The environmental concern and the marketing communications of car manufacturers.

A comparative case study of two carmakers.

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Summary

Background
The automotive industry is a 100 year old industry. In the past, it faced several challenges and always overcame them. Today, it is confronted by the raising concern about the environment at a societal and governmental level. Efforts are made in production and in marketing as well in order to meet the new standards. This means rethinking marketing theories and practices as they never consider the physical environment before.

Purpose and Research question
This paper aims to increase understanding about how environmental issues affect the evolution of marketing strategies in terms of communication. It will provide answer to the following question: how do the environmental claims influence the marketing communications of car manufacturers?

Theories and Models
Theories and models discussed are related to the purpose and research question of this study. Therefore green marketing and traditional marketing theories and concepts have been presented and discussed. As each company has its own resources and objectives, Fill’s model of marketing communication planning has been presented in order to answer the research question. This model will be a base for the empirical research.

Methodology
This paper seeks to understand how a social factor such as the environmental concern can influence the marketing communications strategies of two car makers. Those manufacturers have their own perception of reality. The approach is rather constructionist, interpretivist and inductive. A qualitative research has been conducted through a comparative case study. Semi-structured interviews and documentary sources have been used to collect data at two different two of time. The sample is constituted of a marketing manager and a marketing communication executive of two different carmakers.

Findings and Conclusions
Environmental concerns are influencing the marketing communication strategies of car manufacturers at each stage of Fill’s model of planning. They lead to a redefinition of segmentation and a reevaluation of stakeholders’ expectations. They push manufacturers to raise awareness about their environmental actions and to reassure customers. Communication is increasingly factual and informative. Communication channels are used to increase the level of interactivity between the company and its stakeholders. Generally the strategies are more people-oriented, more open to dialogue, more transparent.
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Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction
The aim for this chapter is to define concepts and discuss the topic before starting the study. First a background of the car industry and one of the growing concern about the environment is presented. Then, the paradoxical concepts of marketing and sustainability are discussed regarding the automotive industry. This leads to the presentation of the research question and the discussion of the purpose of this study and its delimitations.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework
The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical framework we will use in order to enhance our understanding of the topic and to answer to our research question. This framework will help us to build a theoretical model that will be a framework for our empirical study. First, green marketing theories and concepts are presented in order to set the scene of the environmental paradigm. Then, those concepts are applied to the automotive industry in order to highlight reasons for car manufactures to push towards green marketing practices. This involves discussing concepts such as competitive advantage, corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, credibility and trust, perception and attitude. It also includes a look into European legislation. Afterwards, the traditional marketing paradigm and the marketing mix theory were discussed and confronted to those of the green marketing paradigm and the green marketing mix. Then, the focus is narrowed on one component of the mix: promotion. To set the base of this research, the role of promotion in the marketing mix, the promotional mix and Fill’s model of promotional plan were introduced and discussed. Finally, the limitations of those practices are discussed through the concept of “green-washing”. All theories and concepts are summarized in a model to enhance understanding on this theoretical logic, and to set a base for empirical research.

Chapter 3: Methodology
The purpose of this chapter is to present, discuss and validate the choices made in designing the research framework of this work. The choice of the subject, the scientific approach, the research approach, the data collection and analysis, and the quality and the ethics of the research will be discussed here. As a result of these choices, a comparative case study of the marketing communication strategies of two car manufacturers is carried out using semi-structured interviews and documentary sources. In this way, data regarding these strategies are gathered at two different points of time. This permits to evaluate the impact of environmental concern on these strategies and to assess an evolution of these practices.

Chapter 4: Empirical findings
In this chapter, the findings resulting from the empirical research will be presented. Data are categorized and presented according to each different case and each point of time. For each presentation of cases, first an introduction of the company is made. Then data are presented following a narrative approach. This presentation aims to build a base for the further analysis.
Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, the findings stated in the previous chapter are confronted and discussed. First, each case is discussed on its own. Discussion of findings gathered at two different points of time is made within each case. Then, these results are confronted.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

In this final chapter, findings and conclusions are put together in order to answer the research question. Limitations are pointed out. Finally managerial and theoretical implications, as well as suggestions for further research, are stated.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to define and discuss the topic and to bring required knowledge before starting the study.

1.1. Background

“The automobile business is about to experience the most profound and revolutionary changes it’s seen since the Model T first hit the streets.” (William Clay Ford, Chairman, Ford Motor Company, cited in Office of Technology Policy, 2003, p. 27).

The car industry is a 100 year old industry. During this century it has seen success, revolutions in production techniques – taking advantage of the Industrial Revolution and developing the concept of mass production. It has been responsible for the development of management theories – with Ford’s management techniques for example. It also contributed to the development of mass marketing, being the founder of the idea of mass consumption (Fullerton, 1988, p. 110-123). This industry has always been a model, the example to follow in terms of business practices. Today, it is facing a new challenge: the environmental concern.

Today environmental awareness is becoming increasingly relevant to societies and business practices. The proliferation of scientific reports about the “greenhouse effect” and the serious consequences of human activities on Earth like climate change, global warming, the hole in the ozone layer, species and ecosystems extinctions have drastically raised people’s awareness about the environmental issue. This has made the businesses and their customers realize the impact of their actions on the physical environment around them and rethink their way of behaving according to their impact and their implications in that process (Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 726).

Environmental concern has entered society. People, customers rethink their way of behaving and buying. That leads to a significant shift in customers’ expectations about products but also, about companies’ behavior. The focus is not only on products anymore. The behavior of organizations is now seriously and carefully watched and regarded. Customers do not choose a product anymore but a brand. It is now essential for companies to work on communicating and justifying their legitimacy. Environmental concerns have also led to the creation of associations and groups that report abuse and wrong doing by corporations in terms of environment. Many of these concerns have entered the political world. Governmental bodies decide new legislation in order to create a change in favor of the environment. This has implications for both companies and customers. Governments are monitoring the environmental impact on two levels - economic and societal – in order to meet environmental objectives, protect consumers, and initiate more sustainable way of producing and consuming. This forces businesses to rethink their way working, but that is not all. There are also huge implications for marketers. Companies need to be viewed as environmental-friendly. The message delivered by companies and their way of communicating has to be rethought according to those new requirements. The marketing drive is evolving to a greener marketing, a responsible marketing that is aware of its impact on society and integrates the environment in its strategy. (Corbett and Cutler, 2000, 204-206; Polonsky, 1995, pp. 31-33; Wossen Kassaye, 2001, p. 444)

The idea of a marketing strategy that could face its responsibility does not belong to this new millennium. The concept of green marketing appeared in literature in 1976. Henion and Kinnear defined it as “the study of the positive and negative aspects of marketing activities on
pollution, energy depletion and non-energy resource depletion” (Henion and Kinnear, 1976, p. 1). Authors did not agree on one definition. We decide to base our study on the work of Polonsky: “all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment” (Stanton and Futrell, 1987, cited in Polonsky 1995, p. 30). Green marketing is recognized by authors as a way to grow business and innovate (Azzone and Manzini, 1998, pp. 94-96), a way to improve customer relationships and corporate image (Polonsky, 1994, p. 5), a way to appear socially responsible to the society and to follow governmental rules (Davis, 1992, pp. 83-85), a way to struggle with competitors and to reduce expenses by lower costs linked to waste disposal or material usage (Azzone and Manzini, 1998, p. 104).

The origin of those shifts is mainly attributed to the Kyoto Protocol launched in 1997 by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The aim of this treaty is to “stabilize the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (UNFCCC, 2005, p. 5). According to the European Environment Agency (2008, p. 7) more than 28 billion tons of CO₂ are produced and released in the atmosphere. The major actors involved in that depletion of the environment are first the production of energy and then transportation. Transportation is one of the major consumers of energy, especially the main user of oil, it contributes largely to greenhouse gas emissions as a consequence. It actually represents 28% of global CO₂ emissions and those emissions increased by 40% in this sector since 1990 (European Commission DG Energy and Transport, 2008, p. 12). In terms of figures, transportation produces nowadays 1,113 billion tones compared to 739 million in 1990 (ibid.). Among that cars are responsible for 12% of those emissions (ibid.).

Integrating the green marketing concept to business, especially to polluting industries such as transportation is a tricky enterprise, as it is trying to put together two opposed concepts. The main challenge for the car industry today is to develop and propose attractive products that fit new customers’ green expectations and new governmental environmental legislation at the same time, which appears paradoxical given the very nature of its products. Indeed, the whole industry is based on internal combustion engine and its consumption of oil.

Car manufacturers are aware of those changes and try to face them. Huge amounts of money have been invested in recent years in order to adapt themselves to this new revolution. The two main areas of investment are Research and Development, and Communication and Advertising. Each year, the industry invests €20 billion in R&D. It is the third major investor in Europe (ECEA, 2009, p. 17). In terms of communication, the automotive industry was in 2005 the number one media investor (Douglas, 2005). Even if those expenditures have decreased due to the economical downturn, the top ten advertisers in 2009 lists two car manufacturers (TNS Media Intelligence, 2009).

However, the public, media and government carefully watch companies that orient their strategies as environmentally or socially responsible. False or misleading claims about environmental attributes of a product, or any attempts to confuse customers using green arguments are liable to harsh criticism (Banerjee, 1999, p. 19). These practices are called “green-washing”.

The car industry is one of the most proactive industries when it comes to environmental claims. Vast sums of money are spent on communication strategies by carmakers in order to fit the environmental expectations of customers and governments. With this in mind, it is
interesting to study the communication strategies of carmakers and to try and understand how environmental claims are influencing their strategies.

1.2. Problem statement

Environmental issues are now a crucial topic in our society. The green revolution is mainly based on the proliferation of environmental claims regarding the scientific reports arguing for the depletion of the environment, but also regarding the green commitments of the Kyoto Protocol and the implications of governments. Once again this has large consequences on how companies do business but also on the market system with which companies are making business. Until recently, the external environment being taken into account by companies was coming down to the social, political, cultural, technological, economic or legislative environments (Passel 1990 cited in Charter and Polonsky, 1999, p. 18). Thinking companies as physical entities that evolve within a physical and harmful environment, has not been properly considered. This has then been ignored as management and marketing issues. Nothing discussing the natural environment has been found in literature. If environmental issues were discussed, it was dissociated from the economic paradigm (Passel 1990 cited in Charter and Polonsky, 1999, p. 18; Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 727). It is only in the 1990s that marketers started to discuss the physical implications and sustainability of marketing and started to discuss the current economic paradigm, realizing that it was not giving a correct view of the actual economic situation as it was ignoring the physical environment and the scope of damages done (Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 727).

Discussing the sustainability of marketing, or how to use green marketing is a complex exercise. It attempts to combine two concepts which have, at first sight, diverging goals. Indeed the environmental concern is about conservation, minimizing use of limited natural resources, while marketing is focused on wooing customers, encouraging consumption, generating profitable sales rapidly (Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 732).

However, the pressure of stakeholders forces companies to rethink their marketing strategies. The rising involvement of governments, the increasing regulatory forces and the heavier pressure of public concern and pressure groups influence marketing actions of companies (Banerjee, 1999, p. 17). According to the traditional economic paradigm, companies have to ensure profits and consumers need satisfaction. Now in addition to this companies must consider societal well-being. They have a moral obligation to be more socially responsible (Davis, 1992, pp. 83-85) and they must communicate their efforts on this part. Companies are realizing that there are ways to integrate the green concern to business practices; and that the environment is not the enemy of profit, but on the contrary, it could offer a large potential and business opportunities. However the difficulty remains in translating moral decisions into business actions. That is where marketing has an important role to play. Marketing is a key activity when a company is adjusting or changing its strategy.

Here marketing is a key player regarding the communication dimension. Indeed, communication enables organization to inform potential customers and make them aware of their offering (Fills, 1999, p. 3). Manufacturers want to integrate the environmental concern into their strategies and they want to say that to their different stakeholders. Marketing communications are a way to justify their management and to affirm their legitimacy.

Communication can also reassure the consumers by reminding the benefits of the products (Fills, 1999, p. 3). Because of the growing focus put on environmental concern, more and
more consumers are feeling concerned with the way they consume and therefore, they are more looking at the environmental impact of the products and services they consume, and they are willing to reduce their impact. Their focus and their satisfaction is not limited to the effectiveness of the product they buy. They require reassurance on the performance of the product but also they need to know if they contribute to a better environment, and being reassured on the environmental impact of the product (Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 737).

Marketing communications are a way to reassure consumers by promoting the green attributes of manufacturers’ products. In that way, they could also educate customers by teaching them how to behave in a more sustainable way (Fiills, 1999, p. 3).

The automotive industry has experienced many changes but it has never wholly considered the physical environment before. Even the concept sounds antonymic, as the automobile has had such an effect on global warming and CO₂ emissions. However the industry understood the importance of that new challenge and started to adapt itself. As a first reaction, carmakers decide to put their efforts in R&D, in order to develop more fuel-efficient engines and alternative technologies and in communication, in order to reassure customers.

It is interesting to study the evolution of marketing led by environmental concerns in one of the major polluting industries. If we consider the sizeable efforts made by the car industry in terms of communication it seems interesting to study the link between that industry, evolving environmental constraints and the resultant communication strategies. The environmental concern is paradoxical to those two fields. We could suggest it is relevant to study this link and the strategies implemented to deal with the issue. Green marketing is a relatively new concept, limited research has been carried out in that area. A high percentage of literature discusses the legitimacy of green marketing (Peattie and Crane, 2005). Some applications of green marketing have been studied in the automotive sector but they focus on the supply chain and not on customer relationship (Simpson et al., 2007). As the implementation of green marketing is actually in progress, there are no strategies proven to be successful. No theories have been developed. Literature is based on the study of famous cases, like case analysis of big corporations which non-environmental practices have been largely covered by the media, or, on the contrary, companies which successful green strategies could be a textbook case (Kearins and Klyn, 1999; Neale, 1999; Verity, 2005). Therefore one could say it is relevant to study the controversial sector that is the automotive industry in a customer-oriented way. This can help to broaden our understanding and contribute to research in that area by developing the following question: how do the environmental claims influence the marketing communications of car manufacturers?

1.3. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand how environmental issues can affect the evolution of marketing strategies in terms of communication. It will investigate how a polluting industry such as the car industry manages to link together paradoxical concepts such as cars and the environment and integrate them in a same strategy through marketing.

To help find answers, two leading auto manufactures have been studied and a case study of each has been created. The first one is Citroën, from the PSA Peugeot Citroën group. It is recognized in the industry as the greenest manufacturer. It has a technologic advance regarding fuel-efficiency technology. It is the leader in low-polluting cars (www.psa-peugeot-citroen.com). The second one, Land Rover, is a specialized manufacturer only offering all-
terrain vehicles (4x4’s). It is a 60-year old manufacturer that always has been recognized for its know-how and its authenticity on off-road vehicles. Today it is targeted by the press and environmentalist groups as a symbol of automotive pollution (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 201). Case studies have been designed to look closely at the communication strategies of each car maker and study their evolution in recent years. In this way, assessment will be made on how environmental considerations have been integrated, and how they are influencing marketing communications and where could this lead to. This will also provide insights about what these carmakers are doing while waiting for the development of green technologies.

In order to proceed with this analysis, we will build a model that will help to describe how marketing communication strategies of manufacturers are designed. This model will be based on the theories linked to our topic.

1.4. Delimitations

The car industry is facing a structural crisis since the beginning of the new millennium. Over the last years, and still nowadays, the industry experiences serious organizational changes. The first signs of this mutation were the saturation of Western markets and the increase of emerging ones. Then the price spike of oil and the environmental threats forced the industry and the analysts to think that the automotive model had to be rebuilt. Finally the economic crisis of 2008 drastically sank the car industry (EMCC, 2004, p. 4-9). This study will focus on the environmental aspect of that crisis, as it affects a large number of stakeholders and as it is more interesting in a marketing point of view. However, we recognize the potential limits of this study in such a context.

This study focuses on the European market. The European Union is considered as the “good student” regarding environmental actions. It is an area where environmental efforts are most developed. Even if it represents a large number of different national markets, the environmental issue is managed at a European level. Therefore the impacts, legislations and reactions are roughly similar.

This paper will mainly look at the business-to-customers approach in order to focus and emphasize the societal aspect of environmental claims.

Private transportation is about personal cars, utility cars and trucks. We decide to focus our study on personal cars only as it represents the key issues of B-to-C marketing.

This study focuses only on external marketing practices. However we recognize the crucial role of internal marketing for the acceptance, success and coherence of a newly developed strategy. The development of a new green orientation throughout the company is only possible if that vision is shared inside the company. Before designing and launching environmental strategy externally, a company would have already incorporated sustainability into its internal functions and communications (Newman and Breeden, 1992, p. 34).

Finally, in this paper, promotion and marketing communication terms will be used interchangeably.
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical framework we will use in order to enhance our understanding of the topic and to answer to our research question. This framework will help us to build a theoretical model that will be a framework for our empirical study.

2.1. Choices of theories

We are discussing a topical and recent issue. The environmental constraint is a new concern in the business area. It entered the automotive industry only few years ago. Green marketing is a recent concept, and green communication is a new marketing tool still under trial. Therefore, there is no literature dealing directly with the topic. Only the studies of some famous cases start to draw some theories. Studies directly relating to the automotive industry are rare or even non-existent.

For this reason, information has been gathered with a somewhat practical approach. Practical approaches proposed by authors were linked with marketing theories in order to fit the research process. Efforts have been made to first emphasize a theoretical perspective and after apply those theories to our topic.

For this reason, information has been gathered from diverse fields related to the research areas. We worked on defining concepts and theories in order to design a logical and structured framework that would enhance our understanding of the topic and that would allow us to set the bases to answer our research question.

The paper aims to set the scene about what environmental concerns mean in terms of marketing. Therefore, literature about green marketing has been widely consulted and, in the first section of the paper the concept and its characteristics are introduced.

In the second part relevant theories about green marketing were applied to the automotive industry. This aims to point out the impact of environmental issues on the automotive market. It also helps to highlight reasons for car manufacturers to push towards green marketing. To do so, we mainly went through literature about the stakeholder theory. Also discussed were concepts such as competitive advantage, corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, credibility and trust, perception and attitude. Also included was a look into European legislation.

The third section discusses how car manufacturers can actually integrate environmental pressure into their marketing strategies. To do so, the traditional marketing paradigm and the marketing mix theory were used. These theories were discussed, compared and contrasted with those of the green marketing paradigm and the green marketing mix.

The fourth section narrows the focus to promotion. To do this, literature about promotion, the promotional mix and promotional planning were consulted and referenced. Here the role of promotion in the marketing mix, the promotional mix and Fill’s model of promotional plan were introduced and discussed. Additionally sustainable communication ideas were analyzed.

The final part discusses the limitations of those practices. To help with this, the concept of “green-washing” was introduced and discussed.

Textbooks and books were available at the Umeå University Library or online libraries. Academic articles were accessed through databases such as Emerald, EBSCO, Web of
Science and JSTOR. Searches using keywords such as car industry, marketing communication, promotion, green marketing have led to the academic articles and books found in the reference list.

2.2. Introduction to green marketing

This first part will introduce the concept of green marketing. This will first define what green marketing is. Then, we will discuss why businesses should consider this type of marketing view by emphasizing the advantages it provides to companies.

2.2.1. The concept of green marketing

The green marketing concept has been defined academically in various ways. Literature counts concepts such as environmental, ecological, green or sustainable marketing (Jamrozy, 2007, pp. 123-124; Peattie and Charter, pp. 727-729). All of those terms can be used interchangeably because they emphasize the responsibility of the marketer not to harm the environment and, in extension, society (ibid.).

Coddington (1993, p. 1) defines green marketing as “marketing activities that recognize environmental stewardship as a business development responsibility and business growth opportunity”. Green marketing is used to refer to the efforts made by an organization to design, produce, distribute or promote products that will not have a bad impact on the environment (Polonsky and Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995, pp. 6-14.; Grove et al, 1996, p. 56). In that sense we cannot separate how a product is made and how it is sold. The green marketing concept influences design, production and distribution processes but also packaging and promotional ones.

Green marketing is often placed in the social marketing category (Brenkert, 2008, pp. 211-214 ; Jamrozy, 2007, p. 121; Peattie et al, 2009, p. 270; Polonsky, 1995, p. 3). Social marketing is the application of the tools and techniques of classic marketing to social, environmental or cultural issues (Brenkert, 2008, p. 211-214; Jamrozy, 2007, pp. 121-122). It focuses on the benefits to consumers and to society by aiming to change attitudes and consumption habits regarding society issues, and educate consumers (ibid.). Therefore a great part of the social marketing processes is based on communication oriented towards consumers, and in general, the public. However, the process of changing consumption habits is a long and challenging one. No authors agree on a perfect way of implementing the environment into marketing communications strategies.

2.2.2. Advantages of integrating the environmental concern in marketing practices

As we have discussed in the introduction part, the physical environment in which businesses are evolving has not been really considered until now. In the general mainstream, it even has been seen as incompatible (Passel 1990 cited in Charter and Polonsky, 1999, p. 18; Polonsky et al, 1997, p. 218). However literature has discussed lots of advantages that green strategies could provide to businesses.

Facing competition: In a highly competitive market such as the car market, companies work on maintaining their competitive position and gaining market shares. This means being aware
of the overall environment of the market, the wants of stakeholders, and genuinely adapt their strategies according to that. In that way, if the green issue is a characteristic of the market, a company can maintain its competitive position by promoting its environmental commitments. The environmental strategies implemented by competitors can also force a company to review its strategy in a more environmental-friendly way (Polonsky and Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995, pp. 302-303).

*Developing competitive advantage:* It has been proven that if two products have equal price, quality, performance, availability, consumers will tend to purchase the one that shows environmental benefits (Prakash, 2002, p. 287). For companies that are on a market where the offer is standardized or becoming less differentiated (the automotive market) “greening” its marketing practices could be a serious advantage (Banerjee, 1999, p. 37).

Banerjee (1999, p. 27) also argues that, more than a differentiation strategy, greening its marketing strategies could enable a company to save costs and increase efficiency and productivity.

*Integrating governmental decisions:* As emphasized in the introduction part, governmental bodies are working on fulfilling environmental objectives. They are developing legislation in order to match these objectives. Therefore, the threat of firmer regulations and the rising cost of complying with environmental directives could be seen as a reason for companies such as auto makers to review and green their strategies (Banerjee, 1999, p. 31).

*Improving corporate reputation:* As we have previously noticed there is a rise of environmental awareness and concern in public mind. The public is not only expecting products from companies anymore. It puts serious consideration into a company’s commitments, values and behaviors regarding social issues (Banerjee, 1999, p. 26). Research has shown that environmental involvement is becoming part of corporate reputation attributes (Banerjee, 1999, p. 32). Developing environmental strategies can enable companies to insure their legitimacy and a good image. This is especially true for companies such as car manufacturers which, given the nature of their products, suffer from a negative environmental image among the public (Banerjee, 1999, p. 33).

*Increasing customer satisfaction:* As mentioned in the introduction, environmental concerns are leading changes in customers’ expectations, values, demands and attitudes about the offering. By facing and adapting its strategy in order to respond to the changing needs of customers and by integrating environmental issues in its strategy, a company can enhance customer satisfaction (Banerjee, 1999, p. 36).

Now that the green marketing concept has been introduced and its advantages for companies discussed, we will focus on car manufacturers and their market. The next section will explain why automakers should integrate environmental concerns into their marketing strategies. We will discuss in-depth some of the reasons that force car manufacturers to consider the physical environment in their strategies.

### 2.3. Factors influencing car manufacturers to adopt green strategies: The role of stakeholders

That second part will be structured on the three main stakeholders of the car industry that force carmakers to reconsider their strategies in a more environmental-friendly way. These
stakeholders have already been defined in the introduction part as government, customers and pressure groups.

2.3.1. Stricter legislation in terms of environment

As previously mentioned, this analysis and discussion will focus on the European market as it has been recognized as “the good student” in terms of environmental improvements. Today businesses are subject to over 80 environmental directives and regulations that are designed to encourage sustainability in reducing CO₂ emissions and promoting recycling (ECEA, 2009, p. 11). This paper will present the main trends in European legislation in terms of the protection of the environment in order to understand how that affects car manufacturers.

Europe has set divers standards in terms of emissions. In order to reduce CO₂ emissions for example, manufacturers have to improve vehicle technology (parts, engines, fuel technology, lower weight). They also have to design market-oriented measures such as improvements in consumer information (May, 2004, pp. 304-306; Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 732).

Largely in European countries governments are implementing environmental taxes that give “bonuses” or financial compensation to people buying “green” or less polluting cars. Those who choose to buy polluting cars must pay a pollution tax in addition to the sale price of the car (ECEA, 2009, pp. 72-73; EMCC, 2004, p. 10). In order to give an example, we can have a look at the French government. Since the 1st January 2008, bonuses are given to what is called “green cars” which means that a customer who buys a car which discharges less than 120gCO₂/km can have a compensation of 5 000€. The same is applied to buyer of “polluting cars”. A tax up to 2 600€ can be added at the sale price depending of the emission of the car (www.gouvernement.fr). Those taxes force manufacturers to improve the sustainability of their vehicles in order to meet their sales objectives. Those legislations also directly affect customers. They are exposed to economic pressures that push them to adopt more environmental-friendly consumption habits. Therefore, we can suggest, environmental taxes create promotion issues and opportunities to car manufacturers.

Europe set up the End-of-Life Vehicle Directive which encourages Members States to implement laws in order to promote re-use, recycling and other forms of recovery of vehicles and components at end-of-life stage. “Free-take-back” or “sponsored-take-back” campaigns communicate to car owners the facilities organized by car companies in order to clean the car fleet and bring the car to authorized treatment facilities (EMCC, 2004, p. 10).

Governmental initiatives have a strong impact on car manufacturers and force them to rethink the way they do business. In another way we can notice that those regulations also provide car makers with several promotional opportunities.

2.3.2. Change in customers’ behavior

As we have suggested earlier, the environmental concern is developing “new societal norms that determine the legitimacy of companies” (Banerjee, 1999, p. 26). Customers’ focus is now also on the good behavior of the company regarding social issues and on their level of trust. That leads to a change in perception and attitude towards cars.
Change in customers’ demand: Cars always have been considered as fascinating objects that have a unique place in modern societies and in collective imagination (Chanaron et al., 1982, p. 5). Traditionally, they are often linked to ideas of sport, adventure, pleasure or speed. Cars are also part of the society and part of a lifestyle. Automobiles are a means to establish a social status and symbolize success for owners when they are a dream for the others. They are a way to express personality, a symbol of success, a symbol of freedom, a way of differentiation. Speed and performance help to feed the imagination and create an appeal towards cars (Chanaron et al., 1982, pp. 20-27). However societal norms desecrate the image of automobiles (Boillet and Castella, 2005, pp. 182-197). Appeal and passion for cars decrease. The general myth of car is put into questions. Automobiles switch from being icons to potential threats for individuals (ibid.). Negative associations in the minds of the public lead this demystification. Today automobiles are often linked to environmental degradation and danger (ibid.). Owning a powerful car is no longer necessarily a sign of power and success. Many often link it to ignorance and backward thinking. Automobiles and their place in society and collective imagination are now put into question.

The industry has to face a shift in customers’ expectations and demand led by the increasing social pressure regarding the environment. Customers are now asking for greater fuel economy and efficiency (EMCC, 2004, pp. 10-11; May, 2004, pp. 308-309). Their satisfaction is not in speed or style anymore but in environmental quality (Poduska et al. 1992 cited in Charter and Polonsky, 1999, p. 36). Environmental concerns redefine concepts such as customer satisfaction or purchasing behavior, but that discussion is out of the scope of our study.

The growing power of customers: With the liberalization of the Internet, customers have access to a huge amount of information. They have become more informed of the offer and more and more demanding. The broad access and use of Internet also provide customers with the power to denounce abusive company behaviors on a worldwide scale and organize actions against those “bad students” (Peattie and Peters, 1997, pp. 143-145; Wind, 2006, p. 476). In that way, the car industry, traditionally a product-led industry, turns out to become a customer-led industry. It is then crucial for car manufacturers to develop interactions and communications with the public. These changes in the car market provide huge communication opportunities.

2.3.3. Powerful groups of pressure

Another change led by social norms that also occurs at a societal level is the increasing activity of pressure groups, or in that case environmentalist groups or associations. In the last 20 years, the number, size, budgets and sophistication of these groups have drastically increased. They have gained awareness, recognition and credibility among the public. Their communications campaigns are now made by the same agencies who produce the ones of the big companies they target (Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 731).

They work on increasing publicity relaying their actions in the media. Therefore an increasing number of media output communicating environmental messages or denunciating non-environmental practices are now broadcasted. In the press, examples of poor environmental performance are investigated and discussed (ibid.).
Those three stakeholders are the actors of today’s car industry. Their claims are strong and force car manufacturers to green their strategies to allow them to stay profitable and competitive. We will now study how that shift in marketing paradigm can occur. In the meantime, we also want to notice that the pressure put by those stakeholders in order to green the car industry offers great communications opportunities for car manufacturers in order to address and respond to those claims and changes. Indeed, for car manufacturers there are great communications opportunities grasped in-phase with the legislation, to promote what is considered as a “green car” in terms of CO₂ emissions; to promote and enhance environmental consumptions habits, to respond to customer changing needs, or to discuss with environmentalist groups.

2.4. From a traditional marketing paradigm to a environmental-concerned one

We have defined the green marketing concept and we have looked at the reasons why car manufacturers are now considering greening their strategies. As we have mentioned earlier, in the car industry, lots is being done to green production processes but there has been little exploration into marketing practices. Greening carmakers’ marketing practices is a tricky project because it includes a complete change of marketing orientations. That is what we will discuss in more depth in this part. The focus is on understanding how car manufacturers can actually integrate the environmental pressure in their marketing strategies.

2.4.1 Marketing cars: The traditional marketing paradigm

If we look at the usual marketing practices of car manufacturers of those last years, marketing cars is based on the traditional (also called transactional) marketing point-of-view. This means that practices are focused on transactions not relationships. Companies are interacting with customers only as part of a punctual selling process. For car companies, it is even recognized that they are focused on a “single transaction” (Blythe, 2008, p. 280). That means that the value of the customer is considered only on a punctual sale and not on a lifetime view. Very often the emphasis is on acquiring new customers where marketing practices are impersonal and functional. The customer is reduced to a member of a market segment (Fullerton, 1988, pp. 110-120; Lindgreen et al. 2004, pp. 674-680).

Traditional marketing is based on McCarthy’s (1960) 4P classification. It is mostly product-oriented. As we just mentioned, the focus is on transactions, a maximization of volumes and product margins, and winning more customers (Lindgreen et al, 2004, pp. 674-680). The strategy is driven by market share objectives. So the implications in terms of communication are that:

- There is no need to deeply understand or interact with individual customers (Fullerton, 1988, pp. 110-116; Lindgreen et al. 2004, pp. 679-680).

- Target market (or segmentation) is broad and not precisely defined (ibid.).

- As the interest is not on individual buying but on segments in general, and on the maximization of chances of those segments to buy company’s products, then it requires the use of mass communication methods (ibid.).

- The investments are made in the traditional promotional tools such as mass advertising campaigns based on television, billboard and print (Ahlberg and Einarsson, 2008, p. 13). This type of advertising is somewhat primordial, merely allowing companies to emphasize the added value of their products in customers’ perception of the offer (Ahlberg and Einarsson, 2008, p. 13; Blythe, 2008, p. 280).

- Campaigns and promotion are focused on the product essentially, emphasizing its price and quality, aiming to raise the awareness about the product and create desire about it (Blythe, 2008, p. 280; Fullerton, 1988, pp. 110-116; Lindgreen et al. 2004, pp. 679-680).

As we discussed earlier, those practices do not fulfill the requirements defined by environmental pressure. Indeed green marketing is oriented on creating a relationship between the company and its customer. The customer is viewed as an individual and a partner, and the interest of the company is on building long and trustful working relationships with them. The communication practices of the company should work on insuring its legitimacy and spreading a sustainable message. There is a gap between the two marketing views.

2.4.2 Rethinking marketing strategies

As we mentioned earlier, until recently both academics and businesses have not consider the physical environment as part of the business environment (Polonsky et al., 1997, p. 218). So now that we have introduced either the green marketing concept and how cars are traditionally marketed, we can say that considering the natural environment as an organizational objective in an environmental improvement strategy remains a shift in marketing paradigm. This requires a change in both corporate practices and culture, the latter is out of the scope of our study (Polonsky et al. 1997, pp. 219-220).

Shifting to a greener paradigm is complex because the fundamentals of traditional marketing are based on unsustainable production and consumption (Peattie, 1999, p. 58). As previously discussed, in the short term, the environmental concern is now a significant external influence on businesses and the markets they operate in. Companies are facing changes in customer expectations, new regulations and the new social norms. They have to react to and adapt to these changes in order to determine their legitimacy. Integrating environmental concerns to its current marketing practices could be considered a first response for companies such as car manufacturers that have to adapt to this new characteristic of their market (Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 726-727).

In the long term, being sustainable requires a rethink of the marketing and consumption orientations. Here are some examples.

*Change in time perspective and view of customers:* The marketing philosophy is based on “doing business profitably by identifying and meeting the needs and wants of customers” (Peattie, 1999, p. 58). However, meeting present customers’ needs in an unsustainable way – as it always has been done until now – is putting into questions companies’ abilities to meet the need of future customers (ibid.).

*Change in stakeholders perspectives:* Traditionally, businesses are focused on fulfilling shareholders and customers satisfaction. The environmental pressure, as we already discussed,
force the company to consider more stakeholders such as environmentalist groups and the public, or to redefine the level of involvement of some of them. For example the government always has been part of the automotive market environment. However today, it redefined its role as a guarantor of environmental objectives (Peattie, 1999, p. 58).

**Change in resources perspectives:** The economic and marketing theories implemented for years are based on the fact that environmental resources are limitless (Peattie, 1999, p. 58; Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 728). However, the realization that resources such as oil are limited is now part of the structural crisis of the automotive industry.

### 2.4.3 Rethinking the marketing mix

This shift in paradigm has been considered in various ways in literature. Some academics believe that to green ones marketing strategies is to adapt its current practices to more environmental ones. In that way, literature supports that marketers should integrate the environmental issues into marketing activities as planning, product and package design, pricing, distribution, promotion or customer segmentation (Polonsky et al., 1997, p. 220). According to other academics green marketing is a proper marketing strategy that cannot be adapted to current practices but that should be implemented as an overall marketing strategy (Menon and Menon, 1997 cited in Polonsky et al. 1997, p. 220).

Looking at the study of famous cases, literature agrees that when a company is urged to integrate an external factor in its overall strategy as it is redefining the market within which it operates, adapting their current marketing practices to that new demand is considered acceptable as a first response (Banerjee, 1999, p. 40). In our case, car manufacturers are facing environmental pressure that is a considerable external influence. It redefines the market on which they operate. So integrating the environmental concern to their current marketing practices is recognized as a true effort in improving their impact on the environment.

Adapting the traditional marketing perspective of car manufacturers to a greener one is about rethinking its marketing basis. It means rethinking the marketing mix. Bradley (1989 cited in Polonsky and Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995, p. 6) introduced the concept of green marketing mix in 1989 arguing about manipulating the 4Ps of the traditional marketing mix in a more sustainable way. In that way, greening the marketing mix is about developing an offer that saves energy and other natural resources in their production process (greener product and packaging); setting prices for green products that combine and transcribe the price-sensitivity of customers and their willingness to pay for environmental-friendly products (greener price or premium price); creating and planning promotional operations that communicates on the commitments and the efforts made by the company towards the environment (greener promotion); recycling and re-using used materials, reducing and saving resources in the transportation of the products to the market (greener distribution) in order to maximize the value for customers (Banerjee, 1999, p. 40; Grove et al., 1996, pp. 56-57).

As mentioned earlier, car manufacturers have already improved some of these components. However little is known about promotion. Promotion is often considered as the controversial part of the mix. Marketing communication in the traditional marketing mix approach has often been considered as a persuasion tool in a mass media campaign, which implies a one-way communication mode that is not focused on developing interactions with the audience (Van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte, 1992, pp. 87-88). It has also been presented as responsible for the problem of stimulating unsustainable levels of consumption. In green
marketing, however, communication is considered as a legitimate means of informing, listening and answering and educating. It is based on a two-way communication mode that aims to create relations between the company and its stakeholders (Andersen, 2001, p. 169). It is then presented as an important part of the solution by being able to encourage a more sustainable consumption.

For those reasons, it seems that the traditional approach of communication for car companies trying to face the environmental challenge is obsolete. This one-way communication involving an active sender of the message and a passive receiver does not fit with the interactions, the dialogue and other communicative actions that green marketing requires in order to establish trust between the company and its audience, and to create credibility and collaborative relationships (Andersen, 2001, p. 169).

As we have discussed, green marketing and traditional marketing are two different paradigms. The overall marketing mix, which includes marketing communication, is therefore approached in a different manner. The traditional view considers the market with active companies, passive customers and little, or no, interaction. It is a product-led approach while green marketing is a customer-led one. Discussing marketing communications as mass advertising or one-way communication practices considering the green marketing approach will not be relevant. We will try to figure out how to approach marketing communication with a greener perspective. To do so, the next section will present how marketing communications are designed.

2.5. The impact on the promotional mix

2.5.1. The role of promotion in the marketing mix and the promotional mix

The literature explains that it is complicated to deal with the promotion concept. It is one of the Ps of the marketing mix, but it is also said as “a mix inside the mix” (Crosier, 2003, pp. 719-720). It is traditionally called the “promotional mix”. But recent literature renamed it as the “marketing communication mix” or “integrated marketing communication” (Crosier, 2003, p. 719; Fill, 1999, p. 599). Promotion or marketing communication is about making the offerings of the company known to potential customers. It is about promoting the company, its statements and values. It can also be about informing and educating the market (Rowley, 1998, pp. 383-384).

Designing the promotional mix is making decisions on how to combine the different promotional tools the company has in order to meet company’s objectives. Different ranges of promotional tools are discussed in literature. However each organization has different promotional resources. For this reason, presented here are the promotional tools that are most largely introduced in literature as the core components in terms of promotion. The elements of the mix are:

- advertising: any form of non-personal paid promotion made on various medium that ensure exposure to a general or specific audience (Crosier, 2003, p. 719; Fill, 1999, p. 7; Rowley, 1998, p. 384). In our case, this is any kind of advertisement relayed on television, in the press, on the Internet, on billboards and so on.

- public relations and publicity: programs designed and released to a known target audience to “promote and/or protect a company’s image, or those of its products, including product
literature, exhibitions and articles about organizations’ products” (Rowley, 1998, p. 384). In our case this can be any press release or driving trial program for example.

- sales promotion: short-term incentives designed and developed to promote a product or a service, and to push trial or purchase. This can be special offers with discounts over a limited period of time for example (Crosier, 2003, p. 720; Fill, 1999, p. 7; Rowley, 1998, p. 384).

- direct marketing: any form of person-to-person contact medium to communicate with identifiable and targeted audience and promote the company and its offerings. This can be mailing, emailing, or phoning (ibid.).

- personal selling: face-to-face interactions between prospective purchasers and a sales representative that occur during the buying process. This can be a sales pitch designed according to specific training for example (ibid.).

- sponsorship: association with an event or person giving exposure to a targeted audience and ensuring media coverage. This can be financial support to a cause or a sport competition for example (ibid.).

2.5.2. The promotional plan

As mentioned above, each company has different promotional objectives, different communication strategies, different marketing communication structure and resources, or different corporate culture. Therefore there is no general implementation model that fits every company. Only an in-depth analysis of each company can provide an understanding about how the environmental concern is integrated into marketing communications strategies (Gurau, 2008, p. 172). For this reason presented here is the model used to design the promotional plan. Research will is based on this model. The model used to design communication strategies according to literature is the one of Fill (1999, p. 619). It describes seven stages:

- identify target audience: defining the audience and understanding its characteristics and needs. It is also getting to know the audience and understand how do they perceive the company and its product, and to what they are sensitive about. Marketing messages and communication channels will be designed and selected accordingly (Fill, 1999, pp. 619-624).

- determine communication objectives: defining the outcomes of the communication strategy in terms of raising awareness about a product or an action, or raising desire, ensuring brand recognition or encouraging purchases (ibid.).

- design the message: based on the objectives and the targeted audience, a marketing message is designed to ensure the strategy. Usually it reflects benefits provided by the company or its product that would interest the audience. The message is a combination of content and format: what to say and how to say it (ibid.).

- select communication channels: to ensure consistency, communication channels are chosen accordingly. They are divided into personal and non-personal channels. Personal channels are those in which people interact directly. This is the case of sales persons for example. On the contrary, non-personal channels are those in with communication is made through another medium. This can be the press, television, radio, posters, brochures and so on (ibid.).
- establish promotional budget: deciding on the percentage of the budget of the company will be allocated to promotion according to the resources of the company, the efforts required to achieve objectives and so on (ibid.).

- decide on promotional mix: decisions made to design the promotional mix are made according to the previous stages. The selection of the elements of the mix will be based on the available budget, the expectations of the audience, the marketing message but also on the characteristics of the promoted product and on the competition. According to this, selection and allocation to advertising, public relations and publicity, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling and sponsorship will be made (ibid.).

- measure results: monitoring the effects and the results of the strategy by analyzing “sales figures and by looking at any indicators of reputation available” (Rowley, 1999, p. 387).

2.5.3. Greening the promotional mix

As mentioned earlier, promotion is the most controversial part of the marketing mix. Greening the promotional mix is then a tricky task. In the literature, there are no acknowledged theories on this issue for now. The idea is too new. Only a few ideas are put forward. The following is a discussion of these ideas.

Greening the promotional mix should not only be a way of promoting products in an environmentally-friendly way. Considering the characteristics of green marketing introduced earlier on, it should also be about a sustainable way to communicate (Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 748).

Sustainable communication maintains that a dialogue and a long-term relationship should be created between the company and its stakeholders. This means increasing public discourse, increasing transparency and disclosure. This requires also to be environmentally accountable. This would ensure the legitimacy of the company by establishing its social and environmental position, and that of its products (Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 748-749).

In relation to customers, sustainable communication means paying a particular attention to informing and educating the market. This involves defining any technical terms, providing information, allowing customers to make comparisons and empowering them (ibid.).

Sustainable communication should be based on long-term commitment. It should involve all stakeholders and be based on two-way communications. It should rely on the willingness of the company to communicate positive aspects as well as risks. This communication should also be based on facts (Linnanen et al., 1999, p. 223).

2.6. Criticism of current applications

2.6.1. Green-washing

As previously mentioned, promotion is a controversial element of the marketing mix. This is still relevant today while adapting this practice to green marketing theories. Indeed marketing communications executives in the car industry now have the challenging task of elaborating innovative and effective ways to communicate corporate messages that aim to raise awareness and create desire for the product. But developing creative strategies in terms of message
formulation and diffusion was often synonymous in taking over ethical issues in the operational field (Parsons, 2007, p. 267).

Moreover, as we mentioned earlier, today there is a more important focus on companies and their role in society. They are more subject to public scrutiny. Trust and credibility have become issues that companies must pay attention to. Stakeholders such as citizen, consumer and environmental groups are looking closer to company’s actions and they now have an influence on companies through public protest and boycotts (Zöller, 1999, p. 196).

Therefore, the development of green marketing, and especially green communication, are facing a growing skepticism among consumers. The major limit of green communication is what is known as “green-washing” (Brenkert, 2008, p. 141).

The term green-washing is used when a company uses many environmental claims in its communications while developing products and production processes that are not environmentally friendly (ibid.). Green-washing is about giving environmental consciousness to an organization by using green communication without any real drive to actually improve its environmental performance. This is when organizations “respond to environmental issues tactically rather than strategically” (Landua, 2008, p. 40).

The harm in most of the cases is related to the messaging or the themes used in promotional campaigns (Parsons, 2007, p. 275). The abusive use of language, selection of terminology, colours, and themes related to an environmental concern can potentially mislead the public putting questionable doubt into the validity of the message.

2.6.2. Issues for the industry

Organizations that strike public with their green stance have been targets for criticism (Banerjee, 1999, p. 19). This is especially true of “dirty” industries such as oil, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and automotives. Indeed the automotive industry is often compared to an unruly child when we talk about green-washing (Weiss, 2008, p. 7). As a response, those targeted industries frequently use even more communication tricks as an offensive to face skepticism that public has about their environmental credentials (ibid.). From now on automotive ads on television as well as on radio, magazines or billboard systematically promote environmental merits of different models. A study by WWF at the Geneva Motor Show in 2008 shows the existing gap between communication and reality of the automotive industry: "A third of the brands were promoting vehicles rejecting more than 200g CO₂/km while the objective set by the European Parliament is to limit emissions to an average of 120g CO₂/km by 2015.” (Robert, 2008, p. 15). This distortion between communication and facts is harmful to the image of car manufacturers and for the image of the automotive industry as a whole. In this case the public sees companies as generally not really sincere about their environmental concern. This is especially true for the automotive industry (Banerjee, 1999, p. 19).

Because of these abuses, governments, consumer groups and green associations react. Today regulations are designed to prevent this kind of practice (Peattie and Crane, 2005, pp. 359-360; Polonsky and Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995, pp. 56-62). This is a crucial issue as the marketing of an organization is based on the existing relationship between the company and the customer. In cases of abuse, negative attitudes towards the brand are raised among customers. In turn the relationship is characterized by distrust. Business success “depends on the ability
of marketing to make green alternatives appear normal and acceptable and to innovate in different ways” (Landua, 2008, p. 3).

2.6.3 Criticism from environmental organizations and institutions

Environmental groups denounced the tone used by the car manufacturers in communication today (Peattie and Charter, 2003, p. 731). Indeed advertisers create ads which aim to green vehicles that are not necessarily environmental-friendly. More and more advertising on cars is articulated around a green theme with no real desire to reduce emissions or to offer less polluting vehicles (Weiss, 2008, p. 7). To increase public awareness to those practices, advertising that use improperly the ecological argument, Greenpeace has created a dedicated website http://voiture.greenpeace.fr. On this website the association invites people to vote and elect the most environmentally misleading car ads.

Climate Action Network is an organization that brings together 450 NGOs and associations working for the environment. This organization regularly assigned car manufacturers to court for non-compliance with regulations regarding to communication. It sues manufacturers making improperly use of environmental claims (www.climatenetwork.org). Through its website, Climate Action Network invites people to send a complaint to the authorities for any advertisement that does not meet the regulations. The website www.affichezleco2.fr was specially developed for this purpose.

The main criticism of manufacturers and advertisers in this case is that the advertisements are likely to mislead consumers (Parsons, 2007, p. 275). That is mostly about the representation of vehicles in natural areas outside the lanes open to traffic. The association with elements involving implicitly the environment is also denounced. Regulations are in progress to control these abuses (Peattie and Crane, 2005, pp. 359-360). So words like "green" or "sustainable" will no longer be allowed in advertising.

2.6.4 The reactions of customers on the Internet

The year 2007 was a pivotal year for green marketing (Hogue, 2008). The Internet is an excellent tool to measure environmental awareness and interest in these subjects. Customers have become very attentive to the phenomena of green-washing. The number of blogs on that subject has increased sharply in 2007 and again in 2008 (ibid.). Customers have become very attentive to what manufacturers do in communication and marketing. According to Hogue (2008) the buzz around green-washing rose 68% in the first quarter of 2008. Bloggers denounce companies that carry out both green actions and polluting actions. This is particularly the case of manufacturers who have in their range of vehicles both hybrid models and highly polluting ones (Lico, 2008, p. 11). Toyota is regularly denounced as it communicates almost exclusively on the Toyota Prius, its hybrid vehicle that made its reputation and positioned Toyota as a responsible manufacturer when it also sells many models of 4x4 that are high fuel consumers and therefore polluting. Bloggers point out these inconsistencies and they force large manufacturers to insure a greater coherence between their communications and their actions (Hogue, 2008).

These reactions are a threat to manufacturers because it is bad press. Moreover because of the speed of information dissemination on the Internet, manufacturers have little control over this information channel (Linnanen et al., 1999, p. 223).
Green communications are increasingly criticized by consumers. Indeed, their proliferation has discredited the content and the real motivations of the organizations that communicate via the environmental theme. This high rate represents a real threat to the brand image of manufacturers. Car manufacturers are the ones who use the more the environmental theme in their communications. They naturally become an illustration of the abusive use of environmental claims.

2.7. Summary

Our research is designed to evaluate how environmental pressures influence the marketing communications of car manufacturers. To do so we first discussed - in section 2 - the new green paradigm led by the environmental claims by introducing the green marketing concept and discussing its benefits for businesses (referred to \(1\) in figure 1). Then, we explained – in section 3 - why car manufacturers have to integrate the environment in their marketing practices – emphasizing the interactions between the environmental pressure and the stakeholders in the car industry (referred to \(2\) in figure 1). We discussed how the environmental pressure and the role of stakeholders are revolutionizing the marketing practices of car manufacturers (section 4, referred to \(3\) in figure 1) and especially their promotional strategies (section 5, referred to \(4\) in figure 1).

For our study, we focused on the design of the promotional plan in order to understand how environmental awareness and the pressure of stakeholders forces car companies adapt their marketing communications strategies as a response, being also aware of the risk of hard criticism (discussed in section 6 and represented at level \(2\) ). The model studied is Fill’s model of marketing communication planning. The planning processes of those strategies are the core aspect of the overall marketing communications strategies. It is where the changes occur when a company has to adapt its communications to its evolving market environment. We therefore oriented our study on that process.

For the purpose of our research, we developed a model that summarizes the concepts and theories presented in this chapter, as well as the different interactions between them. It will also guide us to proceed to an empirical study of car manufacturers (see figure 1). The selected variables of the model are based on the literature review and our own judgment as no similar research has been found. The interactions between variables try to explain how the environmental claims put pressure on car manufacturers at a societal level and how these attempts reply to it. All the steps of marketing communications planning are represented as it is by studying that process in the empirical part that we would be able to understand how car makers adapt their communications.
ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE
  green paradigm

CUSTOMERS
- change in values
- change in expectations
- change in demand
- change in perception
- change in attitudes
- watch company’s behaviour

GOVERNMENT
- stricter regulation
- proliferation of legislation
- environmental standards

PRESSURE GROUPS
- watch company’s behaviour
- ask for social responsibility

CAR MANUFACTURERS
Product
Place
Price
Promotion

Identification of target audience
Determining communication objectives
Designing the message
Selecting communication channels
Establishing the budget
Deciding on the promotional mix
Measuring promotion results

Marketing communications programs

Figure 1: Proposed model of study
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present, discuss and validate the choices made in designing the research framework of this work. The choice of the subject, the scientific approach, the research approach, the data collection and analysis, and the quality and the ethics of the research will be discussed here.

3.1. Choice of subject

My interest in studying the car industry and the structural crisis it is going through comes from my personal experience. I have worked in this industry for one year last year. I was working in the marketing-communication department for two car markers: Jaguar and Land Rover. Here I experienced some aspects of the crisis while executing my work. This was made obvious as I was working for two carmakers whose products are now targeted as key problems for governments and societies trying to improve environmental issues. I have experienced the customers’ concern, the dealers’ anger, the consequences of the regulation by the government on sales and the threats of groups such as Greenpeace while working on the Paris Motor Show. I realized the growing impact of environmental issues on the industry, an impact that has been emphasized by recent increase in governmental regulations. As I had already written a bachelor thesis focused on the environmental concerns the marketing manager asked me to work with him on an internal training of sales staff. Helping them to reassure customers that may lose confidence in the product looking at the environmental consequences of such cars. Considering my early studies, I felt it would be interesting to delve further into this topic. This would allow me to research and discuss many areas that I found were still somewhat uninvestigated.

Discussions and concepts treated during the course of “Marketing Ethics” this semester allowed me to think about those issues with new tools and theories. That is why I decided to study the environmental pressure on the car industry and its impact on a business-to-customers approach for this work. I wanted to go further with my thinking process.

Finally, I am interesting in working later in media communication. I already worked in my business school in France on a media campaign for a school project. That is why I have limited my study to marketing communications.

3.2. Preconceptions

I must consider that this study has been motivated by my personal interest and my experience of the research area. However, it is expected from the researcher to put his/her personal beliefs, values or feelings aside, and to be fully objective in conducting his/her research. This is considered as a guarantee for the quality and the validity of the study (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 29-30). I am aware of the risks of biases here. In order to reduce them, I try to remain neutral at each and every stage of this study. My experience of the research area has been used in the way that I was familiar with the specific terminology of the industry. In this way, it also enables the collection of data during interviews, as the respondents knew I was familiar with the industry and its practices. Discussion and information provided have been more valuable and insightful. To help prevent biases, the respondents have been asked to define all specific terms and to exemplify their answers. When needed, reformulation has been done.
During the analysis process, the respondents checked transcripts of the interviews and the information was triangulated with other sources of data.

3.3. Research philosophy

The research philosophy is defined in literature as worldviews or ways used by researchers to understand and approach the world. In other words, they are paradigms that inform the researcher about how knowledge is made acceptable. In this section the ontological and epistemological approach will be discussed. Discussing philosophical assumptions is a crucial step because it defines the stance taken by the researcher in conducting his/her study. (Creswell, 2007, p.16-19).

Dealing with ontological issues is defining the way the researcher sees the world, and what his views are of the reality the researcher has. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 22-25) discuss two ontological positions: objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism is an orientation which states that the social reality is external to the researcher, and that social phenomena and their meaning are beyond the reach of social factors. According to that perspective, the reality is objective and organizations can be considered as tangible assets that have universal laws. Constructionism is another orientation which states that the reality is in the reach of social actors and these actors have a permanent influence on social phenomena and its meaning. In other words, the reality is constructed and organizations are social constructions that are under the reach of social interactions.

Considering our research, carmakers being studied will be affected differently by environmental constraints. Each of them will react in its own way, according to its own policy, its own culture, and its own resources for example. On top of that, the selected companies do not interact on the same segment of the market, so considering their offer and their customers, the green reality will be experienced differently for each manufacturer. The philosophy is then based on constructionism.

Epistemological orientations define how the researcher will study the reality and how the knowledge will be acquired. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 16-21) discuss two approaches: positivism, and interpretivism. According to them, positivism is assuming that the reality exists objectively and it is only by following scientific methods that we can get knowledge about it. Reality here is defined as “what is shared and taken for granted as the way the world is to be perceived and understood” (Locke, 2001, p. 9). The researcher tries to be neutral to the object of study. He takes distance with the study in order not to affect or be affected by it. He tries to draw conclusions that could be applicable for generalization. In that way, positivism is often linked to quantitative research. It implies that the world is structured with elements and laws that are measurable and independent from social factors. This is one reality that can be understood and studied with an objective view. On the contrary, interpretivism assesses that the researcher needs to interpret the reality and that the subjective meaning of social actions are crucial elements in the study. The research methods used to understand the world and to get knowledge are not neutral techniques. The focus is more on understanding and interpreting the world than on making generalization. In that way, interpretivism is often connected to qualitative research. It implies that the world is socially built and composed by individuals that have their own reality according to their own values (Creswell, 2007, p. 19-23).
Considering the research conducted, we try to understand how this green reality, this social factor is affecting social units such as car manufacturers. Each car manufacturer will be studied as a case to help understand the complexity of views. The research used philosophy is based on interpretivism.

Considering both ontological and epistemological considerations, the research philosophy is based on a constructed approach of reality where social interactions are interpreted. Indeed the aim is to understand how a social factor such as environmental concern can influence the marketing communications of carmakers. In this way the research approach is based on both constructionism and interpretivism.

3.4. Research approach

Before starting research, the researcher has to define the nature of the relationship between theory and research. According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 14-15), deductive theory is a hypothesis testing theory which means that the theory leads the research. The researcher will design hypotheses from a theoretical background. Theory will also drive the research design and the process of collecting data. After analyzing data the hypothesis will be tested and theory reviewed. This is usually connected to quantitative research.

Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 12) also define another type of theory, the inductive theory. With the inductive theory, the theory results from the research. In other words, the research draws general trends from observations. The aim of this approach is to understand the nature of the problem studied (Saunders et al. 2007, p. 87-89). It is usually linked with qualitative research.

Looking at this study, the topic comes first from an observation. During previous experience in the car industry, it was noticed that environmental matters were having a large influence on the car manufacturers practices. It was felt that it could be interesting to study this influence on marketing communications practices. The research question comes from observation. We have been exploring the existing literature in order to define a general background needed to conduct that research. However, as we already noticed in the introduction, very little is known on our topic. As green marketing is a young concept, there is little literature on its implementation into business practices. Only real applications are analyzed. Authors try to develop theories, but it is too early to measure their effectiveness. No theory has been defined as a reference. And no application of the green concept has been made in the car industry on a business-to-consumer approach. We are therefore conducting an explanatory research because we want to look for insights into our specific problem. We want to understand the issues and the interactions. We want to get the “how” (Yin, 2003, p. 6). This approach is particularly suitable when there is little preceding knowledge. This enables the researcher to increase his/her experience and knowledge of the problem studied and to make him/her more “accurately” conduct the study.

According to Saunders, this research approach is inductive. We want to understand and explain an observation and try to develop theories based on the data collected and analyzed. The models and theories that are presented in the literature review do not determine what we will discover. Because an inductive approach is a drive of interpreting the reality, this also applies to our interpretivism philosophy. In turn, this also confirms the use of qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2007, p. 39-41).
3.5. Research strategy

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), quantitative research focuses on quantification in collecting and analyzing data, and it is highly likely to entail deduction theory and objectivism and positivism philosophy. By contrast, qualitative research focuses on words during the process of collection and analyze of data; and it is closely linked to the inductive theory and the constructionism and interpretivism paradigms (Bryman and Bell 2007, p. 28-29).

As discussed previously, this research is based on an inductive approach and on the constructionism and interpretivism views; so qualitative studies are used as a strategy.

The choice of the research strategy reflects how we want to conduct our research. It is necessary to collect accurate data on a specific phenomena in order to develop a deep understanding on how environmental pressures influence the marketing communications of car manufacturers. Indeed, qualitative research enables the researcher to closely interact and be involved with the research participants. In that way, the researcher can collect accurate data on how informants see and react to the phenomena. Qualitative research helps the researcher to better understand that social pressure, to deeply investigate and understand a phenomenon in society, and to have a deeper understanding of the topic (Creswell, 2007, p.37-43).

3.6. Research design

Among the different research designs, case study appears to be most suitable method regarding this study. According to Yin, “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear.” (Yin, 2003, p.13). It enables us to focus on contemporary matters such as environmental concerns. It also helps us to conduct explanatory research and understand environmental issues and the presumed causal link with the marketing communications strategies of car manufacturers. It enables the researcher to focus on the “how”.

Case study is also characterized by an intensive and in-depth investigation of a selected research unit (Creswell, 2007, p. 73; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 106; Yin, 2003, p. 14). Due to a lack of theories in this area the boundaries of the research are not clear. A case study allows the researcher to get hands-on data. This is achieved by personally collecting data and closely investigating the chosen field. It also enables the combination of multiple sources of data such as documents analysis, interviews or observations. These are limited in time and location (ibid.). This allows us to get information about the environmental reality in the context of marketing communications strategies of car manufacturers, which is not a well-documented issue.

The main limitation of the case study is its lack of relevance in generalizability (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 63-64). However, the aim of our research is to understand the “how” and to investigate about the presumed causal link between environmental pressure and the marketing communications strategies of car manufacturers.
3.7. Time horizon

Time horizon can be defined in two ways: longitudinal and cross-sectional. Longitudinal research aims to study how a situation evolves over time (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 64). Cross-sectional research is defined by punctual time boundaries. Literature talks about a “snapshot” of the unit studied at a particular time (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 203).

The aim of our study is to understand how the environmental claims impact on the marketing communications of car manufacturers. We will then study how their practices change over time. We will analyze their marketing communications practices at different periods of time by analyzing archival information in order to show the influence. Our research is then defined as longitudinal.

One must be aware that it could be difficult for the researcher to define how much change is the result of environmental factors before others over the two periods of time. (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 64-65). This is particularly true considering this study. As mentioned in the introduction part, the car industry is going through a structural crisis. This study will attempt to be precise in its methods and processes for conducting research to help minimize any bias.

3.8. Data collection methods

Case studies are structured on complementary semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

3.8.1. Selection of cases

A case can be an individual or a set of people, an organization, a location or an event for example (Stake, 1995, p. 1-2). Here the studied unit is the marketing communication strategies of car manufacturers.

The case study can be based on the analysis of one single entity. This helps to increase the depth of the study and the relevance of the findings. The use of multiple case studies allows the researcher to “identify distinctive features by exploring similarities and contrasts between cases” (Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 108). Literature usually claims that multiple case studies should not consider more than four cases as too many would decrease the benefits of the study (ibid.). Case studies are used to enable an in-depth study of each entity by giving detailed description of each case. They identify themes within each case then highlight the similarities and differences between them. Finally they provide a list of interpretations and conclusions. A large number of cases compromise the depth of research for each case. This can decrease the quality of the research (Creswell, 2007, p. 76; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 108).

We selected our cases according to their context and their position to the environment. According to Stake (1995, p. 3) we selected our cases according to their “intrinsic value”. This means the case selection has been driven by the researcher’s own interest and curiosity. We selected three cases that could be interesting regarding their marketing communications practices. The first one is Citroën of the PSA Peugeot-Citroën group. This is a non-specialized car manufacturer. It is recognized as the “greenest manufacturer” in the industry. It is the leader on the green cars market (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 281). The second selected case is Land Rover. This manufacturer typically produces 4x4 off-road vehicles. Press and environmentalist groups often regard these as a current day symbol for vehicle pollution.
(Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 323). The third manufacture is Toyota. It is a non-specialized manufacturer. Thanks to their marketing efforts they are often recognized as the most responsible manufacture (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 296). Unfortunately, this company did not respond to requests for an interview. Nevertheless it is interesting to investigate the marketing communication practices of Citroën and Land Rover as two opposed manufacturers. It can also be valuable to study the practices of the greenest manufacturer alongside those of Land Rover, who experience a different appreciation from the market, and to confront them.

3.8.2. Choices of respondents

Our study focuses on the marketing communications strategies of car manufacturers. The respondents in each selected case have been chosen according to their knowledge in this field. As we are studying the overall marketing communication strategy, we worked on interacting with marketing managers. When it has not been feasible, we asked the marketing manager to appoint one of their marketing communication specialists.

Due to my previous experience in the industry, I have a personal network of marketing executives in Land Rover France. In this way, it has been possible to be in email and phone contact with the marketing manager of Land Rover France, Mr. Adrian Knight. Those contacts also allowed me to connect with Mr. Yoann Bregent, marketing communication executive in Citroën UK, who was provided by his marketing manager to participate in this research.

Using the professional database Kompass, email contact was attempted with the marketing manager of Toyota France. This has not been successful. Phone contacts were made with the French headquarter but requests were repeatedly directed to the customer service. Brochures about their environmental strategies were received but it was not possible to obtain contacts or any answers with regard to participating in this research. It was therefore decided to abandon this case.

3.8.3. Primary data - Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are a useful form of data collection because they allow the researcher to explore the perspectives and perceptions of the respondents. Bingham and Moore (1959 cited in Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 166) defines it as a "conversation with a purpose". Interviews are used in order to collect primary data. They offer a flexibility and an opportunity to conduct in-depth qualitative research that is suitable for our study.

There are several types of interviews that differ in their degree of structure. In qualitative research, the two main types are unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. It was decided to conduct semi-structured interviews due to the nature of this research. This study is conducting an explanatory research. It will discuss the relationship between increasing environmental concerns and marketing communications strategies of car manufacturers. In this way, semi-structured interviews provide enough flexibility to learn the meaning and the perspective of the respondents on these issues. They also give the researcher some control of the interview. This helps to ensure that the topic selected will be covered. If we consider multiple case studies, we can suggest that they also enable the researcher to gather similar types of data from all respondents. This is possible even if the sequencing of
questions is not the same for each interview, considering a possible divergence of results (Creswell, 2007, p. 37-39; Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 169-171).

The development of the guide is discussed in the appendix. The interview guide is also available in the appendix. The questions have been designed in order to get the perspective of the respondent about his job, his work environment, and about the key concepts of the study. It was also developed to get information about the communication practices of the company. Questions were designed to investigate the company’s communication strategy considering every step of the marketing communication planning model. They also aimed to get the perspective of the respondent about contemporary communication issues. The guide is designed with open-ended questions in order to get the view of the respondent, and also to allow the respondent to discuss his response.

As the respondent in Citroen UK is French and the Land Rover interview was through the French headquarters all interviews were conducted in French. Due to the distance issues, interviews were conducted by phone. On average, each interview lasted about one hour. They were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated. Recording the interviews was a way to produce reliable data and to reduce bias. However, biases can occur during the translation process. To encounter this, all audio files will be available for reference.

3.8.4. Secondary sources - Documentary sources

Case study research design allows the researcher to gather data from multiple sources. Documentary sources were used to accompany the semi-structured interviews.

Documents can be defined as words or visuals that have not been recorded by the researcher (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 554). In this case, it has been annual reports, newspaper articles, corporate websites, press releases. Documents and reports produced by government departments and regulatory agencies, reports produced by non-official agencies such as environmentalist associations, market-research companies and pressure groups are also used.

Documents can be a rich source of supplementary evidence in research. First, the information gathered can enhance the researcher’s knowledge about the case studied. In this case, the documents studied provided a definitive background of each carmaker and their communication practices. In this way, documentary sources helped to design an informed interview guide and be prepared for discussion during the interview. Secondly, they can also be an accurate way to obtain information that one could not get with other data collection methods. In this case, we are interested in understanding the impact of current environmental concerns on the marketing communications practices of car manufacturers. This means confronting information in a time framework. To do so, data collected was akin to that which was collected through the interviews but with an exception. It was about former marketing communications practices in order to compare data and understand the impact of the environmental pressure. It was decided to gather information about the marketing communications planning model studied in the conceptual model for the year 2003. This time period has been chosen because after this year the car industry began to fall into a structural crisis. 2003 is used here as a time reference in order to study marketing communications practices that were not led by economic factors. Thirdly, documents can also be used in order to complete interviews and clarify areas of ambiguity within. Finally, they can be useful in
order to discuss findings and verify data. Both methods are complementary (Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 216-218).

We can also suggest that using documents has some limitations. The main issues concern the authenticity and credibility of the information provided (Bryman and Bell, p. 555). In this way, the choice of secondary data has been made with a great consideration. Data has been collected from trustworthy and reliable sources. They have been checked, interpreted and triangulated against other data sources in order to fulfill those requirements. In this way, documentary sources can enable the researcher to encounter biases that could have occurred during interviews. (Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p. 219-220)

3.9. Research validity and reliability

In order to establish the quality of our research, the four tests discussed by Yin (2003, p. 33-39) were applied: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Quality is discussed in the table below according to an adaptation of his model (Yin, 2003, p. 34):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Quality criteria</th>
<th>Research stage</th>
<th>Discussion of criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construct validity</strong></td>
<td>Multiple sources of evidence</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Different sources of data have been used: interviews and document review. Regarding the semi-structured interviews, two experts of two different companies have been interviewed on their expertise area. The interview guide has been designed in order to preserve the multiple perspectives of the research issues. Various sources of documents have been used. Data has not been taken at face value and has been checked, interpreted and triangulated against other data sources. Data gathered in interviews also have been checked and triangulated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review of draft case study report Writing report The transcript of the interviews has been provided to the respondents for them to check meaning and add further comments. This has been done in order to reduce any researcher bias.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal validity</strong></td>
<td>Using pattern-matching logic</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Documentary sources and interviews transcripts have been coded and analyzed according to themes developed in the conceptual model, especially according to Fill’s model of marketing communication planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this research, our interest is not in generalization but in understanding how current environmental concerns impacts the marketing communication strategy of car manufacturers. The cases have been selected according to their position with regard to the environment and they provide different perspectives on this. Moreover, the study of two cases would be a poor basis for generalization. However, because the selected cases are offering different approaches to environmental issues, and thanks to the expertise of the respondents, the detailed study of those cases generated ideas that could be tested with further research. In this way, we achieved a certain degree of theoretical generalizability (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 63-64).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External validity</th>
<th>Replication logic</th>
<th>Research design</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>In this research, our interest is not in generalization but in understanding how current environmental concerns impacts the marketing communication strategy of car manufacturers. The cases have been selected according to their position with regard to the environment and they provide different perspectives on this. Moreover, the study of two cases would be a poor basis for generalization. However, because the selected cases are offering different approaches to environmental issues, and thanks to the expertise of the respondents, the detailed study of those cases generated ideas that could be tested with further research. In this way, we achieved a certain degree of theoretical generalizability (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 63-64).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Developing a case study database</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview transcripts and audio records, interview guide and procedures, any documents and tabular materials used in proceeding this research are kept and available for consultation. Moreover all procedures (selection of cases, selection of respondents, contacting respondent, data collection methods data analysis methods) have been explained in detail. In this way, other researchers will have access to this study’s resources and procedures. They will then be able to replicate this research.</td>
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</table>

**Table 1: Quality tests table adapted from Yin (2003, p. 34)**

### 3.10. Data analysis method

According to Yin, the analysis of the data gathered with a case study relies on an analytic strategy (Yin, 2003, p. 109). This study used the pattern-matching technique. Data was gathered and analyzed according to the conceptual model created. Information has been gathered under the themes studied in the theoretical section of this paper. A matrix of themes has been created in order to analyze and discuss the data (Yin, 2003, p. 111).

In this way, data was coded and classified under the pattern presented in the conceptual model. Information was gathered according to Fill’s model of marketing communication planning used in this paper’s model. Data has been coded and categorized under the themes: target audience, communication objectives, marketing message, communication channels, promotional budget, promotional mix decisions and evaluation. Data was also categorized under the other patterns introduced in the conceptual model. These included: marketing communication activities definition, environmental constraint on car industry impact and environmental constraint on manufacturer impact.

Since this paper is studying the impact of a social factor on the marketing communication practices of car manufacturers, for each case it first compares this categorized data on a time framework and then discusses these findings. The outcomes of these comparisons have been studied and discussed. In this way, issues were identified within each case, and common patterns were sought out.
3.11. Ethical considerations

In qualitative research, ethical considerations are a crucial issue. Great attention was made to consider the procedures used to conduct this research (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 132-146). While proceeding with semi-structured interviews, the nature and the goals of this study were presented to the respondents during first contact. It was also explained how their contribution would help with the study. Rights allowing the respondent to stay anonymous, to refuse to answers questions, to refuse to be recorded also have been introduced during this first presentation of the study. Those rights have been repeated and checked before starting the interviews. All the respondents agreed on being recorded and cited in the report for the purpose of the study. The transcripts of the interviews have been provided to the respondents in order to ensure transparency. Also offered is a copy of the final report.

Choices made in designing the research framework for this study have been discussed here. The empirical data is presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings resulting from documentary sources and interviews will be presented. The two cases will be presented separately. The cases here are the marketing communications strategies of Citroën and Land Rover. For each presentation of cases, first an introduction of the company will be made. Data will be presented following a narrative approach. This presentation aims to build a base for the further analysis.

Interviews and documentary sources provided a high amount of data and information. Only the one consistent with our research guidelines will be presented in the following.

4.1. Case 1: marketing communications strategy of Citroën

4.1.1. Presentation of Citroën

Citroën is one of the major French car manufacturers. It was founded in 1919 by André Citroën. It was the world’s first mass-production car company outside of the USA. Since 1976 Citroën belongs to the group PSA Peugeot Citroën. This group is the result of a collaboration between two major French car manufacturers. In 2009 Citroën is celebrated its 90th Anniversary (www.psa-peugeot-citroen.com).

From its early years, Citroën has always differentiated itself from other manufacturers with its technologic advancements and somewhat radical forward thinking design. In terms of environmental technologies, it was the pioneer with its soot particle filter. This technology became a standard in the industry. Today, Citroën is the first manufacturer to develop the Stop/Start technology. This technology is now widely bought by its competitors. It is also the first manufacturer offering cars consuming less than 110gCO₂/km. Citroën is considered as avant-garde. Their dedication and expertise at combining the latest technology with forward thinking design is summed up in their most recent signature catch phrase: “creative technology” (www.citroen.co.uk).

4.1.2. Choices made in designing the marketing communications strategy of Citroën in 2003

Data presented here are based on the empirical research of documentary sources. The material used are mainly the corporate websites of the manufacturer (www.psa-peugeot-citroen.com; www.citroen.co.uk), annual reports, and market-research reports.

4.1.2.1 Defining target audience:

Two main targets are identified: the large audience and customers and prospects.

Customers are asking for convenient, practical cars. They are also asking for more choice, more safety and more technology on board. They want to have vehicles equipped with safety equipments and technologies. They also want to have a deeper “in-vehicle” experience and technologies enabling a convenient mobility (Boilet and Castella, 2005, p. 127; EMCC, 2004, p. 10).
4.1.2.2. Defining communication objectives:
The first objective of Citroën is to promote its products and to sell them. But its main objective is to differentiate itself within the group PSA Peugeot-Citroën, and more broadly on the market. The close association between the two manufacturers tends to overpower the identity of Citroën. The objective now is to establish a proper personality for the brand in order to ensure a true distinction within the group (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 198).

4.1.2.3. Defining marketing messages:
Citroën decided to base its differentiation on its product. The first message is “Citroën is the nice car”. The attributes pointing out are the “convenient technology”, safety, and originality. Using flashy colours in communications helps to convey this. This is also done through advanced automotive advertising that display out of this world scenarios depicting their cars transforming to robots for example. These video advertisements communicate fun and originality while also emphasising the advanced technology and safety within their vehicles (ibid.).

Citroën is promoted as a car for everyone. Their smaller vehicles are promoted as city cars with strong character. They hold strong to their fundamental message of fun and originality while maintaining their image as a car for everyone, accessible by everyone (ibid.).

4.1.2.4. Choosing communication channels:
**Public relation**: This was the early stage of this communication tool. It was mainly used to communicate in a more direct way with a targeted audience. In 2003, this tool was broadly used to communicate on the brand and the quality of its product. Communications were designed to make known the new identity of the brand. They were also promoting the quality of Citroën’s products. This was based on the “European Car of the Year award” Citroën received for the Citroën C3. It was also based on Citroën’s victory of the Constructors’ title in World Rally Championship (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 200).

**Press**: Press is the favourite media of Citroën. In 2003, Citroën was the first investor in daily national press (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 85; TNS Media Intelligence, 2003).

**Television**: Television is used to broadcast its ads and promote the new positioning of their brand by reaching a large audience, non-targeted (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 82).

**Internet**: A new website is created for each new launch of vehicle. Internet enables fast creativity and interactivity. Websites are relaying the message with a high level of interactivity, and music and videos (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 201).

**Direct marketing**: This is the early stage of this tool as well. Direct marketing operations are mainly used to reach in a more direct manner customers and prospects in order to promote the Citroën image and also its products and technology (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 92).

**Dealer marketing**: Dealers are provided with communication materials and have been trained to be consistent with the strategy developed by the brand. The same message is conveyed from advertising to dealership (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 201).
4.1.2.5. Establishing promotional budget:

Vast budgets are allocated to advertising: The average budget allocated to advertising represents 2 to 3% of the price of one vehicle (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 93). As mentioned earlier, in 2005 the automotive industry was the number one media investor with spending reaching €8 billion (Douglas, 2005). Citroën increased its media communication budget by 10% between 2003 and 2004 (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 93).

4.1.2.6. Deciding on promotional mix:

Communication is not approached in an integrated manner. It is a tool used by manufacturers to differentiate themselves with competitors and to position their products on the market (Boillet and Castella, 2005, pp. 80-98).

Mass media communication such as press and television that is not directly targeted are broadly used to promote the new image of the brand and generally increase visibility. Communication is rather punctual and mostly oriented on the offerings of the brand. This type of advertising which aims to reach a large audience and increase visibility can, in turn, help to reach new customers.

Internet enables the manufacturer to increase its interactivity with the public. Therefore, a new website is created for each new launch of vehicle. Special advertising is developed for this new format using short movies or interactive interfaces for example.

Direct marketing and public relation operations are designed to promote the brand and the quality of the products to a known audience.

Dealer marketing ensure the consistency of the overall strategy.

4.1.2.7. Evaluating strategy:

The positioning aim of the Citroën brand has been fulfilled. Citroën now has its own identity and brand personality. One can suggest that the brand is no longer seen to be linked with Peugeot. This image has been well received on the market. Citroën communications are more in-phase with the expectations of customers by pointing out attributes such as convenience, safety, and city driving capabilities.

Citroën is currently the best-perceived French company with 87% of the public considering them as having a good or very good image (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 202).

4.1.3. Choices made in designing the marketing communications strategy of Citroën in 2009

Data presented in the following are based on the outcomes of the semi-structured interview. The interview provided a high amount of interesting data about marketing communications. It gave insights into how the car industry and its market are affected by environmental concerns, how manufacturers deal with this, and finally how marketing communications practices are implemented.
4.1.3.1 Definition of marketing communications activities:

First of all, marketing communication is defined as a cross-functional activity. Strategies are designed with the product management and the sales department in order to decide the guidelines. This activity is adapted to the current market and considers its characteristics, the competition and any unknown or unforeseen external factors such as an economic downturn or sudden rise in oil price. Marketing communications practices are ensuring the visibility of the company, its products and its offerings. To be effective, marketing communication strategy must be coherent. In this way, cross-functional work is encouraged and the marketing messages are relayed through the mediums available. Finally marketing communication activity is the combination and the management of advertising, communication and advertising agencies, direct marketing, public relation, dealer marketing.

4.1.3.2. The impact of environmental concern on the car industry:

The rising environmental concern is a significant issue that widely affects the car industry and manufacturing industries in general. Pressures exist at different levels. At a European and governmental level, pressure is on car manufacturers to develop less polluting cars in order to meet objectives set by the Kyoto Protocol. At a national level, environmental legislation based on financial incentives and taxes encourage customers to buy less polluting cars. At a public level, pressure is also on car manufacturers as increasing numbers of people are taking on a more socially responsible attitude. They are beginning to think differently about their choice of car, very often turning to cleaner and less polluting vehicles. These pressures are reflected within companies.

The combination of the European requirements, the governmental actions and the change in customers’ expectations led by the environmental concern gives a new orientation to the market:

“In the automotive industry in general, everything is about downsizing.”

Manufacturers produce smaller and lighter cars. The new developed engines consume and pollute less. Customers buy less polluting cars for their environmental advantages, but especially for their lower costs.

“There is a financial issue and the environmental one.”

4.1.3.3. The impact of the environmental concern on Citroën:

Citroën, in a way, benefits from this new factor. Now that the focus is on the environmental performances of manufacturers, Citroën has an advantage. It is the manufacturer that produces the least polluting cars. Citroën is then recognized as the “greenest manufacturer”. It received divers awards ensuring this position (“green fleet award” and “green car manufacturer of the year award”). It won a consumption marathon, the LPG. The visual requirements in terms of communication set in order to inform customers about the car performance happen to bring more value to its products.

4.1.3.4. Defining the target audience:

The respondent identifies three different audiences: the public, customers and prospects, and a green audience. The green target is newly considered. It is defined as being more
environmentally sensitive. It expects companies to behave responsibly regarding the environment.

A change in expectations is mainly recognized for customers. The idea of awareness and expectation in terms of the environment is rather new. Buyers are becoming increasingly demanding their expectations of the product is always rising.

“now, [...] they want everything: [...] a branded car, [...] a reliable car, [...] a fully-equipped car, and [...] an environmental-friendly car.”

4.1.3.5. Defining communication objectives:

The objectives of Citroën regarding its communication strategy are twofold. They are reassuring current and prospective customers about the environmental impact of their products. This is also supported by a more promotional approach. The low environmental impact of their products is also a promotional theme. The main objective today is economic. Citroën wants to sell cars and that can be supported by their environmental technologies.

“[...] we are in an economic depression period so our interest is to sell cars. [...] we are compromised between those two ideas: the environment and the crisis. Our priority for now is to sell cars and so that turns out to take over our environmental communication strategy that was more developed before the crisis, and that I am sure will be more developed and elaborated after the crisis.”

4.1.3.6. Defining marketing messages:

Citroën today wants to communicate on the experience of the brand and of its products. It wants to improve its image and be regarded as good quality product, as they have made good improvements in this area. After that, focus is on experiencing the car and pointing out its technology. The message is conveyed through the development of a new signature: “creative technology”.

Another message is about the environment. This is mainly justified by Citroën’s technologic advantages compared to competition.

“We are communicating on this [the environment] because, compared to traditional engines, we are ahead, our technologies are ahead of our competitors. We pollute a lot less.”

“When it is about the car, we communicate on the product and its advantages. As we are forward thinking with green technologies, we will easily point up that we pollute less.”

This is also to fulfill the new expectations of customers. A dedicated part of the communication budget is allocated to what Citroën called “the green theme”. This communication is factual.

“There are no offers, it is 100% communication on “clean” cars. This communication is factual. We point out that our cars consume less than our competitors for example.”

This means the messages are based on figures and results. This would consist in promoting the level of consumption of the car, the awards received, the environmental performances of Citroën, its environmental standards and so on.

“Last year, as we received several awards and as we launched several more effective and environmental-friendly engines, we communicated on this. We developed a strategy according to this. We even developed a special advertising campaign dedicated to it.”
The implications in terms of designing environmentally friendly messages are on the choices made regarding colours, themes, and the use of logo. An example of this is the use of light colours and soft tones. The Air Dream logo is used as a reference for each low consuming model.

4.1.3.7. Choosing communication channels:

**Public relation:** This channel is mainly used to communicate on the company. It is a corporate communication tool. It is then broadly used in order to communicate on the environmental performance of Citroën. Today it is particularly used to promote launches of Citroën new engine consuming less than 100g CO$_2$/km.

In terms of public relation, Citroën has developed a logo, Air Dream, that is allocated to all its cars meeting the European standards of 120g CO$_2$/km. This logo is used for every communication of these “green” vehicles in order to increase the visibility of Citroën environmental performances.

**Press:** The communication made to public relations is relayed in the press. The press is used as a targeted communication channel. Citroën is doing advertorials.

“This is magazines asking us to design an ad with them, or magazines which ask us to give justification about our cars, our claims, why we are like this. They ask us questions so we explain to them, we give facts.”

There are also some press releases. Press and journalists in the industry have a huge influence on the public. It is a key channel during the buying process. Current or prospective customers are seeking information about a product and they often refer to the press and the opinions of journalists.

**Television:** Television is used for advertising campaigns. The aim is to make the product known.

**Internet:** Internet is another channel where the communication themes are relayed in order to ensure the consistency of the strategy. The internet is a great tool that helps to involve people and make them feel concerned about the messages broadcasted. Citroën developed a website in order to make people feel involved with these strategies [http://www.citroen.co.uk/environment]. See link. Here cars and technologies are promoted, but advices on how to reduce one’s carbon footprint are also given. It also enables people to make comparisons with other vehicles. It also generally makes current environmental concerns and issues more accessible and understandable to people. On a larger perspective, sustainability reports, environmental standards and any actions made regarding the environment are presented.

**Direct marketing:** Mailings and e-mailings are made. The main idea it to lead people to the website mentioned above. Otherwise, direct marketing is a tool to promote the performance of the company. Citroën relays its factual communication here as well, arguing for Air Dream vehicles, its environmental standards, or the performance of its engines.

**Dealer marketing:** Dealers are the last step where the communication strategy is relayed. It is also the final destination of customers in the buying process. They have brochures and communication tools in order to ensure this communication. They also have been trained in “the best practices” regarding the environmental program developed by Citroën.
4.1.3.8. Establishing the promotional budget:

Usually, the promotional budget is designed to ensure the divers promotional activities decided by the brand. Now, a part of this budget is dedicated to the environmental theme. This part is not meant to be promotional.

“There are no offers, it is 100% communication on “clean” cars.”

4.1.3.9. Deciding the promotional mix:

The promotional mix is the result of choices made during the early stages of the design of the marketing communication strategy.

- The strategy is designed to reach the identified targets and to fulfill their expectations. Public, customers and prospects, and a green audience are targeted.
- The objectives of Citroën are to increase the visibility of its environmental performances and then, reassure its customers. This objective is temporarily overtaken by another one led by the economic downturn: selling cars and generate revenues.
- Citroën today focuses on promoting the experience of its cars, its technological advance and its improvement in quality. Citroën is also willing to promote its environmental performance.
- Public relations are used to reach the targeted audience. It is also a corporate communication tool. It is therefore the favourite channel to communicate with stakeholders about the environment.
- The Air Dream logo is used for each communication on the low-polluting vehicles.
- Television raises awareness of the large audience about a product. It makes it known broadly.
- Press is more targeted and it provides information about the product to customers and prospects.
- Internet is used to empower customers.
- Direct marketing creates links between those channels. It has been used to lead customers to the website developed for them and to promote Citroën’s environmental performances.
- Dealers have been prepared to ensure the corporate communication at their level.
- Part of the promotional budget is allocated to green communication. This communication is mainly factual. Because of the economic downturn, promotional activities are overtaking this communication temporarily.

4.1.3.10. Evaluating the strategy:

Citroën had good feedback in the press. It received the “green fleet award” and the “green car manufacturer of the year award”.

4.1.4. Summary table

The outcomes of this research are summarized in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Citroën 2003</th>
<th>Citroën 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target audience</strong></td>
<td>Large audience</td>
<td>Large audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customers and Prospects</td>
<td>Customers and Prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Green targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication objectives</strong></td>
<td>Differentiating the brand inside the group: defining personality</td>
<td>Reassure customers about the environmental impact of cars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New positioning of the brand: Fun technology, Functionality, Originality</td>
<td>Selling cars, promotional approach: economic downturn consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing message</strong></td>
<td>&quot;The nice car&quot;: utilitarian technology, safety, city car with strong character.</td>
<td>The Citroën experience, quality and technology: &quot;creative technology&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Car for everyone</td>
<td>Greenest manufacturer, ahead in fuel-efficiency technologies: factual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>communication, soft colours, Air Dream logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication channels</strong></td>
<td>Public relation: promoting new positioning of the brand and the quality of products to a known target</td>
<td>Public relation: corporate communication tool, mainly used to communicate on Citroën environmental performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(&quot;European Car of the Year award&quot; for the Citroën C3; Constructors’ title in World Rally Championship)</td>
<td>Logo: Air Dream logo for vehicle consuming less than 120gCO₂/km, increasing visibility on Citroën environmental performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press: first investor in press, mass media communication</td>
<td>Press: channel of great influence, targeted to customers and prospects seeking for information on products in the buying process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television: broadcasting ads and getting new positioning of the brand known, reaching a large audience, non-targeted.</td>
<td>Television: raising awareness of products, only advertising campaigns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet: increase the level of interactivity between company and customers.</td>
<td>Internet: tool to empower customers [<a href="http://www.citroen.co.uk/environment">http://www.citroen.co.uk/environment</a>].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct marketing: reach in a more direct manner customers and prospects to promote Citroën image, its products, and its technology</td>
<td>Direct marketing: relaying the factual communication and leading customers to websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealer marketing: provided in communication materials and have been trained in order to be consistent with the strategy developed by the brand.</td>
<td>Dealer marketing: trained to &quot;best practices&quot; based on the environmental programs of Citroën, ensuring the consistency of the strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotional budget</strong></td>
<td>Vast budget allocated to promotional activities. Citroën increased its communication budget by 10% between 2003 and 2004.</td>
<td>Part of the budget is dedicated to environmental communications, no promotions, factual communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotional mix decisions</strong></td>
<td>- Communication as positioning and differentiation tool.</td>
<td>Public relation mainly used to communicate with stakeholders about the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use of mass media communication: press and television.</td>
<td>Air Dream logo used for each communication on low-polluting vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communication is rather punctual and mostly oriented on the offerings of the brand.</td>
<td>Television raises awareness of the large audience about a product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Advertising aims to reach a large audience, increase visibility and reach new customers.</td>
<td>Press is more targeted, provides information about the product and about the performances of the brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Internet enables to increase interactivity between the company and customers.</td>
<td>Internet used to empower customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Public relations and direct marketing used to promote the brand and the quality of the products.</td>
<td>Direct marketing creates links between those channels and ensure consistency to customers and prospects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dealers relying the strategy at their level.</td>
<td>Dealers ensure corporate communication at their level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Successful positioning. 87% of public considers Citroën having a good or very good image.</td>
<td>Good feedback in the press, “green fleet award” and “green car manufacturer of the year award” received.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Summary table of Citroën's marketing communications practices in 2003 and 2009
4.2. Case 2: marketing communications strategy of Land Rover

4.2.1. Presentation of Land Rover

Land Rover is an English all-terrain vehicle (ATV) manufacturer created in 1948. Since 2008, it has operated as part of the Jaguar and Land Rover unit owned by the Indian manufacturer Tata Motors. It offers a range of four-wheel drive vehicles capable in on and off-road conditions. For this reason they are often sold to a more specialized and passionate customer. The manufacturer just celebrated its 60th Anniversary (www.landrover.com).

4x4’s became popular and flooded the European market in the late 90s. It represented up to 5% of the global sales in 2003. For many, they were popular because they were assimilated to concepts like “useful”, “fun” or “safety”, but not for their off-road capacities. Non-specialized carmakers decided then to follow this trend and began to introduce 4x4 models into their range. Between 1996 and 2004, the number of 4x4’s models offered on the market went from 60 to 76. The rising awareness of environmental concerns among the public and environmental tax legislation led to a slow down in this trend (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 134).

4.2.2. Choices made in designing the marketing communications strategy of Land Rover in 2003

Data presented here are based on the empirical research of documentary sources. The material used are mainly the corporate website of the manufacturer (www.landrover.com), annual reports, and market-research reports.

4.2.2.1 Defining target audience:

Two audiences have been identified: the large audience and, current and prospective customers. The target audiences are more defined, as Land Rover is a specialized manufacturer. The first audience is most made up of enthusiastic followers and professionals. They expect the vehicles to be strong, to have excellent off road abilities, and to be capable of overcoming their daily constraints. The second is made up of a more broad range of customer. They are generally accomplished people. They are looking for a vehicle that can do all the things the first audience needs but they rarely actually need these abilities (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 301).

4.2.2.2. Defining communication objectives:

The main objective of Land Rover is to increase its visibility and raise awareness about its offerings. Land Rover is a specialist manufacturer. Therefore it is looking to make its brand more known, to reach new customers and broaden its market (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 301).

4.2.2.3. Defining marketing messages:

Land Rover is a benchmark 4x4 brand. It is a specialist in its area. It is a brand with knowledge; know-how and an authenticity when it comes to four wheel drive off-road vehicles. Land Rover vehicles aim to combine strength, comfort, elegance and off-road
abilities. This is characterized by the development of high tech equipments developed from its 4x4 heritage. Land Rover vehicles attract passionate users. They do this by emphasizing their vehicles refinement, technology and comfort. Their vehicles have a clear decadency and because of this they have strong character (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 303; www.landrover.com).

Land Rover is also a symbol of adventure. It is recognized for its robustness, its strength and its off-road abilities. It is a working tool adapted to face any varying daily tasks. Land Rover offers multipurpose and adaptable vehicles with great performance on- and off-road (ibid.).

4.2.2.4. Choosing communication channels:

**Public relations**: Public relation operations are mainly designed to make the brand and its product known. This is done by making press releases for the launch of a product, or by organizing road tests for journalists. For current and prospective customers, training days are organized in order to show the abilities of the vehicles on- and off-road; but also for drivers to become familiar with the different vehicle technologies and to know how to use them. This is also designed for people to know how to drive responsibly on- and off-road. This program is called the Land Rover Experience (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 86-93).

**Press**: Press is the communication tool most used. It enables Land Rover to reach a targeted audience, to increase the visibility of the brand and to introduce the brand and its offering.

**Television**: Television is a support for advertising campaigns. It is not used as a mass media channel. It is also a way to reach Land Rover primary target audience. Satellite channels such as news channels are used to ensure the visibility of the brand to the right audience.

**Internet**: The Internet has emerged as a highly efficient tool used to reach a larger audience and to increase the visibility of the brand. It is a way to present the brand and its offering. It can also be a great prospection tool that can be used to gather information about prospective customers and help to lead them to a dealership.

**Direct marketing**: Land Rover customers are in a large majority loyal. Direct marketing operations are designed to increase this loyalty. It is used to communicate on the news of the manufacturer.

**Dealer marketing**: Communication materials are developed and provided to dealers in order to help them promote the brand at their level.

4.2.2.5. Establishing promotional budget:

The budget is established by a percentage of each vehicle sold. Land Rover is a specialized manufacturer. It sells its vehicles to a more defined market. For this reason its revenues are lower than those of non-specialized manufacturers (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 93).

4.2.2.6. Deciding on promotional mix:

Choices are made in order to fulfill the objectives set with the budget allocated. Special attention is put on the press, but also on journalists. Press is the favourite channel for Land Rover. Considering journalists, Land Rover works on keeping good relations with them by organizing road test days and by establishing close press relations.
Public relation actions also enable to keep a link between current or potential customers, and the manufacturer. It also helps to increase the visibility of the brand and strengthen its image.

Direct marketing operations are used to keep links with loyal customers.

Television is used in a targeted manner to increase the visibility of the brand to a selected audience.

Internet became a new tool that helps to increase the visibility of the brand. It is also a way to canvass new customers and present Land Rover’s offerings.

Dealers are trained to ensure the strategy of the brand.

4.2.2.7. Evaluating strategy:

The brand increased its visibility. The manufacturer is known and recognized for its know-how, its prestigious vehicles, its high technology equipment, its comfort and refinement, and its off-road abilities. The press and public are generally welcoming to the manufacturer. Its authenticity and its know-how are recognized and appreciated (Boillet and Castella, 2005, p. 305).

4.2.3. Choices made in designing the marketing communications strategy of Land Rover in 2009

Data presented in the following are based on the outcomes of the semi-structured interview. The interview provided a high amount of interesting data about marketing communications. It gave insights into how the car industry and its market are affected by environmental concerns, how manufacturers deal with this, and finally how marketing communications practices are implemented.

4.2.3.1 Definition of marketing communications activities:

Marketing communications activities are based on the management of advertising, communication and advertising agencies, direct marketing operations, Internet actions, press and public relations, events and exhibitions. It is a cross-functional activity. Decisions are based on the allocated budget and the analysis of sales and current campaigns. Communications strategies are designed in the UK headquarters. They are then discussed, adapted and implemented to national markets.

Another aspect of marketing communications strategies for carmakers concerns developing and providing tools and materials for dealers. This allows them to relay the strategy locally.

4.2.3.2. The impact of environmental concerns on the car industry:

This is a new factor that affects operationally the French market since 2007. Pressures are coming from the governments. They have implemented taxation policies regarding CO₂ emissions of vehicles. This constraint is added to other factors that hit the market recently: the rising cost of fuel and the economic downturn. For all-terrain 4x4 vehicles, protesting movements must also to be considered. These factors are affecting the market in many ways.

The automotive market has changed. There is a much stronger tendency towards smaller, more efficient vehicles. This is magnified in urban areas.
“ [...] about 50% of the market today is represented by vehicles that discharge 120g or less. [...] Today there are a lot more small cars sold in France than before.”

Since the environmental concern has reached governments, the image of cars has changed.

“It’s true that for now we have lost that passion for cars, for refinement and technologies [...]”

4.2.3.3. The impact of the environmental concern on Land Rover:

The environmental taxes established in France have been implemented in three months. Land Rover is specialized in 4x4’s, with resources accordingly. It has been at first badly affected by this legislation, and it has been hard for it to react quickly.

4.2.3.4. Defining the target audience:

Land Rover orientates its communications to its customers and prospects, but also to the greater public and people that are interested in green issues in general. This green audience is defined as a target “with an environmental connotation”.

The respondent recognized that there has been a change in expectations. He also recognized at a broader level that there has been a change in attitudes towards 4x4s. He also acknowledged a change in focus and attention towards 4x4s in general.

4.2.3.5. Defining communication objectives:

Communication strategies are designed according to the news of the market and the news of the manufacturer. This year, the first objective was to raise awareness about Land Rover’s efforts regarding the environment. Pro-environmental actions have been conducted for a few years but no visibility has been ensured on those actions until now. Due to the context, and taking advantage of the launch of a CO₂ offsetting program, Land Rover wants to make its environmental programs known to the public. It wants to explain its value, its involvements and its guidelines regarding the environment. This also aims to confront general ideas people have on 4x4s and lead the change in attitudes towards 4x4s. It is also a way to show that efforts are not only dependant on future technologic improvements. Other actions are taken in the meantime.

“We try to be seen as green, as green as we are.”

“We want to say in a true and verifiable way “here is what we do”. [...] We know we have work to do on products – what is currently being done – but in the meantime, look first at what we are doing.”

The second objective is to promote the 2010 models. Updated versions of existing vehicles are launched this year. Land Rover is working on selling them.

4.2.3.6. Defining marketing messages:

“we do not pretend to be something we are not. We just simply want people to understand that we act, that we do lots of things they are not necessarily aware of.”

This is the main message Land Rover is trying to communicate. To do so, messages are designed according to Land Rover’s environmental program based on 4 pillars:
- e-Terrain Technologies: improving technologies,
- Sustainable manufacturing: environmental standards of production,
- CO₂ Off-setting program: CO₂ emissions compensation program,
- Conservation and humanitarian projects.

This communication is factual. This communication is also characterized by the development and the appearance of a logo in each communication which refers to the website dedicated to Land Rover’s environmental program.

Land Rover is also focused on selling its products. The finishing of vehicles has been improved as well as their level of equipment. Its second message is therefore more about the products and those attributes. Land Rover is now offering more sophisticated and more powerful vehicles. The focus is also on the experience of the brand, technologies, comfort and elegance.

4.2.3.7. Choosing communication channels:

Public relation: Lots of public relations are used to relay the environmental message. This is based on the launch of press kits explaining the four-pillar environmental program. This has also been done through the organisation of road tests for journalists during the launch of the Stop/Start vehicle.

A logo referring to the website dedicated to the environmental efforts made by Land Rover is systematically integrated into communications on its products.

Press: In order to present and explain the environmental programs of Land Rover, advertorials are done. The complexity is to adapt the message to the communication channels. In the press, advertorials are a good opportunity for Land Rover to present its environmental program. Press is selected according to the targets.

Television: Television is selected according to the target. Advertising is done here. Land Rover also participated in some TV programs with video-documentaries in order to present and explain its environmental program.

Internet: Online advertising is also targeted. Land Rover developed a website dedicated to all its efforts in terms of the environment: http://www.landrover.com/int/en/about-us/our-planet/our-planet.htm. On this website the four-pillar program is presented, sustainability reports are available and the overall environmental strategy of Land Rover is introduced.

Direct marketing: In its mailings, Land Rover always integrates an extra chapter presenting the four pillars of its environmental program and providing information about its efforts in terms of the environment.

Before the launch of the CO₂ offset program, a mailing was sent to customers. This mailing aimed to give them the news first, and to provide them a DVD explaining the overall program.

Dealer marketing: The consistency issue of the communication strategy is even more relevant for a company like Land Rover that does not have huge resources. A great importance is then given to this consistency. Dealers are provided in point-of-sale material, brochures and visuals etc in order to ensure this. Dealers and salespeople have been trained regarding the strategy of the company. Training also helps to provide information to the salespeople allowing them to answer questions and reassure customers about environmental matters.
4.2.3.8. Establishing the promotional budget:

The promotional budget has been affected by recent constraints of the market such as: the rising price of oil, environmental taxes on CO₂ emissions and economic recession. Those factors have considerably decreased sales. For this reason Land Rover revenues have been lower and budgets has been readjusted as well.

Part of the budget has been allocated to promoting the CO₂ offsetting program. Land Rover took advantage of this launch to communicate on its overall environmental program and actions.

4.2.3.9. Deciding of the promotional mix:

Land Rover does not have a big promotional budget. Decisions must be made strategically. Advantage has been taken from the launch of the CO₂ offsetting program to ensure communication on the overall environmental strategy using press kits, advertorials, road tests and journalist interviews.

In this context, press and publicity play a great role. Journalist feedback and reviews can have more impact than any advertising.

A 360° campaign (radio, television, press and Internet) has been carried out in a targeted way aiming to reach customers, prospects and generally, anyone interested in green issues. The idea was to raise awareness and increase visibility of Land Rover’s efforts regarding the environment. It is also designed to readjust the negative attention directed towards 4x4s and to go against generalizations made on them.

Customers are loyal. The role of Land Rover is then to provide them with information about new products and corporate actions. To do so, interactions are primarily made using direct marketing methods. For the launch of the CO₂ offsetting program, a mailing was made to inform them beforehand about the launch and to inform them on the program.

With regard to prospects, communication is both on products and on the brand. This involves direct marketing operations and targeted advertising.

Regarding the green target, an agency has been used in order to ensure Land Rover’s communication in the press is for this particular audience.

To ensure the consistency of the strategy, communication tools and training have been provided to dealers for them to relay those actions at their level.

4.2.3.10. Evaluating the strategy:

The overall campaign has been successful: “We have assessed performance with the UK and generally the program has been well received.”

The strategy has been effective in the press:

“In the articles published thereafter, they [journalists] talked about both Stop/Start vehicle and CO₂ off-setting program, and even about the LRX which is our concept-car that will be marketed within 2 years. So it went well.”

In general, “a majority of feedback was very positive either from journalists, customers, dealers, or just from people around us.”
4.2.4. Summary table

The outcomes of this research are summarized in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Land Rover 2003</th>
<th>Land Rover 2009</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green targets</td>
<td>Green targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication objectives</td>
<td>Increase visibility of the brand and raise awareness</td>
<td>Raising awareness about its environmental program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Selling 2010 models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing message</td>
<td>The benchmark 4x4: strength, comfort, high technology, elegance, refinement.</td>
<td>As green as we are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The professional, adventure vehicle: off-road abilities, great performance and power, robustness.</td>
<td>Sophisticated, prestige vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication channels</td>
<td>Public relation: mainly used to make the brand and its product known to a targeted audience (press releases, road tests, Land Rover Experience).</td>
<td>Public relation: mainly used to convey environmental message (road tests, press kits, presentation vehicle and new technology).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press: targeted communication using advertising, articles.</td>
<td>Logo: referring to the website dedicated to the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television: targeted communication using satellites channels.</td>
<td>Press: channel appropriate to the presentation of the environmental program (advertorials, articles).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet: used to reach a larger audience, to increase the visibility of the brand, to prospect.</td>
<td>Targeted communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct marketing: used to increase this loyalty, to communicate on the news of the manufacturer.</td>
<td>Television: targeted channels. Channel used for advertising, video-documentaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealer marketing: promote the brand at their level.</td>
<td>Internet: Online advertising is also targeted. Dedicated website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Direct marketing: relay factual communication and promote loyalty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dealer marketing: trained to answer the questions of customers and reassure them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dealers ensure and support corporate communication at their level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional budget</td>
<td>Budget established on sales. Its resources are not competitive compared to non-specialized manufacturers.</td>
<td>Budget affected by market constraints. Part of budget allocated to promote CO₂ offsetting program used to promote overall environmental actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public relation: targeted operations to make the brand known and to keep good relations with journalists (road test days, closed press relations) and customers and prospects.</td>
<td>Logo: referring to the website dedicated to the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television: targeted channels such as satellite news channels</td>
<td>Television targeted channels to increase visibility. Also a support to explain the environmental program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet: online advertising and websites increase visibility of the brand, and keep a link with prospects and customers.</td>
<td>Press targeted press, adapted to present information about the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealers: trained to ensure the strategy of the brand.</td>
<td>Internet used to raise visibility and provide information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Direct marketing provide information to customers and prospects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dealers ensure and support corporate communication at their level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Manufacturer recognized for its know-how and its authenticity.</td>
<td>Good feedback from the press, from customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manufacturer well welcomed in the press or by the public in general.</td>
<td>Environmental program well received.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings presented will be confronted and discussed. Each case will be discussed separately first then, confronted.

5.1. Marketing communications strategies at Citroën

This analysis will be based on data presented in the previous chapter and summarized in Table 2.

5.1.1 Defining target audience

Based on the findings presented earlier, we notice that Citroën is now considering a new audience: a green target. The manufacturer adapts its strategy to the market and is now forced to consider a new stakeholder. This stakeholder is defined as having more environmental considerations than other targets.

Citroën also has to face and fulfill the new expectations of the market and its audience. This green target is concerned about the environmental impact of the vehicles and by the environmental legitimacy of the manufacturer.

Customers and prospects are becoming more demanding. They want to have a car that is reliable, high quality, well equipped with technology and environmentally friendly. The current task for manufacturers is to fulfill these expectations without raising the cost of the vehicles. Communication practices can help distinguish and create a sense of value but this is out of our scope.

The environmental concern affects the automotive market by raising environmental awareness among its audiences. It changes the expectations of the targets and involves new stakeholders. It is redefining the characteristics of the market.

It also affects the way Citroën is defining its targets, and so, the way it is designing its marketing communication strategy. As we discussed it in chapter 2, in the past Citroën was considering its audience only in the frame of punctual sale. Its segmentation was broad and not precisely defined (Van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte, 1992, pp. 87-88). Today, broader attention is paid to its audience. First, its targets are defined in a more elaborated way. There is a willingness to better understand their expectations and interact with them. Citroën also realized that customer satisfaction is no longer only fulfilled by the product. The focus should not be on sales or transactions anymore. Citroën recognizes the importance of increasing focus on the company’s social responsibility. Second, there is a willingness to involve all stakeholders (Linnanen, 1999, p. 223).

5.1.2. Defining communication objectives

In 2003, the main objective of Citroën was to differentiate itself from Peugeot and to create its own personality. This was based on a transactional approach: differentiation strategy based on products; willingness to create desire for the brand; attempt to acquire new customers.

In 2009, Citroën wants to reassure customers and the public in general about the environmental impact of its products. However highlighting and communicating the environmental performance and attributes of its cars is also part of a promotional approach. Citroën has an environmental program that is only factual, without any promotional views. It
is for now less highlighted due to the economic uncertainties the manufacturer, and the market in general, is facing.

The environmental concern then affects the marketing communication objectives of Citroën. Indeed objectives were designed according to the transactional logic. Now they are considering the social responsibility of the manufacturer (Banerjee, 1999, p. 26). Even if for now, this is compromised by the economic crisis, the marketing communication objective is not only promotional anymore. This also means communication is further oriented towards stakeholders (Linnanen, 1999, p. 223).

5.1.3. Defining marketing messages

As discussed above, Citroën’s differentiation strategy was based on products in 2003. Therefore, the attributes of the car are pointed out to support this message. This approach is product-oriented. Communications are functional. According to the traditional marketing paradigm, this approach is transactional.

Today, Citroën wants to go further in this direction emphasizing the experience of the brand and the quality of its products. It wants to improve this image. This is achieved through highlighting their cars technology. Here again, the approach is on transactions.

However, another message is about the environment. Citroën wants to communicate on its status of “greenest car manufacturer”. Again, this message is supported by Citroën technological advance. Here, Citroën is also divided between green messages and promotional ones. Some of the messages designed are part of the “environmental theme” that Citroën developed. This means the communication is not promotional. It is factual, based on providing information to people and empowering them.

In terms of design the message is relayed through the use of soft colours, and a logo specific to this communication. This is done with green washing issues in mind. However, as the respondent pointed out: “There are no rules, it is regular advertising.” The impact of environmental concerns on how to design messages is low.

As it has been discussed for the definition of the objectives of the strategy, environmental concerns do impact the design of marketing messages at Citroën. For the most part, messages are product-oriented: this has been justified by today’s economic context. However, a part of environmental responsibility is integrated in the communication strategy. This responsibility is translated into factual messages. The aim is to provide information to explaining the impact of cars on the physical environment (Linnanen, 1999, p. 223; Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 748-749).

5.1.4. Choosing communication channels

Public relation: In 2003, public relation was at its early stage. It has been recognized as an appropriated tool to communicate with targeted audiences on the brand and its news. This is true for communication of a new launch. This was done particularly to communicate on its Constructors’ title prize in World Rally Championship and on its “European Car of the Year award” for the Citroën C3. Quality and technologies of vehicles have been promoted here. Operations have been mainly product-oriented. In this way, the use of public relations has been made in a transactional logic.

In 2009, public relations are mainly used to ensure corporate communication. For this reason it is mainly used to communicate the environmental performance of Citroën and to promote
the launch of low-consuming vehicles. Environmental communication is supported by the development of the Air Dream logo.

Between 2003 and 2009, public relation has gained its place in the Citroën strategy. It differentiates itself with the other communication tools that are traditionally used in a mass communication strategy. It is then used for corporate communications. Therefore, it is broadly used to communicate on the environment. It enables them to increase the level of interactivity with stakeholders. In this way, there is a willingness to create dialogue and to discuss and explain these issues. This increases transparency and credibility (Andersen, 2001, p. 169).

Press: Regarding the environmental concern, Citroën redefines the role of its communication tools in a more responsible way (Peattie and Charter, 2002, pp. 748-749). Usually used as part of a mass communication strategy in order to raise awareness and increase visibility of the new brand positioning, it is today used in a more targeted way. It has a great impact on its targets. It also has been recognized as the appropriate tool to communicate with the green target. It appears to be an appropriate tool to explain Citroën environmental performances using advertorials. It is then a great tool to provide information about the environmental performances of the manufacturer and to increase the level of interactivity with the target audience.

Television: For Citroën, the role dedicated to television has not been influenced by an environmental concern. Its role is to expand visibility of the brand to a larger untargeted audience and to relay advertising campaigns. It is used as part of a mass communication strategy.

Internet: The Internet appeared to be a great tool for environmental communications. Citroën decided to use it to improve its level of communication with stakeholders. It has been recognized as an involving and empowering media. It also ensures the environmental accountability of Citroën and helps to educate people (Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 748-749).

Direct marketing: Before used to promote Citroën’s image and its offerings, direct marketing is now used to provide information about its environmental performances and to lead to its dedicated website. It is focused on increasing interactivity and creating relationships. It is a more personal tool that increases transparency and displays the legitimacy of Citroën (Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 348-349).

Dealer marketing: The environmental concern did not impact how the strategy is relayed in Citroën dealerships. Dealer marketing can be assimilated to personal selling, introduced in chapter 2. Dealers and their staff are trained and communication materials are given to them in order to ensure the consistency of the strategy.

5.1.5. Establishing promotional budget

Considering the traditional approach of automotive marketing, expenditures in communication are always significant in order to support a mass communication strategy.
Figures are not available but the automobile industry has become one of the major investors in media communication (TNS Media Intelligence, 2009). This budget is established in order to fulfill promotional objectives based on increasing visibility of the brand and maximizing sales. However, since 2007, Citroën allocates part of its promotional budget to non-promotional communication dedicated to the environment. No offers and no promotions are made. Communication here is based on facts, on providing information and on educating people.

The environmental concern has an impact on establishing the promotional budget of Citroën. Part of it is dedicated to a responsible communication.

5.1.6. Deciding on promotional mix

In 2003, Citroën mainly based its strategy on mass communication in order to promote its positioning and to increase its visibility. Choices made for the promotional mix were then on extensive use of non-targeted television and press. A special advertising campaign has been developed online. This communication was rather punctual and impersonal. It covered each new launch. The focus was on product and its attributes, and on Citroën’s offerings. Public relations and direct marketing operations have been used to reach a more targeted audience and to communicate about the brand, its products and its offerings. The strategy has been designed according to a transactional logic. It was product-oriented. The focus was not on individuals but segments. There is no willingness to create relationships. The communication strategy was based on a one-way process with an active sender, a passive receiver and no interactions in between (Andersen, 2001, p. 169).

In 2009, the marketing communication strategy is approached in a more integrated way. Messages are conveyed on each channel used. The objectives are twofold: increasing the visibility of Citroën’s environmental performances and reassure customers about those issues; generating revenues by increasing sales. Public relations are preferred to convey the environmental message and communicate with stakeholders. When it comes to low-polluting models these actions are supported by a new logo, Air Dream. The press is an appropriate channel to explain Citroën’s environmental performances and communicate with stakeholders as well. It has been chosen to communicate with the green target. Television is used as a mass communication tool to ensure the visibility of the products and to encourage sales. The Internet is used as a way to inform people, educate and empower them. It is also used to ensure Citroën’s environmental accountability and legitimacy. Direct marketing operations support those actions. They also have been designed to lead customers to the environmental website of Citroën. Dealers in both situations have been trained to relay the strategy at their level.

In the meantime, marketing communication practices have become more integrated – but this is out of the scope of this study. Regarding promotional mix decisions, environmental concerns have impacted how Citroën is communicating. Communication is more corporate, even if it is still led by economic objectives. Communication is also more targeted. The definition of targets is more precise and the level of interactivity with stakeholders is higher. Choices are made to ensure Citroën’s legitimacy, and to increase interaction with stakeholders. There is a willingness to start a dialogue and to discuss those issues. To communicate on the environment, Citroën prefers first to use public relations, then press, and finally the Internet. Direct marketing also has its importance in conveying this message to customers and in ensuring the consistency of the strategy. This is ensured until the dealership stage. It could be noticed here an evolution from a traditional mass communication strategy to a more responsible one, oriented to people.
5.1.7. Evaluating strategy

Confronting findings for this part will not raise any outcomes. We can only say that in 2003, as well as in 2009, marketing communications have been successful. Citroën is well received by the press but also in the public’s mind. Receiving the “green fleet award” and the “green car manufacturer of the year award” has reinforced its green position. The program has answered to the expectations of its stakeholders.

5.1.8. Summary

First conclusions drawn from this within case analysis are presented in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>First conclusions about how the environmental concern impacts Citroën’s marketing communication strategies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Defining target audience**                                         | - Citroën recognized a new stakeholder: a green audience.  
- Segmentation is more elaborated.  
- Considering all stakeholders.  
- Interactions with stakeholders on Citroën’s social responsibility and environmental legitimacy. |
| **Defining communication objectives**                                | - Objectives not only promotional anymore: considering the social responsibility of the manufacturer.  
- Communication further oriented towards stakeholders.  
- Willingness to create dialogue. |
| **Defining marketing messages**                                      | - Not only promotional messages anymore: responsibility is translated into factual messages.  
- However no environmental implications in the design and the format of the messages. |
| **Choosing communication channels**                                  | **Public relation:**  
- corporate communications tool, broadly used to communicate on the environment.  
- increase the level of interactivity with stakeholders.  
- willingness to start a dialogue, to discuss and explain those issues.  
- increases transparency and credibility.  
- Air Dream logo  
**Press:**  
- used in a more targeted way, willing to communicate with all stakeholders.  
- appropriate to communicate with green stakeholder  
- appropriate format to provide information about environmental performances of the manufacturer.  
- used to start a dialogue in explaining those issues to stakeholders.  
- it enables to increase the level of interactivity with target.  
**Television:**  
- still a tool of mass media communication, no impact.  
**Internet:**  
- used to increase interactivity with audiences.  
- used to provide information to them, to educate them and empower them.  
- used to improve the level of communication with stakeholders.  
- it ensures the environmental accountability of Citroën.  
**Direct marketing:**  
- used to provide information about environmental performances and to lead to dedicated website.  
- it increases interactivity and creates relationships.  
- it increases transparency and ensures the legitimacy of Citroën.  
**Dealer marketing:**  
- no impact |
| **Establishing promotional budget**                                  | - expenditures are still significant  
- part of promotional budget allocated to a non-promotional, responsible communication. |
| **Deciding on promotional mix**                                      | - communication is more corporate  
- willingness to better define targets and to increase level of interactivity  
- willingness to start a dialogue and to discuss environmental issues  
- public relations is favoured in environmental communications  
- press is a good way to interact with green stakeholders  
- the Internet used to empower and educate people  
- direct marketing ensures consistency |
| **Evaluating strategy**                                              | - the implemented program replied to the expectations of stakeholders. |

Table 4: Summary table of Citroën's within case analysis
5.2. Marketing communications strategies at Land Rover

This analysis will be based on data presented in the previous chapter and summarized in Table 3.

5.2.1. Defining target audience

Land Rover is now considering a new audience: a green target. This target is defined as having “an environmental connotation”. The environmental concern has entered and changes the automotive market. It has brought new targets, new stakeholders, new expectations. Land Rover has adapted its marketing communications strategy according to this by redefining its segmentation more precisely. Land Rover also acknowledges of the change in expectations and attitudes of other stakeholders regarding 4x4s.

Environmental concerns also impact how Land Rover is defining its target audience. Regarding to the traditional approach of marketing, Land Rover has allocated value to its stakeholder in an economic frame. Today it recognizes the part of social responsibility stakeholders are expecting. There is a willingness to recognize all stakeholders and to interact with them. Communication is more oriented towards targets, not segments.

“The communication that we usually do is about the product. But there is also the aspect of brand image to take into account.”

5.2.2. Defining communication objectives

In 2003, Land Rover objectives were to increase its visibility and raise awareness about the brand and its offerings. This approach is promotional. The focus is on the products and their attributes. The objective is to broaden its market and increase sales.

In 2009, the first quarter of the year was dedicated to the launch of Land Rover CO₂ offsetting program and to the presentation of its environmental program. After, the strategy was designed in order to sell the 2010 models.

Environmental concerns are therefore impacting the marketing communication strategy of Land Rover. The first quarter of the overall strategy has been designed and allocated to communicate only about the environment. This approach is not promotional, compared to the traditional way of marketing cars. It is not about products or offerings. This approach is informative and responsible. The aim is to provide information about the environmental involvements of the manufacturer. There is a willingness to have a dialogue with stakeholders and to discuss issues with them. Land Rover is recognizing its responsibility. This increases transparency and credibility (Andersen, 2001, p. 169; Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 748-749).

5.2.3. Defining marketing messages

Land Rover is known as a brand with know-how. To support its objective in 2003 of raising awareness of the brand two messages were broadcasted. The first one was about showing the products as prestige 4x4s. This was focused on highlighting the products and their attributes. The second was about the adventurous spirit of Land Rover. Here, the focus was on the off-road abilities of the vehicles, their power and their robustness. Again, this approach is product-oriented. It is designed for a segment. It is then transactional according to the traditional marketing paradigm (Fullerton, 1988, pp. 110-120).
In 2009, the first message was about Land Rover’s environmental involvements. Land Rover wants to readjust its image regarding what it is said about 4x4s. Messages are designed according to its four-pillar environmental program that summarizes all its actions. Here the messages are providing factual information. The second message is about the 2010 models. The refinement and the quality of vehicles have been increased. Messages are based on the new attributes of the vehicles and on the experience of the brand. The approach is promotional.

Land Rover is rushed by economic needs. When it comes to its products, the approach is transactional. However, the environmental concern has an impact of its message. This communication is purely factual, despite of any kind of promotion. Those messages are about providing information about Land Rover environmental actions. It is also about ensuring the legitimacy of the manufacturer, recognizing its responsibility regarding the environment, and starting a dialogue with stakeholders (Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 748-749).

5.2.4. Choosing communication channels

Public relation: In 2003, public relation has been mainly used to make the brand and its product known (press release to cover a launch, road tests days, Land Rover Experience program). Operations are designed to communicate about products, their attributes, and the news of the brand. It is also used to increase customer loyalty.

In 2009, public relations are broadly used to convey an environmental message. This is especially true in the context of the launch of the CO₂ offsetting program. Efforts have been concentrated on public relations during the launch. It was a great opportunity to communicate on the overall environmental program.

Public relations actions are supported with a logo that refers to the website dedicated to Land Rover’s environmental program.

Between 2003 and 2009, public relation took its place in the Land Rover’s marketing communication strategy. It is broadly used to ensure communications about environmental messages. However, this tool has always been used to make people aware of those products in their environment. The environmental concern did not change how Land Rover uses public relations. It just confirmed it. This tool is used to interact directly with stakeholders and to enable dialogue. It is a two-way communication tool used to create long-term relationships, and is used to inform and educate customers (Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 748-749).

Press: Press has always been used in a targeted way. However, the focus is not always on increasing visibility of the brand. It is also used as a way to provide information, to explain and discuss implications. This increases the level of discourse with stakeholders, as well as company transparency (Peattie and Charter, 2003, pp. 748-749).

Television: Television is now also used to convey and explain the environmental message. Its role has been redefined by increasing environmental concerns. It is also used to increase visibility and transparency, and to inform people.

Internet: For Land Rover, the Internet became a way to increase interactivity with stakeholders. Before used as a prospection tool, it is now an efficient tool that provides information and creates awareness about Land Rover’s environmental actions. In this way it
increases visibility and inform people about the brand. It also helps to ensure their environmental accountability. Finally, it presents Land Rovers recognition of responsibility and ensures its legitimacy.

**Direct marketing:** Direct marketing is a tool that enables brands to have closer interactions with customers. It is a more personal medium that helps to create a relationship and encourages loyalty. In this way, it is a great tool to provide information and increase discourse. It found its place in Land Rover’s strategy. It is ensuring the consistency of the marketing communication strategy. It is also a great tool to increase loyalty by delivering exclusive news. This increases transparency.

**Dealer marketing:** No changes have been made regarding dealer marketing. Dealers are provided in communication materials and training in order to relay the strategy at their level and to ensure the consistency of the strategy.

5.2.5. Establishing promotional budget

Land Rover’s promotional budget is established by a percentage of each vehicle sold. This has been compromised in recent years due to constraints in the automotive market (rising price of gas, environmental taxes on CO₂ emissions and economic recession). However choices have been made to allocate part of the budget to strict environmental communication.

Considering the traditional marketing paradigm, the budget is established in order to ensure the objectives of the brand. This means, it is designed to cover promotional actions implemented in order to reach objectives. However, in 2009, Land Rover allocated part of its budget to non-promotional communication. The actions implemented here aimed to raise awareness about the environmental program. Communication was based on facts. The aim was to provide information, to recognize social responsibility, to increase transparency, and to increase the level of interactions with stakeholders. We can then suggest that environmental concerns have impacted the choices made regarding the Land Rover promotional budget.

5.2.6. Deciding on promotional mix

Marketing communications strategies have always been designed according to modest resources, compared to a non-specialized manufacturer. Choices are then made strategically.

In 2003, communications always have been done in a targeted way. To increase the visibility of the brand, press was the favourite media used by Land Rover. Then, it was television. Great attention was paid to journalists and loyal customers. Public relations operations were designed to ensure relationships with them and to raise awareness about the brand. Direct marketing operations were used to increase loyalty of customers and to communicate on the news of the brand. Internet was used as a prospection tool. It was also used to increase the visibility of the brand and to lead prospects to dealerships. Dealers were implementing the strategy at their level. According to the traditional marketing paradigm, this approach was somewhat transactional.

In 2009, communications are still targeted. Advantage has been taken from the introduction of the CO₂ offsetting program to raise awareness about Land Rover’s environmental actions. This has been done through a 360° campaign. To convey the environmental message and communicate with stakeholders, public relations are preferred. Then, it is the press. Press is an
appropriate format to explain Land Rover’s environmental actions and to communicate with stakeholders. It has been chosen to communicate to a green audience. Television is part of the mix. Documentaries have been broadcasted during TV programs. Internet is a great tool to provide information and increase visibility. A dedicated website has been created. It also sets the environmental accountability of Land Rover. Direct marketing operations inform people and increase transparency. It provides information on the environmental program and lead to the dedicated website. Dealers are applying this strategy at their level.

The environmental concern has impacted the marketing communication strategies of Land Rover. Part of the communication is based on facts, on providing information. The level of communication with stakeholders has been increased. There is a willingness to have a discourse with them. To convey the environmental message, some decisions regarding the mix have been made. Public relations is the favourite tool. Then it is press. Finally, it is the Internet. Television is relaying the message as well. Direct marketing helps to increase transparency. This way of communicating is generally more responsible and more oriented to people.

5.2.7. Evaluating strategy

Confronted findings for this part will not raise any outcomes. What can be said is that Land Rover is appreciated by the press and by customers for its know-how and its authenticity. The environmental campaign has been well received by stakeholders.

5.2.8. Summary

First conclusions drawn from this within case analysis are presented in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>First conclusions about how the environmental concern impacts Land Rover’s marketing communication strategies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining target audience</td>
<td>- Land Rover is now considering a new audience: a green target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Redefining of segmentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Willingness to recognize all stakeholders, communication more oriented towards targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Interactions with stakeholders on Land Rover’s social responsibility and environmental legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining communication objectives</td>
<td>- Objectives not only promotional anymore: informative and responsible approach to communicate on environmental program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Willingness to have a dialogue with stakeholders and to discuss issues with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recognizing responsibility towards the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increasing transparency and credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining marketing messages</td>
<td>- Not only promotional messages anymore: responsibility is translated into factual and informative messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recognizing responsibility towards the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Starting a dialogue with stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing communication channels</td>
<td>Public relation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Broadly used to communicate on the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Website logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appropriate to communicate with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appropriate format to provide information and explain program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increasing level of discourse with stakeholders and transparency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Used to convey and explain the environmental message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Used to increase transparency and to inform people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increases interactivity with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Used inform people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ensures environmental accountability and legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>- Recognizing responsibility towards the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct marketing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- used to provide information about environmental program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- increase transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealer marketing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- no impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing promotional budget</td>
<td>- part of promotional budget allocated to non-promotional, informative, responsible communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding on promotional mix</td>
<td>- part of the communication is based on facts, on providing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- level of communication with stakeholders has been increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- willingness to have a discourse with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- public relation preferred to convey environmental message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- press is an appropriate format to provide information and to target the green audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Internet is used to provide information and to ensure environmental accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- television is part of the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- direct marketing ensures transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating strategy</td>
<td>- appreciated by the press and by customers for its know-how and its authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The environmental campaign has been well received by stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Summary table of Land Rover's within case analysis**
5.3. Cross-cases comparisons: similarities and contrasts.

The study of these two cases has brought up relevant findings. The companies studied have a different approach in their marketing decisions. Citroën is a mass-marketed non-specialized manufacturer. Land Rover is a specialized one with special targets and loyal customers. Citroën has lots of resources to design its marketing communication strategy. Land Rover has modest resources. However, this study brought up some similarities in their way of facing increasing environmental concerns. Those comparisons will be based on previous discussions, and on Table 4 and Table 5.

First a discussion about the definitions given by the respondent about the key concepts of this study will be done in order to clarify concepts and enhance the understanding of following discussions. Then, a discussion about the choices made in designing market communication strategies will be done.

5.3.1. Definition of marketing communications activities

Preceding the interviews, key concepts have been defined by the respondents in order to define their perspectives of the topic and to know how to interpret data. It is interesting to note for the purpose of this research that both respondents provided almost the same definition of marketing communication activities. Those definitions are also quite close to the theories presented in chapter 2.

Marketing communication is defined as a cross-functional activity. Strategies are designed and involve several departments within the company. It is mainly the job of advertising, direct marketing, dealer marketing, public relations and, communication or advertising agencies. It is also about making the company and its offering known to selected audiences. This summarizes theories presented in 2.5.1.

Making a parallel with what Crosier (2003, p. 719) and Rowley (1998, pp. 384-386) have discussed, dealer marketing can be assimilated to personal selling. It is about the training of dealers and their staff to adapt the strategy in their way of interacting with current and prospective customers in dealerships. Sales promotion has not been properly defined during this empirical research. It is mostly considered as part of advertising car manufacturers are doing. As part of dealer marketing activities point-of-sale materials and communication tools like brochures are developed for dealerships. Sponsorship has also not been properly defined. It has been discussed as part of public relation operations (World Rally Championship for Citroën, Land Rover Experience for Land Rover). Tools such as press or the Internet are defined as a medium of advertising in the literature. Here, in this empirical research, we have acknowledged the evolution of the roles those mediums have experienced.

Respondents also pointed out the fact that marketing communication strategies are designed according to the market and news affecting it. They also observed that to be effective, it was important that strategies are consistent. This is coherent with what has been discussed in 2.5.2.

5.3.2. The impact of the environmental concern on the car industry

Even if the two studied manufacturers are operating on a different part of the market, they have drawn similar observations in the way environmental pressures are impacting the industry. They both recognized that the environmental concern was an important new issue. Pressures have been identified at different levels for both. Pressures are coming from a
governmental level on car manufacturers, encouraging them to develop “greener” vehicles. Pressures are also coming from a societal level. The image of cars has changed, as well as the expectations of stakeholders. People are asking manufacturers to behave responsibly regarding the environment. Pressures put on customers and pressures coming from them have drawn a new orientation on the market. It is called “downsizing”. The attention is on smaller cars from a customer and a manufacturer point of view. The attention is led by economic reasons for both.

Land Rover recognizes the environmental concern is linked to other factors that has increased market complexity and is changing the attitudes of people regarding 4x4’s.

This is coherent and completes what has been presented in 2.3.

5.3.3. The impact of environmental concerns on the studied manufacturer

Both manufacturers have been impacted differently by the environmental concern. For Citroën, it has not been such a burden. The change in focus that occurred on the performances of manufacturers and on the impact of their cars has, in many ways, played to their advantage. It helped to highlight the fact that Citroën is producing the least polluting cars in the industry. Thus adding new value to their products.

For Land Rover, the situation is different. Attitudes among the vehicles it produces have changed in a bad way. Environmental legislation has led to a drop in sales. It has therefore been badly affected at first.

This enhances our understanding about the choices made in designing marketing strategies. This will be discussed below.

5.3.4. Defining target audience

Increasing environmental concerns in the market has impacted both brands. They have been forced to take into account a relatively new issue. They have both recognized a new stakeholder: a green audience, whose environmental sensitivity is higher than others.

For Citroën, which is a mass-market manufacturer, this implies redefining its segmentation more precisely. Land Rover already had a precisely defined segmentation. The manufacturer has to update it. However, it has to face a change in attitudes towards 4x4’s.

Both manufacturers are willing to better understand and fulfill the expectations of their stakeholders. There has been a move from the traditional marketing paradigm to a more responsible approach to defining a target audience. They recognized a growing focus on brand image, legitimacy and the social responsibility of the company. They are also willing to involve all defined stakeholders. This could involve that the automotive industry, traditionally product-led, is evolving to a customer-led orientation.

5.3.5. Defining communication objectives

Both companies have integrated the environmental concern in their marketing communication strategies. The objectives set are not only promotional anymore, as it was according to the traditional marketing paradigm. There is a willingness to raise awareness about environmental actions made and to reassure customers about their environmental impacts. This means communication is further oriented towards stakeholders. The approach is now informative and
accountable. There is also a willingness to start a dialogue with stakeholders. Both manufacturers are recognizing their responsibility and they are looking for transparency.

5.3.6. Defining marketing messages
In the same way, strategies of both manufacturers are affected by the environmental concern regarding the definition of marketing messages. They both recognized their responsibility regarding the environment, and they are both willing to open a dialogue with stakeholders. This is translated in terms of messages by providing facts. The aim is to inform and explain. This also increases transparency and promotes the legitimacy of manufacturers.

5.3.7. Choosing communication channels
The relevancy of using communication channels is different for each manufacturer. This can be explained in their differences of resources and targets. However, similarities arise.

For both manufacturers, public relations are broadly used for corporate communications. This is a way to interact directly with a targeted audience. It is then appropriate to communicate on the environment. The environmental concern has an impact on the role allocated to public relations. For Citroën, this tool enables them to increase the level of interactivity with stakeholders and to start a dialogue with customers. For Land Rover, the environmental concern confirmed its current use of good public relations. It is an excellent tool to raise awareness, inform, discuss and educate people about the brand.

Both companies support their environmental communications with a logo. This enables them to increase the visibility of their actions. This tool allows also people to make comparisons between the offerings.

The environmental concern has an impact in the role allocated to press. For Citroën, this tool, traditionally used as part of a mass communication strategy, is now used in a more targeted and responsible way. For Land Rover, press always has been used in a targeted way. However its role has been redefined. For both manufacturers, press is now used to provide informative advertising that aims to increase the level of discourse with stakeholders.

Differences occur when it comes to television. Citroën uses television as a mass media communication tool. Its use is not targeted. It is supporting the advertising campaigns. Choices made on this channel do not seem to have been impacted by increasing environmental pressure. For Land Rover, television is also a support to advertising campaigns. However, its use is more targeted. It has also been exploited to convey their environmental message and explain the environmental program to a broad audience. This is done through video-documentaries and participating in relevant TV shows. In this way we can see how the environmental concern has impacted Land Rover’s use of television communication.

The Internet is an efficient tool that enables companies to increase brand interactivity. The environmental concern confirms this role. Both manufacturers are increasing their use of the Internet, especially through dedicated websites. This is helping to increase the level of interactivity with stakeholders and to inform them about the practices of the company. This is also a way to increase their visibility and to ensure their environmental accountability. Citroën exploits this media further in making the environmental issue accessible to people, by empowering and educating them.
Direct marketing is an excellent tool to create relationships with current and prospective customers. This medium is personalized. The environmental concern defines its role as providing information about the environmental performance of the manufacturers, increasing the level of discourse, increasing transparency, and ensuring the consistency of strategies. For Land Rover, it is also part of a loyalty program.

Finally, the environmental concern has not impacted marketing operations designed for dealers. They are still relaying the strategy of the brand locally and ensuring its consistency. The approach here is still rather transactional.

5.3.8. Establishing promotional budget

Both manufacturers have a different amount of resources available. Citroën has significant budget while Land Rover’s is more modest. The Land Rover budget has been mostly affected in recent years due to rising constraints in the automotive market. However, they have both decided to allocate part of their promotional budget to an informative and responsible communication about the environment. The impact of environmental concerns on the definition of the promotional budget is not on the amount of the budget dedicated to marketing communications but on the allocation of the budget.

5.3.9. Deciding on promotional mix

Similarities also appear in the decisions made in designing the promotional mix – even though choices made by Land Rover are more strategic because of decreasing of resources. Both manufacturers have decided to make more informative communications based on facts when it comes to the environment. They are both aiming to increase discourse with stakeholders. To convey the environmental message, both manufacturers prefer first, public relation operations, then press communication and finally the Internet.

Public relations enable increased interactivity with a targeted audience. They also enable better dialogue with stakeholders. For Land Rover, public relations are also used to educate people about their products and their impact on the environment. Both manufacturers have developed logos promoting their environmental efforts. These are intended to support their environmental operations while increasing their visibility.

Press communication is also recognized as an excellent tool for environmental communication. If used in a targeted way, it appears to be an appropriate format to provide information and explain environmental performance figures through advertorials. It has also been considered as the right tool to use in order to communicate with the green target. Both manufacturers have communicated in specialized magazines in order to reach a more environmentally sensitive target.

Internet is also recognized as a valuable tool in order to ensure environmental communications. It enables companies to inform the public about their environmental efforts. However its main role is to ensure the environmental accountability of manufacturers. Citroën chooses to use it as a way that involves and educates people.

Television, direct marketing and dealer marketing help to ensure the consistency of the strategy at their own level. Direct marketing operations are specially designed to provide information about the brands and lead current and prospective customers to their dedicated websites.
5.3.10. Evaluating strategy

Both strategies have been well received in the press and by stakeholders. Generally, the environmental concern has been integrated into the marketing communications strategies of our two car manufacturers. Each stage of designing these strategies is impacted by this concern.

The two manufacturers chosen are different. Their markets are impacted differently by the environmental concern. However, in terms of a marketing communications strategy, they are affected in similar ways.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

In this section, findings are summarized in order to answer the research question. The limitations of the research, managerial and theoretical implications, and suggestions for further research will also be pointed out.

6.1. Summary of findings

Environmental concerns are affecting the automotive industry in many ways. If we consider the marketing communications strategy of the two studied car manufacturers, we can see how these concerns have impacted each stage of the design of those strategies.

Regarding the definition of target audience, this study shows how the environmental concern led to a redefinition of manufacturers’ segmentation in a more precise way. This helped to recognize the new green audience and to fulfill its expectations. It also changed the expectations and attitudes of targets regarding cars. This redefinition has also been done through recognizing a growing focus on social responsibility and legitimacy of companies. It is also characterized by a willingness to involve all stakeholders.

Concerning the definition of communication objectives, we have seen how there is now a willingness to raise awareness about manufacturers environmental actions and reassure customers about their environmental impacts. This also implies that communications are more oriented towards stakeholders than before. The approach adopted by manufacturers is now more informative and responsible. There is also an increased willingness to open more dialogue with stakeholders.

As a support of these objectives, the definition of marketing messages tend to be more factual and informative. This enables manufacturers to clearly explain to people the efforts made towards the environment and to make them accessible and understandable to them. This also increases transparency and helps to position their legitimacy.

Looking at the different communication channels, environmental concerns have an impact on the roles they are attributed to by manufacturers.

- Public relation is a corporate communication tool that enables dialogue with stakeholders. Therefore, it is now used to raise awareness, inform, discuss and educate people.
- Previously used according to a transactional logic, press is now used in a targeted way to provide information and to increase the level of discourse with stakeholders.
- Considering the role of television, we cannot assess if there is an impact or not as we drew different conclusions for each manufacturer.
- The Internet is an efficient tool that enables companies to create interactivity with customers. Therefore, it is now used to increase this interactivity and to inform stakeholders about the green practices of manufacturers. It is also helping to ensure their environmental accountability. It could also be used to make the environmental issue accessible to people by involving and educating them.
- Direct marketing is a personalized medium that enables companies to create a relationship with current and prospective customers. Therefore, it is used to provide information about the environmental performance of manufacturers, to increase transparency, and to ensure the consistency of strategy.
- Regarding dealer marketing, training and communication materials are coherent with the strategy implemented. However, its role has not been impacted by current environmental concerns.
Considering the design of the promotional budget, part of the resources are now allocated to a more informative, factual and responsible communication about the environment.

This has also impacted the choices made when designing the promotional mix. Today, public relations, the press and the Internet are the favourite tools used to ensure good environmental communication.

- Both manufacturers have developed a logo specific to their environmental actions. This logo supports their operations and helps to increase their visibility.
- Press is considered as an appropriate format to provide information and explain their environmental performances using advertorials. It also has been considered as the right tool to use in order to communicate with the green target.
- The Internet helps to ensure the environmental accountability of today’s manufacturers. It is also used to involve people in current initiatives and to educate them about what these include.

Generally recent forms of communication are more responsible. The main trends noticed during the process of this study are:

- the development of a communication based on facts,
- the use of a logo to increase visibility and enable customers to make comparison,
- an increasing level of dialogue,
- a communication more oriented to people.

Manufacturers are more focused on creating discourse and building relationships. They are ensuring their legitimacy and trying to build trust. Therefore we can suggest the environmental concern is helping to evolve marketing communication practices of manufactures from a transactional approach to a more responsible and sustainable one.

6.2. Limitations

The main limitation of this paper is the economic context of the car industry. As mentioned several times throughout this study, the automotive industry is facing a structural crisis led by various factors. The economic downturn has a direct impact on the expectations of target audiences and on the strategies of manufacturers as well. For this reason the context has not favoured development of proper green communication strategies although efforts have been done in this area. It has been recognized by respondents that they are overtaken by the economic urge manufacturers are facing.

This idea can be applied to customers as well. Today their behaviours reflect further economic necessity, rather than environmental concern. The economic context is also overtaking on their ability to feel concerned and get involved in green strategies – but this is out of the scope of this study.

Another limitation, which should be highlighted, is that the environmental issue is a sensitive topic in the car industry. Therefore, the objectivity of the respondents could be put into question. To reduce this bias, triangulation has been used.

6.3. Final discussion

This study points to some evolving trends regarding green communications made by car manufacturers. The aim here is not to make generalizations but only to highlight observations
and discuss implications. The following illustrates some theoretical and managerial implications that could also be some guidelines for possible further studies.

- Integrating the environmental concern in marketing communications is recognized as needed by car manufacturers. It has a role to play in providing information to people, to make them aware of their impact on the environment, and also to educate them and show them how to reduce this impact. Until now, the aim was mainly to raise awareness on the performances of manufacturers and their involvement in environmental issues. However, more must be done to make those issues accessible and understandable to the audience, and involve them in the process of reducing the carbon footprint.

- For now, communications made by manufacturers on the environment are less creative. The messages are based on the consequences cars have on the environment, or on financial compensations environmental legislation allow. However, the role of green communication should evolve. It will have great importance when green technologies will be marketed. Indeed, we can suggest creative communication will play a crucial role in differentiating company strategies.

- In this way, the use of functional communications that are product-oriented could be decreased. Environmental legislations increase the costs of vehicles without increasing the value perceived by customers. Differentiation will be based on brand image. Therefore a communication oriented towards customers will be preferred. More messages will be designed in order to communicate on the experience of the brand and its personality.

- There two levels in the environmental communication of manufacturers. The same message in not convey to the same audience. Firstly, dedicated websites, sustainability reports, special press-release in specialized press, or any tools where achievements are discussed, are oriented to the stakeholders with the highest sensitivity to the environment. Secondly, traditional communication tools or logo are developed for more general stakeholders in order to provide more transparent and comprehensible information. This allow customers to make comparisons between different car models. For manufacturers, this is developing competitive advantage.

- The environmental communication of manufacturers is based on facts. This is a good way to raise awareness and to provide information. It is also recognized as an appropriate way of communication that avoids “green-washing” and differentiates companies from their competitors.

- Regarding the impact of environmental concerns on car manufacturers, it has been noticed that the use of mass media communication has decreased. Those practices have been overcome by more targeted communication methods. Based on observations made while studying the Citroën brand, mass media communications today only tend to be used to cover launch, make the product known and ensure its visibility. After, messages are relayed through other mediums providing increased interactivity with the audiences.

- A growing trend in the environmental communications of manufacturers is the increasing use of the Internet. As a communication tool the Internet is considered to have the most impact on people. It involves them. In this way, the consumer is no longer passive but becomes active in the communication process. While advertising raises awareness about a product known, the Internet seems a more appropriate tool for customers to remember the marketing messages.
6.4. Further research

Suggestions for further research would propose a focus on eco-driving issues. Efforts are made by carmakers to decrease the carbon footprint of their vehicles regarding the overall product-life cycle. However, efforts need to come from customers as well. As vehicles are becoming less and less polluting, educational communication campaigns should be more developed in order to raise awareness about green driving practices. This needs to involve customers in the process. Further studies could investigate what is being done in this area and what are the impacts of this on customers.
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**Internet sources**

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www.climatenetwork.org


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[www.gouvernement.fr](http://www.gouvernement.fr)


Land Rover corporate website
[www.landrover.com](http://www.landrover.com)


PSA Peugeot Citroën corporate website
[www.psa-peugeot-citroen.com](http://www.psa-peugeot-citroen.com)


Appendix: Interview guide design and Interview process

1. Argumentation about themes and questions
I have designed the interview according to two main topics. The first one aims to get to know the respondent, to understand his perception of his job and its environment in order to better understand to way he is answering to the questions and to avoid bias – as the research is based on the perception of the respondent. We also make the respondent define the key terms of the study in order to clear the situation and to avoid bias.

The other main topic is about the communication strategies of the company. We want to make the respondent talk about the current strategy of the company, how do they integrate the market environment with that strategy.

The first set of questions aims to understand how the communication strategy of the studied company is affected by external factors of its market environment.

Then, it is structured on the various step of the marketing communication plan as it has been developed in the literature review and suggested in the proposed study model. The questions here aim to understand what is actually done for each of this step and how it is affected by external constraints. A study of former communication practices has been made in documentary analysis.

The last set of questions tends to be a bit broader in order to get the view of the respondent on the communication practices of his/her company, on the issues of associating the environment concern to automotive communications and on the future of communication in general.

2. Establishing first contact
I will establish first contact by email. I have the email address of several contacts due to my previous experience in the car industry. The persons concerned by that interview (Communication Manager, Marketing Manager and their colleagues) are people I worked with.

I will first introduce myself, as a former trainee in Land Rover for them to picture me. Then I will explain what I have done since that internship – master of marketing in Sweden – and I will precise that I am finishing that master by writing a thesis. I will explain to them the topic of my thesis – how does the environmental constraint influence marketing communications of car manufacturers – and I will precise that on behalf of my research, I am studying the marketing communications practices of some car makers and I will point out the fact that I contact them on that behalf.

I will ask them if they would agree to be interviewed on behalf of my thesis. Then I will explain that the interview is structured on themes and I will explain them these.

I will precise that the interview would be conducted by phone and recorded if they let me to, and it should take about an hour.

Finally I will invite them to come back to me to say if they agree to participate to my research in that way and then to plan an appointment for the interview, and I will thank them for considering my demand.
3. Starting the interview

Before starting with the questions of the interview guide, I will first thank the respondent for agreeing to participate to my research. I will then remind the purpose of my study and explain the outcomes to which the research is intended to lead and what will happen to the data collected and how they will be used in that project. I will remind and check if the respondent still agree on recording the interview.

4. The interview guide

**Background of the respondent and his/her understanding of the key concept of the study**
- Could you first tell me about you, your general background and your job in the company?
  - How would you describe your job?
  - How would you define the contribution of your work to the strategy of the company?

- The focus of the study is on marketing communications. How would you describe that term?
  - How do marketing communications contribute to the strategy of the company?

- The study also emphasizes the environmental pressure. How does the car industry experience that new factor?
  - What consequences does that have on the industry in a marketing view, if any?
  - Does that have an impact on your work?

**Communication strategies of the company**
- How has the communication strategy of the company changed over the past five years?
  - What external factors or stakeholders influence that strategy during that time, if any?
  - Why do you think it is important to integrate external factors in the communications practices of a company?

**Communication objectives**
- What is the aim of the current communications of the company? (draw attention, raise awareness, educate, reassure, create desire...)

**Target audience**
- To whom are those communications directed?
- Could you define the expectations of your audience?

**Marketing message:**
- What is the current message sent by the company?
- How is it developed in terms of themes? (choice of wording, choice of colours…)

**Communication channels**
- What types of communication channels are promoted in order to broadcast that message?

**Promotional budget**
- In which extend does the environmental constraint impact the promotional budget of the company?

**Promotional mix decisions**
- How do external factors affect the marketing communications decisions and strategies of the company?
- How does the company claim its environmental legitimacy in terms of marketing communications practices?
- What is for you the best way to communicate regarding the environmental pressure?

**Evaluation**
- Do you think that the current communications practices of the company are in-phase with its market?
- Given the nature of their products, do you think that integrating the environmental constraint to the marketing communications practices of car manufacturers is a consistent strategy.
- Car manufacturers are often pointed out by environmentalist groups or accused of green-washing when it comes to the promotion of its products. How does the company deal with those issues?
- Research have shown that there is a saturation of sustainable messages and themes. How does the company differentiate itself from other manufacturers when it comes to environmental legitimacy?
- How would you define the impact of the environmental pressure on your job or on marketing communications in general?
- What is for you the future of communication in the car industry?

**Conclusion**
- Is there anything else that you would like to add?
- Thank you for your help. These information will help me to continue my research. Can I contact you again if any questions arise?
- Would you agree to be cited in the report?