VALUES AND IDENTITY

IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

IN MALAYSIA

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
Murdoch University, 2001
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people whose support has been critical to this project. I am immensely grateful to my supervisors: Associate Professor Alex Main, who could see the potential of what I was trying to do and encouraged me along my individual pathway; and Associate Professor Iain Walker, whose focus proved crucial and inspiring during the writing and conclusion stages.

My thanks to my Malaysian respondents who so willingly gave their time to the process, and to all others in Malaysia and elsewhere who were interested in the project. A research grant from Edith Cowan University enabled me to travel twice to Malaysia to undertake the research; and a travel grant provided by Murdoch University allowed me to attend an international conference in San Francisco where I was able to present my initial findings and receive valuable input from many knowledgeable people.

Thanks primarily to my family, friends and colleagues in Australia who have provided moral and physical support and assistance; especially to my husband Ian and my daughters Madelene and Georgia who have lived every step of the journey with me, and have given me the space to pursue this goal.
ABSTRACT

This is a study of values and identity within the public relations profession in Malaysia. Although the study has a national focus, its implications are global, because its context is created by the intersection of three current areas of debate and examination: 1) the renewed focus on Asian values which seeks to articulate Asian values as a way of supporting Asia's pathway to modernisation; 2) the open challenge to assumptions about the transferability of theory between countries around the world, about whether theory can be universal or whether different theories or different versions of theories are needed to help explain practice in different parts of the world; and 3) the re-emerging focus on values underwriting the public relations profession.

Malaysia's growing public relations profession is playing a crucial communication role in support of the country's move towards industrialisation. In Malaysia, issues of culture, modernisation, Westernisation, and globalisation are both real and topical.

Through the values framework, the study aims to contribute in three ways: 1) To develop and test an alternative, but equally useful, framework and method for comparing public relations practice between countries; 2) to investigate the influence of specific cultural and professional variables on public relations practice in Malaysia, to further understand specific variables which might lead public relations practice to differ between countries; and 3) to contribute to the definition of Asian values by defining one component, that is, the personal and professional values of a sample of public relations practitioners in Malaysia.
The research was undertaken in two parts. The first, using a survey and structured interviews, examined the influence of two cultural variables (ethnicity and gender) and two professional variables (years of experience and work environment) on values held. Ethnicity and years of experience led to significant differences in the values held, with each variable influencing different value dimensions. Gender and work environment had some influence but generally in combination with ethnicity and years of experience respectively. The study found a distinctive U-shaped curve related to years of experience, which means that practitioners' value priorities change as they gain more experience in the profession. All four of the variables studied could be significant in accounting for difference in professional practice in other countries.

The second part, using repertory grid methodology, examined values and identity. It identified core values central to public relations practice in Malaysia, and interpreted these core values as statements of self-identity. The nature of identity as a public relations practitioner may also account for differences in public relations practice between countries.

Combining both parts, the study has revealed values that underwrite public relations practice in Malaysia, the aspects of self-identity important to the profession, and the way in which those values and identity have been influenced by cultural and professional factors. It therefore leads towards the development of a theoretical foundation for "culture-specific" public relations in Malaysia.

This exploratory study has generated findings which challenge the expectations of Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory, on which the values analysis was based.
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**Years of experience**

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and /or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

**Openness to change**

RESP.: I'm not surprised. They're more aggressive, they're bolder, and obviously as far as juniors are concerned, they always look for something new, something more exciting.

Those in that category (mid-level) have been doing the same thing and probably feel comfortable with what they have been doing over the years and see no reason why there should be drastic changes.

(Senior) At that age group they really believe the time has come for them to learn new things and they must accept changes. Among this group for instance, some of them would not know how to handle an email. They're so used to manual type writers and dependent on secretaries to take dictation. Things have to change.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: For the two years and below, they like to see changes. Like Sony, when they produce tvs, the next time they hope to see more changes to it. They want to stay ahead of the competitors because the young people are always motivated to improvements, changes and so on. And they're never satisfied with what they've done or what they do.

(Mid-level) This group say why stir up a hornet's nest? They have a proven track record, what they've done. They don't want to see introduction of new things because this may result in some expectations may not be as good as what they've had. So they try to play safe -- don't want to make any changes.

(Senior) Along the way, they would see how things have changed over the years… For them to win more business they have to consider new innovative ideas. Probably that prompts them to look for some changes to ensure that they maintain the market leadership.

GS: So change will help them to maintain dominance and success.

RESP.: In middle management, one concern they have is that they are not in the management level so they may not know the dollars and sense, they may not have access to networking and knowing what's happening.

**Conservation**

RESP.: They (juniors) will be guided by those in the mid management and higher management levels. Obviously they may have some formal constraints in the sense that the senior ones may not give them the freedom, access to come up with new ideas, so as much as they like to do what the other companies are doing, because they have to conform with certain process of the individual company. They may not agree to that but because of this policy of the company they have to agree to conservative management style of the company.

GS: They recognise that they have constraints and they recognise they have to do something about it -- therefore the high level.

RESP.: They are basically yes men. (Mid-level) This group of individuals they always take the safe passage. Young people are more gung-ho. Mid-level they take life as it is in the sense that "I've reached this level. I wouldn't want to take the trouble to try and do something different." At that level probably they all are married, family life, they would like something more. And that will affect them.
GS: So when they're newer their priorities are more work-oriented and then their priorities change?

RESP.: Yes.

GS: Why do seniors move back up?.

RESP.: Because they have a track record, something they are very proud about. They may not come up with anything unusual. They will have surveys to back up what they have done. "This is a proven record. Why do you want make changes?" "This is what we have done for Client A. This is what we have done for Client B. Based on your brief, we believe we can use the same model for Client C".

Self-transcendence

RESP.: I find when you talk about welfare, people in the older age groups are more concerned about welfare rather than the younger groups. Maybe because they don't see each other as a threat so for that reason they believe everybody's equal. I always find younger people very selfish. They only care about themselves.

(Thinks graph is wrong. Should start low and gradually go up, so will be highest with senior practitioners). Beyond a certain level, you always believe that whoever you have in the company is part of a team. To me, no-one's indispensible. We all make the team. Like in football. There are 11 players in the team, have equal contribution. Likewise for a company, from the MD to the splash boy. To me, everyone has a role and moreso why management people are more concerned about the welfare of the place. If we have satisfied, happy workers, always leads you to expect maximum productivity.

GS: So it becomes part of the work responsibility of the senior people?

RESP.: Precisely.

Work environment

There's a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you've had in PR. Let's deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: This one I'd agree with, in the sense that I notice that especially in consultancy when I mentioned about team effort, quite often when we go for a new business pitch when we work on the proposal, we all sit down in a brainstorm session, all levels, and I find that you always get feedback from just about everyone. That's why you can see very consistent levels of agreement on certain things, or why don't we come out with something different, and generally they'll be very responsive.

RESP.: In corporations from what I see, a lot of them are still very conservative in their approach. They just go by the level you are. If you are a secretary or a coordinator, this is the input that we expect from you. They all have different responsibilities. Although in the consultancy they also have their different contributions.

GS: So why does it start off higher for young corporates, and then goes down?

RESP.: Young people are more gung-ho, they're more aggressive. Mid-levels are not so receptive to changes. In that category often they're not allowed to make decisions.

GS: So it has to do with the decision making? Are you saying that in a consultancy you have a higher level of decision making right through?
RESP.: Definitely. Absolutely.

GS: Why does it come back up again for senior corporates?

RESP.: That is a natural in the sense that once they've reached a certain level, probably depending who they're working for, the MD or Chairman, sometimes the Chairman wants something more creative ideas and so on. Then they must come out with new ideas, be able to agree to changes, be open to changes. To me, at the end of the day, whether the company has a conservative or open approach, it lies in the hands of the management overall.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: Those in a consultancy are given more freedom at the junior level. I don't understand why there's a big drop for the consultants at the mid level. (Would expect there to be a drop but not that much). Because in consulting you have more openness. Everyone has a say in direction.

GS: So the elements of your own success and dominance are part of the environment?

RESP.: Yes, in many ways.

**Conservation**

RESP.: (Would expect it to start lower and then increase, for both workplaces). Consultants -- They're driven by the bottom line. Once you reach a certain level you have to consider the budget. If you want to come up with an innovative idea, it may cost money to the client. So just stick to the traditional way of doing things. At the end of the day for any consultancy work, any plan to be carried out depends on the budget and client's approval. If they don't have the budget, then let's think of something simpler. Going back to square one, stick to the traditional way of doing things.

GS: Why do corporates follow a different pattern?

RESP.: I'm not surprised at this. Normally unlike a consultant, they don't have so many constraints because before they work out any program, the first thing they do usually, they know what sort of budget they have to work on, and they can tailor make any program to the budget. You can expect a different reaction within inhouse and consultant.

Maybe (young consultants) they are more concerned about making sure they don't make mistakes. That's why they stick to, they follow the instructions so they will not get caught out making mistakes. With mid-level consultants, they would be happy to do what they've done previously.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: Those working in consultancies always see it as a team effort. They always see each other at a certain level. There is no difference between person A or B or C.

The corporates are pretty close to what I've just said for consultancies. The difference is in the benefits. If you compare welfare things, there's more in big organisations than in small consultancies.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: Yes and no. In PR business in-house you find more Malays, but if you talk about consultancy you'll find more non-Malays in the practice. Certain ethnic group find consulting there's more work less rewarding, whereas in certain organisations they get a certain form of recognition. Also partly because of education. Those days we were talking about merit. Now we have this problem of quota -- Malays have a percentage of places, Chinese and so on. So even if you are very brilliant you may not be good enough to gain a place locally because of this quota. So you feel very disappointed.
Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: One of the most important things, especially in consultancy, is time management. You handle so many things at one time, so it is a question of how you manage your time to ensure that your level of service to your clients will not be affected. I don't see that so much in those working in the big organisations. Time is never important. It is not their priority.

GS: Is that a personal or a professional value?

RESP.: It applies to individuals as well. Another thing is to work smart. There's no point in working very hard. Another important thing is discipline. It applies anywhere for that matter. In everything I do, I always believe I have certain deadlines to meet, or how you dress up when you go out, and I know a lot of people who are good in their work but they are not disciplined. Once you reach a certain level, you must do leadership by example, show good points to your staff down the line.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (i.e. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: In my case, I don't see it being an issue. To me, it's perception. They feel that because you are dealing with a government department or because you are non-Malay this is the way it should be done. To me, it's not the way, it's how you manage the person you talk to. Another example is our new economic policy. They say they give preference to certain group of people, but to me it's that for Malaysia to be like what it is today I believe that the wealth, knowledge everything should be equally spread among all the major races. The one race dominates the other. To me, in years to come, you will never find people or a country living in harmony. I've seen that happen in many countries -- in India, in a country where they have a multi-ethnic population, In many cases the root of the problem is that on e particular race dominates over the others.

GS: What about in your dealings with clients of different ethnicity?

RESP.: Not really. Local companies, whether Bumiputra or multinational companies I think it's fairly standard. They don't show certain preference for dealing with certain groups of people. I do hear stories from other agencies, more ad agencies, where the client insists when you select a new agency they like to see more Malay staff than non-Muslim.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

Gender

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: I don't think it's an issue at all.

GS: What about age?
RESP.: Yes it makes a difference. When a person hires a consultancy, they expect experienced people managing the account or looking after and advising them. And obviously first impressions, if some­one young came to give me some advice I would be more comfortable if that company could offer me someone more senior. It's a natural reaction. Clients expect to see experienced people from a consultancy. It's what the consultancy business is all about.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: Depends, not really. If you talk about PR practice, not really. If you talk about ordinary office environment, I may have a different view. A person working in advertising, compared with someone working as an accountant, they come from two different worlds. The reactions, the things they talk about. When you talk about the consulting business, to me whether you are a Malay, Chinese, Indian girl or guy, to me it's a non-issue.

GS: How do the three interact -- gender, age and ethnicity?

RESP.: Age would be most important, followed by ethnicity, followed by gender.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: (not the reality. Feels males and females would be pretty similar across the years of experience). If you're talking 10, 15 years ago, probably you'd see a difference. At that time in the workforce, men were more dominant than women. Today it's all equal.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I'm surprised with the high figure for Indians because I would expect quite similar -- Indian males to Indian females.

Irrespective of race, younger people are more hype and like to see more changes, they are receptive to changes, they agree to changes. (suggest correlating age on this chart)

GS: Why are Chinese males so low compared to the others?

RESP.: There are many factors. I think the education background. Where they studied, whether they studied locally or abroad, whom they studied with. To that extent I find sometimes the Malays who are exposed to the same atmosphere as their Chinese counterpart, they are more aggressive, whether male or female.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why might this be?

RESP.: My personal view slightly differs from this. I find men as far as welfare is concerned, they are better listeners and they are more concerned than their female counterpart. I find Malays show a certain preference for welfare, more so than the Chinese and Indians. Chinese in general are more individualistic, care about themselves, and they tend to be more selfish. You'll find in areas with a mixed population interaction is better than in areas where strictly all-Chinese. I would feel that Malays are higher than Chinese, but the Indians are on the very high side. I would rate Indians higher than Chinese but lower than Malays.

**Individual value types**
Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience (attachment 7), power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: If you looked at today's young graduates, they like to work in big organisations. To them they go for prestige and status. In a consultancy, you are not really a front-liner where you go out. Definitely working in a consultancy they would not be so motivated.

Mid-level consultants, in some ways they have certain influence in how they dictate terms, they have a big role to play. They meet the CEOs of companies, share their views, give advice.

GS: So the role that they're playing once they have 5-10 years experience includes a lot more direct client contact and they are in some position of giving advice?

RESP.: Yes. Senior -- I'm quite surprised that it goes down. If you have been there for 10 years, what else can motivate me to do something better other than the bottom line?

GS: Power isn't it. And with corporates? Are you saying that regardless of years of experience that the values of power would be more important to corporate people than to consultants?

RESP.: Yes. It starts higher, then either stays high or comes down slightly. It's more which organisations they work for. If you made the comparison between consultancies it would be the same -- more established firms compared with less established firms. "Which PR firm do you work for?" "I work for Burson Marstellar" compared with a person, a manager for ABC Public Relations. Obviously the person working for a bigger firm, a national firm, they feel more comfortable or they feel they are better off than people working in small agencies. Social status and prestige is stronger.

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: Maybe because of the male ego. Young people -- social status and prestige. Maybe after a certain number of years they are contented with what they have.

GS: Social status and prestige reduce in importance as years go by, and other priorities become more important which are more to do with performance on the job?

RESP.: Yes. For seniors they can't afford to be content with what they've done so far. They need a bigger market share and they need to get more new business so that is the driving force why they should look forward -- they must be in a comfortable position. For this group of people, control and dominance are more important.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: Simply because working in a consultancy, the form of management is on how well you bring in business, how well you interact with customers, so everything is based on performance. Whereas in corporate, performance for staff of a couple of years experience is not that important.

Mid-level, a couple of factors. They are contented and they don't see any room for further career advancement at that level whether corporate or consultancy. I notice in all the graphs for those in the mid-level it's all down, which is to be expected.

Seniors, in a consultancy they practice with a profit-sharing basis. There's some form of motivation, and in big organisations there's always room for further advancement.

GS: So it becomes important again because they can see the opportunity is there?
Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: For both categories, the younger ones are always more motivated. It is the first job where they see that any form of effort they put in will be seen as very positive by their bosses so they tend to put in more effort. The question to me of those who are still new to the workforce, I don't see young people saying "I've had enough, I don't want to work." They would say probably "I want to change workplace". The question of them not getting the job satisfaction is not because they are not happy with what they are doing, but maybe because they are not too happy with the people with whom they are working. Because they know they've still got a long way to go, they feel that what they're doing, or they don't want to do any more work is quite unlikely because they need to do some many things to maintain their lifestyle, or when they settle down. They are always motivated to go on working for the money they wish to spend. Generally they are happy working. They know they have to enjoy working but they may not be happy working where they are.

GS: So the pleasure for them may more be the people they're working with or the environment itself, rather than the job itself?

RESP.: That's right. Mid-level it goes down. I can expect that. For consultancy to go up, to me to survive in the consultancy business one has to be achiever. There is no such thing as resting on your laurels, happy with what you are doing because there is always someone who could be doing better or more for you. Whether working in agencies, advertising or PR firms, they measure your success. The chances are that you would be motivated, that you would perform better, you get more rewarded package in a consultancy at this level.

Senior consultant -- "I've seen just about everything. I've done just about everything. I've earned more than enough. I've seen nothing else that you could give me -- $2,000 more or other formal rewards, so what? You can't change my view. I’m not going to work more just to earn a few extra things".

GS: What the graph is saying is that once you get to the senior levels of experience in a consultancy, you're not motivated by pleasure anymore.

RESP.: Possible. It depends on individuals.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: To me, it's more important the people that I work with -- whether your clients or in the office. That's more important. What I work on, whether it's in the car business or the food manufacturer, it's not important. It's only important the people whom you work with, you enjoy that working relationship. If you didn't have that support obviously you would not enjoy that.

GS: In terms of what you look for in a job that you do, does pleasure rate highly?

RESP.: Yes definitely. I put satisfaction in the same category. In fact, higher than the rewards. Both the people and the job that I'm doing. (What gives satisfaction?) The support that I get from the lower level people because if one does not contribute it may affect the smooth operation. Flexibility. All of us have certain things that we want to, maybe during office hours. Given a certain form of flexibility makes a lot of difference. Especially I find these days where husband and wife work. Certain things that you have to handle during the week you can't wait until the weekend. The companies allow a certain form of flexibility, I think a lot of working couples would be very happy. But it's not so obvious or it's not really been introduced into local workforce yet. In consultancies it works according to level of seniority. The higher you go you have to have certain flexibility.

RESP.: (The corporates). For sure, they would not enjoy the flexibility of working in a consultancy. They are all guided by terms and conditions, working environment, hours, and so on.

Mid-level -- probably they've not got any promotion or they know for a fact that the work they're doing is for the senior level, but they do not enjoy certain benefits or privileges which their counterparts in the higher levels are enjoying. There is a big gap.
Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

RESP.: I would expect a fairly balanced one for one reason because I find women practitioners these days are very independent. About the only factor probably for men is that because of the economic recession, jobs are always their concern. They can't afford to lose their job. But then again, in a specialised field like PR, concern for security is not so much these days because I think in general there's still a shortage of qualified practitioners or good ones.

Self-concept and years of experience

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: What is important is the trust that I have worked on when I came on board, and the relationship we have with the MDs. It does not apply to all organisations because when I talk about MDs of this country probably you're talking about owners of the company. If they're happy with you you could get two or three increments a year, but if you work in a big organisation that all have their own system that you have to go through. Again flexibility is very important. In small organisations we have the advantage of flexibility.

In my case, half the battle is won for me because my role is media relations and I was a journalist many years ago and it helps to know how one gets stories into the newspapers and tv. I don't really have a problem. That would be my main role but it is only component of the entire work, but the most important thing is the relationship with the people who are more senior than you. And relationships with your clients, because at the end of the day, it's staying power. A good benchmark for effectiveness these days is how long can you retain the client? There's no point winning new business, and then after six months it's up for review.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

RESP.: Things have not really changed in the basic approach of PR business. Maybe in terms of the routine things. You are less dependent on support staff. As to me, what is more important for people like us in this business, you must keep up with the changing environment in the country.

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

. your family identity?
. your organisational identity?
. your ethnic/cultural identity?

GS: Do you find that the values you talked about before actually translate into all those different roles?

RESP.: Exposure in the sense of the perception of the public on certain things, service, it does help me. Apart from working here, I have my own little business. We run one of the bigger chains of computer retail outlets, and it helps in how we can differentiate ourselves from the competitors. In Malaysia, the computer retail business has not changed over the years. It has not improved in tandem in changes with the IT business. There is still a traditional way of selling. No proper product display, staff knowledge on product and how you deal with customers. That has not changed. I have managed to bring new things, what customers see. Because we are in public relations and marketing communications you can add certain things in other areas. I find that very useful. How I can improve the service and relationship with the customers.

I mentioned about time management, discipline. In many ways we use same practices in our daily lives. To me, for most people, a day is not enough to do what you want to do. Again, even for personal things, it's all about time management and how much time you spend with family and other things.

GS: So time management is how you balance things. Are you a different person away from work?
RESP.: I keep them separate.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: No particular role but I like to have time on my own to do certain things. When you have worked for many years you will not be as ambitious as you used to be. Obviously you want to earn more but it is not your priority in life. You like to have time for your own to do things that you like best, whether it is to travel or to do your own things.

GS: So you're at that point where work isn't necessarily the priority?

RESP.: Yes. Work dominates but it is not the topmost priority.

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles? (How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

RESP.: Flexibility for me makes a lot of difference. Because when I need to be the other side I can take a couple of hours off.

Professional values

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: (first group) Track record and broad experience; and Works independently and as a team are the same thing. It's quite simple. When companies look for PR firm, they all basically offer the same service. What is there to differentiate between A, B and C? The key point are track record and the experience you have, in a team it does make a difference. When both are equal, this makes the difference. Drawing on the strengths of everybody.

(remaining constructs in cluster). You need a little bit of everything to support each other. Goes by the book; ethical -- that alone may not be good enough. You need to have the others. Each and every one of these components need to work together.

GS: This is talking about the ability to work as a team and what's important in working as a team.

RESP.: You obviously need the support of each other. There's no way you can do it alone.

RESP.: (second cluster) Value-added service -- all being equal, if you can provide something of additional value it does make some difference. Being flexible. Solid experience is the key point in doing whatever you want to perform for the company looking for a PR firm.

GS: These things are points of competitive advantage?

RESP.: Yes. Every PR firm will say "We can do this. We can do that". How you're going to differentiate one from the other? It is the little things that count.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

RESP.: Fine.
Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princem). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: (Group one) Yes. In this instance I think how a person or a company is judged is based on your track record in getting new business or maintaining existing clients and on that point, if you talk about using proven methods, I think it's quite common for us each time you see people, you expect to hear success stories of things of previous things we have done. Why we have chosen that route for example. (All dimensions of being a capable practitioner, and also how he sees himself).

(Group two) It would cover all four areas.

GS: Are these attributes of a role model?

RESP.: Yes.

RESP.: (Group three) These would obviously apply to those who are new in the business with a couple of years experience because obviously you would take less responsibility compared with someone more senior. To say they are less professional, I don't know that that's it. They may not be.

RESP.: (Group four) These would apply to smaller PR firms, one-man operators. Lack of follow-through is partly because they don't have the support. Not because they are not capable but because they don't have the full support. This is quite common in one-man operators.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way (as an experienced practitioner)? Is it purely the passage of time?

RESP.: You need some time and additional responsibilities given to them. It’s a progression. Apart from passage of time, it’s also the environment they’re in. Some PR firms are more conservative in their approach. Some individuals are very ambitious. They feel they can't get on in one company, they move to another company. They can't afford to wait or they don’t want to wait to go up the ladder.

GS: So it's experience and exposure, and as part of that, taking more responsibility?

RESP.: Yes. If you go for higher positions, one has to take more responsibility.

Is there anything else you wish to add?
RESPONDENT 4 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and /or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: I think because they've probably just come out of university and not so much stuck in the old ways, so they're more open to change and just accepting whatever comes as is.

Then, you get stuck in your old ways. You develop certain beliefs and certain ways of doing things, and that's why there would be less willingness to change.

Senior, having a broader perspective. Someone at 15 years would probably have had a larger work experience and can see things from a macro-perspective and hence are more willing to change. I'm surprised that that would be the result.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: You're out there to prove yourself in the workplace. The only way would be to show your own capabilities and you dominate over others as your own way of proving your capability. Depends on your personal values again. What is important. Level of maturity. They'll probably be in their early 20s so the level of maturity would be different.

Mid-level. Probably in the midst of getting married, having children, and they wouldn't have time. It would be important but this is a time when family takes over, and this takes a back seat for a while. You're still interested in your career but it would be an adjustment mode.

15 years and above I see that it does goes up but it's not such a high issue. Like any typical corporation, if you're not working for yourself, it is a pyramid structure, survival of the fittest as you go up, so there would be that certain amount of politicking to be successful. You are making that move up that ladder.

Conservation

RESP.: This would come back to the first one where you don't want to rock the boat when you're at work. This is probably not their real feel of things, but probably stick by the book based on what they've learned at school, based on what their teacher told them.

Then within the 5-10 years, you develop your own style of doing things having been in the workplace for a while.

15 years, you know what they always say "You get like your Mum as you grow older”. It's again reverting back to the old ways, having established, having seen what it was like when they developed their own pattern. Also when you say self-restriction, the values might be different in the sense that what could be new then becomes old hat there, so they're restrictive, but based on what they experienced when they were younger. New traditions.
Self-transcendence

RESP.: (junior) I don't know if it comes back to educational beliefs and cultural beliefs, our education system where we're talking a lot more about diversity and equality, that comes into play.

Mid-level -- I have no idea why it would dip. It should be something innate, that you should always be equal and concerned for welfare.

GS: Would you see it as pretty much at the same level all the way through?

RESP.: Yes.

GS: So it's not situation-dependent?

Work environment

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. Let’s deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: Probably if you're 2 years, you still have your old rules and what you've learnt from university. The consultancy background is that you always have to be kept abreast of certain changes, and although there's certain modes of working in your workplace, you are playing by the client's rules.

In a corporate culture like X you have these old systems and processes, and although you have your own thoughts, this sets in that this is the way it's supposed to be.

In the consultancy environment, you're so dependent on the client per se and you are actually dictated in a way by the individual client's work culture, so you have to be in tune with whatever client you're working for. Whereas if you're in-house, although things do happen, you're only working for one organisation with just one culture. At X I do see a pattern where some people stay on forever, but there will be a larger pool of people who move out. A lot of long-term employees who leave after about 10 or 15 years and try something else before it's too late.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: (Mid-level). It's like "I've decided to stop fighting the battle". It's sad. There is a set pattern in-house, in working for just one organisation, and when you're in a consultancy, yes you have your own company rules and regulations, but that changes as you working with different clients. You probably get tired of the consultancy scene and switch to corporate at this stage. Actually I find that there is a pattern at about 4-5 years. When times were good people were changing every 1-2 years. But the general path would be to get that certain amount of experience and then go in-house.

(Juniors) It's a lot more competitive in the consultancy environment. It's a smaller environment and also in the work situation. I see this pattern developing more in terms of advertising where it's dog eat dog. Because you're competing with other professionals who are
doing the same thing, whereas if you're working in-house you're probably one of a few. You're all one department, one unit. In a consultancy you're a whole company of PR professionals whereas in this case you've got the job here, you're the only PR person.

(Senior) From a consultancy point of view, they've reached a certain level of seniority and the job market in Malaysia is more limited. From the corporate point of view, I guess they're moving on to try new areas and maybe trying out new things. You can move out and try different areas, and not be in PR and that's why this comes in again, needing to prove yourself to be successful.

Conservation

RESP.: I wouldn't expect any difference between corporates and consultancies at 5-10 years. Why would there be a change and coming back again? I would see them both tapering off. The work practices that they've developed at mid-level remain with them.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: It could be because in the consultancy environment they work a lot more with people from the outside and they're more tolerant of others. Whereas probably if you're working in the corporate side, you're used to certain ways. But when you're on the outside and you meet a lot more people from the different work environments you develop this culture from within.

GS: Is it part of the requirement of the job to be more concerned about others because you're client focussed? And that's not such a reality for corporates?

RESP.: It depends on the company's values. I would say in (my company) they are very concerned about the environment, or diversity. It really depends on the company you're working for. But when you're a consultant you're meeting the client's needs and they have to match these needs, seeing them as equals.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: I haven't seen it but I guess it could be a case of, if you're been in school you choose your friends and if it's going to be clique-ish in terms of race or whatever, you choose your friends. When you're in a work situation, you're thrown into an environment where there could be a mix of cultures and so your own form of familiarity would be identifying yourself with whatever background you have. As you work, you learn to adapt.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: My values -- being honest, getting the work done and not playing political games because that clouds what you want to get across, and trying to adopt that. Being honest and straightforward about things, sometimes difficult, you have to be tactful. Sometimes the culture can be so deep and entrenched it's difficult to break away from it. But you move, you work around it. That's not personal values, that's working within the culture.

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a
factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: Depends on your religious values, not so much ethnicity. Maybe the Muslims wouldn't handle certain accounts that deal with pork. More religion.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: There would probably be some organisations that are very particular. If you're talking about a very Malay organisation, say the government, religion plays a big role. If you work in the corporate sector I think people are a lot more open. There would be an underlying factor. But you do see certain behaviours if you work for a Malay organisation, and I can't see myself working in an organisation that has a lot of one particular race. I don't think it's healthy. Certain behaviours do exist if you're in your own community.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: Maybe there is a glass ceiling that I don't know of. I don't think there is a difference. Then again you do hear things. PR has always been deemed a "women's role" because of their lack of understanding of what PR is.

GS: Do you get different opportunities if you're a male practitioner vs being a female practitioner?

RESP.: You do. Where I am you do, but it's other factors that would hinder it. Whether you're in someone's good books, whether you play the game, and I think that would be regardless of race or gender.

GS: What about age?

RESP.: The sad part is I do see age, if you're not seen as useful any more…

GS: What about the combinations of gender, ethnicity and age?

RESP.: There is the Bumi factor, depending on what the organisation is like. I've always tried to work for organisations which practice diversity. I know it must happen in other organisations, but not in terms of whether they're in PR. It's a general thing. There was a trend, although things are changing. Although there are a lot more females in the profession, the top positions are usually filled by men. I think that's changing. It could be because more men were in the workforce earlier than women.

Ethnicity would be last. Age first, gender second. They find less use for you as you get older. "Let's get someone younger, who's cheaper, who's got the basic experience. The rest can be honed". More that. Gender will probably still come into play, although with the older age group, they would probably favour males. I see a large pattern of senior managers in X who are men, but I know that there's a conscious effort to change that. And lastly ethnicity. I guess it comes from my background. My background, although I'm Chinese and you practice
Chinese New Year and everything, it hasn't been a hindrance. Religion being more the important factor for me. I think we practice tolerance here, or try to.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: Women are more emotional and are able to express your thoughts more, and women I think are just more open to change. Men on the other hand, 5-10 years, maybe family comes into play here.

(Juniors -- why are men so open to change compared to women?) Would they be more ambitious? They're a lot less jaded? Women have gone through more trauma? I have no idea. Could be expectations are different between males and females. Males are more aggressive. Maybe they go into the workplace with less hang-ups than women.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I think it wouldn't be ethnicity. It could be education. The Chinese schools are more traditional. Malays, maybe they're more easy going. And for the Indians, because they're a minority and they're maybe more ambitious because they've reached a certain amount of education and level of experience.

Let’s look at self-transcendence and years of experience (show attachment 1). This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why might this be?

RESP.: The Chinese are just a biased lot. I know that with the Chinese, and I guess it's the same for the others but I can't speak for the others, but the Chinese do make jokes behind their backs, in their face, racial jokes. And they might have a hang-up between the Chinese and the Malays because of the favouritism given to Bumiputras.

(Indians -- wouldn't see it as being this high). Similar level to Malays.

I think females are generally more tolerant. More emotional and are less concerned about war, so they more believe in diversity. It comes back to their belief that they should be treated equally, and so there is no difference. Females regardless of race believe in equal rights for themselves, so race doesn't come into play.

**Individual value types**

Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience (attachment 7), power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment
8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: (Corporates) It comes back to what the areas of concern are at this stage in their life. Generally at this age (mid-level), where marital and family comes into play, power takes a back seat and then goes up again when things are more settled on the home front.

Consultancy -- I think they meet too many clients and they see what's happening so they're not too concerned. Consultancies are usually very small and this doesn't seem as important as in the corporate where there are usually larger numbers of people. There is less competition in consultancy, more competition in the corporate and you have to prove yourself more in the environment where there is more competition

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: (Junior) men are just power freaks. Women are trying to establish themselves in the market place, and are less concerned about power over others. It could be a gender behaviour. For men, having power is important. For women, it's just a case of having to establish yourself in the work situation, proving yourself, and then this comes into play when they start thinking "How do I get better at this?"

(Mid-level men) Other priorities I guess. Work is not such a major concern at this stage.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: (Juniors) The difference could be because you're competing with peers with all the upper echelons and you have to compete with your own kind (in a consultancy). Here, you're probably competing with yourself and that kind of competitiveness doesn't come into play (in corporate). Because you're not competing against core skills, you're competing against other things, eg what car you drive.

Why it tapers off? The other priorities.

Why it goes up again? Your ambitions are probably higher. It's self-actualisation, "what more can I do? I'm getting bored. What more can I do to make things different?"

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: In Malaysia, the corporate sector do have a lot more benefits. You've probably just started work, you're excited, you've got more money, you want to have fun.

The 5-10 years is where the family comes into play.

And here again, it moves up, bigger holidays and things like that, and family time.

The consultants have more work, no time for pleasure.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: Pleasure is outside. There is a lot of satisfaction in work, but I don't think it's the be all and end all. I don't see myself doing this for the rest of my life. But you've got to enjoy it.
It's a decision that you make when you wake up in the morning -- will I have fun or won't I? Say I will.

GS: What do you get satisfaction from at work?

RESP.: Finishing work on time. You see stories in the paper -- you've managed to get that across, you've created an overall image. Personally I saw a lot of satisfaction, after I joined X, there were a lot of things coming out, and you see a lot of things happening, and there's pleasure in that. But I wouldn't say that's the most important thing. Time to myself is a lot more important.

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

*Self-concept and years of experience*

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I'd like to think that I brought value to (my company), and the consultancy experience has really helped a lot. I feel that I have made a significant contribution to the company in terms of its direction and that definitely came from my previous work experience in the consultancy area. It's an exciting industry to be in, to see the technological developments and how to transform that into the layman terms, how it benefits the person. Nobody's going to care what server it runs on but it's exciting -- everybody knows about 'Deep Blue' and 'Casper off'. It's a machine. We all know it as the RS6000 but being able to transform that and seeing ways where I can transform that into the Malaysian workplace as well, humanising things, and that comes from having been in the consultancy, having the abilities to see it that way.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

RESP.: Five years ago, you'd be still "How do you get the press release across. How do you develop media relations?" At this stage, it's a lot deeper than that. It's about strategising and developing messages, and developing an identity, how we can work on marketing, marketing communications, and you start thinking how you can pull other elements together to develop a program as opposed to five years ago, that level of understanding, maturity. I didn't do journalism or public relations, although I did take them as electives. So my understanding of public relations as that stage would be just skimming. Definitely a lot of changes.

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

. your family identity?
. your organisational identity?
. your ethnic/cultural identity?

RESP.: Sadly yes (I am a different person away from work). On the personal level I do a lot of self-development by going for training and seminars and reading, and it's easier out of the workplace to practice what you preach. But sometimes it's difficult bringing it to work. But I'm trying to bring what I learnt to work, and applying it into the workplace.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: The other parts of my life.
GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles?
(How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

RESP.: (Yes I feel I need to adjust) and the trick would be not having to. But that's that period of growth that you have to go through, and it's that uncomfortable feeling that you have to go through with this adjustment, but the aim is to be able to say there is no change. I'm a lot more patient out of work, but it could be the outside stresses that I bring to work as well. But I'm trying to just bridge that gap, and when it's work give it 100% and when it's out give it your 100%, but that these two can merge as well.

GS: You'd like it to be fully integrated, but at the moment it's not.

Professional values

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: (Group one -- are first two identical?) No. (Other constructs) They're all equally important. These qualities are necessary in the PR profession. They should be traits that a good PR practitioner should have, how a good PR practitioner should go about doing the job. I wouldn't separate them. It would be a bonus if a person has all these qualities.

GS: Is this how you would see a role model in PR?

RESP.: Yes.

GS: So together, they are the things you would aspire to?

RESP.: Yes.

RESP.: (Group two) A consistent practitioner is better able to give strategic counselling. You need to be consistent, and coming back to the other qualities. If you have these qualities, and you are consistent in the way you do the practice, with a good understanding of the market place, then you are able to give strategic counselling. A consistent practitioner meaning someone who's in the practice, would have a better understanding of what's going on.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

(See sheet)

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?
Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

GS: (First cluster) Are these the qualities that you would use to judge an experienced practitioner from an inexperienced practitioner?

RESP.: Yes.

GS: Are they also true of how you would see yourself, your own qualities?

RESP.: Somewhat.

GS: (Second cluster) Does this mean that your role model is someone who is a strong company person, and who is also honest and ethical?

RESP.: Yes.

GS: Honest and ethical are role model qualities, and also needed to be a strong company person?

RESP.: Yes.

GS: The role model, from what you said before is also a whole lot of other things, so it's much broader than what you have there. Is the conception of a strong company person also broader than what you have there?

RESP.: No.

GS: (Capable and ethical) Do capability and ethics go hand in hand?

RESP.: It doesn't really need to go hand in hand. Some people are capable but they don't have the ethics in place and you can be seen as capable without the ethics. But in my books where honesty and integrity come into play, when you're not ethical I don't think you're capable. But someone can be very capable, have the right media contacts, but may not be ethical in the way they do things.

GS: So it's an important part of how you judge performance, to have that sense of ethics?

RESP.: Yes.

RESP.: (Practitioner not admired) How can you admire someone you don't like, or vice versa? It comes back to the qualities as well. If they don't have the basic honesty, integrity and being the people person. To admire someone, would be someone honest, these values that you have.

GS: (last cluster) Someone who's got a bit of experience. Again it comes back to the capability, or being seen to be capable, but you never know what they're up to. Being inconsistent. An inconsistent practitioner. You never know what they're up to. You never what strategy decided today will be changed tomorrow. One rule today changes tomorrow, so how can you be effective that way when one minute deciding on one strategy and developing a whole proposal, and the next day but this is not the strategy. If you feel strongly about something, and when you have differing opinions, that comes into play.
GS: It relates to the way in which they go about doing the job?

RESP.: Yes.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?

RESP.: If you have honesty first; guidance, you need the guidance with the right kind of people; to understand theory and practice; but you will need a good role model to follow. That would be the determining factor. What the person teaches, taught the right way, this new practitioner can adopt it. Theory is important, but you need the practice and you need the right kind of guidance. That's very important.
RESPONDENT 5 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2 yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. It suggests that your outlook on the job and /or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: Those young practitioners have the driving force and they want to show results. That is the reason why they are pushing for all kinds of change. When you come to (mid-level) this is when the practitioner start up the family. These external factors may affect me to come down. I am already established in the department, and that is another factor in the workplace, so I am may feel a bit complacent. When you go further it could be you are in such a senior position and later on, when you have the seniority then you are supposed to lead, and you may be pressured by the top to do something, and again to have to really push forward to show some results.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: Comment about reliability of the measurement. Mid-levels as a group are marking lower.
GS: It could be something to do with the enthusiasm of the younger practitioners and they just score everything higher, and the middle practitioners have calmed down a bit. Could be part of the explanation.

RESP.: It could be that another generation, their beliefs are different. You're talking about our education system. I'm the first batch of the SPM, the Malaysian O level.

GS: The values that are being taught in the education system are changing? More of an emphasis on achievement?

RESP.: Could be. The person before me is actually more English-educated. Only one or two papers are in Bahasa Malaysia. The medium that they're exposed to is English. They read more English newspapers. Now our education system is more toward the private study. There are a lot of overseas graduates.

(Proposing three distinct groups among the respondents according to which educational system they went through. Seniors, more English-educated; mid-level SPM, and juniors, more overseas study.)

Conservation

RESP.: It should be the other way around. (Going from personal experience -- mid-level). I think I'm more of a traditional practitioner. It could be my mother language. It could be my family as well. Partly also it could be the education system. This is a Chinese company, and generally they are more conservative and practice in more of a traditional manner.

Asma's results have proven that Malay value very much the religion and they actually bring that into the workplace, and they actually showed a difference significantly as compared with the Anglo-saxon, for the whole of Malaysia. Chinese are more neutral. Malay are more prone to religious.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: It is true, but why? Juniors -- they want to prove something to others, and therefore they want to gain acceptance from others. They're more energetic, more dynamic.

Seniors. Maybe they are already in that position, they have already shown a result. They are talking about Maslow's theory, self-actualisation, and they may have already achieved.

Mid-level -- This group of people have not done enough.
Work environment

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. Let’s deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: In the first place we have to understand the differences of the working environment between these two groups. The corporate, you are reporting to one, and you work for one, and the organisation itself. We pay our full attention to that organisation. Whereas a consultant, they have so much work they have to handle so much accounts, and perhaps you don't pay full attention just on one organisation. They may pay more attention, but at the same time you have to take care of others as well. There's more balance. And also you have to be smart in the sense of managing your time. You play a kind of balancing act. Whereas for corporate, you pay full attention. It could be also in organisation they have some politicking. These are the differences between the two groups.

It is because the consultant, regardless of how many years of service, your purpose is to change. You are changing every day. They are changing your account, so you are coping with change.

In corporates, it could be a complacency come into play. And for this group of people (mid-level) they could be more complacent.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: But generally looking at the younger group, they have a higher score for all. So is that a group that is energetic, they are more pushing, driving force.

GS: Are you saying that it might be a different style of person that goes into a consultancy, or does the environment have some impact?

RESP.: I would say that it's more of both. One is the person who is choosing the work in this consultancy. They are having that kind of higher value. Those who are having the lower value, it could be they decided to choose the corporate environment. But generally these younger generation are still very high, compared with the older generation. It could be also, the working environment has influenced this practitioner, in the consultancy, and therefore there's a higher score.

Conservation

RESP.: 

Self-transcendence

RESP.: This is the same reason. If you are not looking at it, it could be that the workplace has a big influence. As you can see, this is showing that the higher is the younger generation in the consultancy, and similarly this one also. I suppose the working environment influences the practitioner to have a higher self-enhancement. I have not worked with a consultancy so I am not sure of the impact of the environment, but having some working relationship with consultants, perhaps their nature of business is dependent on the account that they're handling, and they're more trying to bid for the account, and having a good relationship with the client. And go home, back to the back room environment, where you need to have a teamwork kind of manner. Integration is quite important, and I think you also have to show concern about others. That is where choice of your working environment may influence them to be more concerned about this value.
Whereas for corporates, there are some differences. Some you work as a team basis. I prefer to work in a team basis. But I don't deny some of the managers, some of the big practitioners practice tribal or segmentism, divide and rule.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: The younger practitioners feel more belonging to their ethnic group? It could be lesser exposure to the other ethnic groups. From the very beginning, I shouldn't have been influenced by this because I have been working in the military before. In that environment they're actually multi-racial. But I don't deny the fact that just prior to that I was Chinese educated and that influenced me. And in order for you to break through that gap I think you need some time to adjust. Some of the people, even of our ethnic group in the military, they have clashes with other ethnic groups. So I suppose these younger practitioners, they have just come out from the school or college, it could be they have some educational contact with other ethnic groups, but these are all different. Being a study group, they can still be on their own and be independent. But you can't in the workplace. You need to have interaction regardless of whoever you are working with. There is something basic on interpersonal communication. You are talking about the frame of reference. That is actually how communication is taking place. But that also, you need to expose your ethnic group to other ethnic group. You need to have better communication, which means you need to have sharing of bigger frame of reference, and therefore fore you can communicate well. In order for you to work you need to communicate with other people and you need to expose your ethnic identity to other people. You have to accept, you have to understand other people as well.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: Sometimes but not so direct. Malaysians, the communication style is very much indirect. For Chinese also, they talk about face, face value. In fact you want to do that you cannot say "I have a very good recipe. Everyone follow". No way. You have to work through a very indirect manner. And to bring in what you think is good, you want to change, perhaps there are a few steps that you have to go through. First you get commitment from the top management, and how you want to sell your idea. Later on you have to talk to your peer group, beat up support as well. And eventually it will turn into the instruction, and then you have to indoctrinate your subordinates. And prior to that you are talking about consultative. I am quoting this book (Kelly). There are a few approaches (matrix) based on the style (soft/hard) and the direction (top-down/bottom-up). The soft approach top-down, you are talking about indoctrination. Hard, top-down is aggressive. There is a very good example, the General Electric culture change. Very aggressive. I look at it, I am more of a soft manner. I don't say you can't have a hard manner.

GS: The Malaysian way would be?

RESP.: More indirect, more compromising.

GS: can you use your values on the job?

RESP.: I won't say that totally. Whether or not they're applicable. I believe more of sharing. I am more of a family man, and I treat everyone like a colleague. I don't see that they are my subordinate. They are actually my colleague. Even though I am the head of this department. We do celebrate sometimes a little success, everyone's birthday, and the little things. It's actually become a sub-culture in the department and it enhances the better relationships. Everyone is like family members. And I believe that. Without intention, we make it a set kind of a system. The little things I am bringing in. I am looking at myself. I am more conservative. I try not to go out with my colleagues at the end of the day. I think to a certain extent (I keep work and private separate). I treat them like family members yes. On the other hand, I am creating that kind of atmosphere. The sense of belonging. But this again cannot be seen in the western approach of how to do it. This is very Asian. Very indirect.

Education. I believe in education. I am doing my MBA. My secretary is doing her diploma in marketing and she has just finished the in-house exam and she is now going to sit for the LCCI exam. I
encourage that. I believe that education can change a person. It's the same like me. I don't know if I told you I was an SMP failure - twice. And I am sure education was my turning point. I worked as an aircraft technician in the Royal Malaysian Airforce for five years. You're talking about socio-economic level. I am more of a medium, but I achieved a transformation. It is true that education. Without certificate you are unable to jump into the executive level, but of course all your promotion is actually based on your work performance. I believe all these things. I always encourage them.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

RESP.: I would ask them to be careful as well. Sometimes they try to bring in too much thing. Also you may tend to step into other people. I am trying to create a friendly atmosphere not only with this department, I am trying to make it with the company. When I actually took over this position as communication manager, and I was elected as the sports club president. Knowing that the previous committee they are practising a small group affair. I try to have a change. I want to integrate the whole company. The very first thing is I change the name to X Group Sports Club. Then also the representation in this committee, I make it a must to have all the company represented. So I try, but you know how much I can do. I need to gain the support from others as well. Even now, today, one of my colleagues is now the President of the Sports Club. I am indirectly giving the advice, how to integrate the participation from all companies in the group, inter-department. Sometimes the senior ones may be a bit difficult.

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: Asma has some very good research findings. She was saying that regardless of whoever as a manager, you cannot run away, you are actually carrying your cultural baggage to the workplace. In that respect, whoever is making the decision, you base on your background, knowledge, your like/dislike, and your normal practices. You will bring that in and eventually that will come into the company policies and practices, and that is how we can say because of this culture comes into this company culture. So, like it or not, being Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, I have got an orientation as a Malaysian Chinese and I am carrying my baggage to this workplace. That is one of the factors that we can consider but don't forget about education on PR that we have got, through mostly western. It is again how you talk about the so-called western culture or western education, and actually coming to the influence of PR practice. In general, most people based on this education to set the policy or set the practices for PR. But you cannot ignore the fact of the culture of the individual, and of the whole organisation. When you are exposed to others, you tend to change or fight through your belief, your values. You accommodate. You know that, through research (Asma's?) as a Malaysian we are more compromising and also they are consensus-seeking.

GS: Re western education: Are there spots where you say the western way won't work here and we have to change it so it fits?

RESP.: It's again that I want to quote Asma. Sometimes it is a disaster that we tend to copy everything, all the western concepts and western practices and bring that into our workplace. Without realising that there are actually so much differences. Eg anglo-saxons are extrovert and straight to the point. If you tend to copy everything you may have a misfit. You still need to do some adjustment. I look at the so-called Chinese knowledge and education and perhaps PR is still very new. You don't have very good models or tools. We have no choice that we have to base on the western model. I suppose we should have our own identity. Culture is definitely a part of that. It is interesting, what you value may not be relevant to Malaysia. Sometimes Malaysia appreciates something so much, eg the religious matter. Are you aware that there is one expatriate who is the head of this company in Malaysia? They tend to create some problems, and eventually almost bring to the Industrial Court. They don't understand the culture in the workplace. They want the employees to sacrifice their Friday prayers. To them, these are very big things. I would suggest, get in touch with Asma.
Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: I am not really experienced. My whole department are all Chinese-educated, so I don't really have any colleagues who are not Chinese. Another person who is from another ethnic group is our Vice-Chairman. He is our first education Minister who is also the president of WWF, the founder of Kiwanis in Malaysia, and Ambassador to the UN. His position as the Vice-Chairman is as the second man in the company, but he is a very good PR man. He's Malay and sometimes at the Malay function, we have to get these kind of prominent figures to handle this kind of festive season. Similarly we have this Indian Director. He also, talking about the Deepavali, we need to get him and his family and others. I work as a supporting role to these directors.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: There is no difference. All are equally smart. If they work hard, study hard, they can get what they are supposed to get. We cannot deny the fact that there are some limitations. Asking me to handle any guests, overseas guests especially, to have any business talk, I can, especially the Chinese, they allow you to go to their hotel room without any restriction. I can do that, I have a kind of freedom, although if I know there is a lade I'll be very careful. But for a Malaysian lady practitioner, some may be very careful about it. Cultural constraints. Tow things: , they're talking about their self-protection, and they're talking about other people's perceptions.

GS: What about age in PR in Malaysia? Do Pr practitioners of different ages have different abilities to gain access, etc?

RESP.: In terms of exposure, yes. But in terms of ability, there's a question. This senior practitioner may be exposed to all kinds of seminars, conferences, etc in terms of knowledge, they gain a lot, in terms of working they may have been working with this company, that company. And the thing is how much they can turn that into an effective PR activity. I'm not sure. So far, my readings are limited. I don't see anything prominent in this manner. In Malaysia, the image is tarnished because of the economic crisis, and the government has been saying we have to do a lot of PR work to bring out the image. These people should come forward, but I still have not seen them. I am not criticising. The country needs our service. IPRM is a body that could represent the Pr practitioners. Malaysia is also very much seniority-based, not merit, and I think we respect the elder and we are waiting for them to meet the need.

GS: Looking at the combination of gender, ethnicity and age. Which would be more influential in the PR role eg acceptance?

RESP.: All equal. All have their influence. In terms of age, they have more experience, they have done everything, and in the Malaysian culture, they wait for them to be the leader. I look at myself as a medium trajectory. In terms of gender, they should be equal. But in terms of the Malaysian culture, there are limitations as well. It is very biased sometimes.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?
This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: You know that the findings from Asma also, that the Indians tend to speak up. They also tend to be more extrovert. Mostly they are the people who are going to speak up, asking for change. They also are in the profession, lawyers. So it could be the reason why the Indian guy has a higher score. (Supported by Asma's research). Chinese is funny. They decline you but they won't say no to you, they don't give you the answer. They are indirectly declining you. But Malays are slightly better. They will say "No. I'll tell you why". Perhaps you have to look into the education and also the environment that they're staying or working in. Because Chinese could be split into two or three. One is very much Chinese educated, just like me, I'm 100% Chinese-educated until secondary school. There is another group, English educated or Malay educated. This group are not exposed to Chinese reading. Now I'm reading all the papers, all languages. But for this English-educated they perhaps only can read The Star so their exposure to Chinese issues and values may be limited.

GS: There are people amongst my sample who would be Chinese educated, and English-educated, and that might lead to a difference in how they view openness to change. The ones who are Chinese-educated, what are the Chinese values that they're getting, that the English-educated Chinese are not getting?

RESP.: (I had an argument with my lecturer who was Chinese-educated and suffered because of his lack of skill in Bahasa. He is sending his children to be English-educated. He said:) It doesn't mean that you won't know the culture if you don't know the Chinese language. You can read the translated version, But to us, the whole orientation, the whole process is different Our ability that I can read the classical Chinese, I can interpret. This is a value I can get from the Chinese reading, my ability to interpret. If you are English-educated perhaps you can only read the translated version and it is very limited to the scope of what the translator is trying to tell you. the whole process is different. Your children will only know the Chinese culture, but have not experienced the Chinese culture. Divide the Chinese into two different groups. Perhaps the Indians also. You have to understand the Chinese education. Mainly they are going for Chinese education, quite a big portion. The English one also, quite big but lesser than the Chinese-educated. For the Indians, they have Tamil schools and English schools, and also Malay as well. But for Malay they are mainly gone through the fundamental education in Bahasa and eventually they have the chance to be exposed to the western education. That is quite straightforward. I am looking to other independent variables.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience (show attachment 1). This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why might this be?

RESP.: Surprised that the Indian lady is less. I can't explain for the Malay. Indian men are more outspoken, they are more dynamic and extrovert. I can understand. For the Chinese men I can also understand. Why there is a difference between the male and female, that I can't understand. Have you checked whether the Chinese ladies are more English-educated? And the working environment? (Check)

Individual value types

Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: For corporates, is it the working environment and not so much the personal value? Possible? Is it because of the expectation when you come into corporate? Expectation from your supervisor? They have not achieved the status (so they focus on it).

This one (mid-level) they have already got it, so to a lesser degree (don't worry about it as much).
But why does it go up? Is it as you are talking about retirement, self-actualisation? This group (seniors), they are going towards another kind of socio-economic status. I consider myself as a medium group. These are talking about going towards the upper group. Going to a different category of the socio-economic.

GS: So at senior level, they are concerned more about social status and prestige?

RESP.: (For consultants). Their life is so plain and not exciting at all compared with the corporate?

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: Young males -- is it because they want to show something to their girlfriend? To the girl, it doesn't bother so much "as long as I am pretty?" I am not sure. This group is not married.

GS: More motivated by how the job looks, by social status and prestige?

RESP.: When I first worked as an executive, when I first joined the company, for the first 2 years, I rode my own motorbike. Not many young graduates are willing to do that. They ask the family and get at least a car. (Because of appearances). For a woman, you can always come here by commuter. One of our media managers, the same level as me, she is still taking the LRT to come to work. Our senior managers are given a car. I'm given a car, petrol allowance, and all those things. But she is still very plain.

GS: So there's a difference in how men and women might look at those perks and be rewarded by those?

RESP.: I think women generally are not so much motivated by those.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: Is it because the rewards, the pay? Working in the consultancy, are they on less pay compared with the corporate? In the corporate the rewards could be quite slow, and not many people have the chance to be promoted. For the consultancy, as long as you can show the result, you get the rewards. (mid-range) It could be they're getting used to the job, and by doing the job and getting the job done, that is the satisfaction. To them, as long as you complete the job.

But for the corporate, especially if you're talking about the supervisor or the manager level (senior), you are the head of the department, you feel pressure. You tend to anticipate the result, you have done something useful to the company.

GS: You have more responsibility to achieve

RESP.: With the senior consultants, are they worrying about their retirement? Or the thought that they can't achieve further. There is a limit.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: Satisfaction comes from the job. The results, the rewards. Sometimes you can't tell the success of it. Sometimes it's just getting the job done. Sometimes it's how other people think about it. Sometimes you get the credit and you get praise for doing a good job. That is how it makes you feel. Sometimes, it's not the reward but you get a lot of chance to see the CEO. They feel happy and they feel very motivated. They feel pleasure.

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?
**Self-concept and years of experience**

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I would see that my western education - the concepts, the theories -- come in to influence the values in this PR practice. I cannot deny the fact that my previous education that I've gone through before the PR education is very much Chinese-influenced, the language etc. The way that I was brought up with the family, I would say that, also the national culture, being very indirect, also influences. At the workplace, mainly the job that I am handling is regarding the Chinese community. Our customer base is mainly Chinese and also the overseas project may be China as well, as that also influences because I understand the culture, not only Malaysian Chinese but also Mainland Chinese culture. And also their social economic status. And our punters are mainly medium/low, so I have to understand. And I have to bring that into practice, into my PR strategies and campaigns. And that is of value to me. In this Malaysian society I cannot ignore the multi-racial aspect, and even though I don't have other ethnic groups in my department, I do have some working relationship with Malay and Indian and that also, I have to be very conscious as well, of religious practices. I have to know that other ethnic groups are more outspoken. Within Malaysian among the three ethnic groups there are bound to be some differences as well.

So you have to understand and you have to adapt yourself towards that environment, how to turn your idea into practice, how to sell your idea, how to gain the support, how to get them working as a team. These are actually very important. And also sometimes you work with a consultancy. You are dominating, rather than them dominating you, because you are the client. You are telling them what is your concern. But you want to turn the concern into practice.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?

Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: There are two roles: my family -- my own immediate nuclear family and my original family on my mother's side; but the concentration is on my own family. In terms of how I spend my time, I spend more time at the office.

GS: But in terms of identity, your family is more important?

RESP.: Yes

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles? (How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

RESP.: I am quite fortunate. From the very beginning, just before my marriage, I told my wife "You have to understand. If I'm in this profession, as a PR practitioner, my job function is .... I know that you're a teacher. Your job function is .... I will accept that." Even to come to company functions, I try to bring my children, to participate, so they have a better understanding. I manage it well, without any interference from the family.

**Professional values**

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links
between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: I am working in this corporation, very much business oriented. Therefore my PR practice is influenced by company goals and the bottom line. There is no question. In a business organisation, you are doing something, you have to talk about what is the return, what is the mileage for the company as well. In a manager level, in this professional you should be able to give advice, to handle issues, crisis management, you must have the skill to do it. And of course you're talking about the knowledge. As a good practitioner, you should have skill and knowledge, and then the driving force to do it, and experience. Experience you gain from the issue or the event you have handled before. You come to the next event and you have it as a kind of reference. And that reference is also a part of the topic you can talk about, and give advice on to others. In this profession, you go through the formal education and you are taught to be an ethical PR practitioner. I therefore put that as one of the factors in the practice.

GS: The thing that links them together sounds like the ability to contribute to the company goals.

RESP.: Yes of course. If you are not capable, how can you contribute to the company? That is the purpose of the department. When the company is setting up the department, you first ask what is the purpose? What is the objective of the department? And eventually you will talk about the contribution of this department. Otherwise why must it spend so much money? Return on investment.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

RESP.: Individual or as a manager? As the manager of this department, the bottom line is critical. The sequence is right.

As an individual practitioner, ethics is more the priority. Ethics up the top. The bottom line is next. Then the rest.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: I agree with your results.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: Cluster 1

RESP.: Cluster 2 (new practitioner).

RESP.: Cluster 3


RESP.: Cluster 5. These are qualities of the person I don't admire. I very strongly believe in that.

RESP.: Cluster 6. I look at the practitioners now, especially the young people. Along their PR career they have experience, and they should also educate and give advice to others, sharing, and then also, more importantly, it's about ethics. That makes you a professional.

GS: Are they role model qualities?
RESP.: Yes. The ideal.

RESP.: Cluster 7 (role model). I have not seen any prominent PR practitioners in Malaysia who could take the lead. Therefore I cannot see them as a role model. The person I had in mind was my mentor, an academic. Also, I take education as one of the important points. I personally pursue my own education.

**What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?**

RESP.: Not just time, but also their attitude. They must be willing to learn, know about ethics, do the right things. Time is also a factor. Throughout a period of time you experience, and then you can go in as a professional. Education as well. Willing to share as well. Learning from peer group. You gain knowledge and you tend to see things in more perspective, and be more holistic, rather than a specialist and just look at one angle.

**Is there anything else you wish to add?**

I am quite happy with the findings, and the feedback. This is quite consistent with my original ideas.
RESPONDENT 7 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR. The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. It suggests that your outlook on the job and /or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

RESP.: Perhaps because you're exposed to business and industry and you're able to get a real close-up view of how people run businesses and how people make bad decisions, and how people are not motivated by the right sort of impulses. Even today I'm just amazed at how public-listed companies make last-minute decisions, decisions that are based on incomplete information. The more I work with companies, the more rot you see and you begin to wonder what sorts of people run these companies, and how capable are they. Even CEOs make bad decisions. So then you stop pushing the professional view because you think there's no point. They're not going to pay any attention to it anyway. They're not even interested in looking at options. Some decisions are so bad and so costly. And after a while you just don't want to push it. How can they be so closed? How could they be so naive? And they're not even prepared to listen?

Openness to change

RESP.: I'm trying to look at it from the point of view of a young practitioner (S) with a future in PR. And someone who has had about 7/8 years' experience (T). And someone like me who's had 20/25 years' experience.

Just looking at openness as something like using the internet or using the new computer-related communications. S is very open to it. She's young, she's fast, she remembers that she wants to send a news release to five editors that she knows and this is the fastest way to get to them.

Someone like T is not even IT savvy. He's not even interested to learn how to use powerpoint. Whereas me, I am so into it. I think it's great. I do all my research on the net. I read newspapers and magazines. I have my favourite websites, about 24 of them. I access most nights. I find that I welcome the new forms of communications. I am constantly in touch with senior editors because I have their email addresses and we chat.

GS: Why might there be those differences?

RESP.: With the younger person, they're more receptive of change anyway. It's the trends. They set trends. They don't have loyalties. Maybe that's the nature of being young. The older practitioners have come to terms with "This is the environment and if we don't do it we're going to be dinosaurs so let's do it".

Maybe the people in the middle have a bit of the mid-career blues.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: You start a career and when you start working you think you can achieve so much, and you're very idealistic. You're ambitious. You don't look at the pitfalls. You think you can do it.

I'm trying to think of myself after seven years. I left my first job after seven years. I just hit the pits. After seven years life is just one big complaint. Everything is not right. Perhaps you become a little bit discouraged about where you're heading in your career. Then you start looking for different things to do. Maybe it's a little bit of frustration and a bit of self-realisation of your own limitations.

And when you get older. In my case I think it's because if you don't do it now, you're never going to do it. That sense of pushing yourself to the limits of what you think you can do because it's your last chance. Why did I decide to start a little shop when I was 46 when I could have been comfortable in employment. People still ask me that because it was a good job, and I had a car. But I felt like it was
the ultimate challenge. If I didn't do it now, then when? Some people think it was very brave. Some people might think it was foolish.

GS: So was it linked with success, with proving yourself to a certain extent?

RESP.: Yes.

Conservation

RESP.: I think that's a bit odd. Young practitioners, having come out of university or college, or having read about PR, or done a diploma, would believe in all those things -- the essence of PR, the traditions, what did Sam Black say? The theory.

Maybe after you've been practising 7-9 years down the road, you might find that the real world is different, and you can't bring textbook solutions to a business problem. But then again when you're older, you still cannot bring textbook solutions, but perhaps when you're older you want to make a little bit of contribution to the industry and to the profession and then you start writing a little article about what is the impact of managing one's corporate culture, and you start revisiting. That's been the case for me as well. A little bit of mentoring and revisiting. Now I start buying all the books I never bought before. Starting to get into some research. Actually getting research papers and doing some teaching as well. Maybe that tends to happen. And if protection of stability also means wanting to protect the profession then that starts happening when you get older.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: I think in the middle years, there's a competitive spirit, keen competition, and hostility. When I was going through the middle years myself I didn't bond so well with other practitioners and want to be sharing the same platform with them.

But now, there's a lot of that. I'm concerned for the welfare of other practitioners, sharing information that I get, not just even with practitioners locally. And concern for the welfare of younger practitioners, the older practitioners would perhaps become a little more conscious of their responsibilities towards the younger people. It takes time. It's much easier to do it yourself if you have a problem or a client has a particular need. It's much easier to just call a young person and say "Do this and this". But it takes lot of time to actually sit them down and tell them why am I editing this, and why am I removing that?

(Young) You're a younger practitioner, you don't look at your peer as a major threat to you. Perhaps it's all to do with being idealistic and friendly and naïve. We have three young people in the office and they're quite willing to share, and to do little things for one another.

Work environment

There's a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you've had in PR. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: I guess you said it when you talked about the influence of the organisation, and the culture. We work with so many in-house practitioners and I find there's always a certain amount of suspicion. It's protecting your territory -- "Are these people threatening your job security?" Less willing to be open to ideas.

Whereas in consulting, the organisation is flat and it's how bright you are in terms of ideas and how much you're prepared to do, how much energy you have. In a consultancy you have to be a lot more open to change because you're meant to be a step ahead of your client anyway. In addition to that, as a consultant you're meant to also be creative and independent and bring in fresh views. That means being open to change. Whereas the in-house person tends to be more concerned with the bureaucracy.
In a consultancy people tend to be more open to change than in a corporate environment. And in a consultancy, all sorts of people tend to be open to change but certainly the younger practitioners and the older practitioners are still more open to change than the people in the middle. The culture in a consultancy is so different from the culture in an organisation. In an organisation they tend to implement decisions made at the top. Consultants are meant to bring in fresh insights and to challenge what's traditionally been done. So that usually calls for fresh thinking. Even when we sit and brainstorm a client problem and we want to be as different as we can be, and we want the wildest, wackiest ideas.

GS: So it's actually the requirements of the job?

RESP.: I think so.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: I guess consultants probably hit a low some years into their jobs. Maybe the common factor is that some years into any job is that realisation that there are certain limitations, I'm not going to get ahead, the mid-career blues. Maybe that tends to hit consultants at about the same time that it hits people in corporate environments. After 7/8 years, that sense of "How successful am I at this job? Should I start thinking about another?" It's a time when you consider a career change.

GS: And then you make a decision and it goes back up again.

Conservation

RESP.: I wonder whether it has anything to do with the fact that older consultants, as compared with older in-house practitioners, might be more comfortable in their niche. After 15 years as a consultant, you are comfortable in that niche as a senior consultant, but in an in-house environment you'll probably rise and get into a more senior role, and along with the seniority comes some of that responsibility in terms of maintenance of traditional practices. I'm not really sure why that is the case.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: I would tend to agree with this. I am in touch with a lot of practitioners who are client contacts in-house, and they all have this dull look about them. If you're a young in-house practitioner, you get stuck with producing the annual diaries, and with a lot of menial work, whereas in a consultancy you get all sorts of opportunities, and variety of work. But I'm not sure how that ties in.

In in-house situations it's a lot more political. You have a small department. You know that you are a young PR executive and in a couple of years you could be head of a unit, and you have to fight with four others to get to be head of unit. So maybe you don't want to share so much. I was in-house for six years and I felt that.

But in consultancies, it's how much you want to put into the job, and the rewards come along with that. If someone like S came up to me and said she's got capacity and she'd like to take on two more clients, then she's prepared to put in that amount of energy and 10 hours a day, her rewards go up. It's nothing to do with position. I've seen that consultants tend to be more concerned for the welfare of one another. It encourages you to be different. There's no time for politics. In in-house positions, people are vying for position, but in consultancy why does anyone need to vie with one another to please me? As long as they get their job done, the clients are not complaining. It's the nature of the environment.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: I don't have any strong feelings about that. In this organisation, I think they're all pretty open.
Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: I do try to as much as possible. I am Christian, and I try to, without trying to appear to be Christian, I want to be a bit value-driven or value-conscious. And when I take some decisions, I try to explain to them why we're doing a particular thing so they understand there is sometimes a moral issue. I'm not being hard because I'm nasty.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

RESP.: Thrift is a good value and a couple in the office are quite thrifty in terms of how the money is spent. That's a good idea. They insist we must use recycled paper. That's fine. They've cut back on pantry purchases -- their own little deal. They've got a deal going on how to cut costs. Other values? I would like to encourage, and I'm open to, but I'm not sure whether some of these values are values I want to adopt. Sometimes it could be misplaced. Maybe it's because I'm much older than many of them so I see things differently. If they want to all get together and hang out on a monthly or weekly basis I would encourage that because it's bonding. That sense of family. A responsible attitude when it comes to clients. That sort of thing I do encourage. Punctuality, respect for office security. Those sorts of things I really welcome.

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (i.e., your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: In a very broad sense in this country with the three ethnic groups, all of them have their own unique strengths which come out of their culture. The Chinese are known to be very productive, very hard working, very efficient. They make good use of time. They're good managers of money. They've got good business sense. These are the sorts of values that they bring to the workplace. And the Malays are much more humane, and nicer, friendlier people. A lot more subtle in their communications and hence having them in the workplace is also good, they're good on the phone, they are softer, friendlier people.

The Indians are meant to be very professionally-driven. They're good writers, they speak good English. They also have their strengths.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: Yes very much so. I'm putting myself in that employee situation. My superior was Chinese and very Chinese in his orientation, more so than others, because he went through a Chinese school education. And there were certain things about him that I never really understood and I use to be put it down to his very Chinese orientation. For one thing he was quite racist and he felt it was only the Chinese who were good at their jobs.

GS: So you had to work harder?

RESP.: Yes. And also he always felt that you had to analyse things in a very clinical and objective manner, to discount the human factors. And because of the nature of public relations, the human factor is always important, so if I went to him for a decision, I would have to look at things very objectively. There was never any real element of subjectivity.
We wanted to support deaf ballet for example. Deaf children learning ballet. And he said it was a bad decision because if you adopt a deaf child and you teach her ballet for a year, if she were good, then you had a responsibility to carry her for all her life. And you could not after the year say "Well our objectives have changed. I'm no longer interested in ballet". Who's going to pick that person up? You'd be doing a lot more damage than good.

GS: That's actually a long-term orientation. "What are the implications of this?"

RESP.: I know that if it was a Malay boss it would have been the warmth of this good feeling -- let's just respond for the need. In a Malay company, I wouldn't say the communication is easier. With the Chinese it's very direct, cut and dried. With the Malays it's very subtle and there's a lot of shadow play. You could be sitting around a table, and everyone agrees this is the right way to do it, but it takes a long time to get to that decision. And even then, it doesn't really reflect what's in their minds. It's a lot of being nice, and lip service, and three days later they do something completely different than what was agreed. They tend to want to please, and want to keep the harmony.

GS: How do you get things done as a PR person when you're faced with that sort of management?

RESP.: I think it's different strokes for different folks. You really have to style flex. I think it's partly the ethnic factor but it's also the personality involved. In the case of my ex-boss where I was before this particular "difficult" boss, it was his Chinese-ness, and also his training as an engineer. He was one of these first class honours in mathematics type person that made him so logical.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: I think gender has a huge impact and I'm not sure if I really understand why. I'd say 80% of the PR practitioners are women. There could be a number of reasons. Company bosses tend to think that if you have six key executive roles -- HR, finance, legal, company secretary, operations and sales - - and they would probably give them to males. And they would look at PR and say "This is one portfolio for women". That is partly driven by the decision-maker in terms of typecasting that particular role.

But it also has to do with the fact that women happen to be more suited to the profession. Maybe that's another reason why the profession has attracted so much because women tend to be successful in it. They tend to be more sensitive to people's needs, and PR is about being sensitive to issues. When you read something is the paper, and I find that I'm very sensitive. My gut feel tells me that this is not going to look right, and true enough it starts exploding in the client's face. Sensitivity and an eye for detail, because we tend to be a lot more detailed in terms of tidyness of presentation and to have an eye for what's presentable, an eye for design. A sharper eye perhaps.

And then relating with different groups because PR is all about communicating with different groups. When you're working on a set of communications for customers, how different that must be for the press, or how different that must be for government. And dealing with different people, different levels of people, different groups of people. All that, women are better at.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: I don't know what sort of comment you expect. The first thought is the right combination really depends on the needs of the job. It's difficult to comment. In Malaysia the PR function in most of the large listed companies that are owned by Bumiputra Malay shareholders, and all the big government and statutory organisations, Securities Commission and Stock Exchange, all of these are run by Malay women. I'm not sure how to explain that.
This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: I think women are less resistant to change. I'm not sure whether it's because they are less ambitious and hence more willing to be flexible. Even in the office, T is the only male and he tends to be quite stubborn about certain things. The women are a little more creative. Women appreciate the value of being open to change more than men do, and women practitioners of all ages tend to be open to change, whereas men tend to be more flexible and open at the start of their careers. Then they get into a little mental block, and then as they get older and more mature, they become more open to change.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I think this is quite true. Indian professionals, if they're very driven by professionalism, they tend to be a lot more open than the Chinese professionals. Chinese professionals are suspicious and even a bit hostile. The Chinese are a lot more competitive, and they're very much in the mainstream of business life. They are the ones most affected by the economic policy. Maybe that's the reason why they are not so open to change, because they want to protect what they have.

GS: So it would be different from the Indian practitioners who don't have that same base to protect?

RESP.: I think so.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?

RESP.: I'm not surprised at all. I'm not sure I can explain. I can go back to one experience I had. The Chinese practitioners have always been a bit selfish about what they have, and not being too ready to share. I think the Indians and Malays are a lot more willing to share with their friends. Even sharing in terms of resources.

I spent six years in X in a huge PR division - there were 40 of us. There must have been about 25 professionals, and then a bunch of clerks. The Chinese practitioners were very selfish with their time, and their experience. They were not so willing to share. There was always that element of suspicion and hostility. If there was someone in the organisation with an attitude of wanting to do the proper job, wanting to do their best, wanting to be prima donnas, demonstrating how great they were, and how superior they were in terms of their intellectual ability, etc etc.

GS: Which is the opposite of self-transcendence. On self-enhancement they would perhaps be higher. Why the difference between males and females?

RESP.: I find that male professionals, particularly in large organisations, tend to be driven by politics, and wanting to get ahead. They spend a lot of their time in politicking rather than being honest and doing an honest day's job, which means being open, being professional, sharing and getting on with it. Women are more genuine, more sincere in their feelings in terms of helping someone else.

I'm thinking of an example outside of PR. We were trying to set up a free medical clinic in a particular area and we had got through working with the Rotary club, a list of all members who were doctors, because to run the free clinic you had to have voluntary doctors. We had a list of 30/40 Rotarians in that district who were doctors. They were all ethnic groups. In the end we got just two volunteers and they were both Indian. This is typical. None of the Chinese doctors were prepared to do voluntary time, even on a rotation basis.

Individual value types
Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience, power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges. There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: I'd agree with that. The young people are always wanting jobs "I wish I had a job that would let me travel, and let me have a credit card".

Then it goes down. I am not sure why. I would have thought even in an in-house situation that you would be looking for those factors. They were my motivating factors. I would have changed jobs if there was another opportunity that gave me prestige.

The consultancy one looks more real to me. In my experience with young people, prestige is important. But many of them tell me they want to start work in an organisation that allows them to learn as much as they can, at least for the first few years, and then they move on to look for that prestige. And as you grow older, it's not so important anymore - dominance over people. Dominance over resources, yes. But not social status and prestige so much.

(Why the peak in the middle for consultants?) I think 10 years ago I was a lot more motivated by a BMW and the business class, and now I don't care for those things.

GS: That suggests it's other things kicking in -- maturity, change of priorities.

RESP.: Yes. Intangibles. A client writes an appreciation letter for the things you've done. That gives you the buzz. For me.

Why is it so vastly different between consultants and corporates? This indicates that if you've been in an in-house situation after 10 years, social status is no longer important as a motivating factor. This dip, I'm not sure if that mid-career blues, that sense of apathy, is one of the factors.

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: I would have thought that the younger practitioners, male and female, would have been similarly motivated by status. There's this new yuppie culture where these factors are important - social status, credit cards, cars. Even in terms of control and dominance, that they're involved in the right sorts of industries and they can drop the right sorts of names. All that is very important to the young people. There may be a slight difference because overall women that work are still driven by perhaps more traditional values than men.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

Self-concept and years of experience

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

RESP.: Clearly confidence is one thing, and also freedom and independence. 10 years ago I was in an in-house situation and I didn't have latitude and that freedom and independence to do what I really
thought was good for the organisation. And now I have that freedom and independence to do at least counsel my clients and give them my best advice, and it's up to them to take it or not.

New skills - people management has grown a lot. Presentation skills. I've always been quite a good communicator in terms of writing skills and I'm able to express myself very well on paper. That's the sort of feedback I've had all these years. I've not been too good at the presentations, stand-up verbal delivery skills, and that's changed a lot. Partly it's the nature of being a consultant. You have no choice but to present your ideas and think quickly on your feet. And you've no choice but to stand up and pitch for new business. But also partly because I've taken on some new teaching and training assignments, I've had no choice but to get thrown into doing it. I've had to develop those skills.

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I'd have to say that I see myself as one of the senior PR practitioners in the country. I see myself as a mentor to a lot of young practitioners. I see myself as having earned the respect of quite a good number of clients and a good number of media, senior business editors. Clearly that's important. Your credibility with them is very important, and being able to do a good job. I see myself as having a good foundation in terms of the technical skills required for the job and that came from my journalistic and my writing background. I see myself as being very lucky in that sense because practitioners that are just "fixers" and liaison persons - taking on a job and then finding someone to copywrite and edit - they're just fixing. I do feel sorry for them and I tell them they have to hone up those basis skills. Because you're sitting in front of the client, and you're being put to the test. "Half an hour. Do that release, I want it now!" Or "Write this speech. I need it now!" You have to summon your best wits about you.

I see myself as being a bit of a counsellor because people do call and ask me for help in terms of their careers, and what do I think. They've been offered this opportunity. Should they move now and why not?

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

. your family identity?
. your organisational identity?
. your ethnic/cultural identity?

Do you have a different concept of yourself when you're away from work?

RESP.: I'm away from here so little. But I think it's the sort of problem that a lot of people face. I have to make a conscious effort sometimes to remind myself that I'm not the boss of a small organisation, I'm not a manager when I'm out of here. I'm just me. And sometimes I find this a bit difficult to do because in my job I tend to want to take control of situations, and I have to. You go into a client meeting and there's six people sitting around the table and you have an hour in which to get everyone to decide this is the way to go, so you can go and implement that decision.

So let's say, in the little condominium in which I live, I'm a member of the residents' association and it's a two and a half hour meeting and I find I have to bite my tongue so I stop dominating that meeting. I get very impatient, so I have to hold back and let it take its course. People have to be able to say what they want to say, to get it off their chest, and there's no point in me trying to impose a view. No matter how frustrating it is, you have to go through the motions.

And I guess when I'm in my church environment, I do see myself differently. And when I'm with my spouse I have to make a big effort to stop being the boss. It's very difficult.

GS: How do you negotiate those differences?

RESP.: I don't do it very well. My spouse would be one of the first people to say I'm always bossing everyone around. "She always wants people to do things the way she wants. She doesn't see a different point of view". My children even sometimes say "Mum, you're meant to be a communicator but you sure don't know how to communicate". I guess I'm driven by stress. The sense that there's so little time, so much to do, and you don't have the luxury of allowing things to take its course before it comes to a
conclusion. You want to hurry it along and I'm always doing that, and I'm actually coming to a stage where I'm beginning to self-assess again and I'm wondering whether this is really something I want to be doing for the next 10 years. I'm not even sure who I am. I know that if I had three days with nothing to do, I'd really just want to go and sit in a park and read a book, and I know that it's not easy to get to do that.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: Work.

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles? (How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

Professional values

Let's go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: Yes. I think there's maybe two groups. One would be the technical competence which would be the technical ability, handling PR activities themselves, providing quality options, track record of being capable, good reputation. The other group would perhaps be ethics or values - loyalty, protecting stakeholder interests, integrity, ethics, quality.

Let's look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order that is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

Ranking listed on summary sheet.

Let's look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: Yes.

Let's look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It's the same material as you've just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let's go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: (First cluster) Role model - yes. And being capable and experienced. And how I see myself. (All quite consistent)
RESP.: (Second cluster) It is accurate. I don't mean to imply that all company practitioners have all of these qualities to the same extent. Some have all of these qualities. And some may not have all of them.

GS: These are not positive qualities, so what are you saying about a strong company person?

RESP.: I do appreciate that these are all negative qualities. I wouldn't say that this is typical of all company practitioners. But many company practitioners in my experience - the dozen regular clients that we have - they can't do it themselves, they can't provide a range of options, they are not on the leading edge, and they lack Basic technical requirements. They all exhibit theses, but some to greater
degree than others. But in terms of ethics and commitment, they have those qualities. I think generally it's the technical competence that is probably lacking.

RESP.: (Third cluster) I'm not sure that the link about not being a role model and being driven by the interests of one party. (I can't look at this and say these are the characteristics of someone who is not a role model). It's not that simple.

GS: Are they qualities that typify a certain level or type of PR performance?

RESP.: I think it was coming from a particular person I had in mind. Some practitioners tend to want to protect their position in the company.

RESP.: (Fifth cluster) I guess I'd identify those as qualities of someone with strong ethics and integrity, but perhaps what's missing is upholding the traditional values of PR. I'm not sure whether that should have been in there.

GS: That's something you'd identify with someone who has strong ethics?

RESP.: Yes.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?
RESPONDENT 11 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: I guess people are willing to change because they're new.

At 5-10 years they're more comfortable and obviously they're trying to stabilise themselves.

When you go up the scale, for me it means they've had such a long experience in PR, they're open to new ideas because they don't want to be stale, they want to keep up with the changes. You're willing to change

Self-enhancement

RESP.: The young ones would look up to somebody to be motivated.

5-10 years there's less of that because it's up to them to be motivated. They've already got that experience so “Why do I need to motivate myself if I'm comfortable with that experience?” You've sort of made it. Maybe they're comfortable at that age. In their mid-30s.

15 years, there's that urge to be motivated. You don't want to be stale. You need to keep up with the changes and you need to have that drive so you're not rusty. People will strive to achieve something greater. Even though you have 15 years' experience, you want to see what you can achieve as a limit. What's your maximum? People will be more driven. Maybe they want a change. Yes they've achieved but they still want to go on.

GS: Do you see it a being motivated by success or by dominance over others?

RESP.: For myself, I see it as success.

Conservation

RESP.: For the young ones, they're new and they want to stick to those traditional practices. They're not willing to expand yet. Once they feel comfortable (5-10 years experience) I guess that's when they want to venture out.

When I was a new practitioner I was quite hesitant to move out of the boundaries of PR practices because I'm learning. I wasn't really aggressive or bold enough to move out of those boundaries. Whatever was written, whatever was taught to me, I actually abided by those rules.

Whereas when you come to 5-10 years you feel less restricted. You're more inclined to stay low and not venture out so much.

At senior levels you would try to explore more avenues, not just limited to the traditional practices of the PR, or other influences.

GS: At that level, is it related more to protection of stability or preservation of traditional practices?

RESP.: I think both of these. The protection of stability, I can see that two years and under you're still new and you want to adapt to whatever principles so that you're stable. 5-10 years you feel comfortable and you feel stable so you try to stay within that limit. 15 yrs and above, you need to venture out. That's
why there's a raise in the graph, because you don't want to feel stagnant. You have to keep up with the changes so you have to know what's going on.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: Young ones, they want to be at the same level as other people. They don't want to be under. Otherwise they feel insecure. They want to be on the same par as their counterparts. They want to keep up with the industry. "Am I equal with them?"

Mid-range it doesn't mean that much. They've had that experience. Why do they want to be on a par with other people? They feel comfortable. I still want to improve myself -- in a way this is not applicable to me. I don't agree that it takes less of a priority here.

Seniors, are more willing to look up to other people to see whether they're left behind. They also have to make an effort to be on par with those other people around them. I guess people will want to move on, and will try to be on a par if not better than their counterparts.

GS: So it's that interest in where you are compared to other people.

**Work environment**

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. Let’s deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

**Openness to change**

RESP.: Consultancies: The young are more favourable to change because they want to explore new ideas. The mid-levels, not so much. The seniors have to keep up with the pace.

In corporates, the young ones have great emphasis on change. Mid-level, a small degree of people are willing to change because they are happy with their environment. Maybe the challenges that they face are quite big challenges so they have to deal with that first, they have to get that over and done with, and then maybe deal with ideas for change. Eg. Challenges may be if a corporate body winds up, how do you deal with it in PR? They've got a big responsibility. Overcome the problems or the challenges, and then the second step is openness to change.

Seniors/corporates, there is a quest for openness to change because they don't want to be behind. They're more open to ideas and they need to move on, and not be stale.

Consultancy vs corporate. The nature of the job for consultants, I see as more of the same work. Their responsibility isn't as great. They are actually advising other companies. The PR people who are representing the corporate bodies have it on their shoulders to represent correctly what is going on in the corporate body. Whereas consultancy, the decision-maker will actually be the corporate body. The consultancy, their work is obviously to consult on PR matters, but the burden of it is more up to the corporate body. They can either take it or leave it.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: Higher in consultancy because you're trying to establish that ground. Being a consultant, you've got several corporate bodies to take care of and it's up to you to have that influence over others. You're new at the job and you have several bodies to take care of so you've got to have that influence over these people. For corporate bodies it is less because it's just that one company that you're working for, versus the consultancy which obviously has a big responsibility.
For 5-10 years for consultancy, there is a big dip. This is because they are more comfortable with their corporate bodies and advising and they don't need to have so much of a greater influence on these bodies. For corporates, this is low because they are comfortable where they are.

For seniors, the consultancy is slightly greater because they also have to take care of various corporate bodies and they also have to have that dominance over them. For corporates, not so much because they are in power and they have to show that they're dominant.

**Conservation**

**RESP.:** Young consultants, they are high because they are new into their job and they'd like to stick to the traditional practices and they do want to venture out. For the corporate sector, they are also quite higher, but lower than consultants. They want to learn about PR practices. They want to be more stable. They want to find a firmer footing because they're new at the job.

(Mid-level consultant) there is a drop because they feel comfortable with the traditional practices and where they are.

(Senior consultants) There's no change because consultancy work, if you're consulting several corporate bodies, you probably just want to stay put. You want to use whatever experience you have. It seems strange to me that they don't want to venture out. I would have thought after 15 years or more you'd want to update yourself.

(Senior corporates) Yes they're willing to learn more practices and update themselves etc. The reason for consultancy people to stabilise is because they're comfortable with where they are.

**Self-transcendence**

**RESP.:** Young consultants, it is because they want to be on par with the rest of the PR practitioners who are also new in their field. They want to better themselves. They want to be more receptive to improving themselves. This compared to the corporate sector (young) is not so much because the drive is not as great as the consultancy people. The consultancy people have a big responsibility. They are taking care of so many corporate bodies. So the drive to enhance yourself is bigger. You've got to represent so many people. Whereas for corporate you've already got that self-enhancement. It's to what degree, to what level more do you want to improve yourself.

Mid-level consultants drop because they feel comfortable with where they are. Likewise with the corporate sector. They're not willing to improve themselves because they've had that experience.

(Seniors consultants) are lower because they've already reached their maximum and the drive is not that much to improve upon themselves compared to the corporate sector. That drive is still there “What more can I achieve?” The drive to succeed in relation to other people is important. In PR other people look up to you because you representative of the body. That's why there's that quest to be dominant as well as to be concerned over the other people around you. Likewise for the senior consultant, it's important to have some form of self-enhancement because you are representing those bodies and it's better to be represented in the best possible way.

GS: So you see self-transcendence qualities as connected to the job that you do and the level of responsibility.

**RESP.:** Relating to myself, the self-transcendence I would do goes above and beyond my PR job scope in order to achieve my status for my company. It's like, you are responsible for the image, so you've got to achieve and you've got to excel to achieve that position.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

**RESP.:** The ethnic background does play a role for new people in the PR line. For me, I still look back to my roots, and my values, so I don't say that it is to a lesser degree. It actually should still be the same
if not even more. It doesn't matter how many years of experience you have, you've still got to relate back to your ethnic values.

GS:   What you're saying is those ethnic values are your personal values and they just go with you.

RESP.: That's right, throughout life.

**Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?**

RESP.: My personal values, being a good person, and being truthful, honest and all that does play a big role. You can't go around misrepresenting people, or the truth. Other ethnic values, the way I've been brought up, to be diplomatic etc, that actually plays a big role in my job because PR is all about diplomacy as well. It's one I regard highly. It doesn't matter how much experience I have in the PR line, it still follows me. Being diplomatic is very important.

Being a good person, helping others. For me, if I see a blind man in the street, trying to cross the road, I would go and help that person. When I relate that to the workplace, if I see somebody who needs assistance, obviously I'd go and help that person not only because I'm in a service business but it's my ethical values. I'm not someone who will close one eye and let it happen and wait for another person to take that responsibility. It's your conscience.

GS:   Do these values match with the values inside the organisation?

RESP.: Yes. Moreso because of our philosophy. We have a credo which we believe in and energise every day. The three steps of service: a warm welcome, by name if possible, and anticipation and compliance of guests needs, and a fond farewell. So yes it does have a very strong correlation with the values and the type of organisation that you work for.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

**Ethnicity**

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: My ethnicity is very interesting. Being brought up in a diplomatic circle, because my father was the Malaysian Ambassador, and being brought up in an all-girls' boarding school taught me self-discipline, ways to liaise with people around you. In my everyday job I deal with different kinds of people -- VIPs, Ministers, a whole range of people. And my background having been brought up in a diplomatic circle and having been exposed to that does give me a lot of advantage and I use it definitely. I guess that's one of the reasons why my General Manager says I'm very well suited for the job, because of my background. Not only do I have to know about the protocol involved, but how to deal with situations. So things like being diplomatic has a big impact on my job. And that has helped because I have been there before.

RESP.: I can think of one example where the character is not a plus point for her. People will talk. And if you have those ethical values and you bring them into the workplace without drawing the line, it is not proper because you are representing your company. So you really have to draw the line. If you have good ethical values, yes, you do bring them in. But if it's a value which will work against you, then don't bring it in. that's where you've got to distinguish where to draw the line.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?
RESP.: My General Manager is not Malaysian. He's a Caucasian. There's strong points and disadvantages as well. Strong points -- the leadership is there, and the drive. Dynamic, aggressive. His ethical values do play a plus point. Where it's a bit of a disadvantage is because of the culture. He is not familiar with the culture of Malaysia, so there may be instances where I'm trying to make him understand why a certain custom has to be adhered to. Some people, no matter how much you explain, still won't understand how important those things are.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: This is a very interesting question because a lot of the top PR people are actually male. It's not to say that we can't do it, but the way we are, people get married, they have to take care of their kids, so in the long run, the top PR positions are actually held by males. My belief is that the males may be cut out for more long hours, but for females we also have to look to our responsibilities of being married -- a good wife, a good mother, etc. For myself, I'm married but I have a very understanding husband. His hours are long as well. When I have children I guess maybe I'll take a step back and weigh the pros and cons. I do love PR but there has to be somewhere where I draw the line. When I do have a family obviously my family will have to be a priority as well. Males don't have to worry so much about that which is why in some ways they are more successful PR practitioners.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: For a male Malay practitioner in PR, he would also be a very aggressive person who would go all the way out to achieve his company's goals. A Chinese lady, I can see also she's aggressive, but to some degree. Male being dominant, they will always try to be on a firm standing. I guess a female Chinese practitioner they will also try all means to achieve their company's goals but not as aggressive as a male. It would be the same with other combinations because of the nature of being a male -- more powerful, more dominant. Not to say that females aren't also powerful and dominant, but they have different set of objectives, different ways to carry it out.

GS: Developed through their upbringing?

RESP.: Yes.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: For the females, they are more stable because they feel more comfortable with where they are. For males, they want to find out what are the new ways in PR. Mid-range they are more stable and the big jump as 15 years and more they want to find out what is the new buzz in town, what is happening, so they want to keep up with the trends.

For females, this is different because maybe they feel they are right and they're not willing to change because they feel their way is more correct. Maybe more for pride's sake. I have met some who think, right or wrong, they won't accept another point of view. But males, yes they are willing to accept different points of view, and to change.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?
RESP.: Chinese female, females are sometimes set on the standards, and they're not willing to be open to new ideas. I have experienced this working for a Chinese lady boss, even though I have explained "Why don't you do it this way?" they are set, they won't change.

I have also worked for a Malay lady in the PR line, and the openness to change was higher than the Chinese, but I guess they are more open to different suggestions as well. And more inclined to adopt changes.

An Indian female, not so much to change, because like the Chinese lady, maybe they're set on their ways.

For Chinese males, willingness to change is very low. This is true. I have found in the Chinese way of thinking, whatever they do is taken as that's it. For Malays there is a tendency to change because they're willing to listen and to change, to adopt new procedures.

For the Indian male, they are also at a point where whatever works, they're willing to try.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?

RESP.: For women, we all accept each other as equals. We don't want to outshine each other but we are more prone to learn from each other. If I give you an idea, it's actually taken.

For the Chinese male, they all have their own principles and they're set, they're not going to change.

For the Malays, there is a great inclination to improve the self. They would like to improve and better themselves. For the Indian male, even more so, because they want to achieve the best for their company and they're very open to ideas.

Individual value types

Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, there is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: For young consultants, they do want to take some form of control. They want to have a safe footing so they are eager to have some sort of power.

Mid-level consultants, being already established, they are not so eager to seek out that power.

Senior consultants have already achieved that dominance. There's not much that I want to take control of now. I've already had my share." This differs greatly with the corporate sector.

Young corporates there is a quest for power because being new at the job. Mid-level, not so, because you've already had that positioning, you don't want to go overboard, you're comfortable.

Senior corporates I can see why it goes up again. You want to show people you've been in the industry for that long, and you still want to retain that dominance. You want to show that "I'm still in charge". That's why in the corporate sector it does matter a lot. Because you're still the person in control.

For the corporate, social status and prestige does have some play in the number of years of experience. (Seniors) want to show that you're in control and that you've reached this top limit.

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?
RESP.: Males have an urge for power in the early years because they want to feel in control. They want everyone to know that they know what they're doing. Even though they're new, it's like face. "Don't tell me what to do; I know what to do".

Mid-level males, they've already got that power, social status and prestige as well. They feel comfortable where they are.

Senior males, also to do with face. To show everyone that they're in control, they know what they're doing. To show people, that they know what they're doing, that they are capable.

For females, it's a gradual rise. Young females, because they're still learning the ropes, they're not as ambitious. Relating that to my experience. I wanted to be more established with the foundation of public relations, than power. It didn't mean that much to me. For 5-10 years, yes I'm beginning to find myself more in control. I want to show people that I have so many years of experience and I am in control of the situation, and that I have achieved that status. Senior females, that quest for power is even more because people would like to show everyone else that even though they have achieved that 15 years of experience, they're still in control. "I'm not old and redundant". They need to show they're more in power than they were before.

**Achievement:** Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: Young consultants, there is a great quest for achievement. They're new at the job and they need to show to their superiors that they can do it. For the corporates, the achievement is high, but not as high because they've already got the job, they don't need to prove to their superiors that this is what they can do.

Mid-level consultants, they're more comfortable with what has happened. They don't need to prove to their superiors what they can do because they're already there. However seniors, it's time to show that I am still capable of doing the job.

For the corporates there is a similarity. There is that upward trend, for the same reason, You want to show people that even though you've had 15 years of experience you are still able to achieve the results. You're not stagnant. You have to move on, and you're still capable.

GS: What happens at the mid-level to change their outlook. Is it something that happens -- decision-making or self-analysis -- that leads to big changes by the time you're a senior practitioner? What is it?

RESP.: After 5-10 years when you're satisfied with where you are, you start self-analysing. You think to yourself, "Maybe there's something more that I can achieve." That's why the great jump. Then they start questioning "Maybe I should do this. Maybe I should do that."

**Hedonism:** Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: For young consultants, hedonism doesn't play so much of a role and they're more content with the job that they're doing. They're main focus is on getting the job done, because they're got that responsibility.

For young corporates, hedonism plays a big role. You want to know what the package is. "What else can I get, apart from the remuneration?" You want to enjoy life.

Mid-levels. There's a sudden drop for the corporate sector because the focus is different. The focus is reversed. You're not so much content outside your workplace, but you're more focused on your job and what you can achieve. However, it's the reverse for the consultants. Hedonism values play a part. People want more out of their workplace. They want to feel that there's more to work. They start questioning "How can we have a better life?"
Senior consultants, because they've already started questioning "What else can we enjoy other than work?"

GS: So they're looking outside of work for pleasure?

RESP.: Yes. For the corporates they are questioning "There is something more to life besides work". They are wanting to find other alternatives. That's why people will say "It's about time now I started enjoying my life. I've worked so hard. Maybe I should take a back seat, and enjoy life".

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: Yes I do. I definitely enjoy what I'm doing. Even though the hours are long, as expected, but I am the kind of person who is very upbeat, and whatever the task, whatever the people that I meet, I always have to maintain that image as well as enjoy it. Because otherwise, why should I force myself? The workplace itself does play a big role.

The elements of my job that I enjoy are: the variety that I have daily. No day is the same. There's always that challenge, and the unexpected. Anything can crop up. The other good things about my work are obviously the surroundings, very aesthetic, and the people make it very conducive to work in. The fast pace of it, because I'm not just sitting in the office. It's actually 'on the go'.

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

**Self-concept and years of experience**

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I see the values of my workplace here. I am in control. I know what I'm doing. I don't have to ask around as much as five years ago, because five years ago I'm still learning. When I was two years in the job I remember it was like still exploring how to do things, whether it's correct. Now, it's on my fingertips. If you ask me to draft up a press release, or arrange an event, I don't have to check with people above me because I know the ropes. Things which are important now, versus five years ago, is doing it to the best of my ability, doing it so that it's perfect, that there are no hiccups. Five years ago I had that excuse, so to speak, you could say "Look, I'm not sure, or is this the way?" But moving on, you're meant to be the one to direct and to supervise etc. So yes I do find that I'm more in control.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?

RESP.: Consistency is difficult to say. For my line, even during the weekends I will have to come in sometimes. As I mentioned, my husband is more than understanding. He will drive me to work on a Sunday, but it's difficult to say because the nature of my work, I have journalists coming to stay or I have to entertain during the weekend. It doesn't happen that often. Yes to some degree it is consistent, but because of the nature of the job it can't be as consistent as it should be.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: Work dominates.

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles?
(How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)
RESP.: To say conflicts, yes there will be conflicts. Because if you've got an engagement to go to which is outside work, you've got to weigh the pros and cons because work does dominate so you've got to take a step back and say "We'll have to forego this engagement because I've got something really urgent to do at work". You've already committed to yourself to that even before you've taken on the job. So, it is difficult but it is a decision which I have to take.

GS: Because the values are consistent, it's not a clash of values, it's a clash of priorities.

**Professional values**

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: Yes I do see these as identical constructs. Maintaining strong corporate image correlates to committed to getting the job done. The reason is I'm the person who will go above and beyond what it takes to get the job done, in order to portray that corporate image. If it means staying on at night until God knows what hours, I will drive myself to do it. So those are my main priorities. Whatever it takes, I will do it. I guess the work environment as well, is such that we will move heaven and earth to satisfy our guests. So that in correlation to my work ethics does match.

Yes there is a strong correlation. For myself, I have a strong attention to detail because if not, if you don't know every step of the way what's going on, you won't get it right. So it's better to get it correct the first time round, instead of wasting time etc. you have to know the ins and outs of your job task. Constantly maintaining the company line. That's also very strongly correlated because if you go beyond that it will definitely be out of the boundaries. So even though I have said I will go over and beyond what it takes to get the job done, as long as it's done within the company standards, as long as it's done tactfully etc and tastefully, yes I'll do it. Able to share and give advice. That's important because when I delegate I will have to give advice to my staff on how it's done and share advice, yes, if they also have opinions I'm also willing to take that. Able to prioritise - definitely because otherwise you'll be concentrating on jobs that don't need that much attention. Always accessible - definitely because people always know where you are to locate you if something does happen. Will take advice, will always seek advice -- this is another important thing that you're willing to not just do it your way, you also have to seek other people's opinions on how to do things.

GS: Are these linked to the first two identical constructs?

RESP.: Yes. Because all the constructs fit into maintaining a strong corporate image and to get the job done. It all fits in.

GS: Extra constructs. Do they link in?

RESP.: To some degree. Knows their job - you have to know what you're doing because otherwise how could you maintain that corporate image and get the job done? Serious about career - also your attitude does play a big part as to how far you get your job done. Whether you take it lightly or not, you still have to get the job done. As for knowledge and experience, the more of both that you have, the faster you'll get the job done. So that also plays a big role in maintaining the corporate image and getting the job done. Works independently - yes, it is correlated because you don't have to supervise so much so you can rely on others to get the job done.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?
RESP.: The only difference is "Able to prioritise and has knowledge and experience" I would list as number four. Everything else okay.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: Yes I see myself as a strong company person and a capable practitioner because in order to portray the best image of your company you have to be a very capable PR practitioner. Myself as a role model, I do see very closely because people do look up to me. I was recently awarded the Manager of the Year Award, so that is very encouraging to me to see that I have actually achieved a role model in the company.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: (First cluster). Yes it is an accurate picture. The qualities, definitely I am all these.

RESP.: (Second cluster). I guess the answer is I see these qualities applicable to all three. Yes you have to judge a capable practitioner in this way. They are actually the attributes of a role model. This cluster also applies to a capable practitioner as a strong company person because it's working independently, they have to know their job.

RESP.: (Third cluster) This practitioner is a person who is not so serious. She would probably take it as it comes. Doesn't have an objective. Doesn't really take it seriously.

GS: If we draw the circle a bit larger, we include the ethical practitioner. What is the linkage between ethics and this group of qualities?

RESP.: I guess the person with strong ethics is more dominant and more firm on doing it her own way. That's why that person will; not take advice, does it her way, won't really stand to the company's objectives, will do it how she feels and not so much how the company's philosophy is.

RESP.: (Fourth cluster). It's to some extent, but not as close. The cluster (third) is more of a strong individual. The new practitioner does overlap a bit, but not as great, but the other cluster is more on the person who is more dominant, and more determined to do it her own way, and doesn't have so much of ethical values.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?

RESP.: It has a lot to do with the time frame. For the new practitioner who's still learning, they will through time be fitted into these two clusters. Prioritise, strong on maintaining the corporate image, accessibility, and so on. Through time, that new practitioner will adapt to those two clusters. Obviously, the more experience you have, the easier it will be to know your job. Also the ethics that the person has. If it's a combination of your work ethics - would you do it your way, or as the book says? Are you willing to bend backwards and forwards according to what you think is right, or according to what the company standards are. So it's also to determine how much values you put into the workplace, doing it your way or the company's way.

Is there anything else you wish to add?
RESPONDENT 13 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and /or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: When you just come into public relations, you're very new to it, you just want to learn. You are so enthusiastic. The main thing is you want to learn. So you're willing to embark on anything. Change this, change that. Try to make an impression. You want to change certain policies, certain concepts because it will give you the satisfaction. That's what I did when I first came in. I had to assist my boss to set up a new department. From becoming a PR department, to a PR subsidiary company. First few years, it was "Yes, I'm going to do this, I'm going to change this. This is what our plan is".

But after some time, it's like "Yes, I've achieved". You just take things for granted. So it goes down. And your motivation is not there, because day in day out, the same thing. Sometimes you just subconsciously feel that you have achieved something, and now you just want to relax for a while.

Until it becomes mundane and you know that life is not interesting, you've got to do something again. Someone says "How come you're not so enthusiastic anymore?" Or, something is slacking. And then it goes up again. By the time you've reached 15 years you have to feel as if you are somebody, you can make decisions, and you want people to look up to you. So again you will start thinking of ways to make sure you keep up that image, for the company, for yourself, and to get the respect from the others. To tell them "I'm still here".

Self-enhancement

RESP.: I don't think I follow this. As the years go by, I have more dominance. When I first came, I didn't feel that I could get the others to do exactly what I wanted, or to actually tell them what to do. I had to use my boss's name sometimes to get the job done. My relative success was through confidence at that time, although I was still learning.

But as years go by, I find that I can do things on my own now. I've already learned. I'm no longer at the learning stage. I've got that experience and I know how to tell people to do it. I felt my dominance over others rose. By being promoted, I felt I had more authority to actually tell them to do things and tell them exactly what their job functions are. I feel as years go by, that increases. I would tell them, this is your responsibility, but when it comes to putting the foot down, I used to go back to my boss. I had a good relationship with my colleagues, so sometimes they would do it anyway. I never had serious problems with my colleagues. But when it comes to the crunch and they just don't agree with me, I bring it to my boss. Now it's different. I am in charge of this account, "you just have to do it because at the end of the day it is to get the job done". And I would give them reasons, and they would do it. As the years go by, I can have more dominance over my subordinates.

GS: As you get more experience, does that motivate you more and more?

RESP.: Yes.

Conservation

RESP.: This one I agree because it's something like openness to change. First of all you feel that traditional practices and work don't really go. Work is different, home is different. Home is for traditional and culture. Work is work, different. When I got into this field, for me it was "get the job done. You do this. You propose this for a launch for example. This is what you have to do. This is how you call the press".
But later on you realise that even in Malaysia, if you want to have a launch, your client may tell you "You have to consult the feng shui master" because they want to know that they get the best date, and they don't want business to fail, even in a signing ceremony. So you learn that culture matters a lot. Culture and their feelings. So when you learn, you start thinking about it. And then slowly it becomes a part of you and you realise that it's not just "a job's a job and culture's culture". That's when you become more submissive to culture.

After years of service I think you just have to do something to hype up. It's a matter of beliefs. If things don't go as per the cultural beliefs, you just think "To hell with it". You think culture is very important. Culture is not important. But after that, it becomes "Okay we'll think about it". But it doesn't become an important factor. It's the opposite (to the graph).

Self-transcendence

RESP.: Yes I agree because when you come in, you're fresh. You want to be a part of the family. You want a good working environment. So you want others to accept you and you are also very concerned about others because you want to create a perfect working environment. But sometimes that is not possible when it comes to getting the job done. You will definitely have jobs where you'll have differences of opinion with your colleagues so you tend to become more self-centred because you want to keep your image, you want to keep your job. You want others to say you've done a good job. Sometimes you tend to put your colleagues' welfare second place. If I were to have a launch the next day, and my subordinate came to say "My father's ill, I want to have leave", initially I would say "Yes. Her father needs her." But when you are in charge of the account you would tell her "Can you still spare some time to do this and then go and attend to your father?" It comes down.

But later on you feel that, when you get older, you feel, that others have done the same thing to you and you've been in this business for so long, it's about time you taught other people to do it. You get others to actually help you out and just release this person. You start thinking about yourself as an old person and how your child will take care of you. As you age, you want others to accept you.

GS: So it's taking into account criteria other than the interests of the job.

RESP.: Yes. Initially it's job, but you have another life as well. Then later it's like job is job, personal life is personal life. Until it reaches a point where they have a personal life and jobs aren't everything. You've got more dominance than others. You can get others to help you out. So try to be sensitive to this person.

Work environment

There's a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you've had in PR. Let's deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: We in the consultancy have to be very open to change because that is what our clients want. They always tell us they want to do something different, to create that impact. It's like how different are we going to do it? They don't want something ordinary. We are always thinking of change. That's why we are more open to change compared to the corporate sector.

(Corporates) When they start they want to maintain an image. After some time the question is not establishing it anymore, but it's maintaining that image, and maybe they become comfortable with that kind of image and they don't want to go far from it. They don't want to make a drastic change because that image has already been established.
(senior corporates) After being established, you just want to have a re-imaging exercise. Now they want to show something more dynamic so they come up with a new re-imaging exercise. And it goes up again. But that also has got to do with a change so it doesn't become mundane anymore.

Whereas for consultancy, the clients dictate to us what they want and then we'll give them the proposal. It is always something to do with how to launch this product differently. So we are always looking at change.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: Initially when you come into a consultancy you don't feel you have the dominance. As you gain experience, you feel you more dominance over others. Even in the corporate sector I feel the same thing. In the corporate sector it's even worse. You don't get promoted as fast as in a consultancy I feel because once you're in the corporate sector you have lots of benefits. You do have promotion opportunities, but judging from my friends, they had to wait longer to get promoted because of the stability. Once you're there, you're there for years before you retire and the next one takes over. And they don't simply just resign because the stability is there. Whereas in consultancies the turnover is very high. So when a manager leaves, the senior executive gets promoted or they take in a new manager, but in the corporate sector that doesn't really happen. I can't really agree with this.

**Conservation**

RESP.: When you come in you're not bothered by traditional values until later on when it becomes important. After that I guess it just stays because it just becomes a part of you. You subconsciously know you have to take care of those things. If the client is a typical Chinese-educated, then you know *feng shui* comes into that sector. If a client is a typical Malay then you have to insert religious stuff like prayers before you start the launch. I guess then it becomes important.

In terms of corporate, they will look into traditional practices because of the multi-racial nature of Malaysia. Traditional practices are also their image.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: It's more for the consultancy because there are less people, whereas in corporate there are so much more. In a consultancy you want people to accept you but you have to deal with less people in your office, whereas in corporate there are so many you have to please. Finally, you realise you can't please a lot of people.

And later on it goes up because it becomes important for you to maintain that image. You want people to recognise you as *somebody* in the company. So that's the pattern.

GS: When you say that consultancies are smaller and that's significant, is that because there are fewer people to work with so you need to maintain a better working relationship with them?

RESP.: Yes. Actually the corporate people have got more departments they've got to deal with. Too many departments. So they have got to deal with too many people and they just feel they can't please everybody. Whereas in a consultancy, it's more the PR department of the client, and also people in that office. And they're all in the same department, the same nature of work. Here consultancies are much smaller than a corporate company.

GS: And for consultancies it's important for their continued viability that they maintain those relationships.

RESP.: Yes. Very competitive.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?
RESP.: It is a reality because sometimes when you come in you just want acceptance and you feel your ethnic people would be more helpful. They will want to help you, if you want to learn. You feel you can ask someone of your own race. They will help because you're the same ethnic group. But later on when you develop contacts, when you've been in the business for quite some time, with experience comes the contact and ethnic will take a back seat. You will become friends. You actually make friends with those from the other ethnic groups. Then it becomes less important.

You feel more at home with your own ethnic group and it will take some time before you can actually venture out, and actually talk to somebody else. It's something to do with confidence as time goes by. You will gain more experience and exposure. Initially you would look for the safest spot. You look at something that's very close to you. Ethnic group is one of them.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: It's like, relationships, and sensitivity towards others. I try to be sensitive to other people, and to my subordinates as well. That is very important to me. Although you want to get the job done, you don't want others to think of you as someone who is self-centred, selfish, so you want to keep up that image. Even at home I try to be very sensitive to my family.

The other thing is responsibility. As a daughter, I have certain responsibilities. As a member of the family, I have certain responsibilities. At home. But I also have responsibility towards my work. I am responsible for that account, so that is also very important. Those two are the main things.

The other thing would be honesty. When it comes to jobs, sometimes suppliers will entice you with offers "I will give you this, if you take me in". But personally I feel the best one has to get the job. If a person were to entice me with something, I usually don't give them the job. I just feel that's wrong. I have to be honest because at no point am I going to be called up by my superiors and question my honesty. Outside work and in work.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

RESP.: To me, these three are important are well. If my subordinates were to start off using friends instead of business, and trying to do a lot of favours, I would put a stop to it. Business is business. Friend is friend. You tend to give certain perks because you've got a very close relationship with the client, but at the end of the day you still have to look at the company. Nobody is doing charity business here. So I may be best friends with you but I still have to justify. I do allow them to decide, but they have to justify their decisions. But if a person is very new in the industry it is quite difficult for me to just leave them alone. I tend to watch them. But after they have had almost a year's experience, I slowly start letting go. Let them do the groundwork without me breathing down their neck.

GS: Is there a culture within this organisation? Values?

RESP.: Something that is unique in this organisation is that we are all under one roof. It is a totally integrated communications outlet. Although the parent company is advertising, and we have various different departments in terms of advertising -- we have our own accounts servicing department, media department, production department, studio, creative, photography -- all under one roof. And then we have PR to actually complement this. In addition, we have also a company that deals with premium items. So when we have a launch, we know where to source premium items. And then we have a publishing house, and we also have our own catering company. So because of that there is a family. We have not had major problems within the departments. I have three wonderful bosses. It's like a family unit. That is why I have been here for seven years now, and I have not really looked elsewhere because of the closeness we have here. And also the contacts that my bosses have to bring the jobs in. There is always something moving. There is always motivation. Once in a while the shareholders or owners would come in, just to give us a morale booster. That helps.

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The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie, your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: Yes. We don't want to be racial here, but situations will force us otherwise. My three bosses -- one is Chinese, one is Indian, the other is actually Indian but he is married to a Malay so he is known as Malay. When we go and see a client, especially when we're pitching for a job, if a client is very Chinese, the Chinese one would follow. Once you impress upon them that they can be very comfortable, they can even speak to my boss in Chinese, and there are a lot of Chinese staff here. When they're going to start new with a client, they want to feel safe. When you come into an organisation, you want the security; you want something that's very comfortable, something that's close to your ethnicity. Although we come in and we don't want to be racial but we can't run away from it because there are some things that don't change overnight. That's why I feel ethnicity is important in this country whether you like it or not. And if it's a Malay establishment, they want you to be sensitive to their culture, and they just feel a Malay would do it better. Especially Malays in this country do insist they want a Malay to service them.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: Not really. They are all English-educated and they don't look into ethnicity as such. Only when it comes to clients, but not in terms of our relationship. It has never become a factor.

Gender

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: It all depends on the situation. Sometimes there's this thing about PR, you've got to be pretty, you've got to look good. That's wrong. There are certain companies who still feel that in PR you've got to be friendly with people, but they don't realise it's a lot of hard work as well. These so-called pretty faces have to actually sit and figure out a plan how to launch your product. How to deal with the press, how to write your news releases. And when it comes to launching, if it's a big launch, clients still tend to feel that a man can do it. We're still second-class citizens. How many big bosses over here are women? Compared to the men.

Gender and ethnicity

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: Yes. If you were to ask my subordinates the way they handle the jobs, it is different because the male will look at it in his ethnicity point of view. The Malay are more cautious compared to the Chinese. But that's general. Sometimes I feel between a fresh graduate Malay and a Chinese, there's a higher chance the Chinese will be more motivated. I can't pinpoint the reason why. Maybe it's the ethnicity, maybe it's the drive. Malays are very humble.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: The female is always more open to change because they're always competing in a male's world. So they just have to be able to change and to fit in and to be accepted. Whereas the males always seem to have more dominance. At least in this country they just feel they have more dominance.
and therefore initially they want to create an impression, they want to change. Then when they reach a certain point they saw "Okay I've already done this. I've already achieved this much so I'm going to take a break". And then later on they feel "Okay this has become mundane" and therefore they have to do something about it. They just seem to have the upper hand over the women. Their motivation to change comes down, whereas the women can't afford that. They are always fighting.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: Indian men want change -- I find that surprising. Because they always want change in the beginning, but after some time they will leave that stagnant. "I have already achieved so much". Whereas the Malay women they want change and they want variety. I feel it is the Chinese women who are always motivated by change because, among the three groups, I look at the Chinese as the most dynamic. They are the hard workers, they are the ones who actually do the job. I would term the Chinese people as a very hard working ethnic group. I feel they are more open to change compared to the Malays. For me it is the Chinese most motivated, followed by Indians, then Malay.

Same thing for males and females.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?

RESP.: I don't know many Indian men who feel this way! I always felt the Malays were the ones who want others to accept them as equals. More than the Indians. And Chinese the least.

I feel the same thing for women as well. Same pattern. Chinese least, Indians next, and Malays the most.

**Individual value types**

**Power:** Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: You think about power in a consultancy. You come in, you can't be the top, but you want to reach the top, so that's why power becomes important. But by five to 10 years, you've achieved something and you know that you have the power, so you don't go power hungry. When I came in I was a PR executive, and at that time and it was "I have to be somebody. The next step is Senior PR Executive, then PR Manager, Senior Manager and all that". But for me in this organisation, the power thing is coming down because after my boss it's only me, so I have already achieved and I feel comfortable I guess.

For corporates, if they're in a big organisation, by mentioning the name of the company they already feel powerful. Let's say I work in Shell. I feel that I've got the power. I'm working in Shell, a multinational. But in order for you to get promoted it would take some time. So you're resigned to the fact that power is less important. But later on, after 5-10 years, you feel that you have to get recognition now, so you go up. You feel you've already got the experience, it's time to move up. How can you move up?

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: I feel women are consistent because as years go by, they want more power. You are fighting in a man's world sometimes. They always have to fight. Males have it slightly easier compared to the female. Men may not agree.

In terms of the males, I am quite surprised at this. I always looked at males as power, power! (Thought it would stay high) It may be that they don't look at it as control or dominance, they want to be treated
as equals, but they want to learn. And then after that, once they know the tricks of the trade, then they show the dominance.

**Achievement:** Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: It's very high at the beginning because when you come in you're still new, so when you do something and you actually achieve it you are very thrilled. You become ecstatic.

But it comes down "I've done this before. I know how to do it". It doesn't become as challenging as the first time.

And then later it goes up again because you want to do something that's different. You want to embark on something more challenging, a bigger budget job. So your motivation towards achievement would go up.

GS: Why is the motivation higher in younger years for consultants?

RESP.: Because consultants work in various jobs, various sectors. Whereas the corporate is what their core business is. So the diversity that we work in is more interesting. It is also why I am in a consultancy, not the corporate company because there is variety here and you learn about various sectors.

GS: What are the things which, at this stage of your career, you would find challenging?

RESP.: I want to actually be involved in the event management now. Rather than just handling the posters and the press conference. Something that's bigger. I don't want to limit myself to those things which used to give me achievement before. What if I actually organised it all? And actually have a say in how the things are organised, in how it is run? That kind of challenge.

**Hedonism:** Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: In terms of what gives me pleasure, it's still got to do with the end results. When I tell them "You have to do this design for me", and they come up with a fantastic design and I can sell it to the client, and I'm the frontliner. I take the credit but of course if it's the otherwise I take the shit as well. It's the end result that gives me the pleasure. But after some time it becomes a bit standard.

Whereas in a corporate I think initially whatever success you achieve it already gives you pleasure. After five years you say you want to do things differently, so you approach it differently to give you that satisfaction that you're doing something about it and life at the workplace is not mundane.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: It is important but not number one. You will just have to do it because the client tells you to do it. Yes, you want to feel happy doing it, but after five years sometimes you just do it because you have to. You've got to think of your job, and money coming in every month, security, your stability, your responsibility towards your family, so you need the job. Compared to the kind of pleasure I used to have before, I'm sad to say it's not the same now. I used to enjoy it more. That's why I'm now looking at a change to rekindle that kind of pleasure, and looking forward to something more challenging.

**Security:** Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

RESP.: That is because the males still feel they are the number one breadwinner of the family, so security for the male is very very important. Whereas the female, at a certain time security is very important. I have a family but if I wanted to have children I would always fall back on the male to see whether he can afford it. For the female the security is more than just workplace. They look at security
in terms of the marriage, in terms of family. Whereas for the male, they feel that they have to be very secure in the job, in order to provide the security for the family. In this culture in Malaysia, you hardly find Mr Mum's.

**Self-concept and years of experience**

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

**RESP.:** I am quite happy with what I have achieved so far. When I first came in I was very fresh. I'd only worked in an advertising agency prior to this for six months, as a copywriter, and then I came into PR. When I first came in it was to start a department, and how you go about designing a department, and then later on make that department into a subsidiary. I learnt a lot. But after three years I was already a senior PR Executive, and the following year I was already a PR manager. So I look at myself as somebody -- I know I can do it, it's just that sometimes I need more self-motivation. Something to spice up my life so it doesn't get mundane.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

**RESP.:** I've got more experience. When I see a client I know how to defend or not defend, how to sell the concepts across. I feel I can make decisions compared to before. I can justify my actions, compared to before. I have become more confident. Definitely more confident. Handling a job, handling a client, and even public speaking. Mainly experience, and by mixing with more and more people. Your contacts getting bigger. It helps.

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?

**GS:** Do you feel that one self dominates?

**RESP.:** I feel my role as a daughter first. I can get another job. I can't get another dad. For me, it's still family comes first. Of course my job is very very important, and I never see myself as having to choose between family and my work. I've never had that to worry about because I'm not married and my father does not have a say as to where to work or where not to work. I decide. But this may become an issue if I get married and I have children and I suddenly have maid problems, and I don't have a babysitter. I'm willing to sacrifice my work, provided my husband can support me and the children. Because my family will come first then. I don't want my children to grow up without proper guidance and without me being important to them.

**GS:** Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles? (How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

**GS:** At the moment you swap quite happily between?

**RESP.:** Very happily.

**GS:** And it sounds like one of the reasons why you can swap happily is because of the lack of constraints. But is it also because you've been able to integrate your values between all of them?

**RESP.:** Yes. I can integrate. Right now, I don't see it as a problem. I don't look as one being more important than the other because I'm not in that situation. My father is there and I'll do my duty as a daughter. I'll help him out if he needs help, and I am basically supporting him in a sense -- he doesn't have income every month. He is retired. So I help him out financially and my brothers help him out financially. But I don't have to worry about giving my job second priority because I'm not in that situation right now.
Professional values

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: First cluster. Yes I see a linkage. One of the important things is if you want management to support and trust you, only then can you actually be on your own, in charge of certain accounts. You fell confident. And then once they have given you that support, that trust, you know you are responsible. And you cannot let your company down. And then you feel that you have to show the results in order to prove to your bosses that you can do it. And you also know that if you don't do your job properly, since you are a frontliner, you get the credit or you get the trashing. It is your company image that you're dealing with. So if you screw up, then it will be a bad name in the market, and you just feel that you are responsible for all this. That's why I feel that all these are linked. If you are really a responsible person then you will be committed to it because that is you, you will give that commitment. And through this responsibility you will learn to become more confident. You will start analysing your judgements, you will start making decisions, you will actually think before making decisions and will not just say "I'll leave it to my boss".

RESP.: (second cluster). Yes, linked. You have got to have good interpersonal skills, and when you have that rapport with the client, or the media, or whatever, you have to make certain judgements which have to be ethical. Let's say you have very good relations with two competing papers because you need their support for various clients, but you can't give them both an exclusive. You can't jeopardise that just for the sake of getting extra publicity for the client. So it is interlinked.

(Would add extra construct to second cluster). Can win business through good interpersonal skills. Willing to share knowledge.

(Adds extra construct to first cluster). Personal goals. It becomes like a personal value. You can learn from your superiors and your subordinates.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

RESP.: The most important thing is I feel management must trust me. Only then will I be safe and secure. They trust me. And if I were to make a mistake, I can justify, and they will listen to my side of the story. So it's very important to me that my bosses do trust me and give me that. They delegate, they let go, they give the work to me and they just leave me in charge.

Then, once you're responsible for that particular account, the main thing you've got to make sure of is your company image. The job that you take on has to be successful because if you screw up, not only is the client's image going to go down the drain, but your company image is going to go down the drain. Because word of mouth, things can spread like wildfire. That's the last thing I want -- shame. (covers responsibility for company image and responsibility for achieving results).

Capable of strategy and execution. In this company you don't work alone. You work with various people so you feel you can actually have brainstorming. It becomes teamwork, so that is why it is the fourth place, because you feel you have support. You don't feel that you are doing it alone.

All this comes later.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?
RESP.: Precisely. I see a very close linking to the ethical practitioner. I feel a capable one would be able to teach me. I'd be able to learn. The ethical one is also how I was brought up. I never at one point want to be questioned on my ethics. It's too high a consequence to pay. It would take 15 years to build a trust. It only takes a few minutes to destroy it. It's too shameful to get that. Here you are working to enhance your company image.

I want to associate myself with an experienced PR person because it's all a learning process. You want to exchange notes, you want to know how they do things, how you do things, as well as for self-enhancement. You need to compare notes to know what's happening in the industry and how you can make yourself a better PR practitioner.

You want to be like a role model. That's the kind of person you want to be. So you work towards it.

Let's look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It's the same material as you've just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let's go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: (First cluster) Yes, how I see myself. The ethical part is quite important because we are building a positive image. We have to be ethical in this industry. One of the capabilities is to practice PR ethical. You've got to have professional ethics in order to be capable.

RESP.: (Second cluster). My role model has to be a strong company person. In the PR industry you've got to make sure that the company image is always maintained and nothing is done to tarnish the image of the company.

RESP.: (Third cluster) In my case I've already been here for seven years. If I was to go and work in another company, I'd have to start from square one which is not something I want to do. That's why I am saying I'd have to look into something more challenging, but not really leaving this organisation and going somewhere else.

As a new practitioner, they don't give you that kind of responsibility yet. The management needs to trust you.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?

RESP.: They have to show that they're willing to learn, that they're capable. They have to show they know how to think for themselves and not to be told what to do all the time. You have to go and tell your boss "I've already done this research". You have to show that you've done more than what you were supposed to do, and you are taking the initiative, so then you come to the second cluster, that is also capable of strategy and execution. You actually tell them that you can plan and you try and prove to them that you're becoming more confident.

From the second group you go to the first group. It's a lot to do with showing the management that you are willing to learn and slowly try to win their confidence.

Is there anything else you wish to add?
RESPONDENT 14 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

RESP.: Most probably education. For those who are 2 yrs and under, probably they are just after college. They read books from people who are 15 yrs and above. Whatever you stress in the books, we learn that by the book and then we do practical training. When we do practical training, the people who attend to us, who teach us how to do this PR, would be somebody who has been in the business a long time. "You've eaten bread longer than I have, so you have better knowledge of what I eat right now. You know it's good, so we just follow suit."

For these people in the middle, most probably their education would be almost the same. But you are still learning, and these people just behind you (5 yrs below you) would say "You are doing it wrong". When you go up, these people now 5-10 years will become like these people 15yrs plus.

GS: You see there is a change in how you do PR depending on your education, and experience and how much you feel you know.

Openness to change

RESP.: Like I said before, education. Not much to think about. Risk factor. Things that you do are very new and you are very very open to changes. Eg, multimedia, internet. You are ready to accept those kinds of technology. Most probably these people are still adolescents. They would like to learn. They would like to try. "Give me anything, I would like to do something about it".

Whereas the people in front of us, they have tried. Maybe some bad experience that they encountered before so they are not willing to try any more.

But when it comes to an older age, they see reasons why they have to change. These people would be most probably in the management team, decision makers. When you are a decision maker, you have to open up to change. If you don't change, something will happen to you.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: For myself, we are new. It's like driving a new car. But when the car gets old you tend to lose interest, unless there is an incentive for them to use the car. When the car gets very old, it gets antique and people want it.

We are young, there's nothing to work for but for yourself. You need to improve yourself, you need to learn. So everything you do is very new, even writing press releases. But if you do the same thing over and over again for 5-10 years, you get bored because you're still doing the same thing.

But then from mid years on, most probably this happens because of promotion. When you're promoted, that is the incentive. The antique car. When you get promotions, increments, bonuses, that's where life is beautiful, and you take it step by step.

GS: So that would be looking at your own success? You start off by being very keen to try and achieve, then …

RESP.: something happens, or your job scope doesn't change. But nowadays it can change overnight. Technology can change overnight. But to me, everything you do is very new. I'm still eager to work for the company. I'm not bored yet. But I'm getting there, because it's stressful when you are under-powered, under-staffed. When you get there (mid), if they don't get the promotion, they feel "Nobody is acknowledging my work". They are not acknowledged or seen by somebody.
Whereas we (juniors) are very new. People are still looking at us, at how we do our work, and we should come up to that expectation. Active, enthusiastic, put a lot of effort into it.

For seniors, just think like this. You are 15 years, most probably you are married, you have children, your children are getting big, you need money for education, and you need to work better. You need to work more.

Conservation

Self-transcendence

Work environment

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

Self-enhancement

Conservation

Self-transcendence

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: My father is actually British-educated. He went to England when he was still young. I’ve been to New Zealand for two years -- I started schooling there. When we came back here I was still learning to talk in Malay but I can now speak very well in English or Malay. But, religion-wise, I am not that strong. That is one thing that I regret most. I am not blaming my parents. But they did not force me to envelop.

When I came here I saw there was (a situation) where office boys were not talking with officers. What I did was to create something - the football team, so they can all mix together. Now we are very good friends. This is the problem. Now, when we get too close, they don't want to do things for us. But we learn what their hardships are, what problems they have, so we learn from them when they come to us openly and say "I cannot do this because it's very difficult for me". Why? And they explain that to us. But before that, they won't tell. They might do, but begrudge it all day long. So I managed to get all the younger people together - make an effort to meet up with one another. Go back to their homes, learn about their families. That is a good step.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: I think it would be similar. What a practitioner does, the difference would be not much.
Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: No. There is a similarity in culture. Now we see mixed managers everywhere.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: When I came here they offered me a job to be under a lady. During the interview they asked me "If we were to appoint you as the PR officer, will you be able to work under a lady?" I said "Excuse me if I hurt anybody's feelings. I don't mind working under a lady, but when you give me a job to do, do not go and tell me every day what to do. I would not like that. You tell me to do, I'll do it. I'll make sure it's done on time, but with less supervision. I would like that". The ladies in Malaysia are too detailed and they are too uptight about work. As Malaysians (ladies) we are not professional enough when it comes to work because family also comes in later because in the Malay culture, your husband is first. Your husband gives you the right to work, but you have also to look after the family, the welfare of the children. Because that is still defined as a women's job. I cook for my wife. I iron my own shirts. But that culture is still there.

Men's ego is a bit different. You ask me to do it, I'll do it because you're my boss. I have to submit no matter what.

Male boss. They tend to tell you "Please submit this". Then he'll probably tell you once after the month and then one week before submission. They would like to know what the progress is. When you are working for a woman, they will ask you tomorrow.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: I think it would be a bit different. If I have a lady colleague of a different race, eg Chinese, say we need to do a press release. I do it in Malay and English. She has to do Chinese press release. I cannot do Chinese, but she can do English and Malay. If her language and English would be better, may as well she does it, and I check. If I acknowledge that her Bahasa is better than mine, I just leave it up to her.

But it would be different if I have a lady boss. When we do a report we hand it to her, there will be a lot of drafts coming up. I won't like to do that because we are wasting time. They like to see it perfect. I like to see whether the message comes across. They are too detailed and we get fed up.

My priority is to my boss who appraises me eventually for my bonuses, so no matter what you want, I'll try to please you.

I see ladies as equal if we have the same knowledge and they come from the same background. We can be equals.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?
RESP.: Males they come and work, they leave. Same as females. We work to please to girls, not the other way around. We would like to be seen to people that we are versatile, we are men, we like to be superior. The ladies just follow whatever is there. Instead of us, we like to go and change something, we have that drive. We want to be leaders. I think men should be leaders.

(Mid) they feel frustrated, they tend to be more conservative. They get set in their ways. These women will just follow whatever is there. They accept. Men are different.

GS: Different motivations for men and women.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I think it would be the other way around (Chinese male more open to change, Indians lower). Because Chinese have been known throughout the world as traders. Hawkers, store people. These people dare to go and change places from time to time.

Indians came here, brought in by the British, to work in the estates. Most probably why you find this happening is because they want themselves not to be seen as the minority. To be seen you have to be, not brilliant, but open and brave enough to change. I can tell you the Indians have guts. They are doing well politically, educationally. There are more Indian doctors than Chinese. They are improving themselves. They do not want themselves to be seen as they were seen during history.

GS: So you're agreeing with the graph for Indians, but thinking that Chinese should be shown to be more open to change? How would they both be in relation to Malays on openness to change?

RESP.: Malays, we are bounded by religion. Old beliefs. Because we were educated like that from the Book.

GS: So that might lead Malay males to feel there are certain constraints?

RESP.: There are constraints.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?

RESP.: Chinese I can understand why they are like this. Chinese still have clans, societies. One society can interact with another, but with limitations.

Indians, have castes. When they give out invitations, they use all their names of the family. I am not saying this is not correct. Why this happens is because Indians see themselves as equals to other people.

I make the distinction on this one also between males and ladies. We did a national survey for a Ministry. There was a question: "Women are enemies of women. True or false". We found out that when you have a woman boss and a woman subordinate. These people sometimes when they are equal they can become friends, but when they are at different levels they have .. especially with Malays. We actually went to Chinese but it doesn't occur. Indians yes, they have the same as Malays because our culture is not much different from Indians. The Chinese are different. They can relate themselves as families.

Individual value types

Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience, power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes?
RESP.: Power -- this is a lovely word. Young ones are like this because they are impatient. Like myself. Impatient for power. It is important. Because power comes with money, it comes with prestige, you can be acknowledged by people. It's all that. When you realise your realistic future is not what it seems to be, then you take it more realistic expectations. You don't go under, but you have to start from the beginning. You have to look back and see what you have done. "Why am I not promoted? Why is it so long for me to get up there?"

Then you work yourself up, but a different route. You took one path because you thought it was a fast route. Then you discover that on that fast lane there are a lot of road blocks. So you have to take the middle lane.

GS: Does this represent a re-focus?

RESP.: Yes, a refocus of what you want and in what way. Of course your pay is better. You have power over your children and wife. So power is something that binds.

When you have power, your status is bigger, seen by a subordinate would be higher. When you do that you wear good clothes, you have a driver, you have a company car, you have a bungalow over there, you have a beach resort. You have everything. All the perks. That also comes with control and dominance. One does not work without the other.

*If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges. There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?*

RESP.: I've told you about the corporate one, just now. Consultants will always be consultants. When they consult people, they consult people to get better, to improve.

And according to gender. Why?

RESP.: The men, two years of service, they would be eager to work and they would be visualising themselves as CEOs. Their need for power, they're thirsty for power. For ladies in Malaysia, they are coming of age, they maybe get married. Men don't think about marriage yet, when they're young. But for women, they are pressured by family. They know they are not on the dominant side, so they take it slow and easy. Whatever comes, they'll do their best.

For men, they try to work less and think big. They realise they have to rethink it again, and take another path.

**Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?**

RESP.: These people in consultancy they would like to see results coming out from what they have consulted. You are consulting to change into something good, something that is better than before. That drive is stronger.

In the corporate side, they think and try to do. They are still young. They more or less listen to you, and try to follow. There is a big gap.

GS: It sounds to me like you're saying it's a requirement of the job in a consultancy to be achievement-focused because that's how they're judged. Whereas in a corporate environment it's not the same.

RESP.: It's not different. It's more uncertainties. They're still uptight about work. "Are you giving me the right ways of doing things?" Eventually they'll come together. These people in the corporate sector would listen, try to do a bit. People in the corporate sector doing the job would have all these visions "I'm doing it my way". Eventually they find out it's not that way.
Consultants start off with more moderate desires, but when these people are too big-headed to listen to us, now they listen to us. "I'm wrong, I'm right, I'm wrong, I'm right". They realise that. It changes. When they get to a certain stage "Now I know what you're trying to do to me". The corporate people say "I think I know what the consultants want me to do". I'm still trying to persuade them to do it this way.

**Hedonism:** Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: Your achievement would be your pleasure. I would be satisfied so that is my pleasure. Of achieving something.

Why would it change on years? That should work for everybody. Most probably their pleasures are somewhere else, away from the job, more on family.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

**Security:** Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

RESP.: I would have thought women would like security more than men. I'm disagreeing with this. Women when they have children, they like security better because they need jobs, they need a good husband to provide them with food, clothes, shelter. That would be their main security.

But for men, that would come only later on. Most probably when they start having children, or start thinking of getting married. Before that they don't think about security, only security for themselves. They don't care what they're doing, as long as their security is filled. They're not enthusiastic about giving security to other people, instead of themselves.

GS: So security is important to both, but at different times.

**Self-concept and years of experience**

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I've become a bit lazy. That's the frustration. I still propose for new things. I like to implement new things, eg. internet for everybody, email for everybody in the company. We would not like to be cavemen in the next millennium. I wouldn't like to see that in the company because later on if you give me managerness, if I want to implement this later on there would be a big hesitant buffer because it's difficult to change immediately at one time. But at least do something. Even though it is costly, but you have done the initial stage of giving everybody one. Most probably you learn yourself and then you have a bit of knowledge. When that knowledge comes in, then you implement further and further technology.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

RESP.: My expectation is to be in that room (to be the manager). To have a least another officer under me. From there on, I'll be more thinking than doing. I believe that when you're in the manager's post you do more thinking, more thinking and a bit of doing. As it is, I'm doing and also thinking.

GS: So the balance would be different.

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?
GS: We've already talked about your roles as a husband, as a person at home, as a member of a sports club in a position of authority, you as the son of the family.

RESP.: I'm also the oldest grandson. Your cousins, your nephews will look at you. "This is what big brother is doing. Why don't you follow his footsteps?" That is a guideline for them to work harder. There are also responsibilities to my brother siblings.

RESP.: I try to balance it. At home, you have certain hours. For the wife it is a short time, but I will be seeing her every day, the rest of my life, God willing.

It's actually similar. First it will be as a leader, in the unit, of my own family, my wife, my father's family, of all the families as grandson. That coincides with everything. It comes naturally. It may differ a bit because you go more on personal knowledge when it comes to family. You must be more professional when it comes to business. But what you say, language-wise, how you talk to people would be the same. Because in PR you have been taught to be the type of person who is really in the middle, no pros, no cons, but you see it as both ways. And you use that every day. When people ask me for advice, I'll ask the same question. "What do you think? What do you feel? How comfortable are you with this decision?" I do not go on a directive basis, because we are not living in an old world any more. We are coming to a new millenium where other people's feelings and other people's ideas must be taken into consideration.

GS: Is that a personal value that you've brought in professionally?

RESP.: I developed that personally, and brought it into a professional background.

GS: So there's quite a lot of commonality between all the different parts of your life?

RESP.: I can say when you learn a bit of PR - my uncle was in PR - that's where you learn a bit, you learn from him. Then when you go to college, then you learn the real thing. "Oh, this is what he was talking about. This is how he did things". So you learn by yourself, and you then you implement that everywhere.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles? (How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

Professional values

Let's go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). The construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you. Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: (Construct 1) By education and by knowledge. If you've got formal education on PR you have to relate this. People in PR would not like people to say "You're in guest relations" because it's totally different. You have to be obliged to put that yourself. That goes for other PRs.

Improves their knowledge and shares it with others. PR always changes with technology. There are new things, new ways to handle press, new ways to develop press releases. You improve your knowledge by learning from other people. They have to have a good background in PR, especially educational.

Sets standards in making PR a management tool. Everybody knows, every PR practitioner would like to become management themselves. But we would like management to notice us, that we are very important, we are actually the tyre of a vehicle. What makes the company goes around. Without us you
cannot move at all. You don't have control. We have to protect our image and educate people along the way. How we educate them will come back to education.

Deals with criticism rationally. There is no right, there is no wrong. It is how you see it and look at it. You have to take everything openly. It’s how you encounter a problem. It’s how you encounter a crisis. Even an economic crisis there must be a good to it. If you see an economic downturn as depressing, some people see it as a profit, as a benefit to them. You cannot be pro to one side only, you have to see all various sides of the story. When you take criticism you analyse it.

Lots of PR experience. As time goes by, everyday is a new day for you. Everything is new and you learn from other people, how to do things. When you're not sure of something you have to ask for somebody's guidance. That guidance would be from somebody in a related field. The more knowledge and experience that you have, the better person you will be. You can also advise the management on what to do, in a very polite manner. You can use questions that they themselves can answer.

In leadership role in PR (if you've got education and experience, it leads you to this). It all makes sense.

RESP.: (Construct 2) Company constraints, let's say financial. They give you a budget that you have to work within, but when you work within the budget, what you most probably want will not be achieved. It will be achieved but it will take a long time. Like red tape. There are company constraints. I have to go through these various people in order for me to progress. That makes you impatient.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

RESP.: Protects the image of PR would be last. The perception by people of PR is better. I've seen that people know about it.

First will always be proper theoretical knowledge. Second will be firm and persuasive/trying to expand the PR role. Then sets standards of making PR a management tool.

The rest as is.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: Yes.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you've just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: (Cluster 1). Yes, how I see myself. For the capable practitioner, I would have to add more. He should be patient (not impatient). When you're impatient you tend to do a lot of mistakes. Patient, takes their time. Also, trying to expand the PR role; firm and persuasive; deals with criticism rationally. Not necessarily lots of experience.

RESP.: (Cluster 2) It makes sense. No I don't see these three as similar. (Attributes relate more to the company person and the experienced practitioner. The ethical practitioner would be different).

RESP.: (Cluster 3) Yes - role model. Should go a lot more.

RESP.: (Cluster 4) Not good PR. Not good people for the company or personally. This is ineffective PR.

RESP.: (Cluster 5)
What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?

RESP.: It takes a lot of time, experience, patience. As a new practitioner you are still impatient to progress, even to succeed in anything. So what you do is actually what you think is right. But in reality, you are doing it wrong. Then you learn from mistakes. When you learn from mistakes, that should at least educate you in some ways. You learn from mistakes. And when people see that now you're doing something right, and you're improving and improving, then you become a role model. When people criticise you when you're new you say "I know what's best for the company and for me". Now when people criticise you, you're thinking positively. "You're criticising me, on what basis?" Now you are taking it rationally. Maturity of the person.

GS: Perhaps what we're seeing in the charts is a progression. For you. You're not there (role model), neither are you there (new practitioner) but you're moving. Maybe these are some of the things which help to explain the attributes that you pick up on the journey.

RESP.: You can speculate that way. I think I was. I still do some mistakes, but not big mistakes. I used to get mad when people criticised or gave ideas. But now I'm looking at it in a positive way, taking it into consideration. Maybe we could implement this. I'm starting to listen, to realise that what people promise may not come true but with a little patience most probably your target will be achieved. I always say to other people "when you have a target and you don't reach that in time and people don't see you doing your work, you may have to leave the company and go to another".

Is there anything else you wish to add?
RESPONDENT 15 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

RESP.: When you are new, or in a new environment, it motivates you. That's why in my own personal experience, I have moved organisations. It's partly when I feel I do not motivate myself to do new things, I leave the organisation. Because I always want to keep it high - keep on contributing and doing new things.

The minute I think we stay comfortable and contented, you don't do new things. (the mid level)

(Why does it go up again?) The need to share, to impart, to leave behind something good for the profession. Actually at this point in my own experience, I'm trying to think how best to share whatever knowledge I have gained over my years of experience with the younger people. I'm looking at trying to write, to share my knowledge. In fact, this year particularly I'm seriously thinking about writing my experiences as a PR practitioner in Malaysia.

Openness to change

RESP.: Because you're new and you want to learn. When you're new you're more ready to learn and to find out things. So you have to keep an open mind about things, to discover new things.

(Seniors) Whereas as you go through the years you would have set your own standards and made your own conclusions, so it is a little less difficult to be open to change.

(Mid) It could be that you're probably trying to complete a task more than doing new things. You're much too involved in trying to complete a job, more than anything else. Maybe just to get things done.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: In the beginning you would have an idea of what you want to achieve, the level of success you want to achieve in your life, in your career. You set out to get it so therefore of course the level of self-transcendence would be higher in your early years. Throughout the years, I would have thought it would be going up this way because I think you have to set your targets and you have to work to achieving it. I don't really agree that it is this way. (disagrees with graph)

GS: As you get more experienced, you get more interested in issues of dominance and control?

RESP.: Yes.

Conservation

RESP.: I think it's the other way around. Normally in your younger years, the spirit is really very very free. You seldom observe the need to preserve traditional practices and protection of stability. You're really more adventurous. The spirit increases and then either it stabilises or it moves down. It's because of the need to be more versatile and flexible in the course of doing your PR job. You will be working with so many different types of people and therefore it's going to be very difficult to hold on to something too strong. You will have to adjust and be more versatile, more flexible, to create better understanding.

GS: As you get more experienced, you get increased recognition that you're going to have to do that, whereas earlier on, you might not be that perceptive about what the job involves.

Self-transcendence
RESP.: I don't agree with this. It should increase over time. In your younger years when you're on the job, you would think that a sense of individuality is overly important. Then you find out that actually there is very little to be accomplished individually and the greater test is to work with others as a team and to treat others as equals and also to be concerned about their welfare. This knowledge will be only more apparent as you grow older and as you gain more experiences over the years.

**Work environment**

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

**Openness to change**

RESP.: I do agree with this consultancy graph. I truly believe that it is easier to carry out professional practice as a consultant because you are not constrained by anything at all. There are no corporate constraints put on you. You are really quite free to exercise best PR practice.

Whereas in a corporation, they have got the culture and that is the strongest factor that will determine your professional behaviour. You have to decide at a certain point whether you give into the corporate culture in order to work. Or if you cannot adjust, you just have to leave. That is the most practical thing to do.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: In the early years the need to prove oneself is very great. Moreso as a consultant, because you're faced with this do or die thing. Whereas if you work in a corporate environment, it is quite different. As a consultant you will not tolerate certain things that go against professional ethics and best practice standards. Whereas if you are in a corporation, although you may be guided by the professional standards, still it is the company's ethical code that determines your actions. As a consultant you would have higher drive to obtain this high level of self-transcendence than if you were in a corporate.

(at mid and senior levels) There are a lot of external factors that influence their actions. You can't really just live by one set of ethical codes out there in the world. You are really working with a lot of others, professionals as well in their own right, on their own terms. So I suppose all this will dilute the earlier drive that you had, and then the PR practitioner will lose, or decrease the pursuit of success.

GS: Is it saying that success and dominance are not so important because other priorities become important?

RESP.: I am sure that is part of the answer. I think it is a lot of things. It is family, it is politics, it's social. All these factors.

**Conservation**

RESP.: This is closely related to corporate culture. If you work within organisations, you really have to understand the corporate culture and go by it. Whereas as a consultant, there are no preservation of traditional practices. (mid level)

GS: Why might it be more important at the start?

RESP.: At the start you're new. You may think that this is highly important. But you'll discover it is not true over the years. Consultants, it is quite natural for them to find it even more important than the corporates because they are specialists. Being specialists in the field, you try to hold on to your standards and keep the standards high all the time. So with respect to preserving your professional code of conduct, protection of what we consider to be professional practice, you would probably try to
champion it. Until you find out that sometimes - I don't like to say that you have to compromise - you may not need to compromise fully but you may need to consider the points of view of others.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: For consultants it should start high. But for corporates it should gradually increase. Why? It's the way consultants work. It's really essential for consultants to accept others as equals. In the field and to be concerned for their welfare. I can't imagine how a consultant can operate without taking into consideration all this at very high levels, even in the beginning. It's a necessary characteristic or trait of the job as PR consultants.

(Mid) In the course of the consultant's work, sometimes you have to draw a line between actually delivering the job, and consideration of acceptance of others as equals and concern for welfare. Because what is the priority on the job - you may have to consider that.

GS: At that mid-range level, those people would start to have some responsibility for delivering results? So when the responsibility starts to sit on their shoulders, then they start to look at other issues.

RESP.: That's right.

**The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?**

RESP.: That makes sense. You're not exposed when you've grown within that certain ethnic group. You've just come out, so you show a stronger identification with your own ethnic group until you gain more experiences and exposure to handle multi-cultural PR. You will learn to accept the other ethnic group but it may not mean that you represent less of your own.

GS: So you might stay quite strongly influenced by your own ethnic background, but better able to understand others.

RESP.: That's right. It's very useful and it is good in the sense that you have got the global appeal and understanding to consider how different ethnic groups behave or require a certain kind of behaviour to fulfil a job. As we know, the Japanese when they ask you to submit a quotation, what are the things they are looking at, would be different if you submit the same quotation to the Malaysians for instance. These are things that will only benefit your job if you understand.

**Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?**

RESP.: Firstly I have been brought up to respect the elders and I find that this is something I learn not only at the PR school but at home. Of course it is seen as a PR tool. A lot of my bosses say "You have learned in the PR school all these manners:. But no, these are really my personal values. I expect courtesy to be observed in the office and greetings. To me it is very important that you start the day with good greetings. In fact I demand all my staff to observe that. I do have some of my staff from different ethnic groups or upbringing. Even if they come face to face with the number 1 person in the organisation, they will look straight into the person's face and not say good morning. And yet this person is a well-qualified PR person. But because the ethnic group, or the family for that matter, do not emphasise these things, and to him he has not done something unusual or wrong, but to me he has violated the basic principles of PR.

Number 2 is transparency. I actually appreciate the staff in the office to be open, to speak the truth even if it is no good news, and to be transparent. Because it helps a lot in problem-solving.

Number 3, I like my colleagues and staff to treat work seriously. Never belittle anything at all. Even like if a customer calls and gives an opinion, I like them to record it. I like to record things in black and white.
To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

RESP.: I am very open to that, especially good values. For instance, I am not a sportswoman. I have staff who are very active in sports. I encourage them. They are active in hobbies like photography. I negotiate with the personnel department to give them a scholarship to pursue right up to diploma. It's not my personal interest, but I like to see people do new things, develop themselves. Among my staff, two of them since I joined this organisation, I have actually pushed them to continue their studies. Because I think it's important that you improve yourself. Although you think you have reached a certain age and you don't want to do, I still try to encourage. And I get them involved in voluntary work. Like raising funds.

GS: How do you see the distinction between work and non-work?

RESP.: Not much of a distinction. Work is a lifestyle. What you are in the office is what you are at the home. And what you are at home is what you are in the office. I encourage the good values that you practice in the house to be brought into the office. And if you have a problem in the house and we can help solve it, we should sit together and help. Why not?

GS: Does it mean that the values of this organisation match fairly closely with your personal values?

RESP.: Yes.

GS: What would happen if the organisation's values were different to your own personal values?

RESP.: I would still carry on to the extent that is allowable.

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why?

What different strategies?

RESP.: Yes there would be. I have worked in a Malay organisation before and now I'm in a Chinese organisation. I think the level of discipline is different. They work longer hours and they work a lot harder. I'm very certain of that. But Malay organisations are more caring, especially with regard to personal affairs. If you work in a Chinese organisation, there is a clear cut -- business is business. If you're in a Malay organisation they operate like a kampong, like a village.

GS: So you're allowed to run this section on your rules, as long as you still do the job?

RESP.: Yes. For instance, before my term here, this place has never celebrated Hari Raya among the Chinese and Muslim staff, or Chinese New Year. So I have been able to ask the organisation to see it as something to improve interpersonal relationships among the people who work in this company. So we celebrate the different festivals now. It has become work.

GS: What sort of things have you had to make an adjustment on here?

RESP.: I've had to negotiate here, but they've been very tolerant and they have accepted. I've found that the Chinese hold very closely to their kong-see (?) concept. This concept among the Chinese is how they develop the surname, and how those who come with the same surname will be given priority in a lot of things - health, education, jobs. The kong-see spirit is extremely strong, certainly much much stronger than the Malays. This also will reflect on the teamwork, how they work excellently amongst
themselves as a team. They really co-operate with one another very well. As opposed to the Malays. Teamwork among the Malays is not as effective as teamwork among the Chinese.

Being a non-Chinese, it took a long time for me to be accepted within the management. They actually utilise this kong-see spirit, so they needed more time to accept me.

GS: And in trying to gain that acceptance, what were you doing? Working double hard?

RESP.: I was working very hard and I was having to listen a lot. Let them have their say and explain things to me before I actually gave my version of it. I've had to do a lot of listening. Listening has helped me gain their recognition. The kong-see spirit now, I feel less of it. If in my earlier years I've had to go through six senior management, Chinese. Now it's only two or three.

GS: They've given you better access.

Gender

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: I think there's generally an acceptance for lady practitioners. It is a lot easier for lady practitioners to get things done in this country, than for males. Why? I think that number 1, ladies have an eye for details which is really required in our line of job. We are good negotiators as well as the persuasion that is needed on the job. I discourage men from joining PR.

Gender and ethnicity

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: It makes a difference. For instance, if this organisation wanted a government relations person it would certainly be cleverer to employ a Malay lady as opposed to a Chinese man. I would still say a Malay lady rather than a Malay man. Because a Malay lady's power to open doors are better than a man. Especially with strangers.

And the other thing is ownership of the company. If the company is owned by a Chinese then I think the most senior PR person of the organisation will most often be of the same ethnic background. To be able to achieve more. In this organisation, they have been very careful and very clever in understanding that there's a lot of government relations involved, and dealing with the central Bank. So as a result I think they have decided to accept them more, the Malays.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: I would have thought the ladies would increase over the years. It's really related to the exposure on the job. Especially if you are in the communications field, you'll find that it's very important to be open to change.

(Males) I suppose in the younger days, they have their own set of values and they hold by it too strongly, and once they are in the field, it decreases, and it's the process of adjustment. Before they're established it is important to value openness to change in their work.

GS: Why the difference between males and females?

RESP.: I was going to ask if there's a biological reason for this (biological or socialisation). I think the men think too much of themselves all the time, then they find out it's not true of any.
This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I think it's true. (Indians) It has something to do with the need to be accepted. I don't like to use the word survival, but it's really the need to be accepted.

With the Chinese, they are also the minority. The Chinese are not the majority yet they are less open to change. Generally they are quite conservative. You do find conservative Malays, yet there is a slight difference in the level of conservatism.

For women, women are more open to change. That's very true. Personally I find it easier to relate to a Chinese lady than a Chinese gentleman. The Chinese ladies are more modern, more open to changes. Indian women are also very open to change.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?

GS: All this graph is proving one thing. It is true that more ladies should be in PR. We are more stable.

I agree with this about the men. I am married to a Malay man. My boss is a Chinese. I have many Indian men friends and I find them to be really most open and quick to treat others as equals. It has a lot to do with the fact that they are in the minority. You trace their history. A lot of them started off coming from India. It's a survival instinct and being a minority.

Somehow with the Chinese, although they came from China, they are not second families. They bring the family out. Not like the Indians. Indians are known for that. They maintain two families in Indian and Malaysia. Chinese are quite different. That's why they are very strong. The team spirit is really admirable. They can help one another improve, they can see their own kind growing, and allow for the person to grow. If you compare with the Malay and the Indians they are different. They will not allow their own kind to grow as much as the Chinese.

GS: Is that an argument for Chinese to be higher? Maybe it's a distinction between how they deal with people in their own family and people outside the family.

Individual value types

Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience, power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges. There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: In consultancy it's quite consistent. The reason is that a consultant would, from the time of establishment, have that certain level of acceptance and represents a certain social status already. The need to further enhance the image is the reason for the rise.

(Corporate) This has to do with the early years when you're just starting work and you're new in the field, this value is important. The need to belong to a certain social status or to be seen as aligned to a certain power before you can be accepted.

GS: So corporations are seen to inherently have more status and prestige than consultancies?

RESP.: Not in that sense. But for the practitioner to use power to be accepted. To be aligned to a certain name, a certain social standing. For instance, if I'm a new PR graduate and I'm going to be joining an organisation that is linked to the Finance Minister. These things become important to me as a symbol of power and authority. And being young, I believe these things will help me achieve a lot of things and do my work. That's important to me.
Over the years I would discover to what extent that fact can help me in my job. Therefore it decreases. And then it increases again, but I don't see that it should increase so drastically. It should stabilise instead of going way up.

GS: Because the reality that you're talking about continues on.

And according to gender. Why?

RESP.: I have one explanation. I really think that females provide a lot of guidance. Therefore the need to dominate over people and resources is very important at this stage (senior). If they're not able to get this at this stage of their life, they're not contributing much.

GS: So they have achieved to the extent that they are providing guidance to others?

RESP.: Yes. With males it still holds -- the need to influence is very strong. The more influential you are...it's all that - social status, prestige, control and dominance. I think they are all very much related.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: In corporates you do not have to deliver as fast and as immediate as if you were a consultant. The pace of work and the pace of recognition given to consultants as opposed to corporate PRs are different. The expectations are very high for consultants.

(mid) The drop shouldn't be so sudden. The movement for consultants should be more consistent instead of downward, and higher up. Corporates at some point it will come down. It should start high, then low, then consistent. But I think it is lower. The longer you stay in the corporate environment, the less motivated you are to achieve. Unless you are at a certain position where you have the power.

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: I agree with this because even when I lecture the college students in PR, they are all motivated by pleasure. The idea of glamour on the job. The idea of mingling with people. They think it is a highly sociable profession. And then they'll find the truth on the job. They'll see how varied PR is. The writing skills they require. It's not just social skills. It's not just looking good and not knowing how to write, and hard work.

For the consultants, I agree because certainly consultants start on a lower range. Even from the beginning, you would see the implications of best practice and the need to deliver the job properly as a consultant. (Focused on the serious aspects). Very very focused. You have all the audits you need to do even before you work out the proposals. Things like this are observed less in organisations.

It gets more serious. That's what it means. I think they have to consider on a wide range. The implications are enormous in PR. The people to consider. You also need to consider the political implications. As PR consultants you have to be very broad up here and see it from all perspectives. Sometimes consultants don't do this part of the job. There is a lot to consider from the different perspectives.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: Yes. It is only human. To motivate yourself to do the work, what is in it for you at the end of it? What is it? It may not be financial. It could be that you make a name for yourself. It could be you are helping others, or you actually help the company achieve something. So yes certainly. One of the things I consider it is all driven by the heart. I put a lot of heart in most of my job. If I don't, I don't perform as well.
Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

RESP.: Yes, but I don't think the difference is that stark. The female graph should be higher. Why the males higher? I think partly related to their role as the father of the family, and the sense of responsibility that they carry in the job. Women are more adventurous in some ways and more willing to take a risk. If I take it from personal experience, I think there is a vast difference. I do not think of security as much as he. It has a lot to do with the leadership role.

Self-concept and years of experience

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: It has been quite fulfilling for me. I have served the plantations industry, banking industry, finance industry, also academic, I have done part-time lecturing, and I involve myself in voluntary activities to promote the profession through the Institute, so I find it extremely fulfilling. But then also I think to achieve this state you must be the kind of person to want to do the work; to create work; to self-motivate because nobody is going to ask you to do it. You have to want to do it yourself. Then again, the theoretical aspects of PR, and the practical aspects are really quite different. I've reached stage where I think I should put down all my leanings and impart to the younger people who are coming out.

And my greatest concern is that you still find young students thinking that PR is a glamorous profession, and that it is related to fashion and looks and level of sexiness. We need to correct that perception. IPRM has dreams to raise its status. We are trying to find out how we can actually one day charter the profession. Similarly we are looking at how PR practitioners can be 'abused' - whether they gain proper recognition in their organisation; whether they have been sacrificed as a result of internal politics. I think this is a real issue. Internal politics can hinder professionalism to an extent that I think we shouldn't keep quiet.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

RESP.: I've grown on the job. I never imagined that I would take this profession so seriously. That it would reach my heart. That everything I do, from the way I raise my kids, to the way I deal with strangers, I really practise PR.

GS: You've internalised it. And it has something to do with the way you like to integrate work and home - a total approach.

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

. your family identity?
. your organisational identity?
. your ethnic/cultural identity?

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: The PR practitioner. I certainly spend more hours in the day in my role as PR practitioner than as a wife and a mother, or even a friend. I'm a true PR practitioner.

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles?

(How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

RESP.: The roles yes, but the level of skills that I practise as a PR practitioner in an office is certainly much higher than the level of skills I have as a mother. I may be able to communicate with my children, but if you require other parenting skills.. the level of skills is different.
Professional values

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you. Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: (first cluster -- three identical constructs) In the PR profession, things are moving very fast. It's really dynamic. A lot of difficult issues will arise in the course of your work, and considerations to be given in making decisions. So you must be able to identify the issues, to see what are the issues that will affect total consideration, and you must be able to deal with the difficult issues. And of course, adapt to changes. PR is ever dynamic. If you are not versatile enough, then it's going to be very difficult to handle the job. There is a certain relationship because these may be new issues that you as a PR practitioner must be able to raise as an industry issue.

RESP.: (remaining constructs) Part of the same picture.

RESP.: (second cluster - two identical constructs) It is really important, before you even implement a PR program, for you to understand the exact situation within the company; for you to carry out an audit so that you get a clear picture of where your starting point is; what are the reasons for carrying out the program; to determine the real needs for the program, and at the end of it to decide what it is that you want to achieve. So certainly research is very important.

RESP.: (remaining constructs) These are all related to PR training and skills. You can have a proper PR practitioner who practices all that she has learned or you can have somebody to carry out fly-by-night PR.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

RESP.: Bring can make things happen up one higher. Everything else fine.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: I think my level of confidence is low. Or it could mean that I am a very modest person. I think I am a very confident girl.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It's the same material as you've just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: (Cluster one) Certainly not how I see myself.

GS: What about ethics and experience? It looks like you've got a strong sense of ethics when you've got less experience.

RESP.: I think you need to understand the code of ethics for sure. I've always stressed on ethics.

GS: How would you describe the level of ethics you would need to be a role model and a capable practitioner?

RESP.: I would improve my training skills in PR practise. Then I would ensure that I'm not just sitting here and not contributing. I would want to measure the success of my programs. And then the question
of morality, I would consider it as well. Whether something is a moral thing to do or not, based on my personal values.

RESP.: (Cluster two)

**What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?**

RESP.: No. In fact, it's the ability to shift mindsets; to introduce new programs; to make a difference. You have to look out and see the trends - the world trends, the national trends, and move your company along with it.

**Is there anything else you wish to add?**
RESPONDENT 16 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: From experience, when you first come into the field you're coming in with almost nothing in your mind except for learning and gaining experience, and you just accept a lot of things. But I think once you get to the five year period, you start becoming very fixed about a lot of ideas. You also become a bit disillusioned about a lot of ideas as well, so you stop wanting to change, you stop wanting to do a lot of things. You become more competitive and very enclosed in what you want to do. And then after a while, the more experience, the higher you go. When you start becoming managers for example, and you have to start thinking in a more open way. Then you start realising that you're back to a childhood situation and teaching once again, and delegating. That mid-range part is the enclosing part, to basically self-promote yourself and therefore you tend to close a lot of things and concentrate on the basis of what you have already.

I think it's a bit different when you're running your own business, then it starts once again, the entire process perhaps. But looking at my own staff who have been here for three or four years, you see a difference in terms of how they behave. They do tend to become more enclosed. They build up a barrier in terms of what they know and sometimes it's a threat situation. It's a promotional situation where you start having a bargaining power and you don't want people changing certain things because you're fixed on how things should happen, based on what you think your experience has been. But after a certain time you become more senior, and you start having to manage people and delegate which changes once again.

When you're starting to go up again, it's because you're moving up the ladder in terms of management decisions rather than just client servicing. With client servicing, you come in and you're totally open to everything but then you start having to deal with rules, with corporate policies, and you start changing as well. You start becoming a bit more closed in what you do and it reaches a level -- I think the five-year level is a question period, as to really is this what you're going to do for the rest of your life? Then I think once you're comfortable with that, then you start wanting to experience more things, to build yourself up again. That five year period, it takes them that long to decide if they're going to stay or not.

Self-enhancement

You're just so driven by wanting to do things when you're in a new profession. You want to prove a whole lot of things. But lots of people start questioning their position, their situation, the business itself. In this country it's still very questionable industry. A lot of people have a lot of things to say about it, and a lot of negative things to say about PR here and 2 years/5 years you start questioning a whole lot of things and in terms of dominance, you're being instructed to do a lot of things. You're still under someone with supervision, and a lot of people think that PR has a lot of independence, a lot of glamour to it. You start losing all those thoughts as you go along and then you start wondering "Am I going to be good in this area of press releases? It's not what I want it to be, and I'm still under someone else, I'm not a manager, I'm not doing this fantastic thing all by myself."

When you get more experience, you're talking about a move up in position. More often that not after 5 years, people would be into the management position already and at that point in terms of success you're seeing yourself grow to a higher level, to a management position, rather than a support staff position. You start to be part of the company, or that's your perception. Or you're being given more responsibility because of your experience. That creates this sense "I'm going up the ladder right now. I'm going places". In terms of dominance over others it goes up as well, because you're the manager. You have people that you're training and that once again, depending on what the person is like, is a
feel-good situation. You're training somebody. You're moulding somebody, you're pretty much telling them what to do.

Conservation

RESP.: At the first part it is to do with your growth in the industry, and the openness in a lot of things. You learn about a lot of things theoretically, and you pretty much want to keep to it because you think this is how it always been done in terms of preserving traditional practices. But the more you're out there, the more you realise it's really all about psychology. It's really about adapting to situations and sometimes what you learn in theory is totally non-applicable any more and you learn that you're supposed to do it like this "A-Z", but now you're saying forget all about it, just think what you want to do. And after a while you realise "What was that all about? Could I have not bothered going to school for example" and you start changing in terms of your values, in terms of what is considered traditional in PR, and acceptable in PR and start thinking about other ways to do things, and be more accommodating, be more customer oriented, tailoring things differently rather than sticking to one regimented system. I think that's what you're seeing here.

These people (in the middle perhaps?), you're looking not so much at protection of stability, but maybe growth in any form because you are looking at going up the ladder whereas these people in terms of stability, you are new. If you plan to be in the industry then you have to make sure that you do all the right things to a large extent.

At the senior end, you're trying to teach a lot of things and how do you teach but except to go back to what theory's all about. It's easy to explain how things are in terms of experience, but the basis is what's in the theory and very often "They have to experience it themselves, but I'll teach them theory because theory's still there, it's still the basis for what you do". The longer you are in the industry, you realise that. It might change in terms of variance but it's really all there. After a while, you realise that a lot of things you do is really all in the books. It's all what traditionally PR's all about and it hasn't moved that much. It just has evolved to the situation. After a certain point, they will most likely be presenting at seminars, giving talks at some of the institutes and schools, so once again you're talking about what you learned and what you experienced, so it's a convergence of both things and it's not just what you're experiencing and reacting to experience.

Self-transcendence

In terms of growth, you are growing in position here and you're becoming more closed in terms of what your key abilities are. You tend to become a bit selfish (in the mid-level area) and thinking about yourself, about promoting yourself in terms of position, pay. You start realising your values and you start becoming very self-centred. You start looking toward yourself and you disregard a lot of other people.

Here (senior), you're looking at a management situation so it depends on what kind of manager you plan to make. Do you make the people feel subordinates or do you call them a colleague? Your mindset changes from an employee situation, a staff situation who's fighting for position, to a management position who has to see what the staff want, and to be seen as treating people equally, and to share knowledge.

Work environment

There's a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you've had in PR. Let's deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: In terms of independent thought and action, when you come to consultancies you are working with a plurality of clients. You're not focussed on just one industry, so there are lots of things that are
going on. If you're not open enough to a variety of industries you're working with, you can't be successful in a consultancy. You can't say "No I will just work on the auto industry". There's always a variety of clients that you're working with and that promotes openness.

In terms of independent thought, in consultancies you pretty much work on your own clients. You decide, although you might report to a superior, you decide what happens with that particular client, whereas if you're working in a corporate environment the chances are you're working as a team but you're following orders very often. You are basically working on one particular project, and everyone's working on that project, so it's always a team effort. Consultancies, especially the smaller ones, it's a lot of independence with consultants working on specific projects, and lot of the consultancies here are relatively small to medium size rather than very large organisations.

The very fact that there's so much openness in terms of things that you do, you're more motivated to do a lot of things in consultancy. Because you're working with so many different parts of industry, it's not a 9-5 job at the end of the day. It's a lot of different excitement. It could be something very dull one minute but there's something else to basically prep you up. Whereas in a corporate environment, it's the same structure that you're working, day in, day out. With consultants, we come in and we assess the situation in a very different way. I've seen corporate PR people and the attitude is very different in terms of work. For one thing, they're very fixed about time. They're very structured in what they do because it's almost routine. It's almost like having an administration job. Whereas consultancy, there's just so much variety, and I think the overall appreciation for your job increases as well. I always tell people, if you're going to go into PR, try consultancy first before you settle into corporate communication. Have that experience, have the breadth of knowledge rather than just focus on something, unless you're really sure that you want to do that particular thing.

Independence of thought you have a big difference between consultancy because you're just independent all the time. I encourage my people here to make decisions on their own because they can't possibly be running to me all the time. In a corporate situation there's not so much independence of thought because you're just independent all the time. I encourage my people here to make decisions on their own because they can't possibly be running to me all the time. In a corporate situation there's not so much independence of thought because you're just independent all the time. I encourage my people here to make decisions on their own because they can't possibly be running to me all the time.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: You're talking about the mental attitude. If you talk about success and dominance, it's really a mental situation, a psychological situation. And in both areas, it just becomes a power struggle. It doesn't matter if you're in a corporate or a consultancy at the end of the day, it's basically how far you're going to go. Are you going to go into management, or are you just going to be stagnant?

That area (mid-level) is the selfish phase and it doesn't matter what environment you're in. Probably it would be any kind of industry, in terms of that particular value.

The longer you are in the industry, the longer you are in a particular company, you just enclose yourself.

Conservation

RESP.: I wouldn't think it would stabilise. It should go up as well at senior level.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: In a consultancy, because of the environment you're in, because of the variety of things that you're doing, you have to build up the confidence in understanding a variety of different industries and businesses very fast. There's no time to just settle, you have to be very fast-thinking. You have to read a lot about different kinds of industries, because you never know when you're going to be involved in a certain thing that you've never done before. Whereas compared to corporate people, if you're in a bank for example, you probably know everything there is about banks and finance but it probably never occurred to you to bother with the IT industry or the textile industry. For that reason, in terms of self-enhancement you are always moving ahead. You don't stop thinking, you don't stop learning, and after a while you're always learning from people you're imparting knowledge as well. Consultants have got more of a proactive situation, we don't wait for things to happen. It's our job. We're being paid pretty much to be very proactive, and I think in corporate situations you tend to be very reactive to a lot of
situations, where PR is concerned. If something is happening then you work around it. Whereas we do it the other way.

So you have to start thinking about people in a different light, in terms of how you deal with those people. That promotes change and the way you think.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: Not particularly, but if you look at the kids who are coming out of the PR schools here in Malaysia, a lot of them are from MARA, and I think a lot of it not only has to do with the ethnic background but also language. A lot of them don't speak English very well and so they tend to stick to companies or the environment where a lot of the way they think, the language as well, suits them. So when you're younger that could happen. You're just comfortable as to where you came from. If you came from MARA which is so Malay-oriented, the chances are you want to stick to that particular environment. But when you're in a consultancy and you start meeting other people, when you start having a lot of interaction with a lot of different clients, I think that moves with your age. So you're starting to realise that you don't have to be so afraid, so (concerned with) self-preservation for fear that you're going to be criticised, or you're not going to fit into a situation. The education structure in this country unfortunately is not very open in terms of where you fit in so you grow up knowing very well that you are a Malay, and Indian, a Chinese, and it takes while for you to get out of it. It pretty much happens in their work environment where it doesn't really matter anymore, and it's more on quality of work. But you come out of school, you've got that school mentality and it's very difficult to walk away from that.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: Yes. Things that I believe in, in terms of work ethics. Journalism for example, there are certain things that I don't believe in, like bribing for example. We have clients who are comfortable or are used to paying the media for example in different countries in Asia to get things done. And I don't believe in that. I know it's practised in this country as well but I'm absolutely particular that if your product is really that bad, if you don't have the confidence in it to get the kind of media coverage that you can, then we won't work together. If I don't like a certain company in terms of the way they work, I won't be there, and that's a personal thing that I've brought into the company.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

But even where they're concerned (the staff), if they have a particular dislike about certain things then I'm open to listening to them and their views as to why.

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (i.e. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: In terms of relations to a client for example, yes it does play a big part. For example, if I have a client that is very Chinese, and his preferred language is Chinese for communicating, in terms of sharing and feeling more comfortable, then I will take a Chinese staff with me so that client has more confidence in sharing thoughts. There is a lot of discrimination in this country. There's a lot of protectiveness of the background you come from -- "We're Malays, we want to stick to Malays". Very often you find a Malay company may only appoint or want to appoint a Malay company, and a Chinese company is probably more clued up with the Chinese. And an Indian company may be looking for a company with more Indians in it for example. That does happen, and for that reason you'll find a lot of the consultancies will actually take a couple of staff. They might be a predominantly certain group but
there will be at least a couple of staff from other backgrounds to basically accommodate this particular situation where clients as concerned.

It's very true when it comes to government for example, not necessarily the person would be Malay but I would expect the person to be comfortable with the language in terms of how fluent you are in Malay and whether he can actually think they way they do. Because they all think very differently. If you work with the government sector, they're very slow, they're very talkative, very gossipy, and if you can't fit into the way they think then you're not going to get very far because they're not going to trust you. So you're looking for people who can adapt to that situation. When I take my staff for example to see a particular client, I've pretty much figured out what their client will probably be looking for in terms of a consultancy. And you're going to try to meet that and make sure that the client is comfortable and confident about who they're dealing with.

Internally yes there is a certain amount of favouritism in terms of discrimination, the type of people you hire. You want to make sure there's not too much clash, for example. A lot of Malay companies are very Muslim. They tend to hire a lot of Malays and very few nons. Sometimes, not at all. When it comes to Chinese and Indian companies it's usually quite a mix, but Malay companies tend to be very closed in the way they do things, internally and who they deal with.

**Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?**

RESP.: I think that's a mixed situation. Some are very open, some don't look at the ethnic background, some rely on your performance. But there are companies where your growth in that company, your progress can be rather stunted because you're from the wrong ethnic background. That really is more a situation in companies that are very traditional, a very old company perhaps, that hasn't changed in the way it does business. It could be very Chinese business, and they might be growing in terms of products and services but internally where operations are concerned, it's very traditional. In that situation a person of another race, whether it is consultancy or otherwise, could have a problem reaching that certain level unless once again you're talking about being able to speak the language. Language is a very important thing here. If you for example speak Tamil and you go into a company that's predominantly Indian, the chances are that they will appreciate you more, they'll share more with you because you speak the language. And the same with the Chinese. If you speak the language, you may necessarily be a Chinese, but they appreciate the fact that you speak the language and that can basically take you further than a Chinese.

Language is very important and the second is your behaviour, the way you think. The Chinese have very particular ways of doing things, or they might find certain things more interesting than a Malay for example. If you fit into that situation, you speak the language, or you actually understand the lingo of how they speak and what they are saying, that makes a big difference. When you start thinking the way they do, then you get accepted better. And it's easier.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: Currently in PR in Malaysia you find a lot of women. That's a traditional thing as well because communication's identified a lot with women in the organisation. In this country because of the background in terms of the very traditional values as to the place of a man and a women, it can sometimes impede your progress when you are a female in a man's situation. There are times when I go in for presentation into a company that's a very masculine company, and the very fact that you're speaking to them on the same level certainly takes a lot more work trying to get your confidence, rather than a man who goes in and basically makes a presentation and says "I am right for this company. Give your business to me". It is a big issue, it's a very annoying issue as well, and it's very sexist issue because there are times when we go in and they immediately assume that there is something more entertaining in value here rather than professional. That is quite a big thing in this country.
I think once again it depends on how you project yourself. If you go in with a very feminine attitude then you're just going to be bowled over. You're not going to get anywhere with them. You've got to be aggressive. If you go in looking very soft, very sweet, saying yes to everything they say, just being very nice, then in this country they just don't appreciate a female for that. You be aggressive, very masculine in the way you deal with people here, especially the men, or they just take advantage of the situation. That's where you have a lot of people complain about sexual harassment in PR. That's a pretty big issue. It depends on the way you project yourself. It's a very tough thing for a female in PR in this country.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: It makes a difference depending on the management of the company. Male would take a higher standing regardless of what ethnicity they are, and then comes your background. That's basically the criteria. It's whether you're male or female first, and then..

For me, it's not been a problem. It's been a challenge, but not a problem. I've gone to companies that have been very traditional, very traditionally Chinese for example, very male, but I suppose it's really the kind of upbringing and background you've had. If you've had a lot of friends from a variety of different backgrounds, you can identify with them easily. You tend to change the way you speak for example. I will not speak to them English the way I speak with you. I speak more of a colloquial English that they're comfortable with. I'd probably talk to them about things that they'd be interested in, and it's not been a problem at all. It means having to go in for meetings perhaps to convince them that you know what you're talking about and that they can out their confidence and their money behind you in terms of what you're doing. But I do know a lot of people who complain that that is a problem. That they can't seem to go beyond that barrier in terms of discriminating about your gender as well as your background. I adapt to the situation.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

**Openness to change**

RESP.: In terms of openness to change, women being very stable or consistent, I think the minute you get into school, the minute you start communicating and moving about with guys, you have already pretty much figured out where you stand. A lot of women compare themselves against a man in terms of what you're doing so you've pretty much fixed your ideas to exactly how far you're going to go, or how much you're going to do or how you're going to play. Whereas men don't look at women at all as a comparison. We don't come into the picture at all. They're probably comparing against another guy. Whereas women are comparing against the men at all points.

It's openness to change in what you expect. Which means a lot of women in this country don't really expect that much. You're comfortable so long as you get into this particular range, you're comfortable with a lot of things. It's got to do with a lot of complacency in the way we've been brought up, passiveness in a lot of what we do. So you don't expect much. Whereas men they just expect the world.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: The Malay women, I agree in terms of them being higher than the other two. A lot of that has to do with the privileges that the Malays get in terms of the potentials, business, loans and such things. Being Malay there's a lot more assistance you can look at and a lot of Malay women are entrepreneurs in this country compared to Chinese and Indians. I suppose they've got a whole lot more to look
forward to. As it is, you don't expect very much. A lot of Indians and Chinese, they're just very comfortable with what they have and they're not very ambitious. With the Malays, because there are opportunities that the government pushes and publicises all the time, you want to go further, you want to be a bit more ambitious. You know that you can make it. But it's always a problem with the Chinese and the Indians in terms of motivation as well. They tend to be a bit lower. It starts way back in school. It's a horrible system in terms of how far you get. The gradings are different. So you come out into the work world already seeing a lot of discrimination and that impedes you to do a lot of things or to want to do a lot of things or want to go anywhere beyond just being a menial secretarial person. You find a lot of Indians and Chinese who are secretaries, administration level. Whereas Malay women because of being Malay it will further them in the bigger corporates. You see a lot more Malay women at higher levels.

In terms of the men, the Chinese although very successful in terms of business, try to be very traditional in how they do business. It's a pretty much inherited situation from your parents as to how you do certain things. I can't explain the Indian men. I would think the Indian men would be closer to the Malay male. Yes you do have some very successful Indian men here, and they are totally self-made millionaires. Whereas Malays, there's a lot of help from the government. So maybe what you're looking at it a small category of people who are very successful in terms of Indian men. You don't find that many Indian men in the first place, the young ones for sure. You find more Malay men in PR than either of the other two races. They tend to look at PR to be a more feminine line, and you find that a lot of the men are a bit soft, a bit feminine! I find a lot of very feminine men in PR in this country and a lot of them are Malays. The media are filled with Indians, especially the English media. The Chinese in terms of communication, they're not really there. Even in the Chinese media there are not that many men. There are more women. And in communications, when I think of the men I know in PR, there are not that many Chinese. I don't know too many male Indians who would want to go into PR. It's a very selective group. They would want to go into communications and they would all end up in the media.

GS: Is it a status thing?
RESP.: I think so. To a large extent PR is seen as a feminine profession. The media is a more masculine profession. So if you're going to be in the media you have to choose between the press and PR, they'd probably choose the press.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience (show attachment 1). This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why might this be?

Self-transcendence

*Individual value types*

**Power**

Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience (attachment 7), power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: The consistency you see in the consultancy has a lot to do with the work environment that they're in, the fact that they've got a lot of independence, you basically take control of a lot of things. In that sense you know for a fact that you are in charge, maybe not within the office but within the client's environment. There's a lot of power in what you do, in what you suggest and I think that's an inherent thing with consultants. Whereas in the corporates, you're within the structure, so you come in ambitious and "I'd better conquer the world" and after a while you fall into line and realise there is a hierarchy system within the company and you don't have very much influence outside the company because you're in a corporate situation. You tend to go down in terms of what power's all about because you're a subordinate, and then after a certain period when you come to managerial level and you move up again, that's what you're looking at here.
And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: The fact that women don't expect very much in the work environment, in how you go in the work environment, and what happens in the work environment. So power doesn't play that much of an influence when you join the workforce. But you see an increase as years of experience come into play and you realise what your potential is and therefore you tend to go up after a number of years.

RESP.: Whereas men come in with a lot of ambition and who after a while realise that that's not exactly what the work environment's all about and you downgrade your expectations about power, and then once again it explodes once you get that confidence and the years of experience and you realise that you're moving on to a new level into management.

Achievement

RESP.: You see a similar structure here in both consultancies and corporate. It's got to do with the learning process of coming in and assuming that you really know more than what it's really all about in terms of PR and getting into the work environment and realising a lot of what you've known is really not what the situation is. You tend to start having doubts about what your achievements are, what your competency is, until you become fairly secure about what your strong points are. Then you see it rising up again. I think you lose a lot of confidence in terms of what exactly are you supposed to be doing and how well you're doing, and once you become more secure in terms of your work environment and your knowledge of the industry, how to project yourself in the industry, you go up once again.

A lot of people who join consultancies are really people who are more driven, people who expect a lot of working with different types of industries. The kind of person who would join a consultancy is someone who's already got this thing in mind that they want variety, they want a lot of experience, they want to go fast, they want to move fast. A lot of people in Malaysia who join corporations have a very laidback view as to what's going to happen. Not demanding in terms of the job and what they're expecting, not expecting to put much into that job, in terms of time where they tend to keep to a 9-5 situation, you don't have that in a consultancy. The minute you come into a consultancy, or the interview, you're told all of this and pretty much asked can you handle it? The very fact that you've actually joined a consultancy, you are at that level of expecting a different lot of things in terms of how far you can go. That's why you see a difference.

But after a while it's pretty similar, but when you come in there's a totally different mindset as to how you're joining the workforce.

Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

Hedonism

Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: I think when you join a consultancy, the longer you're in the consultancy the more committed you are towards the job. You tend to almost belong to the job rather than to your family. A lot of consultants I know have been in the job for such a long time they basically, their time is dedicated to work. You're always working, you're working moving, looking at new opportunities for client. And after a while you tend to leave a little bit of yourself, you start losing it in terms of enjoyment, and in terms of the time you spend with family and friends.

You go into a corporate with a view that you will not spend so much time on the job because it's just really one company that you need to focus on, one agenda that you're looking at. You have a better time management because you pretty much know what you're going to be doing the next day, and the following day or a week later because it's all worked out. In a consultancy you never know what's going to happen tomorrow. There might be a new project you'll be working on tomorrow or you could lose something, or something else comes on, and the longer you are in a consultancy, and you tend to
stay in a consultancy, you tend to become extremely engrossed and pulled into that workframe. I find that happening to me. Work dominates.

**GS:** Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

**RESP.** The freedom. The very fact that you work with different things all the time. That for me is pleasure. But at the same time, I think a lot of people look at pleasure and self-gratification as outside the office. If all the pleasure is really within the office, what you have outside is almost nothing. Cause you're hardly out there. All you're doing is going home for a meal and some sleep. The chances are you might be working weekends, you're probably working on public holidays. So you tend to lose out on what's happening in the external side of the cocoon you're in in terms of work.

**Security**

Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

**Self-concept and years of experience**

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

**RESP.** Very professional. As a practitioner, time management is the most important quality, response time, proactiveness -- all very important things and I see myself being there and maintaining that, sustaining it and making sure that the entire office adheres to such qualities as well. As opposed to my personal life, it's practically the opposite. I would be the most oblivious person. I don't notice people. They might be friends. I might be at a social situation and I won't notice things and that's something non existent in my professional life because I'm always alert to what's happening. I can key in and out from different industries, different clients at any point and I'll know exactly what's happening. It doesn't work with my personal life. I've got bad time management with my personal life. I procrastinate about making decisions about property or banking, things like laundry -- I'll just push it aside and wait for a day when I really have no choice or really feel like I want to do it. But it doesn't happen at work.

**GS:** How do you explain the difference?

**RESP.** Maybe it's because you put so much effort in work. So much of your energy is concentrated at work that the minute you're out of it you just tend to reject everything that is so important to you within that work environment. Sometimes I think it's a personality thing, but I do know a lot of people who have fantastic or different qualities at work, and total opposite qualities in their personal life.

**GS:** And can you switch automatically between them?

**RESP.** Work tends to encroach into the personal life very often and I let it to a large extent. Yes I do make time for friends and family but if I were to meet a client for example in a social setting and he asked to speak to work I will put that time aside and see to it at that point. I take work home whether it's physical work or psychological work. So I'm always thinking about projects and what's happening at work, what's coming up.

**GS:** How do you explain that you're willing to take work into the other life but your values in that other life are quite different?

**RESP.** True. It's easy for me to switch from personal to work but not so easy for me to switch from the professional to the personal. It's a Malaysian thing, an Asian thing that when it comes to work they do tend to let it get into their personal life, especially if you're in business. The minute you're in business you tend to let it happen. When you're just basically an employee a lot of them are very particular that if it's work it's work, "5pm don't you bother asking me anything about work because I'm no longer employed at this point." The minute you go into business (in a position of responsibility) you find it happening a lot. The very fact that you're in that position is that you've let a lot of work taken over your personal life. You've sacrificed a lot of your personal life which is very odd but the Malaysian management looks at that as a very positive thing. Very few local companies would say "No, your personal life is your personal life and I think you should value that." The longer you spend at
the office, the more hours you put in, they appreciate that and that's almost an ingrained thing. The more work you put in, the more you take home, the faster and further you will get in terms of position.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles?
(How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

Professional values

Let's go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: High credibility and acceptance; wide experience and exposure. Yes they mean much the same thing.

I think when you're in a consultancy and you're dealing in mainstream PR you have to have government experience, and a whole lot of different experiences to give your client the best in professional approach and the overall understanding. Media relations is one of the most important things and I think on a personal level the ethics, coming from a media background, the ethics of what a clients says and how comfortable you are about what the client says to the media because you tend to feel very responsible about what's delivered to the media, having come from that background you want to feed that back again. What's being said here in terms of building image and importance of PR to the company, enhancing the image of the profession, once again that's an ethical thing, more than anything else because PR here does not have a very good image. Results-focussed-- yes in this country in PR if you are not results-focussed it's very difficult to actually see anything in PR in terms of the number of media picking up an article, and with media interested in what you're doing. Not so much sales, but in terms of creating awareness and building a company's reputation. That's a very important thing here and especially in PR. And I do seem them all linked together in terms of what you can offer a client and what the clients take out of PR in this country. A lot of things you do here, you have to understand how the government works, how the government is going to view something, because a lot of government ministers and officials tend to officiate at local functions. Their endorsement is seen as very important as to how the company survives in this climate and how much support the company gets, especially if it's a foreign company. So the better your relationship is with the government, the better their support is for your clients. And you have to realise there's a lot of red tape. It's a very bureaucratic society in terms of business and politics because there's politics in almost everything you do in a business level, so you need to know exactly how the government views a lot of things, what's current, what's topical, what will work, what lead to tell the government. In that sense for any company it's important to be with a consultancy that has that knowledge in terms of how the government works here, or what the protocols are, because it's a very social conscious society and protocol is very important. If you don't practice about protocol with a minister, they'll hold it against you.
Willing to experiment and newer approach. They are linked. If you want to do new things you have to be willing to try new things. You can't say let's do something new, but yet go back to the old ways of maybe doing a launch or maybe doing something creative in how you want to market a product or how you want to approach the media. New approaches, things that you learn from books, from speaking with people from overseas, local, people who've experienced new things, or have new ideas, and whether you're willing to actually execute those ideas at a local level, with a local essence, so yes they are linked.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

Yes would agree with listing.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

GS: Self is most closely linked with an ethical practitioner. Is this how you see yourself?

RESP.: Yes

GS: And the strong company person would be in your mind a capable practitioner?

RESP.: Yes

GS: And an experienced practitioner would be a role model?

RESP.: Yes.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

GS: First cluster. Is this an accurate reflection of how you would see your qualities?

RESP.: Definitely. A lot of the jobs that I get has got a lot to do with my media contacts, my media approach and media knowledge as to how the media works, what can be delivered to them, what's not acceptable. So for myself as PR practitioner that is a very important point.

GS: And the linkage between ethics and media relations?

RESP.: A lot of what journalists like to do is to keep to the ethics, tell the story, but we know that that's not completely true. A lot of it is coloured, but I try very hard in terms of what I deliver to the media, to keep as much as possible to what is acceptable, what is actual, and not to deviate too much from those sort of things.

GS: Second cluster.

RESP.: I would probably look a these people as people who'd been in the industry for a long time, most likely. Who are very very good PR people but in a lot of ways what they do is very traditional, and it’s basically the old fashioned of dealing in PR. What we're talking about is trying new approaches, willing to experiment -- they probably go for the tried and tested. It has been done, I have done it, I have proven it, and therefore keep to it. So although they might be absolutely wonderful PR people, there's a lot of things happening in the environment right now that basically requires new things, new strengths, new methods in how you're going to communicate, and there are certainly new applications you can use in communicating, So it's very difficult to persuade these people to try new things.
GS: Third cluster.

RESP.: It's pretty much the people I would look at in terms of what I want PR to be, or what I think PR should be and how I would want to emulate the practice of PR. I do see these people as being very similar as opposed to the other two capable people. They're all four very capable. But this would be the group I would prefer to have better experience and knowledge.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?

GS: In Malaysia how would you go about moving from this position to one where you're seen as a role model?

RESP.: A lot has to do with personal achievements, personal drive. There are people who have that drive who want to get there fast, who understand and recognise such qualities and that's where they want to move towards, and they try to experience as much, they ask a lot of questions, they are willing to do a lot of things in very proactive terms of ideas, they are very forward in terms of their thoughts, and all that moves a person to a higher level in PR. Whereas there is a very big group of people that are very good followers, they are very good at taking orders but not so much at being a proactive person. They're very reactive, and those people are going to take a whole lot longer to get there, if ever they actually get there. So I think it's a personal thing. It has to do with a lot of experience, with a lot of willingness to want to learn and experience, and humbleness in terms of what exactly you know. I think the minute you get to the point where you think "I've learnt everything there is to know" you will never ever get to this point. Because even the people I know within the role model and the experienced practitioner are people who are still learning, still experimenting, and who are still looking at new things to do. It's basically self-discipline and achievement in pushing yourself towards this other level.

GS: So years of experience in PR will not necessarily get them there?

RESP.: No, I don't think so. I know people who have been in PR for such a long time and they just don't have what it takes to get there because they are just not pushing themselves, they are not opening up their minds to want to go there, they're just very happy being the middle people, the mediocre, the support people. Yes years of experience gives you that ability, that opportunity to do so much more but a lot has to do with the personality as well. What exactly is it that you want? Where do you want to put yourself? The path that you take, you decide how fast you're going to get there. A lot of people unfortunately are very slow.

Is there anything else you wish to add?
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Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: It’s a very very interesting piece of research, particularly because I would fall right smack here. Looking at it I would say that I think that this could very well represent what is truly the case right now. The reason being when one goes out to the PR practice -- maybe I can add to most other practices too – one is very very gung-ho about getting things done, changing things for the better, doing things differently, etc. After you’ve progressed somewhat to the 5-10 years of experience, you start looking at two things. One is the fact that you have changed most of the things that need to be changed. You’ve done your part there. And number two: there is this need to consolidate and to make sure these things are implemented well, and so thus the new changes that the newer generation is bringing about is met with a little bit of disdain and wondering “Wait a minute. This is going to upset the things that I have brought about”. So there is this struggle that emerges. As you move on I guess there is this period of consolidation that takes place that allows you then to move to the next phase, and to say “Okay, now that this has been consolidated, let me see what new changes need to be done”. So if I may suggest that this structure would keep going up and down, up and down, every five years possibly.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: I would have thought that it would be simply all the way down, which is a traditional model I would use that comes culturally from the belief that the more experience once gains, the more years one has been around, the less these things will matter to him or her. This doesn’t seem to suggest that. Now if I were to try and make some sense out of this, how I would explain it is that when you’re starting out that is of utmost importance. I think is general, although I don’t believe that should be the case but I think that that is the case, that one really wants to show that one is able to dominate over another. As you move along it really doesn’t become that important anymore but I really can’t seem to understand why it should become more important all of a sudden later. If I may suggest perhaps, beyond 10 years, you’re at that point where your marketability is probably a bit less, much less in fact, I guess once you cross say 35 you know that you’re stuck there in a sense. You can’t move on to anything else, or it would be very difficult to move on to anything else so there is this requirement, this desire to want to prove, to want to show that you are able to really stand over anyone else. But really I would have thought that it would go all the way down.

Conservation

RESP.: Again, it seems to me following the earlier two models that traditional practices I believe at the start are next to zero, so this makes very good sense that a person just coming into the practice would really want to break all the rules before learning them. And once you’ve come up to 5-10 years, more 10 years than 5, you’d have a little more respect for traditional practices, so you’d find that there is a motivation to want to preserve these things, to make sure that everything that you do is well thought through, and that you see the big picture of culture and traditions before recommending or implementing something. Why this goes up after 10 years, I would explain this as being similar to the change process. One looking at things and saying “Now that I’ve done my part in conserving what needs to be conserved, perhaps now it’s time, and I have learned the rules and so I’m in a position to break them now, so now I’ve earned that right and so I will do so”. I think here in the first part, the new young person into the workforce has said “I’m young, this is my right” but at the
opposite end, the person says “I’ve been through this for so many years, I’ve gone through that stable process and so now I’ve earned myself the right to break those rules because I’ve learned them very well”.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: In fact I think self-transcendence would be the primary thing that the person new to the workforce would look at. I would think that this would be an accurate chart. You’re really looking at showing to yourself as well as others that you able to do whatever you are able to do and to get the necessary training, so that you are actually able to do that. Why it goes down over time could very well be that you feel that you have reached a point where you have enhanced yourself enough, and from learning the strategies you are now learning the implementation. And really thereafter you’ve gone through a period of implementing and you say “It’s time to now move on, to the next phase of enhancing myself again, going back to school in a manner of speaking, and getting things going”. So it could be a trend where it goes down, comes up and goes down again and so forth. I don’t think it’s specifically related to how old a person, but I believe it’s what phase the person is at.

**Work environment**

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. Let’s deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

**Openness to change**

RESP.: I guess the consultant would generally be open to change all the while because the nature of their job demands it. Consultants are more strategy-based than they are implementation-based. Let me qualify that. Essentially the consultant is paid more for coming up with great, bright ideas than for carrying it through because often the company says to them, let me do it myself. But the guy working in-house. Sure there are demands on him too to come up with great strategies but by and large he takes the ball and runs with it until the ball-game is over. Because of that a consultancy would tend to nurture a better sense of “How do we do this better? How can we change that?” Because your very livelihood depends on it. In a corporate setting I would think that it would be wonderful if the corporate sector could be exactly the same as the consultancy but it’s this whole indiscipline that could set in when you come into a corporate setting. You begin to grow fat, and that’s what a corporate person needs to guard against. Is this reflective? Yes and it would be a firm reminder to corporates that that can happen to you because you’re no longer being challenged and your livelihood is not at stake the way it would be in a consultancy.

When he is new, he knows that he’s got to prove himself and thus he’s got to be open to change. But as he goes along very quickly he gets into an implementation mode, so it’s basically getting the job done, rather than finding the best way to get the job done. When he’s 5-10 years, one of two things happens. One, he gets a rap over the knuckles and says “We aren’t getting any more bright ideas from you”; and two there’s a self-realisation that he needs to enhance himself because he’s just not moving. So this need from within to change comes about. So that would propel him to move on, to want to see changes. I’m not sure again whether it would go up down, up down. It depends on whether a one-time rap on the knuckles or a one-time self-conviction is enough to keep the guy going forward for a long time to come, or whether he would come into the cycle again.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: I guess in a consultancy the chances of your views being taken into consideration are far less, especially on both the client side as well as among your peers. So because of that you always feel that you have two groups that you need to prove yourself to – one is to your MD,
your account directors (missed this). Both parties may not accept you the way you would like them to view you in the early phase. Because of that you have a major struggle to get your dominance made known. So that’s a priority to you, both clients as well as peers. Whereas where the corporates as concerned you’re just talking about one client which is your own company, so it’s less of a struggle there and it’s more comfortable. The stakes are less here than here.

Over time, what could happen is that the consultant gains enough experience to hold his own and he says “I’m fine now. So it doesn’t matter very much to me anymore and let me go with it.” Whereas the corporate guy, he had to start at a certain level and he’s discovered that it’s not necessary to be dominant anywhere so it goes down, but he needs to maintain some level which is not as high a level as he needed to start off with but some level, but certainly lower. So he maintains and gradually has this motivation to be dominant decreased. I guess his environment where the stakes are lower allows it to gradually move down. Whereas the consultant, the experience etc that he has gained has given him the confidence to go much further down. I’m not surprised at this, it comes even lower. And then they both increase. I guess again this would go back to the other models we talked about, that is, after a certain time, on both fronts, now that you have been able to hold your own, each one in his own setting knows what it takes to move on and to progress. So it would go at the same rate, but they would need to increase because the stakes change within the organisation – new people come, people go, new challenges are thrown and new ideas are thrown at them so there is a greater need to prove themselves and to hold their territory. Why they converge? At this threshold of 10 years they have already achieved that belief in themselves that stabilises and so they can move at the very same, so there is no difference between corporate and consultancy at that point.

**Conservation**

RESP.: The consultant starts out being very unwilling to break the rules just yet. He wants to but he is not yet prepared to. He says “Traditional values are good but I don’t know how good. Let me play around with these traditional values but because I haven’t really learned the rules yet, let me see how I can slowly adapt them to whatever programs I want to implement.” So because of that he slowly learns how he can do away with these traditional practices. And comes a point where it clearly stabilises and he no longer finds it desirable to go back because I guess once you’ve left that traditional practice that respect for traditional practices doesn’t come back. Actually having said that it doesn’t make much sense. I would think that it could be something a little questionable about this red line here. I would suggest that what should really happen is that at the start it is quite high, it comes down, and at this point it has got to go up again, similar to some of the other models. Because a person I believe after a number of years always looks back and says “What we did at those times made good sense. Let’s see how we can bring those back.” I tend to be a very conservative traditionalist so I don’t know if that somewhat colours what I’m saying, or whether it’s an implicit plea from within saying “Please respect traditional practices”. On the corporates, the model I built for the consultants I see happening here with the corporates. This one makes good sense to me. I feel that it should be the same for both the corporates and the consultants. As a corporate, purely because he when he comes into the job he really wants to make things change for the better, so for the better may mean for him adapting traditional practices, but after some time he realises that tradition is quite important because he respects the traditional his own company has built. So why is the consultant different? It could be that they have no grasp, not as great a grasp as a corporate, for what a tradition means because they don’t belong to the organisations that they work for. That probably would explain this best. I worked several years as a consultant and then went corporate. There is no greater pride for me now in the company I work for than there ever was in the consultancy because everything was being done for someone else. Here everything is being taken personally.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: Just differentiating between the consultants and the corporate guys, up to the mid-point. To me this makes good sense. To the corporate it’s not a do-or-die thing, but to the consultants it’s do-or-die. The corporate here I would put as a person who needs to have his
discipline in check and this is showing that it’s not in check, and the consultant is forced to have his discipline in check and this shows that he is certainly in check. Why they converge here? I guess through natural processes where once you’re 15 years in the job there is a desire from within to want to improve oneself not so much to gain better promotions but just to be. So it’s something driven not so much out of their job but because of what you want to be as part of yourself. Whereas the early years it would really have been more job-related. This is something that comes with maturity, so I would see it continue to go up.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: I find it difficult to give a general answer. It doesn’t make very much sense to me.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: Absolutely. This would be the ideal place for me because the place itself is founded on principles that I hold very dear to myself. So because of that it’s very easy to have my values shared here and to a large extent accepted as well. Not all the time but most of the time, certainly far more often that I would expect at probably any other organisation, or 90% of other organisations.

GS: Was that a match that you were aware of before you joined? Is it a company you thought you would be comfortable in because of that?

RESP.: That is correct. The company is founded on very proactive honest policies. Honesty is viewed as a very crucial part of the game here. Partnership and friendship are key to the running of the company. Internal and external. The idea is that the much-abused phrase “win:win” situations. While it’s talked about very much, one of the things the group tries to do very much is to always achieve a win:win situation. And while they say for every winner there must be a loser, I think what the company has tried and done pretty well I should say is to achieve a situation where you really have more happy faces than just your own. It’s seen in the products that have been introduced, the services that have been introduced. It’s a living testimony here. That has been a value that I share very dearly. Also one of the key values of the company is performance. The idea is that performers get rewarded and non-performers don’t get rewarded, which is something I think makes very good sense. On that basis people often say “If you’re not very intelligent, don’t join X” which I take as a good compliment to the group. Simply because the company makes it very very clear that if you find yourself not receiving a month’s bonus it’s not than somebody doesn’t like you. It could very well be that you’re not performing and it’s a sign for you to buck up. This value of performance is pretty important to me. There’s also this value of creativity, linked to performance perhaps. That everything we do needs to be innovative, needs to be different, our very survival depends on that. To me that’s great because it keeps everyone alive, it keeps me alive. So creativity as a value jives very much with what I think. And finally is the value of social responsibility that the company shows. I think more than any other group that I know of, X has got a very sound social responsibility creed where we set aside X amount of funds and make sure that it’s used for community and make sure that it is always dispersed correctly and at the correct times etc. We don’t necessarily go for the popular types of social responsibility projects but we go for ones that we know will be meaningful even if it’s less visible. To me those things jive with what I personally believe in.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

RESP.: It is encouraged to a very large extent. Basically we encourage them to bring their values in, provided they do not go against the company values. And by and large I don’t see that as a problem because the values that are upheld here are generally universally accepted values. One of the things that I’ve been trying to do is to get staff both within my department
and within the group to make worklife and your life outside of work one. For example, if there’s a problem facing the country, eg the JE disease, the company will give a corporate donation that will help the people who are suffering etc, but the company would not go out to the staff and pass the hat around. Rather the company would encourage if the staff among themselves say “Hey shall we pass the hat around?” and the company would say “Sure, do it.” But it shouldn’t be a management-led thing, it should be a staff-led thing. This comes from having values from within them. The company knows that our values are being transferred to the individual. The more we see that happen, the more we feel that we are succeeding in bringing across the values of the company. If you’ve learned to help your relatives and to help your colleagues and if you can donate toward your church activities, why don’t you donate towards your friend who is suffering because his parents have lost their job? It’s basically creating some sort of fusion where people don’t see dichotomy anymore between work and outside. But having said all of that, it certainly doesn’t mean people taking their work back home, or bringing their family problems to the workplace. I think that would be a different thing altogether.

RESP.: The most important mechanism I can share is the whole idea of “living it”. That means it’s a long process. The company is now about 8 years old; the bank is about 5 years old, and all the values that have gotten transferred to the staff have not come through a lot of communication, newsletters etc. They’ve come through a very consistent, slowly but surely style of moving by the company. So it hasn’t been one big PR exercise. But it’s been probably the best PR tool, which is having a good product and letting it pass by word of mouth. And that’s exactly what’s been happening. One of the rules that I’ve been playing here is to continue this process of making sure that the product never gets compromised in any way. So if you like, that’s a bit of a quality control mechanism that we have in place. And every time there is a value that can be enhanced or that can be put across to the staff through a traditional PR method then we do it to the max. But we only start doing it when we know that our house is truly in order. For example, when I was in the consultancy practice, one of the things that we often used to do was have announcements about things that were going to come. “XYZ Company is going to do this in 2 years’ time”. While there may be merits to that, one of the things that we have found helpful here is that we make an announcement only when the thing is in place. So basically to say that we will tell you when it is really there. The whole sense that the staff get is that you talk only when your walk is right. We have ensured that our communication maintains a huge respect for the staff so our number one priority, my number one task, is not so much external communication, it’s internal communication. Although I handle all of the group’s communication, I would say that I’d be doing my job well only if I spend 80% of my time on internal communication. And it takes a bit of adjusting when you come from a consultancy really, specially consultancies in Malaysia where a lot of emphasis is given on the external. Here compared to what I used to do in the consultancy, we do so little media relations here. And it’s worked well for us, because now each time we put out an announcement, or hold a press conference, there’s a lot of interest because they say “X is talking”. But where staff communication is concerned, one of the things that we make sure we do is to maintain that respect of communication for the staff. We have this internal newsletter called the X Network, which goes out every time there is a piece of news to share. And the general principle is: if that staff haven’t heard of it, nobody else should hear of it. So staff always get the important news first. So the staff have learnt to value that the company says “You are a valued person”. X Network can go out as often as thrice a week. It’s an internal newsletter designed to be no more than one page long each time it goes out. It goes out only when there’s a real piece of news, and no preaching is allowed, only teaching. I think over time this has good kickbacks for the company, but you must be patient. …Management has got a very good idea of the big picture, but sometimes implementation of how the communication should work without realising it, it may contradict the values that they hold. Without realising it because they are not familiar with communications tools. The impetus for the whole workings of this, credit must go to management because management made it possible. Upholding, maintaining, refining and implementing this probably with some of the other departments, communications included, have been responsible for making it happen.

Ethnicity
The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (i.e., your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: In Malaysia, ethnicity often equals religion. It’s so for the Malays for example, who are all Muslims. Chinese who are by and large Buddhist, Taoist, Chinese religion. Indians who are by and large Hindus. That’s how it works. Of course, within those groups who have the Chinese and Indians, some of which are Christians, like myself. These are the exceptions rather than the norm. The way a Malay practitioner executes something would be quite different from an Indian or Chinese. Because he’s be very very steeped in the traditional practices of the Malay culture, that’s the Muslim culture. This would be less so for the Malays who are educated overseas because they have now been influenced by more, I won’t say Christian values, but more Western values which thus could very well be Christian. I would say ethnicity does play a part. Within the ethnic group there are other variables such as education, exposure etc. But speaking in general if I were to see a Malay person carry out a certain PR exercise compared with Chinese I would expect it to be different. The Malay guy probably pay a lot more attention to hype, to wanting to make sure that the whole event turns out to be a very dignified event; all the people that need to be shown the necessary respect are shown the necessary respect; that it comes out looking very good. Results may not often be the key. To the Chinese for example, results would be pivotal. To them the bottom line would count to a very large extent. The Chinese would be more ready to spend less and have not so a glittering event but have the bottom line requirements met, as opposed to Malay who would need the pomp and the pagentry. So yes I would see some differences there. The Indians I would equate them closer to the Chinese than to the Malays. Speaking of myself as an Indian, I would say that I am not very influenced by the Indian culture for several reasons. One would be that my environment is more Chinese than anything. Phileo is a Chinese organisation, but also growing up, family, my wife is Chinese, thus my in-laws are Chinese. Of course, my family is Indian and because of that I’m aware of Indian practices but overriding all of this is probably the religious culture that has developed through church etc. So probably that overrides everything. To me, it tends to be more of religious values than ethnic value and I think to a large extent that would be the case for the Malays it will be both religious and ethnic. So it will be two in one. To the Chinese, Taoist or Buddhist, it would be very much cultural, the way you would carry out things so there is a lot of respect for own cultural traditions and that’s to a smaller extent religious practices too. The Indians, the Hindus, would pay quite a bit of attention to culture and religion in one. The Christians would tend to, because they don’t fit, would tend less to go less on an ethnic front, whether it be the Indians or the Chinese but go more on a religious front.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: Actually lots of implications, not just from a values perspective but also from a sheer capability perspective. Capability-wise, if you’re working for a Chinese organisation and you’re Indian like me, or Malay, you will never really be able to understand the psyche of their customers, and the psyche of the management, because it’s quite different. You would really be a square peg in a round hole. I’m talking about both the management and the customers. Of course, I’m assuming very broadly that if the management is Chinese then the customers would be Chinese as well, but that may not necessarily be the case. But talking specifically about management, leaving the customers aside, so just the Chinese management, then I would say that it may not have that great a barrier if it were just the management. So if you were a Malay working under a Chinese management, it need not be a problem if the customer is Malay. So to me, the customer would take precedence over the management. This is especially true for Chinese management. Of course Chinese management tends to be very bottom-line driven, so basically it’s a case of, it it sells to the Malay, go ahead do it. Very practical. If it were a Malay management with a Chinese guy working under the Malay management, with a Chinese target audience, it would probably be similar, perhaps a little
more resistant because the Malays tend to be more dignity-oriented than just bottom-line driven. There may be a little more problem but not enough to be significant. Similarly for the Indians. I’d say that the problem really begins when you have a Malay or an Indian working under a Chinese management where the customers are also Chinese. For example, I used to consult for a number of years for a Chinese organisation that was as Chinese as Chinese could get -- they could hardly speak any English etc. -- with a fully Chinese target audience. I was principal consultant on that account. The only reason why I could go on being the principal consultant on that was the fact that they were very new in the whole practice of PR and obviously in the very start of the whole relationship I hit a few home runs so there was a trust that built up. To be true to myself, I don’t think five years down the road I would have been able to keep up with the pace created. In the beginning it’s easy but as you move on it gets more difficult and you need to know things like the language, the psyche of the customers etc. So at the start-up anyone can do it. That comes back to the question of capability I was talking about. In terms of values I would think that values would differ between the Chinese and the Malays and the Indians, not so much that one has got a higher sense of .. (missing). The values are held in a different way. To a Malay for example the family value may be extremely important and to the Chinese business values may be very important. So it means different types of values. A Chinese working in a Malay organisation will need to adapt pretty quickly to the Malay style of values and so too vice-versa.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

**RESP.:** In general, PR is still viewed to be a female role in Malaysia and I would guess in most other countries too. In Malaysia, when you say “I work in a PR consultancy, or I’m a PR person” you always tend to expect a lady to come out. And you see it also in the consultancies. In the consultancy where I worked, for many years it was about 80%, and when I left the company it was down to about 70% female. It’s still viewed very much as a female-dominated profession and in terms of receptiveness to a PR practitioner who is male, female I haven’t found any particular instance where it’s different. Except perhaps to a Japanese client for example, they would tend to view males more favourably than females. Apart from that, no I don’t see any.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

**RESP.:** I would think that it’s not very common to hear about Malay male PR practitioners. I guess he may have slightly more problems getting his case across on the top end I guess because they are generally viewed as being slick talkers. I guess the Indian female may rank on the higher end in terms of acceptability. Interestingly, many of the fairly successful practitioners heading up consultancies are Indian females. I really don’t know if all this means anything.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

**Openness to change**

**RESP.:** Based on my experience with female practitioners this is fair. Female practitioners tend to be more consistent though not necessarily more often to change. What they said two years ago is something that they would say two years from now. The male practitioner would tend to want to huddle into his comfort zone and really try to protect it a little more than the
female might. I guess to some extent to the female practitioner it could be a sheer case of survival too because of the sometimes unfair obstacles that she would have to overcome in terms of acceptability etc. My gut reaction is that this is a fair description.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I can make some sense out of it. The Chinese male generally tends to have the thinking that if it ain’t broke don’t fix it. He’s basically quite happy as long as things are going fine. The Malay tends to be more driven to reform things, to change things. To that extent I would have thought this would be higher. The Indian generally is inbetween, he is neither here nor there in a manner of speaking. He has nothing to lose. Basically, change all you can. After all, it’s not going to effect him adversely changes in general. That is comparing between Indian relative to Malay to Chinese. The other factor is that an openness to change could also be related to religion. I think the more truly religiously inclined a person is, the more open to change he tends to be. Because he would believe that the change is for the better. If one truly believes in his religion and wants to practice it, then his openness to change would be greater. Because of that I would think the Malays should come a little higher because they tend to be very committed to their beliefs. The Indians I would explain more from the perspective that many Indians are Christians and that means it came mostly from a conversion from Hinduism to Christianity, and conversions tend to more often than not result in people of greater zeal and could explain this. Overriding all of this would be the fact that the female in general tends to be more consistent anyway. So this consistency doesn’t get overridden by ethnicity or religion. The very make-up, the very gender causes her to be more consistent and not really dependent on outside variables such as ethnicity and religious practices. But I cannot be sure that I’m not reading too much into this.

Let’s look at self-transcendence and years of experience (show attachment 1). This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why might this be?

RESP.: This doesn’t make very much sense to me. I would have thought that the need for self-transcendence would be less with the Malays and more with the Chinese and Indians combined, about the same. The Malays to a large extent are more protected in this country and so it would make better sense that this would not be the case. I’d say again that the difference between males and females has something to do with the female general will to be more consistent than it has to do with self-enhancement per se.

Individual value types

Power

Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience (attachment 7), power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: In the corporate setting I guess I would explain that quite easily. You start off needing to assert yourself somewhat and after some time you stabilise, you’re quite happy with where you are, and then when you get a rap on the knuckles or when new challenges or new threats come in, which does happen in a cycle of a company’s growth, then you start working yourself again. There is this cycle of needing the power, then you don’t need the power that much anymore and then you need the power again. I’m looking more at control and dominance, to some extent status and prestige as well. The way I read it is that in consultancies it is still rising and then coming down. Essentially in a consultancy you’re starting from zero base. You don’t have a company. It’s all clients, or rather you don’t work for a single company apart from your consultancy of course, so you slowly have to build up
that dominance, the idea that you are in control to gain that acceptance. Once you’ve got that acceptance and you’ve reached a certain threshold then you know where you are and there’s really nothing more to prove, as opposed to being within an organisation where you’re always with the same people, here you are working with different people now, different clients etc. The self-belief is probably easier attained in a consultancy than in a corporate setting. I guess in a corporate setting you’re working with the same people but different threats coming in.

**And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?**

**Achievement**

Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: I’d say for the consultant, it’s a do or die mission. When you join the consultancy you have to make it work because you’ve got to please not just your boss but please your client as well. So achievement is one of the greatest of values to them. For the corporate guy, you’re in here, it’s going to take a lot for them to fire you, so it makes good sense that it’s down there. Why it goes down here? To the consultant after a certain time he gets used to it. Once you’ve done it you feel “Yes I know how it’s done.” There may not be this zest to say “I must do it better”. He’s really stabilising himself. The corporate guy goes at a slower rate because he started at a not very high point anyway. Both bottom out at the lowest point you can ever go. And when it goes up it goes up about the same. I think it’s fair that they converge because then the whole idea of self-belief becomes ingrained in the person whether consultancy or corporate. So achievement then becomes something more personal than it is anything else. You’ve already gained a reputation and you’re confident of yourself and so you’re quite happy to stay there.

**Hedonism**

Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: The chart does make sense. For the consultant, it’s because he’s doing a lot of one-off things. To him, he needs to get a tremendous amount of pleasure doing it for it to really mean something. For the guy in the corporate setting, if he does something and it doesn’t give him any pleasure, he’s still quite happy to have done his job for the day. It’s more a case of having carried out his required tasks for the day and going home. Whereas in a consultancy one needs a bigger sense of gratification so that it gives that amount of pleasure that the corporate guy has from seeing his company having grown. It’s a different benefit. Thus for the consultancy guy, to him as he moves along that becomes of greater value to him. For the corporate guy, he may start off saying “Fine. This is something that will gratify me”. But over time it’s not really something he depends on because his is a long-term business. It’s a company that he works for. Which really explains to the 5-10 year point. Why the consultancy guy shoots down is quite difficult to explain because I would think that for him to continue maintaining his sanity in a consultancy he needs to thrive on the gratification so the only way I could explain it is that gratification is replaced by higher earnings, by pleasure that comes out of getting more money out of it. If that were the case it would be a bad sign really. That is one possible explanation. For the corporate guy, I guess it is at this point where he has reached the threshold where he would say “I’ve gained enough experience to see that whatever I’ve done has earned me my seat in this company. Now let me do some things for myself.” So this is a pay-back time to himself to derive some pleasure from all of this.

**GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?**

RESP.: For me, I derive a lot of pleasure from the work primarily because it’s a field I enjoy and the program and the strategies implemented are things that I really believe in and so the pleasure should be quite natural. To me, if you can success in making your work your hobby then great you have a hobby for life. That is the thing that one should always be striving to.
That work is such a pleasurable experience that you can reach a point where you can say that it’s a vocation, and everything that used to be important when you started out is no longer important. I.e. recognition, money etc.

Security

Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

Self-concept and years of experience

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I describe myself as a PR practitioner who is slowly beginning to learn how to break the rules. Essentially I think I have spent quite a lot of time simply learning the rules, and doing that is valuable because you’ve got to know the rules before you break them. So I’m at the point where I’m taking a lot of pleasure at taking things that were deemed gospel truth in those days and saying “Let’s throw this away and let’s do something entirely different because of X, Y, Z.”

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

RESP.: Five years ago it would all have been to do with getting the news out. Now it is all about getting the right message out. The content rather than the method.

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

RESP.: I’d say an enhanced version of what I am right now. Really experimenting so much more than I am now. Breaking more rules.

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?

RESP.: I think one of the things I strive quite consciously to do is to maintain the same self in all fronts. How well that is done is probably difficult for me to appraise, but suffice it to say it’s a very conscious activity where I would always be asking myself “Would I do this at work, and would I do this at church, and would I do this at home? And if I ever say to myself that sure I’ll do it at work but not at home or at church then I’ll say “Why not? Isn’t this a double standard?” So it’s something I consciously ask myself.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: Probably. The church self dominates.

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles? (How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

RESP.: Minimal in the sense that the environment is quite right for that to take place. In that sense I’m in a fortunate situation because not everyone can have an environment that jives with all the values that they hold in all the components that they run into.

Professional values

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus...
Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: With this first group, it’s a genuine problem-solver I see coming out of that. Solutions are realistic so you don’t want just to score points, you want to make things happen. You basically make it happen, you don’t just talk about it. Genuine about solving the problem. By having empathy with clients and their needs again you are working towards appreciating the client’s problems and working within them. That shows you are committed to having the whole thing happen. Long-term perspective is the epitome of a genuine player, that you’re not looking at short term gains. So I think the ideal for genuine problem-solver comes through very clearly here.

RESP.: This second group has to so with ability – clear about PR, experience, strong self-confidence, macro-perspective. All of them basically, strong in capability, and thus whatever you say will matter.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

Analyse this separately.

RESP.: I would move long-term perspective way up, followed by bringing benefit to client, then macro-perspective. All the rest the same. I would just bring the bottom one to the top.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: I would say it’s a fair assessment.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

Analyse this separately.

Experienced: Develops new approaches is a major component of experience. (another point missed) I think inspiring confidence in PR advice.

Role model/strong company person: They should be the same. For a PR practitioner to strongly stand up to represent the company he needs to show exactly what the company is all about. To me, as a model, that would be the one to be developed. This is an ideal but we’re not halfway there. The attributes are more of the strong company person that the role model. The role model can do this and more – the X factor.

Ethics: It seems to look like ethics is in bad company but I think that the suggestion that ethics does diminish with experience is not very far from the truth. The more people tend to experiment the more they have a tendency to go wayward. In reality, this could be the truth that while one may start off with high ideals, those could be eroded along the way.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?
Certainly a major part is the passage of time but it is also a clear sense of mission in his job that will quicken the passage of time. One of the reasons why people may oscillate here for quite a bit is because there is no sense of what exactly this field is all about, what exactly this field can do and can’t do. So if the new practitioner were very clear about that and received the necessary training to make sure that he knows what PR can do and can’t do, I think this move here will be far quicker. So I summarise it as being his own understanding of PR and mission to carry out whatever PR is all about, and the tangible training that he gets to reach that.

Is there anything else you wish to add?
RESPONDENT 18 TRANSCRIPT

**Years of experience**

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

RESP.: It has to do with the experience and wisdom of life in general in the sense that when somebody comes out fresh into the working world, into the industry, they come with probably a more idealistic and inexperienced view of things. I think they find that as they get more deeply involved in the discipline and they deal with very very high level people, business ethics and other similar issues which they never really had to deal with in a major way in their first two years of working life, start to become larger. And personally, when they have gone through maybe 10 years of work they would have ascended to a certain level in the organisation and from being just a subordinate they may be supervising other people. They would have gone through an extra 10 years of life in general, 10 years of working life and basically the world looks different. You take away your rose-tinted glasses. You go through an economic cycle of 10 years for instance and you see a lot of difference. Safely you could say you would run through at least one recessionary cycle. People experience traumas, they experience changes to their comfort zone and they deal with these things accordingly.

So there are a lot of factors from internally plus external factors and the influence of their peers and the culture of the company they work in, the kind of industry they're in, will affect their outlook. I think when one stays longer in this business and is dealing higher and higher up, even all the way up to government officials, you'll find that things are not always as they seem to be. The view from a two-year old person is quite different. Your understanding of things would be different.

**Openness to change**

RESP.: My first response would be that when you're new in the field, you come in with a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of energy, there's this excitement of discovery. And you're prepared to deal with a whole new territory. So change becomes something that means excitement and it's appealing, and I think you look forward to that.

When you look at it again 10 years down the line, you find that change is good but not too much, thank you very much. You like to have a little more predictability, a little bit more stability. I think if you put that against the backdrop of the rapid rate of change that is happening in the world in every facet, politically, economically, socially, personally, change is accelerating, technologically for instance, and dealing with change to some people may be interesting in the beginning, and then manageable somewhere in the middle and perhaps a little bit more tiring a few more years down the line. If they're not able to cope with it. That would be the key difference between somebody that's two years in the business and somebody that's been there a lot longer. They've seen a lot more change.

(At the senior end) it has to do with wanting to do something different in life. Having been in there doing something for 15 years, and having absorbed a lot more about different professions and different commercial activities out there, different areas of interest, one starts the see the opportunities perhaps of either using different technologies for doing the same thing in the business or moving out of it completely or doing something which is more stimulating, different, than what they have been doing before. They might go through a period of mulling, taking stock and reassessing the journey they have taken, the point where they are now, and what they might look like five years down the line. And at that point I think there would be many who might consider a career change.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: I think it's a very personal thing. There could be some that having reached a certain level of technical competence, a certain level of achievement, may start to feel more self-assured with the things they do, in their own role in the organisation, in the organisational chart, and at that point, they would also be likely to be having other people being managed under them, a larger group perhaps as
opposed to being at the bottom of the food chain. Then they get into a position where they take start to take on a coach and mentor role, they start to be concerned about the development of others. It might be a requirement, to develop the second level of succession. As they get older they may come to a point where the company may view these people as a little bit overpaid, or a little bit lacking in energy and enthusiasm, a little bit jaded, and that there could be others who the company feels could possibly do the same or more. They become under threat, they feel a little bit unsure of their own place. Different organisations have different situations. Some person has got 15 years and he may be specialising or concentrating on dealing with government relations. That's a very fuzzy area to a lot of people. It could be strategically very important in terms of the franchise, having the influence to make sure that regulations fall in the favour of the company that you're working for. But not many may understand the impact of that and they feel that this person, at that level of their career, may not seem to be doing much except entertaining and wining and dining perhaps. That's situational obviously I can't overgeneralise with something like this. But primarily I think that's also the element of technology. The other person is not able to adapt to technological changes over a period of 15 years and somebody junior is able to do so, going into multimedia, a real whizz with the laptop. That position could be under threat. And then they start worrying about looking out for Number 1.

GS: and concerned about issues of dominance

RESP.: And they might also be in a lot more debt by that time.

Conservation

RESP.: I see this as a parallel to openness to change, but in a different way because conservation here is that this is probably the peak of a practitioner's career within the same organisation at that time, and things start to either go downhill or they go on a different track from that point. What I understand is that the degree of conservation, the values of conservation would be lower at this point (mid-range). (I don't understand why it's so high at the start.) From the point of view of being a little bit green and naive, somebody here would be early 20s, hardly worked much in the world. Their values at that point would be more innocent, for want of a better word, and while they are open to change they're not going to deal with the conflict of the traditional values that they have been imbued with, fresh out of the nest, fresh out of school, and they're ready to go and take on the world, they want to change the world, but within their own frame of reference.

They go along the way and their values start to be affected and influenced and they change. They're at a stage of life where they come into this industry with pre-set and pre-conceived ideas of things, obviously moulded by their early years' influence, but at the same time they probably realise they will have to adapt. They pick up buzz words like "power lunch", yuppies, networking, things like that and they find out "Oh my gosh, these are new concepts, never learned us in school, it looks like the way to go". They may not have tried different things before, and they probably wouldn't have back in school, but now they are thinking "Everyone is doing it, maybe it's the right thing to do and maybe that's the way I should go too, so as not to be seen to be different".

(At mid-level), this is where an individual says "I want to be me. Here I'm prepared to be different if it means another avenue or another opportunity to do something different." I think when a person comes to this part, and if they're out looking for a new start, but not to the same degree. Here I believe that a lot of people are quite willing to compromise who they really are. What's going to work for them. Here, no.(junior). Here, yes (senior). They start paying attention to people they may not have paid attention to before.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: The influence of being freshly out of school in a very collegial atmosphere, everyone's quite egalitarian and there's a lot of fraternity. In a way you regard everyone as an equal starting with coming from the basement. There's probably less of that at this stage (mid-level) because again as one goes up the corporate ladder and as one starts to increase in self-assurance and ego, in tangible assets -- what kind of car do you drive, what neighbourhood are you staying in -- they start to appreciate that not all men are created equal. They were at some point in life, but. The classic example is when you do a class reunion 20 years down the line. Believe those who are not doing so well would not show up.
At senior level, it could be maturity. It could be just the fact that they understand more about life in general and about what it takes to get from here to here. The individual who has gone through this probably has to fight very very hard, to get here and then over here they start to get into a comfort zone, the comfort zone gets a little more thick, and maybe sometimes things gets to your head. You come to a point where you've got your title and you're no longer at the bottom of the pile. But then we get another five years down the line, at 15 years, you may look at life entirely differently. It could be also due to the fact that when they realise it could be time to make a move, or they're having difficulty coping with technology, coping with young MBAs that come out with a double degree and a laptop, and this guy took 10 years to get there. This young turk gets there in three. You start to eat humble pie. You start to sense that maybe you don't know that much after all because in the information age the impact of technology is going to ensure that the learning curve is much shorter. Access to information is going to ensure competition for jobs and promotions is going to be that much more severe.

Work environment

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. Let’s deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: I think in a consultancy one has to deal with ambiguity on a much higher level than in the corporate world in the sense that if you can't come up with a solution yourself, you pick up the phone and call a consultancy. In a consultancy side, they are constantly on their toes, they have to be, and be aware of impending change of all types. There is no really fall-back option. The buck stops here. Here, beyond what I've just discussed they can still farm it out, outsource it.

GS: So it's something within the nature of the job within the different work environments.

RESP.: Describing the previous transparency on openness to change, in a corporate world one can afford to feel that they can try to resist change for a while. A corporate individual for instance can try to ignore the net for as long as they can. In a consultancy they can't. Too many changes, very much technology driven. The advent of the super microchip has changed every facet of every industry and every facet of personal life and people are starting to realise that they have to be open to change regardless of wherever they might be.

When we get to this stage (senior?) it doesn't matter. Jobs are free and highly mobile, people are mobile, capital is mobile. If a consultant can do the same thing that a corporate person can, cheaper and faster, they can get hired inside. It used to be in some organisations, the corporate person could say, "I'll delegate everything downwards and I'll just wait for the topline summary report". But when the rate of change accelerates, and it's going to accelerate even more, one has to be really really technically-savvy, in this case, all the way to the CEO. No longer can one expect to leave it to the technology guy to handle it -- they've got to really understand the issues. I think that's the reason for that.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: I think at the beginning a person that joins the corporate world would tend to be better prepared for the job he had to do. They'd get formal inductions, they get formal training, and they're eased into the system. In a consultancy you're dropped in at the deep end of the pool and you've got to learn fast or you'll be really struggling. Maybe that explains why the gradient is steeper.

Later it really doesn't matter. I'm not really sure why.

GS: Does it surprise you?
RESP.: It doesn't surprise me that they both go back up. Dominance over others, consultancy ranks higher than corporate. Slightly. This could be the midlife crisis stage of a career but I think 10 years is kind of short to be a midlife crisis -- probably around 10 to 15 in my opinion.

**Conservation**

RESP.: This is very interesting. I would think that people in consultancy have a shorter life cycle and a higher turnover rate than people in the corporate world, in the sense that they could cross the line and join the corporate or they could change and get out. In Malaysia, PR is a mobile profession, and it's getting more mobile. I see that trend especially with the under-50s. They move a lot, they zig and zag. The stalwarts who have been in there 20 or 30 years and they've stuck with it. The corporate side tend to have a longer life span, a longer shelf life.

GS: Maybe its' to do with the structure in a consultancy vs the structure in a corporation. Maybe in corporate there is a path that you can see, and something to aim for, there are steps. Consultancies perhaps are a little flatter.

RESP.: I think it's more intense in a consultancy than in a corporate. The corporate side, if you are with the right company and you're politically astute, you can build your own turf, You can have a lot more resources to really do the grunt work and to do the running, implying therefore they may not be as lean as the consultancy has to be to stay alive. So that could contribute to the corporate individual staying longer and having a longer shelf-life. Because the wear and tear isn't so intense. I get the impression that consultancy life has a high rate of wear and tear on the people in there unless they are naturally driven, passionate. In a consultancy you have to continue, the pay-off has a direct impact on the consultancy's bottom line, and the revenue that's generated by each consultant. In the corporate side you're seen as cost centres. Again in the consultancy side, your schedule and the amount of grief one has to put up with is very client-dependent. On the corporate side, the clients decide when to do it, how quick, they feel like changing their minds in some cases at the eleventh hour, they do so because they don’t have to bear the brunt of having to make those last minute changes. This is the really bad client from hell scenario.

GS: Does that help to explain what we see there?

RESP.: I can't understand why the line goes this way. I would have expected it to go up, a little bit, but not be flat. I can understand the corporate one.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: People who are in the corporate world probably tend to see themselves as slightly different creatures than those who are prepared to go into consultancies. People who go into the corporate world probably are more, looking for identity and respectability and they're going to get that in the beginnings, in the early years, from the brand that they're associated with. I think people who go into a consultancy are more adventurous. They're out there with more of this "I want to change the world" value and then "I want to influence things, I want to be able to go out there and really give of self, more of self, reach out and relate to other people". I really think there is more of that in people who go into consultancy than those who go into corporate. I think there's more hiding in the corporate.

GS: You're saying it's a self-selection thing.

RESP.: It's a self-selection thing. I think so. When one sends out their resumes they're quite clear whether they want to send it in the direction of the Fortune 500 types, the publicly-listed, or want to go and try it out in a consultancy where they are lesser rules perhaps, lesser rigidity.

GS: Is it a common path that people go into corporates and then into consultancies or the other way round? Is there any accepted way of going?

RESP.: No there isn't but I think generally people do get recruited directly into corporate when there is a need to beef up the department. People from a consultancy who are really good will get offered. I personally know at least five from some of the international PR firms that are now working with multinationals by sheer dint of their exposure to the clients they've been serving, the level of hands-on
work they've been doing and the fact that they have the opportunity to articulate themselves and be visible with their clients. It is that flair. I think it is the sort of flair that consultancy people have that corporates don't have and in the corporate people are very much affected and in a way restricted by this more serious culture in a corporation.

Put it this way. As a consultant you go in and see a client, you put on your serious mode behaviour and when you get back to your office you can scream and yell, you can do anything. It's acceptable. And hours are also very flexible. In the corporate side there is an acceptable mode, there's an expectation of how one should conduct themselves. So there's a difference. I think there is a linkage between PR practitioners and advertising executives in that sense. The mentality of the people. They would probably want to let their hair down a lot more and more often than the corporates. It attracts a certain type of people. More creative and less serious I think. More into taking on new challenges, finding new ways. In a corporate world the road map is a little bit clearer.

GS: It has to do with the corporate culture.

RESP.: Absolutely.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: It's probably true because a little bird that has just hatched and come out of the nest, it would tend to stick together with the same flock. The natural tendency is to attach oneself to people who have the same values and generally they are defined by ethnicity in this country. We're very different, the Malays and the Chinese and the Indians are all different. And when you have that affinity, because of your similar background, habits, customs, it's easy to begin a relationship. And one builds relationships, they need the relationships even more I think in the first years of orientation, the first years of really getting into the system. The tendency is there, they need to build a first base and then from there they will move out and into different things. Happens in school as well.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Will some organisations encourage that more than others?

RESP.: I think that it's lip service that you can bring your personality into the organisation. The culture will be determined by the CEO. The CEO may not be the Chairman of the global company. It could be just the local CEO of that country operation. And I can observe that different CEOs come and go through a revolving door and they have a different personality and different values within the larger corporate values that drives the culture. A culture of formality, for instance, a culture of what's acceptable and what is not. And the people actually have to go with the flow. A person could be rough on the humour. They can continue to be rough on the humour, but the edge is taken off sometimes. One can observe that their personality is definitely tempered.

GS: What about you? Can you bring your personal values in and use them in your work?

RESP.: Yes I can. I would leave my personality at home but I would bring my values to work. What I believe in is consistent. It has a lot to do with my being a Christian. And I do it by the book, the Bible. And I have no problem with that and I apply that in every area of my life to the extent that I can whether it's with my friends and my family, or at work. One of the values would be to serve my superior as best I can. That's a requirement. I may or may not particular like or feel a certain way to the superior but because that superior has been put above me, my job is to give the best that I can in terms of service. And things will take care of themselves. I would not practice falsehood. I'm pretty firm about that. If I have to bend the truth to the point where it breaks or where it becomes something that I cannot accept, I won't do it. And I'm prepared and quite ready to walk if I'm going to be forced to do something against my values. I am extremely strong. I would rather please God than please Man. If I were asked to do something shady in the interests of the business deal, my conscience will always be clear and it has served me well so far. I try not to steal time from the company although there are opportunities to go that and obviously I wouldn't take office supplies home.
To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

RESP.: That's a dangerous thing because I set high standards for myself in terms of personal values that I've described, I have to admit that sometimes I have quite a low tolerance. If I see instances where there's a lack of integrity. If I see an attempt at falsifying records. If I see an attempt to discredit other people, which I find personally distasteful, then I have to deal with that. So, personality is fine, but it has to be within the parameters of acceptability as defined by the corporate culture. For example, if a person is naturally flippant then one can't do that in certain places, but they can't be flippant in here because in our department it represents the bank. They would have to modify their behaviour and if they can't then we have a problem. We're all made up of different individuals. The thing that's quite unique to me about Citibank to me is that diversity. Personality is not an issue.

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (i.e., your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: Only to the extent that the values of that ethnic group are brought into the job. There is a close link between ethnicity and religion and values, to the extent that they bring religion into the job there will be some differences I think. But by and large, if people subscribe to a certain standard of professionalism that shouldn't be the case. They should be driven by the need to accomplish, to deliver, and what's deliverable, and get the job done as efficiently and as cost-effectively and professionally as possible. I can't really speak for a really ethnic company and the culture in there like some of the people in listed companies which are totally dominated by a particular ethnic group. As opposed to something like a global multinational like this where basically the people park their ethnicity out the door generally. They're all usually educated overseas. They're a cocktail and melting pot of different values. It's probably more pronounced in the early years I think.

I've worked in local Malaysian, British and American, but in different types of jobs.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: Even the Malaysian corporations are subdivided into two general types -- Chinese/Chinese and Malay/Malay and they're different again. Those organisations tend to have very strong command and control -- both. The number 1 is usually the owner, the founder and major shareholder, and their word is law. They make the rules. And by definition that means that the people in the industry, the people in the company, have to play ball. You either fit in or ship out. It's very pronounced in local companies. And they would normally be surrounded by their lieutenants who are totally bought-in loyalists. It's different in a multinational. Why is that? Because the Board can interchange. There are stakeholders all over the place. It's different in a local company. The only stakeholder is the founder, owner, major shareholder -- the number one guy.

Gender

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: I think that has. Somehow women are more detail oriented than men, in my opinion. That is really useful because you don't want to make any mistakes, you've got to be able to focus on those details. I most certainly am not like that, not to that extent. And secondly, the perception out there is they tend to expect a female, more likely a female than a male, doing the communications, the public speaking, master of ceremony for instance, and because of that expectation the response would be different (to whether you are a male or female practitioner).
GS: Is it a self-selection thing?

RESP.: It's more natural for a lady to do public relations than it is for a man. It's seen as a soft job, that's because of the things they see happening at the front. They don't see the strategising, the conceptualising at the back, all the hard work that goes behind it, the thinking, the planning, the coordination, they don't see that. It's like cooking. You slave for 15 hours in a kitchen and it's all eaten in 15 minutes. Do they know what you went through? No. All they know is it tastes good or it doesn't taste good. So there is that facet of the front-line, visible delivery and the back.

**Gender and ethnicity**

What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: I think gender has a bigger impact than ethnicity. The type that are attracted into the business, they tend to be the outgoing, the gregarious type regardless of what ethnicity they come from. That's the visible part of it. Is there a difference? There is a difference, in some cases. There are some ethnic groups that are generally more gregarious, you'll find a lot of them becoming lawyers. That profession would be dominated by a certain ethnic group. This is not stereotyping, it is just observation. And then you will see that certain ethnic groups may tend to be a little more reserved and speak when they need to speak, not just speak for the sake of being heard. There is some of that, especially the 10 years and less. And I think because the different ethnic groups in this country are afforded different opportunities it is reflected in the way they apply themselves to the job.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: This links back to what I said about this job naturally attracts women more than it does men. Besides the nature of women, the way they are more caring, at least they display more of that than a man does, this job is also seen as not revenue-generating and the old macho man has to go out there and hunt, be the hunter to bring home the bacon. In an organisation, if you're not revenue-generating you're seen as a cost centre, you're seen as nice but not critical, if the bus runs over that individual, that's okay -- the organisation will not collapse unless they're in the middle of a crisis. There is time to get a replacement in. Revenue-generating people are regarded differently. So I think it's a point. The male gets to that stage where they feel this is all very fun, been there done that, and they want to get into perhaps more of the revenue-generating type of role, do a career change, a totally new move. A male might want to do that. They might want to get into a business, they want to run the business, they want to feel it's time to stop being dependent on a salary and they want to go out and create a business, and self-employment. I think the men feel a greater amount about this conflict in where they are after 10 years, than the women do. I see much more women retiring in that business, that industry.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: The Chinese are arguably the most commercial and entrepreneurial group in Malaysia. If you understand the history of how it all began, the usual slowboat out of China, come in with 16 pennies in their pocket. The degree of independent thought, the self-assuredness in highest among the Chinese group. They've got the history and heritage to know that their generations have been doing something correct. There's a track record of successful Chinese individuals who have gone from rags to riches. The Indians are the group who has to struggle the hardest in this country and the Malays they get all they got from the Government, and they're making the transition from rural to urban life with a lot of help along the way. The Indians are dissatisfied with the status quo, with their lot in life (and therefore they're high because they want to change).

GS: It sounds like you're saying that the Chinese are also very open to change because they're entrepreneurial.
RESP.: No. Not for those in this industry. We're talking specifically PR. Coming back from that backdrop, let's come back to this. Because of that understanding, Indians feel they are the least satisfied. There is also a lot of pressure, all things being equal, the old problem with racial identity, whites, blacks, yellows. In the scheme of colours, the Indians face the highest prejudice, even from fellow Malaysians. When you're an ethnic Indian lady, you really have a lot of glass walls to deal with. They would probably be the least satisfied. They would feel that they're not really getting their fair share. And I think the Chinese basically, they would probably feel quite good about their network. They have that support system in that work, the extended family system, the options that are before them, or they may be feeling they are quite comfortable where they are. They're in that position where they can do what's expected of them. They see they could probably be working in the right kind of company that they wanted to work in, and see the opportunities and the road ahead. They hit the comfort zone a lot faster (because of the networks around them, and what has gone before).

GS: So the pattern is right for Chinese and Indian. What about Malay?

RESP.: I am surprised that the level. I would have thought it would be lower down. Higher than the Chinese. The only way I can explain it is this has come from an ethnic distinction to a class distinction within the Malays. There is this distinction between the haves and have-nots. It's no longer this feeling commercially disadvantaged vis-a-vis the Chinese, in terms of opportunities. They have a lot of that. They are just having to compete among themselves more now. You may be aware that there are some jobs in this country reserved for them. Houses as well, a lot of things. They're settling in, I think.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience (show attachment 1). This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why might this be?

RESP.: I think in terms of the groups which are communal, the Indians probably band together a lot more, most of all because they are the minority, the least advantaged, the most disadvantaged, they have common customs and language, to a lesser degree than even the Chinese -- we all have different dialects. And I think they need to look out for each other and accept each other, to stay together as a group. On the other extreme you've got the Chinese which tend to be the most selfish. The number one thing in a Chinese generally is money. More money. Number 2 is money, Number 3 is money. And that takes precedence over a lot of things. They're also very communal. Maybe it's empathy. Maybe they help Indians, having been through the kind of situation they're in and seeing fellow Indians in that kind of situation, they would probably have more empathy for others. Let's put it this way. It would be harder for a Chinese to accept an Indian as an equal, or a Malay definitely as an equal. There is this superior attitude that a Chinese harbours. By sheer dint of economic status. Background, what kind of universities they went to. By definition, it's easier for Indians to accept others as equal but it may not be reciprocated.

The Malays will never accept an Indian as an equal. Not quantifiably, not qualitatively. I would put them a bit lower (on the chart).

GS: And the women? Is that a true reflection?

RESP.: I think so. I was reminded of a class reunion recently. My sister went to hers and I went to mine. She went to an all-girls convent, and I went to an all-boys school. And she said that some of the ladies that she had met after 10 years, they become wives of some big tough blokes, really married into wealth and have got this social status, and when they see their old friends, it's just like a throwback to 10 years ago. Hug, kiss, that sort of stuff. There isn't that sense of competition about social status. That's what she saw. But I saw a different thing. I saw that the guys who showed up were the guys who had made it in life and those who did not do so well did not show up. The distinction is there. Women, maybe they feel there's less of a need to compete than men. I'm not saying there isn't a need to compete, but their perception is different.

Individual value types

Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience (attachment 7), power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why
might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: The first job, the first organisation and obviously you want to go into one that has the best reputation. I think generally corporates are perceived to be more prestigious than consultancies, especially in the PR line. It's different if you're going into management consultancy. But in the PR industry because some of these firms are very small. Some of the PR firms have just started out, not very well known, even the biggest like BM, it's the biggest but it's a consultancy. This is corporate. There's that attitude out there, and perception. So I think it's really big for somebody who's just joined, started working.

Then here at the mid-career stage, I am quite surprised at the line going like this. I would have thought that in the corporate world, you would probably stay high, and probably climb. The only thing I could thing of is that the respondents could have been influenced by the fact that they're somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy. They would like to have some power and dominance over others, but at the same time they also realise that they're not at the top of their function and they have to take orders, and in a way they can empathise better. They wouldn't want to for instance be a demonic mover over someone below them because they know what it's like. The middle position is where you get to see both sides of the picture, both as a subordinate and then as a supervisor. That's the only thing that would influence their motivation on this chart. In some organisations you would actually stay high.

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: The female, women's lib, emancipation, financial independence, that's what you get when you have some guys working under you taking orders from you. It's a real trip. You've got to cut your teeth for 10 years and then you get to run the shop. And they're probably not married, generally speaking, by that time. They can dedicate themselves wholly to the pursuit of the career and that means they have more time to focus on competing with the menfolk. In fact on a "more advantages" basis. If you take a career women who's unmarried, she doesn't have to deal with dependents. A male has to deal with dependents. It's quite distracting sometimes -- kids, wife, bills, school. Got to go home at seven, the wife's waiting.

It has to do with this middle of the totem pole situation. It's probably more of an ego trip to be able to join the best in the field, whatever corporation it is. You get to a point where you're in the middle of the totem pole. When you start climbing out of it it reasserts itself, the need to dominate. Dominate the pack and dominate others.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: It starts with expectations. Before a person joins a corporation, you take a big corporate thing like IBM for instance. One would have heard of it and would be expecting good pay packets, good benefits, perks that will allow you to indulge in, and including 28 working days off a year, guaranteed. There are policies that protect employees from being abused. There are fixed working hours that you can maybe stretch a little bit but not too much. And you know you don't come in on the weekends. So you go with that expectation, really high, that you're going to be able to indulge in all that. It allows you to have your hobbies, your night classes. Consultancies, they go in with a much lower expectation. Every consultancy that I know of is profit-sharing which means if you work hard, you get more. It's different. You don't have all these expensive benefits which are packaged to pull in the graduates at recruiting stations. And then when they get into the job there's the element of sacrifice and dedication and commitment. The corporate man will give up personal pleasure, pursuit of pleasure to get up the ladder.

GS: Are you associating pleasure at all with pleasure in the workplace?
RESP.: I wasn't. Does this refer to pleasure in the workplace? I don't see the connection. I have a very clear distinction between working life and private life. That's why I leave my personality, most of it, at home. In my case it's a very clear distinction. I am there to get the job done, go home and get on with my life. Because my values are different. That's the starting point. I don't indulge in gossip, or scandalous talk or sexual jokes, and I don't take alcohol. I prefer home life to hanging out in a bar. That's personal preference, and I make no apologies for that. So I make a very clear distinction that this company allows these differences to be incorporated and all of us to be able to work in an environment like this. So that suits me fine.

That's why I make it very very clear that I don't have to feel pressured or obligated to indulge in things that I don't want to do and if the others want to that's entirely their choice. They have their life and I have mine. So the job is just a job, get the job done and then carry on with the things that I've selected to do outside the work environment.

GSD: Would your colleagues have a similar view or would some of them feel that work was pleasurable?

RESP.: There are some who they find their pleasure in work. We call them workaholics. We have a joke here "get a life!" "Why are you here, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock five nights a week. Go get a life. Don't you have a life? Seriously, if you're not married don't you have someone to go see, to take out, go dinner. If you're married, don't you want to go home to the family? Do you have problems with the wife that you're trying to run away from? What?" In fact the bank realises that it is very unhealthy whereas in the past it used to be heroic to put in more hours than the next guy. It's turning out to be a very silly thing because in the long run you get burnout you get stressed out people, high turnover. So we have to confine this to within the working environment.

Because of the generally greater knowledge and awareness of companies, one goes in expecting it to be a great place to work. Why? They've got great products and great services. I've experienced some of them and bought some of them so I know, and I've met some of the people -- they seem to be having a glamorous life, and fun. So expectations are very high that they expect to have that kind of pleasure in their work. Again in consultancy, not so sure what they're getting into. Reality sets in. They probably underestimate it. They probably thought it was going to be worse than it is. It turned out to be a lot better because when you set expectations low, it can only be delight. That's a prize. That explains the curve.

At some point again when you're at the mid point of the totem pole and you actually begin to run a function and have staff to manage, one can begin to delegate it more, and one can begin to actually indulge in the things which are probably strategically more challenging. Intellectually more demanding, and you interact with a different level of people. And the organisation provides an environment for you to grow, and as you grow with the organisation and with the job then the pleasure begins.

RESP.: (For senior consultants) Jaded. Been there done that!!! I really think the burnout hits the consultancy person a lot faster, much much faster than corporate. I know a lot of people in the advertising field. They started off because they wanted to creative things, they wanted to do fun things, they want to express themselves through their work, they wanted to write, they want to create copy. And they actually have fun. They thrive on it. They work late hours. Time is no problem. It's not a work, it's a hobby. Then they find that as they get into it, first of all the pace starts to take its toll. They don't have the same level of energy that they had before. Jadedness is one thing, and then the drop off in energy. On top of that you add the added responsibilities, worry about management, got to worry about bottom line, so then the fun's taken out. It's no longer a fun thing. It's no longer a creative expression. It's a business. And some people are just not cut out to really not run a business. They'd rather not run a business, but because they're good they're put in that position. More responsibilities are added.

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?
**Self-concept and years of experience**

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I wasn't doing PR 10 years ago. The biggest difference for me is this job has put me higher up in the food chain. Banking as an industry is definitely much higher up in the food chain than the other things I've done, which were tobacco marketing, retailing and music. They were all businesses but here in corporate banking it's a different stratosphere altogether. And because of the exposure to the business and the access to information, and the access to technology I've obviously benefited professionally and personally, and financially by being in this kind of environment. That is the biggest difference, looking at things from a financial point of view, from a larger macroeconomic point of view. Understanding the forces, both political and economic and financial that actually shape the economy and the lives of people. I don't think there's any other industry that would allow me to have that. If I'd even been a CEO in the previous companies where I've worked, because we were further down the food chain, we don't have the privilege of information. And personally I've learnt a bit more about financing and investing and managing my own personal finances better than before. Less naïve.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles?

(How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

**Professional values**

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: (First cluster) Two out of the three talk about ethics and not only having consistency but being very strong and firm about sense of ethics. How it links to results is very simple to me. In the PR field it would be disastrous if one is tempted to move away from ethical behaviour as defined by the company and the individual. I believe that even in all situations of PR communications, from the norm to a crisis, one has to be very very clear about the principles and the values on which one is going to stand, whatever decisions and communications we take. Because first of all when you have that strong sense of ethics you will be consistent, and the audience whether it's the media or the public will appreciate honesty for instance. What they will not want is to be given the 'wool over the eye' treatment, for them to find out later that everything was contrived. I think in a delicate situation if it is not handled properly it could actually spell a total disaster both for the practitioner and for the company. In a crisis situation we especially need to come clean. And the temptation is not to come clean especially if the company has made a mistake.

GS: So maintaining high standard of ethics and consistency will contribute to results?
RESP.: Absolutely. I think the customers and the general public and the regulators will appreciate the company and the individuals in there more and be more forgiving if they have made a snafu, or if they tried to do something unethical and came clean rather than try and improve them later.

(Second cluster) You obviously have to have a high level of PR capabilities in order to develop appropriate solutions. You can't do one without the other. There have been many many instances where inappropriate solutions have been put forward to address an issue. They turn out to be the wrong ones or they turn out to be inadequate through lack of PR knowledge and experience and support systems to deliver that capability. You need to be competent.

(Third cluster) Depending on the industry, and in an industry like financial services, and in fact in today's climate with all industries with the lack of predictability of what's around the corner -- Y2K coming up, you've got a lot of issues out there which are anything from political unrest in neighbouring countries to war in the middle east, to a global meltdown on Wall Street, to a collapse of the Japanese economy, devaluation of China, the Russian crisis -- all these things in a globally connected world will have implications on whatever business you're going to be doing. One has to be very aware of the implications of the outputs of anything that we do and we say. You've got to know what to say and what not to say. You've got to know when to say it and when not to say it. You've got to know how to say it just as much, and that comes with both experience and maturity, especially when one is put into a high-pressure situation where the media is grilling and some tricks questions, boomerangs are thrown. You've got to be able to handle that and you've got to have personal maturity to be able to handle and deal with those questions properly. Accountability obviously links in with the job, and whatever actions and decisions I've taken, both the individual and the organisation will have to be accountable for that. A lack of maturity sometimes can mean that positions are taken consciously without being aware of the implications, and that can be very costly.

Let's look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

Listing is on the interview sheet. Quite different order.

RESP.: We're in a different environment from a year ago. Even if you were to hire somebody new today, I would stick with this list because they've got to be able to deal with it because it's a different reality out there. I think a lot of people have no clue what they're going to see over the next 12 months.

GS: Given that there's a lot of change that's still to happen, and the emphasis you're now mentioning -- level of capabilities, understanding the issues and consistency of ethics, then company values, and results -- what will the changes be for you in five years time?

RESP.: I think strategic thinkers are going to go higher up the chain. I think we're going to come into a situation where we're going to be dealing with more issues-related stuff. Issues are going to be the key, which is a great opportunity for the PR firm if you cotton on to that early enough. It's already happening in Malaysia. I did a check with the PR industry first. Business is booming. They can't recruit enough people. Money is being moved from above the line to below the line. Companies need to restore their image and some of them have had some bad press and they need to restore and regain confidence of their customers, so they need to proactively communicate. There are nuggets everywhere. I think the companies that are finding it hard to survive are probably too slow to respond because they didn't have any idea what was coming.

Let's look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: I see myself as less of a strong company person. Still am, but to less of a degree. Ethics is a constant. I see myself as less of a role model now, linked to seeing myself as less of a company man, so I am not an ideal role model from the company's point of view. My view has changed in the past year. But I have to be a role model, but I see myself as less.
Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

RESP.: (First cluster). I think in the context of my company, I see the roles as interlinked and collapsed into one, so the similarity is there partly because I have a lean organisation where I have to be all of these together with my staff. They're interchangeable in my particular instance.

(Second cluster) It would be likely to be a person coming in from a consultancy into a corporate environment, because it would see change. There is the adaptation period where the rules are a little more rigid, better defined, the culture is more uniform -- put it this way, company men are like soldiers in an army, they're all marching, wearing the same tie and so on, same colour suits. When I gave that response I had that in mind.

GS: It sounds like you don't have a high opinion of consultants.

RESP.: No. Not necessarily so. I think they have to go through a major adjustment. Yet there are good consultants just because they spend quite a few years and have a lot of exposure in a particular line, doing things a certain way. It's different in the big multinational corporation, very different, and if the practitioner is flexible and mature enough to understand that adaptations have to be made then the transition will be quick, short and very pleasant. That requires maturity and being prepared to change, to adapt to your new environment. I think it's the same if you reverse the flow. If you take a corporate person and put them into a creative consultancy, all the management practices and behaviours and attitudes that you picked up in the corporate environment may not be applicable directly in a consultancy because it's a different culture.

GS: So this represents someone new coming into the corporate environment

RESP.: at the mid-career level.

GS: They've had experience doing other things, or doing PR elsewhere. So a new practitioner as far as this organisation is concerned. Describe their journey to being an effective practitioner.

RESP.: Time is obviously a key factor, and length of it will be determined by the ability of the individual to assimilate. Character is very key, and obviously values. When I say character I mean integrity, flexibility of character, maturity is also important because it's a much larger organisation and expectations are different. One should also come in with a very keen sense that there are significant differences. In the same way if a person coming in from corporate to corporate from a local local company coming into a fast moving western multinational, many of them can't make the change and it's corporate to corporate. It's got nothing to do with consultancy to corporate. It's the fact that the differences are there and like any issue one needs to be aware of the implications and because some industries move very very fast -- semi-conductor, financial services, technology companies -- the period for adaptation is much shorter. Things are flying all over the place in cyberspace, so having a balanced and healthy attitude, open to character development and all these good things on top of the technical competencies would make a big difference. And in some cases, three months, in some cases, six, in some cases, one and a half years and still struggling.
RESPONDENT 19 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: I think when you have 5-10 years' experience and you probably have staff under you, you tend to want to influence your staff a lot more, and you're not as open to change because you feel that you've had the experience, or certain things work or certain things don't work. You tend to want to influence the way you do things.

Why that changes as years go along, when you're a senior practitioner you've a lot more time to strategise, and you have to be open if you're in a business, especially with market changes and things like that.

So maybe in the 5-10 years where they don't do a lot of strategy. They're maybe middle management. So therefore they're just going through the works and implementing systems that they already know.

When they're younger, it's the non-experience. You're just absorbing. You're younger and therefore you're more open to ideas, and you're learning.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: They have similar patterns because they're all at different stages of careers. When you're a lot younger and you've just entered working life, obviously you're more open to change. You're a lot more determined to get there. With this one, the pursuit of success would be much higher when you're a lot younger.

(Mid) You're more established as far as your career and you're not as concerned about dominance over others. You get a bit more comfortable as your career gets on track and it gets up again because you're really at your prime with 15 years + of experience. Maybe as you get older as well, and the young people start coming in, perhaps you're a lot more motivated. You don't want to be outdone by the younger set.

Conservation

RESP.: I guess it makes sense because as you come in you're not as experienced and you bring in whatever values and traditional practices that you have. As you go along, and you're absorbing things, you find that your ideas change and that as you get older, with most people you get a bit more set in your ways.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: When you come in with no experience, you want to be accepted as equals. You're more confident as you go along.

At a senior level, maybe you're comparing yourself with others, how successful others are. At your prime, and with the younger generation coming in you want to be up to date (not the right word). You want to be accepted by people who are about the same level as you.

Work environment

There's a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. In what way might your perspective
as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

**Openness to change**

RESP.: When you're in a consultancy, you're dealing with a lot of different industries and you're seeing a lot of market changes. Therefore you're constantly looking at things in different perspectives. Perhaps therefore you're used to changes and you're open to a lot more changes.

Whereas in corporates I find because of the way you're dealing with one company, with that one business focus, and they get comfortable perhaps, depending on the management as well. Some top level management might have been there for a long time and they're continuing the same things in the same way. Perhaps the business philosophy is very ingrained in the company, and it is not very open to changes.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: I think we're talking more about human values rather than change. Change could be to do with your experience, your business changes. Here the value of your own success depends on your own motivation. That's probably why it's closer.

GS: So with openness to change, you're looking at extrinsic values, and the impact the environment has on you as a practitioner, whereas with self-enhancement you're looking more at the internal, the intrinsic drivers.

**Conservation**

RESP.: I don't have an answer.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: The environments are different. As a consultant, you're put in a situation where you're involved in the development of the business, whereas in a corporate environment, you're not as directly involved in that. The motivation or the drive is a lot higher in consultants. The pressure is a lot higher.

GS: You've worked in both environments. What impact does the work environment have on the job that you do?

RESP.: In the consultancy I was really involved in business development, to get the clients coming in. Whereas in corporate often I'm solely concentrating on the PR work and the strategising internally. I'm dealing with the one industry whereas in the consultancy I had a varied number of clients. The work environments are quite different.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: Surprised. I don't see the difference. Maybe because you're less confident and you're establishing yourself so you identify with what you know. People with the same traditional values, or same religious backgrounds.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: Yes. In certain ways we deal with suppliers or we select companies that support us. Criteria in which we do things. Having that decision-making power to decide on certain business practices.

GS: Because you've got the decision-making responsibility, you're able to use your own criteria? And your criteria are based on personal values as well as professional values?
RESP.: Yes. Looking at the integrity of the person we're dealing with and business practices, the way they do things. In Malaysia, pulling rank or having connections might get you somewhere. I don't see that as a general way we should do business. I see it more of the experience, or the expertise of the particular company, being more important than having that additional connection.

**To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?**

**Ethnicity**

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: No, not for me. I run a department and I tend to be quite balanced in my recruitment. I'm the only Chinese in my little department. Of the other three, two are Malays and one's Indian. I tend to want to select employees that are different races, to get a balance. I feel that different ethnic groups have different talents. The Malays are more creative. The Chinese are very thorough, and perhaps more business oriented. The Indians are good in language skills. I like a good mix. Also to give it more of a balance.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

GS: Does the fact that this is a Korean organisation mean you have to adopt any different strategies to deal with management or to do your job?

RESP.: I think Korean practices are very disciplined. They're not as open to change. Whatever applies in Korea they feel can do just as well here. In some ways I think that impedes their growth. So I think that has a lot of influence over the work environment. In terms of PR work, I'm not sure so much whether it's the Korean factor or the general business situation, but they're quite developed in the way they look at PR. So they apply whatever they know, and whatever they've done in Korean to the Malaysian situation.

GS: What sort of culture have they established in this organisation?

RESP.: Very disciplined. Very strict. Very military in their approach. But it's also because it's a factory environment and most of their investments here are in manufacturing. Maybe that's also why they're very strict. It's also their culture.

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: In Malaysia in general definitely there would be a difference. In the work that I do, you see in the consultancy business there's a lot more females. There's this misconception about PR work in Malaysia. It seems to be more suited to women because it's to do with organising cocktail parties and events, and the nitty-gritty detail in organisation seems to apply better to women than to men. Men generally don't like to do organising work like that.

And then as you get into a more business-oriented, strategising role it seems to be more attracted to men. Men who are doing marketing would also fall into PR. (More of the corporate side)

**Gender and ethnicity**
What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: Yes and no, depending on what you're assigned to do. If I was male and Malay I could probably deal with the government a lot better. In the Malaysian context, it would be quite natural for the management to send me to have dealings with the government. Chinese and being a lady would be a lot more difficult in that sense.

I wouldn't see differences so much in the PR industry. More in other work areas. For example in Samsung: the people who look after security and general affairs overseeing property and furniture are Indians; the Malays would fall into the operator level, or human resources, PR.

GS: Would they select themselves into those because they feel more comfortable in those roles?

RESP.: Yes, they're more comfortable with that and also the Koreans are a lot more comfortable. From their experience they find that that mix works better.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: Males in Malaysia are more exposed. It surprises me that women are not as open to change as men, but maybe it's because there are less women working than men, so they're not as exposed to the work environment.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I'm quite surprised comparing the males that the Chinese are less open to change, and that the Indians are much more. I would imagine it would be the inverse. From my experience dealing with the different ethnic groups.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?

RESP.: For the females I don't see that as typical, but for the males maybe. With self-acceptance, I think the Indian males, because they're a minority, I think it's important for them. I would expect the females to be the same as the males.

*Individual value types*

**Power**: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience, power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes?

RESP.: The very same reasons as we talked about earlier. When you're at entry level with very little experience, I think your values are a lot higher when it comes to prestige or control. You would want that. And you get more comfortable as you go along, but as you reach a much senior position you tend to want more control and dominance over others. You do have a lot more options.

If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges. There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: With the young consultant, you're more interested in learning as much as you can. At middle management level, you're looking at dominance over the entry-level people, and you're also trying to get up there to senior management level so you're wanting more control. At senior level, you feel that
you're really quite comfortable with that and you're just going about doing your work rather than concentrating on establishing yourself.

With the corporate, you get more comfortable at middle management level, and it peaks again because you're wanting that senior position and it's important in a larger environment.

And according to gender. Why?

RESP.: In Malaysia the men are more motivated in their working career and they're motivated with the prestige, whereas the women perhaps are a little more lax in that area. At the entry level they're looking for the experience. They're not as aggressive to perhaps position as much as men.

I don't know if this shows that men are a little bit more comfortable at middle management level. But for females, it tapers up because they see the potential of success, and with experience they gain more drive perhaps.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: In a consultancy, there is a more visible demonstration of competence from your achievements because you're handling different projects and you're gaining business. As opposed to corporates where perhaps there's more working as a team towards the one area. It's quite difficult to differentiate the levels of achievement, whereas in a consultancy it's much easier to identify.

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: I'm not sure why there's a difference between corporate and consultancy. With consultancy I can see that financially you're more established when you're at middle management level and as you get older you're not as concerned with self-gratification. With the corporates I imagine it should be the same.

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

RESP.: Maybe in Malaysia because it's still quite a traditional thought that, especially if they're married, that the male would still take on the role of providing for the family. That's why security is not so much a driving force for females. Security of relationships. Maybe males value these a lot more because they feel that may be a driving factor towards their career success, than for females. They are more driven in the success of their careers rather than females because perhaps females don't rely on the traditional thinking about males having the job, and with females it's not so important.

Self-concept and years of experience

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: Someone who is practising PR in a big multinational company that perhaps the public might think would be contributing a lot to the society, coming from a big environment. I'm at this point where I'm a little disillusioned. People externally would see me as having a position where I can influence PR spending or advertising a lot more than I actually can.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

RESP.: The experience would be the factor about how I view myself. I would value myself higher through experience and having the knowledge and confidence. Application from my knowledge to the work demands (better ability).
Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

RESP.: In five years hopefully I would be more established. It also depends on the work situation, how motivated I would be would depend on the work environment. Personally I'm at the stage in this company where I feel that they are not utilising my ability as much as I would like, so perhaps, depending on the work environment I would be more or less motivated, and feel more or less valued. I would value myself differently depending on the work situation. At this stage where I'm thinking perhaps I could apply myself a lot better in a different work environment. So I don't think so much of the years, but hopefully in five years I would be in a much better position to apply myself better.

GS: What is the work environment that would motivate you?

RESP.: One that would see more of an importance in having PR practices in the company and how that would influence the business. One that is very marketing and publicity oriented. One that would be more open to PR practices and new ideas.

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

- your family identity?
- your organisational identity?
- your ethnic/cultural identity?

RESP.: I fit into different roles, with a different emphasis on what I am in the work environment and what I am at home. I am perhaps less submissive in the work environment than I would be at home. With decision making it would be the same, but I don't think my ethnic background has a lot to do with values in the work environment or at home because as you know my background's not distinctive.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles? (How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

RESP.: Not really.

Professional values

Let's go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you. Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: (First three identical constructs) In terms of PR effectiveness I would see them as similar because they are effective if they're a specialist in PR. They would have certain expertise that would make them effective. They would have certain knowledge. Achieves objectives - yes, because they obviously understand the situation, and if they're achieving the objectives, they would be effective.

(remaining constructs in cluster) I would say they are linked. If they're well-known in the PR industry, they have been effective. Either as a specialist or they're well known because they have achieved a certain level and have succeeded in implementing a PR strategy. Experienced and broader exposure - obviously they would be more effective if they are experienced, they have the knowledge. Resistant to pressure - maybe they're a lot more self-confident. Creative strategies - yes. Contributing to organisational goals - they are linked together because it contributes to the effectiveness of what they do. They're seen by management as contributing to the goals. They are effective. Autonomy to make decisions - they have more autonomy to apply their knowledge and experience and expertise. It links to how successful they are in the industry and how effective they are. All these criteria are all inter-related because it has to do with how successful they are in their job.
GS: So the practitioner who does all these would be your view of a successful practitioner?

RESP.: Yes.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

RESP.: Experienced and broader exposure I would rate higher with uses knowledge and personal networks. You'd have more knowledge with experience.

The rest are fine.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

RESP.: Strong sense of ethics definitely.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s discuss what each means.

RESP.: (First cluster) religious values has quite a strong play in business ethics, for an individual, and not compromising on the beliefs has quite an impact in business practices. So I'm not surprised that these are clustered together.

GS: Is that how you see yourself?

RESP.: Yes. Maybe in certain decision making, or being put in a situation where I have to make value judgements, my religious background or my beliefs would have quite a strong play. Maybe more accepting in the way I value people of different ethnic backgrounds has quite a lot of bearing because of my religious background. If I compare myself to some other individuals in the company, their religious values would have a lot of impact on them in the way the ethnic structure - because ethnicity has a lot to do with religion in Malaysia. Because of my religious background I'm a lot more open to accepting other ethnic groups within the company.

RESP.: (Second cluster) I see them as attributes of the role model. More the role model than the others. They have all the elements and the attributes of an effective PR practitioner, not necessarily the company person or the others.

GS: So you're really saying that if you're operating at the very top level in PR, then these are the attributes you should have?

RESP.: Yes.

RESP.: (Third cluster) Partially the new practitioner. The new practitioner would not be able to get results using networks because they're new, but perhaps coming from a different background, different work responsibilities, and coming into the PR line they might be able to get results by using networks, but not necessarily the new practitioner. I would generally tend to agree.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?

RESP.: With experience comes knowledge, and you're more established and you're more confident, and you may then already achieve certain specialist knowledge to be able to come to this grouping. You're obviously well-known in the PR industry through experience and having that knowledge. You're not vulnerable to pressure on the job as much.
Is there anything else you wish to add?
RESPONDENT 21 TRANSCRIPT

Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. It suggests that your outlook on the job and /or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: This one I'm not surprised that people are open to change because you're enthusiastic. After a while you get a bit jaded. You've been there, you've done that, you've seen it all. But after a while, when you're here (mid-level) you would have obtained a certain level in the organisation, and if you're the MD even from here (senior) and you don't have to fight your way up any more, then you become again more open.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: This one would be a bit more difficult because I think I act more on the self-transcendence bit. I'm more of a team player and I've always worked on a team, and not on my own, and I've never felt the need to have this dominance over others. But also I've been quite lucky. When I came into this profession I didn't have to fight my way up. I came in as a professional with a legal background, and because of that I was put in at a certain level. I didn't have to start from scratch. If I had started as an executive, would I have had to fight my way up.

What I can imagine is ambition. When you're a junior, you want to make your way up and you have to prove yourself still.

By mid-level, you would have or you wouldn't have, and you would have known whether or not you're cut out for this. And if you know that you have some standing in that particular industry, and in that particular company, or you have a reputation already which is safe, then you become more of a motivator to your team and less someone who wants to seek that position, who's fighting for it. By this time you would have got somewhere, and you don't have to break your back anymore. You've put in your requisite three or four years of hard work of going back till 11 o'clock at night just to prove to someone that you can do it and you want to have that position in the company. And now that you've got it you can afford to take things a bit easier and your job responsibilities would have changed. You're not the runner anymore. Now you sit down and you strategise. And you have to learn how to delegate. And with that, in doing so, you already have a natural sense of dominance over others because you're giving out those orders. Now you're saying to someone "Can you please go away and do this".

Conservation

RESP.: This seems contradictory because if you're open to change here…Traditional practices makes a bit more sense. Now while you still want to maintain traditional practices because there are certain rules that you have to follow by the book, but at the same time they're open to change. But even when change looms, even if you are beginning to accept change, you still want to keep to a certain standard, or a certain practice. Let's see how we can still maintain this while adapting this new idea to this. Arguing by analogy. So you would adapt traditional practices in a new environment. Protection of stability I cannot reconcile.

As you grow older you want that stability. When you are younger, I am not saying that you don't look for stability, you still do, but this becomes a bit more precious as you grow older. This is the course of human nature.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: I maintain what I said about this before. When you get to this stage (mid) you're probably very tired and jaded. You've had x number of years in this industry, probably x number of years in a certain
company, and the industry is so small. Everybody knows everybody else and you know what sort of undercutting is going on, and stabbing behind the back, and it happens. Everywhere. Especially now. From what I've observed of my friends who have between 8-10 years of practice, they're either on the brink of leaving "I've had enough, of the industry totally. I think I want to do something different". At that particular age, everybody has that, from what I've seen, may not be a PR practitioner. They just want to do something else. They maybe want to be their own boss. There's a pattern.

(mid) "I'm very happy in this job. I have a team now. I have to motivate them. It's my responsibility to teach them, and to let them carry on, as best as they can, under my leadership. I'll do that. But I won't go all out to do it" because they're already not self-motivated at this point. It's a matter of carrying out their job. There's no added element. There's no pro-activeness in trying to get your team together "Hey guys, let's be the best here. Let's do it".

GS: Why would it be stronger at each end?

RESP.: (seniors) Because you've passed this stage. If you haven't broken out by then, you'll never break out. "Let's get on with it". But if you have broken out, and you're starting a new company for example, you start going up again because you have to prove yourself in a different way.

(Juniors) You're really gung-ho when you start, and as it goes on you realise things are not as rosy as it seems, and you may not want to share as much knowledge with your peers. (mid) You're at the stage where you're fighting to get a job.

Work environment

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you've had in PR. Let’s deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: Because if you are a consultant, you deal with so many other people and so many other types, brands and corporations. For example, if I've been in Petronas for 10 years. Petronas is a place where I never want to get out of because my benefits are great. And if you've been anywhere for 10 years, you'd be very reluctant to leave it unless it's for something really wonderful. You probably know the ins and outs of that organisation. If you don't know by 10 years then you're in trouble. Over time, because you've been in the same position, people would have told you "No, forget it. The Chairman doesn't want this done. Just stick to this. The company's not likely to change because you're thinking about the company." And if you're thinking about a corporate change, a corporate face for the company, that doesn't change overnight, and then you get a bit more demotivated.

Whereas here, you're going out to win new clients all the time. We have got to change with the times. We have got to show that we're progressive, we're innovative.

GS: So your work environment affects your approach.

RESP.: I think so, because if I were in the corporate side, I'd be less open to change, trying to preserve the corporate identity that has been built up over the years.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: Because this is more for yourself. Whether you're in a company or in a consultancy, it doesn't really matter. You've come out of university. You have to achieve a certain level by a certain time. In Malaysia people are so motivated by that paper qualification, and there's that syndrome in Singapore, they call it klasu -- it's not wanting to lose out. "If my peer is there, I've got to be at least here, if not higher". So whether you're in this workplace or another workplace, that doesn't change. It's still in you, and it's a traditional thing.
Now I did law. It took me three years to get the degree. Then you have to do the bar when you're chambering -- that's five years. My friends who didn't do law, three years in university then they're out working. By the time I come out, I can only come out on a salary of say R2,000. These guys would have started at R2,000. Two years on, they would be earning more. So I'll have to work a bit harder to catch up. Because we're all friends. We still move around in the same circles, and we don't want to lose out.

**Conservation**

RESP.: (Consultants)Because you have to keep on your toes, you have to be open to change, you have to keep yourself up to speed with the practices, and with corporate identities, and how people run their companies, and how you think they should be doing this best. You're a consultant, and they look to you for that. If you remain stuck in the doldrums, no one's going to come to you.

GS: Why doesn't it go back up again?

RESP.: It's two ends of the spectrum (with openness to change). This is high (openness to change). This is low (conservation). It makes sense then. Because here, you're open to change. Here, you're discarding it. "We don't want to do this. It's more important for us to stay on top of things".

(Corporates) Corporate identity. If I am in X still in 10 years time, I will know what X is on about. If my company has a perfectly sound reputation, I wouldn't want to do anything to upset that. If you want to change anything to do with the company, you have a difficult task to convince me because we've spent x number of years building up this reputation, and you're telling me let's take a different slant. And I'll say no. I want to protect that.

GS: So that's the company culture?

RESP.: Yes.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: (senior) Corporates higher, simply because if you've been there forever, people look to you for advice. If you're in this field, and you're here (senior) then you are the person responsible for the corporate reputation of the company, and anything that is done in relation to PR, you have to check with this person. Therefore she has to dictate and she has to give as much guidance as she can to her team. She has that responsibility on top. Here (consultancy) you're talking about a team. Here (corporate) you're talking about a team and the company.

If we are in a consultancy, then we have to go out to pitch for business all the time, naturally you have to maintain that high enhancement, as compared to my peers who are in the corporate sector. We are the ones always on the go. We have to keep on our toes. We have to do this. We have to get the team inducted into the same life. It's a question of keeping the motivation high. If you're highly motivated you're more likely to win more business. I think that explains the slight increase.

**The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?**

RESP.: Some cases yes. It's the makeup of the country. Malays, Chinese and Indians. When you're a junior, in this place for example, the coordinators by some coincidence are all Malays, so they play the role of the secretary. The majority of us are Chinese. I am Chinese Muslim. So the coordinators see me in a different light, subconsciously, they don't mean to but because they know I'm married to a Malay, they treat me slightly differently. They tend to stick together, simply because there's so many Chinese here. To an extent, that is also true of an executive who is just starting out. Maybe he is Malay. He can probably identify better with someone else who is Malay, as opposed to me, if I were his boss. Even though I'm giving him all the right guidance and I share everything with him, he would still feel more comfortable with a Malay colleague in a different department. They do identify.
As they get more experience, they become a bit more competent. They say "Maybe I can stand on my own two feet now". And because they get so caught up also in the work, and it grows over time, that you're working with someone who's not Malay. Your relationship would have grown. At that point there is less dependency on race as opposed to now.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: I do it all the time, because (the organisation) will allow. Everybody sits here, all levels. They will allow everyone to say their piece "If this is how you feel, we'll adapt that". We have work values here. We call it paydosh -- open, honest and fair. And the management will accept if they think it is a sound idea. Personal values, you can bring it into work, anytime you want to, and to a certain extent, everybody practices personal values when they come in. I don't chuck them out the window.

(Gives example of personal principles)

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

**Ethnicity**

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: Initially yes, but after a time, all consultants have to prove their worth. It helps with some clients if you are Malay. And if the shareholding is owned by the government, in the majority, it helps if you are Malay. I am able to put my foot into the door and beyond a little bit easier than someone else who's Chinese. Probably because I'm married to a Muslim. My husband is Malay. Therefore I have embraced the religion. When you embrace the religion in this country, you don't just embrace the religion, you embrace the traditions, and the way of life. So I don't live like a Chinese anymore, I live like a Malay. And therefore it's easier for them to accept me. But even if they accept me in the beginning, I still have to prove that I can do my work, because if I can't, they'll know there's no point keeping me. So it helps right at the beginning, and to a certain extent only.

But you'll find also sometimes, that someone is kept there just to keep the networking going. And the work is done by someone else. So, ethnicity does feature quite a bit in this country. If the company is a predominantly Chinese-owned company, they will want a Chinese team to service them because you can speak the language, and when you have to entertain, you know what sort of entertainment you want. Ethnicity does help.

GS: Do you see any differences to how you do the job compared to how someone else might do the job?

RESP.: There would be some differences, but that's individual. It doesn't relate so much to a race.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

**Gender**

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

**Gender and ethnicity**
What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

RESP.: It depends. If the client is a man, and you send another man in, that's okay. But if there is a clash of characters at the first meeting, they'll send in a woman immediately. And if he happens to be Chinese, they'll send in a Chinese girl to see if they have that rapport. In this country, unfortunately, people who do business are not as scrupulous as we'd like them to be, and wrong practices in my eyes are prevalent because of that, because they allow this to happen. If it were left to me, I would say put the best person in. But not everybody does that, and some people still use race and gender.

When I was a lawyer, a young lady lawyer who is Chinese, you tend to be a bit more careful than a young lady lawyer who is probably Indian or Malay. Because traditionally, the Chinese have always had to prove to everybody that they can do it. So you are very careful when you make a step. And because of that, people see you as shrewd. You don't want to make the wrong move. Looking back 100 years ago, the Chinese left China and we came over to Malaysia. We had to survive and therefore we had to work very hard, and the people here lost out on certain opportunities when they saw the Chinese coming in and taking over. It's like what happened in Australia when the Vietnamese came in. And they started getting more and more places in universities. Suddenly you think "Why are so many of them coming in?" Because they have to prove themselves. Therefore they work a little bit harder, whereas the rest of them get a bit more complacent.

But being a woman has its disadvantages still in this part of the world. Not so much at our level, but at the lower level. Look at what's happening in Klantang. They're considering not allowing women to work. That mentality is prevalent in that part. They are fundamentalists, but they practise the religion in that manner. No-one can say that that's right or wrong. It's a question of choice. If you choose to live in Klantang you have to obey their laws. But that shows the type of thinking they have. Women are still inferior. I've very happy being a Muslim. But the religion is very pro-male sometimes, and it's difficult in that sense. But if you're talking about a job, whether you're a man or a woman at my level, it doesn't really matter whether you are Chinese or Indian or Malay. Sooner or later you have to prove your worth.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: I don't why know. Maybe because of job security, men fluctuate a bit more. In this country, most families survive on a double income. Women, even though we are open to change, we still have to consider the other variables, and if you think about your family this way, you bring this practice into your work as well. We're a bit more consistent in our thinking and in the way we act, than men are.

GS: In your experience, would there be a difference?

RESP.: Hardly any.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: Female line makes sense. There's hardly any difference anyway.

From my experience it's the opposite pattern. (Chinese more open to change). Indians conform after a certain while. They are conformists. They still practice arranged marriages and that sort of thing. I cannot see them as being so open to change.

Malays pretty much take the middle road. The Chinese are more open to change.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?
RESP.: I wouldn't rate this one so low (Chinese) - I would put it higher. But I do agree this one is the highest (Indian). Because they are a minority race and they tend to stick together, or circumstances force them to stick together. As a result, they are always very grateful if others show them that "hey, you're one of us". If someone shows them that, they will go all out to practice that too.

Here (Malay), they don't have to worry about that - they are already on top. There's no loss. If they're going to treat someone as an equal, become more of a team player, it's better for them if they do that.

This (Chinese) is the survival instinct, and this is very much so in a man as compared to a woman. It is a socialisation. From my observation, from my circle of friends it is. Women, after we get married, we're very happy to give up whatever it is we used to do before in our free time, stay at home, take care of the kids, rush home from work just to be with the kids. In my case, I used to be very active in theatre but I've given everything up because of my son. And I'm very happy to do that. My friends are saying you are mad to give your life up. No, I have a life, but it's a different life and I have different priorities. There's a more stable feeling.

Whereas for a man, for my husband, he's married, he's got a son, he's got a career, but he also needs to have his recreation for example. I don't stop him from doing that. I encourage him to do that. Men, to me, have a different make-up from what we have. We're women, and because we're in Asia, even though I received a British education, I've lived abroad, but I came home and I became the traditional Asian wife. And I wouldn't have it any other way. I'm very happy. It's the social make-up. It's in there.

GS: It's the balance between work, family and other things that is the point of difference?

RESP.: I think so. Because you have to go home and play the wife and the mother. It's okay for him to work late but it's not okay for me to work late. I have my responsibilities at home. My son needs me more than my son needs him. Therefore, because of that I have to be home a bit earlier than he does. That kind of mentality and you find it's quite prevalent.

GS: How does that affect things on the job?

RESP.: You just have to juggle it a bit more efficiently than your male colleague. He can afford up to spend up to 10 o'clock doing this. You have to learn how to be more efficient. Work a bit smarter. If I can take reading home, if I can take work home, I will take work home. He can afford to spend more time in the office doing it here. When he goes off, he goes off to the pub or the club, or he does nine holes. I think the organisation, as long as you do your job, you're fine. Don't get lax on the job. If you're supposed to do something, make sure it's done.

RESP.: When I was in practice, and both bosses were males. They would spend all hours in the office, and they expected everyone else to be able to do that. Some of us can't. When I finish work, I'm not going to stay on in the office just to prove to you that I can stay on late, if I don't have to. If I have to stay back, I will stay back. But there are certain people motivated by a show of commitment.

GS: It's like playing the game. The men have the flexibility to play the game more, than women. Would it be detrimental to you?

RESP.: It would have been if I have a different boss. With my last boss it was a bit difficult. She was single, and 40 and her work was her whole life, and she could never understand why I could. If I had a male colleague who could say "Never mind, I'll stay back", he probably would have gone a bit higher with her than I would have.

**Individual value types**

**Power:** Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience, power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes?
RESP.: (Juniors) Because they're proving themselves. Here (seniors) I would expect it to be much less steep (still increasing but not so much). Because you've attained that level, and you don't have to prove anything to anyone any more.

At this stage (mid), this is the stage where you either break out or you don't. If you continue on in this company, you're fine. You know what you want to do now, whether it's here or there. If you go out and you start a new company, you still have to do this. You still have to go out there and prove to your people. It's not so much control or dominance, it's social status and prestige.

If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

RESP.: This makes sense in terms of what I just said. The corporate, if you decide to stay there, then you make a go of it and you might as well make the best of it. Remember what I said about being responsible for the corporate reputation? Naturally you would have attained that status and prestige. And I think you like it there and you probably want to maintain that. (seniors)

GS: So it has to do with the level of responsibility that you have?

RESP.: I think so. Because in this country, social status and prestige will mean that you will have control and dominance over people, and resources. It may not be mutually exclusive. One gets accustomed to that.

GS: Is that different between the corporate and consultancy sector?

RESP.: I think so. In a consultancy, you are exposed to a lot more. The environment and the scope of work is wider. You meet a lot more people. In the corporate world I think you become a bit myopic after a while. You're there with one company. I see the consultant as being a bit more worldly, whereas the corporate person is a bit more insular.

GS: Maybe different things drive them. Power may drive the corporate person slightly more.

And according to gender (attachment 9). Why?

RESP.: Not so. When they're younger, it would be about the same. Women would be higher. In an urban market centre, younger women who are not married will be on a higher mark, and then for women it will begin to peter off.

For the men, they've achieved stability here (mid) and they become a bit more laid back. And what happens here (seniors) replicates what happens in the corporate world with the other chart. (ie. the responsibility of the job)

Here (mid women), I suppose this is the time where everything starts to happen, family, and children, and by the time you're through the first few years of having children and getting the house in order, you're able to continue again to build your career. And I've seen this happen a lot.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: Why does it come down? (Would expect it to stay high across the top for consultants). Here (mid) maybe you feel you don't have to demonstrate competence because you've got x number of years of experience, but I would have thought, because you're in a consultancy that you always have to prove that you're competent, otherwise you wouldn't be getting any more work.

Here (mid), you're safe, you're in a company and unless they ask you to leave. It's not likely to happen, except maybe part-timers I guess.

GS: Why do the corporates go back up again?
RESP.: The only reason I can think of why is because you have a lot of juniors under you by this time, and you have to earn their respect, and therefore you still have to show that you are competent.

GS: And I guess you're outlining goals for them

RESP.: True. The team thing comes to mind as well, and the motivating factor. Maybe by then you are the motivating factor.

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: This is very alarming. (Senior consultants) Maybe because you've had to keep on your toes for so long, because here you have to keep on getting the business and keeping it financially sound, and after a while it gets tiring. So you lose a bit of pleasure. I can't imagine it dropping to such a low level.

Here you're younger too. By here (senior), you're a certain age and I suppose other things would have come into your life by then and work may not be the only thing. You'd be able to afford a lot more as well. And work is not the only thing that can give you pleasure.

The same thing would happen here for the corporates (seniors), but it is going up slightly. Maybe the stability because you're in one organisation. Here (senior consultants) you've got to keep on fighting for work and you're working with different types of people, different companies. And you can never really be sure how stable your job is in a consultancy. Whereas here (corporate) your job is stable and therefore it goes up again. You know, I've attained a certain level. Things are not going to be as difficult as it was in the first few years of my working experience. And therefore it picks up.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: Yes it is important for me. I have to like what I'm doing. Otherwise it is just a job. My colleagues are a big source of my pleasure at work. My accounts are also a source of pleasure. They are not always the biggest source of my pleasure. In fact my colleagues are the biggest source of pleasure. But the company itself, the culture of the company. If the culture is not right, if you don't agree with the culture, you can never be happy, no matter how good your immediate boss is. But I derive pleasure from my work, simply by coming in and having people who are intelligent to speak to, and when we have to do something, we do something as a team and we find that we're very much in sync with each other. There's B, there's me and there's another senior executive. We work very well together. I've always been very lucky with my colleagues.

GS: If you weren't getting the same amount of pleasure, you would consider another environment?

RESP.: I would consider it.

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

RESP.: I think women look for security just as much as men do. (more even) But I have to warn you that a lot of my friends say I am not representative of the mass.

Self-concept and years of experience

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: When I walk in the door, I head straight for my office, my little cubicle. I am the public relations manager in that division. B is the head. But a lot of responsibilities still fall on me, because I am supporting him. Whenever someone comes in to talk about PR, if they can't find B, or if they prefer not to speak to B about it, then they will come to me. I see my role in the PR department as someone who has to facilitate building the business, in the department, and in the company, because X is an integrated communications company. And to all of our clients all of us, each division, plays a role. Advertising, PR, direct marketing, so we are not just a PR consultancy. We are housed within an
integrated communications group and expected to work with all our colleagues in trying to get the best communications mix for all our clients. My role is very much a business building role and trying to keep the clients happy. I also have to get into execution because the department is not big enough for me to let go of the executional details.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

RESP.: I want to concentrate on the strategy. I like to pitch. I enjoy that challenge. Our clients are great but I prefer the challenge to go out of look for the business as opposed to sitting in the office and getting things done. If I know I have a competent team at the office who can run the business properly, I'd be very happy going out just to look for the business.

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

. your family identity?
. your organisational identity?
. your ethnic/cultural identity?

RESP.: No I'm not (a different person when I walk out the door). I don't put on a different hat. I always look at my sister-in-law. I think about her when I walk out the door because the minute she has her jacket on she becomes the corporate lady, and she forgets completely about the family. I am not a different person when I go home. I am still the same person because even at work I am not just a PR practitioner. Even at work I am a mother. And every time the phone rings I worry that it's someone telling me something's happened to my son. So I don't think I'm a different person.

GS: We've talked about your personal values that you can bring into the job. But the way in which you like to do PR -- networking, facilitating, relationship building -- is that also the way you lead your life when you're away from work? Are those principles important?

RESP.: No. At home things are so different. I don't have to go out and get the business at home. I don't have to facilitate anything at home. The relationship between my husband and myself is of course very important and I'll do anything to keep peace with my in-laws and they're very good to me. I've no complaints. So I suppose I'm able to come in and do my job properly because I don't have any problems at home. I'm very lucky in that sense. And I have my mother and my mother-in-law both helping me to look after my little boy when I'm at work.

GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: I think they're all in balance, although maybe being a mother dominates slightly.

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles?

(How do you balance these various identities? Do they balance? What tends to dominate? Do you ever find that these roles/identities clash? What happens then? How do you resolve conflicts between roles?)

Professional values

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

RESP.: (First cluster -- three identical constructs) If you are going to be a good PR practitioner, then you have to be professional in client relationships, and you have to be a good team worker. It doesn't
work if you are not a good team worker. And if you are leading the team, you have to build your team and one way to do that is to encourage contributions from others.

GS: So that is a team focus with that particular group.

RESP.: Yes. (Other constructs in first cluster) I see these as a follow-through from the first three. Definitely. There will be a few of these which you will not score as high as some others, but they are important yes.

RESP.: (Second cluster) If you have more exposure, you will be able to look at things from different angles. Experience doesn't necessarily mean innovation. Exposure and innovation have a closer link. Experience counts but exposure counts more.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?

RESP.: Fresh approach, thinking outside the box would go higher with me now. Would come in fourth, along with can give immediate advice/respected for their professionalism.

Find solutions with logical approach would go up to with adapts solutions.

Strong PR background doesn’t need to be so high. I would put that lower (down the bottom).

GS: You mentioned changes which have affected the ranking. What has changed in the 10 months?

RESP.: We've had to retrench people. As a result of that, when we managed to get more business, we had to look for people to hire. We didn't hire the people we had let go because we decided that we needed people who were a bit more senior and able to work more independently. Not necessarily have a very strong background, but someone we can trust to run the business while we go out and look for it. What happened was, we found someone. She is excellent. She does not have a very strong PR background but we found that that was not very important because she picks it up very quickly. And I guess when my boss hired me, she didn't look at the PR background either. Just capability, because the tools we can pick up. And PR is a very logical thing. You have to be sound. You can't have somebody who is very flighty. You have to give very sound advice and in many ways it is very similar to being a lawyer. When you give advice to your clients on what you should and shouldn't do. Because here we are also giving advice as to how you improve your corporate image for example, and what steps you could possibly take. So it doesn't differ very much in the sense of giving advice, but it is the situation, the tools and the rules have changed, that's all.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

GS: Who would you identify yourself with professionally? Last year it wasn't a close link with anyone. Perhaps your views about what you see as capable and effective PR practice have changed?

RESP.: Yes, and now I've had two different bosses in the last year. I'm a lot happier now, and if I had to name a role model I would probably name him.

GS: And you'd try to identify more with him? RESP.: Yes.

GS: It relates back to what we started with, that as your years of experience change, your outlook on PR changes.

RESP.: I think in the last year at Grey, the experience that we've been put through in terms of having to win the business, and having to service the clients, someone said it's equal to almost three years of work somewhere else, so we've really had to put our hands into it. Also, because B became my boss
and I learnt a lot from him in the first two months that he took over, and I am continuing to learn a lot. Which just goes to show how little my previous boss taught me. I actually had to learn on my own.

**Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.**

**RESP.:** (First cluster) No. This is contradictory because I see myself very much as a team player. And I cannot see myself not being a team player.

**GS:** If we took you out of that and just looked at the qualities, what sort of practitioner would those qualities represent?

**RESP.:** (First cluster) Someone quite conservative, fresh ie. not been in the profession for very long. A newish practitioner. Probably came from a completely different background as everyone else in the team, and not being able to relate to people on the team, and therefore not as open. Probably does not have a very good sense of how professional people conduct themselves, or what professionalism means.

**RESP.:** (Third cluster) I always see someone who is fresh as being very enthusiastic. Ethics. That comes from my legal training. Because I first started out as a lawyer, when I went in to do my pupilage, we'd just had a lot of ethics drummed into us, and when we go in we're all told that we're officers of the court, and therefore we have to maintain a certain sense of decorum and there are ethics governing the profession and if you do not adhere to those ethics you can be struck off the board. So they put the fear of God into you. When you asked me whether a fresh practitioner has a strong sense of ethics, I'd say yes because in every profession there is the same thing eg doctors have to take their oath. Accountants come out with the same sort of ethics drummed into them. It is idealism to an extent, but I do not expect everybody to have top level of ethics in them when they start out. But they will have some ethical sense of practice.

**GS:** So what happens as they become more experienced?

**RESP.:** Ethics still play a big part in it, but it also depends on how you're moulded and what sort of consultancy you join, what sort of company. Because you adopt your company culture very easily. From what I've seen from my colleagues in the advertising world, they come from all sorts of agencies, and there's a lot of job-hopping going on in the advertising side of it, not so much the PR. And they bring along with them the culture that they picked up. That is still ethics the way they practice it. The main ethics still remain but the culture may be different.

**GS:** So it's not really related to experience. You're not suggesting that as they go through their professional experience they lose that sense of ethics?

**RESP.:** I don't think they would lose it. Some might. I think everyone has that sense of ethics. It's just a question of how much you want to practice that.

**RESP.:** (Cluster three) Close but not as accurate as all that. You can be experienced but you can still not be professional. You can still not encourage contributions. You may still be the dominant one. And you may not be a good team worker. So experience does not.

**GS:** Can you plot the progression that leads away from these perceptions (newer practitioner) to these (experienced practitioner)?

**RESP.:** Some things come with maturity. Some things come with the training they receive. So it depends on what kind of guidance they receive as well. If you're talking about a team, the team leader has to give you. If you want them to be independent, you have to teach them how to be independent and you have to shape them that way. But if you want them to be dependent, you'll be selfish and not teach them that much and then they'll never attain.
RESP.: (Fourth cluster) Expat doesn't figure very much. Exposure does, and expat doesn't necessarily mean exposure.

GS: (Draw cluster a bit wider) So all of those would be qualities that you'd associate with the capable practitioner and also the role model?

RESP.: Yes.
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Years of experience

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR (attachment 1). The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. I’ve named the groups A, B and C (attachment 1). It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

Openness to change

RESP.: I think the pattern which is reflected here, for me personally being in the 15 years category, I am very much open to change. Basically I think those who are within this middle range feel that they have not reached the maximum and therefore they are comfortable, in their comfortable zone. They think they know almost everything, and a change could threaten what they know and that’s an element which is very new to them. And I think when you grow and when you’re more matured towards the field, you are more comfortable with where you are, you can accept change, you can see the potential of things, and therefore your openness to change is greater. Especially when you are two years and under, you accept anything. Things are great; things are new; this is fantastic; actually try and do it and move on according to the norms or whatever. But once you reach the mid-range, the comfortable zone is there, and change is a threat to them. As usual, change is something which nobody really likes.

RESP.: I think culture plays a lot, not only the exposure, but the culture and your background is very important. If you’re from a family who are very sheltered and your culture has a lot of restrictions, or your family is the pious kind of family. Changes that would affect that openness might be a threat. I feel it’s how open and how liberal the way you’ve been brought up, and your culture, does play a role in your own change and your perception towards change.

GS: Does that boil down to ethnic background?

RESP.: Yes I think so. Basically because for example, I’m a Malay, a Muslim, but there are fanatic Muslims and there are very liberal Muslims, and there are in-betweens and I find through my experience and also through my friends’ relationships I notice that if you’re very religious and you have not been exposed to overseas things and all you don’t tend to be very broadminded and when you see things that you need to change you will see it in a different light, and not see in a broader spectrum. Yes your ethnic groups and your religion does play a role in oneself.

GS: That’s interesting because the data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. Is what you were just saying an explanation for that?

RESP.: Yes. I feel that the younger generations, they just came out from the cocoon of their family, and its probably their two or third years or working experience, and they’re still under the influence of the family and the culture and the ethnic. It’s an anchor. If you are very sheltered it helps or it will deter your looks in terms of whether it needs to be changed, your openness to change and all. It plays a role. I have got a Chinese staff, I have a Malay staff and I have a mixed-birth staff. And each of them looks at things different, and yet age bracket is like 25 years old to 38 years old. And each background, some are very low income, some are very middle income and some among the staff are very high end, income bracket. And the way you see things, how they see things, is really different. And exposure, because the one who is the high income has the opportunity to be exposed to a lot more things and they tend to be very liberal, and that gives them a different outlook and openness. For instance when we have brainstorming session, that group will see things differently. The other group will see things from a different angle, and when you want to change certain things they will see it
from the religion aspect, the ethnic aspect of things whereas the other looks into a different aspect, a creative aspect. So it does play a role.

GS: In the interactions, the ideas that come forward and the degree of confidence?

RESP.: Yes. Definitely.

Self-enhancement

GS: Is culture part of the explanation?

RESP.: When you just start working and your values are very fresh, are not being influenced by outside factors, I think it does motivate you in some sense because you want to see yourself grow. Somewhere within three, years, five years, 10 years, so you are motivated to go very far or to put in a very high gear towards that, and very motivated and your values, your desires are much stronger. Again, this mid-range is almost like a middle crisis age and it has to do with comfort zone that you're in and therefore being in that line for 5-10 years, you're pretty comfortable with a lot of things and when you grow much longer in the industry you feel “I need another push before I retire” and you're motivated further. For me for example, I have 12 more years that I want to really work, and I’m pushing all the way for the next 12 years. I had this comfort zone initially and I was pretty okay and I was comfortable with my level at that time. Now I see for the next 12 years I just want to be the best of whatever I can and that’s my motivation. You don’t want to be where you are when you’re within the 5-10 years because you want to end it with something that hopefully in the industry you become an institution. That’s one of the reasons.

Conservation

RESP.: I would think it would be the reverse, rather than this because as you grow much more in the industry it’s like positioning a product. You have reached a matured level and therefore I feel that when you are at this point, your traditional practices will reduce. I would have thought they would not be concerned so much as the younger practitioner whereas the older one would want to conserve and say that the values of that company should not be changed. You want to position the whole aspect of what you’re doing for that organisation to remain as it is, based on the traditional, the culture. The 15 years and above practitioners would want to sustain it rather than to preserve the traditional practices. I would think it would be the reverse. With the group in the middle, the middle one is building up the traditional and the values and using that as a base to change, whereas once you’ve been established you would then want to conserve it. Because once you’ve established your product, and when a product is known, why change? You’re quite contented with things.

GS: Over time, as a senior practitioner I guess you would have developed your own methods of working, you know what works and doesn’t and you would want to maintain the things that work.

RESP.: Exactly.

GS: Whereas here it’s still a learning phase.

RESP.: Correct. It’s like your product cycle, and you have known what is right and what is wrong, and you feel that this culture is the one that leads to the success of that organisation and therefore you want to maintain it and not to change it.

GS: So, it’s been a voyage of discovery for you to get to that point, and you’ve got some insights into the profession?

RESP.: Correct.

Self-transcendence
RESP.: I think I will agree with this graph. The younger practitioner likes to be accepted and to feel belonging within the industry, within the group and therefore the values of other practitioners and the values of successful practitioners in the industry becomes something that would enhance their values. With the mid-group, it goes the same as with openness, self-transcendence, and all. Whenever you’re new in the industry, you tend to try to follow people and then you establish yourself and therefore again the comfort zone is there and you think you have established those values and being within the group already. And therefore other values of other people are not that important. And once you are towards the end of your career, more than a decade in the industry, you feel you want to become another trendsetter and therefore it motivates, and the values of the industry and other practitioners are very important.

Work environment

There’s a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. Let’s deal with those two aspects separately. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

Openness to change

RESP.: Probably because a consultancy they can be very diversified. They have different clients with different needs. Therefore the work environment is very challenging and different for each client. That’s probably one of the reasons that they have a higher level for consultants. For corporate, especially if you’re in a small to medium-sized organisation and you have a PR unit you tend to work on only very narrow kinds of assignments. Therefore that kind of environment does not provide a healthy opportunity for you. Probably in terms of openness to change, you’re probably quite narrow. You’re not exposed to a lot of things and it does probably affect in terms of your change towards things. I am quite surprised. That’s quite a vast difference.

Self-enhancement

RESP.: I think that this vast difference for early practitioners is the opportunities to be getting the assignments, whereas over here (15+ years) you probably become specialised in your field. You probably just look into catering or hotel management consultancies. And that’s the reason why there’s a convergence. When you’re in the early stage of the practice of the industry, in the corporate you probably are looking into not diversified opportunities, and that also dominates in terms of the values of your success. For example, if you’re a consultant you probably might be given several assignments with different kinds of companies, looking into management problems but different industries. And that helps you to grow, compared to the corporate one. Whereas the corporates are probably a little bit narrow and are given a few less challenges, because you’re much greener in this field and therefore you will not be equal to looking to other kind of assignments.

Conservation:

RESP.: I think the corporate has increased again after 5-10 years in terms of preserving their traditional practices. They conserve much more than this. Consultants cannot have a standard norm when they want to consult people and they want to advise. They would have to be very open and see the trends of the industry, and therefore they should not be very conservative about how things should be run and how things should be looked into. Whereas the corporate would be much more conservative because they think it is the right way and it should be kept as it is, the traditional values of the organisation. That’s probably why the corporate is much higher towards the end.

At the younger end, probably not knowing the industry that much, consultants would want to follow the norms of the industry. I think the consultant’s job is very tricky here. Obviously
your job is not just to please the client, your job is to give solutions to your client and therefore the early practitioners, because they are very young in the industry, probably they might want to follow what the client wants, what the client needs and not do too much of the change, and therefore try to conserve the traditional practices and make it very stable for the company or the clients they’re working with. For the new practitioners in the corporate industry, it shows it is on an increase but not higher because they need to be part of the culture of the organisation, and therefore they really have to imitate. Whereas the job of the consultant normally is to try and resolve solutions for a problem and although they want to maintain and try to conserve the culture and so forth they need to put input of some change and try to ways of improving the client’s needs.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: I think again for both, the 2 years and under practitioners it is like Maslow’s hierarchy, you like to belong to a group, in any kind of job, whether it’s in communications or whatever. The tendency of you trying to be within the industry, within the industry’s norms and trying to belong in the industry is much higher, and probably it’s much more challenging for the consultant because they are meeting with different kinds of industry but working on the same subject, communication. Therefore I feel for the younger practitioners, the values of their colleagues, the values of their friends around them in their workplace, it’s very important to them. When you are at the 15 years and above, even earlier, just like conservation, it’s the same thing with self-enhancement. You’ve reached that level, you already know the values of yourself as well as the values of the industry and therefore those values are something which you think you would want to pass on to your younger practitioners. Because the consultants have already established which industry they would be an expert in, and for the corporate they have already gone through a lot of things, a lot of ups and downs and they are quite established and they know their weaknesses and strengths by more than a decade of training. Therefore their values seem to hopefully be passed on to the younger practitioners and again it would be something which you hope would set the standards in the industry, I think for both. Again this (mid-range) is something which is a crisis, age or years of experience, you’re neither here nor there, you’re trying to be somewhere and there’s a lot of uncertainties entering.

GS: You talked about age. To what extent are the changes we’re talking about here based on age or on years of experience?

RESP.: It’s quite rare to see you’re young yet you’re very mature. There are people like that but it’s quite rare. I think age does make a difference. Age, your exposure which means your experience, makes a lot of difference in terms of all these values.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: It’s your principles. I always believe in life there should be principles of how you should run your life, and even if a company has asked you to do something against your principles, there should be a level that there’s a limit for everything. So it does play a role. For example, if you’re one who looks into giving things to people easily, sponsorship might be something that might be quite easy for you to see in terms of whether you want it to be a community relations activities, events, and the values you see coming out of that are different. I personally feel that the principle of your life and how you run it, plays a lot in terms of your personal values. Of course there will be a time when there is a business decision that needs to be made and personally you think it is a great thing, but when you look into the figures you see it’s not feasible. And that’s where the business decision comes in. So I feel that your personal values from your family, from the surrounding, does play a role when you work.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

RESP.: I weigh it and see. Whenever we have a brainstorming session, personal values does come in to it a lot, and I like to listen to their personal values because sometimes different
ethnic groups have different ways of seeing things. And that’s important, especially in a country like us. Different races can be very sensitive to things and all. You need to know that and from their input and feedback I would be able to judge whether this is a sensitive issue, this is not a sensitive issue, and if it’s so, how are we going to look into that. So I do allow that. Obviously you cannot be too emotional, but at the same time you judge their personal values because they represent the people in some sense of the word. It gives me a sense of what the community feels when you want to do such an event or such an activity, especially a community related activity. So I think it’s very important.

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity (ie. your ethnic background) influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Does it provide advantages/disadvantages?

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why? What different strategies?

RESP.: I’m a Malay. I’m a very good example. I’m a Malay and I’m a Muslim. The management here, the founder is a Chinese and a Buddhist. So we’re from two different groups, ethnic and religion. But I don’t think it should affect so much. Yes there will be arguments, there will be debates about things, but it is not something that’s negative. It’s something which both would be able to see what’s right and what’s wrong and how it should be looked into and how we can work around it. So I don’t think that should be something that will make it difficult. It is something where you should adapt and it is a learning process actually for both. I’ve been with this company for seven years. Half of my working experience is in this company. And I see things differently from my founder, from the managing director, but I think being also in a country where Muslim is one of the majority community, it helps him to see what is right and what is wrong to do in an event. I think it’s a way where you’ll be able to tolerate. It shouldn’t be something that can deter or stop or make it difficult in your job. It’s how you want to adapt. How you want to move around to solve the problem. It gives you another perspective because else you see only one side of the coin, now you can see the other side of the coin and work around it.

Gender

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: The majority of the PR practitioners here in Malaysia are female. Again I think gender should not be a problem. Of course they say if you are a lady boss it’s harder to work with and so forth. But I feel it’s adaptability and trying to understand one another. It’s characters of each other, it’s not your sex that makes it difficult to work or really accept. When I just joined this company, first of all there were few Malays in this company, so it takes them about probably a year and a half to actually accept me and trust me, being in the Chinese company. And you have to gain their trust and give them that confidence. I think whether you’re a male or a female it doesn’t matter because you have to prove yourself. Slightly difficult in the sense that because the industry here is a lot of female so that acceptance is quite easy, but the acceptance of trust and confidence of how you can do the job for the first 18 months needs to prove certain things. Especially in the Chinaman company.

Gender and ethnicity
What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

GS: If you were a Chinese practitioner, male or female, would it be any different? A quicker process?

RESP.: A little bit probably. But not that much. Because you still have to prove a lot of things, and trust is not something that skin makes a difference. You have to prove in terms of your honesty, your loyalty. That’s how it is and with a Chinese or Chinaman company, that’s how it is.

GS: What about if you add age into it? Being a senior practitioner vs being a junior practitioner, and you look at that in combination with ethnicity and gender. Does age become something that is more influential in determining access and acceptability?

RESP.: I think that boils down to how confident the top management looks at the person. If the person may be very young, very junior, but makes sense everyday he or she says certain things, again that boils down to experience, and that boils down to maturity, then acceptance should be very fast. But if your age and your experience really shows the green part of yourself then acceptance will be very slow.

GS: So can you rank age, gender and ethnicity in terms of what is more influential?

RESP.: I should think that ethnicity would be the first, then gender then age. It does help.

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

Openness to change

RESP.: I think in the Malaysian context, probably basically the role of female has not been a very strong player outside the home. For a female in the industry, they might think their voice will not be heard that much and therefore it’s not something they want to explore in the industry. It could be that they have not been given the opportunity in the management to voice out openly and therefore their openness to change is, they change but not too much, looking into a lot of controversial issues or whatever. Whereas male probably they are expected, especially when you’re a young practitioner, you want to show a lot that you have great ideas. Being very dominant sex in this country I think they would like to portray that in their working environment also, and when they are towards the end of their career, again they want to voice it out and make it the finale in their career.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?

RESP.: I don’t see it that way. I would see it the other way. Chinese character has always been something which is a survivor and having that character they are one that can adapt very fast everywhere in this world I think, not just in Malaysia. And they want to move and progress very fast. I am quite surprised at the pattern here. I think probably Malays again are probably conservative in a lot of ways and therefore they move but not as open as the Chinese. I thought the Indians would be the reverse. Basically the Indians in Malaysia are more of a follower than a leader. They will see whether it is progressing and therefore they progress along with this group. Again in terms of gender, the female gender role in Malaysia has not been one that has been seen as the front in industry and so. It is growing but not like everywhere internationally, but we are playing our role slowly.
Let’s look at self-transcendence and years of experience (show attachment 1). This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why might this be?

RESP.: This one is more acceptable. The Indians are very conscious and very community-related and the values of the community are very important. They actually weigh what the Indian community have to say and it sort of runs their life – how they should be seen in the community, how the other people in the community sees them, so that’s important to them, so this is a true reflection. The Malays is one also where again we are trying to move ourselves and trying to progress in a lot of ways. It has been stated in history, in a lot of books, although this is a Muslim country but the Chinese progress more than the Malays. I think with current policies and current practices, the Malays are given opportunities to be educated overseas and the percentage is greater and therefore those values also play a role in their self-transcendence. Yes, the community plays a role but not as much as the Indian community. I think it’s more towards religion than what other people think of you. I’ve never seen so many Muslims pray 15 years ago. Fifteen, 20 years ago I was quite young. The mosques were not as packed as they are now. Right now they even pray on the streets during praying hours so I think religion plays a heavy role these days for the Malays.

GS: Why do you think it has increased?

RESP.: I am a very liberal woman. There are more opportunities where talks on religion are given, there are schools that teach you about the religion, so people are educated from when they are young. I think the roads are open bigger on telling people about the religion, the roots of where you come from, and what is right and what is wrong, and that helps in terms of your morals and things. In every property development you will have to have a mosque for example. So that has been a growing thing -- educating people. “Being a Muslim doesn’t mean you have to be backwards, because God doesn’t want you to be backwards. Don’t be fanatics – you don’t have to be fanatics to be a good Muslim.” You have to know the right and wrong and I think a lot of people need that these days. There are so many things. You are too open to everything -- internet everywhere, even when you’re four years old you know how to use internet and you have access to a lot of things and you need something to give you solid foundation and the right, and the dos and the don’ts, and what is the right thing. Gives you back to your self and to your roots. I think that’s important and that’s why Malays are looking to progressively, the opportunities are greater.

RESP.: A good example is JE (encephalitis). Chinese are very very bonded. If you have a problem, you just announce it once and you can get millions of dollars in just a few days to help that group of Chinese community. I think their values are quite consistent in that sense. I think in the business world of Chinese there’s not much of. We always feel the Chinese always help the Chinese whereas sometimes the Malays would like to stab the other Malays to be successful. They are not competing with one another. They are actually looking at each other’s values and learning from one another. And that’s important politically, and in a fragmented country like us, it’s very important. And that’s why I think politically they are looking to all these rules.

Individual value types

Power

Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience (attachment 7), power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges (attachment 8). There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?

And according to gender. Why?
RESP.: Let’s talk about the working environment. In corporate it is higher than in consultancy because the younger practitioners in the corporate industry, we are the so-called clients to the consultant. Therefore power is everything that would be able to give you or show the consultant authority, of giving instructions “Hey listen to me. I’m the one who directs you to do this”. And for the 2 years and under practitioner I think it’s because they need that recognition especially. And therefore it’s very important to them that they are recognised that they are sitting on the other side of the table and giving you the instruction to look into this problem and that power may be social status or have a control on people. That goes the same when you are very senior. Whereas a consultant, of course it’s important to them, but they shouldn’t be overpowering to the corporate clients and I think their role becomes advisory to the corporate clients, and they would like to be very powerful in a sense but if it’s within just the consultancy itself, then it does probably reflect like this in terms of power, it is very important. But if you compare that with the clients or corporate, I don’t think you can be very overpowering.

RESP.: The male is more power-crazy than the female. I’ve always thought that. They like to have the last word in everything. Probably it’s already in their characters. It’s already embedded in them, drilled in them since they were young that you are the breadwinner. You are the male of the family and therefore when you are in an organisation you like to have control and status. It is everything for the males. This is a true reflection. Especially when you’re young. When you’re so new you always want to put a stand somewhere to say that you’re already here in power and let your family, your friends, your group and colleagues in the industry recognise that you have that power. Mid-range is the time when they think they’ve got enough power. They’ve already established. I always feel this is a period where they’re always at a comfort zone. Between the 5-10 years you’re quite comfortable. You think you know everything but you don’t know everything yet. You want to know everything and you’re quite comfortable and you’re in an established zone. Towards the end of your career you want to make it as if you’re an institution in that company, or in the industry.

Achievement

Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: I think it’s because of the organisational structure and beyond in some sense of the word. If you are in a middle sized to large organisation, the chances of you being a partner in a corporate world are not as great as if you’re a consultant. Because if you’re a real good consultant and that achievement is very important, you would be recognised and probably roped in to be a partner of that company because you’re an asset. But if you’re in a company, it’s quite rare that you’d be roped in as partners in the organisation. What I’m saying is that in the corporate industry or the corporate working environment -- I’m not saying they are less ambitious -- it is just that their values of success are probably seen differently than the consultant. Consultant success or achievement plays a role in the sense that you can play a very very important role if you play your cards well and you achieve very fast. That boils down to your performance. In terms of the corporate, there’s a lot of hierarchy, bureaucracy, the organisation’s structure itself probably makes it difficult for people. People say “I know where I want to be, but it takes me quite some time to be there, therefore I will be achieving a few things and will try to move very fast”, but the motivation factor for a consultant is much more than for a big company. Especially if it’s a family-run business, it’s quite rare that you’d be a partner. If you’re a publicly-listed company again it’s quite rare. Your achievement, there’s almost a limit. Your seniority is based on your perks, your options, your securities and that’s about it probably. So the way things are structured probably is a factor that pushes it.

Most of the people in the PR industry that I know, a lot are not properly trained. You happen to be there and then once you’re in there you happen to like the job, and therefore you develop.

Hedonism
Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you’re in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: I should have thought this should come out about the same for corporates and consultants (at 2 year level) because it is a new experience. I think when you start working you should enjoy your work or else why work? You drag your feet every day to work. So work and pleasure is something that you would want. It would be a very close relationship, particularly at the start. And no matter whether you’re a consultant or corporate, it should go the same direction, rather than opposite. At the middle level, the capital C comfort zone is there. You do it basically because it’s part of the job. You’re there already; you do it; you’ve probably proven yourself already and then again you move up to senior levels you get different perks, so your pleasure is important for you. From a lower, middle and the higher top management level you see things differently, but it shouldn’t be different for consultants. I am quite surprised.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

Security

Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

Self-concept and years of experience

In looking at your self-concept, how would you describe your professional identity at this point?

RESP.: I’m very honoured, because the industry feels that I have been playing a fair bot if role in the industry, and contributing to the practice. I’ve been asked to give a lot of talks and seminars, and give topics of communications. As a senior practitioner in this industry it’s something which I like to pass on to the junior practitioner because a lot of the things that you do in PR are basically common sense, and you have to be a very very sensitive person because PR has to do with human relations. Of course your image can always be built through seeing how people see you and being very empathetical. As a senior practitioner it’s very important to lay the foundation correct because once you lay it correctly and if you get the right people to follow through then it’s something that I think you’ve contributed to the industry.

What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?

RESP.: Five years ago I would be more concerned about positioning a company in the right light where it’s always positive. Whereas right now after five years it’s a different ballgame, not that I’m saying you don’t have to worry about positioning, and the image of the company and so forth. In terms of my role it’s more philosophical, and that philosophy should be distributed among all the subsidiaries we have so that it becomes the culture in the communications policy for the group. So that’s very different because previously it’s a lot of execution of things, more of implementation, and now it’s more on concepts of philosophy, of the culture and so forth. And to me that’s more important because at the end of the day, once you’ve built a culture it becomes the seeds for everything. That’s important. You probably plant the wrong seed, you get the wrong fruits and the wrong results. So the basic things need to be cemented properly now.

Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?

Discussion of various identities and how you move between them

. your family identity?
. your organisational identity?
. your ethnic/cultural identity?
GS: Do you feel that one self dominates?

RESP.: Right now it’s a balance between my family and the work. After more than 15 years of working it’s that balance. I’m balancing building my career and still my family.

GS: Is there any conflict in moving between those various roles?

RESP.: Basically I see it’s time management. I’m not married. When I say my family, I have my mother with me and I’m a guardian to three of my niece and nephews. So in view of that I try to balance my time with them because you have to value yourself. You work so hard for so many years and towards a peak time of your career you want to value that with your family because you’ve already earned your rewards in a lot of ways and you would like to use that, what you have always wanted to with your family. That’s what my challenge is now. Previously work was dominating very much.

Professional values

Let’s go to the data on professional values. The ratings you gave enabled me to analyse relationships between the constructs and the elements, and this is the result (focus diagram and summary sheet). Looking at the constructs first, the construct trees indicate matches/links between the constructs and from the ratings data I was able to group them in order of those that appeared to be most important to you.

Do the groupings make sense to you? Do you think that this is an accurate representation of how you view PR effectiveness?

Group one: Ethical approach and focus on internal and external publics. Yes they do tie in. I see them as quite close to one another because when you want to do events, and when you want to organise events in terms of PR exercise you would want to consider again for which purpose, for which group, and if you know if internal or external. You need to understand the ethnic group of who you’re targeting for and that approach depends on your target market, and that’s important.

Yes I feel it is very related for PR practitioners. Set parameters, organise … -- these are attributes that are very important for PR practitioners because it becomes a basic guideline for Pr practitioners to see how an event can be a positive factor, rather than a negative factor. When you want to do any PR exercise, or when you want to do anything that’s related to PR, you need to be able to weigh these things, and weigh it in terms of optimising the funds and in terms of creating impact, organising systematic. It plays an important role for the success and positive impact of that exercise that you plan to do. To me, these are the guidelines, the rule of thumb, what you should do, like a checklist for PR practitioners.

GS: Are these role model qualities?

RESP.: It would be a very important factor during your hiring of your PR practitioner to look at whether they are result-oriented, how do they see things, whether their values are important, their standards of things. I think in terms of their exposure, their knowledge of things, their understanding of things on PR. It’s very important. Basically I think also to say attitude is a very important factor. PR has to do with a lot of human relations. You can call it human, customer relations – it touches base with human beings and therefore your attitude of being very sensitive to things is one criteria which is very important. You have to have an open attitude, not very narrow-minded, you have to be a bit liberal to see things, you cannot be too fanatic in doing things. That attitude and those characters are very important in PR.

Let’s look at the construct ratings. This lists professional values in a priority order which is supposed to reflect their importance to you. How do you view the values listed? Are they important to you?
RESP.: Very people-oriented is correctly placed. I would think the last one would be the second one (focus on media relations/sets standards for subordinates). Then role model, Then organised/systematic/achieves results based on credibility/uses PR know-how. Then optimising use of funds.

Let’s look at the elements. This is interesting because it gives a picture of how you see yourself as a practitioner in relation to other practitioners. Does this picture seem accurate to you? Why/why not?

Yes.

Let’s look at another part of the analysis (princom). This plots how you view PR effectiveness, characteristics of practitioners, and how you saw yourself and other practitioners. It’s the same material as you’ve just seen, but presented differently. There are a number of groupings. Let’s go through them and discuss what each one means.

Cluster 1 with self/role model/capable/experienced: I think it would be under the role model practitioner.

Cluster 2 with new practitioner: In think a good practitioner doesn’t abuse things in terms of the things that are given to you and empowered to you. Abusive of funds, abusive of authority and abusive of ways and approach of doing things starts something that is right. Although you probably reach the same goal, but it’s not the right way of doing. And I think that’s what I’m trying to say. You can still probably make people talk about your company but it has been done wrongly and on the way you have hurt a lot of people or a lot of groups, which might become at the end of the day, in the long term a negative impact. Initially it could be a positive impact. That’s the kind of thing that I think is not right. It can be trained. It’s something which an organisation should not encourage because you are given a fair bit of empowerment of how to run the thing and if the management encourages it then it will become a culture in that company. But if it is discouraged and you are reprimanded for doing that process then therefore this is something you can be trained to do the right way. Obviously some things there are values attached to that and that’s something that is very difficult, but the old values can always change in the long run. Values although it’s difficult can be changed. You might see your values of things to you is something that’s positive because your background has been trained to say “It’s quite alright to do such a thing for example” but I think when you are going to do something and it’s going to affect quite a fair bit of groups or the community then you should not encourage it and therefore those values can be taught and can be learned and can be trained that should not be repeated.

What helps a new practitioner move to the other side and being seen this way? Is it purely the passage of time?

RESP.: Other than your values and your ethics, I think in any case the orientation period for the new practitioner is very important. I learn a lot about Chinese culture when I’m in this company and you will respect more of that culture. When you are not in that culture you don’t see it in that light. So the orientation, the program that is very important for new practitioners when they are brought in because the basic foundation is going to be your launching pad to how you see things and how it should be run.

Is there anything else you wish to add?

RESP.: It’s very eye-opening for me.
**RESPONDENT 26 TRANSCRIPT**

*Years of experience*

It seems that values held are highly correlated with years of experience in PR. The pattern is always the same – high for practitioners with 2yrs or less experience and those with 15+ yrs; and lower for practitioners with 5 – 10 yrs experience. It suggests that your outlook on the job and/or on life changes as you get more years of experience in PR. Why might that be?

*Openness to change*

RESP.: First, is it really because of work experience or because of age?

GS: Not totally related to age.

RESP.: When you first come in you have to prove yourself, you have to get confirmed on the job, and you need one year, two years to get confirmed, especially in the government sector. Perhaps you'd be very much motivated at that point.

Then, as it goes down the line, you think you know everything. Until you get further training. That brings up the motivation again after that for a bit. It would be interesting to see if it goes down again or not. Maybe a pattern, another one that's down, at the end before retirement.

*Self-enhancement*

RESP.: Again I would see that at this point (junior) we are fresh and we have ideas of what we think we want to bring in to the department and at this time we are already very much into the organisational values and adapting to it, not really wanting change.

(mid) This is the time when you go for training, when there are changes in your life and you decide that you can't remain in a rut. You have to improve. You're perhaps looking for another promotional jump at this point also. Normally it occurs around five years.

(senior) At this point, if you're expecting a promotional jump, you have to do something. It's your values also that you would put in there, asserting yourself. We begin to assert ourselves, wanting to achieve certain things, irrespective of fitting in with the culture of the organisation, maybe trying to bring change to the organisation at this point, and taking perhaps more leadership roles at this point. I would see that also with the job.

(mid) There was that time when I fell into a rut. I wanted to do something so I started applying to do my PhD etc. It was at this point. Getting bored. Wanting to achieve something more. And wanting to do something more. Wanting to make a bigger mark on the job, in the organisation. That pushes you back up.

There might be a recognition at this early stage that you are submissive, that you don't know as much as everyone else, but it's something that motivates you strongly, that you want to achieve success. Because of the very position that you have.

RESP.: Your own relative success. I don't think dominance over others. Dominance in what respect? I don't think it's dominating over the bosses really. But coming up with their own ideas perhaps, and thinking they are better in what they are doing, if that is the way you read dominance. More success within your own specific area perhaps.

*Conservation*

RESP.: I find this contradictory on self-restrictive. Protection of stability - yes. When you first come in you want to be part of stability, you don't want to rock the boat too much. When I first started on the job I was far more full with new ideas, but how much did I want to change those ideas? How much I'd follow the text book style of doing things?
And in the middle area, did I want to change that? Even now, I am not into wanting to protect the stability. Maybe. Maybe I'm talking about my own self-preservation. This is maybe correct. The first few years you want to preserve, you don't want to go too much against management. You want to bring in changes but you don't want to go against too much of the management. Perhaps you become more confrontational, but I joined management at that point and was back again with the traditional. I was working with the system.

I think it shouldn't be that much of a dip. When I look at my students and where they are working, many of them are wanting to bring in their own ideas of how something should work, but they wouldn't question management too much at this point. Then it would work, and they would be questioning management a little bit more at this time. But 5-10 years is the time when you're getting a promotional jump - you still wouldn't be rocking it too much. And then a rise again because it's a senior management position. So in fact it's you setting up that stability, and following whatever comes from the big boss. Working within the system.

**Self-transcendence**

RESP.: You didn't see more submissiveness in the first two years?

GS: No.

RESP.: Concern for their welfare in a way because at the younger age, you do not have that much courage and say to do much, so you will show more concern. And you wouldn't need to protect your position. This person is a mentee and they'd know that there are mentors who do not necessarily have that status of being equal but are perhaps more knowledgeable. It depends on how we describe equal perhaps.

(mid) Here we are trying to make our own mark. Get up and others as equal as us, perhaps we begin to get a bit more confident of our own work, think we know it all, we've got 5-6 years of experience, and it's time to protect myself to get better. So not true concern perhaps. I'm too busy directing my attention to myself. To improve myself at this point. This is where I feel most threatened. There are many of us aiming for that promotion.

(senior) Here I don't feel so threatened. You have got that promotion. You've got those projects to do. You've achieved something. Less threats and perhaps that's why at this point you're more concerned for your welfare rather than being worried about others. We're too busy putting attention on ourselves.

**Work environment**

There's a high correlation between years of experience and workplace. This means that your outlook on the job/life may be different depending on i) whether you are a corporate person or a consultant, and ii) how much experience you’ve had in PR. In what way might your perspective as a consultant be different to that of a corporate person? Why does the amount of experience combine with your work environment to influence your outlook?

**Openness to change**

RESP.: In the consultancy, when you talk to people how many of them remain in the same agency throughout?

GS: Some have been corporates first, others have gone in and stayed. Small sample.

RESP.: Maybe it's because each time they have a different client, new projects all the time, so they're always motivated. There's always something new to do. And it is far more competitive than the corporate sector, so you have to remain motivated to do something good and to compete. Competition is what is driving that.

The Malaysian corporate sector, unlike the Western corporate sector where you can get kicked out very fast, here you don't have that much of a threat. Now you see it a little bit more but for a long while it was not really there. You're entrenched in the culture. You sit there. You feel very safe. As long as you
do your job, you're not going to be thrown out. It's just that you have to work hard to move up the ladder. But you're not feeling threatened that you will be thrown out if you don't perform so well. But in the first few years yes, until you're confirmed. You're sort of in a probationary period and there's more chance of you being kicked out if you don't perform. Past that stage, you're in it. The likelihood of them throwing you out is quite minimal.

That's why I'm wondering whether it's all work or whether it's also personal. That's a human being. We're willing to do something for a while, then there's a stage. It would be interesting to see how this matches the human psyche. We get bored, the middle age trauma in the job. The job is there, and you're doing it for five years and then you decide either you're going to move jobs or do something to improve yourself within your job and move up again.

**Self-enhancement**

RESP.: Perhaps in the consultancy you're given more responsibility. So with that comes the desire for personal success and wanting to set up your own niche. And also here again it comes back to competitiveness. There's a greater risk of you losing your job in a consultancy, than in the corporate sector. That makes you more keen to succeed compared to the corporate sector.

The corporate sector, even though you have to be confirmed and all, there's less pressure of you being thrown out of your job. Perhaps also as an individual in the corporate sector there's a system of doing things and you just do it. In a consultancy it's more ideas. It's very creative-based, whereas here (corporate) it's more let's follow the system. How we can improve the system but still we're working within the system. Whereas it's how much creativity can I bring into my job?

Then it drops because already they've changed a little bit. They're more confident. I don't try so hard any more. Even the consultant - they've achieved something, they've done a few things. They're not sure at this point whether they should remain at the agency, this agency, move. Perhaps it's also they feel they've learnt something already and they can just use it. They're not trying to do better. Whatever they've achieved, it's still high. It's just that they've not made any effort to make it better.

But there comes a time again when you want to move up. Personally - it goes back to your self-esteem - as well as for the job. At this point you have more responsibilities. At this time you're in your early 20s; by this time (senior) you're already about 35, a family. You want more money and you have to work hard. I think all that motivates you - the responsibility and also personally. You want to make a mark. Achieve something. It's also the work. It's again competition at the workplace. You have to do better than your other friends. Otherwise the new ones coming in will take over your place. It's not only you personally but also your work. If you want that extra money and that bigger position at work you have to work harder. And there's also you wanting to succeed more. More than your friends. So you get that position that you wanted. At this point it doesn't matter where you are, whether you're in consultancy or corporate sector. You still want that senior management position and you want to work for it.

**Conservation**

RESP.: The consultants are no longer interested in protecting their stability here (senior). It's just like you have a job and that's it. Why is there a difference. Maybe from your sample, but in a lot of agencies if you're there long enough, you try to get a partnership in them. Whereas in the corporate sector it's still the CEO's there, so you want to protect stability of the organisation there. At this point if you're already in the organisation or the agency, you've already established certain standards, what is right, what is not right, what we should do, what we should not do, what are the correct practices to make our agency last? I suppose we just follow it through. Consultancies are very small organisations. They have a fair idea already.

Whereas in the corporate sector, why it goes up. Maybe I should also ask which organisations we are talking about because some of the organisations are undergoing changes, corporatising, certain policy changes. Maybe in this period of time, there's a need to emphasise the stable structure of the organisation. Could that be a factor?
GS: I don't know. It could well be reflected among the people I spoke to because they were responding in terms of what was important to them at the time. And those things could have been important to them in their personal or professional life. I've got no way of knowing that. But it is quite central to this because one of the things I've been talking to them about is the extent to which their personal values are also their professional values. So for those whose personal values integrate well with the professional values, then we might see a greater degree of concern about what's happened with the organisation as being important to them. So I may be getting some of that in with the data.

RESP.: The last five years there's been a lot of change in the business environment here. (Does that explain the graph?) Maybe. Working hard to ensure that the organisation exists. The last five years there has been more privatisation, more organisations being listed on the stock market, more rules and regulations also, more enforcement. There have been some changes in the business environment. Also economic changes. The need for stability was greater within the corporate sector. The consultancies anyway they are already stabilised at this point - they are doing their jobs. As far as they're concerned for their agencies they are dealing more with clients, not themselves. The agencies are protected. It's more the corporate sector, the large organisations.

Or it also could be moving towards senior management, and falling in line with what the boss says. That could be the other reason.

GS: Why is it higher for young consultants?

RESP.: Could it be because there is a smaller staff in a consultancy? So you want to maintain it, maintain the core values. The need is not as great for wanting to maintain the traditional stable values in a corporation.

Self-transcendence

RESP.: In consultancies this is probably true because there is less of a hierarchical set-up compared to the corporate sector. It goes down at the same interval.

In the middle, the same thing, more interested in preserving themselves. They're threatening their position.

In a consultancy it's a smaller group. There's more respect for each other. In the corporate sector, there's still the big boss and the underling kind of thing. The seniority complex is still there. In the consultancy the only person they consider as very senior is the MD. Most of them work together. The team work is stronger in a consultancy, so you tend to see each other as peers in all the discussions that are going on, everyone bringing in ideas, and they see them all equally. There's an equal contribution of ideas. Whereas in the corporate sector there is still that hierarchical status and the assistant won't try to influence senior officers too much because they're higher up. They still accept others as equals, but maybe at a lower scale. This is more teamwork.

At senior level, they are all already bosses, everyone is the same. This is when you see more the difference between the senior staff and the junior staff. Here it makes no difference which organisation you are in, you're already at a senior level. Your position is more protected. It's time for you to look for your subordinates and you have to show concern for your subordinates to get their respect. You have looked after your own welfare - it's time now to look after others.

The data suggest that practitioners with lesser experience identify more with their ethnic group than more experienced practitioners. How do you react to that? What might be an explanation? To what extent would a finding like this have relevance in the workplace?

RESP.: Two things: One, they've just come out of school and in school there's a lot of emphasis on this race and that race, these opportunities, their opportunities. Perhaps that influences the way you come in and you haven't changed in. You're still thinking that you'll just bring the values with you to the organisation. And then once you have worked in the organisation, you begin to look at others as colleagues rather than by their race, and also you've matured. Here (young) you've got a lot more family influence, and a different kind of peer group influence that stressed the race.
This now is your work group. The work group is who is doing the work. There's competition for the job. The rules and regulations of the country do not allow for too much discrimination. Only for certain positions, but generally you all have to work together. So you're competing on merit and no longer on race, and you're on the job. That's why you lose it as you move on in years. That is one thing.

The second thing is also perhaps you're trying to protect your position. And you're thinking a lot of things re moving along that line. You think (young) whether you get a raise, whether you get into a certain position, is going to be based on race. Once at a senior level, merit's going to count a lot more.

GS: You said that your race is influential in you getting the job. Is that what you meant?

RESP.: Yes. Even which job, which project you get to work on. Could be, but sometimes they don't go by your merit again. But at this stage (young) you are more concerned about it. You are not so confident. I am talking more for the other races rather than the Malay race. The Malay race would be more confident of getting certain things. But depending on which organisation they work in because if you work in a Chinese organisation, then the Chinese are more confident. I think they are more concerned about it, about race, when they first start on the job because that is also in their cultural way, the way the whole system has been set up. They may not have brought it in, but also what they see as an opportunity because of their race. Now that is lost when they begin to do the work and you see it doesn't really play a role once they're already on the job. Then they lose it. They don't see it like that.

Is your workplace one where you can bring your personal values onto the job? Why/why not? In what way?

RESP.: If our personal values are good and highly moralistic of course you can bring them in, it doesn't matter. Honestly, it's very important. I work in a very Muslim environment, a very Malay organisation and I am a non-Muslim. The kind of values I bring in, I'm already quite conservative I think. Not necessarily in my thinking but in my values in life. I fit in with the culture. I don't have a problem fitting in. Because whatever the Muslim practices, even if it's belief along a different path, being honest. Concern for others is important because I don't go around thinking I am better than others. Whatever I do, others must benefit - the collectivism thought, I'm more into that than the individualistic. That's why I fit in. Can I bring in all these values? Of course. They fit in perfectly with that. I don't just try to achieve for myself. Whatever I do it's so that the whole faculty can develop. It's not just for personal ambition. That is there as well but it's also ambition for the whole faculty. I personally feel there is a match.

GS: What would happen if there wasn't?

RESP.: I think they would isolate you. Not give you opportunities. Find fault with you. And those things happen. You do have those few who are more concerned about themselves. More individualistic rather than collectivistic kind of culture. Then you have to start looking for things outside. Which I also do to a certain extent. There are things that I'm not given the opportunity to do internally. It's nothing to do with personal values. The personal values are there. I feel that I'm not given enough opportunity with certain things. So I don't aim to do it within the organisation because I know that it is denied to me. So I do it within society, within the profession.

To what extent do you encourage your employees to bring their personal values into the workplace?

Ethnicity

The analysis shows that work environment is affected by ethnicity, and there is a correlation between workplace and ethnic identification. Why might ethnicity be a factor in different workplaces? In what way might ethnicity influence your values, your PR role and how you do your job? Advantages/disadvantages?

RESP.: I don't know whether it's the ethnicity or the cultural values of the different ethnic groups. I think it's more respect. We're aiming for respect for whatever audiences. Whatever we are doing we have to do something that we know will not offend the other group. They are very concerned about it
here because we are a multi-ethnic country. We have to be assured that whatever we are doing will not affect the other person. It's always uppermost in our minds.

What we will wear even, it comes to that point. I can't wear sleeveless blouses to work, and I wouldn't wear it to a place where I may meet people from work. Because I feel that it may offend them, or they may look at me in a different light - maybe I won't fit in with them. I don't know. We have to be aware of that because it affects them. Eating. You wouldn't eat certain things with certain groups of people. I would not eat pork at the same table, I wouldn't order it when I had Muslims at the table with me. I would not order beef if I knew there were Hindus who did not eat beef. What you wear. What you eat. How you speak even. Whether you are aggressive. I suppose aggressiveness doesn't go with ethnicity, it goes with age. How you speak when you speak to the older person, you have to show a bit more respect. And when you speak to people who are your age or a little bit younger you can be a bit more brash and aggressive if you want to be. Nothing to do with ethnicity, that's with age actually.

But ethnic group yes. I think in PR practice that's very important.

Is management in your organisation the same ethnicity as you? How do you deal with this? Do you see any differences experienced by colleagues from a different ethnic background? Would ethnicity of management lead you to follow different strategies in different workplaces? Why?

What different strategies?

RESP.: I don't know if it's because of the ethnicity or because of the way they work. When you do things with the Chinese, say Chinese clients that you have done projects with, you will be more aggressive. They are more into competition, and producing things. They can also be more open to ideas and being questioned for what they do. So you would also behave that way. You're willing to come up with more ideas and in fact question their ideas.

But if you work more in a Malay organisation, it's also how they think you will fit in. you know you cannot really question them too much. They don't like it. Is it because they don't like it from anybody or because they don't like it because you are non-Malay? Or maybe because you're a woman. That occurs. We have to be careful what we can say and what we cannot say sometimes, and how we say it. We'll say it, but it's just how you say it, how you approach the whole matter. Straight to the point, or try to dress it up a little bit.

It's just how you achieve the final goal. You have to be sensitive to the culture of the person you're dealing with. I think that is important. Definitely. And whether it's the organisation-based or ethnic-based, and sometimes I'm not even sure if it's because you're a woman. Because sometimes that comes into play.

Gender

The data showed that gender was also important. In what way might gender influence your values, your PR role and how you do the job? How do you think your gender impacts on the job? How important is the issue of gender in the workplace?

RESP.: It is definitely in this country. Because a lot of men are more willing to accept ideas from other men, senior men, than from women. I think age comes into play, and ethnic group comes into play, and your gender. Even age, they're more willing to accept ideas from older people than younger people. That happens, especially with senior management.

GS: Which of those - age, gender and ethnicity - would be more important?

RESP.: An older Chinese female would find it easier to communicate with a senior manager (than a young Malay male). Age I think. I think in a lot of cases the age would come up above ethnic group and gender. Age, ethnic, gender, in that order.

Gender and ethnicity
What about the combination of gender and ethnicity together. Why might the combination of your ethnicity and your gender impact your values? Does your gender and your ethnicity affect how you do the job? In what way?

This graph shows that gender is important in terms of openness to change. Female practitioners across all years of experience groups were much the same in terms of openness to change, but the male practitioners were different. Does this match with your perceptions? Why might gender be a factor in openness to change?

RESP.: Women don't care, but we know and I suppose we accept. We are motivated to change but we accept that some may listen to us and some may not. The reason why age doesn't come into it because we must look at the contrast of age. We have to look at the 20 yr olds and the 40 yr olds, and then you will see the difference. If you're a 20 yr old and you have the most fantastic of ideas, the senior management will not even listen to you. But if you're 40 yrs old and you have the same ideas, they will listen to you. But at 30 yrs old, you're in the middle and it's touch and go. Age only comes into play if it's at 40 and above or 30 and below. More especially at 25 and below, then you see the contrast.

GS: So grey hair helps?

RESP.: They think you've had so many years of experience. The age is related to the years of experience. That's when it shows the difference. They start to respect you more if they think you have been in that line for a longer time. I think your consultants would probably have told you that. This is a common problem. And a lot of clients in the corporate sector they have been complaining. They come into the project and the senior manager develops everything and they're so happy and impressed, but then they get this young person to work with them and they're not so happy about it. The young ones find the clients are more interested in speaking to their bosses. Even though the job is their's to do. They are not so willing to listen to the young ones. That's important.

At the end of the day, it's not how much technology you use, it's how much knowledge you have of the total business. And it's the more senior ones who have the bigger picture. And management wants the total picture. When it comes to what you're doing, piece-meal technical jobs, yes I think they would be willing to listen to the younger ones who have all this technological expertise and ability to do things using them. But when it comes to the overall planning and understanding of where the industry is and where this company lies within the industry and within the nation, then I think it's going to be more the senior people who have a better idea, are better read, more exposed to all that. And they'll be listened to. I think it depends on what kind of job it's going to be. Which kind of job. If it's advice and a lot of planning, for example, probably the senior people are going to be more listened to. The technican vs the managerial role.

I think this is a bit different from the US system where the senior managers are quite willing to listen to, not the very junior staff, but even the quite junior staff, they're willing to listen.

GS: Why is it different for male practitioners?

RESP.: It goes back to perhaps their position, proving themselves, not needing to prove themselves, managerial position and proving yourself again. I suppose because women are always having to prove themselves to be above the men. We cannot afford to relax so much. In fact, it increases at 5-10 years, moving towards that promotion, having to prove ourselves far more so that we achieve that promotion. So we are always consistent trying to achieve and we have to keep otherwise we lose our respect and all. Maybe the pressures on women are there all the time.

GS: So men don't feel the same level of pressure once they've proven themselves initially?

RESP.: Yes. And then for the next step they perhaps have to prove themselves a lot more at a more senior level.

This graph shows that while openness to change is impacted by gender, the level of impact depends on ethnic group. What might explain this?
RESP.: It depends on who you meet. I would have thought Chinese were also very much motivated. The Indians have to prove themselves. When you look at opportunities that are available, most opportunities are available to the Malays, then the Chinese and lastly the Indians. So Indians always have to work hard. Work harder than everyone else to prove themselves. But I would have thought the Chinese would have been also open to change. Unless it depends which organisation. If they are already in a Chinese organisation, or where they are the owners, then they don't have to work so hard. Do I see it this way? Not really. They should maybe be equal to the Malays.

More Chinese women are open to change than Chinese men. They have to prove themselves. Every kind of women have to prove themselves more. And the Indian women I suppose are less ambitious than the Indian men. I think so. That's a cultural thing with a lot of Indian women. In general, Indian women who want to achieve, but the men need to achieve more than the women. Men have to work harder because they're competing with the other males for very much more senior positions. Whereas the Indian women, not too many are really fighting for very senior positions. They're happy with a settled position because they're more concerned about marriage. All women in fact would be more concerned about getting married, and looking after the family and the main breadwinner is supposed to be the man anyway. Perhaps that's also very much of the Indian culture. You don't want to earn more than the husband if you help it. It upsets the whole structure. But the men have to prove themselves a lot more. Wanting the same kind of a position as a Malay and the Chinese. So they would be very much more motivated.

Your graph shows Malay women to be more motivated than the men. Women overall we have to be more motivated - we have to be to even attain the same level as the men. There are more opportunities open to men. I'm not too surprised at the Chinese women and the Malay women. And the Indian women also should be more motivated.

Between the men, the Indians have to work a lot more.

Let's look at self-transcendence and years of experience. This graph shows that the effect of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Why?

RESP.: Women generally are the nurturers. That fits in very well. Less chauvinism amongst women. I think there's not much to talk there. Women are much the same.

Amongst the men, This is saying that the Malays and the Indians are more collectivist than the Chinese. That's probably true. The Chinese are more ambitious. But the Chinese always feel they help each other a lot. But within their own group, rather than outside. They always protect their own group. It's the culture right from China, the feudal lord, and your own province, and you protect your province. So they are most helpful that way and they would help themselves a lot more.

GS: So there would be a distinction between how they dealt with people inside their own group and those outside?

RESP.: Always. The Chinese stand out compared to the others. The other two groups are more for everybody rather than just within their group, but the Chinese within their group stand out much stronger than either of the other two. Also because the Chinese are more ambitious. Within their own group they would probably be very high. But between these, the Indians and Malays are more into collectivism.

Individual value types

Power: Power is one of the value types where there was a significant difference between practitioners. In relation to years of experience, power appears to be more significant when you are an A or C group practitioner, rather than a B group practitioner. Why might your views on power change as your experience in PR changes? If we add in an extra variable of work environment, this pattern emerges. There is a big difference here between practitioners according to years of experience and work environment in terms of how they view power. Why?
RESP.: (senior consultants) They're already established anyway. They don't have to show any control, not that much control anymore, and they are already in a senior position so people already respect them for it. They don't have to exert themselves. Whereas at this stage (mid) you need to exert yourself. This stage (junior) you can't really exert yourself compared to others. In the consultancy, because they are treated more equally than in corporate. There is less hierarchy. It is a flatter organisation, the consultancy.

(Senior) If you already have it, you don't look for it. (Mid) You don't have it yet but you want to be at that level, so you look for it. Here (junior), you're too busy trying to establish yourself first.

Corporate sector, when you first come in, you think you've joined this organisation, you've got a job, you're an executive, you have to show you're very concerned at working in this organisation, this position. (mid) I suppose at this point they are already part of the culture. You fit in and you don't see it as being much to be concerned about. And maybe also you are working hard for the next level.

At this stage (senior), the hierarchical structure is there so it's important. Whereas in the consultancy you don't have that many staff to worry about. Here you do have, the hierarchy is there in the corporate structure, so you are concerned about your status - senior manager, vice-president. You have to be worried about how you look to the rest of the world - your position, your family, your friends, your certain status, your car, a driver. Status and prestige are definitely there - you're concerned about whether you get it at this level because you've got so many years of experience and you want to be recognised for whatever you've contributed to the organisation, your area of expertise. You're concerned about it. But at the same time of course you're concerned about how much control you have over people. You want to be able to be the one to make decisions. What your subordinates do or will not do, even the budget, whether the resources are there, how much money needs to be spent on what. At this stage definitely you would be concerned about it.

And according to gender. Why?

RESP.: Females are not concerned about power? I think they like to be part of a team, and work together. It comes back to concern for the others, treating others as equal. It's there and it reflects it - it's consistent with that. You're not interested in putting power on others and dominating others. But working with others, the co-operativeness. This is the feminist theory, part of our make-up as a woman.

GS: Why does it increase over time?

RESP.: Position on the job. They have to show some power. It is very important that "If that's my position, I must be able to show that I can control what is going on in the department, otherwise I will lose my respect. I have to show that little bit of interest". And I think you do become motivated with a bit of power as well, to maintain that position and respect you need to. Otherwise you lose it. It goes with seniority.

GS: So the position you're in demands that you show some power and be motivated by it?

RESP.: Yes. The males? They're staff, thinking they are bringing new changes to the world. I must tell you that even in our department, the young ones are the ones who come in and think they are the best, the greatest. The young have all this IT experience, all the modern technology. The others are all the old fuddy-daddies who don't know anything about new changes and all that. We always call them the young punks. They really are. They think the others have not been doing things, the department has not been performing as it should because so many things are lacking which we have been exposed to, the new developments, especially the west. They've just come back from the west - the older ones were there long ago. They've just come back with the new ideas and they know what's going on in the world. That is true.

And after a while they start fitting into the system, they realise all the problems and why these older people have not been, at this level, coping with all the problems and the pressures. So they drop. They become a bit demotivated. They can't implement all these ideas that they want to implement. The system doesn't allow them to. Or the available resources do not allow them to. So they become demotivated.
But as they increase in their own position in the company, and the kind of changes they can bring about with whatever power they have, makes them become more motivated to use their power because of their position in the company. And understanding the system a bit more also, how to manipulate it perhaps.

Achievement: Achievement is another value type, correlated with workplace and years of experience. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of achievement. Why?

RESP.: The young consultant being motivated more by achievement - it goes back again to where your job is threatened more is of course at the consultancy level. If you don't perform, young and early enough, you get thrown out. In the corporate sector it's there but less at this point. So young consultants are more motivated at this point. The danger, the amount of threat you see, is higher in the consultancy than in the corporate sector. This I can understand, and at this point where they drop down (mid) because they're already in the organisation. They don't have to be that concerned. They've been doing things. This (young) is where you have your fresh ideas. You want to achieve, you're very motivated to make a mark. You've made that mark, you forget it. But then at this point you become bored. You want to go to make a mark now for the higher position. And it's related to two things - yourself personally as well as professionally wanting the job. For both it's the same cycle.

Here (senior), the positioning of the consultancy lower than the corporate is because of the positioning in the corporate sector - the hierarchy is steeper and there's a more senior level yet so you're more motivated about being an achiever. In a consultancy the competition is less. Just you and one other person.

GS: Would the corporate position there have to do with the corporate culture as well?

RESP.: Yes. You're working for a much higher position and wanting to stay there.

Hedonism: Hedonism is another value type, correlated with workplace. This means that the workplace you're in influences your perceptions of hedonism. Why?

RESP.: Consultants, they lose interest.

GS: Lose interest, or maybe they don't associate work and pleasure?

RESP.: Or maybe it's how they view pleasure. What you consider as pleasure when you're young and when you're old may be two different things as well. Unless you want to stay at home, going out, painting the town red, all the while earlier you're a fresh new consultant. You want to get to know all your clients, mix with them, network with them. And then at this point, all your clients already know you, know what you can perform. You don't have to prove yourself that way anymore.

GS: So the clients aren't expecting that sort of treatment?

RESP.: No. Not from you anyway. They don't expect you to be painting the town red with them and drinking with them.

GS: Is that part of life in PR here?

RESP.: I think so. Because networking is important, and getting to know. So when you're young, nobody knows you. You really have to work hard to be known. And one of the ways to work hard to be known is not just to work but also to socialise with clients. Getting to know them on a social basis. Taking them out for lunches and dinners. Trying to get that gratification that way as well. I think it's important when you're young, both for males and for females. Especially at this point it becomes important. Especially when you are fresh in the job. All beginners in the consultancy seem to go out a lot more than 5-10 years because that's when you're moving more towards a senior position. In the consultancy you're still assisting somebody here (young). Here probably (mid), you're already heading the team so you have to do more of that entertainment yourself. And here (senior), even though you're heading the team, you're known already in the profession, and at this point you don't have to work that hard at getting to know your clients. Even for competition, you leave it to the younger ones to do it.
The corporate sector, why it goes up is because in the senior managerial position you are expected to. In a consultancy you choose and pick very few people, whereas here you get a higher entertainment allowance anyway as you're more senior. In a consultancy it doesn't matter, even the most junior person gets the same amount -- you charge for whatever you do. In the corporate sector, no. In the corporate sector your allowance goes with your position. When you're young actually you're probably paying your own money.

GS: When you're young though, you're much more highly motivated by hedonistic things, by pleasure. Why is that in a corporate environment?

RESP.: In either environment I would say. Why are corporates paying more attention to that? I would have thought it would be higher for the consultancies. Because the consultants can charge their clients, taking them out for dinners, and also organising events for them and then they're part of the event, and the event becomes part of the pleasure. I'm wondering whether the corporate sector is seeing it as such or whether they see it separately as work. Do the consultants see attending functions for clients as pleasure of work? Maybe they didn't list it as pleasure because they saw it as work. Whereas in the corporate sector, attending functions that belong to the organisation, they saw it as pleasure rather than work, so they listed it as pleasure. I don't know. To me, I don't see why it should be different, unless they are classifying it differently.

GS: I suspect what I'm getting with these responses is that people are drawing those lines between work and home differently.

RESP.: Maybe the consultants have not integrated as much as the corporate sector, who integrate a bit more. Especially if you're new at the job and you attend every single function that the corporation organises. Down the line you get bored, you will not attend half the things, so you do not become so motivated by what you see as pleasure functions organised by the organisation. You will not attend them. But once you're in a senior management position, you're obliged to attend them. So they are pleasure and you classify them as pleasure, but you are obliged to attend (pleasure functions organised by the organisation). There's more motivation to go to them because you want to be seen by the bosses, especially at this point where you're going up for more senior positions. Again, you're already at a senior position, you have to be there anyway.

And for consultants it is the other way round because at this point (senior), you don't need to. You are already a consultant and doing a big job, pitching and all that, and you pick and choose, you don't do it with everybody, whereas here when you're young, every client.

GS: Does the concept of pleasure and work have meaning for you?

RESP.: No. It depends what kind. Some yes. Sometimes you have to go out and do some interviews and I'm there on the job, but I do whatever I want to do to make it more pleasurable. Then I integrate it.

GS: So there are aspects of what you do as work which you derive some pleasure from?

RESP.: Yes. On the job, it's not while I'm doing the work, but it's after the work. But I'm there, doing the period of time when I'm considered to be at work. I'm there and the whole trip is being paid for by my job. It's not me paying for it. Coming back to the teaching and the students - that can also do it, because there's certain functions we hold with the students that we get some pleasure from. But more often I'll consider pleasure as being personal rather than at work.

Security: Security is another individual value type where gender seems to be important. Males are more motivated by security than females. Why?

RESP.: Of course. That shouldn't surprise. The male is supposed to be the provider of the family. The male is supposed to be earning more than the woman. Most of them get an inferiority complex if they don't. And because they feel they have to provide for the family, the security is very important for them. A secure job. I think the males would be more concerned about social status and wanting that kind of stability. Maybe even of self. The men value themselves more than the women do.
This is not relationships. That I would question. I think women value relationships more than men. Relationships within the family, within the organisation, their position. They are less likely to get into conflict with their co-workers compared to the men. Ties with the in-laws, ties with the friends, ties with colleagues. The men would look at relationships more for business ventures. For networking, clients, who can bring me more money, so keep those kind of friends. So it's really the kind of relationship.

GS: More to do with maintaining the income

RESP.: That kind of security.

GS: With women it's more on a personal front.

RESP.: Yes. Relationships as in friendship, support, and less conflict-oriented. Now I am starting to question. Because I think it is the women who are more into wanting a stable department. We're the one who are always the peace-keepers.

GS: It gets back to those self-transcendence values, treating others as equals.

RESP.: If those are the values we are stressing, women should be in a higher position.