Green Transportation

External environmental communication

Jasin Kolar and Johan Persson

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ABSTRACT

Climate change is a hot topic today. It is important for companies to take responsibility for the environment. For companies it is also important to communicate their environmental efforts to its customers.

The aim of this study is to analyze how transportation companies communicate their environmental efforts on the web. Europe’s largest transportation companies as well as Asian and North American airlines are studied. Companies’ websites were examined and evaluated on several criteria.

The study surprisingly showed that a lot of companies did not have any external communication due to unavailable websites. There are significant geographical differences in how companies communicate green.

Many transportation companies provide environmental information on their websites however they need to be more convincing in doing so.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have in different ways helped us in the creation of this dissertation. We would take the opportunity to thank these people.

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Thanks a lot!
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Human activity has a great impact on the environment and the environment has a great impact on citizens around the world. Today global warming is a well known phenomenon. At least in the western world most people are familiar with global warming and its effects, especially after Al Gore’s academy award winning movie “An inconvenient truth.” It is now a fact that our consumption, and sometimes over-consumption, has a dark side. Our luxury lifestyle and the growth of developing countries are contributing to global warming. The demand for energy is huge and it is predicted to grow even more in the future. The usage of fossil fuels results in so called “green house” emissions, which contribute to a higher average temperature on earth. A higher average temperature will cause serious problems for the environment. Global temperatures have risen by about 0.6°Celsius in the past hundred years, and the temperature is predicted to rise between 1.4°C and 5.8°Celsius for the next hundred years (UNFCCC, 2002). As a result of higher temperatures, the glaciers are melting, the sea level is rising and this will result in a turbulent future for humanity (UN, 2007).

1.1.2 Transportation

Companies within the transportation industry transport people and goods on a local and global level and they are the cornerstone of globalization. The industry is a very environmentally unfriendly industry, but at the same time the industry is necessary for the development of modern society. The transportation industry is mostly dependent on fossil fuels and it is often blamed to be a big contributor to global warming. It is carbon dioxide (CO₂) in particular that contributes to global warming. The gas is generated when fossil fuels are used and combusted to produce energy for
cars, ships and other transportation vehicles. In the European Union alone, transportation accounts for 21% of the total greenhouse gas emissions (EC, 2005). At the same time, the transportation industry is very important for the development of modern society. There will be a huge demand for transportation services in the future. As more people have larger disposable income, they can travel more and send parcels all over the world. There is one important factor to consider, the oil price. Because most of the transportation industry is dependent on fossil fuels, it is very sensitive to the oil price. A higher oil price might speed up the introduction of renewable fuel alternatives. New technology is often expensive and is primarily introduced and used in industrialized countries. Any environmental benefits from new technologies are often erased by the traffic growth itself (Gwilliam & Geerlings, 1994).

1.1.3 Marketing

Today it is crucial to adjust marketing efforts, especially as consumers are changing their buying habits. Consumers are more environmentally conscious today. They are aware of the linkage between environmental problems and everyday consumption. This leads to changes in consumption patterns, which are important for companies to detect and take advantage of. Customers cannot be seen only as greedy, over-consuming creatures. They have now more than ever before a conscious and they care about the future and the next generations. A major concern for marketing people is that unlike conventional segmentation, it is hard to make a demographic segmentation of the green customer (Ottman, 1998). With an increasing population of green consumers, marketers are forced to reevaluate their strategies. We will see more and more green advertisement in the near future (Grande, 2007). Companies need to communicate their environmental efforts in a good manner since there is a lot at stake.
Communication is very important in any situation especially in marketing. Marketing towards customers is an example of external communication. Throughout different channels companies communicate externally with their customers. External communication is crucial for a company’s survival. With the help of external communication companies need to convince their customers that they are doing everything they can to save the environment. Many companies are already doing this by for example establishing CSR reports.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goal of this dissertation is to analyze the external environmental communication in the transportation industry. Furthermore, suggestions and recommendations are given on how firms can adjust their external environmental communication in order to reach their full potential.

The two main objectives of this dissertation are:

- to analyze and evaluate the external environmental communication of transportation companies, looking at one specific communication channel; and
- to give recommendations on how firms can improve their external environmental communication.

In order to accomplish the objectives, we need to identify and evaluate subjects. Firstly we need to identify appropriate theoretical communication models, which will give us a good understanding of the communication process and its implications. Secondly, the transportation industry is a polluting industry, so we need to identify the environmental problems of the transportation industry. Furthermore, we need to
evaluate to what extent transportation companies use green marketing on their websites. Finally, we need to recognize the obstacles and create recommendations for successful external environmental communication.
2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 OVERVIEW

Two types of research were conducted for this study. Initially, secondary data was collected and reviewed. Secondary data consist of various articles and studies from different scientific publications. A literature review was also conducted in order to gain some deeper understanding of the theoretical aspect of our problem. In addition, primary data was collected and analyzed. A rather new and innovative way of collecting primary data was used. The collection and analysis of data builds on the theoretical review. This study was conducted in the period Sep - Nov 2007.

2.2 SECONDARY DATA

Collection of secondary data is crucial for a successful study. In order to achieve our goals with this dissertation we needed to have a great understanding of the theoretical aspects within our field of study. In our literature review we concentrated on some communication theories as well as corporate social responsibility (CSR) theories, in addition other relevant theories were studied as well. The secondary data research was concentrated on three different topics, marketing, transportation and the environment. All three subjects were studied to better understand the connection and correlation between the subjects. Focus was put on where these three subjects overlap. This enabled us to create a suitable theoretical framework for the study and at the same time it created a conceptual base for the continuing work. Different articles and publications were mainly searched for in Kristianstad University and Maastricht University’s electronic library. In addition some research was made on the Internet as well.
2.2.1 Problems with secondary data

There were some problems with collecting the secondary data. The main issue was that a lot of the literature was out of date. A lot of environmental studies were published during the seventies and nineties. The oil crises could maybe explain some of the work published in the seventies. Some of the studies from the nineties are still very relevant because it takes very long time to make environmental changes. First now we see the effects of what the authors were talking about in the nineties. The results of today’s research, studies and suggestions, will gradually come into effect over the next decade.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

Primary data is a vital part of the study. The study tries to analyze and find general ways of environmental communication through web sites. The study was rather wide than deep. We tried to detect and identify general attitudes within the field of green marketing on companies’ web sites. Since the study was based on a specific communication channel, the web sites of companies, it had no geographical limitations. Nevertheless we chose to study transportation companies from Europe. Air transportation companies were studied as well as land and sea transportation companies. In addition, we also decided to study air transportation companies from North America and Asia. In total an amount of 155 companies were examined.

2.3.1 Justification of selection

The selection of companies to study was based on several criteria. We wanted to study big transportation companies from Europe with more than 5000 employees and an operating revenue or turnover of more than 10€ Million. Our study intended to examine air transportation companies as well as land and sea transportation companies. In order to get accurate results to our search criteria we used the
Amadeus data base as a source for selecting companies. In addition we used convenience sampling in order to add more companies from Europe to our total sample. The additional selection gives more width to the study.

Furthermore, we wanted to study air transportation companies from North America and Asia. North America has the highest amount of air traffic in the world and we figured it would be suitable to analyze some of the air transportation companies from that market. Asia is the fastest developing region in the world and air transportation is a highly interesting industry. Are airlines bothered to communicate their environmental efforts or is it all about promoting low fares. Results from these companies have been compared to the results of European air transportation companies, as well as with other transportation companies from Europe. The selection of suitable companies for this part of our study was based on convenience sampling.

2.3.2 Approach to research

The study had a two stage approach. When we made the data collection we used a two stage approach. We wanted to see how companies communicate their environmental efforts on the web, as well as what they communicate. Firstly, we looked at how they communicated their environmental efforts, by looking at the design, colors used, accessibility of the information and so on. Secondly, we observed what they tried to communicate by looking if they had environmental reports available for downloading, interactive material, options for further reading and so on.
The evaluation of websites from transportation companies was based on 12 different categories. As mentioned earlier this research consists of two different research areas. The first one was to see how companies communicate their environmental efforts and the second one was to see what they communicate. Our 12 categories were divided up in two different types. Six questions were about how companies communicate and six questions were about what companies communicate. Nine questions were of the yes/no type. The other three questions were descriptive. The categorization of the descriptive questions was developed while data was collected. The 12 categories and their characteristics are presented in table 2.3.1.
Table 2.3.1 Description of questions used in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Possible Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A  Is there any environmental content on front page?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B  Where on the website can the environmental information be found?</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C  Is there a separate environmental section on the website?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D  Does the environmental section differ from the rest of the website, in terms of color, size, type?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E  What format is the environmental information available in?</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F  Are there any graphical animations/movies with environmental content?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G  Any environmental content included in company’s mission/vision?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H  CSR or Environmental reports available for download?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  Any environmental certifications or awards shown on the website?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J  Any interactive environmental content, pollution calculators etc.?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K  What kind/type of environmental information on the website?</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L  Does the site offer any opportunity for further reading?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.3 Rating system

The collected data needed to be coded so it could be used in the analysis. The collected data itself was so not useful. Coding of the data was necessary in order to gain value from the answers and in order to use the data in the analysis. We strived to make it as easy as possible to understand the collected data. A value of 0 or 1 was given to any answer depending on the result. With coded data it was much easier to get easy understandable results. Table 2.3.2 shows the rating system that was used in the study.

A scoring system was used to evaluate and rank companies. Our scoring system was a 0 to 100% rating system, where 100% represents the best result. A value of 0 is equal to 0% and a value of 1 is equal to 100%. A company with a score of 100% is doing everything right and fulfilling all the requirements according to this study. In order to get an average score for a company we add up the values and then divide the sum with the number of categories. This gave us an average percentage or a score for a company. The score was used in order to rank a company and compare it with others.
Table 2.3.2 Rating system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rating system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0=N/A, No, Investor relations, Annual report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1=Special env section, About us section, Company information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0=N/A, or only one format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1=More than one format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>0=N/A, No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>0=N/A, Simple information, one page or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1=Specific information, Policies, two pages or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>0=No 1=Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The focus of this dissertation was on external environmental communication within the transportation industry. This study evaluated external environmental communication efforts by transportation companies, and not their actual environmental performance. The study was based on one specific communication channel. It only examines the performance of online advertisement on the specific
company’s website. Companies’ websites were studied, other e-material were excluded such as for example newsletters and advertisement on other websites. Big companies tend to have more than one version of a webpage. They tend to have different websites for different markets and they also sometimes use different languages. Mainly we examined the global website of a company or the website used in the country of origin. The study was conducted in English. If no information was available in English even though environmental info was available in the local language we considered it as missing data.

2.5 RELIABILITY

Reliability is concerned with whether the study would perform similarly on other occasions, as well as if similar observations would be reached by other observers (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). We need to keep in mind that this study is rather innovative. This study does not handle with interviews or questioners it is more of an observational study. Perhaps innovative studies are less reliable because there is not so much to compare with and see if the results are similar.

Websites are dynamical and may change at any time. If for example some government imposes legislation on how companies have to communicate green on their websites, than this would probably mean that results from another study would differ from this one. In conclusion we argue that our study is reliable to the extent of the criteria required from it to be reliable.
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 SHIFT IN THE MARKETING ORIENTATION

As our world changes, we need to change as well. There is a lot of pressure on companies from different stakeholders. There are huge demands on growth and profitability, at the same time as companies should take social responsibilities. So companies need to sell a lot to a relatively low cost. Humans have needs and they need to satisfy these needs. Marketing offers and triggers the consumption so humans can satisfy their needs. The critical role of marketing is to offer and trigger the satisfaction that we need, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Marketing needs to take a more responsible role for sustainable development. Marketing is informing customers of the availability of products and services on the market. Consumers need to understand that a product’s total impact on everyone and everything is more important than consumer satisfaction or corporate profitability. However Polonsky & Mintu-Wimsatt point out that “At the same time it needs to be made clear that, customer needs are not, nor should they be in conflict with environmental needs” (Polonsky & Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995, p. 7).

Michael Jay Polonsky is a lecturer in marketing at the University of Newcastle in Australia. He is highly experienced in the field of marketing and in particular green marketing. In his book “Environmental Marketing” he presents a model that suggests a two-dimensional shift of marketing in the approach to ecological issues (Figure 3.1.1). Polonsky argues that a shift from consumption marketing to sustainable marketing should be adopted, as well as a shift from invisible hand to a more visible hand of the government.
The fundamental proposition of the theory is that sustainable development can only be reached by proactive corporate marketing and active government intervention. There are several mechanisms that could be used in order to achieve sustainable development. It is suggested that strategies must be aimed at redirecting customer needs more toward eco friendly products and services (Polonsky & Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995).

### 3.1.1 Proactive corporate marketing intervention

Corporate strategies can implement four so called R’s (Polonsky & Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995).

*Re-consumption* - Means that firms need to have a marketing approach that promotes re-consumption. This means the ability to use and re use materials or/and goods, not only over one product lifecycle but several. Product development efforts have to meet ecological needs.
Re-direction - Marketing has to re-direct consumer needs towards more environmentally friendly consumption pattern. This is best done with in-depth analysis of customer habits and market research. In the past, marketing has successfully increased consumption and satisfied needs. This is why it should be able to re-direct customer needs as well.

Re-orientation - The whole marketing mix should be re-oriented. An environmental tone needs to be implemented in manufacturing, packaging, labeling, advertisement, distribution, use and disposal. Simply adopt more environmental thinking in the complete marketing mix.

Re-organization - Sustainable marketing requires strong strategies and action plans. Several changes in the organization itself of companies are required, for example re-organization and re-design of many processes. A company needs to improve its own environment in order to market environmentally friendliness. When companies start communicating green customers will become interested in environmentally friendly offerings.

3.1.2 Government intervention for sustainable development

According to Polonsky, intervention by the government is necessary for a marketing shift. Without some governmental intervention the environment cannot be fully protected. This does not mean that markets should be replaced by governments. Systems with total governmental control constrain competition and by doing that also the technological improvements which are important for the environment. The government has to be a raw model, and lead the world towards a sustainable development. Therefore the two-dimensional shift of marketing model by Polonsky
suggests four interventionist roles for the government: regulatory, reformatory, promotional and participatory (Polonsky & Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995).

*Regulation* - Governments can use regulations and policies, including performance standards for products and different technologies. Using different regulations the government can control and command the industry to prevent an environmentally unfriendly development. Governments should also coordinate policies with other worldwide organizations such as the United Nations.

*Reforms* - Governments commitment to reforms is critical. Consumption and production reforms must occur at the same time. Institutional practices that are not environmentally friendly but widely accepted also need reformation. An approach which is more concerned about economic and environmental development and less about military needs to be adopted.

*Promotion* - Governments can promote the development of new technologies by for example introducing pollution taxes, tradable pollution permits and performance bonds, although it should not result in higher costs for the consumers. The government needs to provide training and offer low cost loans for environmental work. Cooperation between governments and industry is essential.

*Participation* - In most countries the government is the single largest customer in the country. By purchasing environmentally friendly products governments can make a substantial impact on what goods are produced in the country. Governments can set up big research centers on their own and show commitment to sustainable development. This could have a great impact on the research and production process in the area (Polonsky & Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995).
3.2 CORPORATIVE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

3.2.1 What is CSR

CSR is a term that describes the company’s ability to go beyond national legislation and its potential to cover human rights as well as environmental and social issues. In practice, CSR means that businesses meet the demands of national legislation and, where this is inadequate, look in addition to collection of established, fundamental freedoms and rights that are globally recognized (Norén et al. 2005).

A word that is strongly connected to CSR is globalization. Globalization is a familiar concept nowadays and is spreading very quickly, this means an increased share of welfare for the citizens of the world. This might sound exceptionally good but with better living standards comes great responsibility. Environmental and social questions are arising due to the fact that production is rising in a hefty way, which in the long run puts the environment in danger as a result of pollution etc. Anthony Giddens (2003) writes about the problems in his book “Runaway World” and explains that a specific group of people, so called “skeptics”, are doing everything in their power to oppose company dominance in the poor world. He further indicates that globalization is a bad phenomenon where companies merely exploit foreign employees for the sake of their own good, and that globalization can only be achieved if all countries in the world are involved in the process (Giddens, 2003).

The arguments from the “skeptics” are many and most of them are probably true, but when talking about exploiting labor there is another side that needs to be considered before we decide if companies are doing right or wrong. The thing that must be taken into consideration is that the world is looking different depending on where you are located. There are no obligations that demand a company to pay their employees three times the wage for the same kind of work in a foreign country. The companies in fact adjust its salary level to the host country’s wage level. This is an ethical
question that every multinational company around the world is faced with and it is very much up to the company themselves about how to handle such a problem.

Sometimes you need to adapt to the situation and follow the maxim “when in Rome do as the Romans” as Milton Friedman once said. Hill ads to Friedman’s argument and talks about *cultural relativism* were he states that a firm should adopt the ethics of the culture in which it is operating (Hill, 2007, s. 139).

### 3.2.2 CSR and its functions

CSR is about how businesses work towards sustainable development from an environmental and human point of view or in other words, how the companies benefit the environment, their employees and their customers. There are three aspect of CSR that needs to be considered, economic growth, social development and environmental consideration, all of them affecting each other. First of all companies of course need to be profitable to please its shareholders, so how to increase the profitability? One way is building good relationships with employees and customers. To integrate CSR into the core competence very much decides if the company will be profitable or not. This means that CSR probably only exists and works in companies that creates values and norms about for example environmental cautiousness within the company’s core competence, and actually do this on a voluntary basis instead of something that is going to be forced upon them by legislations (Norén et al. 2005).

It is important from both a strategically point of view as well as from an environmental perspective to actually listen to the needs and demands from the consumers in order for companies to act as a “good corporate citizen”. A successful company is in many ways categorized as one that enables itself to adapt to changes if
this should be needed (Hanson, 2007). If a company for example refuses to handle
environmental problems that they are causing they risk their reputation; and if they
ignore social responsibilities regarding for example human resource issues, they lose
skills which both affects the outcome of the company’s profitability (Norén et al.
2005).

Norén and his co-workers (2004) further point out that what drive corporate
commitment to the community are the following things:

- Customer appreciation
- Brand reinforcement
- Support for new business
- Improvement in productivity
- Avoidance of business risk
- Creation of good-will thwarts politicians and other decision makers.
- Creation of competitive advantages
- Support of recruitment
- Increase in company spirit and understanding of business idea
- Pre-emption of legislation

As we can see from the statements above, it is easy to think that the companies’
primary goal is to raise its profitability by acting according to the three aspects of
CSR. By acting this way both the company (by raising its profit) and the customers
will be satisfied.
3.2.3 Structure of a CSR report

Companies acting in accordance with the CSR principle are often getting the question about how far they should stretch to classify themselves as “done” when talking about environmentally friendly actions. A common view held about this question is that they should never classify themselves as “done” because of the fact that everything depends on the situation: the less developed a community, the greater the responsibility companies must take, even for functions that are often public services in the more developed world (Norén et al. 2005).

A company should not be afraid to try to engage a more “responsible” approach within their core competences. Acting in accordance with the CSR standards does not necessarily mean that a company should leave their primary goal of making profit for its shareholders. It should instead be an indication of the fact that taking more and more social responsibility is more common these days than before. This should work as a tool for marketers around the world to design better and more improved marketing strategies that enable firms to meet its responsibility without sacrificing their aim of being profitable. If companies can handle this shift into being more socially responsible it might even work as a competitive advantage (Kärnä et al. 2003).

There is an example of how companies can structure a CSR report and what it shall contain; it is called “Global Compact” and is based on (the UN Universal Declaration of Human Right, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights to Work and the Rio Declaration of Environment and development) explained by (Norén et al. 2005, s. 25).
Global Compact’s Nine Principles

Human rights

1. Business should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights within their sphere of influence; and
2. Make sure that they are not complicit in human right abuses

Labor standards

1. Business should uphold the freedom of association and the affective recognition of the rights to collective bargaining
2. The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor; and
3. The effective abolition of the child labor; and
4. Eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Environment

1. Business should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
2. Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
3. Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Many companies follow the global compact’s nine principles today and more are yet to come. They recognize the opportunity of raising their profitability by change into a more environmentally concerned behavior. Companies focus more and more on
environmental issues by creating specific CSR reports and sustainability reports. These reports are presented by the companies either in their annual report, at their website or at an external CSR community (Norén et al. 2005).

It is very common and popular nowadays for companies to “show the society” about their work for a better and more improved world. Sites like www.csreurope.org and www.csrwire.com whose primary objective is to help companies showing reports about their environmental work are constantly getting more and more members which all want to be part of the exclusive group that works on the basis of improving the world. To quote csrwire.com: “CSRwire Members are Companies and NGOs, Agencies and Organizations interested in communicating their corporate citizenship, sustainability, and socially responsible initiatives to a Global Audience.”

3.3 COMMUNICATION

Communication is all around us every day of our lives. When we communicate different messages to each other we can apply different models and theories that help us understand what is going on in a more simplified way. Below we focus on describing different models and the true meaning of the word communication as an attempt to clarify how important communication is and how it works as a tool when trying to reach out to the customers.

3.3.1 What is communication?

An appropriate way to start writing about the existing communication models and theories connected to it would be to clarify the definition of the word communication. Communication is a broad and commonly misunderstood word. Some people comes to think of communication in form of public transportation
channels such as busses, trains etc while other argues communication to be a way of making yourself understood towards another individual (Hanson, 2007)

Beaulieu indicates that the meaning of the word in fact is a process in which organisms exchange information trough several methods. A basic need for two individuals to understand each other by communicating is that they speak a common language. You might also being able to communicate by using so called “nonverbal physical means” such as gestures, touch, eye contact and writing. Further definitions declare that communication between individuals occur by using symbols such as body language, words, signs and pictures to transmit a message, normally an informational or emotional one to a receiver (Beaulieu, 1992). Thereby is Communication a transmission of knowledge from one part, normally described as the sender, to a destination source, normally referred to as the receiver. Only when the receiver understands and accepts the message that is being sent to him we might say that the communication process has been achieved.

3.3.2 Communication and Leadership

Findings from a diversity of articles shows that many experts consider communication and leadership as being strongly connected to each other. These experts even suggest that a leader for a company could not possibly succeed (in his position) and make the outmost for his company if he does not have the necessary skills it takes to communicate with for instance the press. Therefore, it is absolutely vital for a company to have a leader that posses certain communication skills in order to win trust and confidence from the board, the shareholders and also from the employees (Falkheimer & Heide, 2007).
A good communicator is characterized as a person that has great empathy for other human beings. In order to be a good communicator you need to have the ability to put yourself into a similar situation as the reader and almost know he is thinking and how he feels from an emotional perspective. Something that also needs to be emphasized is that not many people will change their opinion about something just because you argue with them. Logical thinking is not the way to affect somebody to change an attitude or an opinion. An important aspect of communication is that if you want people to change a certain behavior, you need to be able to accept changes yourself. A vital thing for company success is that it is constantly following what is happening in their environment and that they have the ability to adapt to different changes if it is considered necessary (Hanson, 2007)

3.3.3 The Active Model

This is actually the first ever developed communication model created by Shannon (1948), and it is still applicable in some cases today. It describes the basic contents in a 70 year old version of the communication model cited by (Foulger, 2004)
As we can see this model is not as out of date as you might think when you consider when it was created. The active model describes almost all of the most relevant elements such as the sender (Information source), message, channel (Transmitter) and finally the receiver. One important thing to consider when this model was made in the forties was that a specific problem often arose, which Shannon referred to as “noise source”. This was a common problem back in the old days which made it less likely that the message actually would reach out to its receivers.

The active model however came soon to be updated to what currently is known as The Interactive Model by Weiner (1948, 1986). This model built on the Shannon model but with another important element added, which today works as a crucial tool for collection and understanding the information, Feedback cited by (Foulger, 2004). Feedback is the part of the communication process in which the sender has the possibility to analyze the information and see how the receiver has responded to it. When providing feedback, the original receiver goes through the same process as the sender did and the same factors influences him as they did the sender (Beaulieu, 1992).
3.3.4 The SMCRF Model

This model by David K. Berol (1960) is a key model today. It is very easy to understand and it describes a lot of different factors influencing communication between individuals. The figure below helps us understand the processes easier.

Table 3.3.4 Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) Model of communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENDER</th>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>RECEIVER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comm. Skills</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>Comm. Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Institutionalized</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Social System</td>
<td>Social System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As we can see this model explains five different elements influencing communication. Each element is broken down to specific underlying topics that determine how well we are able to communicate; the main elements are: sender, message, channel, receiver and feedback. The model is helpful for clarify different behaviors a consumer might be put in front of when faced with a decision to either purchase a product/service or not. Below follows an explanation of the different elements (Beaulieu, 1992, s. 2)
1. Sender

- **Communication skills** – There are five different skills that determine our ability to transmit and receive messages; speaking, writing, listening, reading and reasoning.

- **Attitudes** – We think in certain ways. We have our mind set up to either like or dislike specific things. There are three ways to transmit an attitude; Self-confident, Uneasy and to confident.

- **Knowledge** – We tend to communicate better when talking about something we are interesting in and know off.

- **Social systems** – We communicate differently depending on who we are communicating with.

- **Culture**– We communicates easier with individuals that share the same ideas.

2. Message

- **Content** - What we want to achieve from the message based on arguments and appeals in order to seek acceptance from the receiver.

- **Treatment** – How we prepare ourselves. To show a survey before we ask for assistance could be appropriate sometimes, for example before we start asking for rising funds etc. we could show a survey about the needs and desires that will be met from buying the specific product.

3. Channel

- **Sensory** – Our five senses; sound, sight, smell, taste and touch.

- **Institutionalized**- Face-to-face conversation, printed material and electronic media.
4. Receiver

- Same process as for the sender but it also involves understanding how well the receiver will understand the message. The final goal is to seek acceptance from the other individual and make him accept the message.

5. Feedback

- How the sender uses the information he gets back from the receiver. Feedback measures influence and provides a method of eliminating miscommunication, it is most effective when being done face-to-face but might as well even work for the Internet when performing an electronic survey, or during a telephone interview.

3.3.5 The ecological model of communication

This model created by Davis Foulger in 2004 is an updated version of Lasswell’s (1948) classic outline of the study of communication: “who … says what … in which channel … to whom … with what effect” (Foulger, 2004).
The ecological model of communication.

Source: (Foulger, 2004), available from:
http://foulger.info/davis/research/unifiedModelOfCommunication.htm

The model is taught as being a tool for help understanding which factors influence communication nowadays and its main purpose is to enlighten the role of the media within the communication process. What also has been added in this model compared to the other models is a more focused perspective on the language of the message. The earlier models did not mention anything about the role of perception and relationship of communication. Here on the other hand we find a more complex structure of the process that is going on when we communicate. This hopefully leads to a better understanding for the process which in the end helps understand the elements influencing communication in a more detailed way.

The creators and consumers affect each other in different ways and are influenced by a number of factors such as media, language etc. People today cannot emphasize enough the importance of feedback between the two communicating parts. A cycle is
constantly going on within the process. How well we use our skills to learn, invent, observe and understand the information we are given determines whether we simply act as a consumer of the message or if we actually become the creator of the message.

3.3.6 Integrated marketing Communication (IMC)

In the “real world” there is said to be four dimensions of communication that all needs to be integrated in order to make the marketing process work (Lesley, 2004):

1. Message – The information we want to supply
2. Channels – The place where we supply the message
3. Influence – How our message fits in
4. Time – When we supply the message

The message is what kind of information we want to deliver and what we hope to achieve from it. The channel is the place where we deliver the message. There are three different types of channels; bought channels, none-bought channels and own channels. In the category of bought channels we find TV-advertisement and newspaper ads etc. This channel is normally the most expensive one since we get access of transmitting our message to a huge variety of consumers. The none-bought channel includes public relations (PR), mouth-to-mouth talking and expert announcements. An important aspect to reflect on is that the none-bought channel often sees as the most preferable one. This is due to two reasons. First of all companies get “free advertising” and secondly it provides additional reputation since PR and experts announcements often gives the company greater credibility. Eventually we find homepages, sales representatives, CEO, employees and seminars among the elements that fit into the own channel category (Lesley, 2004).
Concerning influence there are a couple of factors that determine how well the message will be received and comprehended by the receiver. Everything from the clothes you wear to the price in your catalog makes an impression on the receiver. You might as well say that influence is everything that makes an impact on consumers. This is one of the key reasons to why integrated marketing communication has been a more vital question for many companies lately (Kotler, 2003).

The time factor is essential in order for integrated communication to work. If we fail to handle things in the appropriate order we will be faced with some tough decisions later on in the process. For instance, companies need to educate their employees in what they want to achieve before they even begin to consider spreading the message to potential customers. Only after this first step companies will give themselves the opportunity of succeeding in the world of marketing (Lesley, 2004).

3.3.7 Changes within communication over the last years

Communication is constantly going on every day of our lives, and as explained earlier on the first communication model was developed already back in 1948 by Shannon. Many things have happened since and today we live in a far different and more developed world.

There is always a need of change and that is why people and experts around the world always seek to expand on and improve already existing models to further clarify what is going on in the communication process. Some argues human empathy to be the key element if we are to improve the communication process (Hanson, 2007). Foulger (2004) on the other hand states that the media and the language are the two most vital elements within the communication process. He developed a new
communication model, the so called ecological model. This was made as an intention of proving how these “new” elements affect the other parts within the communication process.

If we are to improve our communication it is of greatest importance that we learn how to listen, that mass media audiences have choices, and that we need to be “literate” in our media choices. There is no denying that both attention to feedback and attention to detail are critical skills of effective communication (Foulger, 2004). What we have learned from the past is that communication is very complex and that it contains a variety of elements that all needs to be recognized and understood in order to reach perfect understanding. From a company’s point of view this can only be done by keep improving its attention for what is going on in the environment combined with the ability of being able to adapt to changes and demands from their customers (Hanson, 2007).

3.4 GREEN MARKETING

Environmental concern is an increasingly discussed subject nowadays. This has lead to that not only more and more consumers are going green, but also to the fact that issues of environmental concern are higher on the agenda of management’s priorities today according to Peattie and Ring (1993) cited by (Polonsky et al. 1998, s. 23). Kirkpatrick (1990) further suggest environmentalism as being “the biggest business issue for the 1990s” cited by (Grove et al. 1996, s. 56). This adds yet another description of how green marketing has developed during the last couple of years and the importance it will have for the companies in the future.
3.4.1 Green consumers

How does one define a “green consumer” then? Shrum, McCarty and Lowrey (1995) consider a green consumer to be anyone whose purchase behavior is influenced by environmental concerns. Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius (1995) further explain that “green consumers” might be divided into high and low involved consumers. The high involved consumers represents the part of the customers whose purchase behavior is highly affected by environmental issues, while the low involved consumers are the direct opposite, both descriptions cited by (D’Souza & Taghian, 2005, s. 53). Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius also performed a research in an attempt to find out differences in the way consumers relate to environmental involvement, which in other words meant that the research was structured in a way to separate the high involved consumers from those who are just slightly involved. By using a scale from one to seven in which one means that the customer is highly involved and seven points out that the customer more or less do not care about the environment (low involvement), the following four questions were asked:

a. I am concerned about the environment.

b. The condition of the environment affects the quality of my life.

c. I am willing to make sacrifices to protect the environment.

d. My actions impact on the environment.

The research eventually resulted in close to 75% falling into the category of high involved consumers among the 207 respondents that took part in the research. 25% fell into the category of low involved consumers (D’Souza & Taghian, 2005, s. 55).

D’Souza and Taghian expanded on Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius research and wanted to test two new hypotheses in order to find differences between the high and
low involved green consumers. The first hypothesis was: “The environmentally high involved consumers have a more favorable attitude toward green advertising than the low involved consumers” and the second hypothesis was: “The environmentally high involved consumers find green advertising as being more”:

- pleasant
- convincing
- believable
- favorable
- good

The result showed that there was a significant difference in which the green advertising was received by high and low involved green consumers. High involved consumers found green ads of being more “believable”, “favorable” and “good” whereas the low involved category of consumers disagree these variables to be “good”, “favorable” and “believable”. Based on the “convincing” and “pleasant” perspective both categories of consumers felt somewhat neutral (D’Souza & Taghian, 2005, s. 57).

Table 3.4.1 below shows the most important green advertising promotions and how the two different categories of green consumers react to a variety of environmental advertising.
Table 3.4.1 gives us an indication that in order to gain the interest from the low involved consumers companies need to use a different strategy. Marketing strategies should be aimed at creating more favorable, pleasant, good, believable and convincing advertisements in an attempt to change the way low involved consumers thinks of green advertising. Also important is that if companies are to strengthen their convincing message towards both categories of consumers the marketing department needs to deliver a truthful, transparent and clear message (if consumers are to listen to it). Donations are another example of a tool that might be used in order to win trust from the consumers, this often increase stronger publicity for green companies and make companies seem reliable. New technology which shows that companies are reducing emissions and pollutions does also affect consumers, as does certificates, recycling symbols and awards. According to Adcock (2000) advertising might have three main functions, to inform, remind and persuade. However the aim of green advertising should instead be to create awareness and tentative strong attitudes towards brands and companies (D’Souza & Taghian, 2005, s. 60)
3.4.2 What needs to be done?

Adapting to a “greener” way of life within organizations might not be an easy task to perform, but it is of highest importance since environmental concern is rising very quickly. Peattie and Crane (2005) mention a variety of things that requires attention from the companies before more people start getting “greener”:

a. A redefinition of the “product”
b. A willingness to change markets
c. An emphasis on benefits from product use
d. Marketing communication that aims to inform rather than just impress
e. A focus beyond current consumer needs
f. A willingness to manage demand and expectation
g. An emphasis on cost instead of price
h. Taking more responsibility

Companies need to take their social responsibility and act as a guide for their consumers in order to reach a more environmentally sustainable behavior. The key here is how companies address its environmental messages and how they convince consumers that these changes are necessary and worth waiting for, and that the benefits gained from adapting will have its benefits in the future instead of right away (Peattie & Crane, 2005). The Atlanta Journal (1993) states that you might influence consumers via commercials and reports with the goal of educating them about environmental concerns, such as informing consumers that driving the car is more harmful for the environment due to the fact that a car discharges more carbon dioxide emissions and so forth than if you are going by train cited by (Grove et al. 1996, s. 61).
In recent years an emphasize on the three R’s has continued to grow, how companies *reduce*, *recycle* and *reuse* their products nowadays serves as a guideline for showing how environmentally committed your company is. Within the transportation industry there are a number of things that could be done from the company’s perspective if they want to communicate their environmental cautiousness, they could for instance recycle tires for their rubber material, they could invest in more environmentally safe vehicles that reduces less carbon dioxide emission (technological improvements) as well as assemble parts from old vehicles and replace them into other vehicles. A more enhanced focus on the three R’s is needed if companies within the service industry are to reduce their environmental impact even more (Grove et al. 1996).

Sometimes companies lack knowledge about green marketing and how to adapt to the new way of marketing. If that is the case it is appropriate to gain help from outside stakeholders. The key thing to consider is that the company who wants to change and thereby aims to become “greener” must be able to take risks and make sacrifices in order to change. In American organizations for example it appears that this type of help provided by external stakeholders does not work out very well in most cases. This is mainly explained as a sign that American companies do not trust outsiders and are unable to adapt to the changes because of it (Polonsky et al. 1998). When applying an external stakeholder you will go through a five way process in order to establish a “greener” company:

1. Opportunity
2. Design
3. Testing
4. Introduction
5. Life-Cycle Management
The external stakeholder begins with recognizing an opportunity by thinking “outside” the box. For example, “how can this company become greener”, “Are there any possibilities of informing customers etc?” Then a design about how to establish a greening of the firm is constructed, and after the design has been made the testing begins. An introduction takes place which means that the wheels are in motion and things are happening, and eventually the green way of thinking is created in the companies’ core competences. Important to consider is that a company that wants to change also need to be a learning organization, meaning that it need to be open for new environmental ideas as well as having a willingness to test these new things, the whole thing is kind of a learning process where the company tend to learn more and more from day to day. Environmental objectives might only be achieved if you combine in house know-how with external expertise (Polonsky et al. 1998). This eventually enables the firm to be an environmental leader within their branch if they are open to do so, and which will finally lead to a competitive advantage (Porter & van der Linde, 1995).

3.4.3 Is it worth going ”greener”?

Despite the satisfaction companies might get from not harming the environment there is yet another important aspect to consider, the profitability. Consumers tend to be attracted to companies that take their social responsibility about issues concerning the environment etc. Davis (1991) suggests this has initiated many organizations within the service sector of going greener since they realize the many benefits gained by turning greener, such as for example added profitability and consumer attraction (Davis, 1991). Porter and Van der Linde (1995) also found out that firms in many cases find the transition to a more green marketing approach as being good for the business as well as a sign that they take their environmental responsibility (Porter & van der Linde, 1995). This pretty much points out that if a company is to become greener, it will have its advantages later on in the process, since customers most likely are attracted by the company and thereby even raise its profit.
3.4.4 Where are we now?

A glint about how far we are at the moment in the marketing process is that we perhaps are witnessing the beginning of a never ending story. Due to the fact that we are in the early stages of the new wave of marketing (green marketing) it is natural to think that consumers lack a bit of patience and commitment since they perhaps feel that the individual himself cannot make any difference. This makes it even more important that we keep on spreading the message about the benefits we will receive later on by acting green. Everyone around the world probably wants to save the environment and take their personal responsibility for making the world a better place to live. If not, for themselves but then for the generations of tomorrow. That is why companies need to focus their efforts on telling their customers that the benefits gained from saving the environment will be good for future generations.

The most important aspect to emphasize is the fact that in order to create more environmentally friendly efforts, both organizations and governments must take their social responsibility even more and reach out to the consumers in a wider degree. Educational communication will have a great importance since it enables consumers to understand how they themselves as an individual might help saving the environment.

What can be said for now is that green marketing is in the developing process. Because of this it cannot be considered unfulfilled, but there is some work to be done until we might enable ourselves to make progress towards more sustainable green marketing (Peattie & Crane, 2005).
4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The main purpose of this chapter is to present facts and findings. Firstly we want to clarify how the research was constructed and executed. Secondly it is important to understand how results were created. Scoring and rating systems are presented in order to give an overview of the evaluation methods. Results are presented in various forms. Tables and graphs are mostly used in order to give an easy overview over the results. This chapter will present the most interesting findings and results. Conclusions will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.1 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

4.1.1 Sample description

Companies that are included in this study are diverse and many, but not all companies provide data. The total sample size is 155 companies. Out of these 155 companies, 125 are from Europe and 30 are from Asia and North America. The companies are categorized in to five different sectors shipping, air, rail, bus/urban transport and delivery service companies. The response rate in this study is 65%. For different reasons data could not be obtained from some company websites. No information in English, dysfunctional website or no website at all are some of the reasons for missing data. Figure 4.1.1 shows the amount of companies that had any kind of environmental information versus companies that did not have any environmental information what so ever. 101 out of 155 companies communicated some kind of environmental information on their website.
4.1.2 Sector score

The overall average score of the companies which had some kind of environmental information is 31% out of 100%. If we only look at European companies, the average is 38%. Best performing sector is the shipping sector with an average score of 47% and the worst performing sector is the air sector with an average score of 29%. However, European air companies have a score of 39% but North American and Asian companies drag the average score down. Asian air companies score on average 13% and North American 10%. A comparison of the five different sectors and their average scores is presented in figure 4.1.2.
In fact, if we break down the results of the air transportation sector, we can see that European air transportation companies score on average higher in relation to other sectors (Figure 4.1.3). And European air transportation companies score above the total industry average and above the European industry average.
In total, there are 101 companies responding in this study. The number of responding companies in different sectors varies a lot. Six companies represent the shipping sector. Delivery service companies have eleven companies represented. Rail, bus and urban transportation companies have around 20 companies. The largest amount of companies participating in this study is from the air transportation sector. In total there are 42 air transportation companies in this study. See figure 4.1.4.

4.1.3 County score
Companies from in total 35 different countries world wide are examined. Most of the companies that were examined originate from Europe, in total 22 countries from Europe are represented. The country with absolutely most responding companies is United Kingdom, in total 24 responding companies are from United Kingdom. Seven companies are from Germany while both Sweden and Italy are represented with six responding companies each. France, Spain and the Czech Republic are represented with three companies each in the study. Furthermore there are 15 different countries
with only one or two companies responding. Table 4.1.5 show the number of responding companies by country in Europe.

### Table 4.1.5 Responding companies per country in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Nr of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North America has 15 responding companies in the study, 13 are from the USA, one is from Canada and one is from Mexico. In Asia there are 13 responding companies divided over ten countries. Three companies are from Hong Kong and two from
Malaysia. Japan, South Korea and Singapore all have one company each represented in the study, as well as Vietnam, China, Thailand, Taiwan and Indonesia.

Scores among the participating countries are diverse. The single highest scoring country is France with an average score of 61%. There are ten countries with an average score of 0%. Figure 4.1.6 shows the score distributions by country. Europe scores 38% and Asia scores 13%. North America is the worst scoring region with an average score of 10%.

There are twelve countries out of 35 which score above the industry average. A majority of the countries score below the industry average. Five countries score between 0 and 10%. Furthermore there are six countries with a score between 10 and 20%.
4.1.4 Three European regions

In order to simplify the regional comparing we have divided Europe into three regions. In table 4.1.7 you can see what countries belong to what category. North region is represented by 33 companies, the West region is represented by 26 and the East region with 14 companies. The first reason why we divide Europe into three regions is that we want to see if there are any geographical differences within Europe itself. Another reason is that some countries within Europe are represented by only one company in the study. The result might not be representative for the whole county. That is why we chose to compare with regions as well in our study.

Table 4.1.7 European regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North region</th>
<th>West region</th>
<th>East region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Romania</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

33 companies 26 companies 14 companies
4.1.5 Category score

Companies score similar in the two research areas “how” and “what”. In the first part of the study which handles the question of how companies communicate their environmental efforts the average score is 30%. The average score for the second part of the study which examine what companies communicate is 31%. The results of the specific questions vary a lot. Five percent of the responding companies in the industry have some kind of graphical animation on their website. On the other hand more than 60% of the companies have their environmental information in the “about us” section or a special environmental section. In figure 4.1.8 and 4.1.9 we can see the specific results for each category that was examined.

Figure 4.1.8 Category score of the how part
As we can see, category A, D, F, G and J score low. On the other hand B, C, H and K score a high score. In the following chapter we will in detail analyse each and every category.
5 SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

A. Is there any environmental content on front page

Category A tries to see if there is any environmental content on the front page of a company website. This category is very interesting because the content on a company’s first page is the first thing a visitor on the website is going to see. Out of the 101 companies which had some kind of environmental information on their website only 13 showed it on their first page. Figure 5.1.1

![Pie chart showing number of companies with environmental content on front page]

Figure 5.1.1 Number of companies with environmental content on front page

We believe that it is a low number of companies that present green information on the front page. In table 5.1.2 below we will present the 13 companies that do present this kind of information on the front page. We will try to discover what characterizes a company that is good in this area and if there are any other differences that we can detect.
Table 5.1.2 Companies with environmental info on front page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>What kind of info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LUFTHANSA</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Link to env section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRITISH AIRWAYS PLC</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETWORK RAIL</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Link to env section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMA CGM (CGM)</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Link to env section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAILION DEUTSCHLAND</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Link to env section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIRGIN ATLANTIC</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Link to env section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWISS AIRLINES</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE GO-AHEAD GROUP</td>
<td>Bus/Urban</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Link to env reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THERMAL BUSES S.A.</td>
<td>Bus/Urban</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Env pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASYJET</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Link to env section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Link to compensate flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ AB</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Offer to rent env car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN CARGO AB</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Link to env section, env awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the results we can see that a typical company that shows some kind of environmental information on the first page is an air transportation company from Europe. It is companies from the northern region in Europe that are best in showing environmental content on the first page. Most companies present a link on the first page that takes the visitor to their environmental section.

Obviously there are differences. One company can put a very small link on the bottom of the first page and another can put a link in green color on the top. Both are on the first page but there are still differences in how visitors will perceive them. Having environmental content or a link about it on the first page does not guarantee that a visitor will see it.
We would like to lift up a company that we believe is showing green information on the first page in a good way. This company is EasyJet. Looking at the screenshot from EasyJet’s website we can see how they do it. The dominant color on their website is orange. In contrast to the dominant orange color they have put a link on the menu bar which is green. In addition they have a small picture of a tree in the same link. This makes it very easy for customers to spot the link and access the environmental information.

In this case we would like to say that EasyJet is a benchmark company.
B. Where can the environmental information be found

Category B tries to detect where on the website the environmental information can be found. There are several different places on the website where companies decide to put their environmental information. Our study shows that most companies chose to put their environmental information in the “about us” section. In total 63 companies out of 101 put their environmental information in the “about us” section. To put the information in the “about us” section has its advantages as well as disadvantages. What can be seen as an advantage is that it is relatively easy to find the “about us” section. A negative effect is that the environmental information might “disappear” in the huge information flow that most companies have in this particular section.

Some companies place the environmental information in other places. “Investor Relations” is a section where it sometimes can be found. It can perhaps be said that the majority of visitors to this section on the website are not regular customers, rather professionals and other stakeholders. Most regular customers will most likely never visit the “Investor Relations” section. This is why we believe that putting environmental information in this section is not a wise action. Another way is to put the information in the company’s annual report. The annual report should include all essential information about a company and so even their environmental work. Nevertheless regular customers most likely will never look at the annual report.

In total 83% of the shipping companies put their environmental information in the “about us” section, while only 14 out of 42 air transportation companies do the same thing. About half of the 63 companies that put their environmental information in the “about us” section are from the northern region in Europe. Once again companies from the northern parts of Europe outperform the rest of Europe.
C. Is there a separate environmental section

This category examines if the companies have a special environmental section or not. The definition of a special environmental section is that it should have a link to it and it should have several under categories which all handle about environmental work. In our study about 50% out of the 101 companies have a special environmental section. There are many examples of how companies chose to link to this section. A few companies have a link on the first page which takes the visitor directly to the environmental section. A vast majority of the 50 websites that have a special environmental section link to it from the “about us” section.

Even if a website has a special environmental section it might be hard to find. A company can put out a lot of information but it might never be found. This makes it obvious that companies should link to the special environmental section in a good and visible way.

The special environmental sections do vary in size and content. Most companies have small sections. Nevertheless there are several companies with extensive information and many under categories. To exemplify, we can look at what categories EasyJet offers on its environmental section. EasyJet has come far in communicating its environmental efforts and we believe that they do a good job. This is why we use it as an example several times. EasyJet present their environmental work in two main sections within the special environmental section. They divide it in to “efforts on ground” and “efforts in the air”. In addition to this they have carbon calculators and carbon offsetting possibilities as well. Companies need to communicate their matters clearly.
D. Does the environmental section differ?

Environmental sections can look different. Category D examines if there are any differences between the environmental section and the rest of the website in terms of colors, size and style. Out of 101 companies there are only four for which it could be said that they differentiate the style of their environmental section. Most companies use the same style throughout the whole website. In general there are no differences between these sites. The four companies that have a bit different environmental section are all from the UK. Two companies are bus companies and there is one airline and one delivery service company.

Looking at the four companies and how they do it differently we can see that they have one thing in common. They work with colors. There is a different color in their environmental section. The dominant color in the environmental section is green. All four sites use much more green color in their environmental section. There are no differences in anything else than colors. Type style is the same and the layout is the same as well. As mentioned before most transportation companies’ websites have the same style throughout the whole website.

To show how different colors can have an impact we will here below show two screenshots from the company Stagecoach, a UK bus company. The first screenshot is from their first page and the second picture is from their environmental section. Note the difference in background colors and how that can make a difference, as people perceive green as an environmental color.
Stagecoach Group takes its corporate responsibilities seriously and the responsible way we do business is firmly embedded in our Group’s culture. From our approach to safety and the environment, to how we treat our people, our customers, our local communities and other key stakeholders, we have a very clear set of values.

As well as providing a range of economic and environmental benefits, our bus and rail services help promote social inclusion and bring people together. We are committed to encouraging more people to use public transport. This is central to our growth strategy and the future success of our Group, and also important to the future of the communities in which we operate around the world. We have the same long-term goal of sustainable development as our stakeholders and it is in our collective interest to have an ongoing dialogue on how that can best be achieved.

Our Code of Business Conduct (PDF, 39kb - opens in a new window), confirms our core values and policies in a number of areas: how we deal with our employees, suppliers, customers,
E. What formats are available

This category explains which formats the company use in order to deliver their environmental information. The most common way for companies to present their information is through the standard format for Internet, HTML. Many companies use a combination of HTML and PDF to transmit their environmental messages to the customers. PDF is an alternative to HTML and are mostly accessible when the customers download it directly from the website to their own computers. As figure 5.1.3 below shows 39% of the companies use more than just one type of format in which they present their environmental information.

![Figure 5.1.3 Number of companies with more than one format](image)

There are a few examples of companies that break the pattern of regular formats and provide their customers with alternate types of formats. Table 5.1.4 below explains which companies are doing this and also what format has been used instead of the regular HTML and PDF formats.
Table 5.1.4 Three companies and formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Type of Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>HTML, Doc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIETATEA NATIONALA DE TRANSPORT FEROVIAR DE CALATORI - CFR - CALATORI SA</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>HTML, Flash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEOLIA TRANSPORT SVERIGE AB</td>
<td>Bus/urban</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>HTML, PDF, WMA, SWF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see from the table above there are only three companies that show environmental information in another format than HTML and PDF. If we are to lift up one specific company that are doing well in using a variety of formats it is Veolia Transport from Sweden that have two additional types of formats WMA and also SWF, those are used when for example playing movie clips.

Worth noticing is that another three companies have no environmental information in HTML format since they entirely focus on providing their customers with PDF formats. This is not a very good option we think since PDF files often need to be downloaded and thereby take up additional time when visiting the website. Also when talking about PDF files you often find them in the annual report section or when you are to look at a CSR or an environmental report. We think that a combination of HTML, PDF and WMA will be good if companies are to communicate as good as possible and the way Veolia Transport work is obviously a benchmark for how companies can do in order to reach out to the customers perfectly.
F. Any animations/movies with environmental content

Animations are a way of simplifying a message as an attempt for companies to reach out to their customers. Out of the 101 companies that provided their customers with a functional website there were only 5 that actually showed any kind of a graphical animation, which we consider to be a very poor figure. We think that by providing the customers with animations the companies will give their customers an opportunity to enjoy their visit on the website since animations many times creates entertainment and thereby breaks the regular pattern of information.

Figure 5.1.5 Number of companies using animations

Based on figure 5.1.5 presented above we will give a more detailed explanation down below in table 5.1.6 to show which companies are doing best in presenting animations and also what kind of animations they have created as well as which sector and nation the belong to.
Table 5.1.6 Company list category F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Type of Animation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EASYJET</td>
<td>Air Transport</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Picture with “living” symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERROCARRIL METROPOLITA DE BARCELONA SA</td>
<td>Bus/urban</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Movie and pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEOLIA TRANSPORT SVERIGE AB</td>
<td>Bus/urban</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORT TRADING LIMITED</td>
<td>Bus/urban</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMA CGM (CGM)</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Movie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our research showed that companies from neither North America nor Asia had any kind of environmental information in form of animations. Even most of the European companies lack this information, which possibly is the easiest one to understand and relate to. Animations in form of movies are a good way of catching attention from the customers since it does not necessarily requires that they have to read anything.

Reading can be exhausting and even boring sometimes but we figure that if companies could provide its customers in a larger scale to create movies about how they address environmental issues then they would probably attract more viewers and also eventually more “green customers”. A good example of a company that provides its customers with an animation in form of a movie is Veolia Transport from Sweden. They created a commercial about environmental issues which they also put on their website for customers to view. The clip shows messages that are easy to understand and show how Veolia is working in order to create a more sustainable development towards a better world.
G. Environmental content included in company’s mission/vision

Category G examines if companies have included some environmental content in their mission or vision. It is easy to assume that a company which has some environmental content in their mission or vision would work harder for the environment. Only a small fraction of the companies studied have some kind of environmental message in their mission or vision. 11 out of 101, see figure 5.1.7. Five companies out of the eleven are from western parts of Europe and one of the eleven companies is from North America. All the eleven companies score relatively high in the other categories as well. The rail sector is the best sector in this category, represented by five companies.

![Figure 5.1.7 Number of companies with environmental message in Mission/Vision](image)

It first must be said that there are very few companies that present their mission or and vision in a clear way. Many companies present instead similar topics as for example “company strategies” or “company values”. Most companies have these kinds of statements instead of mission or vision. Another common thing is that some companies place these “company values” and “company strategies” in the
environmental section. We will present two examples below from two different companies. The first one is “group strategy” from Finnair, an airline from Finland. Their statement is found in the “group strategy” section.

“Most desirable intercontinental airline in the Northern Hemisphere
Finnair aims to become the airline of choice for quality and environmentally conscious air travellers in intercontinental travel in the Northern Hemisphere. Finnair will pursue its growth strategy based on increasing demand in the traffic between Europe and Asia and in the future also in the traffic between North America and Asia as well.”

Another example is Delta’s mission statement which is found in the environmental section called “Delta’s force for global good” on their website. Delta is the only company outside Europe with an environmental message in its mission statement.

“Our Mission: We—Delta's employees, customers, and community partners—together form a force for positive local and global change, dedicated to bettering standards of living and the environment where we and our customers live and work. We are Delta's Force for Global Good.”

Here we can see two different examples of statements with environmental content. Because few companies present their vision or mission on their website and even fewer do it under the proper section. It might be hard to perceive the credibility of the statements because they are almost always different in different websites. Nevertheless it could be a powerful tool in communicating green.
H. CSR or Environmental reports available for download

This category is one of the most important ones. It shows if companies present CSR reports or not on their websites and thereby takes its social responsibility to make the world better. This category is probably one of the most important ones if companies are to reach out to more green customers. Many low involved customers’ means that this category provides creditability and indicates that companies are acting with responsibility towards the environment and thereby not only focus on raising profits.

Our study shows that 43% out of 101 companies provided their customers with CSR or environmental reports, which we think is a pretty good figure. There are some geographical differences in the way companies tend to show CSR reports. Only six companies from Asia and Northern America have established a CSR report out of the 28 companies from these regions. This indicates that only 21% of the Northern American and Asian companies have established a CSR report in which they show on their website in comparison to 52% of the European companies.

Figure 5.1.8 shows how many companies from each European region have published a CSR or environmental report. Eastern part of Europe has not one single company that has published a CSR or an environmental report on their website. Most companies that have issued a report and presented it at their website belong to the air sector.
Since CSR and environmental reports are a very good way of creating credibility from customer point of view and make the company look trustworthy we think that if possible every company should establish one. The North American and Asian companies are doing very poor in presenting CSR reports and our suggestion for them is to seek assistance from external stakeholders in order to improve on this part and thereby give themselves a chance to reach out to the low involved green customers.
I. Any environmental certifications or awards shown

According to previous studies it is very important for companies to show certifications and awards in order to create further reliability. By doing this, companies transmits a message of one that cares about the environment and that they take their social responsibilities. Awards and certifications are given by an independent source which often indicates that a company has been doing something that benefit others and thereby shall be rewarded.

Based on our study we found out that only 31% of the companies showed any information of this kind, which we obviously regard as a pretty low figure since as many as 75% of the customers believe this type of information is important to them. Our study further shows that companies from the northern and the western parts of Europe are in front of the competition. Further on the sector within the transportation industry that is doing best in presenting information about certifications and awards is the shipping sector. Four out of five shipping companies show environmental awards or certifications.

Our conclusion about the way companies show certifications and awards on their websites is that they definitely should consider either showing it on their website if they have any. If they on the other hand have no environmental certifications or awards they should strive to get one and share it with their customers since it creates creditability for the company. If a company cares about the environment they should do their outmost to show it to the public and transmit a message that the company actually also cares about the future and not only on raising profit. A good way for a company to start showing that they care is to show certifications that indicates that they want to improve the environment.
J. Interactive environmental content

We think that it is important to involve the customers in the process themselves when they visit the website and look for environmental information. Most commonly companies use carbon dioxide calculators in order to show customers the impact the travel will have on the environment. By using a calculator the customer get an opportunity to see how much his/her travel will impact the environment and some companies also give the customers a possibility of paying an additional fee in order to make up for the damages he/she makes on the environment during the trip.

Our study shows that only 16% of the companies provide their customers with any form of interactive environmental service such as calculators. This is a poor figure and worth noticing is that no one of the North American and Asian air transportation companies provide such assistance for their customers.

As we can see from figure 5.1.9 the sector most companies who are providing their customers with interactive tools is the rail sector. The worst performer on the other hand seems to be the delivery service sector which has no companies represented. Perhaps this specific sector does not want to show their customers about their environmental impact and make comparisons with other sectors because it might scare possible customers away due to the fact that they are responsible for causing more pollutions than other sectors? Also worth considering is that it might be more complicated to calculate as these companies have no set routes instead they get new routes on a daily basis.
The table below shows the companies that actually use interactive tools on their website and what kind of interactive tools they provide their customers with and also which sector and region they belong to.
Table 5.2.1 Company details category J

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Type of tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARNIVAL PLC</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Hotline phone number which handles environmental questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES (SAS)</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEOLIA TRANSPORT SVERIGE AB</td>
<td>Bus/urban</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>A tool that describes environmental problems and solutions to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGECOACH GROUP PLC</td>
<td>Bus/urban</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>A suggestion form for CSR report, and diagrams of how they benefit the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ AB</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN CARGO AB</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASYJET</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWISS INTERNATIONAL AIR LINES AG</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAILION DEUTSCHLAND AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL EXPRESS GROUP PLC</td>
<td>Bus/urban</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>A form in which customers can make suggestions about the CSR report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMA CGM (CGM)</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Diagrams of how different sectors influence CO2 emissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS CARGO S.P.A.</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRITISH AIRWAYS PLC</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT</td>
<td>Air transport</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIETE NATIONALE DES CHEMINS DE FER FRANCAIS (S.N.C.F.)</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEUTSCHE BAHN AG</td>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide calculator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table above we can see that most companies that use interactive tools have something in common and that is providing their customers with a carbon dioxide calculator. Although there are companies that break the pattern even in this category. Some of them merely show diagrams of the impact their sector has on the environment while for example Veolia Transport describes environmental problems and also provide solutions to the problems.

We think that a carbon dioxide calculator is a good way for companies to involve their customers more in the process. However we once again want to highlight the way Veolia Transport works in order to transmit their environmental messages to the customers. It seems that they have put down a lot of effort and it will most likely give them great creditability from customers.

Even a phone number where customers might ask questions directly to the company seems to be a good way of creating creditability, the same thing goes for the feedback forms where customers can hand in their suggestions to the company concerning environmental issues.
K. What kind/type of information on the website

Category K is examines what kind/type and how much information there is on a website. In total 60 out of 101 companies had two or more pages about their environmental work and/or they had policies and detailed information about their environmental work. 41 companies had either no information whatsoever or they had very limited information in form of one page or less with no specific information or policies. In figure 5.2.2 we can see how many companies out of the 60 are from every region in absolute numbers.

![Figure 5.2.2 Number of companies per region in absolute numbers](image)

Figure 5.2.2 Number of companies per region in absolute numbers
In figure 5.2.3 we can see the same results as in figure 5.2.2 but divided on sectors instead.

As evident most companies with extensive environmental information are from the northern region in Europe. Furthermore, most companies with extensive information are from the rail sector.

There are a lot of variations in terms of what kind of information companies present. What can be said is that many companies present their environmental information in their own favor in general terms. For example every sector claims that their sector is the most environmentally friendly. An air transportation company can claim that taking the airplane is much better than taking the train for one distance. And at the same time if you look at a train company it will state that the train is better than the airplane for the exact same distance. The question is how much substance is there
behind their claims. Although, visitors to the website will be affected by the statements whether the statements are right or wrong.

Besides comparing sectors many companies also put much information about their equipment that they are using. They are good in presenting investments in new environmentally friendly vehicles of all kinds. And again it is just their own vehicle that is the best performing.
L. Any opportunity for further reading

The last category within our research explains if the company gives their customers an opportunity for further reading. We obviously think that companies that provide their customers with links to other environmental websites are more trustworthy than other companies that fail on giving their customers with an opportunity for further reading. Our study shows that 28% of the companies have this kind of environmental information on their website. Figure 5.2.4 shows that the regional score indicate that the northern European region is once again in front of the other regions which comes as no surprise what so ever since they have been providing its customers with more and better information in basically every other category as well.

![Figure 5.2.4 Number of companies per European region](image)

This category further on indicates that the companies strive to let their customers know more about environmental issues, which will make them more aware of the environmental problems. We feel that companies that provide their customers with links for further reading actually take their responsibility in order to inform the
customers about different environmental issues which will probably in the end make them feel more reliable from a customers point of view.

5.2 General observations and thoughts

As we are doing a study about how companies within the transportation industry provide their customers with environmental information on their website, it will be quite hard for us to come up with an answer for how effective the environmental information really will be and to what degree it will influence consumers. We are simply looking at websites in order to find out how companies communicate their environmental efforts today. Further studies will be needed in order to understand the effect of the green marketing on companies’ websites. This study can instead simplify future work for people who are interested in this new and fast growing topic about green marketing. It is an interesting field, and it will certainly be interesting to see how it will evolve.

Surprisingly many companies have no website or a completely dysfunctional website. What else is surprising is that some websites do not have any information available in English. Today, one would expect all companies to have a website, especially big companies with 5000 or more employees. Evidently more than 25% of the companies in our study do not have a functional website or any information available in English. Referring back to the communication theories and models we want to point out the importance of communication and the importance of establishing and maintaining a good relationship with ones customers. In our study we can see that more than one quarter of the companies have failed in the initial stage, in communicating a message. The general opinion would be that a company without a functional website could not be very environmentally friendly.
It is apparent that there are some differences in how and what companies communicate on their websites in terms of environmental communication. Our study provides us with an average score for the industry which is 38%. If we add the Asian and North American airlines to the results we get a score of 31%. All five sectors score fairly similar. A similar score between the different sectors is expected. They are all accused for similar environmental issues like pollution in terms of carbon dioxide exhausts, noise and waste management issues for example. It seems that most of the companies try to tackle similar issues when it comes to the environment.

We have agreed that companies within the transportation industry have similar environmental problems to tackle regardless of what sector they belong to. There is also a similar pressure on all companies to comply and adapt to more environmentally friendly operations. Consumers are changing and they are more concerned about the environment. They are more and more concerned with their choice of transportation company. A company that does not take full responsibility for its actions and the impact it makes is less likely to attract green customers. But what is even more important is that if a company fails in the communication process it might lose customers as well. Companies need to be responsible and take care of the environment. Maybe even more important is that they need to communicate it as well, otherwise their efforts risk to stay in the shadow.

Although transportation companies face similar environmental issues and similar expectations from stakeholders they perform differently. Our study shows that there are some differences in how different sectors and companies communicate their environmental efforts. Overall the shipping sector is communicating its environmental efforts best. The score for the shipping companies in our study is 47%. The shipping sector outperforms the other sectors in seven out of twelve
categories. Although there were only six responding shipping companies the sector manages to outperform the other sectors.

European airlines are also very good in their communication. But in this sector there are huge geographical differences. Asian and North American airlines perform similarly. Airlines from Asia and North America are by far the worst performing sector. European airlines on the other hand are good. Some of the best performing companies in the entire study are European airlines. It seems that European airlines are much better in communicating green. The question is, do the results for airlines reflect the whole industry.

5.3 Improvements on influencing green information

The Internet is an important tool nowadays for companies to communicate what procedures they are taking when trying to explain their environmental efforts. Consumers are often being influenced and affected by messages that companies transmit through their websites. D’Souza and Taghian found that 86% of the high involved green consumers for example find recycling symbols as being an important advertising tool and another 75% argue that certifications and awards have some importance to them as well. According to our study 59% of the companies are providing their customers with information about recycling programs and actions about how companies work in order to maximize the benefit from an environmental point of view. Moreover, 31% of the websites show some kind of environmental certifications and awards. A score of 59% means that companies have several pages in which they have included information about their recycling policies. This must be seen as a sign that most companies take a fair amount of responsibility about recycling. The result could be even higher if we exclude the North American and Asian companies from the research, which are normally worse in showing environmental information on their websites. The figure will rise to 73% which is
close to the 86% in previous researches which found this form of environmental information as having great importance for customers. Then we are still only talking about the high involved green consumers which means that companies are doing fairly well on this part. 31% of the transportation companies (36% if we only look at European transportation companies) showed environmental certifications and awards. This we find to be a somewhat weak figure if we are to compare with the 75% of the high involved green consumers who thought that this was important for them as a possibility of influence. Companies need to improve this type of information and start showing the customers more certificates and awards, as it obviously affects them.

5.4 Organizational change is important

External stakeholders will have a great importance if companies are to become “greener”. Therefore it is important that the whole organization stands behind the decision of turning green. To be able to change from a regular kind of company to a greener company it demands that the employees must agree with the decision to change as well. An important aspect to consider is that employees will not change their attitude if they are not convinced that such a transformation will be good for them. In this case a leader who posses great communicational skills if required in order to make them listen and perhaps also change their minds about the transformation to a greener organization. If the leader can prove to his employees that by turning green the company can receive a number of benefits, then a transformation is much more likely to occur. Previous researches point out that by going green a company will have an opportunity of creating a competitive advantage on the market, which eventually will give the company the possibility of raising its profits?
5.5 Establishing a CSR report is beneficial

What has been fairly common recently is to establish a so called CSR report which shows that the company takes social and environmental responsibility. What motivates a company to create a CSR report is for example that it helps strengthening customer appreciation, the company brand, the reputation as well as that it helps creating a competitive advantage. According to our study, 51% of the companies (43% if we include Asian and North American airlines) have established and communicated a CSR report or another type of environmental report on their websites.

Transportation companies from the UK and the Nordic countries are doing best in presenting a CSR reports or other environmental reports on their websites. More than three fourths had some kind of report available on their website. To compare with continental western European companies of which 46% had CSR reports available. Companies from Eastern Europe had no CSR reports available. It is apparent that companies from eastern European countries put less effort into presenting a CSR or an environmental report. We believe that it is not acceptable that companies with more than 5000 employees do not have any CSR reports. Something needs to be done here. Perhaps it is time to ask for help from outside stakeholders in order for companies that perform poorly to turn greener and provide their customers with what many consider to be one of the most important environmental information, CSR reports.

Consumers who are just slightly involved in the green marketing process need to be informed in a different way than those who are highly involved. As mentioned earlier (see table 3.4.1), an important aspect is to promote company image in the advertising process. Low involved green consumers do not have too much faith in green advertising. Because of this reason it is important for companies to create CSR
reports where they show their commitment about how to save the environment. Creating a CSR report is a good way of increasing a company’s credibility.

5.6 Communication channel and its usage

As we have seen in the theoretical chapter the way we communicate have more or less been the same over time. New things have been added and the ecological model of communication is a good example, here the roles of the media and the language have been highlighted as a sign that the Internet is more important now than ever. As many as 18.9% of the world’s population have Internet access. This is an increase of more than 244% since 2000 (Miniwats Marketing Group, 2007). This shows that the Internet is an important communication channel for companies. The Internet also enables companies to reach out to customers from all over the world. This is a huge step forward in comparison to earlier where they more or less were restricted to use TV or magazine advertisement which cost a lot of money in order to reach out to overseas markets.

What companies communicate on their websites will have big influence whether the company will successfully reach out to their customers or not. As stated in the theoretical chapter, companies need to focus on things that have the most importance for their customers, information about the three R’s and CSR reports etc that influence the customers. It is also important to recognize that companies should focus their marketing communication to inform rather than just to impress. What we have witnessed throughout our research is that some companies for example give the visitors an opportunity to provide them with feedback. This means that those companies have established a form in which the visitors can tell the company what parts to improve and what they should think about. This is a very useful tool and you might think that it creates a fair amount of reliability since it proves that the company is ready to take action to change. Our study further points out that many of the
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transportation companies show third party accreditations, such as certificates and awards which also help the company create reliability.
5.7 Purpose and implications

Reflecting back on the purpose of this study we feel that we have fulfilled it in a good way. The purpose was to see how the largest transportation companies in Europe communicate their environmental efforts on their websites. Furthermore we wanted to give some recommendations on how companies can improve their communication. Overall companies do communicate green on their websites, but there are some differences between companies. We also believe that there is a lot of room for improvement in the communication process. We have developed some recommendations based on our study for how companies can improve their environmental communication.

- Companies need to provide their customers with environmental information in English in a wider degree. Some companies provide their customers with environmental information only in their native language. We believe that all big transportation companies should have information in English, especially in today’s globalized society.

- Some companies need to put more focus on providing consumers with more information about the three R’s reduce, reuse and recycle.

- Establishing a form in which customers are able to give feedback to companies is a good way of creating reliability.

- In order to improve their environmental communication companies need to show more certifications and awards on their website since this adds further creditability.
companies need to send out clearer messages about how the consumers will benefit from using their services. more interactive tools such as carbon emission calculators or more animations are needed to simplify this procedure.

external environmental communication is important and it will remain important. in order to be successful, it is crucial to have good communication. evidently companies communicate green to their customers but there is a lot of room for improvement. if the generations of tomorrow are to live well and healthy then it is very much up to every human being and company around the world to take their responsibility for making the world a better place to live. companies’ ability to communicate green and affect consumer habits will play an important role. if green communication will actually change consumption habits and save the environment is hard to tell, but only if we communicate well we might find out.
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