

Institution: The University of Glasgow
Unit of Assessment: C19 Business and Management Studies
Title of case study: New thinking and practice on employer branding, corporate reputation management and employee engagement in two European multinationals
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The development and practice of strategic human resource management at two multinational enterprises has been transformed by University of Glasgow research on employer branding, corporate reputation management and employee engagement, impacting on more than 94,000 employees across 90 countries.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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The research into corporate reputation management and strategic human resource management (SHRM) has been led by Professor Graeme Martin, Professorial Research Fellow in Management, University of Glasgow (2006-present), in conjunction with academic and practitioner colleagues in the UK, Australia, Sweden and Switzerland. This research has been published in a series of refereed academic articles, three books aimed at senior human resources (HR) practitioners and academics, invited chapters in books edited by leading academics in HR and organisational behaviour (including Paul Sparrow, Cary Cooper and Hugh Scullion), and two reports for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. These works have been conceptually oriented, developing theory on the links between corporate reputation management and SHRM. They have also been empirically grounded by drawing on in-depth case study research of practice in large multinational enterprises and public sector organisations, including Agilent Technologies, Royal Bank of Scotland, Standard Life, and the NHS in Scotland.

Drawing on organisational identity and signalling theory, the main propositions and findings have demonstrated an important link between the signals sent out by 'promising' HR and people management practices (such as employer branding, engagement and leadership strategies), and how corporate reputations are perceived internally and externally. These findings also confirmed a strong link between positive perceptions of corporate reputations and attracting and engaging high quality employees. The research and theoretical frameworks have been presented at numerous practitioner events during the last decade in Canada, the Netherlands, the UK, Australia, China, Israel, France and Italy, which has led to invitations to conduct consulting and research projects. In turn, these projects have resulted in further publications and developments in SHRM thinking, with theory and practice mutually influential in informing each other. This mutual influence is illustrated in the publications listed below, most of which have been written in conjunction with practitioner/former practitioner colleagues, and have directly shaped SHRM practice in two companies – Holcim Ltd and Getinge AB. It has also led to the author being invited to act as an expert advisor to the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development and a global faculty member on the advanced practitioner programme for the New York-based Reputation Institute.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Martin, G., Gollan, P. S. & Grigg, K. (2011) Is there a bigger and better future for employer branding? Facing up to innovation, corporate reputations and wicked problems in SHRM, *The*

Impact case study (REF3b)

International Journal of Human Resource Management, 22 (17) 3618-3637. ISSN 0958-5192 ([doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.560880](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.560880))

- Martin, G. (2009) Driving corporate reputations from the inside: a strategic role and strategic dilemmas for HR, *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resource Management*, 47 (2), 219-235. ISSN 1038-4111 ([doi: 10.1177/1038411109105443](https://doi.org/10.1177/1038411109105443))
[The research outputs above have been published in leading international journals which operate rigorous peer-review]
- Burke, R., Martin, G. & Cooper, C. (eds.) (2011), *Corporate Reputations: Managing Opportunities and Challenges*, London: Ashgate Publishing. ISBN 9780566092053 (available from HEI)
- Martin, G., and Groen-in-t-Woud, S. (2011) *Employer branding and corporate reputation management in global companies: a signalling model and case illustration*. In: Scullion, H. and Collings, D. (eds.) *Global Talent Management*. Routledge, London, pp. 87-110. ISBN 9780415871709 (available from HEI)
- Martin, G. (2007) 'Employer Branding – time for some long and 'hard' reflections?' in *Employer branding: The latest fad or the future for HR?* London: Research Insight into Employer Branding, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, London: [Link](#)
- Martin, G. & Hetrick, S. (2006) *Corporate reputations, branding and people management: A strategic approach to HR*, Series: Advanced HR practitioner series. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, UK. ISBN 9780750669504 (available from HEI)

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Two multinational enterprises to benefit directly from University of Glasgow research are Holcim Ltd, a Swiss-based organisation and the world's second largest cement and building materials company, operating in 90 countries with 80,000 employees, and Getinge AB, a Swedish-based medical technology company operating in 14 countries with 14,000 employees. Since 2008, these two organisations have sought to improve their corporate reputations by implementing global policies and initiatives in employer branding and employee engagement to attract, motivate and retain talented people in a range of occupations.

The senior HR teams and HR Directors of both companies were influenced by the ideas and empirical research disseminated in practitioner conferences by Professor Martin, and invited him to act as an internal adviser to teams leading major projects on employer branding and employee engagement. This advisory role began with invited seminars in both companies and progressed to advising on HR policy and practice. Both the Holcim and Getinge AB cases have been used to inform conceptual development in how employer branding and engagement can contribute to innovation and reputational capital in a recent academic journal article (see Martin, Gollan & Grigg, 2011), emphasising the mutual influence/engaged research element of this work.

Holcim Ltd

Between 2009 and 2011, Martin acted as confidential advisor to the project leaders and HR Director at Holcim. His involvement resulted in policy changes to focus on employee engagement as well as employee attraction. In 2010 Martin and the team implemented employer branding research in a pilot project at Holcim. In 2011 they developed a talent pipeline model in which different stages of the talent management process were identified and elaborated to aid policy development and evaluation of the process. Both these projects are included in a critically reflective book chapter (published in Scullion and Collings, *Global Talent Management*, Routledge

Impact case study (REF3b)

2011) produced by Martin in collaboration with Holcim's HR Director and currently being used to influence policy and practice at Getinge.

The former HR Director of Holcim, now Vice President (Supply Chain), stated:

I first came across Professor Martin when he provided a keynote at a conference in London, during which he outlined ideas that helped me think more clearly about the design and implementation of the project [developing an employer branding program]... His research on employer branding, engagement and social media was of great help in shaping the project and providing context for a company new to these concepts. This had the impact of sharpening our thinking by acting as a critical friend to the team and ensuring that what we proposed to do was evidence-based and importantly, relevant for an organisation that had not conducted such a process in HR previously. The resulting tools, such as Touchpoint, gained traction globally - particularly in Latin America, and are still in use today, proving their sustainability.

The Holcim Annual Report for 2010 describes the HR Touchpoint Analysis as 'an easy-to-use tool to assess how a Group company manages its workforce from an HR perspective. It analyzes how consistently and strongly Holcim Group companies manage the candidate and employee experience at Holcim, and the impact this experience has on employee engagement and company reputation.' Because the Touchpoint analysis tool linked to employee engagement and satisfaction surveys, it provided the company with the necessary information to formulate action plans and also provide insight on how central HR functions were perceived by the staff.

Getinge AB

Working with Getinge AB from 2008-2013, Martin helped to shape more rigorous thinking and policy with regard to HR leadership, employer branding and employee engagement, such as establishing a more theoretically informed approach to evaluating these policies. He provided research expertise to support two critical areas for Getinge AB: a major Global Employer Branding Initiative (June-November 2011); and an Employment Engagement Survey (March 2012), described below. Martin devised a development programme for ten senior-level HR practitioners at Getinge AB, running two four-day courses in 2009-10. Due to their success, these courses will be repeated with a new cohort of senior HR executives in 2014. Martin became part of an internal consulting team advising Getinge AB on the choice of vendor selection for conducting engagement and employer branding research (among major international consulting firms, including Towers Watson, Kinexa and Engage). This advisory role began in 2011 and continued through to 2013, during which time Martin oversaw the design and implementation of appropriate survey material in Getinge AB for two ambitious HR projects.

The first project focused on building an employer branding identity and establishing a genuine way of communicating that identity with the company's 14,000 employees. The company vice president in charge of the initiative wanted to '*generate appeal, create a company identity and establish a way of communicating the identity which was authentic and real*'. Going on to note that, '*With the assistance of Graeme Martin at Glasgow University, we started to establish a branding strategy which could become a way to sustain a corporate reputation.*' Martin helped to design the methodology for the research and interviews which were conducted with approximately 130 staff in 10 countries and in multiple business units. An outcome of this stage of the work with Getinge AB

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was senior management's conclusion that an employee engagement survey was required before an employer branding strategy could be devised. The Getinge AB project manager states:

'As a result of this work, a multitude of issues and problems throughout the organization were identified, which could also be considered opportunities. Several business actions were defined, yet the general decision was not to proceed with these strategies until we better understood the challenges and gained a broader picture via a global employee engagement survey.'

Martin subsequently contributed to the design of Employee Engagement Survey (March 2012), which measured employee involvement, commitment and psychological investment in the organisation. Martin remained an active advisor to the project through 2013; Getinge AB is now at 'Phase 3' (the launch of the survey: September 2013) and aims to implement an action plan in 2014.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- Statement from (former) HR Director of Holcim Ltd (testifying to the specific impact of Martin's research on Holcim's policy and practice) [Available from HEI]
- Holcim Ltd. 2010 Annual Report, which confirms Holcim's use of Touchpoint analysis (p45): [\[Link\]](#)
- Statement from Vice President, Global Learning & Development, MAQUET Cardiovascular (Getinge AB Group) testifying to the contribution by Martin to transformative research and preparation for rollout of new employee engagement and employer branding strategy [Available from HEI]