

Submission to the 11th Int'l Conference on Reputation, Brand, Identity and Competitiveness

Authors: Justine J. Tang* and Stephen S. Standifird
IMBA Student Associate Professor
Instituto de Empresa University of San Diego
jtang.imba2006@alumno.ie.edu stephen2@sandiego.edu

ABSTRACT

Innovative corporate citizen: A case study on Royal Dutch Shell's innovation in CSR initiatives and the link to reputational distinction

Royal Dutch Shell (RDS) has been identified as a learning organization since the 1980's, which enhances her competitive advantage (Boyle, 2002). In the current business environment where the future is shaped by three powerful forces: liberalization, globalization, and technology (Freymond, 1999), innovation in products and services, customer relationship management, stakeholders management and reputation management is a key driver for sustaining and redefining competitive advantage.

RDS has been particularly innovative in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). For example, Shell's Livewire Program has been launched in 25 countries enabling 16 -30 year old to start and develop their own business. Shell's commitments in the environment, education, community donation and sports are very different from her competitors.

As Royal Dutch Shell has consistently been ranked as one of the top ten global corporate citizens, this case study aims to explore the link between how RDS manages her reputation differently from other corporations in the same industry and CSR innovation at RDS. Specifically, to what extent does innovation in the area of CSR lead to a differentiated corporate reputation for RDS?

METHODOLOGY

We investigate this topic in two phases. In phase one, we use archival data from media coverage, RDS' corporate website, competitors' websites, and sustainability reports of RDS, BP, ChevronTexaco and ExxonMobil to demonstrate the innovative CSR activities at RDS. In phase two (scheduled for December 2006), we plan to use detailed phone interviews with staff of RDS' Policy and External Affairs Department to identify the drivers of RDS's reputation. We will then use this information to determine to what extent innovation in the area of CSR is perceived as a key driver to RDS's reputational distinction.

REFERENCES

Boyle, E. (2002) "A critical appraisal of the performance of Royal Dutch Shell as a learning organisation in the 1990s," *The Learning Organization: An International Journal*, 9(1)

Freymond, J. (1999) "Shell global scenarios 1995-2020: the transformation of international governance," *Peace Research Abstracts*, 36(1)

*Corresponding Author