	Did you receive, during the process, any updates? If so, through which channels?
	Do you read the weekly newsletter sent by Nors? What other internal communication channels do you use regularly?
	In your opinion, which is the most efficient internal communication channel to transmit information?
	Through which channels do you receive information about the activities that take place in the company?
Conclusions	In your opinion, is internal communication in Nors effective?
	Would you like to add anything?

Table 5: Interview script (source: Author)

Documents and videos related with the process of rebranding and provided by the organization were also studied and their information was used to build the case study. The strengths of documentation as a source of evidence are, according to Yin (1994), the fact that (1) it can be reviewed repeatedly, (2) it is unobtrusive, (3) it is exact, as it contains exact names, references, and details of an event and (4) it offers broad coverage, with “information likely to be relevant to every case study topic” (Yin, 1994, p. 81). In the development of this case study were used administrative documents in order to confirm information from other sources (Yin, 1994).

In March of the present year, a group of students of the International MBA of Católica Porto Business School developed a study concerning the internal perceptions of the brand Nors, the conclusions of this study will also be presented in order complement the information retrieved in the interviews.

Secondary analysis “involves the use of existing data sets to answer new research questions” (Clarke and Cossette, 2000, p. 109), which can be seen as a disadvantage because the data was not collected “to address the particular research question or to test the particular hypothesis” (Cheng and Phillips, 2014, p. 374). This data will be analyzed carefully and not without first thoroughly understanding the methods and the methodology used in the study in order to accurately interpret its results.

2.2.1. Sample

In this kind of research study there is no perfect way to select the sample. Not having the primary objective of generalizing, but to improve the understanding of complex issues, the appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is the one that satisfactorily answers the research question (Marshall, 1996), often a small number of participants in a certain organization (Sarma, 2015).

Marshall (1996) presents three approaches to select the sample for qualitative studies: (1) convenience sample, (2) judgment sample and (3) theoretical sample. Since this study was developed externally to the company, some aspects of it are dependent on the information provided. In this aspect, the sample was selected according to the availability and will of the employees to participate in the case - convenience sample. The only condition imposed was that the employees chosen worked already in Nors before the corporate rebranding.

As Nors is a corporate brand with business in four major business areas, an employee from each of those business was interviewed. It was also interviewed an employee from the holding who has a direct and daily contact with the NORS brand (see Table 6). Furthermore, the support throughout the process was given by José Albuquerque, Communication Manager of Nors, who kindly gave access to reports and videos related with the process.

Name	Position	Company	Business Area	Years in the company
Francisco Leitão	CEO of Amplitude Seguros	Amplitude Seguros	Safekeeping Solutions	5 years
Ana Salomé	Director of People and Communication	Holding	Nors	8 years
Margarida Pina	Director of Development of Aftermarket		Integrated Aftermarket Solutions	6 years
Pedro Oliveira	CEO of Auto Sueco	Auto Sueco	Original Equipment Solutions	27 years and a half
Pedro Pinto	Commercial Manager at Biosafe	Biosafe	Recycling Solutions	3 years in Biosafe (previously worked in Auto Sueco)

Table 6: Profile of the respondents (source: Author)

2.2.2. Data collection

The first contact with the organization was made in January through José Albuquerque who answered a first roll of general questions concerning the rebranding. In addition, in this first meeting I was given access to documents and videos about the organization and the reasons and decision to advance with the corporate rebranding.

The interviews to the employees took place in the offices of Nors on the 9th of June. They were conducted in Portuguese to facilitate the understanding of the questions by the respondents. All the interviews were recorded, with the permission of the participants, and then transcribed in order to better analyze its content. The data was then studied through the research questions proposed.

With the development of the case study some doubts emerged and were promptly answered by e-mail by José Albuquerque.

Chapter 3

Case Study and main findings

Before the analysis of the interviews and the presentation of the findings, the evolution of the company Nors is introduced and its corporate transformation throughout the years is analyzed.

Grupo Nors is a Portuguese multinational company whose vision is to be one of the world leaders in transportation solutions and construction equipment. It started its activity in 1933 when Luís Oscar Jervell initiated a business for Volvo in Portugal.

The company develops its activities in four major business areas: (1) Original Equipment Solutions, (2) Integrated Aftermarket Solutions, (3) Recycling Solutions and (4) Safekeeping Solutions (see Figure 5) and it is constituted by six operational areas: (1) Nors Iberia, (2) Nors Angola, (3) Nors Brasil, (4) Nors Africa, (5) Nors Ventures and (6) Group Ascendum. The company is present in 23 countries, has about 4.300 employees and reported a turnover of more than 1.4 billion euros in 2015.



Figure 5: Nors' brands (<http://www.nors.com/en/o-nosso-negocio/as-nossas-marcas/>)

3.1. Grupo Auto Sueco

Since 1988, when the denomination Grupo Auto Sueco first emerged, the business expanded and diversified and, in 2003, the organization was faced with an unrelated portfolio of brands and recognized the need to create a new brand that encompassed all its businesses. In 2005, after consulting four brand agencies, a new logo and a new brand architecture for the Grupo Auto Sueco was created (see Figure 6). During these two years the organization developed workshops and internal market studies to ensure that the employees were aware of the transitions before they happened. But the final result was not the best since only the workers of Auto Sueco - the business that handles Volvo, the first brand the company represented - felt a strong connection with the corporate brand while the employees from the other brands did not. Being one of the functions of a

corporate brand to operate as a bond of identity for employees (Basu, 2000), it is possible to conclude that the corporate brand did not present the desired results.



Figure 6: Brand Architecture of Grupo Auto Sueco (Nors, 2015)

3.2. From Grupo Auto Sueco to Grupo Nors

“We must be ready to change” (Tomás Jervell)

In february 2011, by the initiative of CEO Tomás Jervell, a briefing to different brand agencies was launched, challenging them to create a brand with which all the companies from the group can identify. The company was expanding its activities, nationally and internationally, to new and different business areas and was in the need of a corporate brand that could translate its growth and display the diversity of its businesses. The creation of a new corporate brand was also fundamental so all stakeholders could recognize and value the evolution of the group, which is in line with Stuart and Muzellec (2004: 473), who say that one of the motivations to proceed with a corporate rebranding is the “need to present a global image to the marketplace”.

To build this new corporate brand was created a Steering Committee composed by Tomás Jervell, Francisco Ramos (CSO), Carla Teixeira (Human Resources) Rui Miranda (CFO) and José Albuquerque (Communication Manager).

“A brand is built from the inside out. Always.”. (Nors presentation video, 2013)

After the creation of the Steering Committee, between the 2nd and the 4th of November, the first workshop “Knowing the business” took place in Oporto. According to José Albuquerque, “it was fundamentally for the agency [Brandia Central] to get to know the group and its operations. A number of employees were selected from the various operations and, over two days, they presented and discussed the various facets of their activities, from different points of view: internal, external and advantages and disadvantages of our companies.” For this workshop, the selection criterion was the business knowledge of the employees.

During that month, several internal interviews were conducted in Portugal, Brazil and Angola, the three main markets where the company operates. The interviews were conducted by Brandia Central, following a previous structured script. The sample was “a large group of employees from different companies and organizational groups” (José Albuquerque).

After the presentation of Phase A results (Workshop I + Interviews), Phase B started on the 7th of March 2012 with a second workshop also in Oporto. The primary objective of this second workshop was to “define/refine the strategic path for the new brand. Teams were created in order to answer several questions/challenges that, in the end of the two days, pointed the way forward” (José Albuquerque).

On the 9th of April the new Brand Strategy was defined after the consultancy identified the attributes, personality and values of the new brand. According to

André Rodrigues, designer from Brandia Central, they were looking for the “truth of the brand, by trying to identify the uniqueness and relevance of the brand to the marketplace”. From there the first paths emerged and, on the 7th of July, the first proposals for the new naming were presented by the agency but the Steering Committee did not identify with them, so, three months later, in October, the second proposals were shown.

Between the 13th and 14th of November, the third workshop “Visual Identity” took place in Lisbon. At this stage, the name had not been selected yet. Tomás Jervell personally selected the participants for the workshop according to their intervention in different operations of the organization. Different activities were performed, such as the “selection of the main idea that aggregates (...) the current reality of the group”, the “definition of how to organize the different brands on the new organizational spectrum” and “definition of the brands’ personality and behavior” (José Albuquerque). To achieve these goals, different visual stimuli were shown to the participants in order to help them express their ideas and opinions.

On the 28th of November, Brandia Central presented the new name and the new signature to the Steering Committee: Nors, We Know How.

Changing the brand name is a delicate and risky process because it will probably eliminate the positive associations towards the brand (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). So it was important that the new name had a powerful meaning and a positive impact. The name Nors derives from two words: North (“Norte” in portuguese) and We (“Nós” in portuguese). According to the document provided concerning the creation of the new brand, the tie to the North is present not only due to the origins of the brand Volvo (Sweden), the first business of the company in Portugal, but also with the northerner personality and behavior. With the “We” association, the organization pretends a new identity with a twist,

customized with the R of “North”. The signature “We Know How” enhances the operational knowledge of the group with a subtle reinforcement of belonging.

The new visual identity (see Figure 7) was presented in January 2013 and the new brand was approved by the General Board and the Management Board on the 14th of February.



Figure 7: Visual Identity of Grupo Nors (Nors, 2015)

With the new brand a new brand architecture was also developed (see Figure 8). According to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), the new brand architecture is a house of brands. In this strategy the brands are independent from one another, having the advantage of being capable of maximizing their impact on a market. Concerning the subcategory, Nors is a Shadow Endorser of the different brands as it is not visibly connected to the endorsed brands but many consumers are aware of the connection.



Figure 8: Brand Architecture of Grupo Nors (Nors, 2015)

According to Harris and de Chernatony (2001), to make a brand unique, employees need to be aligned with the brand's values, previously defined by managers. With the changes that have occurred, the strategic positioning had been inevitably impacted so were the values of the brand. Grupo Auto Sueco was guided by values as (1) quality, (2) integrity, (3) preservation and protection of the environment, (4) solidity, (5) safety and (6) entrepreneurship. The Grupo Nors presents fewer but stronger and more direct values as (1) ambition, (2) trust and (3) talent.

The new brand was formally presented to the shareholders on the 16th September 2012 and to the top management the following day.

The presentation to the employees took place on the 18th in all the company's facilities. The employees were invited to see a short movie showing the reasons and all the steps of the rebranding process. As it happened, all the signs that read Grupo Auto Sueco were replaced by Grupo Nors (see Figure 9 and 10).



Figure 9: Presentation of the new brand to employees I (Nors, 2015)



Figure 10: Presentation of the new brand to employees II (Nors, 2015)

After the formal presentation, all employees received a “Welcome Kit” (See Figure 11) containing all the information concerning the new brand.

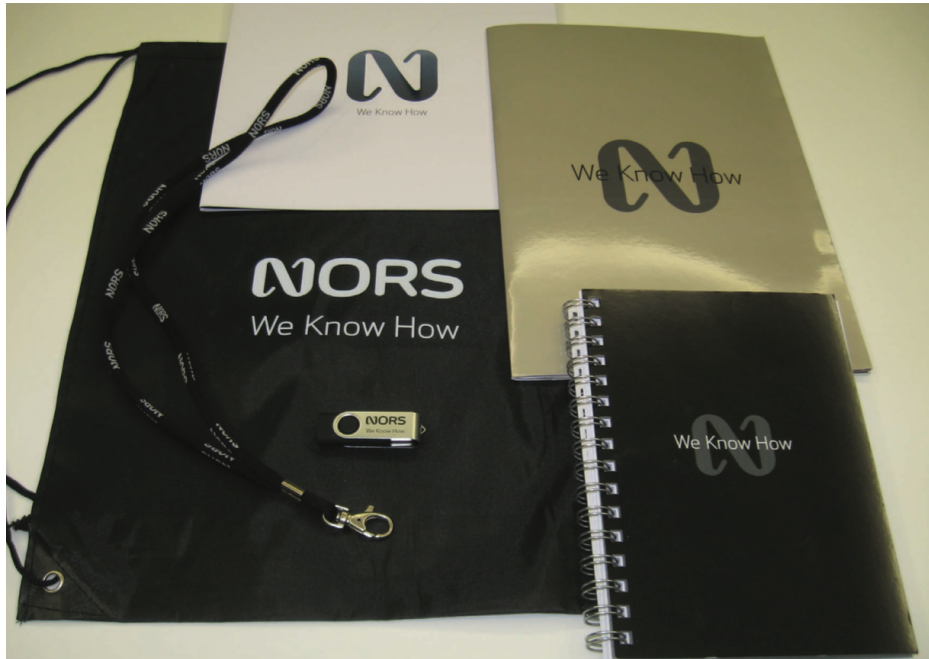


Figure 11: Welcome Kit (Nors, 2015)

Based on the two degrees of corporate rebranding proposed by Muzellec and Lambkin (2006), the rebranding of Grupo Auto Sueco to Grupo Nors is considered a revolutionary rebranding. As previously stated a “revolutionary rebranding (...) describes a major, identifiable change in positioning and aesthetics that fundamentally redefines the company” (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006, p. 806). As shown in this chapter both the positioning and the aesthetics suffered major changes, which inevitably challenge the bonds between employees and an organization.

Merrilees and Miller (2006, p. 538) claim that there is usually a “greater sensitivity to potential internal resistance to the brand change and thus a need for a well-structured change management program to get brand buy-in” which, according to Filipa Robalo, Brand Consulting Manager at Brandia Central, occurred: “Nors is a dream client because the organization was involved at the

highest level. It is a brand project that now truly begun". Although there is still some resistance due to the connections with the business brand Auto Sueco, José Albuquerque personally considers that the new brand has been well accepted.

After the revision of the whole process of corporate rebranding, it is possible to understand and fill in the first stages of the research model:

Context

Profit: Nors is a profit organization as its primary objective is to generate profit.

International: the company is present in 23 countries so the rebranding has mandatorily international repercussions. As said before, employees from both Brazil and Africa were heard during the construction of the new brand. Corporate rebranding processes in which the group had one global name are also an opportunity to leverage "the global dimension that the group has acquired" (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006, p. 812).

Objectives

The objectives for this rebranding were very specific: (1) create a brand with which all stakeholders can identify themselves and (2) is able to translate the growth and diversity of the businesses.

Triggers

Non-urgent: the corporate rebranding of Nors was a non-urgent case as it had no strict deadline to be implemented. "We wanted to be as comfortable and safe as possible with the change. And that is what we have achieved" (José Albuquerque).

Proactive: a proactive corporate rebranding occurs when opportunities to enhance the brand drivers are identified. In this case, it was important that all employees felt a connection with the corporate brand, which was not happening

with the brand Grupo Auto Sueco. It was also fundamental that all stakeholders could recognize and value the evolution of the group.

3.3. Main findings

3.3.1. Internal branding

Mahnert and Torres (2007) present three core elements of internal branding: (1) knowledge of the brand values by employees, (2) a clear understanding of the brand promise communicated to the internal and external markets and (3) recognition of the importance to reach all the organization levels.

Concerning the brand values, all of the respondents confirmed that they knew them but were not able to list them. On the other hand, they all identified what the brand wants to convey to its audiences: a trusted and innovative brand, concerned about people and with a strong North that represents not only the confidence and knowledge in what they do but also the path they will follow.

As reported by Margarida Pina, during the different stages of the rebranding, “people, not only from the administration and that were not directly related with the project, were called to make sure everyone was acquainted with the process and would be given the chance to express their opinion”, which shows the concern to involve different levels of the organization in the process.

When asked if they like to work in Nors, every answer was a genuinely “Yes.” But it is possible to differentiate two attitudes towards the new corporate brand, according to the working years in the organization. Francisco Leitão, who has only been at Nors for 5 years feels a strong connection with the corporate brand because “shortly afterwards I joined the group, the rebranding process began, so I don’t have the onus of the former brand”. On the contrary, Pedro Oliveira who works in the organization for almost 28 years, still feels a stronger link with the

corporate brand Auto Sueco considering that “I lived 24 years with a brand [Grupo Auto Sueco] and am only living for three years with another [Nors]. I am very comfortable with the corporate brand Nors as a brand with its responsibilities and mission. But it is a brand that it is not essential to the business I am involved with daily as is Auto Sueco.” This confirms what was referred by José Albuquerque in the first meeting, that “for a new employee it is easier to accept and understand the new brand” due to their lack of relation with Grupo Auto Sueco.

3.3.2. Internal communication

All respondents accepted well the new brand but Francisco Leitão draws attention to the fact that “[Grupo Auto Sueco] is a brand which had more than 80 years so it is natural that for workers with more years of service it was harder to adapt.” In the opinion of Pedro Oliveira, the internal communication carried out during the corporate rebranding “eased the process, no doubt”.

“Internal communication was fundamental in a sense that it promoted a different number of initiatives related to the brand. Communication was able to, in the time preceding the formal presentation of the brand, create energy and curiosity. I believe that is the reason people adhere so much, because communication was able to create a high level of curiosity and mesh.” (Ana Salomé). Margarida Pina also agrees that the involvement of employees from different companies and positions was decisive for the creation of links between the new corporate brand and the internal stakeholders - “Something that was crucial to the success was the involvement of many employees not only from top management but from middle management, managers, operational, workers of the warehouses and workshops, ... right there they guaranteed a large involvement in the making of the brand and that was crucial so the employees felt involved and understood why it happened.”

Stegaroiu and Talal (2014) state that, if founded on strong corporate values, internal communication is an essential piece in the creation of value to the institution by employees. But to create value and build a brand from inside, it is important to know how and through which channels to communicate with employees.

Pedro Oliveira recalls a senior executives meeting where “a speaker was invited to explain the idea of a change of this nature” but, apart from Pedro Pinto, who recalls that the corporate rebranding was communicated to him through informal communication, none of the other respondents could remind exactly when or through which channel they became aware of the process.

Only Francisco Leitão did not participate directly in the different activities developed throughout the process, but pointed that, even so, he “followed it”. Due to a confidentiality agreement, the details and the underlying reality were only disclosed to some of the employees about six months before the formal presentation, as Ana Salomé explained. Due to this restriction, the results of the different stages were not reported to the employees.

Concerning the internal communication channels most used, not only during the rebranding but in their daily activities, the respondents mentioned verbal communication, e-mail, intranet, internal tools for audio and text and internal publications.

During the actual corporate rebranding, the communications between the Steering Committee and employees were mainly through e-mail and face-to-face meetings. These two channels were utilized to invite employees to participate, since early stages, in the different activities developed by Brandia Central, in order to engage them in the creation of the new brand: workshops, interviews and, in a later stage, in tests with internal target groups to analyze and study the reaction to the new brand.

Lipiainen, Karjaluoto and Nevalainen (2014) and Stegaroiu and Talal (2014) conclude that face-to-face communication is the most preferred medium of communication “because improves the chances of communication being understood as it was meant” (Stegaroiu and Talal, 2014, p. 64). The authors add that “face-to-face meetings are information-rich, since they allow for emotions to be transmitted and immediate feedback to take place” (Stegaroiu and Talal, 2014, p. 65).

Concerning the whole internal communication strategy, not only the one applied during the corporate rebranding, although “e-mail lacks information richness and fails to convey complicated information to influence or persuade” (Men, 2014, p. 271), it is the channel through which employees receive most of the information: “If not at 100%, almost” (Margarida Pina) and has, according to Ana Salomé “a very high efficiency level”. This new media channels simplifies and improves relationship building (Sheer, 2011 *apud* Men, 2014) and is increasingly being adopted by organizations (Lipiainen, Karjaluoto and Nevalainen, 2014) but for Pedro Pinto, Margarida Pina and Ana Salomé, the intranet is an important tool that it is not yet exploited at full - “We are missing elements that aggregate like a developed intranet. (...) Nors is a set of companies with different realities from various geographies and we are missing a platform of everyday communication to the whole group” (Margarida Pina).

3.3.3. Continuity of brand elements

Merrilees (2005, p. 207) suggests that “although the core brand is being redesigned, the new formulation should ideally be sympathetic to the *essence* of the initial brand”. And, in this particular case of a revolutionary corporate rebranding, the respondents believe that happened: “I believe there is always a continuity because people are the same, history is the same, culture is the same” (Ana Salomé). Margarida Pina believes that the base values of Grupo Auto Sueco

were present in the foundation of the brand Grupo Nors – “[the new corporate brand] reflects the values that are aggregated to a whole past” and Pedro Oliveira “never felt a rupture with the former brand, I felt an evolution. (...) The majority of people took it as a natural evolutionary process”.

3.3.6. Conclusions of previous studies

In March of the present year, a group of students of the International MBA of Católica Porto Business School developed a study concerning the internal perceptions of the brand Nors, almost three years after its official presentation.

A questionnaire was developed and, between the 19th and the 25th of February, 72 valid responses were obtained out of 142 sent: 19% of the respondents were women and 81% men; 85% of the answers came from Portugal and 15% from Brazil.

Questioned if they followed the development of the new corporate brand, 40% answered “No”. 11% do not recall the release of the brand, but 8% consider that the process of launching of the new brand was perfect.

The most interesting about the new corporate brand is its potentiality, followed by the fact that it is a unifying brand. The logo, the name and the change of visual identity are the aspects considered most interesting in the new brand.

Although 67% consider that the new corporate brand brought advantages to both internal and external audiences, when questioned, only 24% identified themselves as Nors employees before recognizing themselves as employees from a business brand. 40% think that an internal encounter would help the reinforcement of the brand.

According to José Albuquerque, “although not quantitatively representative, the conclusions of the study meet our perceptions” but do not meet the main findings of the case study. In the quantitative study the positions of the respondents are not explicit, so it is not possible to know if the 40% that did not

follow the development of the brand work at high or lower positions in the organization. This can be a differentiator factor and can limit access to information. It would be interesting to understand if the position that employees occupy in the organization have influenced the quality and quantity of information that they received during the corporate rebranding.

Chapter 4

Discussion of the findings

The main goal of this study was to understand the relation between internal communication and corporate rebranding, and conclude if a positive internal communication strategy has influence on the acceptance of the new corporate brand by company employees. In order to ascertain that, the case study of Nors, which went through a corporate rebranding between 2011 and 2013, was developed.

It is not enough to conceive a brand and expect it to thrive, “it is also necessary to get full support from all of the other internal stakeholders” (Merrilees, 2005, p. 204). A brand has meaning to all stakeholders but has a crucial importance to the internal public, as for them the brand represents a set of values and promises (Daly and Moloney, 2004). Through the interviews and the analysis of secondary data, we could conclude that the majority of the employees of Nors understood and supported the decision of advancing with a new corporate brand. More than that, they considered it fundamental - “I felt the need to advance with this corporate rebranding, it was a requirement for the group’s growth” (Francisco Leitão); “I believe that everything was well explained: the idea that what we were as a group was no longer well explained through the name Grupo Auto Sueco.

For various reasons, but it already did not describe the group in full.” (Ana Salomé).

Although Grupo Nors went through a revolutionary corporate rebranding, as the changes in the aesthetics and the positioning are clearly identified, this group did not cut entirely with Grupo Auto Sueco – “In the parking lot we had a band that said “For 82 we were Auto Sueco but deep down we were always Nors”, and that explains what we got through” (Ana Salomé). This is consistent with Merrilees and Miller (2008, p. 540) who state that “all corporate brand exercises should balance remaining the same with moving forwards” - “I see Nors as more modern, a little more irreverent, different. I see Nors as more evolved and sophisticated than Auto Sueco. More inclusive, more universal, more global” (Ana Salomé).

The first research question seeks to understand the role of internal branding in the employees’ acceptance of the new brand. It was important that the motives to advance with the corporate rebranding were clear and perceived by all. It was also a concern of the Steering Committee to encompass the greatest number of employees, of various departments, in the construction of the new brand. These two objectives were met, with Francisco Leitão considering this corporate rebranding “a requirement to the groups’ growth”. During the rebranding, different activities were developed with employees, as interviews and tests with internal target groups to analyze and study the reaction to the new brand. The challenge now is the transmission of the message and the values of the brand to new employees so they can also establish an emotional connection with it (Mitchell, 2002).

The second research question focuses on finding out which internal communication channels were most effective. Different channels engage different audiences in different ways (McLuhan, 1964 *apud* Men, 2014), but, in a company that “easily has three generations working at the company at the same

time, in various sectors and areas” (Ana Salomé), the e-mail has been proven to be one of the most efficient channels. Ana Salomé reflects on the importance of face-to-face communication, which is consistent with the literature that says that this is the preferred medium (Stegaroiu and Talal, 2014).

There were two key moments in the communication with all employees during the rebranding, both communicated through e-mail: (1) the first to explain the motives and ambitions of the project, sent in the beginning, and (2) the second to announce the launch of the new brand. Although this is how most of employees became aware of the process, there were exceptions; for example, Pedro Oliveira learned about the intention of advancing with the corporate rebranding in a senior executives meeting, and Pedro Pinto recalls that the corporate rebranding was communicated to him through informal communication. During the actual process, the communications between the Steering Committee and employees were mainly through e-mail and face-to-face meetings. These two channels were utilized to invite employees to participate, from the early stages, in the different activities developed by Brandia Central, in order to engage them in the creation of the new brand: workshops, interviews and, in a later stage, in tests with internal target groups to analyze and study the reaction to the new brand.

The continuity of brand elements is important so employees do not feel a complete disruption with the brand and do not erase positive associations. Although some respondents, as Pedro Oliveira, feel a stronger bond with Grupo Auto Sueco, the continuity of brand elements eased the transition because the new brand “reflects the values that are aggregated to a whole past” (Margarida Pina), allowing the positive associations of Grupo Auto Sueco to pass to Grupo Nors. With a higher or lower bond with Grupo Nors, the opinion that the outcome was positive, is unanimous.

The fourth research question sought to discover if internal communication had indeed a positive impact on employees' acceptance of the brand. Balmer (2001 *apud* Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007, p. 343) states the importance of total corporate communication, "particularly taking into account the key role that employees play in endorsing the corporate brand promise". The analysis of the interviews confirmed that employees were well informed of the whole process - "The internal communication process was very intense at all levels at the time and I believe that completely facilitated the process" (Pedro Oliveira); "I think the company gave much emphasis to the process and how it happened. At the time it was explained in the magazine [We.Nors] that allowed people to understand exactly what happened" (Pedro Pinto).

But the work is not finished; it is important that employees live the brand at all times (Mitchell, 2002) for the brand to thrive - "I believe Nors conquered the internal dimension of the company. But I also believe that there is still a lot of work to be done for the company to benefit fully of the potential that the brand has" (Ana Salomé).

It is also important to refer the attention given to the transmission of the new brand to external stakeholders - "Telling the story of the corporate brand can be an important - and meaningful - way to relate the company to its stakeholders" (Hatch and Schultz, 2003, p. 1060). This corporate rebranding has a special feature that can hinder the comprehension of the relation between the new corporate brand and the businesses brands and that has been, according to José Albuquerque, the most challenging aspect - Nors is the new corporate brand but Auto Sueco still exists as a business brand, so "at the time there was much discussion on how to present the new brand, because Auto Sueco was a corporate and a business brand. Nors is a corporate brand, but the fact is that Auto Sueco still exists as a business brand. At first, one had the tendency to tell a story:

“Grupo Nors is the new corporate brand of Grupo Auto Sueco, which is the oldest private importer of Volvo in the world”. More recently I already see people introducing the group only based in Nors” (Ana Salomé).

Margarida Pina confirms that having the support and trust of external stakeholders is fundamental - “To all of them [external stakeholders] I presented the new brand. I explained the motives (...) because it is important for them to be involved and understand that a group that invests what Nors invested in a new corporate brand is a group with future and with room to grow. It is very important to have the support and trust of external stakeholders, especially from providers”. Therefore, after the formal presentation of the new brand to employees, an explanatory letter and a pamphlet were sent to customers, suppliers and institutional partners. To very important partners, the brand was presented personally or through a phone call. Furthermore, a presentation was prepared, to align internal and external messages (Kaikati, 2003), and to ensure that all communications with external stakeholders were coherent. Here it is also possible to understand the important role employees have as brand’s ambassadors (Hemsley, 1998 *apud* Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) - “We must be the ambassadors of the brand and if we are not able to do that, it is not going to be a TV commercial that will do it for us. (...) before doing anything externally, we have to do it internally” (Pedro Pinto).

Even with the work that has been developed since the decision to advance with the creation of a new corporate brand, there is still a long path to go - “A brand is not built in three years (...) The importance of a brand is not seen in the early years; it is a very long term project. Daring to create a brand from scratch is a very important moment for a group who wants to be more than a cluster of companies. (...) It is impossible to standardize everything because markets are

not compatible with that. But having two or three values firmly attached is already a success from a corporate brand as Nors" (Margarida Pina).

Chapter 5

Limitations and directions for future research

One of the major limitations of this study is the lack of diversity of the sample. As can be seen by the profile of the respondents, all have important positions in Nors so it is not possible to conclude if and how the information reached lower positions during the corporate rebranding. And, although it is not the main purpose of a qualitative study, the conclusions of this study cannot be generalized.

The lack of prior research on which internal communication channels should be used in a corporate rebranding is a limitation, because, although the respondents consider that the internal communication implemented by the company was successful, it is not possible to know if these communication channels would also have positive results in the corporate rebranding of other companies.

In a future research, additional dimensions can be added to the model in order to test their influence in internal stakeholder's buy-in. It would also be interesting to perceive and study employees' attitude towards the new brand during the process of rebranding and not only after its conclusion. In this thesis, the fact that the holding' employees may have a stronger and earlier link with the brand due

to more direct and constant contact was only addressed superficially and we could not draw any significant conclusions. In future investigation it would be interesting to develop this subject.

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