

Revisiting the Corporate Identity of DALTA Group of Companies: Basis for the Development of A Corporate Identity Manual”

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Abstract— This study aimed to revisit the corporate identity that the DALTA Group of Companies (DGC) would like to project to its internal and external publics, find out the advantages of managing the organization’s corporate identity, determine the contents of a Corporate Identity Manual, redesign the Corporate Identity of the DGC through a manual, and validate the usability of the proposed manual.

The study used qualitative research approach and applied action research as a tradition of inquiry. The participants of this study have held positions in the administrative level for at least two years and are familiar with the corporate identity of the organization.

Findings showed that DGC has been projecting the value of helping and providing complete service to their various publics. It has been projecting to stakeholders that they are working partners in achieving the mission and vision of the organization. The basic advantage a corporate identity is the clear and effective communication that it brings to its stakeholders and this will also communicate the organization’s values, its philosophy, mission and vision.

Two drafts of the corporate identity manual were produced which contains brief description of corporate identity; history, philosophy, mission, vision, core values of DGC; descriptions of the various logos and their usage rules; and the rituals and activities of the organization.

Keywords— corporate identity, corporate identity manual, logos, usage rules

I. INTRODUCTION

It is essential for human beings to know who they are in order to lead gratifying and successful lives. Likewise, organizations or companies need to know who they are and why they exist in order to survive. A company needs a distinct “personality” or identity that will differentiate it from its competitors and that will shape its corporate identity.

Paul Argenti (2002) defines corporate identity as the concrete, often visual, manifestation of a company’s reality, including effective names and logos, memorable brands and symbols, consistent self-presentation, corporate sponsorships and most significantly, the organization’s vision, and the delivery of powerful multisensory experience. Corporate identity is the visual means by which organizations, businesses, and manufacturers are recognized and distinguished from each other. It is also a means of conveying the ways in which they carry out and value inherent in their activities. Although corporate identity is often closely linked to logotypes, at its most effective way it also embraces other aspects of corporate

expression such as architecture, interiors, furnishings, uniforms, stationery, publicity, even codes of company behavior. Corporate identity schemes may also be useful to make large corporations appear less dominant or threatening through the creation of positive individual identities for their subsidiaries, or give related smaller companies greater global presence through the development of some readily communicable aspects of shared identity.

The DALTA Group of Companies

One of the most successful organizations in the country that the researcher believes needs to revisit its corporate identity is the DALTA Group of Companies. Over forty years ago, Dr. Antonio L. Tamayo along with wife Dr. Daisy M. Tamayo, established an educational and a health institution in Las Piñas City. With Dr. Tamayo’s unorthodox management style, vision and genuine commitment to serve, his institutions slowly branched out to other types of services. DALTA Group of Companies later provided various services such as cattle and hog-raising, bakeshop, dairy and meat processing plant, restaurants, healthcare provider, communications company, realty, medical transcription and more. Thus, the DALTA Group of Companies (DGC) was born.

DGC envisions to be the leading group of companies of premier education, healthcare, delivery service, and community development with enterprises in food and agriculture, retail, construction and real estate, health maintenance organization, manpower services, business process outsourcing, and management services, all for the better Filipino society.

It is passionate and committed to its mission of rendering the best quality education, providing the best healthcare service, offering great food and valuable supplies, creating lasting homes and landmarks, rendering the most reliable support services, and managing with utmost excellence all in synergy and strength.

Revisiting Corporate Identity

Through the years, the DALTA Group of Companies has already established its own identity. It has always been associated with its pioneer institution’s patroness, Our Mother of Perpetual Help. Thus the value of “perpetually helping and performing as helpers of God” has been emphasized by its founders. For the DALTA Group of Companies, the logo maybe considered as the “heart” of the company’s identity. Ever since the establishment of the DGC, the image of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in the logo of the DGC’s schools and hospital has also become its permanent symbol/icon.

The researcher has been serving the DGC for more than 20 years and has been exposed to mostly corporate communications tasks or projects. The researcher has observed

that in some instances, there are inconsistencies in the usage of these logos as applied in letterheads, marketing collaterals, calling cards, signatures and more. Other existing communication collaterals were gathered to further study the corporate visual identity of DGC. The researcher believes that this should be given immediate attention because “the corporate name and logo are two essential components of the corporate identity construct, since they are the most pervasive elements in corporate and brand communications (Henderson & Cote, 1998; Schechter, 1993), and they play a crucial role in the communication of the desired positioning strategy (Alessandrini, 2001; Van Riel & Van den Ban, 2001).”

Organizational identity, if used continuously, supports a favorable development of the organization’s reputation, continuity and value. Expressing coherent clues about what the organization is all about allows the organization to develop a positive image with its stakeholders. The first step towards developing the potential of the organizational identity is taken within the organization. Thus, DALTA Group of Companies needs to revisit its corporate identity to ensure that it has been building trust, strong brand, and value and to project the image that the people behind this organization perceive.

The researcher also believes that in order to address the DGC’s problem on inconsistencies in the usages of visual elements, a corporate identity manual has to be produced for standardization. Knowles (1988) said a manual is a vital means for the internal communications of all the members of any working team. This proposed corporate identity manual will certainly help the organization to identify not only its corporate visual identity but also other aspects that will reflect its philosophy, mission and vision.

This study was limited only to the following:

1. The discussions on the corporate identity of the DGC as perceived by the internal and external publics were based only on the impressions given by the DGC administrators.
2. The content of the manual includes: vision and mission, corporate design (logo, letterhead, font/size, business cards, folders, certificates, identification cards, tarpaulin, promotional materials, powerpoint templates etc.).
3. The Corporate Identity Manual was only subjected for validation of the internal management particularly three administrative officials of the DGC.
4. The researcher used a modified model of Research and Development (R and D) in developing the proposed Corporate Identity Manual. However, the study did not include all the stages of the model. Furthermore, the study was delimited to the production of the first draft of the manual and the printing of the second draft after the validation.

II. THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to revisit the corporate identity that the DALTA Groups of Companies would like to project to its internal and external publics, to find out the advantages of managing the organization’s corporate identity, to determine the contents of a Corporate Identity Manual, to redesign the Corporate Identity of the DGC through a manual, and to validate the usability of the proposed manual.

The objectives of the study had the following research postulates:

1. DALTA Group of Companies would like to be identified as an organization that provides the best quality in all its services and manages with utmost excellence all in synergy and strength.
2. The employees and stakeholders will accept DALTA Group of Companies corporate identity by first explaining to them its history, importance and significance.
3. A well -managed corporate identity will have several advantages that will benefit both the organization and its people.
4. The Corporate Identity Manual will conform to the qualities significant to DALTA Group of Companies corporate identity.
5. There are difficulties inherent in the process of creating a corporate identity manual.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

This researcher used qualitative research approach for this study. Descriptive research design was used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomenon to describe “what exists” with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. It is suited to this study because it will reveal information with the current corporate set up of DALTA Group of Companies particularly its corporate identity .

The researcher used focus interview (FI) and archival research. The focus interview was conducted among the administrators of the organization and other business heads to find out their perception on the identity that the DALTA Group of Companies has been projecting to its publics.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Corporate Identity Projected To Internal & External Publics -Observations about the image projected by the Dalta Group of Companies

The participants emphasized the value of “helping” and providing complete service. They also stressed the company’s ability to cater to the needs of their various publics. *As stated by participant 3 “the company has a vision of making it a diversified entity that caters to everyone’s needs. It portrays to the public that whenever you need something, DALTA has it.”* They believe that this is how each constituency views the organization. Only participant number 4 answered that the DALTA Group of Companies has no clearly defined image.

It is confirmed with the statement of Argenti (2002), that corporate communication is looked at as the voice of the company and the images it projects as these are shaped especially by the CEO. This is evident in response of participant 2 stating the image that the DALTA Group of Companies’ Chairman of the Board and CEO would like to project to its various publics.

Organizational identity theory states that the essence of an organization is its’ identity. Basically, the firm’s identity is what the firm itself believes it to be and what it reflects is its’ communication with its stakeholders.

Argenti also stated that the vision that encompasses the company’s core values, philosophies, standards and goals are central to DALTA Group of Companies’ corporate identity.

Corporate vision is a common trend that all employees and ideally all other constituencies can relate to.

Projection of Corporate Identity to the Internal Publics

Participants 1 and 3 reiterated that the DALTA Group of Companies is instilling in their employees the value of helpfulness. As shown in the DGC's history, it started from the University of Perpetual Help school and hospital. As the name implies, they provide "endless or perpetual ways to help". This also implies that the DGC is prioritizing its employees as beneficiaries to any help or assistance that the organization can provide. "It is a company known for concern for its employees, and employees are partners in the business", as stated by participant 2.

On the other hand, participants 2 and 4 answered that the DGC would like to project that the employees are partners with the organization in achieving the mission and vision of the CEO. Likewise, mutual benefiting is also a common response. Maslow's hierarchy of needs model illustrates the need for employees to have their basic needs met before they're able to move on to higher level issues. Ensuring that all employees firmly grasp the company's mission statement and vision helps foster a sense of attachment that can spill over from this internal constituency to external ones.

Projection of Corporate Identity to the External Publics

Christian values and serving others are common denominators in the responses of the participants. This is a common answer because the DGC's pioneer institution is inspired by the guidance of the Mother of Perpetual Help, its patroness.

Community relations is also mentioned by participant 2. This way, companies integrate themselves to their local communities. This encompasses corporate volunteerism and charitable efforts that impact community perceptions about the organization. Those efforts need to be strategic and aligned with the overall corporate vision and strategy.

Also mentioned in the book *Essentials of Corporate Communications and Public Relations* are some important and constant themes that exist among all external audiences a) communication strategies should be strategic and should be aligned with the over-all corporate mission, vision, values and goals, b) managing the relationship with these audiences will serve to support and strengthen the company's reputation and image.

Strategies for the Acceptance of Corporate Identity Among Stakeholders

Participants 1 and 4 answered that there should be consistent and regular communication with the employees of DGC. In the book *Essentials of Communication* (2006), it is said that the organization must first determine the best timing and order on the target audience and the content of their message. Ensuring that the messages is delivered in the proper order and with consistency of content---this is critical and can have a decided impact on the organization's credibility with all audiences. The bottom line is persuasion. The goal of any communication is to persuade an audience, whether that persuasion is as simple as sharing of information or as complex as influencing the opinion of a constituency. Likewise, ideas should also be repeated to

ensure that they are heard broadly. The communication process should have a cascading movement.

Participant 3 emphasized that DGC should provide leadership by example. Social-power theorists discuss the importance of credibility on a personal level, but clearly, certain perceptions about your organization before they even begin to interact with it, based on everyday life experiences which gradually add or detract from this sense of credibility. These images stem from what they have read about the organization, what interaction others have had, and what visual symbols they recognize.

Frontline managers may be able to reiterate the organization's value statements, identify an image by demonstrating through word, deed, policies, practices and procedures that it is "walking the talk".

Engaging the employees in the process was also emphasized by participant 2. To engage through the employees, an organization needs to communicate a feeling that they are part of a broader team and that they are working toward a common goal. It should also be explained to the employees how the change fits into the overall context or benefit the administration. Also it should explain how the employees can contribute to the team in implementing this change and what personal or professional characteristics the employees have that mean well with the organization's culture. Also it should manage employee expectation and make sure that they know what to expect when they contribute a suggestion.

Advantages of Managing the Organization's

Corporate Identity

The basic advantage that Participant 2 answered is a clear, effective and efficient communication, it brings to its stakeholders. Participants 1,2, and 4 also mentioned that it will also communicate the organization's values, its philosophy, mission and vision.

Participant 3 discussed that managing the organization's corporate identity will also help in establishing brand. "I believe that corporate identity is essential for establishing a brand. And since a strong brand is related to client recall, it follows that a strong brand will also result in higher profits. Thus, for a company to fully realize its income potential, it must be able to establish a strong brand recall in its targeted market segment". A study conducted by Dowling (1993), Van Rul and Balmer (1997) stated that the creation of a strong corporate identity is crucial for companies to encourage positive attitude in its different target publics and may provide an important competitive advantage. The corporate name and logo are two essential components of the corporate identity construct, since they are the most pervasive elements in corporate and brand communication and play a crucial role in the communication of the desired positioning strategy.

Contents of Corporate Identity Manual- Comments on the Development of a Corporate Identity Manual

The participants agreed that a manual will be very helpful in developing a corporate identity for DALTA Group of Companies. "Manuals are forms of intervention which can actually help because they serve as guide" participant 2 said.

They agreed that the manual will be a great source of information which stakeholders can read and refer to. An

example of an organization that created a corporate identity manual is Philhealth or Philippine Health Insurance Corporation. A study about the development of Philhealth's Corporate Identity Manual was conducted by Varlez (2005), which is aimed to develop a manual that will standardize the graphic execution and application of its corporate identity elements in Philhealth nationwide. The manual served as a guide that prevented the various Philhealth offices from recreating logos or applying them to what they presumed to be correct.

Another example is Land Bank of the Philippines. Its corporate identity manual serves as a guide to various Land Bank units on how to properly and consistently use the trademark, corporate name, and logo in all official communication and collaterals.

Comments on DGC's varying usages of visual elements

Participants 1,2 and 3 agreed that DGC has varying usages of visual elements. Only participant 4 said that there is a need to have more probably because he is not very much involved in the other DGC businesses. Participant 3 explained that the reason behind this is the diversity of services of DGC. However, both Participants 1 and 2 suggested that the DALTA element should be carried universally throughout these visual elements. This is important in order to show that the business unit or institution belongs to the DALTA Group of Companies. Organizations such as the Ayala Group of Companies and the Yuchengco Group of Companies are doing the same strategies so that their clientele can identify all the businesses/companies that they own. As mentioned by Argenti this scheme will also make large corporations appear less dominant or threatening through the creation of positive individual identities for their subsidiaries, or give related smaller companies greater global presence through the development of some readily communicable aspects of shared identity.

Corporate Identity Manual Content

Participants 1,2 and 4 said that one of the most important contents of the corporate identity manual should be the DGC's mission, vision and philosophy. Formann (2002) said that an inspirational corporate vision is part of reputation management and identity-building. He also said that the vision that this encompasses the company's core values, philosophy, standards and goals are central to corporate identity.

Participant 2 emphasized the importance of visual elements. Moreover, Participant 3 added that policies with regards to the utilization of these visual elements should also be included in the manual.

The various manuals which were reviewed by the researcher basically contains the important elements mentioned by the participants in this study.

Redesigning the Corporate Identity of DALTA Group of Companies through a Manual

After conducting the focus interviews among the participants, the researcher was able to get their impressions regarding the corporate identity being projected to the internal and external publics. The impressions became the basis for the production of the initial draft of the Corporate Identity Manual of DALTA Group of Companies. The manual has twenty four

(24) pages including its cover. The standard size of the manual is 8 ½ x 11. The cover and the inside pages are designed and printed in full color using matte paper (inside pages) and glossy board (cover pages). The first page contains a brief description about corporate identity and its importance to an organization. Pages were also allotted for the history, philosophy, mission and vision, core values of the DALTA Group of Companies. The succeeding pages contain the descriptions of the various logos of DGC, the logos usages rules, and print applications. The final page includes the rituals and activities of the organization.

Validation of the Usability of the Manual

A focus interview was conducted by the researcher among three participants. The first participant is Dr. Raymond Mallari, head of a marketing department of the medical center. The second participant is Mr. Francis Serna, art director of the marketing and PR department of the school while the third participant is Mr. Richard Antonio Tamayo, Executive Vice President for Administration and the head of Cluster B where the Corporate Communications office is a part of.

The FI was guided by the following criteria which was adopted from a study conducted by Varlez (2005). The criterion were modified by the researcher within which the Manual was presented: attractiveness (physical attributes), completeness (coverage of applications), comprehension (understandable), and acceptability (user-friendly).

Attractiveness of the Manual

The participants in the validation phase agreed that the corporate identity manual has an appropriate cover design. The correct font type and colors were presented in the cover and inside pages.

However, they agreed that the resolution of the logo in the cover has to be improved. They were generally in favor of the size, binding and thickness of the manual. Both participants 2 and 3 agreed that the design speaks of the group's corporate identity but participant 1 said that he is not very familiar with the identity of the group. With regards to the paper type, participant 2 suggested to use a thicker paper for the cover.

The participants have no negative reactions about the design of the manual basically because the researcher who conceptualized the design and the artist who executed the layout are both part of the company. Both are already familiar with the corporate colors and other specifications.

Responses on Completeness

The participants said that the manual was able to cover all the information needed. However, they have some suggestions which include a policy on the official font type to be used in all written communications, office signage and directional signs and the uniform of employees.

Participant 1 also suggested that we also have to look into the logo of DGC as well. He said that it should encompass everything about the DGC's business units-educational and health institutions, realty, HMO, food and agri, medical transcription, travel and tours and manpower services. It seems like the identity is focused on the subsidiaries and not the group. A committee maybe convened to immediately look into this matter.

Responses on Comprehension

The participants agreed that the manual's rules are clearly stated. Participant 1 said " *It's ok. What's important is, it is done in a layman's term. It is not very technical which is very good.*" The researcher did not use complicated terminologies or technical terms and the rules were properly explained and illustrated. The sequencing of the topics are also correct.

Participant 2 suggested to include the design of the DGC's official website because the internet and world wide web is the in-thing today. This would be very useful for the DGC however, the management has to make sure that each business unit has its own website linked to the main website of the DGC.

Responses on Acceptability

The participants agreed that the manual is user-friendly because of its font type, organization and visuals. They also said that the manual will help the DGC to standardize the application of the corporate logos and other elements.

"*Yes. It will be a milestone,*" said participant 3. As an over-all assessment, participant 3 emphasized that the corporate identity manual is a good project and will definitely mark the professionalization efforts of the DGC.

After the conduct of focus interviews, the researcher produced a second draft of the corporate identity manual which incorporated the participants' comments and suggestions. The second draft is composed of 26 pages including cover. There were only minor changes made by the researcher.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the participants accounts and other related data gathered by the researcher, it may be concluded that a corporate identity is vital for a stable and growing organization like the DALTA Group of Companies to clearly define its corporate visual identity. The results of the study affirmed the Organizational Identity Theory conducted by Beek in 2003 in the theoretical framework.

The Corporate Identity Manual projects the over-all goal orientation of the DALTA Group of Companies. It depicts the desired mission of the corporation and the vision to make the organization diversified corporation serving a variety of needs.

The manual projects the DGC's norms and values. The employees internalize the mission and vision of the corporation. Above all, they demonstrate Christian values and are able to immerse themselves in the community and society at large.

The corporate identity manual epitomizes the coherent and sound practices of administrators and staff in their dealing with the stakeholders and customers. They rationalize the reason for the corporation's existence, eventually delivering the various services in the proper conduct and coherence in logical patterns on a well-thought out plan of action.

The corporate identity manual shows the management's leadership by example. There is a reiteration of the organization's value statements. It demonstrates teamwork and the management and employees communicate a feeling of working towards a common goal.

The results of the study have attained the following research posulates:

-DALTA group of Companies would like to be identified as an organization that provides the best quality in all its services and manages with utmost excellence all in synergy and strength. DGC's corporate identity signifies the organization's commitment by providing best quality services to its stakeholders and customers. A DGC corporate identity manual could help in the attainment of this objective.

-The stakeholders will accept DALTA Group of Companies identity by first explaining to them its history, importance and significance. DGC stakeholders should be familiarized with the history, importance and significance of a corporate identity. Thus, a corporate identity manual would help in verbalizing these in physical form to be read and studied and accepted by DGC stakeholders.

-A well-managed corporate identity has several advantages that will benefit the organization and its people. The corporate identity manual is the best representation of DGC's corporate identity. It provides an expression of DGC's commitment to provide quality and excellent services to the different sectors of society. It is the the blueprint of the company's mission and vision and the formal manifestations of DGC's over-all objectives and plans that would benefit the employees and customers.

-The Corporate Identity Manual will conform to the qualities significant to DALTA Group of Companies corporate identity. As observed in the various manuals gathered by the researcher, corporate identity manuals always conform to the qualities significant to the organization. The color schemes, symbols and fonts used in DGC's manual represent the groups' corporate identity.

-There are difficulties inherent in the process of creating a corporate identity manual. The development of a corporate identity manual needed a collaboration of creative minds to be able to formulate a standard for all the visual applications. Prior to the multiple production of the manual, a committee shall be formed in order to finalize its the contents and design. Budget shall also be taken into consideration. The contents shall also be updated at least annually. All manuals from other companies also go through the same process.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggestion of one of the participants should be considered in one of the committee meetings prior to the final printing of the manual. Participant 1 reiterated that corporate identity should focus on the DALTA Group and not with the individual business units or subsidiaries. She suggested to look into the DGC logo as well. The logo should encompass all the business units of the group.

The researcher sees that there is also a need to conduct further studies regarding the perception of the DALTA Group of Companies employees (other stakeholders) on the use of the manual. A bigger number of samples (organization-wide) maybe tested to re-evaluate the relevance of the manual to the organization.

There should also be efforts on the part of the corporate communications department to strengthen the campaigns or programs to create awareness regarding the DALTA Group of Companies' corporate identity. Orientation sessions with the supervisors and department heads on how to use the manual

maybe arranged in cooperation with the Human Resource Department. The Orientation session may also serve as venues to clarify some information and to answer queries from the participants.

The corporate communications department shall request the CEO and Chairman of the Board to create a memorandum circular regarding the compliance to the Corporate Identity Manual among all business units of the DALTA Group of Companies.

The corporate communications department should also ensure the compliance of the employees and stakeholders to the Corporate Identity Manual.

A compact disc containing all the logos and samples of other print applications shall also be distributed among the business units of the DALTA Group of Companies.

The Corporate Identity Manual should be reviewed and updated annually by the Corporate Communications Department.

A study on the corporate culture of DALTA Group of Companies maybe conducted in the future.

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