

Corporate Visual Identity management: current practices, impact and assessment

This dissertation presents three perspectives for studying Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) management: 1) identity, image and reputation, 2) design, and 3) the organizational perspective. The first deals with the *objective* of a CVI. The second perspective investigates the CVI as *means to an end*, and the third focuses on *processes, instruments and practices* applied in order to ensure the correct use of the CVI design. In a theoretical exploration of CVI design in relation to reputation it is concluded that CVI can, in principle, support an organization's reputation.

The main focus is on the third perspective. It is assumed that characteristics of the organization and of the way a CVI is managed will affect the perceived consistency of the CVI among employees. This assumption was tested by conducting research in 20 Dutch organizations. The results indicate that efforts made to manage CVI have a positive impact on its consistency.

The CVI management mix should include structural, cultural and strategic aspects. Guidelines, procedures and tools can be summarized as the *structural* aspects of managing the CVI. Among the *cultural* aspects of CVI management, socialization – i.e. formal and informal learning processes – turned out to influence the consistency of a CVI, and managers proved to be important role models. Finally, it seems to be important that organizations communicate the *strategic* aspects of the CVI.

To some extent CVI management is also related to more general organizational characteristics. Profit-making organizations put the most effort into managing their CVI. For auditing CVI management, a qualitative research instrument was developed and used in three organizations.

The final conclusion is that a CVI manager should have a clear vision on the CVI in relation to strategic developments in the organization, and needs to have the necessary competencies and resources to develop CVI management in terms of identity-image-reputation and design as well as organizational aspects.