Evaluating The Projection
Of Corporate Culture Online

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ABSTRACT

It is argued that corporate culture projection should be considered an important business strategy and a crucial factor in entering different business environments. The framework presented in this paper is based on an extension of the AIPD web evaluation model (attracting, informing, delivering, positioning) to a greater focus on a firms' stakeholders. Using this framework, the paper presents an empirical investigation of web organization and content of sites in three countries. The website evaluations and statistical analyses support the idea that websites can consistently project an appealing corporate culture if web content is structured with stakeholders in mind.

Keywords: AIPD, online corporate culture, cross-border web strategy

INTRODUCTION

$\mathcal{T}$he concept of corporate culture has been linked to many business strategies. Corporate culture consists of the public image as well as the internal social environment that results from the interaction of a firm's characteristics, values, expectations, staff profile, and business strategies (Pettigrew 1979; Fitzgerald 1988; Denison 1990; Schein 1991). The idea that a company's culture can have a significant impact on its behavior and performance is a widely held view and many researchers continue to apply this perspective in organizational studies (Bloor 1994; Denison and Mishra 1995; Harris and Ogbonna 2002). These wide ranging studies showed that corporate culture can have an impact on areas such as employee recruitment, organizational commitment, workflow management, innovation, negotiation strategies, brand recognition, community relations, alliance behavior and organizational learning (Argyris 1978; Gudykunst, Matsumoto et al. 1996; Homburg and Pflesser 2000; Adair, Okumura et al. 2001; Aladwani and Palvia 2002; Dunkerley and Robinson 2002; Evans and Mavondo 2002; Harris and Ogbonna 2002).

Although internet sites represent unique virtual locations, the world-wide web exists because of the global use of standardized technologies and practices. Consequently, initial studies centered on the best practices for the effective use of web design and structure to inform and communicate (Betts 1995; Fink and Laupase 2000; Aladwani and Palvia 2002; Ranganathan and Ganapathy 2002). There was every expectation that this standardized technology infrastructure would minimize the impact of cross-cultural forces. However, instead of complete convergence, we have witnessed an increasing variety of approaches as organizations from different national environments establish their presence in this virtual arena. In response, a number of consultants and researchers have resorted to using various cultural values approaches to examine the impact of culture on websites in different national environments. Unfortunately, they still have not provided a consistent approach for understanding how firms can manage their web content to develop and effectively project their corporate culture online and across national boundaries. In fact, most of the research on consistent web strategies has focused on the effective use of web design and web tools (Hernon 1998; Bauer and Scharl 2000; Marcus 2003; Robbins and Stylianou 2003).

This paper will present a framework that allows for a consistent approach to evaluating the projection of corporate culture online. A key aspect of this framework is the strategic approach to presenting website content. The paper takes the view that presenting a consistent corporate web culture across borders can give strategic advantages to international firms. In effect, creating and projecting a consistent corporate identity can also be considered an essential strategic mode of entry into foreign environments.

The framework to be presented is based on an extension of the AIPD web evaluation model (*attracting, informing, delivering, positioning*) to a greater focus on firms' being responsive to stakeholders (Simeon 1999; Simeon 2001). The paper will provide empirical support for the suggested framework by evaluating information that was collected from 350 corporate websites in three countries. Statistical analyses were used to confirm the usefulness of this approach in identifying content factors that support the emergence of positive corporate web culture characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROJECTION OF WEB CULTURE

The concern with web design and culture projection has been examined from a number of different perspectives. Interest in the different approaches has been shifting as the internet evolves from merely a communication tool to a more virtual interactive environment. Figure 1 below illustrates how the strategic use of web content has evolved.

Figure 1: The Evolution of the Strategic Use of the Web
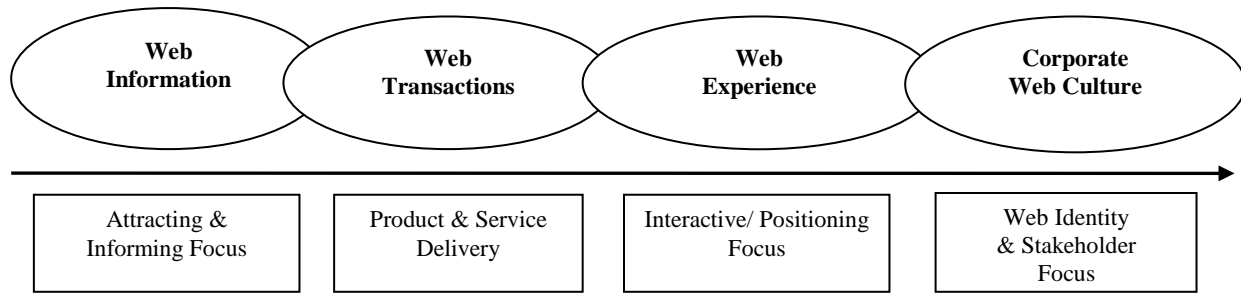
There has been a progressive blurring of the distinction between external and internal culture as the impact of the internet is felt inside and outside organizations as well as across many national boundaries. The summaries of the perspectives below show the evolution of the interest in and use of culture in web strategy.

Impact of Intranet & Extranet Usage on Corporate Culture

This perspective highlights the impact of extensive intranet usage (intra-firm web) on the overall culture of the organization. Since the intranet refers to the application of the internet within an organization for the private purposes of its members, many studies show how this new technology forces firms to reorganize their operations and change their approach to information sharing. Organizations extensively using intranets have had to adopt a new degree of openness, accessibility and cooperation to the extent that the internal culture of the firm was irrevocably changed (Borsook 1995; Grochow 1996; Hibbard 1998; Gray 1999). Since many firms rapidly expanded their web environment to their customers, suppliers and affiliates, extranets (external web interfaces between suppliers & customers) also had an impact on business culture. This fast and open communication environment transformed many firms' attitude toward their business partners and customers. Studies show that firms that actively participated in a networked internet environment or in e-commerce activities had to adjust their management style and business processes in ways that eventually changed their corporate culture (Croft 1995; Taylor 1997; Cairncross 2000; Chabrow 2000).

Cultural Values Impacting Perception, Web Design and Usage

This perspective represents a recently popular approach to studying the impact of culture on web activities. The majority of its proponents use Hoftstede's value dimensions to examine differences in preferences, web design, and communication style across cultures (Robbins and Stylianou 2001; Marcus 2003). The main assumption is that

the dominant national culture will directly or indirectly affect the way websites are displayed, perceived, and appreciated by managers, staff, and consumers. Cultural dimensions such as individualism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity and time orientation are often correlated with different design, communication and transaction styles of websites around the world (Gudykunst 1998; Fink and Laupase 2000; Tang 2001). The drawback with this approach is the observation that sometimes the within-country differences in websites are sometimes greater than cross-border differences. The nature of the firm and the type of sector may better explain some web design and customer perception differences.

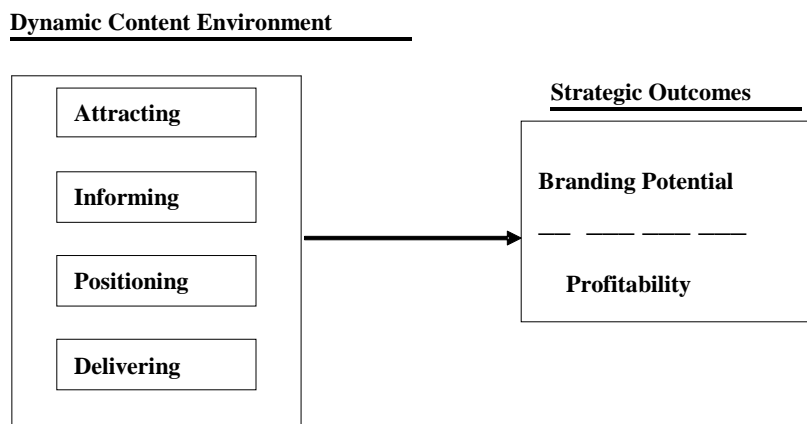## Ethnic Sites, Pop Culture and Web Community Environments

Another approach to exploring online culture is the examination of sites that are linked to ethnic groups, pop culture events, and virtual web communities. The study of websites linked to ethnic groups and institutions show that it is crucial for these sites to have the capability of displaying multiple languages, unique designs, color schemes and music preferences for communities spread over space and time. In a sense, the specialized interests of the ethnic groups and special interests drive the cultural dimension of these sites (Lam 1997; Tang 2001; Cunliffe, Jones et al. 2002). The strong presence of pop culture sites and virtual web communities can be attributed to their ties to important events or social preferences (facebook.com, myspace.com, forumfind.org, &other online communities). Here also, it is the strong and persistent interests, preferences and interaction of the users that create a cultural dimension on these websites (Kuchinskas 1999; Williams 1999; Pack Jun 2001). However, unlike web communities serving narrow interests, corporations operating in a competitive business environment need to serve a variety of stakeholders.

ADAPTING THE AIPD FRAMEWORK FOR ONLINE CULTURE PROJECTION ANALYSIS

The AIPD Stakeholder Approach

This perspective is a combination of two strategic views. One focuses on the structuring of web content (AIPD) and the other focuses on the target of the web content. The AIPD perspective takes the view that the strategic ways in which activities are presented on websites can have a definite impact on an organization's image, culture, and web performance. The AIPD (attracting, informing, delivering & positioning) framework focuses on the structuring of web capabilities and content in a systematic way to develop virtual branding (Simeon 1999; Simeon 2001). In this perspective, an organization can transform its virtual space into a recognizable location by effectively managing website images, content, and structure (figure 2).

Figure 2: The AIPD Perspective

Dynamic Content Environment

| Attracting |
| Informing |
| Positioning |
| Delivering |

Strategic Outcomes

**Branding Potential**

— — — —

Profitability

Source: (Simeon, 2001)

The second perspective that focuses on stakeholder targeting sees organizational identity as being embedded in a network of relationships. It holds the view that the dynamic interaction of a firm with its internal and external stakeholders drives the development of its corporate culture. There is also the assertion that a firm can consciously manage internal interaction and external perceptions in ways that boosts its image in the community and marketplace (Hornick 1998; Scott and Lane 2000; Violino 2000; Zimmerman 2000; Lewis Oct/Nov 2000).

The combined approach is henceforth referred to as the AIPD Stakeholder approach (figure 3). This approach assumes that in order to project its corporate culture, firms will develop and then project positive and desirable images, characteristics, and capabilities of the organization on their websites. They do this by effectively structuring the web content to respond to attract a wide variety of stakeholders. The combined perspectives underlie the framework presented below (Borsook 1995; Marken 1996; Patrick 1997; Homburg and Pflesser 2000; Kabanoff and Daly 2000; Dunkerley and Robinson 2002).

Figure 3: AIPD Stakeholder Framework for Corporate Culture Projection

Dynamic Content Environment
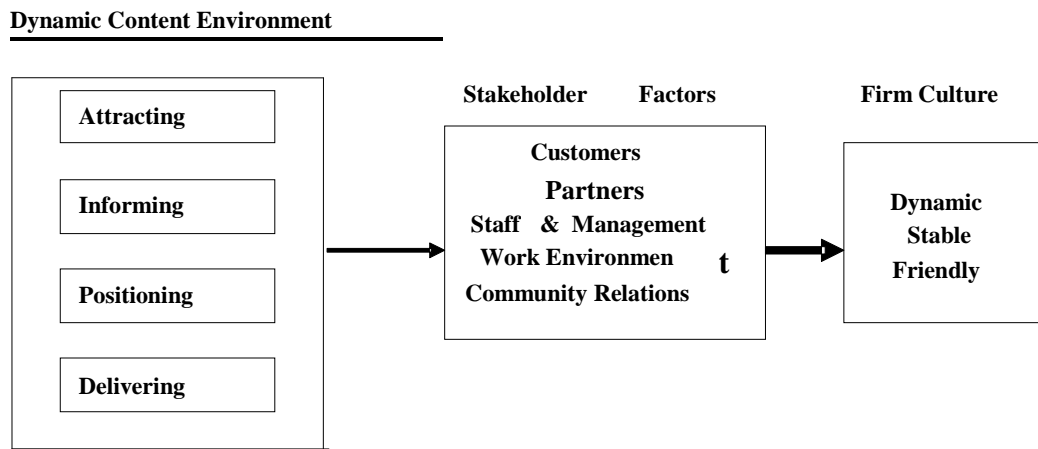
It is clear that all web cultures interact with or target stakeholders to some extent. Stakeholders, here, can be separated into four main categories: customers, affiliates, employees, investors/ community. It is our claim that the manner in which firms address stakeholder interests helps to create the virtual infrastructure upon which the corporate culture can be built. Consequently, the differences in the way the corporate web culture is perceived will depend on which aspects of stakeholder interests are stressed and which ones are downplayed (Gaffin 1994; Hibbard 1998; Zhou and Nakamoto 2001).

Hypothesis I: The more extensive and targeted the stakeholder related web information, the more likely it will be for firms to successfully project positive corporate culture characteristics.

Hypothesis II: The more dynamic the organization of the website, the more positive will be the perception of the corporate web culture.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The information for this project was gathered from corporate websites in three different countries (Japan, U.S.A & U.K.). The list of companies represents a random selection of well-known firms in each country (appendix, table 5). The AIPD Stakeholder framework was used to identify the type and pattern of information gathered. To that end, we examined the extent to which explicit stakeholder related information was presented on each corporate website (table 3, appendix). We also collected information on the web tools and the web organization of the sites.

In order to evaluate the projection of corporate culture it was necessary to capture and code the perception of those accessing the websites. For each country we used two individuals for separate perception related tasks. One individual collected and coded stakeholder related information. The other individual thoroughly explored the websites and then graded them on the extent to which they projected corporate cultural characteristics such as *dynamic, stable, and friendly*. The individuals who coded the websites were of the same nationality as the website locations. In this way, we minimized potential cross cultural bias connected with evaluating sites in different national environments.

The positive corporate cultural characteristics studied (*dynamic, stable & friendly*) have frequently been mentioned as desirable characteristics for firms operating in competitive environments. These projected characteristics identify the firm's positive image in the community and the marketplace (Gordon and Ditomaso 1992; Denison and Mishra 1995; Deshpande, Farley et al. 2000; Homburg and Pflesser 2000).

We used a number of statistical techniques to examine the projection of corporate culture. First, we used the ANOVA procedure to compare variable means across the three countries studies. We then used regression analysis to examine the impact of stakeholder related factors on the desired projected corporate cultural characteristics. For scales used in all the analyses we carried out reliability analysis to determine the cronbach alphas. Tables 3 & 4 (appendix) give a detailed listing of the questions, the variables and the scales used in the analyses below

Dependent Variables

Dynamic Company (Scale)

This scale is a combination of three variables. On a scale from 1-5, it measures the extent to which this website projects the company as: 1) innovative, 2) flexible, and 3) global. The Cronbach alpha was .72 (table 4).

Stable Company (Scale)

This scale is a combination of two variables. On a scale from 1-5, it measures the extent to which this website projects the company as: 1) stable and 2) a leader. The Cronbach alpha was .82 (table 4).

Friendly Company (Single Variable)

This is the extent to which (1-5 scale) the website projects the company as being friendly (table 3).

Strong Online Corporate Culture (Scale)

The objective of this scale was to capture an overall projection of corporate culture on the website. This scale combines all of the six individual variables used in the previous three dependent variables. The Cronbach alpha was .84 (table 4).

Independent Variables

Effective Web Tools (Scale)

An average of the presence or absence (0,1) of five basic web practices on the site: 1) can submit resumes on-line, 2) links to other company locations, 3) links to affiliates or partners, 4) photos of employees on-line, and 5) profile of top executives on-line. The Cronbach alpha = .60 (table 4).

Good Web Organization (Individual Variable)

This variable measures the extent to which (1-5 scale) the website appears well organized. This is generally influenced by web design, technology and cultural preferences (table 3).

Dynamic Staff (Scale)

This scale combines seven variables that are related to internal stakeholders (staff & management), the extent to which the websites presents positive images and writes about: 1) creative & innovative employees, 2) staff with initiative and judgment, 3) dependable and hard-working staff, 4) good problem solvers, 5) excellent leadership skills, 6) good staff diversity, and 7) internationally-oriented employees. The Cronbach alpha = .91 (table 4).

Good Staff Development (Scale)

This scale is related to staff development, the extent to which: 1) exciting career opportunities exist and 2) there is investment in staff development. The Cronbach alpha =.74 (table 4).

Good Work Environment (Scale)

This is a two-variable scale, the extent to which: 1) there is a group-oriented workplace and 2) the company has a fun or dynamic workplace. The Cronbach alpha =.81 (table 4).

Good Customer Focus (Scale)

This seven-variable scale is related to product and service-related activities, the extent to which the company mentions: 1) unique products or services, 2) innovative products/services, 3) excellent quality, 4) dependable services/products, 5) good customer support, 6) quick and convenient service, and 7) popular services and products. The Cronbach alpha =.84 (table 4).

Subsidiary & Partner Focus (Scale)

This four-variable scale is related to external stakeholders, the extent to which the company writes about: 1) strong partnerships, 2) extensive business networks, 3) flexible alliances, and 4) cooperative relations. The Cronbach alpha =.89 (table 4).

Good Community Linking Behavior (Scale)

This two-variable scale is related to external community stakeholders, the extent to which the company writes of: 1) committment to serving the community and 2) having high staff-community interaction. The Cronbach alpha =.90 (table 4).

Image of a Leading Firm (Scale)

This three-variable scale is related to market status of the firm, the extent to which there is discussion of: 1) the firm as a market leader, 2) the company as a global organization, and 3) the company has an extensive history online. The Cronbach alpha = .63 (table 4).

Performance Focus Firm (Scale)

This three-variable scale is linked to investor concerns (external stakeholders), the extent to which: 1) the company is proud of its performance, 2) the firm's vision is to excel and grow, and 3) the company is using responsive strategies. The Cronbach alpha =.71 (table 4).

Dummy Variables

US, UK. Japan is the reference factor (Japan = 0).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison of Means

We first examined the differences across countries in the means of the variables & scales (table1). For the U.S.-Japan comparison, American firms not only had higher means for most stakeholder related factors, the differences were statistically significant. Japanese companies had a higher mean for community stakeholder linking activities. For the U.S.-U.K. comparisons, American firms showed significantly higher means for all factors except one. Like Japan, the British firms also had a higher mean for community related activities. For the Japan-U.K. comparison, there was no statistical difference for the usage of two factors: *web tools* and the *image of as stable leading firm*. Although Japanese firms recorded higher means for community related activities, British firms showed higher means for all remaining factors.

Table 1: Comparisons of Means (ANOVA)

Means (Stdvd)	US	Japan	US	UK	Japan	UK
Effective Web tools	3.51	2.53***	3.51	2.53***	2.53	2.53+
	(1.29)	(1.02)	(1.29)	(1.60)	(1.02)	(1.60)
Web Organization	3.99	2.79***	3.99	3.47***	2.79	3.47***
	(1.08)	(.883)	(1.08)	(1.19)	(.883)	(1.19)
Dynamic Staff	23.98	15.10***	23.98	19.89***	15.10	19.89***
	(7.46)	(5.58)	(7.46)	(7.10)	(5.58)	(7.10)
Good Staff Development	7.03	3.79***	7.03	5.56***	3.79	5.56***
	(2.20)	(1.76)	(2.20)	(2.41)	(1.76)	(2.41)
Good Work Environment	7.05	3.24***	7.05	5.86***	3.24	5.86***
	(2.40)	(1.29)	(2.40)	(2.30)	(1.29)	(2.30)
Good Customer focus	26.97	21.33***	26.97	24.43***	21.33	24.43***
	(5.96)	(4.19)	(5.96)	(5.78)	(4.19)	(5.78)
Good Subs & partner focus	13.77	9.40***	13.77	12.10***	9.40	12.10***
	(4.39)	(4.62)	(4.39)	(4.33)	(4.62)	(4.33)
Community Linking	6.77	7.07+	6.77	5.32***	7.07	5.32***
	(2.74)	(1.94)	(2.74)	(2.64)	(1.94)	(2.64)
Image of a Leading firm	11.39	9.07***	11.39	9.83***	9.07	9.83+
	(3.05)	(2.59)	(3.05)	(3.28)	(2.59)	(3.28)
Stress Performance	11.89	9.51***	11.89	10.49***	9.51	10.49*
	(2.60)	(2.71)	(2.60)	(2.86)	(2.71)	(2.86)
Dynamic Firm	10.98	7.63***	10.98	9.26***	7.63	9.26***
	(2.91)	(2.41)	(2.91)	(2.79)	(2.41)	(2.79)
Global Firm	8.08	4.76***	8.08	6.83***	4.76	6.83***
	(1.93)	(1.42)	(1.93)	(2.07)	(1.42)	(2.07)
Friendly Co.	3.14	1.67***	3.14	2.62***	1.67	2.62***
	(1.35)	(.989)	(1.35)	(1.20)	(.989)	(1.20)
Strong online Culture	22.21	14.06***	22.21	18.71***	14.06	18.71***
	(5.22)	(2.76)	(5.22)	(5.19)	(2.76)	(5.19)
N =	142	70	142	145	70	145

Significant: * = p > 0.05   ** = p> 0.01   *** = p> 0.001

This examination of the means for the scales show that firms in all three countries generally present stakeholder related factors on their websites. However, there is a range in the extent to which these practices are consistently used. For most of the scales, American firms rank first, British firms second and Japanese firms third in the use of these factors.

Regression Analysis

The results of the regression analysis (table 2) show that stakeholder related content consistently impacts the perceived corporate cultural characteristics of the websites. We examined firm characteristics such as *dynamic,*

stable, and friendly. We also combined these dependent variables into an overall *strong web culture* scale. Except for *staff development activities*, all the stakeholder content factors had a significant impact on at least one dependent variable. Moreover, both internal and external stakeholder factors played a significant role in boosting the perception of corporate web culture characteristics. The discussion below of the significant factors provides additional insights into the link between stakeholder content and corporate web culture.

Table 2: Regression Analysis - Projected Corporate Culture

Stakeholder Factors	Dynamic Culture Projected	(SE)	Stable Firm Projected	(SE)	Friendly Culture Projected	(SE)	Strong Online Culture	(SE)
Web tools	.140	.073	-.00406	.054	.00007	.044	.00969	.108
Good web organization	**.276****	.109	**.333*****	.081	.00574	.066	**.665*****	.162
Dynamic staff	**.106*****	.030	-.003812	.023	-.00233	.018	.00455	.045
Good staff development	-00299	.066	.000224	.049	-.00034	.040	-.00308	.098
Good work environment	-.101	.084	**.147***	.062	**.229*****	.050	**.275***	.124
Good Customer focus	.00416	.022	**.00374***	.017	-.00083	.013	**.00701***	.033
Good subs & partner focus	**.101*****	.026	-.00234	.019	-.00018	.016	**.00761***	.038
Good community linking	-.000582	.042	-.00264	.031	**.137*****	.025	.107	.062
Image of a leading firm	**.346*****	.040	**.269*****	.030	**.00498***	.024	**.666*****	.059
Stress performance	.00759	.052	**.159*****	.039	.00155	.032	**.249*****	.078
US dummy	**.756***	.323	**1.613*****	.240	**.690*****	.195	**3.074*****	.479
UK dummy	.503	.308	**1.181*****	.229	**.645*****	.185	**2.332*****	.456
Constant	-.314	.464	-.323	.345	-.246	.279	-.884	.688
Adjusted R-Square	**.698**		**.696**		**.435**		**.810**	
N =	357		357		357		357	

Significant: * = p > 0.05   ** = p> 0.01   *** = p> 0.001

Examination of the Significant Stakeholder Factors

The independent variables were constructed to capture the perceptions of our evaluators. All except one of the stakeholder related content factors had a significant impact on the dependent variables linked to corporate culture (dynamic, stable, friendly & strong culture). An explanation that is consistent with our framework is that websites that were more explicit, self-conscious, and targeted in the projection of positive images and firm characteristics (figure 2) were the ones that effectively projected a positive corporate culture online. The discussion below of the significant content factors (table 2) provides some additional insights.

"*Image of the Staff"* is related to the perception of firms' employees and their capabilities. Positive images of dynamic, innovative and friendly staff reinforce the desired characteristics of the firm. This internal stakeholder factor can signal to external stakeholders that there is a strategic fit between employees and company vision. This factor had a significant impact on the perception of the firm as dynamic.

"Good work environment" is an internal stakeholder factor that reflects the climate of the work environment. Positive images and descriptions of the workplace send strong signals to potential employees and shows that the organization is responsive to internal stakeholders. This factor had a significant impact on the perception of firms as friendly and global companies.

"Customer focus" is linked to the positive descriptions of product and service delivery. Words such as high quality, dependable, innovative, popular and convenient project the image of a corporation with a strong customer focus. This factor had a significant impact on the perception of the firms as strong culture and global organizations.

The *"Subsidiary & partner focus"* shows how firms interact with and value their cooperative network relationships. Since these external stakeholders can have a direct impact on the organization's ability to deliver products or services, it is important for firms to project strong, flexible and positive relationships. This factor had a significant impact on the perception of the firms as dynamic, strong culture organizations.

"Good community linking" highlights the firm's community related activities that go beyond a single focus on transactions in goods and services. The website points out that the firm is not only serving the community but actively interacting with community stakeholders. The firm-community relationship is often presented as an important aspect of the organization's mission. This factor had a significant impact on the perception of the firm as having a friendly culture.

"Image of a leading firm" emphasizes the position of the firm as a market leader. This perception is important for investors, customers, the community and even competitors. By stressing its dominant position and strong institutional ties, the firm is usually viewed as a legitimate organization with distinct competencies and capabilities. Prestige and power are important images in many societies and can engender more trust from external stakeholders. This factor had a strong and significant impact on all the corporate culture characteristics.

"Stressing Firm Performance" is linked to the firm's pride in performance and vision for the future. By highlighting the desire to excel and grow, external stakeholders view the organization as responsive to market demands. A more responsive firm is also preferred by actual or potential investors who might inject in or increases resources to the firm. This factor had a significant impact on the view of the firm as a strong culture organization.

As for the *"US/UK dummy variables"*, these variables show how American and British firms compare with Japanese firms (reference category) in projecting corporate culture characteristics online. For dynamic culture, only American firms were significantly better than Japanese firms at projecting that characteristic. For all the other corporate web culture characteristics, both the American and British firms did a significantly better job at projecting their culture online.

"Good web organization" is a non-content factor that had a strong and significant impact on most of the corporate web culture characteristics. It is our view that the effective use of web design can drive the perception of a site being well organized. Since the manner in which websites are designed can vary significantly across national environments, it is more important and analytically helpful to focus on the perceptions of the outcome. It is our view that it is the individuals form the same cultural environment who are best able to judge if a website is well organized. This factor had a significant impact on most of the projected corporate web characteristics.

"Effective web tools" is linked to web design and the interaction capability of websites. This includes the use of colors, photos and the navigation features of the website. This is the only non-stakeholder factor in our model. It had a significant impact on three of the four corporate cultural characteristics. We used a subjective evaluation to measure this factor and

Our framework strongly stressed the importance of a communication orientation to stakeholder related content. The independent evaluators rated the sites for their ability to project the firms' image as being dynamic, global, and friendly. In most cases, the clear and positive descriptions of each firm's stakeholder related information on the websites appear to have successfully projected corporate cultural characteristics. The high level adjusted R-squares indicate that our regression models did a good job of explaining the corporate culture projection phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

In terms of building a website culture, internet strategy can be divided into web organization or web

content related factors. We considered web design and web tools as the main determinants of how organized a website appeared. In fact, many studies have provided ideas on how to coordinate web design and web tools to effectively organize a website. (Bauer and Scharl 2000; Huizingh 2000; Katerattanakul 2002).

However, in contrast to the many studies on web organization, fewer studies examined how the structuring of web content could have a strategic purpose. In this paper, we showed how web content could be used to manage impressions, signal firm capabilities and target stakeholders. The strategy of structuring web content is at the heart of the AIPD stakeholder approach. It is an approach that can give structure to the massive amounts of information that can potentially populate a website.

There are a number of implications for international firms. First, firms should realize that creating a virtual identity must involve methods that allow for the development, manipulation and accumulation of positive descriptions, images and perceptions. Consequently, companies should move beyond the preoccupation with only transaction-centered web design and technology to a more strategic view of web content. In doing so, firms can focus on creating a more consistent image and experience for their stakeholders worldwide. A consistent web culture could also serve to develop trust in the firm's capabilities. Finally, by targeting stakeholder concerns, firms can position themselves as responsive to the domestic and international market environment.

In terms of cross border studies, it is clear that although the AIPD stakeholder approach can illustrate how firms are projecting corporate cultural characteristics, there are significant variations in the extent to which there is an effort by local firms to be explicit, self-conscious and targeted. However, despite the differences, an AIPD orientation is the best approach for international firms that may be not be well known in various foreign environments. In a sense, building a virtual corporate identity becomes an important strategic mode of entry into different marketing and social environments.

One area which could have been more thoroughly explored is the possible interaction between the website design and the structuring of web content. There is evidence that in some environments, a premium is placed on the manner in which particular color schemes, animation figures, and web tools serve to create a certain web climate (Denison 1996; Fink and Laupase 2000; Tang 2001). Depending on the national environment, it is possible that these web organization factors could boost or moderate the impact of the stakeholder related web content. This is an area to be covered in subsequent studies of web strategy and culture.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Roblyn Simeon is a professor of international business at San Francisco State University. He has taught a wide range of courses related to international business. His main areas of research include internet marketing strategies, popular culture dynamics, comparative business strategies, organizational behavior, career management and emerging market strategies. In addition to having been involved in many executive training and management consulting projects, Professor Simeon has also worked on Wall Street and in Tokyo as a financial and securities analyst. He is fluent in five languages and has lived in and traveled extensively in Europe, South America, and Asia.

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APPENDIX

Table 3: The Major Components of the Website Culture Evaluation Framework

I. Website Organization: Numbers 4-10									
For Numbers 4-10, input 0 = absent and 1= present									
Company Name	Web location http://URL	Country Location	Search Engine at the site?	Many jobs Listed oline?	Can submit resume online?	Links to other co. locations?	Links to Affiliates or partners?	Photos of Employees at website?	Profile of Top Execs online?
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**

II. Customer Culture: Numbers 11- 16						
Input on 1-5 scale, Extent to which the company writes about providing						
Unique products/ Services	innovative Products/ Services	Excellent Quality	Dependable Services/ Products	Good customer support	Quick & convenient Service	Popular Services/ products
11	**12**	**1**	**3**	**14**	**15**	**16**

III. Culture linked to Partners: Numbers 17-20			
Input on 1-5 scale, Extent to which the company writes about having			
strong partnerships	Extensive networks	Flexible alliances	Cooperative Relations
17	**18**	**19**	**20**

IV. Employee/Staff/Management Culture: Numbers 21-31										
Input on 1-5 scale, Extent to which the company writes about having or seeking										
Exciting Career Opportunities	Creative & innovative employees	Staff with initiative & judgment	dependable hard-working staff	Good problem solvers	group oriented workplace	Excellent leadership skills	A fun or dynamic workplace	Good staff Diversity	Internation- ally oriented Employees	investment in staff development
21	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29**	**30**	**31**

V. Investors and Company Culture: Numbers 32-39							
Input on 1-5 scale, Extent to which site information supports the statements below							
Firm is a market leader	Co. is proud of performance	Co. is a global company	Extensive Co. history online	Co. Vision Is to excel & grow	Co. using responsive strategies	Co. wants to serve community	high staff Community Interaction
32	**33**	**34**	**35**	**36**	**37**	**38**	**39**

VI. Website & Company Evaluation: Numbers 40-47								
On a scale from 1-5, indicate level of agreement with company & website characteristics								
Well Organized Web-site	Site clearly Shows co. culture	Co. is innovative	Co. is Flexible	Co. is Global	Co. is Stable	Co. is a Leader	Co. is Friendly	
40	**41**	**42**	**43**	**44**	**45**	**46**	**47**	

Table 4: Scales & Reliability Analysis

Scale Name	Number of Variables	Variables included in scale++	Cronbach Alpha
Good Web tools	6	4,5,6,7,8,9	.60
Dynamic Staff	7	22,23,24,25,27,29,30	.91
Good Staff Development	2	21,31	.74
Good Work Environment	2	26,28	.81
Good Customer Focus	7	11,12,13,13B,14,15,16	.84
Sub & Partner Focus	4	17,18,19,20	.89
Good Community linking	2	38,39	.90
Image of a leading firm	3	32,34,35	.63
Performance focus firm	3	33,36,37	.71
Dynamic Firm	3	42,43,44	.72
Stable Firm	2	45,46	.82
Comprehensive Culture	6	42,43,44,45,46,47	.84

++ See table 3 for corresponding items and variables

Table 5:   Sample of the Firms Used in Data for Website Information

American Firms	British Firms	Japanese Firms
3M	**ABF**	THE DAI-ICHI MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Abercrombie & Fitch	**Adams**	THE TOKIO MARINE AND FIRE INSURANCE CO., LTD.
Acura	AdVal Group plc	Yasuda Fire and marine insurance corporation
Adobe Sytems	AEA Technology	THE SUMITOMO MARINE & FIRE INSURANCE CO.,LTD.
Aegis	**Aegis Group**	The Fuji bank Limited.
Airborne Express	Airtours	The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi,Ltd.
Albertsons	Allied Domecq PLC	The Sanwa Bank,Limited.
amazon.com	Alphameric plc	Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.
America Online (AOL)	Amersham International	Nomura
Anheuser-Busch	Amstrad	The Nikko Securities Co., Ltd.
Anheuser-Busch Co.	Amvescap	UC Card Co., Ltd.
AOL	Apolent	JCB Co., Ltd.
Apllied Materials	Arcadia Group plc	Toyota Motor Corporation
Apple	Aston Martin	NISSAN MOTOR CO., LTD.
AT&T	**Astrazeneca**	Mazda Motor Corporation
AutoDesk	**ATA Group**	Mitsubishi Motors Corporation
Avon	**ATOC**	Honda Motor Co.,Lt
Bank Of America	Baillie Gifford	Toshiba Corporation
Bank One	Balfour Beatty plc	Nihon HP
BE, Inc.	Bentalls	CANON INC.
Bechtel	Bioglan Pharmacy	Hitachi, Ltd.
Ben & Jerry's	Boots Opticians Ltd	Seiko Epson corpration
Biospherics	British Airways	NEC Corporation
Boeing	British American Tobacco	Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.
Boston Consulting Group	British Vita	Pioneer Corporation
Brightware	Cable & Wireless	FUJITSU
Cadillac	Cadbury Schweppes	Sharp Corporation.
California Bank Trust	Candover	Sony
CETCO	Caradon Hyroflex	ALPS ELECTRIC CO.,LTD.
Chevron	Carillion Communications	VICTOR COMPANY OF JAPAN, LIMITED
Chipshot.com	Carlsberg	Oki Electric Industry Co.,Ltd.
Chrysler	Claremont	CITIZEN WATCH CO.,LTD.
Cingular	Cradley Print plc	Fuji Xerox, Co. Ltd.
Circuit City	Croda International plc	NIPPON TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE CORPORATION
Cisco Systems	Cummins Diesel UK	Nikon Corporation
Coca-Cola	Daily Mail & General Trust	Minolta Co., Ltd.
ConStat	**Dairy Crest**	HOYA CORPORATION
Coors Brewing Company	**DANA Petroleum**	TERUMO CORPORATION,JAPAN
Critical Path	**DANKA Bus. Systems**	OMRON Corporation
Dell Computer Corporation	De La Rue International Ltd.	
DELTA AIR LINES	**Diageo plc**	
Disney Company	**DIXON MOTORS**	
Display Technologies	Dixons Group PLC	
Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream	Dreyfus, Louis & Co.	
	Ec soft Group	

NOTES