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**The Process and Value of Developing a Corporate Identity**

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**I. Summary**

Many statistical agencies have recently put in place or are in the process of putting in place a corporate identity program. The programs typically cover all disseminated materials and external communications. However, in some countries the new corporate identity program extends to guidelines for public appearances by staff at exhibits or conferences. In some instances outside contractors have been used to develop and help implement the corporate identity. For some agencies, a new corporate identity spawned a paradigm shift to a customer focus for the agency and a more customer-friendly approach to data dissemination. This paper captures recent corporate identity experiences within Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland and the United States. It outlines a process, including research, which can be used to develop a corporate identity.

**I. WHY A CORPORATE IDENTITY?**

For years the private sector has recognized the importance of the corporate brand and brand equity to consumer sales. In fact, many corporations invest heavily in developing and managing corporate brands. The corporate brand is a description of whom the company is, spelled out in a single, integrating idea or concept—its unique persona. The corporate brand also humanizes business strategy. “It does this by stating a promise, or value proposition, that is instantly understandable and can be acted upon by everyone, whether it is the CEO, head of manufacturing, customer-service representative, or assembly line worker.”<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, the public sector also has recognized the importance of a corporate identity. Many statistical agencies have joined the trend. There are several reasons contributing to this increase:

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<sup>2</sup> “Secrets of the Corporate Brand,” *Across the Board*, January 1998, pp 33-36.

- the increase in dissemination of data to a broader audience that responds like product consumers;
- the need to help those appropriating funds recognize an agency's programs and products and thereby its worth;
- the desire by the public sector to emulate good business practices.

For some agencies, the move to a corporate identity was dictated by a government wide initiative. In September 1997, Ireland's Central Statistics Office (CSO) launched its new "corporate image." This coincided with a government initiative to make all civil service activities more customer-oriented. The launch entailed the introduction of a corporate logo, redesign of statistical releases (content and appearance), and redesign of publication covers. The purpose was to make the presentation of its statistics user-friendlier, accessible to the general public and to the media in particular. Of equal importance was the need to change the image of the office from that of a stodgy civil service body to a more vibrant, professional, customer-oriented organization.

Similarly, in Belgium (NIS-INS), the need for a corporate identity came when the government started paying attention to its administrations and programs at the conclusion of a long period of "bad times." "Modernization", "customer driven", and "efficiency" became the new buzzwords. Also, the NIS-INS general director wanted to head a good running, well-known agency. Finally, the labor market was tight and to compete favorably with the private sector, NSI found that image was important.

In other instances, the agency head was the visionary. For instance, at the U.S. Census Bureau, it was new Director Dr. Martha Farnsworth Riche who felt that the Census Bureau's products did not compete well with the private sector.

For the Energy Information Administration (EIA) it was the arrival of a new Administrator, Jay Hakes, who felt that EIA was doing the public a disservice by not working harder to get its information disseminated and thereby not making the most effective use of appropriated funds.

In still another approach, the corporate identity process for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) in the United States was initiated at a higher governmental level—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—where the goal was to develop and utilize an identity that communicated the full range of CDC responsibilities. CDC has long been seen as on the front lines in the fight against infectious disease. However, less is known about CDC's programs in chronic disease and injury control; fewer know of its role in health information or that NCHS is a part of CDC. CDC wanted to gain awareness for and support of the many facets of its program. Programs within CDC wanted to ensure that the final corporate identity represented their work.

## **II. IDENTITY PROCESS**

The process of developing an identity is multi-faceted with a number of distinct phases, but an important component throughout the entire process is research. A research-based process is essential in determining present position, establishing goals, setting criteria to measure goals, developing the identity themes, testing themes, and creating and testing of each new product, from logo to tagline. Research results also are necessary to gain buy-in from internal and external audiences, particularly for statistical agencies. Focus groups and cognitive research are good ways to get feedback as you develop a new "look and feel." If expanding your audience is a goal, it is important, to include members of the general public as well as stakeholders as test subjects.

## **A. Identity Team**

The identity process can involve a number of staff members, covering the range of skills needed for the process as well as contractors with specific expertise in this area. For the process to be successful, it needs to involve the agency's top management, both in the initial commitment to the project as well as through various stages. For the internal audience to accept something "new" it has to be seen as part of the vision of the agency's director and staff at the highest level. In addition, representation or some type of participation from the various components of the agency is desirable, with the lead probably taken by the communications staff. A staff experienced in designing and conducting research will also be necessary.

Using a contractor has the value of bringing specialized branding experience to the mix. The contractor should have the full range of services within its operation or available to it—research, marketing, creative, design, graphics, event planning, etc. It is at this point that the budget needs to be developed to determine the overall resources that can be devoted to the project and the mix of in-house/contractor services that will be utilized. If sister agencies have embarked on identity projects, their experiences should be valuable. Lessons they learned from going through the process can be used in shaping the overall project and in managing various components.

The Census Bureau formed a core team of four to oversee its "look and feel" project. The team was composed of the chiefs of the Public Information Office, Marketing Services Office and Census 2000 Publicity Office in addition to the graphics services branch chief. Before beginning, discussions were held with Statistics Canada and other statistical agencies that had recently undergone a branding process Statistics Canada. Contributions from the various directorates paid for the cost of the project with those directorates more involved with data dissemination paying a larger share. The work was contracted out to Landor, a subsidiary of Young and Rubicam, the firm handling the paid advertising campaign for Census 2000. Landor's specialty is corporate branding.

The Identity Team at CDC was led by the communications staff with an overall charge from the CDC Director Dr. Jeffrey Koplan and representation from each of the Centers, Institutes and Offices of CDC, including NCHS. There were many opportunities for input from staff throughout the agency and throughout the project. There were Internet surveys of identity themes and voting on the final logos and taglines.

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO) has no central design project, as is the case with larger commercial enterprises, private service providers and other government offices around the world. The SFSO has, however, consciously fostered the idea of corporate design from as early as the mid-1980's and intensively from the early 1990's. This, coupled with some strokes of good fortune, has allowed a corporate design to evolve naturally.

## **B. Current Identity**

Any new identity process, or branding effort, begins with where the agency is currently and how its many constituencies, including the public, view it. There are a series of questions to ask:

- Does the public perception match reality?
- Does the agency have a far broader—or more important--mission and function than is recognized by its key audiences?
- What is the impact of that narrow perception?
- How might the agency's ability to function, gain support, increase budget and resources be enhanced with a new and improved identity?

- Is the agency confused with others in the field? Does the lack of differentiation harm the agency?
- How does a new identity fit into the long-term goals and functions of the agency?

The agency needs to conduct research to answer these questions. Surveys, user feedback, focus groups can help to define the current identity and to determine if various segments of the user community and the public hold varying views.

In 1996, Census Bureau Director Riche commissioned a specialist in graphical design, Sylvia Harris, “to study and evaluate all elements of the Census Bureau’s visual communications for effectiveness and to make recommendations for change.” Visual communications included publications, newsletters, packaging, charts, videos, electronic publishing, stationery and surveys. Ms. Harris concluded that the Census Bureau “had a name but not a face” and that its visual communications possessed a “dated and inconsistent look...[which] directly contradicted the mission; to be pre-eminent, timely, relevant and of high quality.” In fact, Ms. Harris noted that the Census Bureau had many names and a multitude of faces. To lessen public confusion and strengthen brand identity, the Bureau needed to standardize its nomenclature and graphics and insist on consistent use.

For EIA, the first step in moving toward establishing a corporate identity was recognizing that, in fact, it didn’t have one. Prior to his appointment as EIA Administrator in 1993, Jay Hakes had directed the Florida Energy Office. He had known EIA by the many EIA publications he read and the EIA data he used, so he was surprised to find out when he got to Washington that most of EIA’s reports were distributed to only a very few customers.

The reasons were rooted in the history of this relatively young agency, created in 1978 as an independent statistical unit within the Department of Energy, in response to the need for a credible source of energy information during the energy crises of the 1970’s. It is the only statistical agency in U.S. Federal government dealing solely with energy data and analysis. The purpose of creating such a unique and independent agency was to establish the definitive source of energy statistical data and analyses free from political influence or policy advocacy. However, an unintended effect of EIA’s uniqueness and independence was that, without competition, it became complacent about its corporate identity and responsibility to its customers. For many years (late 70’s to early 90’s), the agency operated under the theory that if it disseminated good numbers and conducted good analyses, those who needed them would find them. EIA made little attempt to market its products or services. It ignored the enormous reserve of potential customers, considering itself successful reaching a tiny fraction of possible users. However, when its information was used in the media, especially in the print media, the citations always read “Department of Energy” because no one had ever heard of EIA. To the outside world, EIA was not credible (because it was not known), although, oddly, credibility was supposed to be its hallmark.

In 1998, about 100 staff members from all levels of NIS-INS participated in an “introduction to communication” day. Most of the participants were involved in dissemination and had regular contacts with users. Apart from some theory, small groups were formed to do some exercises. The exercises given by the communication experts were aimed at trying to identify their beliefs and values. Major values identified were the scientific methods and high quality of the agency’s products, the diversity of information the agency possesses, and helping the customer in every way. Major problems cited were the agency was unknown in many ways, the organization was not customer driven, the agency was slow and rigid in making changes and internal communication needed improvement. NIS-INS did not have the budget or the communication specialists to start an image survey. But, newspaper clippings of the 80’s and up to 1995, gave a very good idea of the agency’s image. The media had a very negative appreciation of NIS-INS and always reported on major errors in data and on poor organization and structure. Even many agency personnel were not proud of the agency and did not like telling people where they worked.

The primary responsibility of the SFSO, and its regional offices, is to serve as a provider of information to the Executive, as dictated by legislation. It is required to prepare trustworthy, reputable information that stands out from other less reputable providers. The agency produced publications on a regular basis, primarily aimed to sophisticated data users; it was not the agency's aim to reach the general public with them. An example of this was the SFSO Library. The library always has been open to the public, however, as it was never publicized nor was it visible from the outside, it was used relatively little by outsiders.

SFSO publications were a further indicator that the general public was not considered a prime audience to serve. All of the reports had blue-gray covers that did not particularly attract the public. It is true that they all were similar in appearance and therefore immediately recognizable as SFSO publications, but it is doubtful that any idea of a corporate design lay behind this fact.

### C. Identity Goals

A next step is often establishing the identity process goals--what can be achieved by a new identity and what will that identity communicate about the agency. A new look for its own sake is not usually the worth the time and expense. A new look, which communicates the agency's purpose—its promise—to its customers and is part of the long-term business strategy, is well worth it.

Goals need to be translated into measurable objectives, such as an increase in authority, budget or resources; more public awareness; better participation in agency programs; more effective partnerships; enhanced recognition; expanded scope of operations and others that are unique to a particular agency. A schedule and method of testing results needs to be developed, but it has to be understood that it can take time for a brand to take effect and changes to take place. Rarely are the effects seen immediately and most results are cumulative in nature with differential impact in various segments of the audience.

NIS-INS identified its main identity goal to be a “scientific, customer driven organization.”

EIA undertook several initiatives that came together in what could be called its corporate identity plan. They were chosen because the Administrator felt they would be both effective and low-cost:

- Getting more exposure in the media;
- Developing and marketing the website;
- Establishing a logo and slogan; and
- Supporting a customer-driven organization.

EIA's overall goal was to get more exposure in the major media, especially in print media. The Administrator believed that one citation in the New York Times (circulation 1 million) was more important in broadening EIA's customer base and educating the public than having many articles published in academic journals that almost no one reads. The agency established a performance measure to count EIA citations in the print media, and especially in 5 of the most read and influential newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, USA Today).

The model for the conduct of SFSO activities contains the following statement of its general purpose: “The SFSO prepares **quantitative information** about population, economy, society, area and environment in a **professionally independent** way, while following the principles of **scientific method, comparability, relevance to the current situation and data protection.**”

Therefore the SFSO's corporate design focuses on conveying that the agency produces statistical information (no individual data), transparently, competently, of high quality, comparable in space and time, up-to-date, unbiased, objective and professionally independent.

## **D. Identity Themes**

The goals of an agency can then be translated into themes to guide the overall identity process. The themes are developed that convey best the mission, purpose, and effect of a program. The themes do so in ways that encompass the big picture and give enough specificity so that various audiences can identify and support the themes. The themes work with internal audiences (decision makers to general staff) and externally they resonate. The agency has picked the most important elements for the identity themes because the rest will be based on these themes.

It's back to research at this point. As the current identity was tested, so will the themes now undergo testing to make sure that these are the most effective and the best strategic themes for the agency. Focus groups, surveys, opportunities for gathering internal groups and external partners will be used to test the themes. The agency may want to undertake specific research to ensure that these themes communicate the top priorities of the agency and also differentiate it from other agencies and programs.

## **E. Creative Process**

For the identity to come alive, to be able to communicate and connect with various audiences, a logo (a design element) and a tagline (brief slogan) must symbolize the themes. These two tools (and there can be many others) are a shorthand way to quickly and effectively represent what the agency is, and what it does, to its many current and potential customers. This is another point at which specific expertise is needed to develop a "new look and feel" that really communicates. It is difficult to sum up a far-reaching and important program with a few words and a simple design but it can be done. It is important to avoid the common denominator, everybody's second choice but also to realize that the final selection may be somewhat of a compromise. It also is important, especially if an outside contractor did the design work, to get input from in-house designers who will ultimately be responsible for implementation. Their expertise can address whether a proposed design is flexible enough to be used in a variety of ways. A contractor may be more concerned with the surface appeal of a particular design. The basic design forms of a new logo should, ideally, allow designers to use its components in a variety of creative ways that allow an organization's products to hang together visually, but still have fresh interpretations.

The logo and tagline must then be tested. At each step of the identity process, the thinking, theme, and products are tested. Feedback, both internal and external, are looped into the process so that designs can be fine-tuned or changed extensively as necessary. The Internet offers an efficient and far-reaching approach to testing. Various schemes can be developed to segment audiences for viewing and evaluating the logos and taglines and samples can be stratified to make sure that responses represent the agency's full constituency.

Selecting the Census Bureau's new logo and tagline involved a multi-layered process. Fifteen possible logos were presented to the core team that then selected four to be presented to the Bureau's executive staff and the financial contributors to the project. During the presentation, attendees voted on which logo design best met the design objectives. The "Wordmark" USCENSUSBUREAU was selected for the following reasons:

- It looked professional and conveyed stability, reliability and an "etched in stone," professional feeling;
- It was flexible and worked well with program logos already in use;
- It was timeless, clean and contemporary;
- It connoted a "stream of information" conveying that the agency is a source of dynamic data; and

- It was customer friendly (versus Bureau of the Census), reflecting the organization's name as used by all customer groups.

After the logo was selected, the core team worked with the contractor to develop the tagline. Again, the core team whittled down the new possibilities from thirteen to three. These three along with two existing taglines were presented to Executive Staff for decision. With minor wordsmithing, the Executive Staff selected one of the new proposed taglines "Helping you make informed decisions."

The new CDC tagline is "Safer. Healthier. People." It represents the wide array of CDC functions leading to the goal of healthier people. However, as a tagline it lacks the specificity of individual taglines associated with specific programs. For years, NCHS has used the tagline, "Monitoring the Nation's Health." Now, there's discussion regarding where and when sub-brands or individual taglines can be used. The agency is looking for balance between the overall look and feel to be promoted with every product, from publication to website to exhibit, and the desire to maintain certain programmatic identities, particularly with specific audiences.

On the occasion of the 1990 national census, the SFSO public relations office was given the task of creating a new logo. The results were unsatisfactory. A graphic designer was then given the task of designing a logo. This reworking found favor and was then used consistently everywhere.

The logo is the central element in the SFSO corporate design. It appears on every sheet of writing paper, every publication, every Internet page, every place card at conferences. It hangs as a banner in the large conference room and it welcomes both employees and visitors as they enter the building. On the one hand, the logo symbolizes statistics, and therefore also scientific method; on the other hand, the Swiss cross connotes the serious approach that is associated with government institutions in Switzerland. The rising bars and graphs are intended to convey a positive mood. Depending on the requirement and background, the color of the logo is black, printed in half tone or golden-yellow. The name of the office is added in the four-national languages. Depending on the use, these also can be omitted, e.g. the second page of a letter or press release.

In connection with the move from Berne to Neuchâtel a team of graphic designers was given the task of modernizing the stationery with the condition that it not be changed radically. As part of this exercise, small changes were made to the SFSO logo: the typeface was modernized and the name in French was placed before the name in German. In addition, both the letterhead and the footer were changed and adapted to the new address. A manual explaining the use of the stationery was then given to all employees.

What was missing from the logo was an international orientation. Although the name of the federal office was given in four languages, it was clear to every Swiss citizen that this refers to the four national languages and does not imply an approach that crosses national boundaries. The logo was therefore adapted slightly for international correspondence by using the English title "Swiss Federal Statistical Office" instead of the Romance version.

The Swiss decennial census takes place December 5, 2000, and is the largest SFSO data collection activity. Competitive designs were invited for its logo. The winners of the competition, two graphic designers, created a special logo that does not replace the SFSO logo, but supplements it. In contrast to the single-color SFSO logo, it is in two colors. The figure "2000" is red and the text is black. The logo was introduced in 1998 at the time of the office move to Neuchâtel when new stationery had to be printed. Both logos will appear on all stationery through the census. The national census, thus has its own visual image, but one that is linked to the overall image of the office.

## **F. Approval Process**

Logos, taglines, identity themes can be approved by the agency head, by consensus, by majority, by the experts or any other scheme. But prior to the development of the identity process, there has to be a well-understood process for gaining and granting approval to the new identity. Usually the agency head is the final arbiter but this can be delegated to other senior staff, the identity committee, or even elevated for final decision. Whoever makes the final decision has to have a good understanding of the goals and the process.

## **G. The Launch**

The new identity needs a launch, both internally and externally. There needs to be a plan for presenting the new logo, tagline and other products to those within the agency and those external to the program. The plan needs to be carefully thought out to make the most of the occasion but also to allow for a phased-in presentation if necessary due to the breadth and scope of the audiences and the need to tailor the presentation to fit each different group.

Often the internal launch is accompanied by a great deal of fanfare. It's a joyous occasion, bringing together staff, recognizing and promoting unity, and enhancing staff morale. However, with every change is resistance, and the identity team needs to recognize that resistance and deal with it as effectively as possible. In some cases, the resistance can be overcome by thoughtful implementation and, in other cases, time is the best solution.

The external launch may be done in combination with other events, activities or programs. It may be phased in, on a priority or convenience basis with various audiences, or keyed into a single landmark occasion. The first viewing of the logo and tagline may be timed for the most spectacular effect or the least disturbing, depending upon the nature and magnitude of the change.

Census held a celebratory program in its auditorium to introduce the new look and feel. Staff from Landor presented the process used to develop the new look and feel and the rationale for the wordmark and tagline. Complete standards for using the new look and feel were posted to the Web site. However, each attendee to the unveiling also received a brochure that summarized the new corporate look. The brochure contained a preface from Director Prewitt and introduced the wordmark, approved colors, the tagline, the report cover design system, the typography, and a contact person for questions or comments. The auditorium event, which was taped for distribution to regional offices and those unable to attend the unveiling, was followed by two broadcast messages. The first from Director Prewitt was for the benefit of those who may not have attended the unveiling and reiterated that the new corporate identity would be implemented immediately. The second from the chief of the division responsible for printing reports and graphical products discussed the mechanics of implementing the new corporate identity and how the agency would handle report covers, stationery, business cards, the Internet, and the like.

EIA's strategic planners developed EIA's new slogan ("on-line or off the shelf, EIA is the first place to go for the last word in energy information"). The slogan and a new logo were featured prominently on the EIA Web site and on all publications, brochures, and flyers.

As for increasing media exposure, two initiatives were undertaken:

- Publishing more and improved press releases;
- Increasing personal contacts with journalists.

EIA established guidelines for writing press releases and named two staff members to help analysts understand and use the guidelines. Historically EIA press releases were executive summaries, with little regard to headlines of newsworthiness. The guidelines encouraged analysts used to writing in a technical, somewhat bureaucratic style to eliminate jargon, be brief, and identify the major news story.

EIA's Administrator also developed personal relationships with selected journalists, especially in the major media, and he encouraged staff to do the same. Possibly as a result of this close contact and branding identity, two editorials appeared in the Washington Post asking Congress not to cut the EIA budget because it helps the country understand the energy situation, and, without the EIA information, the Nation might make the same mistakes as in the past regarding energy policy. Journalists recognized they could count on EIA for impartial facts, analysis, and in-depth background for their stories. The Administrator also conducted many press conferences and radio and television interviews during his 8 years at EIA, expanding media access to EIA's information and solidifying EIA's identity in the minds of the American public.

The CSO promoted its new image through the media, by attending various appropriate trade shows, by attending regional enterprise initiative programs and by making presentations to second level schools and third level colleges.

## **H. Implementation**

The final phase is implementation that can actually encompass the internal and external launches. This phase translates the logo and tagline into actual products, either new or existing. In this phase, those who are responsible for the design, graphics, presentation and communications activities of the agency have to be fully involved to ensure a smooth transition. There may need to be a special committee for implementation, involving different staff instead of or in addition to those involved in the developmental stages. Guidelines, specifications and design templates should be developed and made readily available to staff to assure consistent application of the identity. Consistent use is critical to ultimate recognition of the logo and what it represents. It should not appear differently each time it is used. The Intranet is a good vehicle to use to post standards because of its easy access to staff.

Similarly, it is desirable to have either a single person or unit design an organization's package of products (letterhead, business cards, folders, mastheads, Web sites and the like.) This provides for consistency in look and feel that can accelerate insider acceptance of a new corporate identity and customer recognition.

The impact of the new identity on various types of products, activities or programs will now get a full airing. What was conceptual is now operational and due consideration must be given to the different issues in this phase, but obstacles and barriers to implementation must be overcome not overlooked. Implementation is often phased-in to utilize existing materials, allow for priority products to get redesigned first, and for some of the higher-visibility efforts to drive the process.

The Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is using the information it learned as part of its identity process to redesign its Web site. The new Web site is scheduled to launch January 1, 2001. It incorporates their new logo, etc. But the agency has gone ahead and introduced its new identity on all of its printed products.

Actually the final step is not just implementation, but evaluation even as the implementation is beginning. The identity process is not so much a project with a defined beginning and end, but a continuing process where the identity and how that identity is presented is an important component of an agency's strategic planning.

NIS-INS found that for personnel to be proud of their working place, the image of the organization is very important. Their new logo appears on everything including ballpoint pens, plastic bags, and other novelty items. A very strict policy is followed here. Colour and placement of graphics are defined and a central unit watches over it. The house style goes further than the logo. Tables, titles, folders, all have to go through the process of adopting the house style. Recognition is a major concern. The logo is simple and has hopeful colours, the layout of the Web site is simple and rather severe, to emphasize the 'scientific' part. The message on the NIS-INS Website "*The main official statistical institution in Belgium offers you a large choice of figures. Have a closer look...*" repeats the keywords 'official = independent of commercial or political pressure' and 'large choice = large variety of information'. These are some examples of how the values and their keywords are repeated and integrated in as many messages as possible to reinforce the identity amongst the personnel and move the image towards the identity.

SFSO's standing orders define responsibility for its corporate design as follows: "The Head of the Information Service has the right to a say in the design of printed matter generally. He is responsible for issuing guidelines on the design of publication and printed matter in respect to corporate design, after consulting the Central Services Department." The central supervisory body responsible for ensuring compliance with layout instructions is the in-house layout group, while final authority for checking and decision lies with the Head of Information and Documentation, who is at the same time also the press officer.

Another twist on the use of a corporate identity occurred when SFSO moved to Neuchâtel. It was able to develop synergy between its corporate identity and the architecture of the new building. At the suggestion of Director Carlo Malaguerra, the address is now 'Espace de l'Europe,' a title that gives expression to the SFSO model, is visible and therefore, is part of the corporate design. Approaching the building, one can see through transparent panes into the public space, which consists of the public library and an exhibition room. Before the visitor enters the building, he or she is aware of the giant golden-yellow logo, which already has discreetly pointed the way from the railway station to the office four times. Having passed the reception area, those interested can find their way to the easily visible library. The architects have put the idea of transparency into practice elegantly and visibly, not only in the library but also throughout the building.

### III. COSTS

The cost of developing a new corporate identity is dependent upon whether the task is done in-house or contracted out. If contracted out, the cost also depends on the scope of the contract. In some instances, agencies may want to involve both an outside contractor and in-house staff. The ERS recently contracted for a new logo despite a full in-house design staff. The in-house staff was too busy to take on the huge amount of time necessary to do the job correctly. The cost for the new logo and tagline was \$20,000. This included the design firm running focus groups (internal and external customers), and many visits and displays of possible designs as the agency narrowed its options.

For similar reasons, the Census Bureau contracted out its entire identity process. The contract included information gathering and analysis, various presentations to executives/stakeholders, and developing an agency communicative name, emblem/logo, tagline, system of report covers, graphics standard manual, and an education program for Census Bureau staff. The process began in December 1997 and was completed in January 1999 at a cost of about \$250,000.

#### IV. CONSEQUENCES

For the Central Statistics Office in Ireland, the demand for statistics has increased significantly as shown by the number of written queries dealt with (incl. email) and the number of pages accessed on the Internet. While recognizing that there were a number of external factors influencing the increase in demand for their statistics, CSO is confident that its new corporate image and improved services had a significant impact also.

There also has been growth in the demand for more timely statistics and customer focussed statistical packages. CSO's clients expect a faster, more efficient, flexible and professional service in line with the new image it portrays of itself. This is no less than they would expect from a professional private service.

In this regard, it was of critical importance to bring CSO's staff on board and get them committed to the new customer service ethos.

The increase in the demand for statistics is illustrated by the growth in the number of queries requiring written reply (including e-mail) which CSO estimates will be 70% between 1997 and 2000.

In addition, CSO's measurement of Internet activity (which is the number of pages accessed) went from 250,000 in 1997 to an estimated figure of 1,345,000 (based on 7 months) in 2000.

While these figures also can be related to increased net use generally, the fact that CSO started introducing new services in 1998 and particularly 1999 are quite clearly reflected.

Today, EIA's annual citations in the 5 major newspapers are 10 times greater than in 1993; in all newspapers, 8 times greater.

The rapid expansion of Web dissemination of information has helped accentuate the line of demarcation between EIA and the Department of Energy. One immeasurable benefit in establishing a corporate identity for a small agency within a large organization is that customers can go directly to the small agency's Web site. EIA has established its own identity on the web. Administrator Hakes also realized the potential of the Web for EIA and pushed its development. Customer contacts jumped from less than 50,000 per year to several million per year over the past 5 years. Hakes brought in everyone else as a major third party, millions who had never heard of EIA before. Marketing efforts such as Web business cards and a products and services booth (set up at large conferences) help to solidify EIA's identity.

1994 was a turning point for NIS-INS internally and also a turning point for its news coverage in the media. NIS-INS slowly but surely restructured and reorganized; statisticians found their way to the NSI, and new people arrived. The process is still ongoing. The media coverage became 'neutral'; the NSI spiffed up its press releases. Recently it even had the other extreme: a 'hallelujah' article focusing on what NIS-INS values are: the quality, the incredible amount of information it can provide (diversity), the official and neutral source of information it is.

But all along the harsh and better times, some groups of users continue to believe in the official statistics but the agency lost others. An image survey could give more details about the perception of the NIS-INS amongst different user groups.

The high quality of products and the wide range of information became the major values emphasized in external communication (Internet, press release, direct mail.) The agency also added customer orientation, independence from commercial and political pressure (official statistics), and a scientific organization (as opposed to administration.) Whenever possible these values are repeated in internal and

external communications, training, workshops, etc. Internally, the major goal is to support the statisticians so that they trust in what they are doing and can communicate the high quality of the work to their staff.

In 1998, the Bureau of Methodology was created resulting in statisticians from universities coming to the agency. New and long-time statisticians suddenly found people assisting them in methodology, studying problems and collaborating with them. In 1999, a marketing unit was created to help promote products; study user needs (just starting); adapt the agency's publications (paper and electronic); and develop pricing and distribution policies.

More opportunities were created for the agency's statisticians to attend TES-courses giving them the opportunity to talk to colleagues. (Many of the agency's statisticians work in 'splendid isolation' meaning they have no colleague to talk with who is working in the same area and can provide other points of view, refresh their theoretical knowledge or suggest new methods.)

More emphasis was put on press releases (still ongoing) and training was provided to the agency's statisticians on how to write a press release. In 1996, a Web site was created and an internal newsletter started in 1997. Shortly, regular feedback on Web site usage will be given to agency statisticians including the number of hits on pages for their area of responsibility and the questions asked by the visitor.

Statistics Belgium determined that corporate and product communication were important to convey the message of its new identity to the outer world. Until recently most of their efforts had been placed in product communication. However, it is now using different strategies:

- Media -- NIS-INS increased the number and quality of press releases. With this type of free promotion, one cannot control the message, theoretically. In practice it is noticed by all press officers that journalists tend to take over parts of the press release when it is very well written. Getting neutral, scientific comments in the press resulted from that.
- Politics -- Better coverage in the media gave NIS-INS a better image in the political world but not enough. Since ministers propose and parliament decides on budgets a good communication policy towards them is necessary. As this is only in the 'beginning phase' the agency had a problem, for example, with the Census 2001. The budget was not approved and a lot of effort had to be made by NIS-INS to convince the political world of the value of a Census. The university world was the agency's ally and it succeeded after many debates and an elaborate project for 2001 and after, to improve the image and to get the budget (soon on the Internet).
- Internet -- Product communication increased as statisticians were encouraged to give some short, basic fact(s) data in the publication. As these 'appetizers' became better and better, they were used on the Internet, in paper publications, in small articles in publications of the Ministry or of the federal government, in folders and soon even in catalogues of universities.
- Post offices -- A new initiative recently came to fruition and now key statistics of the NIS-INS are available in all the post offices of the country. The agency has had mostly good but some bad reactions. There were some negative reactions because the agency did not promote the initiative internally. On the positive side, friends and family are telling staff that they found the key figures in the post office.
- Education Community -- NIS-INS began a promotional activity towards universities and institutions of higher education. It offered one free copy of everything edited at the NSI. This was difficult but it had a great impact in direct and indirect effects.
  1. Direct effects: many institutions of higher education had hardly heard from the NSI, they started to know it, were amazed about the large choice of information and were happily surprised about the offer.

2. Indirect effects: as the agency stopped all free subscriptions in the target group to replace them by the one free copy in the head library, it lost many contacts (you do wonder why they needed all the free publications). But NIS-INS did not stop communicating with the 'lost contacts' and found out who was actually using the information.

As many parents of students work at the NSI, the agency plans an internal communication activity where parents and children will be able to talk about the NSI and data will be provided on various topics to the school.

- Fairs and exhibitions – NIS-INS participates modestly in national fairs and exhibitions. It encourages statisticians to go for half-day, to see the exhibit booth and to receive visitors. Surprised personnel of our organization turn up regularly (surprised? internal communication!) and feel rather good to see their organization present.

## V. CUSTOMER FOCUS

In the early 1990's, EIA began to develop a picture of its customer base and to recognize the implications of serving a much more diverse audience. Employees were trained in customer service, so as to understand that a telephone call from a customer wasn't an interruption of "real work." EIA also conducted a number of customer surveys to determine how satisfied people were with its products and services and where it could improve. A travel booth was sent out to major energy conferences to let people know whom EIA was and what kinds of information it had. This turnaround from an inward focused organization to an outward focused organization was a major step in helping staff form a corporate identity.

For NIS-INS, staff already was highly motivated to be customer oriented but the publications and the organization followed rather slowly. The sizeable increase in 'ad hoc' questions and tailored answers tells NIS-INS that it needs to improve the content of their publications. Such projects are underway. The large number of people involved in answering customers results in additional problems of coherence and consistent use of house style, which the agency counters *via* meetings and 'workshop' days.

With the Praxis Project, encompassing all departments of the office, customer orientation has become a central objective for SFSO. The project has caused the agency to look at how it presents itself to the public and its customer focus. In 1999, as a first step, a graphics design office was commissioned to redesign the external appearance of the agency's general publications into a modern, attractive style, with a uniform basic theme, in accordance with the new orientation. At the same time the contractor also was to submit a plan for the redesign of the whole series of publications, as well as Internet pages. From this activity the following products so far have emerged: *Statistics, a World Language*, a publication describing official statistics generally and the SFSO in particular; a brief description of the SFSO; official statistical service information offices; publications catalogue; statistics pocket book; CD case; video case; press folder; leaflet for staff "How to write a press release;" the statistical yearbook plus CD-ROM; and the volume of tables "Cantons and Cities." Most of these are general publications. In the near term the agency plans to apply the redesign to its specialised reports as part of its new focus on customer orientation.

Ireland's CSO felt a need to become more customer focussed. More resources were devoted to its data dissemination areas, in particular its Internet service. All copies of releases are published on the Web at the exact time of release; CSO is introducing its full data bank time series through the Web and also a publication ordering system.

CSO introduced a Customer Service Plan guaranteeing clients a certain level of service:

### **Customer Service Commitment**

#### **Service by Telephone**

##### **We will:**

- respond quickly and courteously
- identify ourselves to you when answering the phone
- be helpful and provide the information you require as quickly as possible
- if we cannot answer your inquiry promptly, we will call you back or write to you as soon as possible
- if a staff member is unable to answer a customer's query, he/she will attempt to transfer it to someone who can. If this is not possible, arrangements will be made to return the call.

#### **Personal Callers**

##### **We will:**

- be polite and courteous in our dealings with you
- deal with your inquiry expeditiously
- provide access for people with disabilities
- ensure that all areas open to the public are kept clean and safe.

#### **Letters, faxes and E-mails**

##### **We will:**

- reply to routine correspondence within 5 working days, and more complex enquiries within 15 working days
- if there is going to be a delay we will send you an interim reply within the same period
- ensure that all communications carry a contact name and telephone number.

While the timeliness guarantees are generous, CSO actually respond to 95% of all queries within 24 hours.

## **VI. ONGOING DEVELOPMENT**

Early on CSO realized that the introduction of a new corporate identity is an ongoing process. The need to continuously promote oneself, introduce new services and products is critical.

With this in mind, CSO produced a high quality publication, in commemoration of its 50th Anniversary, which has been a huge success. After an initial print of 1,500, CSO has just reprinted another 1,000 due to unprecedented demand.

CSO is currently co-operating with NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency) to produce a statistical overview of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Also, it is in the process of completely revamping its statistical abstract and redesigning its Web site.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

From a CSO perspective the whole process has been a rewarding one. CSO is now seen as an increasingly important and relevant player in the area of data provision. Internally there has been a change in the attitude about customer care not only in the dissemination areas but also throughout the

office. There is a dynamic being generated whereby CSO as an office is striving to meet the changing requirements being placed on it.

If you launch a new corporate identity you must be in a position to live up to it in terms of service. It is imperative that you get the whole process right the first time. It is not sufficient just to change the outward image. Structures must be put in place to ensure that service that matches the image is provided. The attitude of staff is critical to success in this area. They must be on board, convinced of the value of the change and motivated to provide the new type of service.

If your new image projects you as a professional, efficient, customer focussed entity, you must be in a position to respond to the change in demands being placed on you as a result of the new image.

You have to be able to “walk the walk” as well as “talk the talk”.