

MANAGING CORPORATE VISUAL IDENTITY

Exploring the Differences Between
Manufacturing and Service, and Profit-Making
and Nonprofit Organizations

Annette L. M. van den Bosch
Menno D. T. de Jong
Wim J. L. Elving

Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) is a crucial part of the identity of any organization. Most research on managing corporate identity deals with the strategic development of corporate identity and the design and effects of specific elements of the CVI. This study focuses on an aspect of CVI management that has not received much attention—the problem of maintaining consistent use of the CVI in an organization. A comparison is made between manufacturing and service organizations, and between profit-making and nonprofit organizations. For these organization types, the perceived CVI consistency was investigated, as well as the organizational and CVI management characteristics and instruments affecting it. The research was conducted using questionnaires distributed among employees of 20 Dutch organizations. Most of the differences found were those between profit-making and nonprofit organizations. The results showed greater consistency in the CVI of profit-making organizations, in accordance with the amount of effort these organizations put into CVI management.

Keywords: *corporate visual identity; corporate communication; corporate identity; corporate branding*

Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) plays a significant role in the way organizations present themselves, both to internal and to external stakeholders. The main elements of a CVI are corporate name, logo, color palette, font type, and a corporate slogan or tagline. A tagline is a sentence or message that may be connected to the logo, as, for example, *HP invent* for Hewlett-Packard (the word *invent* creates a tagline, together with the logo of HP). CVI elements may express or emphasize

Annette L. M. van den Bosch (PhD, University of Twente, the Netherlands, 2005) currently works as a consultant. Menno D. T. de Jong (PhD, University of Twente, the Netherlands, 1998) is currently an associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies within the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences. Wim J. L. Elving (PhD, University of Twente, the Netherlands, 1999) is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the Amsterdam School of Communications Research. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. Annette L. M. van den Bosch; e-mail: a.l.m.vandenbosch@utwente.nl.

Journal of Business Communication, Volume 43, Number 2, April 2006 138-157

DOI: 10.1177/0021943605285476

© 2006 by the Association for Business Communication

certain aspects of an organization but will be effective only if people are confronted with them regularly on all communication materials, also called carriers. Some years ago, Philips introduced the slogan “Let’s make things better,” which has been consistently used in all communication materials, varying from advertisements to packaging. A combination of colors may also serve as a strong visual cue in recognizing an organization. The combination of green and yellow on a service station on the highway, for instance, identifies BP, whereas a combination of yellow and red represents Shell. Since the 1980s, the name “Shell” no longer appears with the emblem, yet the company’s identity is still recognized everywhere. The same applies to Coca Cola, with its standard wave, the colors red and white, and its characteristic typeface. All over the world, people recognize signs, billboards, and products bearing this brand, even if they are written in a script they have never seen before. Symbolic figures can also represent an organization. Through advertising campaigns run by Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM), the swan has become a symbol for the airline. Other examples of symbolic figures are the McDonald’s clown and the Michelin Man.

CVI may be applied on carriers such as stationery, printed matter (e.g., brochures and leaflets), advertisements, Web sites, vehicles, buildings, and corporate clothing. Visual consistency may be maintained by CVI guidelines, or in marketing communications, by applying the same pay-off in commercial messages, packaging, or visual aspects in commercial messages (van Riel, 2000). Guidelines for the use of the name, logo, colors, and typeface of the organization must result in a consistent set of visual cues that express the essence of an organization.

Standardizing the CVI is presumed to have a positive effect on customers’ awareness of advertising, recruitment, their familiarity with the organization and its products/services, goodwill, sales, market share, and the receptivity of local inhabitants to the organization’s operations in a particular area (Melewar & Saunders, 1998). A CVI provides visibility and recognizability (Balmer & Gray, 2000) by symbolically representing an organization or brand. Brands help customers to reduce their anxiety when purchasing products or services, and they also help shape the identity of consumers (Ind, 2001; Kapferer, 1994).

The importance of CVI for organizations is usually sought in its relationship with corporate identity, image, and reputation. Organizations depend to a great extent on their image and reputation among relevant stakeholder groups. In the corporate identity mix, three components are assumed to influence image or reputation: organizational behavior, communication, and symbolism (van Riel & Balmer, 1997). The strongest of these influences is organizational behavior—the way an organization acts, as perceived by its stakeholders (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Hatch & Schultz, 1997, 2003). Communication includes both the way an organization communicates with its stakeholders and media coverage (cf. Renkema & Hoeken, 1998).

The CVI is the most prominent expression of corporate symbolism (Schultz, Hatch, & Larsen, 2000). Authors van den Bosch, de Jong, and Elving (2005) discussed the possible contributions of CVI to corporate reputation, using the five

reputation dimensions distinguished by Fombrun and van Riel (2004)—visibility, distinctiveness, transparency, authenticity, and consistency—and concluded that CVI may be relevant for each dimension. In general, a weak visual identity may be considered to be a symptom of corporate malaise (Baker & Balmer, 1997). Firms with a good reputation are more likely to orchestrate and integrate their communication initiatives across departments (Fombrun & Rindova, 1998).

The importance of CVI for organizations is usually sought in its relationship with corporate identity, image, and reputation.

The importance of CVI is quite obvious for organizations that operate in a competitive environment. But it may be equally important for governmental organizations that do not need to bind their “customers” to them because there is no competing service provider. Even though these organizations do not have to fight for every new customer, they still need to be recognized as of use to society. Increasingly, governmental organizations are also seen as brands: here, the brand implicitly presents a promise of performance (Ind, 2001). In this respect, there is no great difference with nongovernmental organizations. The Dutch Inland Revenue Service is an example of a well-known brand. Although nobody likes to pay tax, this organization created considerable goodwill among tax payers by a systematic and carefully designed communication strategy, including a highly recognizable CVI and a prominent corporate slogan, “Leuker kunnen we het niet maken, wel makkelijker” (“We can’t make it more pleasant, but we can make it easier”). The color blue is one of the CVI’s most conspicuous characteristics: When a blue envelope arrives in the mailbox, every Dutch citizen immediately knows where it comes from.

A CVI has several functions: it symbolizes the organization, it provides visibility and recognizability, it expresses its structure, and internally, it may enhance the extent to which employees identify with the organization (Bromley, 2001; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Kiriakidou & Millward, 2000; Olins, 1989). Corporate values first need to be incorporated by employees before they can be expressed externally (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). In our view, the CVI should also first be understood and supported by the employees of an organization. The consistency of the CVI is a prerequisite for a clear and unambiguous perception of the organization (the corporate image). Too many different visual cues will inevitably create an unfocused impression.

Research on CVI can focus on the design criteria for selecting a logo (e.g., Henderson & Cote, 1998), on the tools used to evaluate design elements (Gabielsen, Kristensen, & Hansen, 2000), on an analysis of visual interpretation (Moriarty,

1996), or on the potential for using visuals in argumentation (cf. Birdsell & Groarke, 1996; Blair, 1996; Fleming, 1996). This article focuses on the problem of managing CVI in an organizational context. The central problem in our study is the need to maintain consistent use of the CVI in an organization.

In an earlier exploratory study, the "Leiden Octahedron" was used as a model to explore the organizational dimensions that influence the consistency of a CVI (van den Bosch, 1999). The model, which was adapted from Leavitt (1965), was further developed by Demenint, van der Vlist, and Allegro (1989). The Leiden Octahedron, which visualizes the way in which an organization reacts to a dynamic environment, is made up of six clusters of variables: organization goals, strategy, structure, culture, technology, and people. People work toward common goals and the results are influenced by strategy, structure, culture, and technology. Organizational dimensions, based on the various perspectives on organizations found in the literature, emphasize the strategy of organizations (Johnson & Scholes, 1999; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998), organizational structure and principles of coordination among various functions and tasks (Hall, 1991; Hodge, Anthony, & Gales, 1996; Mintzberg, 1979), and culture, which includes how the shared values and beliefs of the organization's members are described, how one is supposed to communicate and behave, how newcomers are socialized, and how leaders influence others (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Socialization is the inculcation of the company's norms and values, and this assimilation of the culture is mostly reinforced through daily practices (Kotter, 1996). Another important organizational characteristic was found in open systems theory, which accounts for the way an organization interacts with its environment and adapts to it in order to survive (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).

In two earlier studies, we investigated the influence of organizational characteristics, CVI management characteristics, and specific CVI management instruments on the perceived consistency of CVI. All selected characteristics and instruments were based on the above-mentioned exploratory study. In the first study, we investigated the influence of specific CVI management instruments. The total number of CVI management instruments applied appeared to have a positive effect on consistency. Within these instruments, up-to-date CVI guidelines and managers setting an example were the most important (van den Bosch, de Jong, & Elving, 2004). In the other study, we distinguished various organizational characteristics and identified three corresponding CVI management characteristics that focus on strategic, structural, and cultural aspects. These CVI management characteristics appeared to significantly influence the consistency of CVI (van den Bosch, Elving, & de Jong, in press). In these two studies, however, we did not distinguish between types of organizations.

In this study, we explore the influence of organizational characteristics and CVI management instruments on the perceived consistency of CVI in various types of organizations. We categorized these organizations according to their business and financial orientation. First, looking at the type of business, we distinguished between manufacturing and service organizations. Manufacturing organizations

deliver tangible products, and this fact is reflected in the use of CVI on, for instance, products and packaging. Organizations delivering services, on the other hand, have

Whereas products and packaging provide visual cues, services are inherently invisible before they are delivered and can only be assessed retrospectively. It may be that service organizations have to work harder to make themselves and their services visible.

to present themselves to the market without being able to show any (tangible) results of their work in advance. Whereas products and packaging provide visual cues, services are inherently invisible before they are delivered and can only be assessed retrospectively. It may be that service organizations have to work harder to make themselves and their services visible. The first research question is as follows:

Research Question 1: What differences are there between manufacturing and service organizations with regard to employees' perceptions of the consistency of the CVI and of the characteristics and instruments that influence its consistency?

Second, we made a distinction based on financial orientation, distinguishing between profit-making and nonprofit organizations. Manufacturing organizations are profit-making, whereas service organizations can be either profit-making or nonprofit-making concerns. Profit-making organizations depend on transactions with customers; nonprofit organizations depend on funds that do not necessarily come from the users of their services but, for example, from the government or the general public. We presume that there is a higher degree of CVI consistency in profit-making organizations, because they have to deal with competitors, and visibility and recognizability in visual communication are crucial in the battle to influence target audiences. Most nonprofit organizations, such as governmental organizations, do not have this need, and therefore this type of organization may often pay less attention to its CVI. We recognized, however, that universities and schools are examples of nonprofit organizations that compete for teachers and students; nonetheless, we expected more consistency in the CVIs of profit-making organizations. The second research question is as follows:

Research Question 2: What differences are there between profit-making and nonprofit organizations with regard to employees' perceptions of the consistency of the CVI and of the characteristics and instruments that influence its consistency?

METHOD

The study was conducted in 20 Dutch organizations. The inclusion criteria were that their headquarters had to be located in the Netherlands, the organizations had at least 400 employees, and they should not be in the process of implementing a new visual identity or have introduced a change in their visual identity in the past two years. CVI gets more attention during and immediately after a change process, which might affect the results. The research focused on the opinions of employees in the participating organizations, not on external stakeholders. After all, the employees are the ones who have to apply the CVI and, therefore, have the greatest influence on its consistency. Moreover, employees can be expected to have a clear, overall view of the consistency of the CVI of their organization, whereas the impressions of external stakeholders are likely to be more fragmented. External stakeholders, for instance, may not see materials produced for internal communication purposes or those intended for other stakeholders.

First, we contacted organizations by telephone. We asked for the person responsible for the CVI. We introduced the research and asked about their responsibilities with respect to the CVI. Furthermore, we asked if there was a change process involving the CVI going on. If this was not the case, we asked them to participate in the study. Some organizations wanted to participate but—due to change processes or other studies currently being carried out—the timing was not right. Other organizations did not have the time to collect enough respondents. In total, we contacted 80 organizations, and 20 organizations met the criteria and were willing to participate. We promised not to disclose the names of the organizations.

In the second phase, we obtained the names and postal addresses of approximately 70 employees from each organization. Based on our criteria, our contact persons—those responsible for their organization's visual identity—made a selection of employees with a variety of jobs, for example, in marketing and communication, secretariats and general support units such as the in-house printing department, the department that manages the fleet of vehicles, building management, and purchasing. Fifteen organizations provided addresses, so the questionnaire could be sent to the employees directly. In four organizations, our contact persons distributed the questionnaire themselves. In one organization, we sent an online version of the questionnaire to employees' e-mail addresses. In return for participating in the research, each organization received a summary of its own results. The average response rate was 48%, ranging from 13% to 78%. In total, 686 questionnaires were returned and processed.

Types of Organizations

We categorized organizations according to (a) their business orientation and (b) their financial orientation. The first distinction gave us 4 manufacturing ($n = 144$) and 16 service organizations ($n = 542$). Manufacturing organizations depend on the delivery of tangible material products and product-related services. This exploratory study included manufacturers of industrial and consumer goods, a publishing firm, and a building contractor. All the other respondents came from service-oriented organizations, working in the fields of, for instance, consultancy, health services, insurance, higher education, and public services. The second distinction—financial orientation—resulted in 9 profit-making ($n = 274$) and 11 nonprofit ($n = 412$) organizations. Profit-making organizations were manufacturing organizations, an engineering consultancy firm, an employment agency, a telecommunications network, and a retail organization. Nonprofit organizations were a hospital, institutes for higher education, a land register, and governmental organizations at the national, regional, and local level. We further subdivided profit-making organizations into 4 profit-making manufacturing organizations ($n = 144$) and 5 profit-making service organizations ($n = 130$). All manufacturers are profit-making organizations. Next, we distinguished 5 profit-making ($n = 130$) and 11 nonprofit organizations ($n = 412$) in the service sector. The category “nonprofit organizations” is totally made up of service organizations. Figure 1 shows the types of organizations and the differences we analyzed.

To measure the way in which CVI is managed in the different types of organizations, we focused on similarities and differences of the perceived consistency of the CVI by the employees, general organizational (management) characteristics, CVI management characteristics, and single CVI management instruments.

The Consistency of the CVI

In our study, the measure of CVI consistency did not reflect the quality of the design or the coherence among the various design elements as, for instance, a color palette and a matching typeface, which can strengthen each other and thus enhance visual effect. This consistency factor is based on a similarity of the “look and feel” among the various CVI elements. The variable *Consistent CVI* was defined as the extent to which the various CVI elements were actually employed as intended. The assumption is that the consistency of CVI depends on the way the defined CVI guidelines are applied by the employees, resulting in a more or less consistent visual expression of the organization’s corporate image. The consistency of the CVI was measured by asking the respondents to react to eight statements, including “Our organization can easily be identified by its CVI,” “The CVI of our organization is messy,” and “Everyone in our organization complies with CVI rules.” All responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). The reliability of the scale used for perceived CVI consistency was good (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$).

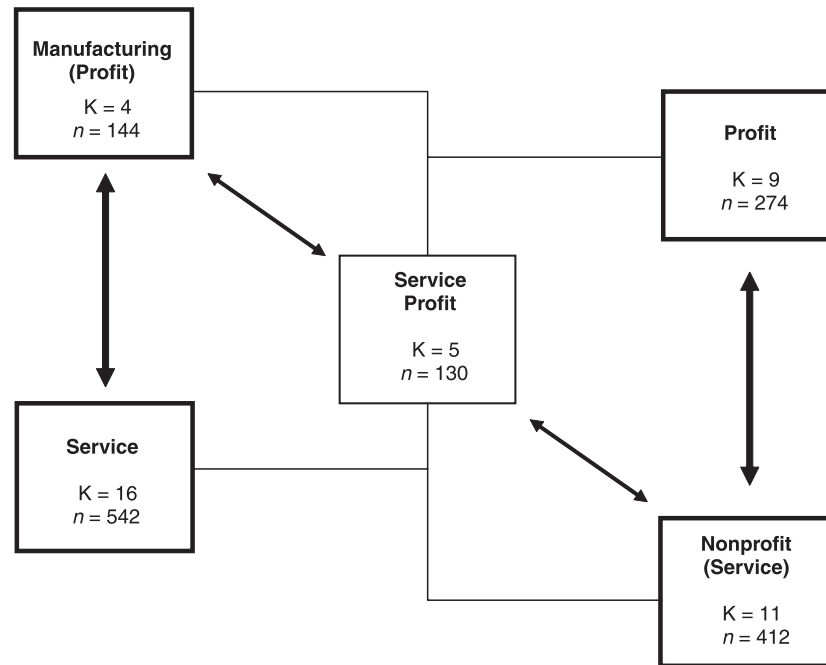


Figure 1. Types of Organizations and Differences Measured

Note: A distinction was made between manufacturing and service organizations. Within the service organizations, a subdivision was made between profit-making and nonprofit. The total group was also divided into profit-making and nonprofit organizations. The profit-making organizations were subdivided into manufacturing and service sectors. The arrows show the comparisons that were made. K = number of organizations; N = number of respondents.

Organizational and CVI Management Characteristics

We included eight organizational characteristics, arranged in two clusters. The first group contained general organizational characteristics, and the second group contained organizational characteristics directly related to CVI management. We included five general organizational characteristics: *Knowledge of Organization Strategy*, *Tools and Support*, *Managerial Quality*, *Internal Communication*, and whether the organization was *Open and Dynamic*. The variable *Knowledge of Organization Strategy* (five items, Cronbach's alpha = .71) included statements such as "I know what our organization stands for," "I know where our organization is heading," and "I know the mission statement of the organization." The variable *Tools and Support* (six items, Cronbach's alpha = .70) provided a measure of the coordination mechanisms used to support the various units within the organization. It included statements such as "Within our organization I have the tools I need to do my job" and "Specialist staff departments support me in doing my job." Examples

of statements related to the variable *Managerial Quality* (five items, Cronbach's alpha = .70) were "Managers stimulate us to learn more about our work" and "My manager does not explain why particular tasks must be carried out." We used statements such as "There is consultation between business units and the board of directors" and "I am well informed about what is going on in our organization" to measure the variable *Internal Communication* (eight items, Cronbach's alpha = .79). Finally, we included the variable *Open and Dynamic* (five items, Cronbach's alpha = .68) to measure the extent to which an organization operates in a dynamic environment and therefore has to act flexibly and anticipate changes. Statements used here were "Most of the work can be organized by the staff themselves" and "Our organization continually anticipates new developments."

We distinguished three characteristics that relate to the way the CVI is managed: *Knowledge of CVI Strategy*, *CVI Tools and Support*, and *CVI Socialization Processes*. The variable *Knowledge of CVI Strategy* (three items, Cronbach's alpha = .70) focused on the employees' knowledge of the rationale behind the CVI and its objectives. Examples of the statements we used were "I understand the rationale behind our company logo," and "The CVI helps others recognize our organization." The variable *CVI Tools and Support* (five items, Cronbach's alpha = .85) was measured using statements such as "Our CVI guidelines are up-to-date" and "In our organization we have tools that make it easy for us to apply the CVI." The variable *CVI Socialization Processes* (five items, Cronbach's alpha = .73) focused on formal and informal learning processes as well as the behavior of managers, through which both existing members of an organization and newcomers come to understand the types of behavior that are expected in relation to the CVI. Examples of statements were "When I do not apply the CVI, I get criticized" and "Newcomers in our department always get an induction course on the CVI." The CVI management characteristics were derived from literature on the strategy, structure, and culture of organizations. All responses were perceived judgments of the respondents, measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

CVI Management Instruments

We also presented the respondents with a list of specific management tools that may be used to ensure the consistency of the CVI: *Up-to-Date CVI Guidelines*, *Access to CVI Guidelines*, *Extensive CVI Guidelines*, *Regular Consultation With Users*, *Preferred Suppliers* for providing, for instance, signs on buildings, corporate clothing, or printed materials, *Technical Tools* such as templates for word processing and presentations, *Managers Setting an Example*, *CVI as a Topic in Induction Programs*, and the existence of a *CVI Helpdesk* and/or *CVI Manager*. Respondents were asked to indicate whether these 10 management instruments were used in their organization. Because it is quite possible that employees may not always be aware of the existence of a particular management instrument, they were also given the option to answer "don't know."

Table 1. Overview of Dependent and Independent Variables Used

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Organization and CVI</i>	
	<i>Management Characteristics</i>	<i>CVI Management Instruments</i>
Consistent CVI	Knowledge of organization strategy	Up-to-date CVI guidelines
	Tools and support	Access to CVI guidelines
	Managerial quality	Extensive CVI guidelines
	Internal communication	Regular consultation with users
	Open and dynamic	Preferred suppliers
		Technical tools
	Knowledge of CVI strategy	Managers setting an example
	CVI tools and support	CVI as a topic in induction programs
	CVI socialization processes	CVI helpdesk
		CVI manager

Note: CVI = Corporate Visual Identity.

Table 1 provides an overview of the dependent and all independent variables included in this study: organizational characteristics, CVI management characteristics, and CVI management instruments.

RESULTS

In the first part of this section, we report on the differences found between manufacturing and service organizations. In the second part, we present the differences between profit-making and nonprofit organizations. We will start with the descriptions of the variables organizational and CVI management characteristics. This is followed by a linear regression enter analysis, which measures their influence on the consistency of the CVI. Then, we present the results that relate to the use of specific CVI management instruments in the various types of organizations. Finally, we conduct a linear regression enter analysis to investigate the influence of these tools on the consistency of the CVI. The tables compare the different types of organizations: manufacturing versus service and profit-making versus nonprofit.

Differences Between Manufacturing and Service Organizations

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and differences (using *t* tests) of the organizational and CVI management characteristics. Except for the variables *CVI Tools and Support* and *Open and Dynamic*, no significant differences were found between manufacturing and service organizations. In the perception of respondents, manufacturing organizations focus more on tools and support related to CVI and they are less open and dynamic. The linear regression enter analysis produced an explained variance (R^2) of 62% in manufacturing organizations and 53%

in service organizations (see Table 3). The results imply that CVI management characteristics are of major importance in maintaining a consistent CVI. In both types of organizations, the strongest influence was *CVI Socialization Processes* and *Knowledge of CVI Strategy*, followed by *CVI Tools and Support*. The other characteristics did not influence the consistency of the CVI in either manufacturing or service organizations. The consistency of the CVI was clearly influenced by CVI management characteristics, regardless of whether the organization was manufacturing or service-oriented.

Next, we conducted analyses to investigate the influence of specific CVI management instruments. Table 4 presents the results with respect to the use of CVI management instruments in manufacturing and service organizations. Significant differences (measured by chi-square) were found in *Up-to-Date CVI Guidelines*, *Access to CVI Guidelines*, *Regular Consultation With Users*, and *Technical Tools*. Except for regular consultation, which was used more frequently in service organizations, the use of these instruments was higher in manufacturing organizations.

To explore the influence of CVI management instruments on the consistency of CVI, we conducted a linear regression enter analysis with the consistency of the CVI as the dependent variable and the CVI management instruments as independent variables (see Table 5). The explained variance was 29% in manufacturing organizations and 28% in service organizations. *Managers Setting an Example* had a major influence in both types of organizations. *Access to CVI Guidelines* was of significant influence in manufacturing organizations, and *Up-to-Date CVI Guidelines*, *Preferred Suppliers*, *CVI as a Topic in Induction Programs*, and the existence of a *CVI Manager* were significant in service organizations. It is worth noting that the *Access to CVI Guidelines* was found to be an important predictor in manufacturing organizations and not in service organizations. On the other hand, *Up-to-Date CVI Guidelines* was a reliable predictor for the consistency of the CVI in service organizations and not in manufacturing organizations. *Extensive CVI Guidelines*, *Regular Consultation With Users*, *Technical Tools*, and a *CVI Helpdesk* did not seem to contribute significantly, either in manufacturing or in service organizations.

Differences Between Profit-Making and Nonprofit Organizations

Differences between profit-making and nonprofit organizations were found in *CVI Consistency*, *Knowledge of Organization Strategy*, the *Open and Dynamic* variable, and all three CVI management characteristics (see Table 2). Profit-making organizations had significantly higher scores, except for *Open and Dynamic*. These higher scores suggest a higher degree of consistency in the CVI, better knowledge of the organization's strategy, and more effort put into CVI management in profit-making organizations. In the perception of respondents, nonprofit organizations were more open and dynamic, which suggests that these were

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Organizational and CVI Management Characteristics and Differences Between Types of Organizations

	Manufacturing		Service		Difference Manufacturing/Service		Profit-Making		Nonprofit		Difference Profit-Making/Nonprofit	
	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Number of organizations	4			16				9		11		
	144			542				274		412		
Consistent CVI		3.56 (.68)		3.49 (.66)			<i>t</i> = 0.95; <i>df</i> = 655		3.66 (.67)		3.41 (.64)	<i>t</i> = 4.69**;
Knowledge of organization strategy		4.03 (.68)		4.07 (.62)			<i>t</i> = -0.56; <i>df</i> = 660		4.13 (.65)		4.01 (.62)	<i>t</i> = 2.33**;
Tools and support		3.57 (.73)		3.66 (.61)			<i>t</i> = -1.40; <i>df</i> = 187		3.60 (.69)		3.68 (.60)	<i>t</i> = -1.52; <i>df</i> = 508
Managerial quality		3.40 (.73)		3.44 (.61)			<i>t</i> = -0.59; <i>df</i> = 189		3.45 (.69)		3.41 (.60)	<i>t</i> = 0.68; <i>df</i> = 505
Internal communication		3.44 (.64)		3.33 (.58)			<i>t</i> = 1.88; <i>df</i> = 629		3.39 (.62)		3.32 (.58)	<i>t</i> = 1.49; <i>df</i> = 629
Open and dynamic		3.95 (.71)		4.10 (.51)			<i>t</i> = -2.10*;		4.00° (.66)		4.11 (.48)	<i>t</i> = -2.16*;
Knowledge of CVI strategy		3.90 (.97)		3.88 (.86)			<i>t</i> = 0.20; <i>df</i> = 200		4.04 (.90)		3.78 (.86)	<i>t</i> = 3.83**;
CVI tools and support		3.53 (.92)		3.23 (.89)			<i>t</i> = 3.42*;		3.48 (.91)		3.17 (.88)	<i>t</i> = 4.45**;
CVI socialization processes		2.94 (.76)		2.93 (.81)			<i>t</i> = 0.15; <i>df</i> = 661		3.10 (.79)		2.82 (.79)	<i>t</i> = 4.49**;

Note: CVI = Corporate Visual Identity. ° skewness < -1.0

p* < .05 *p* < .001

Table 3. Linear Regression (Method Enter) Analysis With Organizational and CVI Management Characteristics as Predictors for a Consistent CVI

	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Profit-Making</i>	<i>Nonprofit</i>
R^2	.62	.53	.59	.49
F	18.65**	61.14**	35.84**	39.34**
n	101	439	208	332
Beta				
Knowledge of CVI strategy	.29*	.28**	.27**	.27**
CVI tools and support	.24*	.23**	.24**	.22**
CVI socialization processes	.30**	.32**	.30**	.33**
Knowledge of organization strategy	.07	.06	.14*	.02
Tools and support	.07	.03	.06	.05
Managerial quality	-.06	.00	-.09	.01
Internal communication	.03	.04	.02	.05
Open and dynamic	.13	.07	.12*	.07

Note: CVI = Corporate Visual Identity

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

more influenced by their environment than profit-making organizations. There was no significant difference with respect to other organizational characteristics.

The linear regression enter analysis for all of the organizational and CVI management characteristics resulted in an explained variance of 59% for profit-making organizations and 49% for nonprofit organizations (see Table 3). All three CVI management characteristics significantly influenced the consistency of CVI in both types of organizations. The best predictor was found in *CVI Socialization Processes*, followed by *Knowledge of CVI Strategy*, and *CVI Tools and Support*. *Knowledge of the Organizational Strategy* also influenced the consistency of the CVI in profit-making organizations. Apparently, employees need to know the strategy of the organization before they can support the CVI and apply the guidelines. Nonprofit organizations had a significantly higher score on the variable *Open and Dynamic*; however, this did not affect the consistency of the CVI. Although profit-making organizations were less open and dynamic, this variable significantly influenced the consistency of the CVI.

We also analyzed the differences between profit-making and nonprofit organizations within the group of service organizations (see Figure 1). There was no significant difference in the variable *Open and Dynamic*. However, as discussed above, this variable was significant when comparing all profit-making with all nonprofit organizations. Therefore, this characteristic must be ascribed to the manufacturing organizations, which had the lowest score of all differentiated types of organizations. The highest score on *Open and Dynamic* was found in nonprofit organizations, which suggests that these organizations have to be flexible and react

Table 4. Percentages and Differences in the Use of CVI Management Instruments

	Manufacturing		Service		Difference Manufacturing/ Service χ^2		Profit-Making		Difference Profit-Making/ Nonprofit χ^2	
Up-to-date CVI guidelines	61 (87)	49 (264)	7.23*	67 (183)	41 (168)	46.86**				
Access to CVI guidelines	68 (97)	50 (267)	15.35**	64 (174)	47 (190)	21.05**				
Extensive CVI guidelines	48 (68)	37 (196)	5.84	51 (139)	31 (125)	29.41**				
Regular consultation with users	10 (15)	14 (77)	12.14*	17 (47)	11 (45)	5.87				
Preferred suppliers	43 (61)	48 (257)	4.02	53 (144)	43 (174)	9.52*				
Technical tools	84 (120)	73 (392)	7.60*	83 (225)	70 (287)	13.62*				
Managers setting an example	25 (35)	27 (146)	3.21	31 (84)	24 (97)	4.65				
CVI as a topic in induction programs	25 (36)	20 (107)	2.00	28 (77)	16 (66)	15.55**				
CVI helpdesk	37 (52)	31 (167)	3.27	34 (92)	31 (127)	1.99				
CVI manager	45 (65)	47 (250)	0.21	54 (147)	41 (168)	10.48*				

Note: CVI = Corporate Visual Identity

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

Table 5. Linear Regression (Method Enter Analysis) With Management Instruments as Predictors for a Consistent CVI

	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Profit-Making</i>	<i>Nonprofit</i>
R^2	.29	.28	.25	.28
F	4.71**	19.32**	7.86**	14.22**
N	124	503	242	385
Beta				
Up-to-date CVI guidelines	.00	.21**	.13	.16*
Access to CVI guidelines	.23*	.03	.12	.05
Extensive CVI guidelines	.10	.01	.00	.03
Regular consultation with users	.09	.00	.08	-.04
Preferred suppliers	.15	.12*	.18*	.10*
Technical tools	.07	.05	.06	.06
Managers setting an example	.24*	.20**	.23**	.20**
CVI as a topic in induction programs	.08	.10*	-.05	.15*
CVI helpdesk	.01	.03	-.05	.07
CVI manager	.16	.13*	.15*	.12*

Note: CVI = Corporate Visual Identity

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

to their environment. Another significant difference was found in *Knowledge of Organization Strategy*. However, this was not a predictor for the consistency of the CVI in profit-making service organizations or in service nonprofit organizations. The linear regression enter analysis of profit-making service organizations resulted in an explained variance of 56% with the same set of predictors as in nonprofit service organizations.

Another subdivision we made was that between profit-making manufacturing and profit-making service organizations. Significant differences were found in *Consistent CVI*, *Knowledge of Organization Strategy*, *Knowledge of CVI Strategy*, and *CVI Socialization Processes*. Profit-making service organizations had the highest scores for all of these variables, even higher than those for manufacturing organizations. This implies that the differences must mainly be ascribed to the profit-making service organizations.

Next, we explored the differences between profit-making and nonprofit organizations for specific CVI management instruments (see Table 4). For the seven instruments, a significant difference was found. For all of these seven instruments, the percentage of use was higher in profit-making organizations. Profit-making organizations apparently put more specific instruments into practice to ensure the consistency of the CVI. We also conducted linear regression enter analysis (see Table 5): The explained variance was 25% in profit-making organizations and 28% in nonprofit organizations. *Managers Setting an Example* had the most influence according to both linear regression analyses, which shows that the perceived behavior of managers is a very good predictor for the consistency of the CVI. The

existence of a *CVI Manager* and *Preferred Suppliers* was also significant in both types of organizations. *Up-to-Date CVI Guidelines* and *CVI as a Topic in Induction Programs* significantly influenced the consistency of CVI in nonprofit organizations. Nevertheless, only a minority of the respondents indicated that these instruments were used in their organizations (see Table 4).

We conducted the same analyses to measure the differences between the subgroups profit-making manufacturing and profit-making service organizations as well as between profit-making and nonprofit organizations in the service sector. Significant differences were found in *Up-to-Date CVI Guidelines*, *Extensive CVI Guidelines*, *Regular Consultation With Users*, *Preferred Suppliers*, *Managers Setting an Example*, *CVI as a Topic in Induction Programs*, and the existence of a *CVI Manager*. In the perception of respondents, profit-making service organizations used these instruments the most. Significant differences were also found in *Access to CVI Guidelines* and *Technical Tools*, and the highest use of these instruments was found in manufacturing organizations. Profit-making service organizations were perceived to put more effort into the use of CVI management instruments; however, linear regression enter analysis (with an explained variance of 25%) resulted in only two significant predictors for the consistency of the CVI: *Up-to-Date CVI Guidelines* and *Managers Setting an Example*. This suggests that a variety of CVI management instruments can be put into practice, but not every CVI management instrument will significantly influence the consistency of the CVI.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to assess the differences of employees' perceptions among various types of organizations with regard to consistency of the CVI, organizational characteristics, and CVI management instruments that influence the consistency of the CVI. We investigated ways in which manufacturing organizations differ from service organizations and how profit-making organizations differ from nonprofit ones. Before discussing the differences, we will concentrate on similarities in the way organizations manage their CVI. These were found in the CVI management characteristics that influence the consistency of CVI. In general, all such characteristics—*Knowledge of CVI Strategy*, *CVI Tools and Support*, and

In the perception of the respondents in this study, profit-making service organizations put the most CVI instruments into practice.

CVI Socialization Processes—appeared to be important predictors of the consistency of the CVI. Regardless of the type of organization, managing the CVI had a positive effect on how the consistency of the CVI was perceived internally. In organizing CVI management, a combination of knowledge, attitude, and behavior turned out to be crucial.

Knowledge of the CVI—both the aims and the rationale behind the design—provides useful background information on the reasons for and the design of the corporate visual identity. Attitude and behavior are the results of socialization processes, including both formal and informal learning. Managers play an important role in learning processes and they must set a good example. Explanations for this can be found in modeling (Bandura, 1986) and the influence of attitudes and behavior of significant others in the working environment (Monge & Contractor, 2001). Another element related to socialization is the use of advanced technologies, which is assumed to be important for newcomers (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004). Our earlier research showed that CVI tools and support correlate both with the knowledge of CVI and with socialization processes (van den Bosch, Elving, & de Jong, in press). Tools and support positively influence the knowledge of CVI and help people learn how to apply guidelines.

In discussing the differences, we will first look at the initial research question, which concerns the distinction between manufacturing and service organizations.

Tools and support positively influence
the knowledge of CVI and help people
learn how to apply guidelines.

The perceived consistency of the CVI did not differ significantly between manufacturing and service organizations; neither did the organizational and CVI management characteristics, except for the openness and dynamics of the organization and CVI tools and support. In service organizations, up-to-date guidelines were an important predictor for the consistency of the CVI. In contrast, in manufacturing organizations, the accessibility of the CVI guidelines was an important predictor. It may be that in manufacturing organizations, guidelines are part of production processes. It is plausible that employees in the office not only have to rely on tools but also need to be knowledgeable about the CVI for correspondence, presentations, promotional materials, and so on. Another reason for this difference might be found in the nature of the types of activities service organizations engage in. Because of a general need to share written information, appropriate means are made available, including those for communicating the CVI. In general, up-to-date, accessible CVI guidelines are crucial if employees are to be able to retrieve such information.

The most differences in our study were found between profit and nonprofit organizations (Research Question 2). CVIs were perceived to be considerably more consistent in profit-making organizations. Our analyses also showed significantly higher scores in profit-making organizations for CVI management characteristics and most of the CVI management instruments. It may be that profit-making organizations try harder and put more instruments in place to improve their CVI. Nonprofit organizations may not feel the same need to invest in these instruments. Another noteworthy difference we found was that nonprofit organizations were perceived to be more open and were perceived to operate in a more dynamic environment. In our research, this group was made up mainly of organizations dedicated to public service—a type that has to follow government rules. Political influence might be one explanation for this dynamic environment. In the Netherlands, governmental organizations undergo frequent changes in their practices due to new national and European rules. Although nonprofit organizations are more open and dynamic, this characteristic did not appear to have any effect on the consistency of the CVI. On the other hand, the characteristic concerning openness and dynamism did influence the CVI in profit-making organizations. Perhaps they more often need to react to changing situations in a way that affects their CVI.

Another difference between profit-making and nonprofit organizations was knowledge of the organization's strategy. There was more knowledge of the strategy in profit-making organizations, and this finding also appeared to have a direct influence on the perceived consistency of CVI. Maybe employees in profit-making organizations feel a need for their organization to be visible and recognizable. Knowing about the organization strategy seems to help them implement the CVI guidelines, which results in greater consistency. Or perhaps the use of the CVI in their environment as well as in promotional campaigns motivates personnel to apply the CVI. In the perception of the respondents in this study, profit-making service organizations put the most CVI instruments into practice.

An important limitation of this study is the fact that we measured the *perceived* judgment of the respondents. We did not measure the consistency of CVI by running a visual audit, which measures consistency by analyzing the visual materials used by the organizations. Further study could include supplementary information, such as the results of a visual audit.

We also did not address the type of identity structure in the organization. There might be a difference between organizations that have a single corporate logo (monolithic identity) and those with multiple logos and visual identities (endorsed or branded identity structure).

Further research could also include studies on CVI in different types of organizations. For instance, do employees in service organizations have other needs with respect to information on the CVI than their counterparts in manufacturing organizations? Do profit-making organizations put more effort into support and tools for enhancing the consistency of their CVI? The degree of effort and the size of the investments made could also be a subject of further research.

In this study, we found both differences and similarities that we believe are important for corporate identity and communications managers and specialists. In general, profit-making organizations put the most effort into managing their CVI; however, efforts put into managing the CVI will result in more consistency in the use of the CVI in each type of organization. Those responsible for managing the CVI need to be aware of the management instruments they can use for enhancing the consistency of CVI, regardless of the organizational characteristics.

REFERENCES

- Baker, M. J., & Balmer, J. M. T. (1997). Visual identity: Trappings or substance? *European Journal of Marketing*, 31(5), 366-382.
- Balmer, J. M. T., & Gray, E. R. (2000). Corporate identity and corporate communications: Creating a competitive advantage. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 32(7), 256-262.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Birdsell, D. S., & Groarke, L. (1996). Toward a theory of visual argument. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 33, 1-10.
- Blair, A. J. (1996). The possibility and actuality of visual arguments. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 33, 23-39.
- Bromley, D. B. (2001). Relationships between personal and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4), 316-334.
- Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Demenint, M. I., van der Vlist, R., & Allegro, J. T. (1989). Organisations in een dynamische wereld [Organizations in a dynamic world]. In J. J. Boonstra, M. I. Demenint, & O. Steensma (Eds.), *Organiseren en veranderen in een dynamische wereld* [Organizing and changing in a dynamic world] (pp. 15-31). Culemborg, the Netherlands: Lemma.
- Dutton, J. E., & Dukerich, J. M. (1991). Keeping an eye on the mirror: Image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 34(3), 517-554.
- Dutton, J. E., Dukerich, J. M., & Harquail, C. V. (1994). Organizational images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39(2), 239-263.
- Flanagin, A. J., & Waldeck, J. H. (2004). Technology use and organizational newcomer socialization. *Journal of Business Communication*, 41(2), 137-165.
- Fleming, D. (1996). Can pictures be arguments? *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 33, 11-22.
- Fombrun, C. J., & Rindova, V. P. (1998). Reputation management in Global 1000 firms: A benchmarking study. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 1(3), 205-212.
- Fombrun, C. J., & van Riel, C. B. M. (2004). *Fame and fortune: How successful companies build winning reputations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Gabrielsen, G., Kristensen, T., & Hansen, F. (2000). Corporate design: A tool for testing. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 5(2), 113-118.
- Hall, R. H. (1991). *Organizations: Structures, processes and outcomes*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (1997). Relations between organizational culture, identity and image. *European Journal of Marketing*, 31(5), 356-365.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2003). Bringing the corporation into corporate branding. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(7/8), 1041-1064.
- Henderson, P. W., & Cote, J. A. (1998). Guidelines for selecting or modifying logos. *Journal of Marketing*, 62, 14-30.

- Hodge, B. J., Anthony, W. P., & Gales, L. M. (1996). *Organization theory: A strategic approach*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Ind, N. (2001). *Living the brand*. London: Kogan Page.
- Johnson, G., & Scholes, K. (1999). *Exploring corporate strategy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kapferer, J. N. (1994). *Strategic brand management*. New York: Free Press.
- Kiriakidou, O., & Millward, L. J. (2000). Corporate identity: External reality or internal fit? *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 5(1), 49-58.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1967). *Organization and environment*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Leavitt, H. J. (1965). Applied organizational change in industry: Structural, technological, and humanistic approaches. In J. March (Ed.), *Handbook of organizations* (pp. 1144-1170). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Melewar, T. C., & Saunders, J. (1998). Global corporate visual identity systems: Standardization, control and benefits. *International Marketing Review*, 15(4), 291-308.
- Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Mintzberg, H., Ahlstrand, B., & Lampel, J. (1998). *A guided tour through the wilds of strategic management*. New York: Free Press.
- Monge, P. R., & Contractor, N. S. (2001). Emergence of communication networks. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 440-502). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moriarty, S. E. (1996). Abduction: A theory of visual interpretation. *Communication Theory*, 6(2), 167-187.
- Olins, W. (1989). *Corporate identity: Making business strategy visible through design*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Renkema, J., & Hoeken, H. (1998). The influence of negative newspaper publicity on corporate image in the Netherlands. *Journal of Business Communication*, 35(4), 521-535.
- Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schultz, M., Hatch, M. J., & Larsen, M. H. (Eds.). (2000). *The expressive organisation: Linking identity, reputation and the corporate brand*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Trice, H. M., & Beyer, J. M. (1993). *The cultures of work organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- van den Bosch, A. L. M. (1999). *Corporate identity: De zorg voor een consistente visuele huisstijl* [Corporate identity: Maintaining a consistent corporate visual identity]. Master's thesis, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.
- van den Bosch, A. L. M., de Jong, M. D. T., & Elving, W. J. L. (2004). Managing corporate visual identity: Use and effects of organizational measures to support a consistent self-presentation. *Public Relations Review*, 30(2), 225-234.
- van den Bosch, A. L. M., de Jong, M. D. T., & Elving, W. J. L. (2005). How corporate visual identity supports reputation. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 10(2), 108-116.
- van den Bosch, A. L. M., Elving, W. J. L., & de Jong, M. D. T. (in press). The impact of organisational characteristics on corporate visual identity. *European Journal of Marketing*.
- van Riel, C. B. M. (2000). Corporate communication orchestrated by a sustainable corporate story. In M. Schultz, M. J. Hatch, & M. H. Larsen (Eds.), *The expressive organisation: Linking identity, reputation and the corporate brand* (pp. 157-181). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- van Riel, C. B. M., & Balmer, J. M. T. (1997). Corporate identity: The concept, its measurement and management. *European Journal of Marketing*, 31(5), 340-355.