LANGUAGE AND BUSINESS -

International

Communication Strategies

in Saxon

Small and Medium-Sized Companies

DISSERTATION
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von

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PART III – MERGING RESULTS

1. Scope and Objectives

1.1. Objectives of this thesis

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the German economy. Against the background of continuing globalisation, they are increasingly faced with the challenge of internationalisation. This study was designed as an empirical investigation of how well SMEs in the federal state of Saxony are prepared for this task of the future, which measures they take in order to market their products and services in the global marketplace, and it tries to identify their strengths and weaknesses in this respect. The very nature of this thesis is thus a truly interdisciplinary approach, investigating marketing aspects as well as linguistic factors.

The main focus was on the language small and medium-sized companies use for their international communications. English has long become the lingua franca of the globalising economy, and this study set out to investigate how well SMEs are prepared to meet the linguistic requirements imposed on them by global business. Enterprises in the new German states are widely believed to be disadvantaged with regard to their communicative competence in English, since English played only a minor role for decades, but has risen to decisive significance within the past couple of years, taking many companies and their employees by surprise, finding them not as well prepared as their colleagues in the old German states.

Still, finding their way to the new export markets in Western Europe, the Americas and Asia is vital for the survival of Saxon economy, and communicative competence in English as the lingua franca of international business is the major prerequisite for achieving this objective. Corporate communicative competence involves various aspects, including the foreign language skills of the employees – covering the entire range of linguistic skills from oral communication including listening and speaking, giving presentations or participating in negotiations to writing skills ranging from reading and writing of various text types, including media literacy.

Apart from the personal linguistic competence of the employees, the "corporate" linguistic competence of the company also plays a major role for the perception of the company on its international markets. Therefore this study focused on investigating how well SMEs present themselves in their corporate literature and on the internet, which instruments from the wide-ranging selection of marketing tools

they apply for communicating with international markets and how the linguistic quality of their international market communications can be assessed.

The objective is to provide small and medium-sized companies with a tool to maximise the effects of their international communication efforts based on the analysis of the current state of the art and on the evaluation of previous studies in this field. Theories from the field of functional stylistics provide a useful scope for such an approach. Although the aim of this study is not to establish normative requirements with regard to how corporate advertising literature *should be* written, a functional style analysis will provide the basis for suggestions of what *could be* improved with regard to the functions these text types have to fulfil. These suggestions will be based on a comparison of the established features of the text type of advertising copy[1] with the linguistic features actually used by Saxon SMEs in their marketing materials[2].

It is suggested that the implementation of the concept of the communications consultant will be one efficient way to improve international communication management in small and medium-sized companies. By analysing communicative tasks in SMEs and by providing a theoretical background, the concept of the communications consultant will be put on a scientific basis, and the need for professional support in international communications for SMEs will be underlined.

The idea of the communications consultant actually sparked this entire study. After reading Zeh-Glöckler's study on *English in Saxony* and contemplating the concept of the *Sprachenberater* she suggested, I compared her findings with my practical experience from everyday communications in Saxon SMEs and developed the idea that the concept of the *language consultant* might be put on an even wider footing, serving as a true *communications consultant.* The major difference between these two concepts is that the communications consultant has a stronger focus on marketing, taking responsibility for all aspects of international marketing communications. Therefore I designed a questionnaire dealing with a great variety of factors influencing and determining the international marketing strategy of a company and then linked the results to linguistic theories in an interdisciplinary approach. The actual feasibility and possible ways of implementing the concept of a communications consultant will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis, taking the findings from the questionnaire and the linguistic analysis into account.

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[1] Cf. chapter 11.
[2] Cf. chapter 12.

1.2. Methodology

The empirical study is based on a questionnaire containing nine question sets, comprising the communicative fields of advertising and sales literature, press work, e-commerce and internet presentations, the participation in trade fairs as well as language training and intercultural aspects.

The final version of the questionnaire was preceded by two pre-tests with a total of 35 participants in two rounds. These were the objectives of this step:

1) To test the understandability of the questions and to find out if they indeed elicit the required answers.

2) To test how much time is consumed by filling in the questionnaire. I asked all testees to indicate the amount of time it took them to fill in the form. This was necessary in order to be able to inform the potential participants of the real test about how long they are going to take. On the one hand, this served the principle of honest information, on the other hand it helped avoid manipulated answers due to allowing the participants to think it over and over again.

3) To get feedback on the organisation of the test, its layout and its visual appearance.

4) To eliminate unnecessary or superfluous questions and to discover which questions were mostly left unanswered. In those cases, the questions needed modifying.

5) To get a first impression of what the answers are going to be and then to decide whether or not to include additional or clarifying questions.

In order to implement the pre-tests, I distributed the form among 15 managing directors or sales managers who I am personally acquainted with. This allowed me to expect a high response rate as well as honest and personal comments, remarks, ideas, suggestions and above all, constructive criticism.

Apart from having the test filled in by the "real" target group, i.e. managing directors or sales managers, I also had the questionnaire checked by several experts in marketing, international trade and intercultural communication from several universities (including the universities of Jena and Dresden) and business organisations (including the Wirtschaftssenioren, IHK Chemnitz and CWE Chemnitzer Wirtschaftsförderungs- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft).

The final and approved version of the questionnaire[3] was then sent out to a total of 741 companies[4]. Out of these 741 SMEs, 108 companies returned the completed questionnaire. This equals a response rate of 14.6%[5]. The results of the questionnaire were evaluated with the help of the statistics programme SPSS.

Furthermore, the investigation was completed by more than 50 intensive interviews with senior executives of Saxon companies, representatives of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, business journalists and scholars. There was no particular guideline or questionnaire for the intensive interviews, because they were conducted against the background of the questionnaire which was used for the empirical study and the results given by that particular company (for those interviewees who had participated in the written investigation and who had given their permission to evaluate the results on a personalised basis). In the interviews, certain points of interest from the questionnaire were topicalised and explored in greater depth, elaborating on reasons, backgrounds and opinions leading to the results given in the written investigation. Thus, the intensive interviews mainly served to deepen the understanding of the results of the questionnaire, providing the researcher with valuable insights into everyday practice and background information.

Apart from that, the author of this study has been working as a professional translator, advertising copywriter, English language trainer and intercultural coach for more than eight years at the time of completion of this study and can thus contribute valuable insights and experience from the communication practice in Saxon SMEs.

All in all, this study represents a comprehensive picture of the state of international communication in Saxon SMEs and tries to pave the way for its further improvement by providing an analysis of the current state and a guideline for future success.

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[3] See Appendix.
[4] For further details on the selection of the sample see chapter 2.2.
[5] When planning this survey, I had aimed at achieving a response rate of 7%, which is a good average for studies of this kind. That I achieved more than twice as many was a great success, which I mainly trace back to the fact that as a gesture of saying thank you, I offered a free intercultural seminar to all participants in this survey. More than 50 companies registered for this seminar, and 38 actually took part.

1.3. Structure of this thesis

In order to provide a broader understanding of texts and contexts of marketing communications and the language it uses, this paper is divided into two analytic parts which are merged in part three in order to reach a conclusion. Rather than observing and describing language as an isolated entity, discourse analysis aims at paying tribute to the entire range of determinants influencing a certain text type. "The breadth of this approach is justified by the belief that neither specific acts of communication nor the internal mechanisms of language can be well understood in any other way. (…) Discourse analysis views language and context holistically."[6] Cook defines the term *discourse analysis* as follows: "Discourse is text and context together, interacting in a way which is perceived as meaningful and unified by the participants (…). The task of discourse analysis is to describe both this phenomenon in general and particular instances of it."[7] And he continues: "The study of language must always take context into account, because language is always in context, and there are no acts of communication without participants, intertexts, situations, paralanguage and substance."[8]

Part 1 builds on the belief that marketing communications can be considered a special discourse type determined by external factors and a specific context, which again influences the type of language used in that particular discourse type. Discourse determines style. In part 2, I am going to describe the major determinants of marketing discourse, based on a *quantitative*, empirical investigation into the context of marketing communications. Chapter 2 outlines the profile of the participating companies that formed the sample of the empirical study. Chapter 3 investigates the process of globalisation and the consequences this has on the marketing mix of SMEs, focussing on communicative aspects. Starting from the assumption that English as the lingua franca is one of the most vital prerequisites of successful marketing communications in a globalising economy, chapter 4 sheds light on various English language skills in Saxon SMEs. Chapter 5 provides a quantitative analysis of the application of marketing instruments in Saxon SMEs, illuminating the communicative aspects of trade shows, sales literature, the internet and media relations. In the following chapters, these factors are explored in greater

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[6] Cook, G., *Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992), p. 1.
[7] Cook also holds that "discourse analysis is sometimes accused of being large and rather messy, for it cannot bring to analysis the precision of approaches which isolate one facet of communication from others." (ibid, p. 1) – an accuse which could be turned against this paper as well. However, taking such an approach means that this lack of precision is the price one has to pay if one wants to get a broader picture.
[8] Ibid, p. 2.

depth and detail, focussing on the various aspects of international communications. Chapter 6 deals with trade fairs; sales literature is analysed in chapter 7; the internet in chapter 8 and last but not least media relations are illuminated in chapter 9.

Part 2 presents a *qualitative* analysis and focuses on the language resulting from the particular text types of marketing discourse, taking the approach of functional and descriptive stylistics. In a way, normative or practical stylistics is also going to play a role, since there will be a comparison of how the promotional language used by SMEs in Saxony relates to the linguistic "standard" or "norm" of that particular text type. One obstacle that needs to be overcome here is the fact that most analyses of advertising language that have been made to date mainly focus on the language of print adverts. As this sub-category bears only little relevance for the participants in this study, I decided to ground the linguistic analysis on their marketing literature, i.e. their brochures. Although there are a few differences between adverts and brochures with regard to structure or use of pictures, the basic linguistic features are very similar. Chapter 10 explores the functional background of advertising in general with regard to its role in the marketing mix and for promoting the products and services of a company. Chapter 11 illuminates how the language of advertising serves these functions and which peculiarities derive from the functional requirements of advertising with regard to its language. Chapter 12, then, takes the practical perspective and provides a qualitative analysis of 24 sample brochures from Saxon SMEs, investigating in how far they meet the linguistic requirements of advertising language and tries to identify areas of improvement.

Finally, part 3 merges the quantitative results from part 1 with the qualitative results from part 2 and derives conclusions and recommendations for the communication practice in SMEs.

Part I: Discourse Analysis of Marketing Communications (quantitative analysis) Chapters 3-9	Part II: Semiotic and Linguistic Analysis of Promotional Literature (qualitative analysis) Chapters 10-12	Part III: Merging Results (practical recommendations) Chapter 13
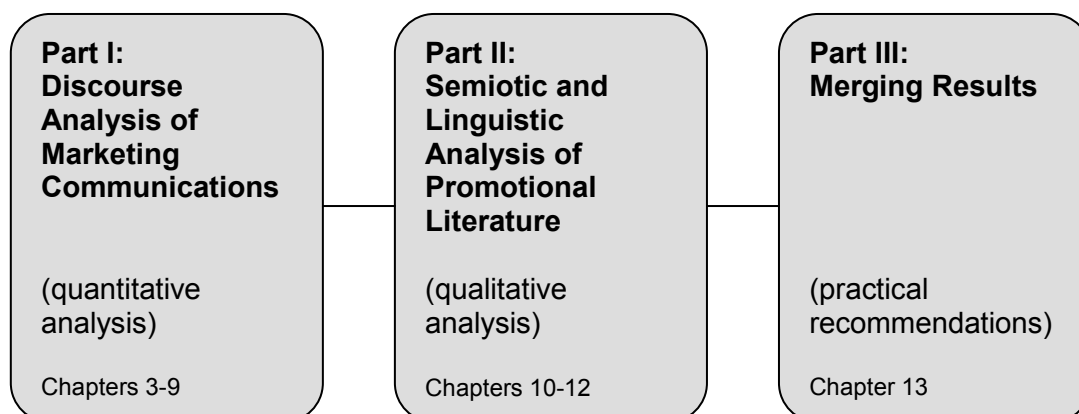
Fig. 1.1. Structure of this thesis

PART I

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

2. Profile of participating companies

This chapter describes the sample that formed the basis of the empirical study, which will be subjected to a quantitative analysis in part 1. Keeping in mind the objective of this paper – to provide an analysis of international communication strategies in small and medium-sized companies – I will first outline the characteristics of so-called SMEs (or "Mittelstand") in general, followed by a description of the participating companies with regard to sector, size, age, location as well as their export and import activities, which provide the background for their international communication activities.

2.1. "Mittelstand" in Germany

German economy is predominated by small and medium-sized companies. About 85% of all companies count among the category "small and medium-sized". In concrete figures, that means: there are 1.1 million medium-sized companies in Germany with a minimum level of sales of 125,000 Euro per year and a maximum of 500 employees[9].

According to the "MIND" study, "Mittelstand in Deutschland", issued by the Dresdner Bank in 2002, 43.3% of medium-sized companies are from the service sector, which means a growth of 0.9% compared to 1999. A quarter of small and medium-sized companies belong to the crafts sector, and about 20% are involved in trade. Both categories have been declining over the past years. About 10% of small and medium-sized companies belong to the industrial sector.

Small companies dominate the medium-sized economy. About 60% of the 1.1 million companies employ less than 10 people. In East Germany, medium-sized companies are still under-represented. This becomes obvious from the fact that only 14.5% of medium-sized companies are based in the new German states (except Berlin), while 18.5% of the population live there[10].

Asked for their prospects of the future, East German entrepreneurs are significantly less optimistic than their colleagues in the West. Whereas 32% of West German entrepreneurs expect an improvement of their economic situation during the next

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[9] Dresdner Bank AG, *Mind 02 – Mittelstand in Deutschland* (Köln: Gruner + Jahr Wirtschaftspresse 2001).
[10] Ibid.

months, this figure is 10% lower in the East. But East German companies are determined to move forward: The percentage of companies that plan to invest in the qualification of their staff is considerably higher than in West Germany, and they generally plan to invest more in marketing and advertising.[11]

This is vitally necessary if East German companies want to succeed in a global marketplace. However, many of them have inhibitions about setting foot on international markets: "Kooperationen suchen die Ost-Unternehmer vor allem innerhalb Deutschlands: Der Anteil von Firmen, die vor allem mit inländischen Unternehmen kooperieren wollen, ist in den fünf neuen Bundesländern deutlich höher als im Westen."[12]

This investigation focuses on the activities of East German small and medium-sized companies involved in international business. The objective of this study is to determine the actual situation of how SMEs market their products abroad, focusing on the communication process. The study is based on an empirical survey that was conducted at the end of 2001 among 103 small and medium-sized companies from the region of South West Saxony.

2.2. The selection of the sample
2.2.1.The region of South West Saxony

South West Saxony is the economic motor of the federal state,[13] confirmed the then chief administrator of the regional council of Chemnitz Karl Noltze in January 2001, when this investigation commenced. The region is responsible for 60 percent of Saxon exports. Thus, South West Saxony can be considered the region in the new German states that has realised the greatest process in internationalisation.

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[11] Dresdner Bank AG, *Mind 02 – Mittelstand in Deutschland* (Köln: Gruner + Jahr Wirtschaftspresse 2001).
[12] Ibid.
[13] FP Spezial, "Wirtschaft der Region", 17.2.2001, p. 1.

2.2.2. The selection process

The companies to be involved in the survey were chosen according to the following criteria:

The most important and decisive criterion were the export countries of the companies. In the IHK address database, more than 70,000 companies were listed at the time when the survey was planned (2nd quarter of 2001)[14].

Out of those, I eliminated the trades that are very unlikely to pursue trade relations abroad, i.e. industries with a very clear regional or local focus such as agriculture, hunting, fishing, mining, printing, suppliers of water and energy, local car dealers, local retail trade, insurances, lessors, training and education, health services, governmental services, waste disposal, churches and religious organisations.

I was thus left with the industries listed below to be potential partners for my survey: Food industry (13.7%), textile and clothing industry (7.7%), wood industry, paper industry, chemical industry, production of rubber and synthetics, glass and pottery, metal industry (14.6%), mechanical engineering (17.2%), production of office equipment and electrical devices (11.1%), radio and TV technology, medical and optical industry, automotive industry and its suppliers, vehicle industry, production of furniture, jewellery, musical instruments, toys and sports equipment, recycling (6.3%), wholesale, data processing, research and development, industry-related services, culture and entertainment[15].

With regard to the economic structure in the Chemnitz region, the underlined industries are particularly relevant. The number in brackets indicates the percentage relating to the total number of companies in 1999[16].

Of course, by far not all of the companies falling into these categories have international trade relations. Therefore I performed a detailed research focusing on which companies export to the following countries: Egypt, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, The Middle East, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Spain, South Africa, Taiwan, USA.

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[14] The current figure of 12/04/01 was 77,268 companies.
[15] These industries correspond with the following main groups distinguished by the IHK:
15 (153, 154, 157, 158, 159); 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 51, 64, 72, 73, 74, 92.
[16] Source: CWE 2000, p.18.

The choice of Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA is self-explanatory against the background of this study, since English is spoken as the native language in those countries. The correct and proficient use of English is therefore of particular importance there. Especially advertising materials must hit the nerves of the recipients exactly and must therefore put a particular premium on slight shades of meaning, associations, style, wordplay and the creative use of the English language in order to be able to compete against the advertisements of local enterprises. It still has to be discussed whether those linguistic subtleties are of lower importance in countries where English is only spoken as a lingua franca, or if the overly creative use of English would perhaps even hinder the transportation of the advertising message in countries where English is not spoken as the native language.

The choice of the other countries that serve as criteria for English as the language of business communication partly goes back to Zeh-Glöckler. In her study completed in 1999, she had included the question: "Mit welchen Ländern stehen Sie vorwiegend in Kontakt auf Englisch?"[17] Apart from the explicitly English-speaking countries, which all score between 55-60%, the most frequent answers were: EU member states (65.3%), East-Asia (36.7%), other Asian countries (33.3%) and, surprisingly, East-European states such as Russia (43.3%) and the Czech Republic (36.7%). Zeh-Glöckler states that although the older generation still uses German or Russian for communication with Eastern European markets (which all people who underwent schooling in the GDR period had to learn as a compulsory subject), these languages are being replaced by English as the younger generation is taking over.[18]

The other export countries included as criteria for the use of English are the ones that are deemed relevant for the South-Saxon region by the CWE GmbH, a service company ascertaining and publishing economic data for the Chemnitz region. So, out of the 107 possible export countries (including, for example, such exotic countries as Oman, Sudan or Singapore[19]) listed by the Federal Office for Statistics, companies in and around Chemnitz mainly maintain trade relations to 36 countries,

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[17] Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000)., p.193.
[18] Ibid, p. 46f.
[19] See Federal Office for Statistics, alphabetical list of countries.

out of which English is the major language of communication with the ones mentioned above.[20]

In sum, the choice which out of the 77,268 companies in South West Saxony are relevant for this study followed these steps: First, the range was narrowed down by picking the industries which are most likely to lead to international trade relations. Among those, we researched which companies have business contact to those countries to which communication is mainly held in English. As a result, we were left with a sample of 741 companies. They were all sent a questionnaire[21] containing 9 question sets. Out of these 741 SMEs, 108 companies returned the completed questionnaire. This equals a **response rate of 14.6%[22].** Five replies could not be used for the analysis, mainly due to the reply that the company no longer exists. In total, this leaves 103 completed questionnaires that could be used as a basis for evaluation. The following section provides an analysis of the profile of the participating companies.

2.2.3. Definition by sector

80 percent of the companies in this sample are from the industry sector, 20% are service providers.

In detail, the following categorisation describes the fields of business activities the companies in this sample are involved in:

Industry	Number of companies
Textile industry	13
Metal working	12
Mechanical engineering	11
Electronics / electrics	10
Automotive industry and suppliers	7
Wood industry, toys, music instruments	7
Service providers	7
Environmental technologies, life sciences	7

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[20] Chemnitzer Wirtschaftsförderungs-und Entwicklungsgesellschaft, *Chemnitzer Wirtschaft. Firmenhandbuch 2000* (Chemnitz: CWE 2000), p. 550ff.

[21] See Appendix.

[22] When planning this survey, I had aimed at achieving a response rate of 7%, which is a good average for studies of this kind. That I achieved more than twice as many was a great success, which I mainly trace back to the fact that as a gesture of saying thank you, I offered a free intercultural seminar to all participants in this survey. More than 50 companies registered for this seminar, and 38 took part in the end.

Chemical industry, synthetics processing	5
Computer / IT / telecommunications	5
Plant engineering	2
Food industry	2
Optical industry / glass	2
Measuring industry	2
Trade	2
Construction industry	1
Paper / packaging	1

Fig. 2.1. Fields of business of the companies in this study

This largely represents the structure of the industry in the region of South West Saxony[23]. The shares of mechanical engineering, the metal industry, the electric and electronics industry and the wood, instruments and toy industry are representative; the food and textile industries are slightly underrepresented in this study, which can mainly be traced back to the fact that the decisive factor for the selection of companies for this study was their export rate, and these two industries do not export as extensively as the other sectors.

2.2.4. Definition by size

Almost three quarters of the companies in this sample (72.2%) employ less than 100 people. However, the share of very small companies with less than 20 employees is comparatively low[24], which is likely to be due to the fact that the typical small companies such as craftsmen and the retail industry were not included in this sample because the major selection criterion was the export rate. Larger companies with more than 100 employees make about one quarter of this sample.

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[23] Cf. section 2.2.2.
[24] According to the MIND study quoted above, about 60% of SMEs in Germany employ less than 10 people. In this study, the percentage of companies with less than 20 employees is only 25.7%.

Size of companies in this sample
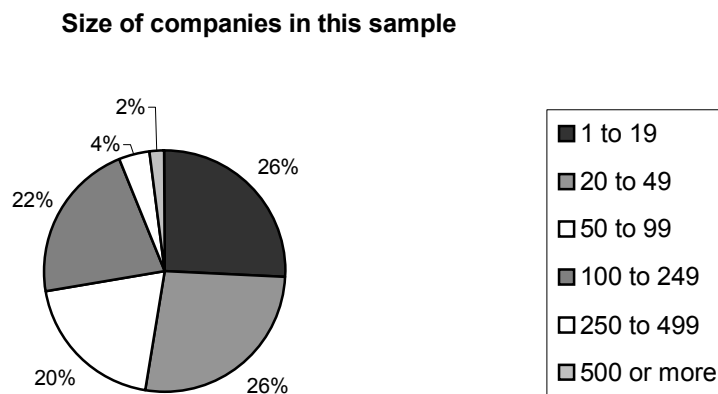
Fig. 2.2. Size of companies in the sample of this investigation

2.2.5. Definition by year of foundation

The majority of the companies in this sample (66.3%) were founded after the political change, i.e. after 1990. 16 companies were younger than 10 years at the time of investigation. 17.8% of the companies in this sample have more than 50 years of tradition and were founded before World War 2.

2.2.6. Definition by headquarter

Ninety-six out of the 103 companies in this sample are based in Saxony. Only 6 companies have their headquarter in the old German states. Thus, this sample can be considered truly representative of the young East German economy.

2.2.7. Definition by export activities

2.2.7.1. Internationalisation process

International marketing activities are the major focus of this investigation. Therefore, the export rate was the decisive factor for the selection of this sample. All companies in this sample are involved in export activities. However, it needs to be taken into account that export and internationalisation are processes, and that these processes can have reached different states:

- at a very fundamental level, the move from being a completely domestically oriented firm to having an awareness of international influences. At this stage

no more than a simple tracking of events, or a defensive response to overseas competition might be relevant.

- the movement from being a purely domestic firm to undertaking some upstream or downstream international activity (i.e. either beginning to source from abroad or selling to a foreign market would be included in this, as would the development of informal international linkages or collaborative ventures, say in R & D).

- the decision to contract, maintain or expand the existing level of international activities in the case of a firm which is already operating on an international level.[25]

2.2.7.2. Export rates

Reckoning with the fact that two thirds of the companies in this sample are fairly young enterprises and have not had more than ten years of time to develop their export strategies, it seems reasonable to include also companies whose export rate is only considerably low. What counted as a criterion for selection was the aspect of international considerations, an export rate of at least 10% and the intention to expand the international activities in future.
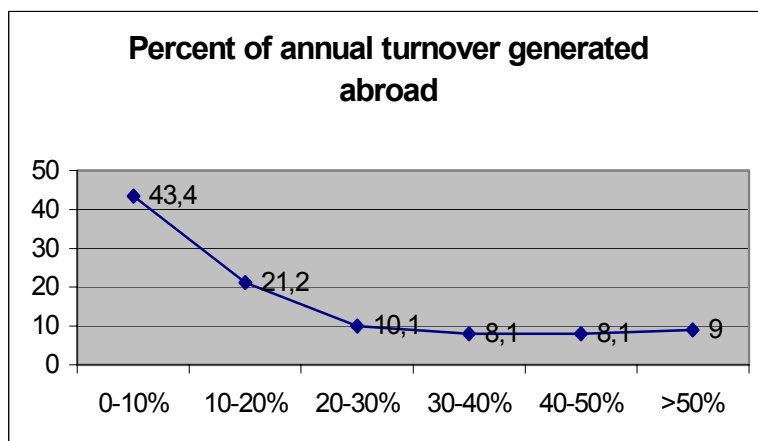
Fig. 2.3. Percent of annual turnover generated abroad

43.4% of the companies in this sample have an export rate of 10% or lower. Another fifth generates between 10 and 20% of their annual turnover abroad. Ten companies export between 20 and 30%, 8 companies between 30 and 40%, another 8 companies export between 40 and 50%, and 9 companies generate more than half of their annual revenue abroad.

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[25] Industrie-und Handelskammer zu Leipzig et al. (ed.), *The International SME* (CD-ROM 2001), p.6.

2.2.7.3. Development of export rates

Since 1996, the export rates have steadily increased among Saxon SMEs. The number of companies with a low export rate (between 0 and 10%) has continuously decreased from 62 to 43 percent of the companies, whereas the share of companies that export between 10 and 20 percent of their annual turnover has risen from 11 to 21 percent. The number of companies generating between 20 and more than 50 percent of their annual turnover abroad has also steadily increased.

Development of export rates in percent of the annual turnover between 1996 and 2000
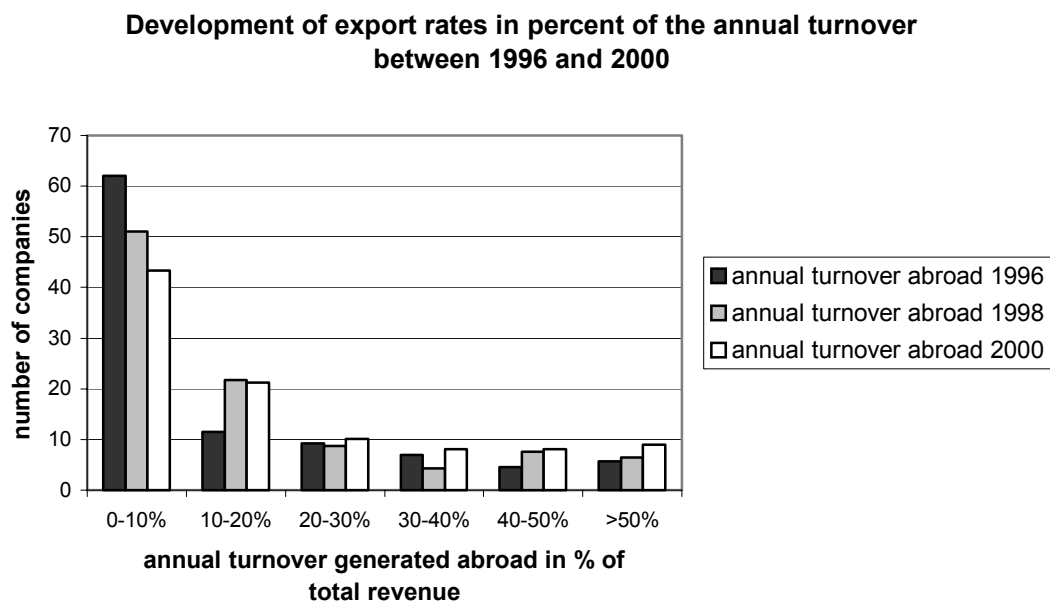
Fig. 2.4. Past development of export rates

How will your export rate develop over the next years?
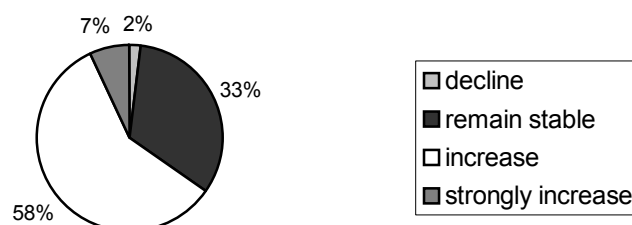
Fig. 2.5. Future development of export rates

For the future, most companies are optimistic with regard to their export activities. Only 2 companies predict that their export rate will decline over the next couple of

years. One third of the companies in this sample intend to maintain its current export rate. On the other hand, an amazing percentage of two thirds are planning to increase their export activities in the future and want to create more sales and revenue abroad. This study will try to provide advice on how they can achieve that goal.

2.2.7.4. Export and import countries

2.2.7.4.1. Export countries

The evaluation of export countries was performed according to two different criteria: 1) Frequency, i.e. how many companies from this sample export to these countries in total and 2) Importance, i.e. which export countries are most important for Saxon SMEs? The result can be seen in the figures below:

1.	Benelux countries	(29)
2.	USA, incl. Canada	(28)
	France	(28)
	South-East Asia, incl. China	(28)
5.	UK	(26)
	Austria	(26)
7.	Switzerland	(23)
8	Russia and former USSR	(20).
9.	Arabic countries	(19)
10.	Scandinavian countries	(17)
11.	South America	(16)
	Italy	(16)
13.	Czech Republic	(13)
	EU countries	(13)
15.	Poland	(12)
16.	Japan	(11)
17.	Hungary	(6)
18.	Portugal	(5)
19.	Slovenia	(3)
	Australia	(3)
	South Africa	(3)

Fig. 2.6. Export countries after frequency[26]

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[26] The figure in brackets indicates the total number of companies exporting to the respective country, irrespective of the importance of that export country.

1.	USA, incl. Canada	(175)
2.	France	(153)
3.	Austria	(139)
4.	Switzerland	(137)
	Benelux countries	(137)
6.	UK	(128)
7.	Russia and former USSR	(116)
8.	South-East Asia, incl. China	(84)
9.	Arabic countries	(83)
10.	South America	(77)
11.	Scandinavian countries	(76)
	Italy	(76)
13.	EU countries	(75)
14.	Czech Republic	(65)
15.	Poland	(62)
16.	Japan	(60)
17.	Spain	(39)
18.	Hungary	(34)
19.	Portugal	(19)
20.	Slovenia	(16)
21.	Australia	(12)
22.	South Africa	(9)

Fig. 2.7. Export countries according to importance[27]

The results suggest that apart from other German-speaking countries such as Austria and Switzerland, the Anglophone markets of the USA, Canada and the UK are the most important export markets for Saxon SMEs, underlining once more the major importance of excellent English language skills.

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[27] Each company rated the importance of their export countries on a scale from 1 (least important) to 8 (most important). These rates were added up. The figures in brackets indicate the overall result.

2.2.7.4.2. Import countries

However, Saxon SMEs do not only sell their goods on foreign markets, they also purchase components and materials from other countries. Below is a list with the most important import countries supplying goods and materials to Saxon SMEs:

1.	Czech Republic	(17)
2.	Italy	(15)
	France	(15)
4.	Switzerland	(14)
5.	UK	(9)
6.	China and South-East Asia	(8)
	Austria	(8)
8.	USA	(7)
	Benelux countries	(7)
10.	Scandinavian countries	(6)
11.	Poland	(5)

Fig. 2.8. Most important import countries of Saxon SMEs[28]

Obviously, Saxon companies purchase from an entirely different set of countries than those they export to. English-speaking countries such as the USA and the UK, which take the lead among the export countries of Saxon SMEs, are not as important as suppliers of resources. Hence, English language skills are not as vital for purchasing products abroad as they are for selling goods.

So how can Saxon SMEs successfully sell their products and services on a globalising marketplace? Starting from the analysis of the participating companies in chapter 2, chapter 3 will explore the reasons and effects of a globalising economy and illuminate the consequences on the international marketing strategies of SMEs.

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[28] The figure in brackets indicates the total number of companies in this sample buying from those countries.

3. Globalisation and Marketing Strategies

3.1. Benefits and threats of a globalising economy

Globalisation became a buzzword in the 1990s. Whereas most large companies consider a multinational strategy the only way to survive in an increasingly competitive environment, many medium-sized and smaller enterprises still have a sceptical attitude towards international expansion.

Opponents claim that if globalisation continues, the world market will be dominated by a handful of multinational companies, which will destroy any healthy competition and will thus be able to develop into true monopolies dictating prices, products and strategies. Moreover, they fear that this will happen on the back of developing and third-world countries, which will be exploited as suppliers of cheap labour and natural resources, but which will never have a genuine chance to benefit from the wealth they help create. The gap between the rich industrial nations and the developing countries would thus grow bigger and bigger, resulting in an unbridgeable economic divergence.

The economy, on the other hand, ceaselessly stresses the multitude of benefits a global economy holds in stock. The ultimate objective of the economy is steady growth. However, the domestic markets of developed nations are largely saturated in many fields, and the only way to achieve lucrative growth rates is to expand sales to foreign markets. Moreover, the life cycle of products is becoming shorter and shorter, and existing capacities can be used to their full extent only if products are marketed on more than one market. As the costs for developing a product are also increasing dramatically in many industries (e.g. automotive and chemical industries), a return on investment can often only be achieved if a certain high number of products is sold, which cannot be achieved on one single domestic market.

The strategy to sell products on a global scale is facilitated by the converging tendencies between different countries. Lifestyles, product preferences and consumer behaviour are becoming increasingly similar, which creates attractive and numerous markets for a product. The rising living standard of emerging countries contributes largely to this convergence, as they provide attractive and consumption-affine markets for products that require a certain level of luxury. The improved infrastructure of emerging and third-world countries is another factor that puts them

increasingly in the focus of global sales strategies. Moreover, foreign markets are often a valuable source of cost-efficient resources for material, finances and labour.

Politics support the globalisation tendencies of businesses. The formation of the European Union was the major step in this direction that has been taken during the past years, and it symbolises the efforts of European countries to unite their strengths as to become an equal player in the global economy that can face the competition from the United States and Japan. With about 320 million consumers, the pan-European market offers an even bigger potential than that of the USA.

Competition also increasingly takes place on a global scale. Even companies that operate purely on a national level are forced to take global players into account, as they are omnipresent. Due to their enormous size and selling power, the global players set the pace for new developments, for prices and trends, and they dictate the market. Whoever wants to claim a place in this market, and be it only on a regional level, has to reckon with what the multinationals have to offer.[29]

Due to these market requirements, globalisation is becoming an item for medium-sized and smaller companies as well. During the past years, the export rate of German companies has constantly been between 30 – 35%. In many regions, such as in the region of South West Saxony that provided the basis for this empirical study, the export rate is significantly higher[30]. But also on the side of the suppliers, international contacts are a vital prerequisite of successful SMEs.

The benefits of exporting are visualised in the following overview:

- **Increased sales**
- **Higher profits**
- **Reduction of dependence on traditional markets**
- **Diversified markets**
- **New knowledge, experience and enhanced domestic competitiveness**
- **Global competitiveness[31]**

Fig. 3.1. Benefits of exporting

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[29] Kreutzer, R., *Global Marketing – Konzeption eines länderübergreifenden Marketing* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag 1990), p. 1-4.
[30] 60% of exports in Saxony come from this region (FP Spezial, "Wirtschaft der Region", 17.2.2001, p.1).
[31] http://www.glreach.com/eng/intltrade/index.php3.

3.2. The marketing mix as the foundation of global marketing

Every company that considers expanding its activities to foreign markets should be aware that global marketing comprises a wide range of processes and affects all aspects of the marketing mix. The reduction of an international marketing strategy to an international advertising strategy, or even worse, to a mere translation of existing marketing material into the languages of the target countries, fails to reckon with the complexity of the matter. An international strategy should comprise all processes within a company, i.e. controlling, human resources, research and development and product launch strategies, price strategy, purchasing and logistic processes, a global corporate identity, as well as all the classical elements of the marketing mix. The marketing mix includes all elements that contribute to the successful sale of a product or service and comprises considerations of products, prices, sales and communication[32].

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[32] In English and American marketing literature, the four elements are often referred to as "the 4 Ps": Product, Price, Placement and Promotion.

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │    MARKETING MIX    │
                        └─────────────────────┘
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Product	Price	Sales	**Communi-cation**
Portfolio of products and services	End consumer price	Sales organisation	Classical advertising (for products or image)
Product ap-peranace (design,pack-aging)	Conditions for resellers	Sales represen-tatives	Promotion activities
Pre- and after-sales service, training, planning	Conditions for represen-tatives	Direct sales	Public relations
		Sales agents	Direct marketing

Fig.3.2. Elements of the marketing mix[33]

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[33] Cf. Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie (ed.), "Marketing", in: *Gründerzeiten* 20 (1999).

Taking the individual elements of the marketing mix into consideration, the following questions need analysing if a company intends to offer its products and services on a global scale[34]:

3.2.1. Product

3.2.1.1. Product portfolio

- Is there a demand for this product in the respective markets?
- If not, how can a demand be created (e.g. through extensive advertising, sponsoring, promotional activities)?
- What is the lifecycle of the product in the target country?
  - o Many companies from Germany underestimate the demands foreign customers have in terms of quality and standard of the product. In the intensive interviews accompanying the empirical investigation of this study, one managing director told the story of his attempt to sell one of his older models to Egypt. He vastly underestimated the sophistication of the Egyptian market. The client right-out rejected to buy such an old-fashioned model.
  - o Uwe Hartmann, managing director of Chemnitz-based Ermafa GmbH points out the high standards demanded by the Russian market: "Wir stehen dort genauso im Wettbewerb mit der internationalen Konkurrenz wie auf anderen Plätzen der Welt. In russischen Unternehmen haben vielfach junge Leute mit internationaler Ausbildung die ersten Reihen besetzt. Diese erwarten absolutes Niveau, beginnend bei der Präsentation eines potentiellen Auftragnehmers."[35]
- Which competitors are already active in this sector?
- What are their activities, their sales figures, their strengths, their challenges?

3.2.1.2. Product appearance

- Is the design of the product appealing to the consumers in the target markets?
- What do products of competitors look like?
- Can the packing be well handled in terms of shipping, warehousing and transport in the respective country?
- Which package size is preferred by the consumers in the target market?

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[34] Cf. Kreutzer, R., *Global Marketing – Konzeption eines länderübergreifenden Marketing* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag 1990).
[35] Uwe Hartmann*, in: Freie Presse*, 17.2.2001, p.9.

- o Due to the lower economic power of consumers in countries or areas with a lower purchasing power, many products, including detergents and cigarettes, are offered in smaller pack sizes. Pack sizes can also have intercultural implications. For example, a set of golf balls that came in a pack of four did not sell well in Japan. The reason is that the figure 4 is an unlucky number in Japan[36].
- Are there official laws or guidelines that need obeying?
  - o This is particularly relevant for the declaration of ingredients or safety precautions, which can differ quite significantly between countries and which can have serious consequences in terms of product liability.
- Should the packaging be the same in all countries or should it be adapted to the respective markets?
  - o The arguments in favour of a consistent packaging design are prevailing: First, it helps save production and logistics costs, and second a coherent packing can support the identification of consumers with the product. Buyers shall be reassured that they can find their favourite products no matter where they are. Many tobacco firms estimate the significance of the packing as high as to maintain the same pack design even if the blend of the cigarettes contained in it differs between countries.[37]

3.2.1.3. Pre- and after-sales service, planning, training, assembly

- Can a warranty for the product be provided on foreign markets?
- Who is responsible for the installation and assembly of industrial goods?
  - o Not in every case are the employees of the manufacturing company allowed to actually set up and assemble their product themselves. A Saxon manufacturer of machine tools was confronted with an US-American regulation allowing Germans to work there only under certain conditions. In the case that was reported in the interview, this regulation led to the situation that the machine had to be set up by untrained American workers, who took four times as long as their German colleagues would have taken for the same job. The costs for this time-consuming assembly had to be borne by the German manufacturer.

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[36] Hollet, V., *Business Objectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992), p. 55
[37] Kreutzer, R., *Global Marketing – Konzeption eines länderübergreifenden Marketing* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag 1990), p. 290ff.

- Who is responsible for maintenance and repair of products?
- What are the costs?
  - These challenges are the reason for some of the major problems one Saxon manufacturer of machine tools is currently facing in connection with their attempts to export their machining centres to the USA. The machines are used by suppliers to the automotive industry, who are bound to very tight deadlines and delivery times. If a machine breaks down, it has to be repaired as quickly as possible. However, if an engineer has to fly over from Germany to fix the problem, it can hardly be resolved within 24 hours, not to mention the immense costs that this procedure incurs. One possible solution is remote diagnosis and remote support via telephone and internet. A maintenance engineer in the German head office has access to the control of the machine via internet and can try to fix the problem from the distance. However, the engineers complained in the interview that communicative barriers often hamper fast and precise action.
- Who trains the users of the product?
  - Communication and cultural obstacles are also the reasons for another challenge that the machine tool manufacturer mentioned above is facing: Most machine operators in the USA are so poorly educated that they cause significant damage to the highly sensitive machining centres. Proper training of the operators is first very expensive and secondly often aggravated by communication problems between the (German) instructor and the American operators.
- How can language gaps be overcome?
  - This question applies to oral communication in the case of on-site maintenance and training, but also to written training and maintenance material, such as technical documentations, data sheets, training handbooks and manuals.

3.2.2. Price

- What is the purchasing power of consumers in the target market?
- What are competitors' prices?
- What additional costs occur due to shipping the product to the target market? What are the costs for appropriate packing, customs, insurance, freight?

       ○   The costs for transporting a machining centre to the USA are about 25,000 Euro. Additionally, a seaworthy packing, which is usually a specially made wooden box, costs another 5,000 Euro. This adds about 30,000 Euro to the price of the machine, which greatly reduces competitiveness in comparison with producers that are based overseas.

- What influence does the currency exchange rate have on the price policy, and how would possible changes affect price policy?
- What are frequently used modes of payment? What bank charges occur?
- How do different dimensions and regulations affect the price on a foreign market?
- How important is it to keep the price level consistent over several countries as not to damage the image of the product?

3.2.3. Distribution

- What is the availability and significance of different distribution channels on the foreign market?
- Is qualified personnel available in the foreign country?
- What are the preferred distribution channels in the target country?
- Is cooperation with business partners possible?
- What is the legal background of selling the respective goods in the target market?
- To which extent can e-commerce be used for selling the products in foreign markets?

       ○   This distribution channel is much too often neglected especially by medium-sized manufacturers of consumer goods. The internet offers a wide range of distribution methods for such products, starting from the company's own internet shop to auctions on eBay or other auction platforms on the internet. Most companies, however, do not even consider this channel for selling their products, as a recent study of the German Ministry of Economy points out: "Die Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Betriebsbefragung...zeigen, dass KMU vielfach keinen Nutzen in e-commerce sehen und mehrheitlich der Meinung sind, sie seien davon nicht betroffen. Das trifft laut Studie insbesondere auf deutsche Betriebe zu: Fast 50 Prozent der deutschen Unternehmen mit bis zu 50 Beschäftigten sehen beispielsweise keinen Nutzen darin, Online-Bestellungen

anzubieten."[38] This result is supported by my study[39]. Here lies a huge potential for the development of international trade.

3.2.4. Communication

- What is the communication concept for the foreign market?
  - o The communication concept comprises the communication strategy as well as its execution.
  - o The strategy describes **what** is communicated to **whom** and includes the definition of the target group, the positioning of the company and its products, the benefits of the product, which should ideally be reduced to a **USP** (Unique Selling Proposition), and which should be explained by **reasons why**[40].
  - o With regard to the communication mix, Philip Kotler lists the following characteristics of each of the four elements:

    Advertising: public presentation, pervasiveness, amplified expressiveness, impersonality

    Personal selling: personal confrontation, cultivation, response

    Sales promotion: communication and information value, incentive, invitation

    Public relations: high credibility, off-guard, dramatization[41]
  - o The decision on which element of the communication mix proves right for a certain task will depend on the objective, the message to be communicated and the target audience.
- How is the communication concept to be executed?
  - o <u>How is the core message (USP) to be creatively presented? (creation)</u>

    This step includes all aspects of

    verbal (headlines, copy, slogans)

    visual (colours, photos, pictures, drawings, symbols, logo) and

    acoustic (music, spoken language, acoustic logo) communication

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[38] Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, *Elektronischer Geschäftsverkehr* (Berlin: 1999), p.5.
[39] Cf. chapter 8.
[40] Cf. Kotler, P., *Marketing Management* 7th edn. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall 1991).
[41] Ibid, p. 584f.

- o What media are suited to convey the message to the relevant target group? (media planning)

  For the companies that participated in this survey, trade magazines are by far the most important media for communication. 44.1% advertise in German trade magazines; 25.5% are present in international trade magazines, mostly in English. This is of course due to the fact that almost 90% of the participating companies mainly advertise in the B2B sector. Thanks to their clearly defined and specialised target group, trade magazines are a prime medium for advertising to business customers. Moreover, 12.7% of participating firms advertise in German consumer print media. This kind of medium, however, is completely irrelevant for international advertising. Only 1% of the companies stated they use the foreign consumer press for advertising.

- What cultural peculiarities of the target country need to be taken into account? Has the advertising message to be adapted to the culture of the target country[42]?
- Can communication processes be standardised?
- How can the brand be established internationally?
- How can the corporate identity be internationalised?
  - o Is the name of the company suitable for international use? (see 7.7.4.)
  - o Are colours and logos suitable for international use? (see 7.7.5.)

3.3. Planning and cooperation

First and foremost, successful globalisation depends on a thoroughly laid-out strategy. Apart from all aspects of the workflow within a company such as controlling, logistics and human resources, the thorough planning of the international marketing strategy plays a vital role for successful activities on foreign markets.

3.3.1. Professional planning

However, here lies one of the major weaknesses of small and medium sized enterprises in Saxony. Many of them have no strategically planned concept of how they are going to market their products. According to this survey, one third of the participating companies have no marketing plan for the German market. The figure

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[42] Cf. chapter 7.4.

for export markets is even lower at 52% of companies that have no strategic plan. This result was also supported in the intensive interviews with executives. Many of them stated that their export activities are largely based on trial and error, and that they apply the method of "learning by doing". Companies seem to start making strategic considerations only after they have reached a certain level of experience and success in the respective market.

So, what should be done if a company considers entering a foreign market? The following step model illustrates the individual measures that need to be taken if a company is to become a successful player on international markets:

Monitoring

Starting expansion

Strategy implementation

Communication management

Adapting product, price and distribution

Finding potential partners

Thorough market reasearch

Organising structure and financing concept

Define reasons for expansion? Objectives? Time?
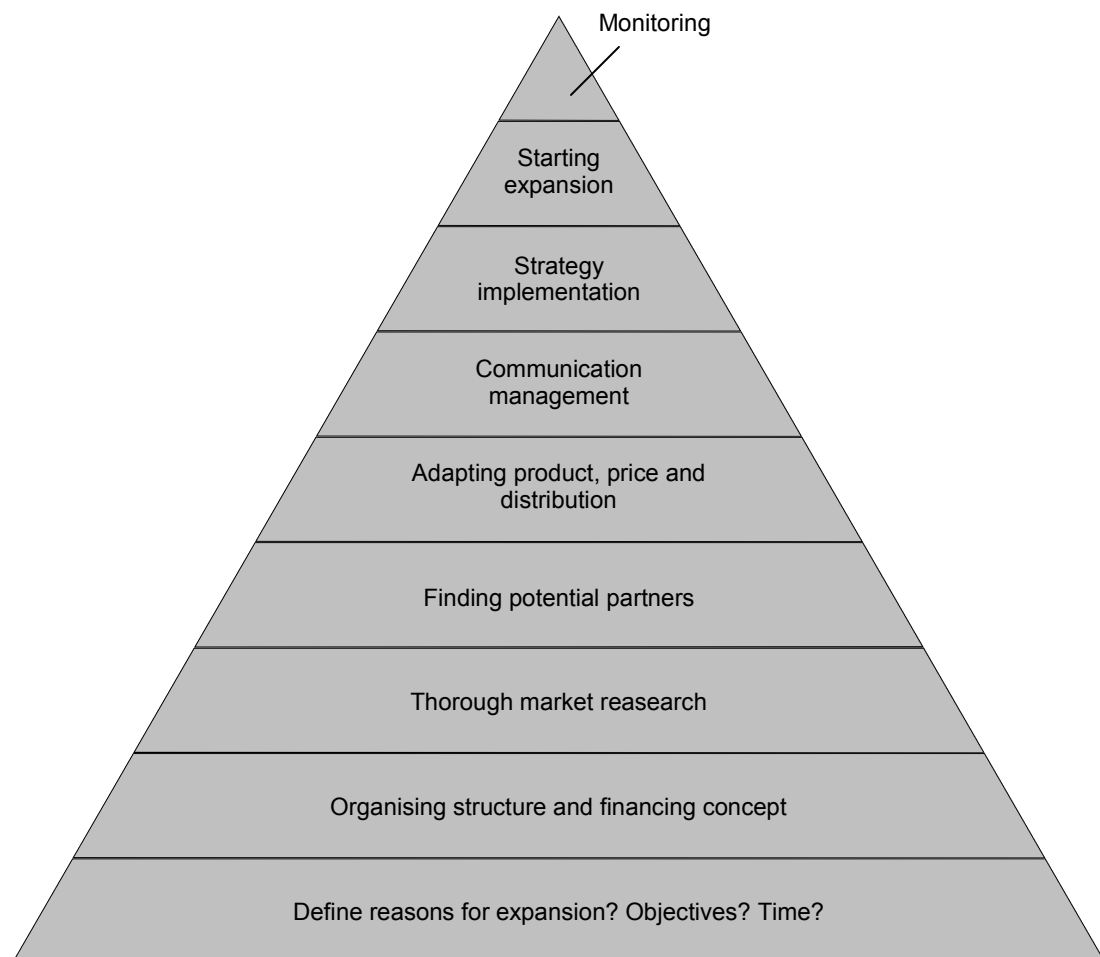
Fig. 3.3. Steps to be taken on entering a foreign market

First of all, the management of the company should clearly define their reasons and objectives for the expansion. This is done by less than half of the companies

participating in this study (45.5.%). As became obvious in the intensive interviews, the decision to enter a foreign marekt is often made for intuitive reasons only, particularly if there is a crisis on the domestic market, and if the sales figures on existing markets are no longer satisfactory. Overcoming a crisis on the domestic market, however, should never be the sole reason for an expansion, because the challenges that have to be met in the course of this endeavour can be virtually overwhelming. An expansion to foreign markets must be based on sensible reasoning and clearly laid out objectives which are bound to a time-scheme when they are to be achieved.

As a next step, responsibilities and financial assets should be clearly allocated. Then comes the step of a thorough market research. Much of this can be done via internet, but professional help should also be included. Two thirds of the companies in this sample put a premium on market research and obtaining relevant information about the target markets.

Another vital step is finding the right partners in the foreign countries, mostly sales agents or partners for logistics and distribution. Organising the distribution channels abroad is considered an important step in the internationalisation process by 45.5% of the companies in this sample.

Then it needs to be considered whether the product meets the requirements of the customers in the target country, and what changes or adaptations need to be made in terms of product, price and distribution channels. The aspect of communications should also be included in the strategical plan. It has to be considered what message is to be conveyed to whom via which media, and what the costs can amount to. Market communication and advertising on export markets are conducted by less than a third of the companies in this study (32.7%).

After the expansion has started, the results should be regularly monitored, assessed and, if necessary, adapted - a step which is taken by only 28.7% of the companies in this sample.

Which measures do you take if you are preparing to enter a new market?

We define our exact objectives and develop a strategic plan	45.5%
We research exact information about the target market	66.3%
We organise distribution channels on the new market	45.5%
We take advertising measures and invest in marketing communication	32.7%
We evaluate the success and change the strategy if necessary	28.7%

Fig. 3.4. Measures taken to prepare for entering a new market

Reckoning with the fact that international companies should include *all* these steps in their international marketing strategy, the percentages of Saxon companies that actually do perform those measures are definitely insufficient. This underlines the assumption that globalisation efforts of small and medium-sized companies are too often not planned comprehensively enough from a strategic perspective, and that this lack of strategic thinking is one of the major reasons of failing marketing efforts. Professional help and advice to overcome this shortcoming is offered by various institutional partners, such as the IHK or the Bfai, as well as private service providers. The use of both kinds of resources is illustrated in the following chapters.

3.3.2. Institutional partners

Basically, there are three main sources to be tapped into for information on foreign trade: The IHK (Industrie-und Handelskammer, *Chamber of Trade and Commerce*) with their AHKn (Auslandshandelskammern, *Chambers of Foreign Trade*); secondly the bfai (Bundesstelle für Außenhandelsinformationen, *Federal Agency for Foreign Trade*), which closely cooperates with the BMWi (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, *Federal Ministry for Economy and Technology*), and thirdly the respective embassies. Furthermore, there are many regional organisations offering consultation, which is also partly for free, such as the portfolio offered by the CWE in Chemnitz (Chemnitzer Wirtschaftsförderungs-und Entwicklungsgesellschaft, *The Chemnitz Society for the Promotion and Development of Businesses*). What is more, the web sites of those organisations offer a great variety of links to related services.

3.3.2.1. Bfai (Federal Agency for Foreign Trade)

The bfai is a service facility related to the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie (BMWi, *Federal Ministry for Economy and Technology*). In a great variety of brochures and publications as well as online, it provides information on foreign markets. The bfai also offers an individual market research service. It is a service department of the Federal Ministry for Economy and Labour and has declared it their aim to support German companies on their way into foreign markets. The service department provides up-to-date information on the latest developments in all relevant export markets. Correspondents deliver the latest information on foreign markets, advertised biddings abroad, as well as investments, development plans and cooperation enquiries from foreign companies. Moreover, the bfai provides an extensive database of lawyers. The department's expertise in terms of foreign trade is collected in more than 45,000 documents which can be accessed via their databases. Moreover, they offer a wide range of publications, including country-specific information on legal and tax regulations, comprehensive market analyses, economic data and many more for more than 200 countries and several economic associations such as the AFTA, CEFTA and SADC.[43] They also offer support in finding business partners and potential customers.

This is how the bfai describes itself and its tasks: "Bei der Bundesstelle für Außenhandelsinformation (bfai) in Köln beginnt die Erforschung ausländischer Absatzmärkte. Hier sind die wichtigen Informationen über Auslandsmärkte schnell und kostengünstig zu haben. So hilft die bfai als Servicestelle des Bundesministeriums für Wirtschaft und Technologie besonders kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen auf dem Weg ins Auslandsgeschäft. Von A wie Ausschreibung bis Z wie Zoll bietet die bfai alle Informationen online im Internet sowie als Broschüre und in Zeitschriften an. Außerdem recherchiert der bfai-Auskunftsservice bei speziellen Fragen. Insgesamt 174 Mitarbeiter im Inland und 45 Marktbeobachter in der ganzen Welt arbeiten daran, Informationen über Märkte im Ausland zu beschaffen und praxisgerecht für die deutschen Unternehmen aufzuarbeiten."[44]

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[43] http://www.bfai.de/?uid=93a6ccb1edae281dec1fd8917f5ea95e&id=Seite213
[44] http://www.bfai.de/home_b3.htm

3.3.2.2. IHK

The IHK is a public chamber representing the interests of the industry. Membership is obligatory. This is how the IHK describes its function: "Hauptziel der Kammern ist das Gesamtinteresse der zugehörigen Kammermitglieder wahrzunehmen, für die Förderung der gewerblichen Wirtschaft einzutreten und dabei die wirtschaftlichen Interessen einzelner Gewerbetreibender, Betriebe oder Unternehmen abwägend oder ausgleichend zu berücksichtigen, hoheitliche Aufgaben wahrzunehmen und Serviceleistungen anzubieten."[45]

Within the IHK, there is the department of foreign trade (Außenwirtschaft). Their consultancy services include the fields of general advice on foreign trade, export and import, financing and investments, trade fairs, cooperations, country-specific information and information on the European market.[46]

They specialise in the following areas:

1) Information about establishing companies abroad, business data worldwide, industry-specific information, writing up contracts, public subsidies and government funds for international trade, international invitations of tenders

2) Finding lecturers on international topics, establishing contacts with consultants for foreign trade, translators and interpreters, business partners, contact people abroad, lawyers abroad

3) Organising projects for opening specific markets[47]

4) Consulting on international trade fairs, marketing programmes ("Vermarktungshilfeprogramm"), individual consultations on foreign trade and on customs regulations and international trade laws

3.3.2.3. AHK

The 117 AHK offices in 80 countries (December 2003) form a network of local experience and global presence. They are economically independent organisations and pursue the interests of German foreign trade. The main objective of the AHKn is to promote bilateral business.

The catalogue of tasks ranges from commercial information services, legislative and administrative support, the representation of German trade fairs abroad, market

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[45] http://www.ihk.de/ihk_wir.htm
[46] http://www.diht.de/inhalt/themen/international_neu/index.main.html
[47] http://www.chemnitz.ihk.de/dienst/aussen/aussenw/indexaw.htm

analyses, technological transfer and environmental protection, funding of innovation and trade up to public relations and training.[48]

The services offered by the AHKs can be grouped into four major categories:

- Sales advice (analysis of sales structures, presentation of products, finding personal contacts)
- Market analysis (macro-economic environment, rules and regulations, competitors, product placement)
- Legal advice (contracts, establishing a company, country-specific regulations)
- Making appointments (organisation of business trips, making appointments and finding interpreters)
- Publishing of AHK magazine as a platform for bilateral communication[49]

The survey shows that more than 70% of the participating companies make use of the services of the IHK and the related Chambers of Foreign Trade (AHK). One of the reasons that were stated frequently in the interviews was that these consultancy services are largely free. The companies that had cooperated with this institution were mostly satisfied with the quality of the services.

Only 5.9% of the participating companies cooperate with the official representations in the respective countries, the embassies. The services of the Federal Agency for Foreign Trade, Bundesagentur für Außenwirtschaft (bfai) are used by a fifth of the participating companies.

As a general trend, it can be observed that companies prefer to cooperate with official or semi-official institutions when they plan to expand to foreign markets. Only 23% of the participating companies stated that they used the services of private consultancy providers. The great acceptance of the AHK, IHK and bfai can mainly be traced back to their great expertise as well as to the cost efficiency of the services they offer.

In addition to the services provided by external institutions, many companies have an active share in analysing the target markets themselves. Out of the participating companies, five pave the way to foreign markets via direct contacts. Another five companies make use of their company network, which has either been developed

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[48] http://www.diht.de/ahk
[49] http://www.diht.de/ahk/home/aufgaben/index.html

through their group of companies or through their own network. Six companies have partners abroad who support them in expanding their business. Four companies consider trade agents a valuable alternative to official support in international marketing, and another four companies use international trade fairs as a means to establish contacts with partners and customers from abroad. Furthermore, many companies stated that they conduct extensive research on the internet, but many of those pointed out that their insufficient knowledge of foreign languages, especially of the English language, is a serious barrier to their understanding and evaluation of vital information.

3.3.3. Private service providers

Only a relatively small percentage of Saxon SMEs (23.8%) turns to private service providers for consultancy on developing new markets. In the intensive interviews, most executives mentioned the cost factor as the major obstacle of referring to private consultants and stated that they are fairly satisfied with the consultancy services the IHK, the AHK and other public institutions offered. Many of them also claimed that they build on personal contacts, i.e. people they met at international fairs or agents and representatives they cooperate with in the respective target countries.

Put in a nutshell, it ca be stated that the globalisation of the economy poses various challenges on the international marketing strategies of SMEs. In order to maintain and expand their position on their international markets, they need to adapt all the elements of the marketing mix – products, prices, distribution and communication - to the requirements of the respective target countries. So after all, in spite of a global general approach, locally oriented activities are the key to success on international markets. To meet these requirements and to obtain the necessary expertise and information, SMEs can draw on a variety of institutional and private partners. Especially the services of the foreign trade departments of the IHKs and their counterparts in the respective countries, the AHKs, are greatly appreciated by many internationalising SMEs and, consequently, widely used.

In the face of ongoing globalisation, the role of international communication is ever-growing. The following chapter evaluates the communicative skills of Saxon companies and their employees, based on the assumption that English as the lingua

franca of international business is one of the major prerequisites for marketing success abroad.

4. International Communications and English as a Lingua Franca

4.1. The significance of English as a lingua franca

In international business, the necessity of international communications is omnipresent. Whether filling in order forms for machine components from the Czech Republic, making telephone conversations with retailers in Spain or negotiating with business partners in the United States, every business that aims at successfully positioning itself on contemporary and future markets must be able to communicate internationally.

International communication is inseparably linked to English as the lingua franca of modern business. In the survey which was conducted as the basis for this thesis, 97.1% of companies said English was "very important" or "important" for their business. Other languages, such as French or Russian, are rated significantly less important at 38% and 33%.

Significance of foreign languages in corporate international communications
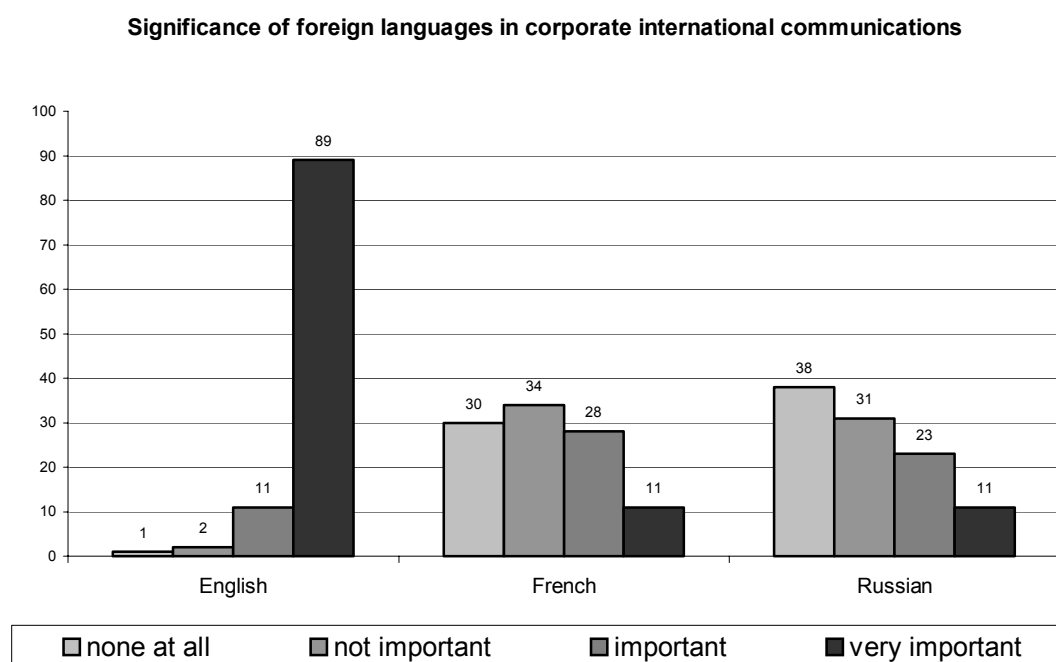
Fig. 4.1. Foreign languages in international communications

The great importance of English as a lingua franca in international business was underlined by Zeh-Glöckler's study from 1999, where 81% of the companies stated they needed English "very frequently" or "frequently" for business communication. According to that study, most companies replied that they need the English

language for communication with customers and business partners (69.4%), followed by exhibitions and trade shows (43.1%), moreover for contact to international organisations (38.9%), contact to head office or subsidiaries (29.2%) and for conferences and training seminars (29.2%).[50]

The fact that English is used as a true lingua franca also becomes obvious from Zeh-Glöckler's study. About forty percent of the companies stated that they use English for communication with English-speaking countries such as the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Forty-seven percent use English as a means of communication with non-English-speaking countries of the European Union, 25% communicate in English with East European business partners, and among the countries and regions that were listed under "others" are Asia, Central and South America, Africa, France and Switzerland.[51] Thus, English is not only used for communication with native speakers, but even more frequently for conversing with speakers of other languages.

This has serious consequences for the type of English that should be taught to business people or that should be used for international business communication in general. No doubt, "proper" English should be the basis for international communications – but what is "proper" English? Due to the spread of the English language throughout "terranglia"[52], English exists in countless regional varieties today:

"Man geht nicht mehr einfach von englischem und amerikanischem Englisch (…) aus, wie es noch vor wenigen Jahrzehnten der Fall war. Stattdessen ist man sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass neben den USA auch die anderen ehemaligen Kolonialgebiete eine Spezifik haben, die (…) differenziert werden muss – zumal diese Gebiete ihre soziopolitische und kulturelle Eigenart mit immer größerem Selbstbewusstsein vertreten."[53]

Traditionally, the British variety used to be the standard for international communication. Due to the dominating position of the USA, many businesspeople demand today that they want to learn American English, since most of their business contact is with partners from the USA. On the other hand, a large

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[50] Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000), p. 44f.
[51] Ibid, p. 45f.
[52] Korte, B.; K.-P. Müller; J. Schmied, *Einführung in die Anglistik* (Stuttgart: Metzler 1997), p. XI.
[53] Ibid.

percentage of international business communication is conducted between partners who both speak English as a second language, which results in completely different challenges. Many interviewees in this study as well as in Zeh-Glöckler's study complain that they have huge difficulties understanding foreign speakers of English. This problem is particularly prominent with speakers from Asia.

Another field where we have to reckon with the fact that business communication is not only directed at native speakers is the creation of international sales material. About 90% of the companies that participated in this study have marketing material in English. On the one hand, it has to be ensured that the English used in that material is absolutely correct, especially if the recipients are supposed to be native speakers of English. On the other hand, however, it has to be ensured that this material is understandable to non-native speakers of English as well. Wordplays, metaphors, culture-specific expressions etc. should thus be used with particular care.

Case study: Internationalisation of Sales Material

A Saxon telecommunications company was thinking about a new slogan, which was to be used world-wide. Most of their customers were based in West European countries, especially in Spain and Italy, but also in some Eastern European countries, the UK and South Africa. Of course, the slogan was to be in English. It was supposed to convey the message that this company offers outstanding service, and that all their customers are extraordinarily satisfied with their services.

The suggestion of the advertising agency was the wordplay "We'll give you a buzz", whose ambiguity comprises the two aspects of meaning the company wanted to express: "to give someone a buzz" means a) to call someone on the telephone – an apt description of the kind of services the company provides, and b) to make someone excited – a synonym for the satisfaction the services of the company create.

However, the management of the company was afraid that this ambiguity of the slogan might not be understood in most of their target countries. So they decided for the more straightforward slogan "We'll excite you", which covers only one level of the intended meaning, the customer satisfaction, but not the hint on the telecommunication services. This decision was based on the assumption that the ambiguous wordplay of "We'll give you a buzz" would not be understood by the

majority of their customers. The understandability of the slogan even to non-native speakers was thus rated higher than linguistic creativity, which could have led to greater memorability and uniqueness of the slogan.

The fact that English is a true lingua franca is also reflected in the fact that many companies use English slogans or English expressions in their corporate communications directed at German-speaking markets. Examples from the survey are the slogan "StarragHeckert. The milling experts." for a Saxon machine tool manufacturer or the slogan "We'll excite you" mentioned above. Another machine tool manufacturer presents itself as "The Technology Provider", a producer of dyeing auxiliaries as "The Solutions Provider". The telecommunications company Komsa advertises with the slogan "The better connection". The objective of such internationalisms is mostly to create one slogan that is understood worldwide and that need not be adapted to the individual target markets. Problems arising from this practise are that these slogans might be hard to pronounce for some German speakers and that their meaning might not be understood to its full extent.

A study issued by Endmark AG, Cologne[54], supports this concern. They tested the understanding of English advertising claims and slogans used in German advertising, the result being that more than 50% of the 1100 participants in that study did not fully understand the intended meaning of the slogans. "Die meisten der untersuchten Slogans wurden von vielen Verbrauchern gar nicht, oder zumindest nicht im Sinne des jeweiligen Absenders, verstanden." Even short slogans such as Siemens' "Be inspired" were understood by a mere 15% of the target group. In some cases, the participants thought they had understood the meaning, but missed the intention of the sender completely. 54% believed the Douglas slogan "Come in and find out" means something like "Come in, and find your way out again"! Only 34% interpreted this claim correctly. Moreover, there were claims that could be literally translated, but did not make much sense to the participants, such as Mitsubishi's "Drive alive" – "Fahre lebend" just did not make sense to most people.

However, the international approach that is conveyed by English slogans is often the more important aspect of meaning that is to be conveyed. Companies position themselves in an aura of international activity, thus elevating themselves to an international standard by using English slogans.

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[54] "Drive alive – fahre lebend? Englische Werbeslogans werden kaum verstanden", in: *Funkschau insider*, supplement of *Funkschau* 20/2003, p. 4.

4.2. English in everyday business

When investigating corporate communications that are conducted in English, we have to distinguish between the following types of communications:

Recipient	Mode
Personal communication	Oral communication
Mass communication	Written communication

From this categorisation, the following situational types that are relevant in business communication can be derived:

oral personal communication:
- making telephone calls
- negotiations
- welcoming guests
- showing guests around the company
- making presentations

written personal communication:
- writing and reading business correspondence
- writing and reading E-Mails
- writing and reading reports and plans
- translating personal letters

written mass communication:
- reading articles in special interest and trade magazines
- writing press releases and articles for international trade magazines
- translating articles from international magazines
- translating data sheet, specifications and technical documentations to foreign languages
- creating or translating mail shots and serial letters
- creating or translating promotional texts for brochures, catalogues, print advertisements

According to Zeh-Glöckler's investigation, the following activities play a major role in the international communication of SMEs[55]:

▪	83.3%	answering phone calls
▪	79.2%	making phone calls
▪	75%	reading letters and faxes
▪	70.8%	reading reports
▪	70.8%	writing letters
▪	58.3%	looking after foreign guests
▪	54.2%	reading trade magazines or specialist books
▪	54.2%	writing reports
▪	41.7%	correcting texts

Fig. 4.2. Major foreign language tasks in SMEs

These results are also mirrored in the requests most participants in English language training courses express when they are asked what areas a premium should be put on in the training. Making phone calls is one of the most frequently mentioned challenges that many employees in internationally active companies are confronted with "very frequently" (11.8%) or "frequently" (36.8%), or at least "sometimes" (29.4%)[56]. Ironically, the communicative act of making a phone call is one of the most challenging tasks for a non-native speaker. It requires good listening comprehension skills, the ability to adapt to accents and dialects, quick reaction and the ability to produce a relevant answer in a relatively short period of time. Moreover, it requires situational skills such as making small talk and following the communicative patterns of telephoning.

Many interviewees complained that they hate making telephone calls with international business partners and stated that they preferred written communication where they have plenty of time to ponder over certain expressions or to consult a grammar book if they are unsure about a certain grammatical construction. Oral communication is always ad hoc and requires communicative skill and a certain level of practice. Another serious obstacle is the great inhibition to speak that was topicalised by many interviewees. They feel insecure about the quality of their spoken English, and they are over-conscious of their weaknesses. The result is that

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[55] The figures indicate the percentage of companies that rated the respective category as "very important". Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000)., p. 81.
[56] Results from Zeh-Glöckler's investigation; cf. Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000)*, p. 62.

many do not dare speak English, let alone on the phone, although they would actually be able to make a sound conversation. Consequently, another one of the most frequently required communicative skills uttered as objectives of English language training courses is "to overcome the inhibition to speak".

4.3. Responsibilities for English language tasks

Whereas Zeh-Glöckler's study focused mainly on the text types that are relevant in international business communications, my study tried to shed light on who is responsible for various communicative tasks. The objective of this approach was to find out if responsibilities and competencies are adequately distributed, and to what extent small and medium-sized companies make use of the services provided by external companies, particularly by translation agencies or communication consultants.

In the selection of communicative tasks I focused on those that are relevant to the presentation of a company to the outside world. The reason is that in these situations, the use of "good" or "correct" English is absolutely vital. It should be beyond doubt that the English used in a brochure, in a contract or on the company's web site should be absolutely correct and therefore possibly done by a professional translator and/or a native speaker of English. The English used in oral presentation situations, such as in negotiations, at trade shows or when showing foreign visitors around the company, need not be perfect, but should be as flawless as possible.

4.3.1. Translation tasks
4.3.1.1. Linguistic background of translation

Translation is the "core skill of converting text from one language to another"[57], or as the Encyclopedia Britannica puts it: "the act or process of rendering what is expressed in one language or set of symbols by means of another language or set of symbols."[58] It seems to be so simple. Yet translation is one of the most complex and intricate tasks of applied linguistics. Translating from one language into another does not only imply matching source words with target words, or transferring the grammatical structures of a source language into a target language. What is required is a transfer of meaning, and a transfer of effect. As Friedrich Schiller put it:

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[57] Sprung, R. C. (ed.), *Translating into success. Cutting-edge strategies for going multilingual in a global age* (Amsterdam Koller /Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2000). p. X.
[58] Quoted in: Stolze, R., *Übersetzungstheorien* (Tübingen: Narr 1994), p. 13.

"Von einer Übersetzung fordre ich, dass sie den Genius der Sprache, in der sie geschrieben ist, nicht aber den der Originalsprache atmet."[59] In order to achieve this, the following standards need to be adhered to:

1) A translation must convey the complete and correct meaning of the original.

2) A translation shall have the same effect on its readers as the original.

3) A translation shall not be felt as a translation.[60]

The ultimate goal of any translation is therefore establishing *equivalence* between source and target text. Assuming that translation between languages is possible[61] in spite of their different structures and systems of perception, equivalence can be established at various linguistic levels, as defined by Mona Baker:[62]

1) Equivalence at word level

2) Equivalence above word level (incl. collocations, idioms and fixed expressions)

3) Grammatical equivalence (e.g. number, gender, person, tense and aspect, active or passive voice, word order)

4) Textual equivalence (theme-rheme structure, functional sentence perspective, cohesion, reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion)

5) Pragmatic equivalence (coherence and implicature)

6 Cultural equivalence

Only when the target text conveys the same message and structure at all levels can it be considered a good translation of the source text. That this requires great skill and a comprehensive knowledge of both source and target language and culture is beyond doubt. Equally beyond doubt should therefore be the demand that translations must be made by professionally trained language experts.

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[59] Friederich, W., *Technik des Übersetzens* (München: Hueber 1969), p. 39, also cf. Schleiermacher's theory as described in Koller, W., *Einführung in die Übersetzungswissenschaft* 5th edn. (Wiesbaden: Quelle & Mayer 1997), p. 43.

[60] Friederich, W., *Technik des Übersetzens* (München: Hueber 1969), p. 39.

[61] This was doubted by the supporters of the theory of linguistic relativity developed by Sapir / Whorf and their predecessors such as Weißgerber or Humboldt, who regarded languages a closed entities with unique structures that cannot be united. Cf. Stolze, R., *Übersetzungstheorien* (Tübingen: Narr 1994), chapter 1.

[62] Cf. Baker, M., *In other words* (London: Routledge 1992).

4.3.1.2. Translation practice in SMEs

The majority of translation tasks are fulfilled internally in SMEs. 58% of translations are made by "linguistically well-trained employees", another 35% are made by the company management[63]. Thus, about twice as many translations are made in-house (93%) than by external providers (49%). The services of professional translators are made use of for texts with a legal significance, such as contracts, manuals or documentations; or texts that represent the company, such as sales material or the company's web site.[64]

Surprisingly, even in text types that should strive for linguistic perfection, especially promotion material and the company web site, about 50-60% of the companies do not make use of the services of external service providers, but prefer to do it in-house. Only 53% of the participating firms refer to external providers to offer support with the creation of advertising material in a foreign language, and only 38% of companies deem external support necessary for the English version of their web site.

The figures for external support with advertising material (53%) significantly correlate to the percentage of companies that claim that they cooperate with advertising agencies for the creation of their corporate literature (56%). This correlation suggests that the support for the translation of the English materials does not come from translation agencies, but from advertising agencies instead. In practise, the procedure is that the creation of sales literature is outsourced to advertising agencies who then subcontract a translator or a translation agency with the translation of the German version. The translation is thus not directly commissioned by the company, but rather by the advertising agency responsible for the creation of the materials.

One drawback of this procedure is that the translators who actually do the translation often have no insight into the company, its philosophy, its products and services and into the company-specific terminology. These factors, however, are

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[63] This approach is not peculiar to Saxony, however. Sprung quotes that "the typical response to a translation request in many US corporations used to be 'Get a secretary to do it'" (in Sprung, R. C. (ed.), *Translating into success. Cutting-edge strategies for going multilingual in a global age* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2000), p. XII).

[64] Zeh-Glöckler observed the same situation in her study from 2000: "Übersetzer werden häufig nur für all die Texte eingesetzt, die rechtlich von Bedeutung sind oder die Firma repräsentieren. Dazu gehören Verträge, Dokumentationen und Werbematerial." Cf. Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000), p. 91.

basic requirements for a convincing and correct translation. The concept of a communications consultant who works directly for the company is one strategy to overcome the communication barriers between translator and company. The idea is that there is one person within the company who is responsible for all communicative tasks in the foreign language. Due to the strong connection with the company, the communications consultant is familiar with the specific vocabulary, but also with the mission of the company, and the consultant would thus be able to make sure that messages are conveyed with the intended meaning.

Another solution to bridge the communicative gap between third-party translators and the company is that translators are allowed to get in direct contact with the company. This sounds obvious, however, it is much too often not the case out of fear of the commissioning agencies that they might lose their mediating function between translator and company and, what is worse, their commission. The best translation results can be achieved if the translator has a chance to see the products he writes about in action, to try them out himself, and to talk to the people who work for the company about their tasks, their mission and their products.

It is obvious that the direct personal contact between translator and company cannot be realised in every case. Often, translations are made over long distances, with a freelance translator in Germany doing a translation via an agency based in France for a British company selling their goods in Switzerland. In such cases, the agency has the responsibility to provide the translator with all relevant material, such as previously published brochures, access to the company's web site, including access to intranet sections, and comprehensive glossaries compiled from previously translated texts. For the translator, it means a considerable amount of extra work to get familiar with the company-specific style and terminology. This extra work pays out in a long-term cooperation, but for smaller jobs there should be an adequate monetary compensation.

Moreover, in order to ensure best possible results, translated texts should always be double-checked by someone in the company, ideally a person responsible for international sales that is familiar with the specific terms in the target language. It is a sad fact that many people in the companies who are responsible for international communications think that a translator for English is at the same time a specialist in any field. They often expect that translators are familiar with all fields of specialisation. Often, however, the source texts contain a number of specific terms

that are not even commonly understood in German, so how can the translator know the exact English cognate? Of course, there are specialist dictionaries, but often technical terms have several meanings, and for a non-specialist, it is extremely hard to guess the correct variety of a term not known to him from a list of between five and ten suggestions.

Thus, companies need to become aware that translating for a company is always about giving and taking. The translator can give his knowledge of linguistic structures, about syntax, grammar and vocabulary, about style and pitfalls resulting from differences between the languages. The company, on the other hand, must contribute their specialist knowledge and their experience in dealing with the target markets. Only then can the result be correct both from the linguistic and from the technical perspective.

Many of the mistakes and flaws that I discovered in the analysis of the advertising material that the interviewed companies provided for this survey can be traced back to a lack of cooperation between company and translator. There are two different varieties of a wrong approach to translating sales material:

1) The material is translated by someone who knows about good style, uses correct syntax and grammar, but is not familiar with the specific terms relevant for this company.

2) The material is translated by someone with a technical or company-specific background, often from within the company. Technical terms are rendered correctly, but syntax, grammar and style feature serious weaknesses.

From the analysis of the material provided by the companies and from the intensive interviews it appears that the second approach is practised most frequently by SMEs in Saxony. Many managers stressed explicitly that they value a correct translation of specific terms higher than good style or even linguistic correctness. Zeh-Glöckler observed this attitude in her study as well, and she confirms that sales material is often translated in-house: "Sprachlicher Mängel ist man sich dabei durchaus bewusst, akzeptiert sie jedoch als kleineres (...) Übel."[65] The results of this approach are mirrored in the analysis report table[66]. Only seldom are there

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[65] Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000). p. 76.
[66] Cf. chapter 12 and Appendix III.

mistakes in the technical vocabulary, but there are numerous faults in the fields of syntax, style or non-specialist vocabulary. The comparatively high number of "false friends" that were used in the sales material provided by the companies is also a sign for the insufficient linguistic qualification of the translators.

Case study: Translation of Advertising Texts for an Engineering Company

The following case study illustrates the practical aspects of the translation process within the company and the balancing act between linguistic correctness, technical correctness and advertising style:

The first text is the German version that was written by the marketing manager of the company and then edited by an advertising copywriter, who adapted the style to the requirements of the target group "purchasing managers in the automotive industry":

Hochgenaues Fräsen von Haupt- und Hublagern für Kurbelwellen

Das neue CNC-Fräsbearbeitungszentrum XY von ABC spart Kosten und Zeit

Besonders in der Automobilindustrie kommt es auf kostengünstige und flexible Produktion sowie auf kurze Durchlaufzeiten an. Dies gilt sowohl für die Großserienfertigung als auch für kleine Losgrößen. Das neue Fräsbearbeitungszentrum XY wurde speziell für diese hohen Ansprüche konzipiert.

Innovatives Design spart Zeit und Geld

Auf Grundlage des bewährten Drehmaschinenbaukastens der X-Reihe überzeugt die XY durch eine Reihe revolutionärer Neuerungen. Das steife Maschinengestell in Gussausführung mit kombiniertem Wälz-Gleitführungssystem ist die Grundlage für hohe Genauigkeiten bei maximaler Dämpfung. Je nach Kapazitätsanforderung können ein oder zwei kompakte Fräseinheiten die außenverzahnten Scheibenfräser mit hoher Schneidenanzahl in A11 Werkzeug-Spindeln aufnehmen. Der Spindelantrieb mittels Spindel-Einbaumotor erfolgt über nur zwei Zahneingriffe ohne Riemen. Das Werkstück wird in zwei spiegelbildlichen, elektronisch synchronisierten Spindeln mit neuartigem Linear-Einbaumotor bewegt. Die Werkzeug- und Werkstückantriebe sind flüssigkeitsgekühlt. Neben der Hauptlagerbearbeitung kann auf der neuen XY die exzentrische Hublagerbearbeitung in einer Aufspannung realisiert werden. Teure Spannvorrichtungen zur zentrischen Anordnung der Hublager werden nicht mehr benötigt. Die erzielten Genauigkeiten reduzieren den

Aufwand zum Fertigschleifen der Lagersitze beträchtlich – ein weiterer Kostenfaktor, der für diese Maschine spricht.

Intelligenter Aufbau vereinfacht Service und Wartung

Das kompakte Maschinendesign mit Standard-Baugruppen für eine effiziente Ersatzteilhaltung ist die Grundlage für die Servicefreundlichkeit der Maschine. Der Arbeitsraum ist sehr gut zugänglich, die rechte Werkstückspindel und die Lünetten sind NC-verstellbar. Rüst- und Werkzeugwechselzeiten werden dadurch deutlich minimiert. Die Werkstück- und Werkzeugspindeln sowie die Medienversorgung für Hydraulik, Spindelkühlung, Schmierung und Pneumatik sind wartungsfreundlich angeordnet. Stellglieder und Sensoren sind über das modulare Profibus-System angeschlossen. All dies vereinfacht die Instandhaltung spürbar.

This text was translated by a translator specialising in advertising and copywriting, who consulted the experts of the company with respect to specialist terms. Here comes the result, which is both well-written and technically correct:

High-Precision Milling of Main and Pin Bearings for Crankshafts

The New CNC Milling Center XY from ABC saves Costs and Time

Cost-efficient, flexible production and short cycle times is what really matters today – especially in the automotive industry. This goes not only for small batches, but just as well for large batch sizes. The new milling center XY has been specially designed to meet these ambitious demands.

Innovative Design Saves Time and Money

Based on the tried and tested modular system of the X-series turning machines, the new XY scores with a number of revolutionary innovations. The rigid cast frame with combined linear-antifriction guides guarantees highest precision with maximum vibration damping. Depending on the required capacity, one or two compact milling units can pick up multi-blade side-milling cutters with external gears in A11 tool spindles. The spindle is driven by means of a built-in spindle motor via as few as two gear meshes without belt. The workpiece is moved in two mirroring tool spindles, which are electronically synched and which feature a novel built-in linear motor. Tool and workpiece drives are liquid cooled. With the new XY, not only main bearings can be machined, but eccentric cutting of pin bearings is also made possible – in just one setup! The machining results are so accurate that the bearing seats can be finish-ground with considerably less effort. Moreover, expensive clamping fixtures

for center-positioning the pin bearings are no longer needed – just another cost factor in favor of this outstanding machining center.

Intelligent Structure for Easy Service and Maintenance

The machine is particularly service-friendly - another decisive advantage. This is due to the compact design, whose standardized components make the stocking of spare parts even more efficient. The easy-access working area makes tool change quick and simple. An adjustable right-hand workpiece spindle and flexible steady rests drastically cut set-up times. The clever arrangement of tool and workpiece spindles guarantees easy maintenance. Another benefit for easy maintenance is the unhindered access to the utility supply for hydraulics, compressed air, spindle cooling and lubrication. Actuators and sensors are connected via a modular Profibus-System.

Then occurred something that is fairly bizarre both from an advertising and from a linguistic point of view: The above text was proofread by the German engineers who are responsible for selling these machines abroad. They claimed they cannot understand this text. Among others, they maintained that "novel" is a book and cannot be used in the context of "a novel built-in linear motor". Of course, "novel" is also an adjective with the meaning of "new", but since the engineers did not know this meaning, they would not have it in their brochure. So they asked a technical translator to translate this text again. Here comes the result:

Highest precision upon milling of main and pin bearings for crankshafts
The new XY Milling Center of ABC saves cost and time

Cost-effective and flexible production as well as short cycle times are of particular importance in automotive industry. This applies both to large-batch and small-batch manufacture. The new crankshaft milling center XY was specially designed to meet these ambitious demands.

Based upon the approved modular lathe construction kit of the N series, the new XY model features quite a number of revolutionary innovations. The rigid machine frame in cast construction with combined linear-antifriction guides ensures high accuracy with maximum damping. According to the capacity required, one or two compact milling units can locate the externally-toothed side milling cutters with a high number of edges in A11 cutter spindles. Spindle drive via built-in spindle motor takes place

only through two gear meshes without belt. The part is moved in two mirror-inverted, electronically synchronized spindles with new linear built-in motor. Tool and workpiece drives are liquid-cooled. Further to main bearing cutting, eccentric pin bearing cutting can be performed on the new XY in one setup. So, expensive clamping fixtures for concentric location of pin bearings are not required any more. The accuracy achieved considerably reduces finish-grind work of bearing seats – another cost factor that speaks for this machine.

Intelligent construction eases servicing and maintenance

The compact machine design with standard components for efficient spare parts warehousing is the keystone for the machine's service-friendliness. The working area is easily accessible, the right workspindle and steadyrests are NC-adjustable. As a consequence, setup and tool change times are considerably reduced. Workspindles and cutter spindles as well as utility supply for hydraulics, spindle cooling, lubrication, and pneumatics are arranged service-friendly. Actuators and sensors are connected through a modular Profibus system. All this contributes to a noticeable ease of servicing.

This version is not exactly wrong, true. Still, there are a number of syntactic flaws, stylistic slips and non-appropriate vocabulary choices that turn this text into an obvious and mediocre translation from German. Most syntactic constructions were transferred from German one to one, often rendering an unnatural structure in English. All these faults, which were confirmed as being either "incorrect" or "clumsy" by a native speaker who checked this text, are underlined in the text above. The irony is that in spite of the urgent pleas of the translator of the first text in favour of her version, the company decided to print the second version, thus bearing evidence to the fact that not only the awareness for the importance of good style is underdeveloped, but that at the same time technical aspects are valued significantly higher than linguistic and stylistic considerations.

Case Study: Collection of Translation Pitfalls from the Corporate Brochures of Saxon Companies

The following collection gives a couple of examples from corporate literature of Saxon SMEs. If we consider the high costs for producing the material as well as the damage to the international reputation of these companies due to these incorrect translations, these examples of translation pitfalls are more than just embarrassing.

An attempt of a linguistic classification of the most frequent mistakes and linguistic interferences can be found in the analysis of syntactic and lexical interferences in the sample brochures[67].

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by *goodness sign*: RAL GZ 251
> "Meine Güte-Zeichen" (choice of words)

The following pictures are *shoeing* examples
> "ziehen den Beispielen die Schuhe an"

for a *heathy rowth*
> "for a HEALTHY GROWTH" (spelling)

"absolut<u>ly</u> purity in view of alien elements and growth *demaged* substances."
> wrong grammar and spelling

"The constantly high quality of the BIOFLADER® our firm XX can guarantee you always. For that our own laboratory and an independent one takes care."
> syntactic interference

"No pound or hum *makes trembling the air*."
> syntactic interference

"*anonyme* facades"
> wrong choice of words

"Chemnitz' entrepreneurs *had not their villas but just their factories built* by famous architects"
> wrong syntax

"There are especially the factories *and the dating back to the turn of the century living quarters*...which make Chemnitz worth seeing."
> syntactic interference

"The Municipal Theatres of Chemnitz *together with the reopened in 1992 opera-house*, one of the most up-to-date theatres in Europe, and the playhouse are nationally and internationally well known and highly esteemed..."
> syntactic interference

"*f.ex.*" = for example
> violation of conventions

"*this actual theme*" = dieses aktuelle Thema
> lexical interference

"enjoy pieces *of Wagner*"
"Have at first a look into the Sales Guide *for your stimulation* and *than* take the time to *make the intensive acquaintance* with the city."
> wrong choice of words

"*quality-assuringly* and *customer orients*"
> grammar and wrong choice of words

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[67] Cf. Chapter 12.3.12.

Slogan: "*lion-strongly*"
> grammar

"Only as a team mean has a chance"
> syntax

"*Bad* and Breakfast"
> spelling

4.3.1.3. Bridging the gap between content and style

Thus, a solution needs to be found to meet the challenge of creating a text that is both technically correct and stylistically attractive. The problem was identified in Zeh-Glöckler's study as well, and she reports on her impressions during the interviews with company executives: "Dabei kam insbesondere die Schwierigkeit zum Ausdruck, hoch spezialisierte Übersetzer zu finden, die in der Lage sind, den fachsprachlichen Ausgangstext zu verstehen und zu übersetzen und außerdem über werbepsychologische Kenntnisse verfügen."[68] The most fruitful solution is the interdisciplinary cooperation between technical experts, advertising specialists and translators. However, most companies avoid this approach due to the "cost factor", which is a dangerously short-sighted approach. "Smart companies understand that translation is a strategic imperative. It requires complex planning and analysis, with significant investment of time and resources to achieve the ultimate goal of lower translation costs, higher quality, and shorter turnaround time."[69]

A good copywriter for the German text, a translator with a feeling for advertising style and an expert in the company to provide consultation and support with the technical aspects of the text can ensure professional results. Many translators have experience in advertising, and if the experts in the company are willing to answer the translator's queries, they can together create sales material that is linguistically, stylistically and technically correct and that is written in a somewhat punchy style so that it is attractive and convincing to international customers as well. Various translation theories (e.g. those developed by Reiß/Vermer[70]) have rightfully maintained that language and culture are interdependent. Robert C. Sprung puts it

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[68] Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000), p. 76.
[69] Sprung, R. C. (ed.), *Translating into success. Cutting-edge strategies for going multilingual in a global age* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2000). p. XV.
[70] Reiß, K., H. J. Vermeer, *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* 2nd edn. (Tübingen: Narr 1991).

in a nutshell with the following words: "Effective translation bridges the gap between cultures, not merely words."[71]

After all, the result should not be a mere translation, but rather an adaptation, defined by Angela Goddard as follows: "Text or, in advertising terms, 'copy', is said to be adapted, rather than translated, when it cannot simply be translated in a word-for-word way, but rather some consideration has to be given to the overall approach or message of the text, to see if that is likely to work within the target culture."[72]

However, companies need to increase their awareness of the importance of good style, and they need to develop a feeling in order to be able to judge what is a good translation and what is a poor one. In his book "Einführung in die Übersetzungswissenschaft", Werner Koller also complains that many companies and their representatives have not yet realised that translation is a highly qualified task. He observes: "Notwendigkeit, Wert und Funktion des Übersetzens, die Wichtigkeit des Übersetzerberufs und die Rolle der Übersetzung in allen Kommunikationsbereichen unserer Kultur sind erkannt, wenn auch leider weder in einer breiteren Öffentlichkeit noch bei vielen Auftraggebern"[73], and he continues: "…man ignoriert nur allzu leicht die Tatsache, dass es im Bereich des Übersetzens wie auch im Bereich des Dolmetschens qualitativ streng abgestufte Funktionen gibt, die man nicht über einen Kamm scheren kann."[74] Robert C. Sprung confirms the neglected image of the profession of a translator from a transatlantic perspective: "Purchasers of language services are often unaware of the skill needed to recast text in a foreign tongue. Translation is often thankless; ask a dozen marketing managers for their experience, and their only memories will be of translation errors. A professional translation does not enjoy praise – it merely avoids criticism."[75]

Ironically, translation jobs are more often outsourced by companies whose people in charge have a very good knowledge of English themselves. They are aware of the challenges and pitfalls that can occur in translating a text into English, and they appreciate the quality of professional translations more than their inexperienced colleagues do. This can be propped with my own experience as a freelance

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[71] Sprung, R. C. (ed.), *Translating into success. Cutting-edge strategies for going multilingual in a global age* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2000), p. XIV.
[72] Goddard, A., *The Language of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1998), p. 123.
[73] Koller, W., *Einführung in die Übersetzungswissenschaft* 5th edn. (Wiesbaden: Quelle & Mayer 1997), p. 24.
[74] Ibid, p. 26.
[75] Sprung, R. C. (ed.), *Translating into success. Cutting-edge strategies for going multilingual in a global age* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2000). p. XII.

translator and copywriter. Two of my most demanding customers are companies that are led by executives who speak English as their native or as a second language. From a linguistic point of view, it would only be too easy for them to translate their material themselves. However, they are well aware of the subtleties and difficulties of creating good advertising copy, and they trust my experience and skill. They are also the only ones who actually and honestly appreciate the quality of the results. This is a natural phenomenon: the better one knows a language, the more aware one is of the subtleties of the language as well as of one's own deficiencies – and the more one is going to appreciate the services of a qualified person whose competence in this field exceeds one's own expertise. On the other hand, when I explicitly mentioned the poor quality of their sales material to some of the interviewees, they expressed their regrets that their command of English is not sufficient enough to judge the quality of the translation that is delivered to them by third parties.

After looking at the responsibilities for the translation tasks within a company in general, I am now going to illuminate a some other fields of communicative activities.

4.3.2. International contracts

The draft of international contracts is largely the responsibility of the company management. More than half of the contracts are written by the executives themselves, 31% make use of the help of their employees, and only 27% consult external service providers for support with international contracts. It is surprising that only such a small number of companies turn to professional help with this text type, as wrong formulations in contracts can have serious legal consequences. All interviewees were aware of this fact, but they all claimed it was too expensive to consult either a translation agency or an international lawyer or even both. However, this seems to be a fairly myopic approach.

4.3.3. Negotiations

With a share of 44% and 48% respectively, management and employees have about the same level of responsibility for negotiations in English. External service providers are occasionally used by 30% of the companies. In English language company courses, negotiations are often mentioned as one of the most urgent

topics to be taught, and companies express a great need for negotiation skills in English. It is beyond doubt that good negotiation skills are an area of competence that executives and employees should be able to handle themselves. The ultimate objective of English language training and interpreting services provided by a language service provider should be to enable the people within the company to conduct negotiations in English themselves. Offering interpretation services should only be an interim state of communications consulting. However, many interviewees stated that they feel more secure and confident in a negotiation if they have an interpreter by their side, because it reduces the anxiety as well as the pressure to make no mistakes.

4.3.4. Looking after international guests

Taking care of international guests is the major resort of senior management. More than two thirds of the participating companies (69%) claim that the managing directors see to the well-being of international guests themselves. This figure indicates the premium significance that international guests are credited. Another 52% of the companies ask their employees to take care of visitors from abroad. External support is only made use of by a very small percentage of companies. Generally, this approach is sensible as it expresses the high esteem of the company towards the foreign guests. The presentation of the company and its products can be handled well by most executives. However, many managers complain that they have large difficulties entertaining their guests, especially in the communicative situations of socialising and small talk. In such situations, a communications consultant who is familiar with the company, its people and its products could provide valuable services. The consultant could accompany the guests at dinners or during sightseeing trips and make sure they feel well looked after and cared for. This is particularly interesting as many executives claimed that they do enjoy looking after their guests, but on the other hand they cannot neglect their everyday work and cannot afford to spend whole days with their guests visiting sights or going on trips. This would be an interesting task for a communications consultant, and it would both save time for the executives and create goodwill with the guests.

4.3.5. International trade fairs

The personal attention of the company's staff is also in the foreground when it comes to international trade fairs. More than half of the interviewed companies send their managing directors (54%) or employees with a good command of English (42%) to international trade fairs. Twelve percent use the services of external providers such as interpreters or multilingual attendants to attend their stand at the show.

Bearing in mind that establishing and maintaining personal contacts is the most important objective of participating in trade fairs, this approach seems reasonable. However, many executives complain that their level of English is not sufficient to present their company appropriately at the fair. On the other hand, the costs for an extra interpreter are often considered too high. This argument seems not too strong though, if we take the immense costs into account that occur in relation with an international trade show. Budgets of several tens of thousands of Euros are not unusual for the participation in an international fair, and at a daily rate of between 300 and 600 Euro, the costs for an interpreter would not stretch the budget significantly. Again, it is more or less a question of awareness and esteem that companies express towards their international communications.

4.3.6. Presentations

Presentations in English are also mostly held by the staff themselves. Only 16% of the companies use the support of external interpreters during the presentation or of translators to prepare the presentation. Executives and employees have an equal share in giving presentations in English, at 43% and 44% respectively. Due to the high percentage of internal staff responsible for presentations, this topic should be increasingly included in corporate language training, and many participants in English language courses express an explicit demand in practising presentation skills.

4.3.7. Business correspondence and telephoning

Everyday communication tasks are almost exclusively handled internally. Only two percent of the participating companies refer to external help with their international correspondence or telephone calls. The majority of correspondence and calls is

handled by well-trained employees (71%). In fifty percent of the companies, the management is in charge of these tasks.

Due to these high percentages, a premium should be put on making telephone calls and writing business letters in English language training as well. The staff have to be enabled to handle their everyday communicative tasks themselves with a satisfactory quality. It makes little sense to outsource these fields of communication completely, since often quick reaction and personal contact to the people in charge is required.

4.3.8. Media relations

When evaluating the response to this section, we have to bear in mind that most companies do not pursue international media relations.[76] Out of those who do, the responsibility lies clearly with the management (34%). About one fifth (18%) of the companies have employees do their press work, and 21% refer to external service providers.

4.3.9. English version of the internet presentation

This is one of the few fields where the majority of the responsibility lies outside the company. Thirty-eight percent of the firms claim that external service providers are responsible for their internet presentation in English. However, in analogy to the field of advertising and promotion, I assume that these service providers are largely internet providers that are responsible for the design and the programming of the web sites and not exactly translators. In most cases, the multimedia designers and programmers who develop the web sites outsource the translation of the content into English to a translator. This means that here the same problems and challenges apply as to the creation and translation of printed sales material.

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[76] Cf. chapter 9.

4.3.10. Summary responsibilities

	Management	Employees with a good command of foreign languages	External service providers
Translations	35%	**58%**	49%
Creation of sales material in foreign languages	28%	34%	**53%**
Press work / PR international	**34%**	18%	21%
English internet presentation	20%	32%	38%
Looking after international guests	**69%**	52%	6%
International trade shows	**54%**	42%	12%
Presentations in English	43%	**44%**	16%
Negotiations	44%	**48%**	30%
International contracts	**53%**	31%	27%
Correspondence / telephoning	50%	**71%**	2%

Fig.4.3. Responsibilities for international communication tasks in SMEs[77]

The following chart provides an overview of the responsibilities in terms of international corporate communications.

Fig. 4.4. Comparison of responsibilities in international communications

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[77] The bold figures indicate where the major responsibility for this particular task lies.

What is striking is the large percentage of communicative tasks that are fulfilled internally. Especially in areas where face-to-face communication is required, such as taking care of international visitors or representing the company at international trade fairs, the management prefers to be personally involved. In presentations and negotiations the share of employees and junior executives is larger, and the support of external providers is still very low. External providers are largely referred to in the field of non-personal written communication, as in the case of sales material, the company web site, translations and contracts. One of the consequences is that the focus in English courses should indeed be on oral communication skills, as it has been demanded by the approach of "communicative competence" for years.

All in all, about twice as many tasks are performed internally as compared to tasks where external service providers come into play. This would be no reason to worry if the people in charge were proficient in the foreign language. However, this is not the case. Many executives admit that the command of English of the people who have to use it is far from satisfactory.

Another question that arises if we have a look at the high percentage of tasks fulfilled by senior executives is if the time schedule of those people actually allows them to take care of such profane tasks as doing press work, translations or business correspondence. Most of them claimed that of course, they do not have the time and that they are aware that they should dedicate their time to more demanding tasks, but then they said that there was no adequately qualified person in their company who could fulfil those routine tasks. This seems to be a sign of poor management skills, because the ability to outsource tasks that distract the executive from his core tasks is one of the fundamental qualifications of a good senior executive.

To put it in a nutshell, many companies claim that they cannot afford the support of external service providers for highly sensitive communicative tasks. However, I assume that a lack of awareness for the impact of a high-quality presentation in a foreign language also contributes to the fact that the majority of international communication tasks are fulfilled in-house. Thus, there is a large scope for improvement where the services of highly-qualified communication consultants could prove very beneficial.

4.4. Command of English of employees and executives in German SMEs

4.4.1. Command of English of the people in charge of international communication tasks

Based on the survey results of the question of who is responsible in SMEs for foreign language tasks, and for English language tasks in particular, it is interesting to illuminate the aspect of how good the command of English of the people in charge of international communication tasks actually is. After all, eight out of ten foreign language tasks that need to be fulfilled in small and medium-sized companies are handled internally. Oral foreign language tasks that involve personal contact such as trade shows or presentations or that are part of everyday business routine such as making phone calls are handled internally in most cases, whereas written tasks such as translations or the creation of sales material are outsourced more often. If almost eighty percent of international communications within a company is handled by its employees, the question suggests itself of how good their English language skills actually are and what quality the communication has.

About two thirds of the participating companies rated the command of English of the employees responsible for foreign languages either "good" or "satisfactory". This seems to be sufficient for everyday tasks. After all, communicative competence in everyday situations is to be valued higher than linguistic perfection. Most interviewees have the same attitude towards this question and maintain that their level of English is sufficient to meet their everyday communicative needs.

Command of English of the People in charge of foreign language tasks
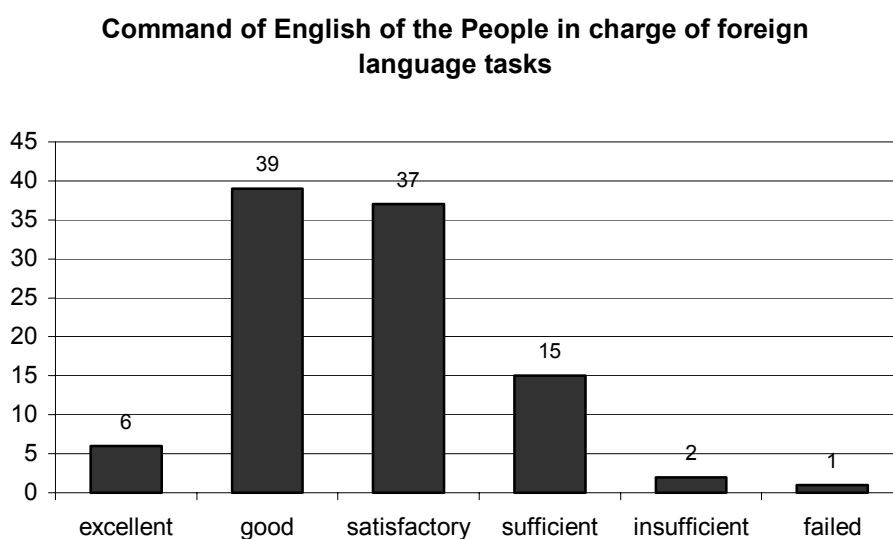
Fig. 4.5. Command of English

The results are significantly better than those of Zeh-Glöckler's study from 1999, where the same question was raised. In her investigation, the majority of interviewees rated their level of English only satisfactory and poorer. Only 20.8% of the people interviewed in her study claimed their English was "good" or even "very good". This share has risen to the impressive rate of 44% in this study, and the definitive majority (80%) of interviewees rated their command of English on the first half of the scale, i.e. satisfactory or better.

4.4.2. The "English-Gap" between East and West Germany

Many interviewees pointed out their opinion that the level of English language skills of employees is one of the major differences between East and West Germans. They said their West German colleagues do often not speak better English, but they are not ashamed of using it. They have recognised that communication is the ultimate objective – they have reached a level of "communicative competence", which is the declared aim of most contemporary English language courses and text books. One reason might be that West German speakers have been surrounded by the English language for all their life, and it has become a part of their lives. For many East Germans, on the other hand, English had an exotic flavour until only a decade ago, and they just do not feel comfortable or naturally at home in that language. It has occurred in many language courses with participants aged 40+ that the Russian translation came to their mind immediately, but they had no chance of retrieving the English expression.

The "English gap" between East and West Germany is still considered a major problem by many interviewees. According to popular opinion, the English language skills of East Germans are lagging considerably behind those of their West German countrymen. This myth is hard to prove, and one does not need to search long for stories in support of this thesis. A native freelance English trainer who used to work in Chemnitz but recently moved to Hamburg pointed out how happy he was that at last he can speak "real" English again and confirmed from his daily experience how significant the difference in the knowledge of English is between East and West. Many West German managers in executive positions in Eastern companies complain that they have to spend a lot of time doing their English correspondence themselves, whereas in the Western federal states these tasks are fulfilled by a secretary as a matter of course . Another example is the fact that many West

German companies reject to have their translations done by professional translators from East Germany – and that in spite of the lower rates East German translators charge. The prejudice that East Germans cannot speak English properly is absolutely prevailing. On the other hand, there are the experiences of excellently trained graduates of secretary colleges, most of whom migrate to the West because they claim they cannot find a job in the East that challenges their skills and that pays properly.

4.4.3. A positive outlook

Comparing the results of this survey with Zeh-Glöckler's study from 1999 and bearing in mind that a period of four years lies between these two investigations, the improvement noted of the command of English of employees in Saxony in this study presents a very positive outlook and can be interpreted as a great leap forward. Even if we leave possible digressions and inaccuracies that might result from a different interview method or a different sample of target companies aside, the increase in the confidence of Saxon managers in their own command of English is amazing. After all, it has more than doubled in the last four years! This is a very positive result, and for this there are a variety of reasons.

On the one hand, the late 1990s were a time of huge investments in English language training in Saxony. The government provided substantial subsidies for language training, language schools were fully booked, and almost every company offered English language courses for their employees. It is great to see that these efforts are now bearing fruit.

On the other hand, one has to bear in mind that the interviewees were asked to assess their own level of English, i.e. the results are actually a reflection of their own awareness and how they value their own skills. The improvement does therefore not necessarily mean that the English language skills have improved indeed over the past four years, but at any rate has the confidence of the people in their own English language skills grown significantly. With the assumption that what we strive for is communicative competence rather than linguistic perfection, this result has to be interpreted equally positively. Psychological barriers and the strategy to prefer to say nothing for fear of making a mistake were two of the largest obstacles that inhibited people from East Germany to speak English for many years after the political change. If the results of the latest survey mean that this self-conscious attitude has

now been overcome, it would be a great progress for the communicative competence of the employees in East German SMEs.

4.4.4. English language training in SMEs

In spite of this progress in comparison to the study from 1999, all interviewees expressed the wish to improve their English. If their command of English was better, most of the interviewees claimed that their chances on international markets would be considerably improved. This applies particularly to the smaller companies that do not cooperate with partners or sales agencies abroad and thus have to handle all communication activities themselves. Many directors claimed that their business success in Germany depends to a large degree on their own convincing sales strategies and pervasive power, which is largely built on verbal and rhetoric skills that are particularly hard to obtain in a foreign language.

Thus, it is only natural that most companies take measures to improve the English language skills of their employees. According to the survey, every second company (50.5%) offers internal English language training courses for their employees. Courses in other languages are offered only extremely rarely. Two companies said they had Spanish and Italian courses in their companies, but those courses are usually related to concrete projects that have to be implemented in the respective countries. English courses, on the other hand, are mostly offered as a standard, even if there is no immediate need to put the skills into practice. In today's business environment, a good command of English is considered a prerequisite, which is beyond doubt if we bear in mind that English functions as a lingua franca also for communication with non-English-speaking business partners.[78]

Most of the companies offer these courses free of charge to their employees. The costs are borne by the company. In seven percent the courses are organised by the company, but the employees have to pay for the course themselves. The latter approach has the advantage that this way, only motivated participants are selected, and that no one feels forced to sit in on the course. This can sometimes become a problem in official company courses. However, if the objective of the training courses is a consistent and long-term language strategy, the decision of which employee has to take part in the course should not be made on the basis of who

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[78] Zeh-Glöckler observed in her interviews that even in countries where German used to be the traditional lingua franca, such as in Hungary or the Czech Republic, English is considerably on the move. Cf. Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000).

would like to participate, but rather whose function requires that person to improve their English language skills.

According to the typology of courses used by Zeh-Glöckler[79], most company courses can be described as long-term group courses. Most courses extend over a period of at least six months, with an average of 3-4 lessons a week. Although most companies agree that better results could be achieved if lessons took place on two days of the week, their business routine does not allow this procedure. So 3 to 4 hour courses on one day of the week are the overall rule.

The average group size varies between 4 and 10 participants, which is a reasonable size not only from the cost perspective, but also from a teaching point of view. In such groups, interaction between the participants becomes possible, both in the form of pair work and group work. Pairs and groups can be mixed according to the requirements of the respective tasks and to the different levels of skills.

When the groups are assigned, the premium should be on groups with a homogenous level of knowledge. This seems to be obvious, but causes considerable problems in practise. Many executives responsible for the organisation of language training in their company try to allocate courses according to executive levels. They strive to organise all their seniors in one course, the juniors in another, and secretaries and assistants in yet a different course. Asked for their motives, many senior managers admitted that they feel ashamed when they are in the same course with their inferiors, even worse if they have to realise that their secretary's English is better than their own. Such considerations are, of course, completely out of place in language training, especially if one bears in mind that the objective of such courses should be the personal progress of all participants in line with their individual skills. The competent consultancy of a language expert and a proper language development strategy can help solve these problems.

4.4.4.1. Language training as part of the personnel development strategy

Corporate language courses are a vital factor of the personnel development strategies in SMEs. Most companies have recognised the importance of developing the linguistic skills of their employees, and 43.7% provide considerable assets for this field of training. The money that is spent on language training should be used

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[79] Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000)., p. 158.

wisely, however. The best way to ensure optimum results is a clear concept and a well thought-out strategy. Every good English teacher, every language school offering English courses and every language consultant should make it their standard not only to offer English lessons, but to offer consultancy about how the participants in the course can make the most of it.

Zeh-Glöckler presents a valuable approach in her book, which forms the basis of the following considerations[80]. The first step in the development of a decent language strategy should be the analysis of the current situation and the target situation. From these key points, the steps that have to be taken in order to reach the objectives need to be defined.

4.4.4.2. Analysis of the current situation

The following questions need to be considered:

- What English language tasks need to be handled in the company?
- Which of these tasks are handled internally, which ones are outsourced? Where? Is this a sensible approach or should responsibilities be assigned in a different manner?
- Who are the people who have to deal with English language tasks most frequently?
- What kind of communicative tasks do they primarily handle (e.g. telephoning, personal contact, writing, reading, translating etc.)?
- What is their individual level of English?

4.4.4.3. Definition of goals

Based on the analysis of these key points, the objectives of the training can be derived. Which employees are the communicative pillars of the company? The objective is to enable these "A" people most urgently to use English correctly in situations that are relevant in their everyday work. Apart from these "A" people, the carriers of international communication within the company, there might be "B" and "C" people, who also need a good command of English for their work, but who are either not in direct contact with English-speaking clients and partners or who need their skills only rarely.

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[80] Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000), p. 158ff.

Ideally, all the "A" people should be assigned to the same group, the same applies to the "B" and "C" candidates. In practise, this will work in very few cases only, since they will have different levels of skills to begin with. In these cases, the implementation of additional courses should be considered. Those candidates who should be assigned to the A group but whose knowledge of English is significantly poorer than that of the rest of the group, could participate in a pre-course, which could be organised as a crash course, for example. After they have successfully completed that introductory course, a homogenous group consisting of the communication carriers within the company can be successfully implemented.

The creation of homogenous groups is one of the most vital preconditions for the success of the corporate language strategy. In order to ensure an equal level of all participants, tests should be conducted prior to the allocation of groups. All potential participants should take part in the test, which should ideally consist of a written and an oral part. Based on the results, learners with similar levels of English can be assigned to the same group. If the company pursues the strategy described above and prefers to assort the participants according to their communicative function within the company rather than their actual level of English, steps need to be taken to improve the knowledge of those participants who do not meet the requirements yet.

After the groups have been assigned, the duration of the course as well as the contents need defining. In practise, most courses extend over 60 to 80 lessons, which results in an overall duration of approximately 6 months. Most companies, however, offer follow-up courses, so that the implementation of a long-term strategy becomes feasible. This only makes sense, however, if the objectives and contents of the complete series of courses are defined from the very beginning, so as to make sure the participants have a good chance to develop their skills in a strategic manner. Only if they know from the beginning which course is following after their current course, and in which ways it will take them further on their road to success, can they fully concentrate on achieving their personal goals.

Another problem of corporate language courses is that most participants hardly find time to do additional work at home or to revise the contents of the previous lessons, although this is actually an essential part of successful language training. Nevertheless, teachers should always try to convince their students to develop their English skills outside the course as well. This can be achieved by assigning

"voluntary" homework or providing extra material that students can work with at home. The effect of the language course can be greatly enhanced this way.

The contents of the language courses should meet two major criteria: First, they should be tailored to the immediate requirements in the company and of the participants (*"bedarfsgerecht"*), and second they should be as close to life as possible (*"praxisorientiert"*)[81]. Zeh-Glöckler asked the participants in her study what they consider the most urgent areas of improvement for themselves, and here is an overview of their responses in order of importance[82]:

Oral skills:
- general speaking skills
- specific vocabulary
- general vocabulary
- negotiations and meetings
- presentations
- telephoning / listening comprehension
- small talk

Writing skills:
- general writing skills
- grammar / style / orthography
- specific vocabulary
- business correspondence / reports
- contracts and legal texts
- translating German - English
- translating English – German
- reading comprehension

These lists might serve as a guideline for the determination of the actual requirements within any particular company. If these skills are developed in the language course, the criterion of meeting the individual needs within the company should be fulfilled. The other criterion, practise-orientation, requires some more efforts on the side of the teacher. If one compares the skills that are required by most Saxon companies as listed above with the contents of most business

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[81] Cf. Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000), p. 169.
[82] Ibid, p. 93ff.

textbooks, it becomes obvious that they focus exactly on these skills. However, the sample texts and exercises are not always consistent with the everyday needs of the participants in the individual courses. No doubt, most of the textbooks on the market are very good quality, and textbooks should of course play a role as a teaching material.

However, a single textbook can only rarely cover all the needs of an individual company. Business English books often cover a wide range of general business skills, but only rarely do they offer an opportunity to actually focus on the real-life situation in the company itself. Zeh-Glöckler also describes this dilemma and suggests that textbooks should not play an overly dominant role in business English training:

"Auch die zum Teil verbreitete 'Lehrbuchgläubigkeit' sollte neu reflektiert und im Hinblick auf ihre Praxisrelevanz untersucht werden. Ein kommunikationsorientiertes Lehrwerk macht noch keinen diskursbetonten Unterricht aus (…) Mit anderen Worten, die Benutzung eines Lehrbuches zum Business-English hat nicht automatisch zur Folge, dass die diskursiven Gegebenheiten des geschäftlichen Alltags tatsächlich relevant abgedeckt werden."[83]

4.4.4.4. Solutions

To overcome this gap between the general approach of common textbooks and the actual needs of the company, a true-to-life teaching method can be extremely beneficial. If the teacher asks the students to bring authentic material from their everyday routine to the course, the linguistic skills can be developed on the basis of these sample texts, which can be E-Mails that the participants have received and need to reply to, or operating manuals of a new device, or a presentation that one participant has to give the next day and that he would like to prepare for. Moreover, classroom work can be enhanced by a tour of the premises, where an engineer can explain the functions of a machine in action or where the concept of a new plant can be explained. Even if these samples are not necessarily relevant to all participants, they all benefit from the close relation to their everyday work, and this approach often offers the students valuable insights into the work of other departments.

Another valuable idea that Zeh-Glöckler presents in her work is the creation of a language reference centre within the company. Again, this is an interesting task for

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[83] Zeh-Glöckler, M., *Erfolgreich mit Englisch? Untersuchungen zum englischen Sprachgebrauch in sächsischen Unternehmen* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2000)., p.159.

the language consultant, and the participants in all courses should contribute to the establishment of such a reference centre. The idea is that there is a central place in the company where all employees can have access to reference material such as general and specialist dictionaries, trade journals, collections of sample letters and self-study materials such as cassettes or CDs[84]. The objective is to enable the staff to work individually and on their own in solving their everyday English language tasks.

Summing up, the comparison of the results of this study with Zeh-Glöckler's study five years ago yields some encouraging prospects. The confidence of many employees in their English language skills has risen significantly – a vital step for successful international communications. But although a great number of companies invest in the language training of their employees, many everyday communication tasks are still a big burden for numerous companies, and they are often not fulfilled with the necessary English language skills.

Apart from everyday communication skills, however, the complex tasks of marketing and advertising require more sophisticated communication skills, which will be explored in the next chapters. Starting from the general requirements of an international marketing strategy in chapter 5, the individual communicative aspects of international trade fairs, foreign language sales literature, a global internet presentation and international media relations will be illuminated in the following chapters.

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[84] Ibid, p. 162.

5. Marketing and Advertising

5.1. Marketing as discourse

Marketing communication is determined by a great variety of different factors and influences. Basically, any discourse analysis can be brought down to the question: *Who* communicates *what* to *whom* to *what end,* by *which media,* in *which way* and *on which occasion*? These questions were raised in the questionnaire which served as the basis for the empirical analysis of marketing discourse in Saxon SMEs, and they shall be illustrated in figure 5.1.

So, which measures do Saxon SMEs take to advertise their products and services in Germany and abroad? How much do they spend on marketing their products? And who do they cooperate with in order to sell their products? This section will provide the answers to these questions. In particular, I am going to focus on the differences between marketing and advertising activities on the national and international markets. The objective is to uncover deficiencies and to develop some guidelines of what small and medium-sized companies can do in order to maximise their success on national and international markets. Apart from the figures resulting from the questionnaire, the intensive interviews revealed interesting insights into everyday marketing practices and procedures and provide some explanations for certain differences and deficiencies.

TO WHOM (RECIPIENT)
Customers
Prospects
Business Partners
Shareholders
Employees

WHO (SENDER)
Company
Ad agency
Other customers
Testimonials
Fictional characters

BACKGROUND
Strategy / Plans /
Company Objectives
Budget / Finances
Partners (Ad
agencies,
institutions…)
Feedback, market
research
Company Profile
(size, no. of
employees…)
Export activities /
Degree of
globalisation

WHAT (SUBJECT)
USP
Product information
Company philosophy
Facts & Figures
Emotions
Image

Marketing Discourse

WHEN (TIME)
Regularly
On certain
occasions
(fairs, calls
meetings…)
Long / short-
term

HOW (MODE)
Oral / Written
Personal / Mass
Communication

WHY (OBJECTIVE)
Inform
Sell products / make profit
Build up customer loyalty
Build up brand
Convey company philosophy
Gain / Maintain reputation
Distinguish from competition

HOW (MEDIA)
Brochures, flyers,
catalogues…
Internet
Print adverts
TV, radio
Press (magazines,
newspapers…)
One-to-one
(telephone, trade
fairs, meetings…)
Ambient media
(cars, towels, bags,
mugs, pens)

Fig. 5.1. Marketing as discourse

5.2. The Significance of marketing instruments in SMEs

The basis for successful marketing is the existence of a marketing strategy. Here lies one of the major deficiencies of Saxon SMEs. According to the results of the survey, one third of the companies do not develop a marketing strategy for the German market. On an international scale, this figure is even higher: 53% of the companies participating in this survey do not have a plan for their international marketing activities.[85]

The marketing mix offers a great variety of opportunities that can be taken in order to promote the services of a company: trade fairs, sales agents, print adverts, direct marketing, PR / events, press work and online promotion, to name but a few. This study also investigated which importance each of these marketing tools has for Saxon SMEs nationally and internationally, and where significant differences in national and international marketing practises of SMEs are.

Marketing instruments and their significance on the German market
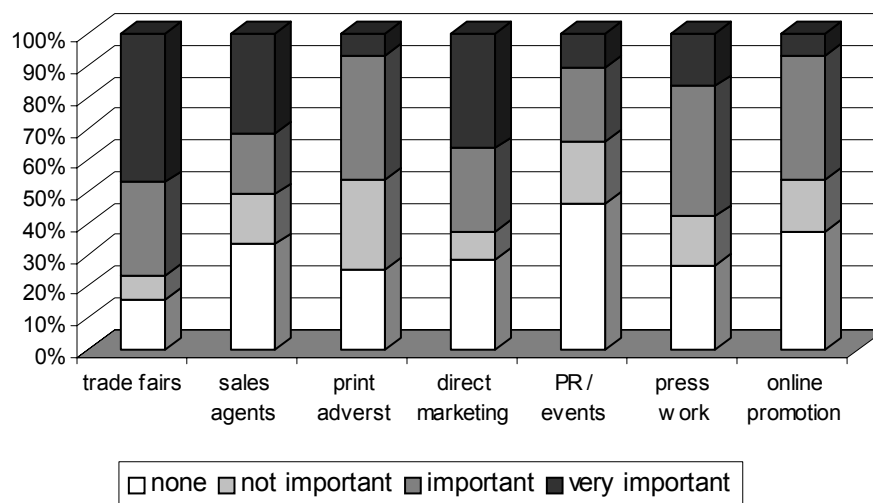
Fig. 5.2. Marketing elements and their significance on German markets

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[85] For the interpretation of this figures, it needs to be considered, however, that more than 40% of the companies participating in this survey have an export rate lower than 10%. In the intensive interviews it became obvious that most of the contacts those companies with a low export rate have abroad are based on personal relationships and are not related to extensive marketing activities abroad.

Marketing elements and their significance on export markets
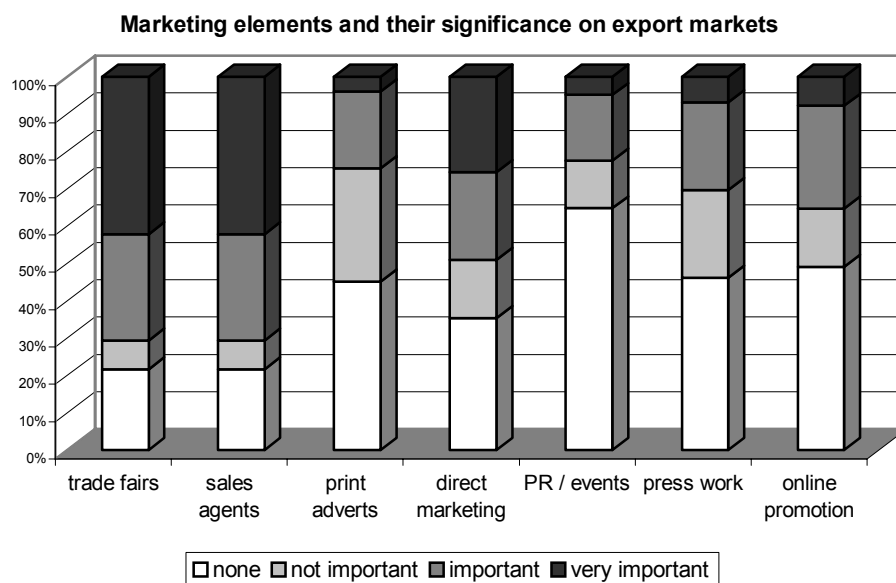
Fig. 5.3. Marketing elements and their significance on export markets

5.2.1. Trade fairs

The most important marketing tool in small and medium-sized companies are trade fairs. Almost every second company in this sample (47.1%) considers trade shows a "very important" tool of their marketing mix. Another 29.4% claim trade fairs are "important" for them. In total, this yields 76.5% of companies that consider trade fairs either important or very important.

This predominant position of trade fairs also holds true for the international marketing mix of Saxon SMEs. Although the share of companies that do not invest in international trade fairs is a little higher, and although a smaller percentage of companies consider trade shows "very important", fairs are still the most important tool in the international marketing mix of Saxon SMEs.

**Significance of trade shows nationally /
internationally**
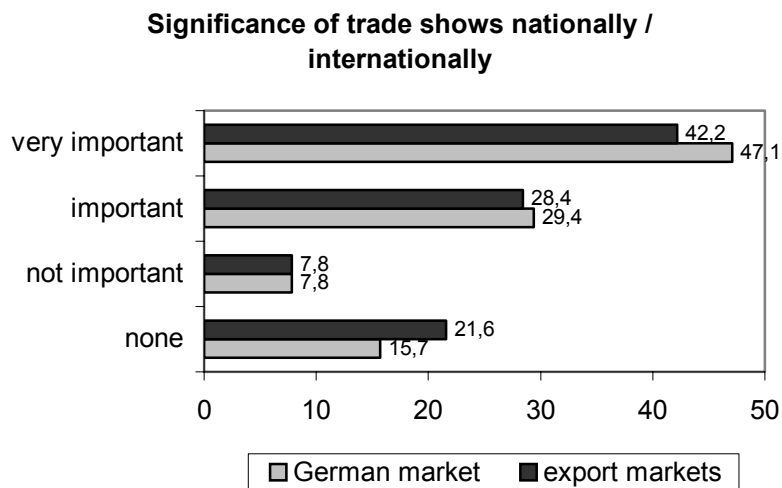
Fig. 5.4. Significance of trade shows

The high significance of trade fairs is also reflected in the expenditures. On average, Saxon companies invest the major share of their advertising spending (44%) in trade shows. This figure confirms the high significance of trade shows for SMEs.

5.2.2. Direct marketing

The second most important marketing instrument is direct marketing, i.e. the direct contact with the customer, either by a personal visit, telephone marketing or by direct mails. 62.8% of the companies in this sample consider direct marketing either "very important" (36.3%) or "important" (26.5%). On an international scale, these figures are slightly lower, the total percentage of companies that consider direct marketing "very important" (26.5%) or "important" (23.5%) being 49%. This discrepancy is natural, reckoning with the fact that personal contacts to clients abroad are more expensive and considerably more time-consuming. In the intensive interviews, the communicative barrier was often made an issue as well. Language barriers make the direct contact with international customers more difficult. This is mirrored by the fact that by means of the new media such as telephone or E-Mail, getting in touch with international clients is neither much more expensive nor more time-consuming than domestic contacts. Still, most executives and employees are reluctant to make phone calls abroad or to write E-Mails in a foreign language and send them round the globe. Again, the services of a communications consultant with a professional knowledge of at least one foreign language could help out with this discrepancy.

Significance of direct marketing nationally and internationally

	German market	export markets
very important	36,3	25,5
important	26,5	23,5
not important	8,8	15,7
none	28,4	35,3

□ German market   ■ export markets
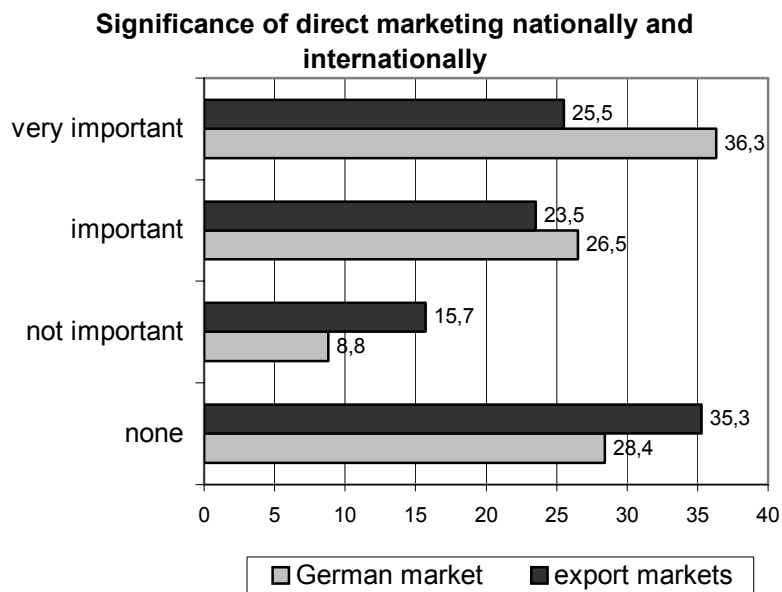
Fig. 5.5. Significance of direct marketing

5.2.3. Media relations

Surprisingly, the third position in the importance of national marketing tools is occupied by PR work. Although only 16.7% of the companies in this sample claimed media relations are "very important" for their company, an astonishing 41.2% consider it an "important" marketing tool. In total, this means that 57.9% deem media relations either important or even very important.

This figure is surprising because it creates a stark contrast to the answers given by the executives in the press work section of the questionnaire. Although almost 60% of the companies claim to consider media relations important, more than three quarters (77.7%) stated that they are present in the media either seldom, sporadically or never. Here, it seems that wishful thinking is worlds apart from the real state of the art. Most marketing executives are aware that establishing and maintaining well-functioning media relations is an important key to successful marketing, but in practice, media relations are not pursued with the necessary commitment by most companies.

Internationally, these figures are considerably different. Almost half of the companies in this sample (46.1%) claimed that international media relations have no significance for their marketing activities. Only 30.4%, i.e. about half of the

companies that regard media relations as an integral part of their national marketing mix, consider international media relations "important" or "very important".

On the one hand, reasons for that discrepancy can be found in the relevance of the press information. Many pieces of information that are released to the press are only relevant to the regional press, such as the creation of new jobs or the building of a new production site. But many pieces of information, especially those with an expert relevance, might be useful for the international special interest press as well. If relevant international media are included in the company's press list, it requires only very little effort to release such information to the international special interest or business press as well, thus at least increasing the awareness of the company in the respective target market. In the intensive interviews, most executives uttered their surprise that they never actually considered this possibility of promoting their products internationally. At any rate, there is a huge potential for improvement in this respect. All that is required is a press release in the respective target language, and an up-to-date media list including the international press.

Significance of press relations nationally / internationally
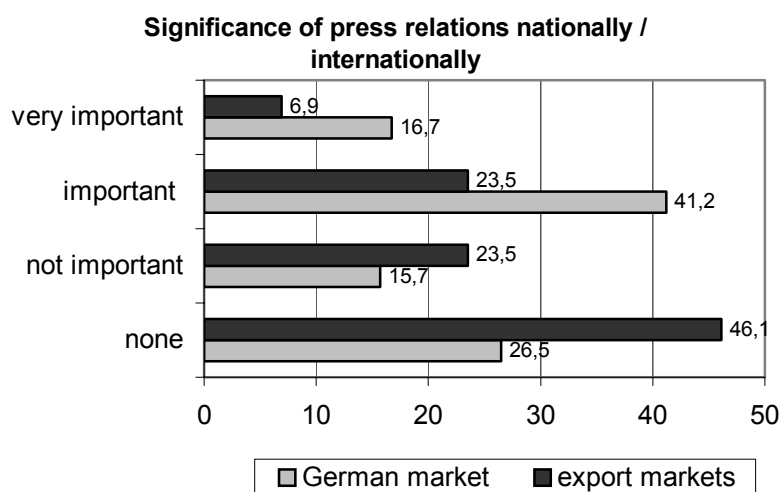
Fig. 5.6. Significance of media relations

5.2.4. Sales agents

The forth most important tool in the marketing mix of Saxon SMEs are sales agents. More than half of the companies in this sample (51%) consider this marketing instrument either "very important" (31.4%) or "important" (19.6%). Once more, this highlights the major importance of personal contacts in the marketing mix of small and medium-sized companies. Internationally, the significance of direct contacts via

sales agents is even higher. 70.6% of Saxon SMEs consider international sales agents a "very important" (42.2%) or "important" (28.4%) marketing tool.

Significance of sales agents nationnally / internationally
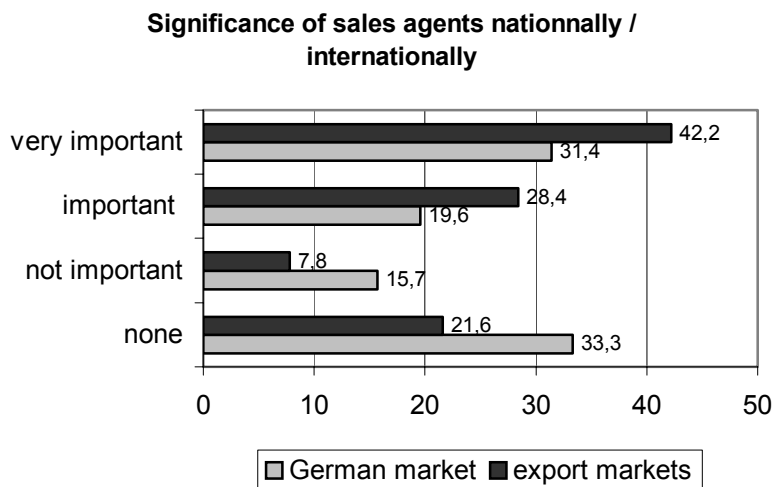
Fig. 5.7. Significance of sales agents

5.2.5. Print advertising and online promotion

Print advertising and online promotion range among the least important marketing instruments at positions 5 and 6. Both tools are "very important" (6.9%) or "important" (39.2%) for 46.1% of the companies in total. On an international level, these two values are even significantly lower. The promotion of the company and its products and services via the internet is, however, much more important than print advertising. International online promotion is considered "very important" (7.8%) or "important" (27.5%) by 35.3% of the companies in this sample in total, whereas print advertising plays a "very important" (3.9%) or "important" (20.6%) role for only 24.5% of Saxon SMEs in total.

Significance of print advertising nationally / internationally

Significance of print advertising nationally / internationally. Bar chart comparing German market and export markets.

- very important: 3,9 (export markets); 6,9 (German market)
- important: 20,6 (export markets); 39,2 (German market)
- not important: 30,4 (export markets); 28,4 (German market)
- none: 45,1 (export markets); 25,5 (German market)

Legend: □ German market ■ export markets

Fig. 5.8. Significance of print advertising

Still, the considerably little significance of online promotion is somewhat surprising, as actually, the internet is the ideal medium to promote products and services internationally without incurring horrendous costs. Many executives, however, expressed their inhibitions to market their services via the internet. The major obstacles were of technical and linguistic nature. Both problems can be solved, however, without much effort. All that is required is a professionally designed web site in the respective target languages of the company. Then, the company must ensure that international customers are made aware of the existence of that site, and they must enable potential customers to find it. Portals, platforms, forums, links, web catalogues and search engines as well as banner advertising on relevant partner sites are only a few possibilities to achieve that goal. Baker & Baker recommend: "Online marketing beyond the Web represents some of the most effective and least expensive (often free) ways to market your products. You can use classified online advertising (often free), direct mail promotions, and simple word-of-mouth ads on newsgroups and chat programs to communicate with customers."[86]

Last but not least, international customers who have found the site and require further assistance must be taken care of in their mother tongue, or at least by means of using a lingua franca, mostly English.[87] Baker & Baker confirm again the paramount importance of good language skills on the web, i.e. both on the company web site and in E-Mail communication: "The biggest status cue is your competence

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[86] Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 207.
[87] See chapter 8 for further details on successful online promotion in SMEs.

with language. If you have lots of misspellings, your subjects do not agree with your verbs, or you use the wrong words, people may assume you're uneducated."[88] If there is no one in the company who can see to these issues, the services of a communications consultant can prove very useful indeed and help increase the international sales of a company without major efforts.

Significance of online promotion nationally / internationally
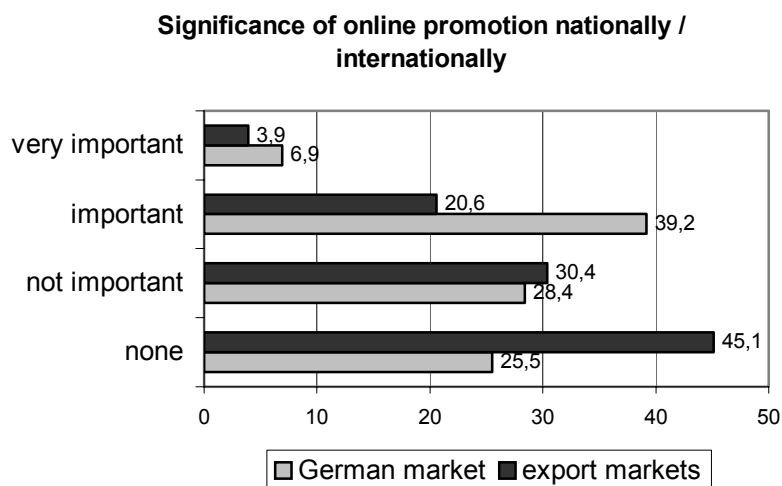
Fig. 5.9. Significance of online promotion

5.2.6. PR and events

The least important marketing tool for Saxon SMEs are PR activities and events. Almost two thirds of the companies in this sample (65.7%) stated that this form of marketing has no importance for them (46.1%) or that it is "not important" (19.6%). On an international scale, this figure is even higher (75.4%). These results are not surprising, because the majority of the companies in this sample (89.9%) are mainly involved in B2B activities, and event marketing traditionally plays a subordinate role in this area. Still, many larger companies are discovering that this marketing instrument is also a useful tool in the B2B sector, so SMEs might become more active in this field in future.

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[88] Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 59.

Significance of PR activities / events, nationally / internationally
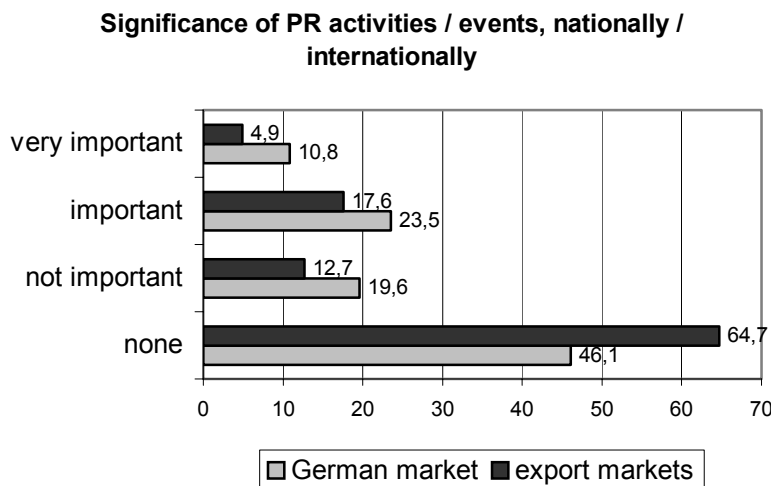
Fig. 5.10. Significance of PR activities and events

5.3. National and international marketing spending

5.3.1. General results

Marketing experts recommend investing between 2 and 10 percent of the annual turnover in advertising, depending on the type of products and services and the competition. Another factor for determining the right size of the advertising budget is whether the products and services of the company are targeted at the consumer or to the business market. Out of the participants in this survey, 88.9% of the companies are mainly active in the B2B area, which usually requires a smaller amount of advertising spending than the much-competed consumer market. Still, 2% of the annual turnover should be the minimum share to be invested in advertising.[89]

The results of this survey present a quite different picture. Almost two thirds (62.2%) of small and medium-sized companies in Saxony spend less than 2% of their

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[89] According to Philip Kotler (cf. Kotler, P., *Marketing Management* 7th edn., Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1991, p. 581), there are four different ways of determining the right size of the advertising budget for an organisation, which are commonly applied: First, there is the "affordable method", basing the budget on the amount that can be spared. However, "this method ... completely ignores the role of promotion as an investment and the immediate impact of promotion on sales volume". The second method is the "percentage-of-sales-method", i.e. setting the budget depending on the sales volume, whose major disadvantage is that "it leads to a budget set by the availability of funds rather than by market opportunities". Third, some companies rely on their competitors in setting their promotional budget. Last but not least, there is the "objective-and-task-method", which is based upon a definition of specific objectives and tasks that must be performed to meet these objectives, and then an estimation of costs of performing these tasks.

turnover on advertising. **In other words, 62.2% of the companies do not invest enough in advertising.**

Advertising spendings in % of the annual turnover
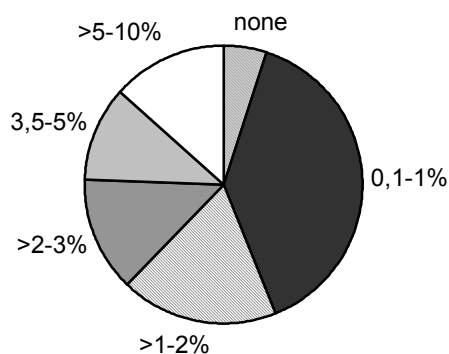
Fig. 5.11. Advertising spending against annual turnover

On average, Saxon SMEs spend 2.6% of their annual turnover on advertising. There is a clear differentiation between companies with high and low spending on advertising. Five percent of the companies invest nothing at all in marketing their services, which leaves the question how they manage to sell their products. The percentage of companies that invest 1% or less in advertising amounts to an amazing 43.9%. Another 18.2% spend between 1 and 2 percent on advertising, 24.5% invest between 2.5 and 5%. Thus, 91.6% of the companies participating in this survey spend 5% or less on marketing their products and services. Only a small percentage of 8.4% invest between 6 and 10% of their turnover in advertising, the percentage of companies spending exactly 10% being at 6.8%.

These figures are fairly alarming. It appears that Saxon SMEs spend considerably too little on advertising and marketing. The tendency of industrial companies investing too little in advertising and promotion seems to be universal, as is confirmed by Philip Kotler: "Industrial companies rely heavily on their sales force to bring in orders. They do not spend enough on advertising to build customer awareness and comprehension. They underestimate the power of company and product image in preselling industrial customers."[90]

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[90] Kotler, P., *Marketing Management* 7th edn. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall) 1991, p. 599f.

In the intensive interviews, most interviewees complained that they cannot afford to strongly involve in marketing and advertising because of the high costs. Another alarming fact is that almost every second company (46.1%) does not have an advertising budget. This also reflects the little respect that most SMEs pay the entire issue of marketing and advertising, and it might be one of the reasons why they consider marketing too expensive for their company, which is a dangerous pitfall. The question whether or not a company needs an advertising budget is largely a psychological one. If a certain amount of spending has been planned for advertising and marketing, these costs are not perceived as an additional financial burden.

Therefore, one of the most urgent recommendations derived from the results of this survey is that Saxon SMEs must take the matter of marketing and advertising much more seriously, and they must be willing to invest a reasonable share of their turnover in marketing their products and services in a professional way.

On average, Saxon SMEs spend 2.6% of their annual turnover on advertising measures. And what share of these 2.6% do Saxon SMEs invest in international advertising? One third of the companies in this sample claim they invest nothing in international advertising. 17% of the companies claim they invest 10% or less in international advertising, 25% spend between 11 and 20% of their budget for that. 11% invest between 25 and 40%, and 13% focus entirely on international advertising and spend more than 50% on promoting their products internationally.

These figures are somewhat astonishing in two respects: On the one hand, there is the large share of one third (33%) that spends nothing at all on international marketing, on the other hand there is about one quarter that invest between 20% up to more than 50% of their total budget on international advertising.

Spendings on international advertising in % of the total advertising budget
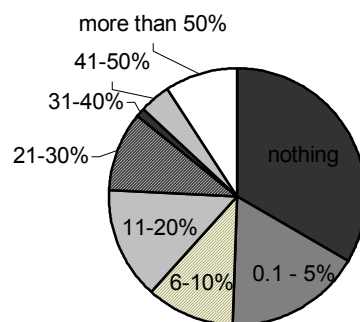
Fig. 5.12. International advertising spending in % of total advertising budget

In order to gain a reliable interpretation of these figures, I compared these percentages with the revenue the companies in this sample generate abroad. This investigation yielded a proportional relation between international advertising spending and international turnover. This finding can be interpreted in two ways: On the one hand, it is logical that a company that is more active in terms of advertising on international markets will generate more leads there and result in more international sales. On the other hand, this result can be interpreted the other way round. Companies that do not invest in building up a reputation abroad will, of course, not be known and therefore not sell their products. Thus, it can be concluded that companies that invest in international advertising will also gain the reward for that and sell more of their products abroad.

Relation of international advertising spendings and the turnovers abroad
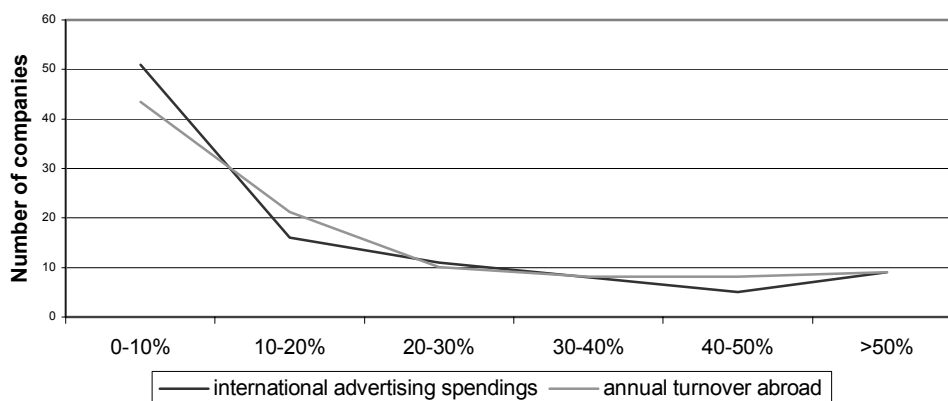
Fig. 5.13. Relation of international advertising and export turnover

5.3.2. Exact spending on individual marketing tools

But exactly which measures are taken by SMEs to promote their products and services, and how are the expenditures spread over the different marketing tools? Companies invest in a variety of marketing and advertising tools, including trade shows, advertising literature and material such as catalogues, brochures, leaflets and product information, print adverts and the internet. The analysis of the figures yields the following results of how the spending on advertising are differentiated between the individual elements of the communication mix:

Advertising spendings

others
9%

internet
9%

print adverts
14%

trade shows
44%

advertising
material
24%
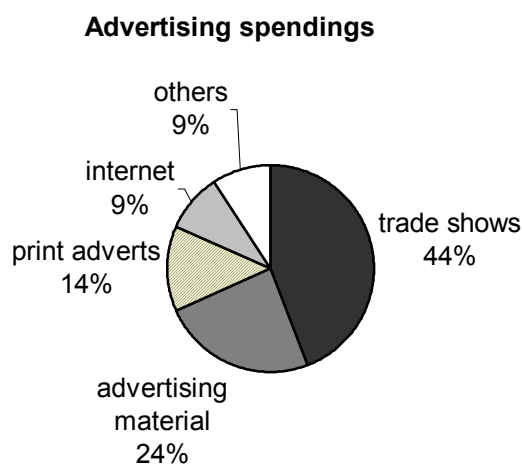
Fig. 5.14. Advertising spending on individual elements of communication mix

5.3.2.1. Trade fairs[91]

Trade fairs are the most important and at the same time the most expensive tool in the marketing mix. On average, companies spend almost half of their marketing budget on trade fairs. A closer scrutiny yields the following differentiation:

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[91] See chapter 6 for more detailed information on trade fairs.

Spendings on trade fairs in % of the total advertising budget
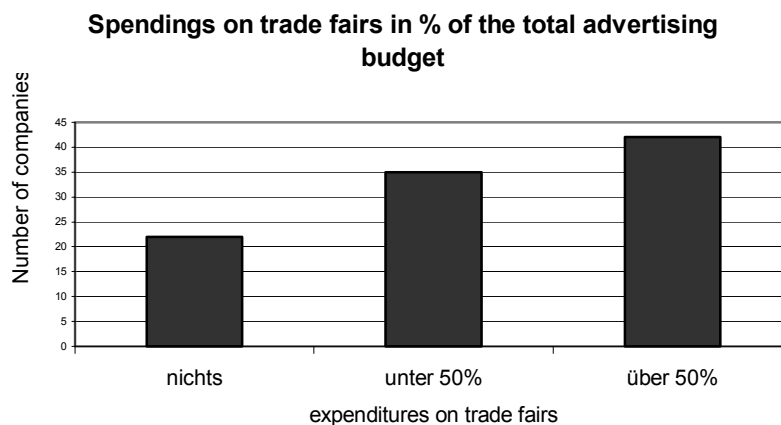
Fig. 5.15. Spending on trade fairs

About twenty-two percent of the companies participating in this study spend nothing at all on trade fairs, in other words: one in five companies does not participate in trade shows. On the other hand, almost 50% of the companies in this sample spend 50% or more of their marketing budget on trade shows. This means trade shows are the most cost-intensive marketing tool for small and medium-sized companies.

The high expenditure on trade shows suggests that fairs seem to be at the same time a highly efficient marketing tool. One of the major advantages of trade fairs is the opportunity to get in direct contact with customers, suppliers and business partners, an aspect that is of crucial importance for small and medium-sized companies, much more than for large companies that mostly focus on more "impersonal" forms of advertising such as print advertising and "below-the-line" measures such as sponsoring or event marketing.

5.3.2.2. Sales literature[92]

After trade fairs, printed advertising literature and marketing material such as brochures, catalogues, flyers, leaflets, product information and data sheets are considered important by Saxon SMEs. On average, a quarter of their advertising budget is spent on the design, the creation and the production of marketing literature. A study issued by the marketing institute IMAS reveals similar results: The majority of companies (34%) invests between 10 and 30% of their advertising budget on sales literature, and 16% invest either more than 30% or less than 10% in this form of communication[93].

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[92] Cf. chapter 7 for further details on sales literature.
[93] "Wichtige Helfer am PoS", in: *W&V* 50/2002, p. 34ff.

The IMAS study mainly focussed on major brands. It is therefore interesting to investigate differences in the expenditure on sales literature between major and medium-sized companies. Interestingly, the results for the average group that spend between 10% and 30% of their advertising budget on print materials are almost exactly the same at 34% in the IMAS study on large companies and 36% in this study about SMEs. The major difference, however, can be found in the number of companies that spend 10% or less on sales literature: Whereas in the IMAS study, this figure was at 16%, it is more than twice as high (38%) for SMEs. This means that small companies generally seem to spend less on sales literature than their larger counterparts.

Expenditures on sales literature in % of the total advertising budget
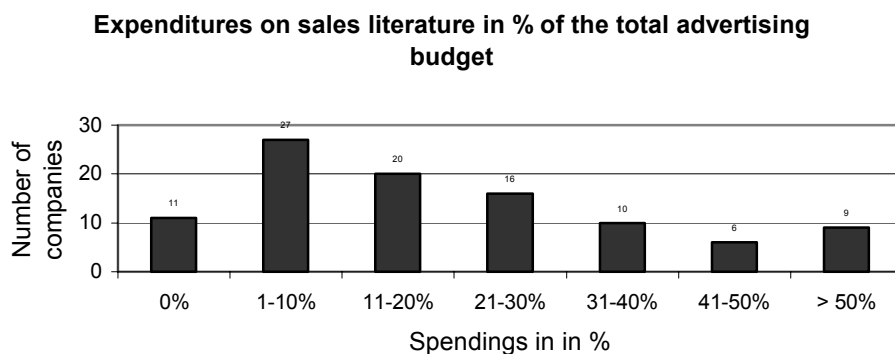
Fig. 5.16. Spending on sales literature

Sales literature has regained new importance in the last couple of years: "Gedruckte Verkaufsliteratur schien während des Web-Booms passé. Doch die großen Marken zeigen: Kataloge, Prospekte und Flyer sind wichtiger denn je."[94]

5.3.2.3. Internet[95]

The requirement that the internet should be closely interlinked with the presentation of the company in sales literature builds the bridge to the question on how much Saxon SMEs invest in their web presentation. 87.3% of the companies in this sample claim they have their own web presentation, in a different question set 95% claimed they are present on the web[96]. On average, Saxon companies spend 9% of their marketing budget on their internet presentation. Compared to the other

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[94] "Wichtige Helfer am PoS", in: *W&V* 50/2002, p. 34ff.
[95] For more details on the internet presentation of Saxon SMEs, see chapter 8.
[96] This difference might be due to the fact that some of the companies do not have their own internet presentation, but share a web presence with their mother company.

marketing tools, this is the lowest share. Out of the 99 companies that replied to this question, 30 stated to invest nothing at all in this form of communication. 19 companies invest 5% in their internet presentation, another 28% spend 10% of their budget on this marketing tool. In total, 82.5% invest 10% or less in this modern form of communication.

Spendings on the web presentation in % of the total advertising budget
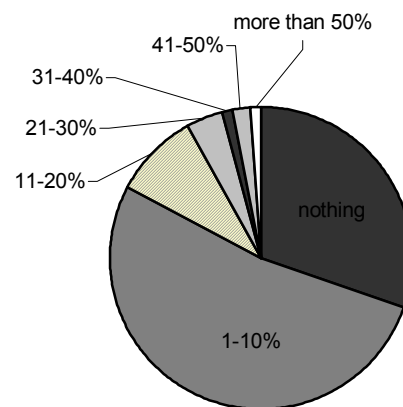
Fig. 5.17. Spending on internet presentation

5.3.2.4. Print advertisements and media relations[97]

On average, Saxon SMEs spend 13.5% of their marketing budget on print advertising. However, a large percentage, 36.4% to be exact, does not invest at all in this form of advertising. Almost another third (27.3%) invest less than 10% of their advertising budget in placing print adverts, 17.3% of this sample spend between 11 and 20% of their budget on print adverts. Every fifth company (19.6%) invests more than 20% of its budget in advertisements in newspapers and magazines.

Spendings on Print advertising in % of the total marketing budget
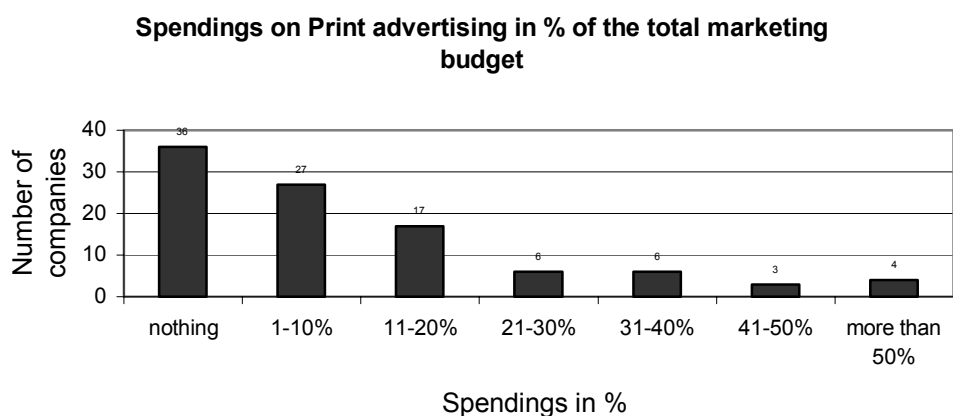
Fig. 5.18. Spending on print advertising

International		National
Adverts	**Media**	Adverts
1.0%	Consumer newspapers	12.7%
2.0%	Consumer magazines	2.0%
3.9%	Business newspapers	9.8%
4.9%	Business magazines	9.8%
25.5%	Special interest / trade magazines	44.1%
1.0%	Radio / TV stations	3.9%

Fig. 5.19. Frequent advertising media

The most frequently used medium for placing print adverts are special interest and trade magazines, both on a national (44.1%) and on an international level (25.5%). On an international scale, business newspapers and magazines are used as a

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[97] See chapter 6.1.4. for further details on print advertising.

medium for advertising at 3.9% and 4.9%. In Germany, consumer newspapers, mostly the regional daily newspaper, are the second largest medium for placing print adverts. The business media follow behind at 9.8% each. Consumer magazines and TV stations are negligible as advertising media at 2.0% and 3.9% nationally and 2.0% and 1.0% internationally.

The latter finding represents one of the major differences to the advertising practises of the major brands and larger companies. For them, consumer magazines and TV stations are the two most essential media for advertising. Reasons why SMEs use these media only rarely are first the high costs for placing adverts, and secondly their target group, which largely consists of specialists, who can best be reached via special interest media.

Based on the quantitative analysis of the significance of various marketing instruments in Saxon SMEs, the individual components of the communication mix will now be scrutinised in greater detail in the following chapters: trade shows as the most important instrument of the communication mix (chapter 6), advertising and sales literature (chapter 7), the internet and online promotion (chapter 8) and press work and public relations (chapter 9).

6. Trade Fairs

6.1. Importance of trade fairs for Saxon SMEs

A significant majority of the companies interviewed in this investigation stated that trade shows are their most important marketing tool. More than three quarters of Saxon SMEs classify trade fairs as a "very important" (47.1%) or "important" (29.4%) element of their marketing mix. For merely 15.7% of the companies, trade shows have "no significance" at all, and another 7.8% consider fairs "unimportant".

The relations for international trade shows are fairly similar. Seven out of ten Saxon companies that indulge in export activities rate international fairs "very important" (42.2%) or "important" (28.4%). Twenty-two percent stated that international fairs are not important for their marketing activities, and 7.8% claim international fairs are "unimportant".

Importance of National and International Trade Shows

very important	42,2 (Export)	47,1 (German)
important	28,4 (Export)	29,4 (German)
unimportant	7,8 (Export)	7,8 (German)
no significance	21,6 (Export)	15,7 (German)

□ German market ■ Export markets
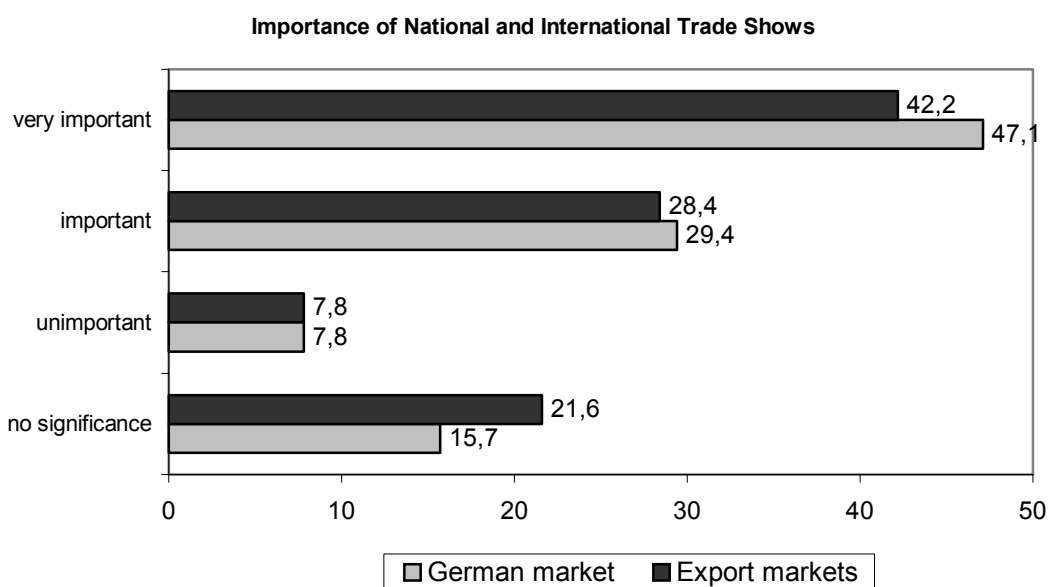
Fig. 6.1. Importance of trade shows

Virtually all investigations about the importance of various marketing tools suggest that participating in international trade fairs ranges among the most popular marketing tools. The following figure based on a different study from 1994 illustrates the outstanding significance of trade fairs in general[98]:

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[98] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing*. Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner"16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.13. It should be remarked that the survey underlying these results was conducted among the participants of the IAA 1992. Thus, it is clear that they all value trade fairs very highly. Still,

The Importance of General Marketing instruments valued by German Companies
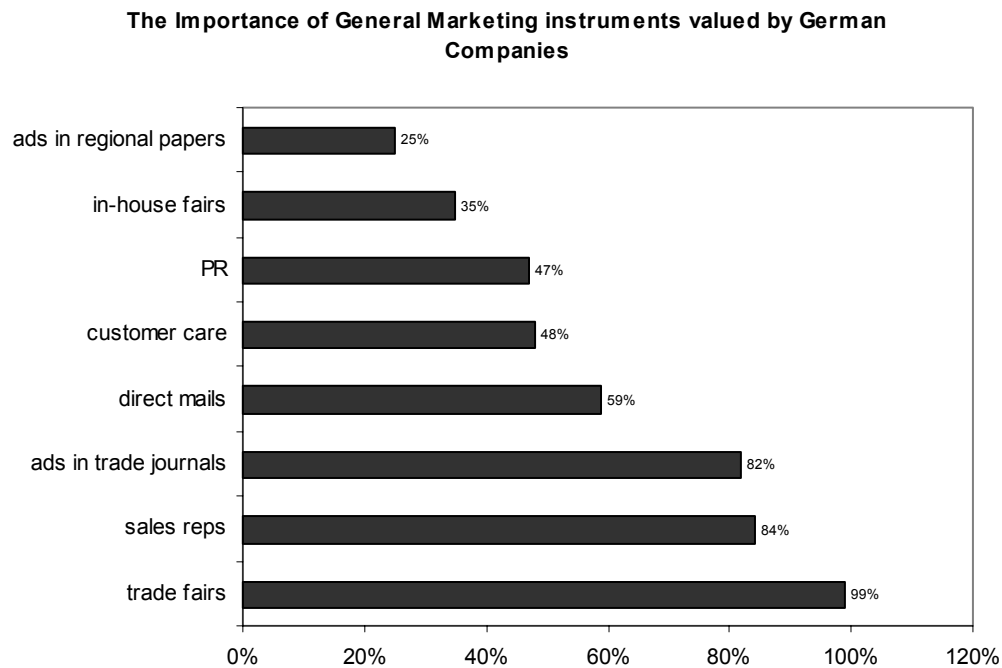
Fig. 6.2. Importance of marketing instruments

According to these results, which also correspond with the results of the current study, the special importance of trade fairs as an instrument of communication policy is beyond doubt.

6.2. Benefits of trade fairs

The reasons for participating in a fair can be divided into qualitative and quantitative objectives:

Qualitative aims	Quantitative aims
Introducing a new product	Selling products at the fair
Presenting a new catalogue, new prices etc.	Preparing sales and contracts
Reactivating customers, finding new customers	Collecting market information
	Checking trends
Finding partners and distributors	
Recruiting new staff	

these results correspond with different investigations in terms of the extraordinary significance of trade fairs.

The leading German trade magazine for the advertising sector, *Werben und Verkaufen*, listed a very similar selection of arguments for the participation in trade fairs:

- Generating new leads
- Making new contacts
- Representation of the company
- Promoting the image of the company
- Closing deals
- Customer retention
- Providing information
- Observing the competition[99]

All investigations agree that trade shows are an important vehicle for the representation of the company, its products and services as well as for the promotion of the corporate image and philosophy. For most companies, the most vital objective of participating in trade shows is the aspect of customer relation management. This relates to the retention of existing customers as well as to generating new leads and activating potential customers. The focus is on recognising the needs and requirements of the customers and on influencing the buying decisions of the customers. Most interviewees regard the fact as a particular benefit that at trade shows, the majority of visitors come from a specialist background, which makes sure that they are explicitly interested in the products and services presented at the fair.

No doubt, trade fairs are all about communication. The unchallenged and foremost benefit of trade shows, which is at the same time the reason for their over-proportional popularity is the fact that they provide a platform for direct and personal contact to customers, business partners, distributors as well as the press and other public media. Trade shows are a great tribute to the everlasting significance of face-to-face communication, in spite of all the prophecies of doom that were uttered in the wake of the internet and mass media mania.

As a consequence, excellent communication skills are absolutely vital for a successful participation in trade fairs. Not only should the stand staff be able to speak the language of the visitors, but they should also be aware of the impact of

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[99] "Präsenz zeigen", in: *W&V Compact* 5/2002, p. 19 and *Business Spotlight* 02/2003.

their nonverbal communication signals – body language, gestures, smiling, intonation etc – and their cultural significance.

6.3. Cost factors

Trade shows are the most expensive marketing tool. On average, Saxon SMEs spend almost half of their advertising budget (44%) on presenting themselves at national and international trade shows. Forty-two percent of the companies in this sample spend more than 50% of their advertising budget on trade shows, 5% spend even more than 80% of their budgets on fairs. On the other hand, 22% claim they spend nothing on trade fairs. This figure corresponds exactly with the number of companies that did not respond to the questions of trade fair participation, which makes it fairly certain that about one quarter of Saxon companies do not participate in trade shows at all.

The high share of the marketing budget that is spent on trade fairs is of course partly due to the high costs a trade fair incurs. According to recent study by AUMA, the German Association of Trade Shows, the costs for participating in a fair are divided as follows:

C o s t   S t r u c t u r e   o f   P a r t i c i p a t i n g   i n   T r a d e   S h o w s

O t h e r s
5 %

T r a n s p o r t ,
D i s p o s a l
3 %

s t a n d   s e r v i c e ,
c o m m u n i c a t i o n
1 2 %

B a s i c   c o s t s ,
s t a n d   r e n t
2 0 %

S t a n d   d e s i g n ,
e q u i p m e n t
3 9 %

S t a ff   a n d   T r a v e l
2 1 %
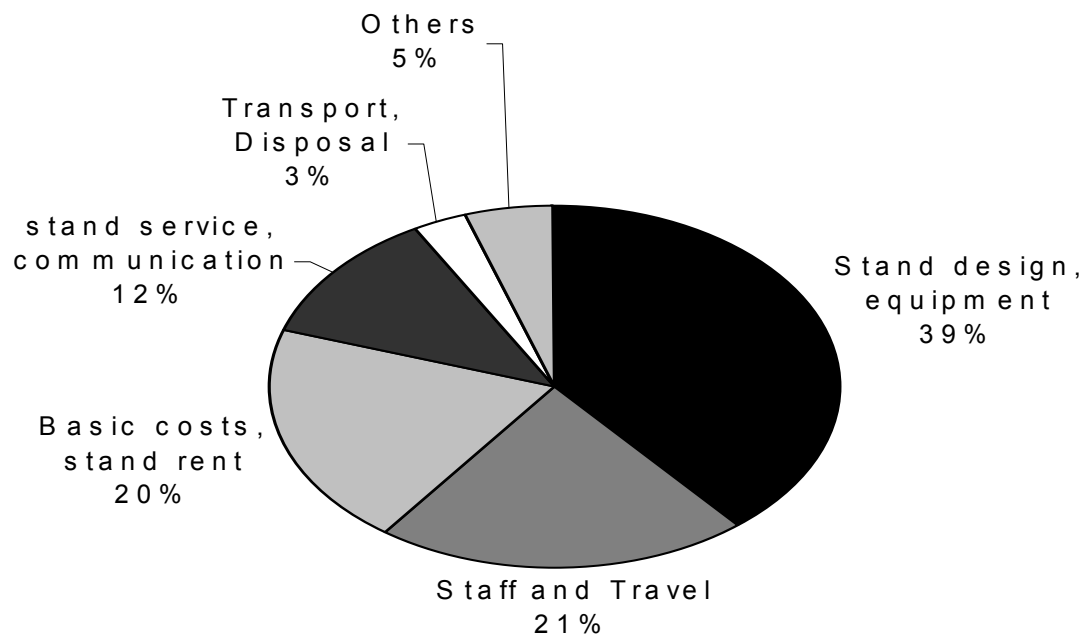
Fig. 6.3. Cost structure of trade shows

Communicative elements can be found in stand design (displays, brochures and stands, headlines, eye-catchers) as well as among the staff service. Therefore, communication is a significant cost factor of trade shows. Thus, the implementation of trade show communication should be as professional as is required by its status.

6.4. Common flaws in trade show presentations

In spite of the generally acknowledged necessity to show their presence at the most major trade fairs of their respective sectors, both exhibitors and visitors are not completely content with the results. On the side of the visitors, the lack of efforts taken by the exhibitors to fulfil their expectations is criticised. Several surveys have confirmed that more than 50% of the visitors at trade fairs do not feel well served by the exhibitors and even feel neglected after the fair. The same percentage, that is also 50%, is never contacted by the exhibitors again! Another thought-provoking

result is that out of those visitors who are taken care of after the fair, 34% say that those after-fair measures have left rather negative impressions![100]

To further illustrate this point, the following figures provided in a seminar package by corporate consultant Elke Clausen characterise the typical visitor of a trade fair:

> The visitor…
>
> …has planned 36 hours for visiting the fair, including travelling time
>
> …visits 10-12 stands during that time
>
> …60% are searching a solution to a problem
>
> …70% are not approached by stand staff
>
> …only 20% find their expectations fulfilled in the conversation with exhibitors
>
> …50% leave without hearing from the exhibitors ever again[101]

Also the exhibitors themselves, though they are all convinced that their presence at trade fairs is a necessity, are not fully satisfied with the results. Most of them criticise the high cost of participation and assess the relation between investment and success as lopsided.

My assumption, which can be partly held responsible for this misrelation, is that most exhibitors do not use the potential of their participation to the full extent:

"Dennoch werden von Ausstellerseite immer wieder die vermeintlich zu hohen Kosten einer Messebeteiligung moniert; das Verhältnis zwischen erforderlichen Investitionen und Erfolg einer Messe wird als unausgewogen empfunden. Umso erstaunlicher erscheint es, dass Ausstellerunternehmen zwar ihre Messepräsentation mit großem Engagement und – vor allem – hohem finanziellem Aufwand vorbereiten und durchführen, die hierdurch angelegten Potentiale jedoch durch Defizite in der Nachbetreuung nicht hinreichend nutzen."[102]

I believe that exhibitors do not only neglect after-fair care, but do not maximise their efforts before and during the fair, either. In order to successfully achieve these goals, the participation in a trade fair must be well planned, well presented and well

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[100] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.31.

[101] Clausen, E., *Seminarunterlagen Messe* (München Januar 2001).

[102] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.5.

evaluated. The presentation at the fair itself is just the tip of the iceberg. Or, as Elke Claus puts it: "Messe ist das ganze Jahr". Although the average trade fair only lasts 3-7 days, preparation takes up three to five months, and the thorough evaluation of qualitative and quantitative results should be scheduled at another four to six months.[103]

6.5. Effective use of trade fairs as a platform of communication
6.5.1. Preparation

There is a wide choice of marketing instruments that can be effectively employed to make potential visitors aware of one's participation. The most successful way is the direct invitation of customers and prospects. Usually, invitations are sent out by direct mails, but E-Mails are gaining ground, too. Mostly, the invitations are accompanied by some kind of promotion material, such as brochures or free admission tickets for the fair. Invitations should always contain a response element which makes it easier for the customer to confirm the invitation. All those who did not answer the first mailing should be contacted by phone to make a definite appointment. Last but not least, all appointments should be confirmed in a further telephone campaign about one or two weeks before the fair takes place.[104] More than three quarters of the companies interviewed in this study replied that they do invite important customers to the fair.

Apart from getting in direct contact with potential visitors, extensive press work can greatly increase the success of participation. There are numerous media which should be informed before as well as after the fair: trade journals, special interest magazines, retail magazines, financial and business papers, daily newspapers, TV and radio stations. Of course, every medium must be supplied with specific information, tailor-made to catch the attention of the respective readers: press releases targeted at trade magazines should contain information on new products and innovative technologies, business papers are interested in economic, social and financial aspects of the participation, whereas daily newspapers serve a layman audience and therefore need easily digestible facts and figures of public interest.

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[103] Clausen, E., *Seminarunterlagen Messe* (München Januar 2001).
[104] Ibid.

Moreover, the kind of information supplied also depends on the kind of medium. TV stations can only make use of visually attractive presentations or products, whereas a radio report requires a good speaker to represent the company.

In addition to issuing press releases to various media, there are further steps which can be taken to increase the publicity of a company's participation in a trade fair: The organisers of the fair usually publish an exhibition magazine where visitors find useful information on the fair, a map, a list of exhibitors as well as background information on some of the exhibiting firms. Companies can place ads or contribute an editorial text to these exhibition catalogues.

Moreover, larger companies will probably organise a press conference to inform journalists about their participation in the fair. At any rate, they should prepare a press kit containing interesting facts and figures about the company, the product and the presentation of the fair to be provided to interested journalists. Of course, journalists and other representatives of the press should also be among the ones who receive a personal invitation to visit the stand! This way of drawing attention to the presentation of a company at the fair is not used effectively enough by most companies participating in this study: Only 17.5 and 15.4 percent said they invite journalists to visit their stand at domestic and international trade fairs respectively. There lies a huge potential to improve corporate communications during the preparation of a trade fair. Sending out an invitation to relevant journalists or special interest media costs not much more than the paper the invitation is written on.

A simple press release notifying the media about the company's presence at important trade shows is often the most effective way of communication with the press. Forty percent make use of this vital and cheap communication tool in preparation of national trade fairs, and 36.5% do so at international trade shows.

Last but not least, the presence in the press should be supplemented by attractive and informative ads in relevant media. This way of getting media coverage is also used only scarcely by most SMEs, especially when it comes to their presentation at international trade fairs. Whereas in Germany, almost every second company (45%) advertises its services in print media before a trade show, this percentage shrinks to only 23.1% when it comes to international fairs. This divergence is not really comprehensible, especially when reckoning with the fact that international shows often incur considerably higher costs than domestic fairs.

The reasons for the reluctance to place ads in international media are mostly communicative barriers. First of all, companies find it hard to find out which international media are relevant to advertise their services, moreover they have difficulties accessing the media kits provided by international media, and third there are problems in the communicative implementation of the ad in international papers. Communication with the media people needs to be conducted mostly in English, and the advert itself has to be created in a foreign language. Most interviewees stated that these obstacles are the main reasons why they refrain from placing adverts in international media. In the age of the internet, however, it has never been easier to access all relevant information and to get in contact with media people abroad. Almost every paper and trade journal has published a media kit on their web site. And if communication in a foreign language is really the reason for not informing the international press about the participation in an important trade show abroad, again the services of a communications consultant could be extremely useful.

Which marketing tools do you apply in preparation of a trade show?

	At domestic fairs	At international fairs
We invite key customers to visit the stand	77.5%	73.1%
We invite journalists to visit the stand	17.5%	15.4%
We send out information material	52.5%	48.1%
We place adverts in print media	45%	23.1%
We notify the press about our participation	40%	36.5%

Fig. 6.4. Preparation of trade shows

6.5.2. Presentation at the stand

The presentation at the stand itself has been called the tip of the iceberg. Still, or just because of that, here all the efforts are bundled and converge into the lasting impression on the visitor. Keeping in mind that the average visitor has only little time and a lot to do, companies must succeed in first attracting the visitors' attention and then fulfil their expectations.

To achieve that, the outer appearance of the stand must convey a consistent message which is emotionally attractive. This starts with the design of the stand and culminates in the behaviour of the stand staff. Most of all, the message must offer some benefit to the customer. Thus, not the selfish presentation of the latest innovation should be the centre of attention, but the requirements, needs and demands of the customer. The whole presentation must communicate the benefit to the customer and answer his essential question: How can this product or service improve my life or the way I work?

The attractiveness of the stand is influenced by four factors:

1) Presentation of products: Information should be presented in such a way that even non-expert visitors can understand it, information overkill must be avoided, i.e. the presentation should focus on the most interesting products – additional information can be provided otherwise.

2) Design of the booth: The booth should emit a relaxed atmosphere, inviting visitors to come in and find out. A counter equipped with informative sales material in several languages can attract attention and ensures face-to-face communication as well as the little distance most customers appreciate at the beginning. When the conversation proceeds, a comfortable corner with armchairs creates a stress-free zone, which can be made even more pleasant by offering refreshing food and drink.

3) Stand staff: The most vital component for success. First of all, all staff members should be easily recognisable as such, ideally at the same time conveying the corporate identity by the choice of their clothes or accessories. They should approach visitors in a friendly, encouraging and unobtrusive way and still have a refined argumentation up their sleeve. They should also speak at least one foreign language.

4) Philosophy: Certain principles should serve as guidelines for the entire presentation: the determination to provide solutions, focus on customer benefit, flexible and competent conversations, and keeping promises.[105]

Comparing these basic requirements of a successful stand to the answers given by the participants of this survey, it appears that the design of the booth plays a vital role indeed for many companies. Almost nine out of ten interviewees (88.8%) stated that they go to great lengths to make their visual appearance as attractive as possible. This percentage is a little lower at international trade

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[105] Clausen, E., *Seminarunterlagen Messe* (München Januar 2001).

shows, which might be due to the fact that many companies present themselves at a combine booth and thus have only little freedom to design their presentation according to their individual requirements or ideas.

What was surprising, however, was that only few companies (28.8% at German fairs and 25% at international fairs) deemed a certain degree of entertainment necessary to attract the attention of visitors. In the intensive interviews, most executives said that this form of presenting themselves is not relevant for their sophisticated and highly technical products. Experience shows, however, that no matter how technical the exhibits and the general portfolio of a company are, those stands are most frequented that offer their visitors something to look at, something to touch or even something to try out for themselves.

The following list of positive examples presents a couple of ideas how little gimmicks or creative demonstrations can have a significant impact on the success at a trade show:

Example 1: The manufacturers of assembly robots demonstrated the performance of their robots by making them tap beer from a barrel and "transport" it safely and without spilling a single drop to the thirsty visitor, who could then enjoy the cool brew.

Example 2: A company producing measuring systems based on laser trackers called themselves CATS. At various trade shows, they hired a handful of attractive young ladies, all clad in sequined dresses, which reflected the laser beams in an impressive manner. The sparkling girls caught a lot of attention, and there was even a clear relation of the show effect to the exhibits of the company. As a highlight, some of the girls were "measured" with the exhibited laser tracker.

Example 3: The same company designed their entire stand in a "banana" outfit at a different fair. Of course, bananas were offered to all hungry visitors, and almost none of them rejected the kind offer, which really stood out from all the cookies and coffees they could get at the other stands. It did not take much effort to enter into fruitful conversations with the happy banana eaters.

Example 4: The ideal presentation should be based on a clear motto, which is repeated in all aspects of stand design and demonstrations. This was the case in the presentation of a manufacturer of handling systems, whose motto at several trade shows was "It's Tee-Time". The "tee" was not a typo here, but it referred to the "tee" used by golfers to place their ball on. The company presented a machine that "handled" a golf ball from taking it up and putting it straight in the hole of the golf course they had designed on their automation machine. Then the ball was picked up and printed with the company logo. The visitor could take the souvenir home. A little trick even helped the company generate valuable addresses: the system got started when the visitor placed his or her business card on a little tray, which was then picked up by the robot.

Example 5: A manufacturer of milling machines did not demonstrate the precision and capability of their machines by show-milling car parts as usual, but they came up with an idea that made people queue up at their stand and wait patiently for their sample: They milled faces in steel. The results were so beautiful that they could not meet the enormous demand, and all visitors who were lucky enough to get one of the popular sample products took them home and placed the "statues" on their living room shelves.

Example 6: Even if a company has no products that can be demonstrated in such a spellbinding way, there are always ways to make people visit a stand. The easiest method is always to offer something to eat or drink that nobody can resist. If these drinks are prepared by professional cocktail mixers, and if on top of that the whole stand is designed like a huge bar, as it happened at a stand at the fair for suppliers to the automotive industry in Leipzig last year, the crowds will occupy the stand as never before.

Example 7: Another best-practise that illustrates the last point: There is one company that issues a different motto for their trade shows every year, such as "Country and Western style" or "The beginnings of our company". Then all employees are asked to bring everything that is related to this motto to the company. The motley collection of items is analysed for useful things, which are then used to decorate the stand. The result are booths with unique, outstanding decorations that never go unnoticed by the visitors. Last year, when "Country and Western style" was the motto, the stand was full of old fiddles, saddles and cowboy boots, the stand staff all wore cowboy and "cowgirl" clothes, and

Western music was played in the background. True – not exactly many parallels to the products of the company, but simply a total success!

Another very important factor for a successful participation, especially with regard to the quantitative effects, is the collection of visitor data. These can include the following details:

- Name and address
- Position in the company
- Contacts after the fair required?
- Intention to buy?
- Information about the organisation and competitors[106]

More than 80% of the companies collect standard information such as name, address and position. However, it is the more specific information such as the intention to buy or the company background which are particularly valuable for efficient after-fair marketing. In order to fully exploit the great potential of talking to visitors in the relaxed setting of a trade fair, it should be thought about carefully before the fair which questions are to be asked[107].

In terms of quantity, ideally all visitors should be analysed, but according to Strothmann's survey, 75% of exhibitors capture only the data of people they had a sales talk with.[108]

Other tools to make a company's presentation at a trade fair as attractive and effective as possible are the presentation of the company in the accompanying seminar and lecture programme of the fair. This possibility is used by a relatively small percentage of exhibitors, 13.8% and 11.5% at national and international trade shows respectively. Again, this is a very useful method to catch the attention of visitors and to present the products and services of a company to an interested audience of expert participants.

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[106] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.21f.

[107] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.18.

[108] Ibid, p.21.

At closer analysis of the results of the survey it became obvious that most of the companies that stated they do present their services in the programme during the fair came from the textile and fashion sector, where fashion shows are an integral part of any trade fair. The actual percentage of companies from a technical background is thus even lower than 13.8% and 11.5 % respectively.

Another vital point for the success of the fair is the selection of the right kind of stand staff. After all, the core message of the stand is conveyed by the people! About two thirds of the companies participating in this study have recognised the impact of professional, competent, friendly and open-minded stand staff, and they put a great premium on having their products presented by employees that are best suited for this challenging and vital task.

Visitors want to know who they are dealing with, and pleasant personal communication is worth much more than the most sophisticated multi-media presentation. Therefore, the selection of the right communicators should be conducted with utmost care. Here are some criteria which can be applied to find the best stand staff[109]:

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[109] Clausen, E., *Seminarunterlagen Messe* (München Januar 2001).

Social skills	Business skills	Expertise
Communication skills (ideally multilingual)	Negotiation skills	Knowledge of products
Sociability	Argumentation skills	Knowledge of technical details
Outer appearance	Background knowledge of business matters	Ability to explain technical matters
Motivation	Knowledge of company organisation structure	
Self-confidence	Exhibition experience	
Common sense		
Politeness		
Friendliness		
Good manners		

At international trade shows, another requirement is added to the required qualifications for stand staff: They should speak at least one foreign language. After evaluating the results of the survey, this was one of the points that were most surprising: "Speaking the language of the customer" was considered relevant by merely 52.2% at German trade shows and 69.2% at international fairs. Especially at international fairs, this figure should be a pure 100%! After all, trade shows are all about communication, about meeting people and talking to them about the company's products, services and the benefits it can offer to the customer. But how can communication take place if there is no common language?

The same problem applies to the information material the companies provide at their stands. Only 61.3% and 69.2% of the participants in national and international trade shows respectively said they provide their visitors with material in their language, or at least in English. What sense does it make to present a company at an international fair if the presenters can neither talk to them nor give them something they can gather information from?

It seems ridiculous and almost unbelievable, but my experience and the replies given in the intensive interviews confirm that, sadly enough, this communicative disaster is still common practice at many international trade shows. What remains incomprehensible is why the people in charge are not willing to spend the low extra

amount to hire a professional interpreter to present their company at an international fair in a language that visitors can understand.

Which measures do you apply during a trade show to make the presentation of your company as attractive as possible to the visitors?

	At domestic fairs	*At international fairs*
We present our know-how in lectures and seminars	13.8%	11.5%
We speak the language of the visitors	52.2%	69.2%
We offer information material in several languages	61.3%	69.2%
We only have well-trained staff at our stand	68.8%	67.3%
We make our stand as attractive as possible	88.8%	73.1%
We offer entertainment at our stand (e.g. demonstrations, multimedia presentations, activities)	28.8%	25%

Fig. 6.5. Communication during the fair

6.5.3. After the fair

Taking up the iceberg image again, with the fair itself being only its tip, it vividly illustrates the major importance of a targeted and well-planned evaluation. More than 60% of visitors to trade fairs agree that the quality of the after-fair care affects their decision on which company will be commissioned with the order. Existing business relations are also enhanced by professional after care, as is confirmed by 48% of visitors.[110]

"Nur wenn es den Ausstellerunternehmen gelingt, durch zielgerichtete Aktivitäten auf die spezifischen Wünsche und Bedürfnisse der Standbesucher in der Nach-

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[110] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.25.

Messephase einzugehen, können die während der Messe angelegten Potentiale ausgeschöpft...werden."[111]

So, what can be done in the aftermath of a trade fair in order to fully exploit the potential that has been created during the fair? Strothmann's investigation analysed the marketing measures that are frequently applied after trade fairs[112]:

Marketing measures taken after trade fairs
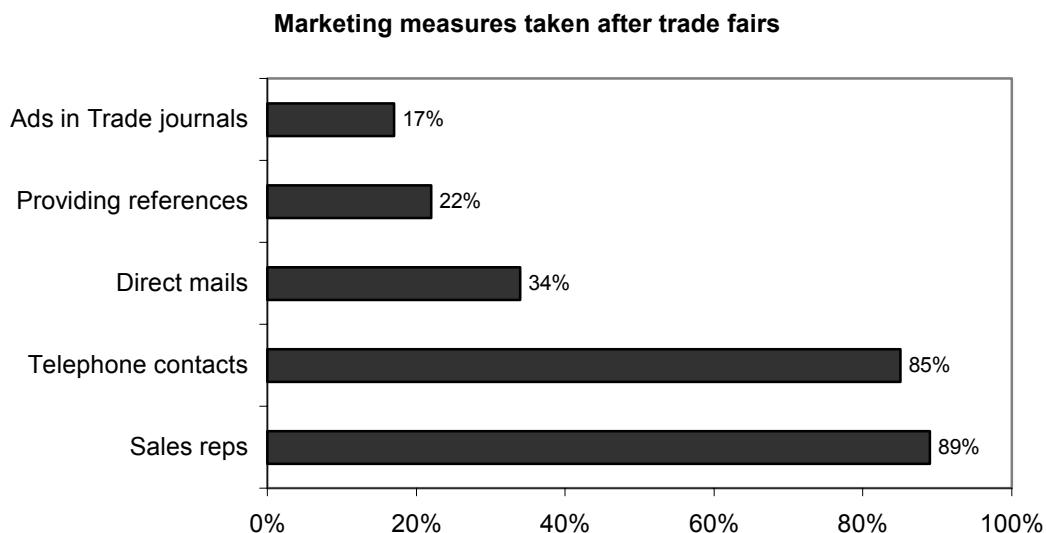
Fig. 6.6. Communication measures after the fair

It occurs that sending sales representatives and getting in contact by telephone are by far the most frequent steps taken to evaluate trade fairs. These results correspond largely with the replies generated in my survey, although the percentages are generally somewhat lower than in Strothmann's investigation. The reason for that could be that Strothmann investigated mostly larger companies, whereas my study focused on SMEs.

Providing the visitors with the materials they requested is the measure that is taken most frequently by Saxon SMEs after a trade fair (87.5%). Those materials are mostly data sheets, references or concrete offers. The evaluation of visitor data comes second and is deemed very important by 81.3%. Taking up telephone contact after the fair is also among the most frequently applied after-fair activities and is mentioned by 80% of the companies. About half of the companies (51.3%) send representatives to the visiting companies after a fair. The remaining array of

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[111] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.5.
[112] Ibid

measures is only used scarcely, particularly if compared to general marketing activities:

Measures taken after a trade fair
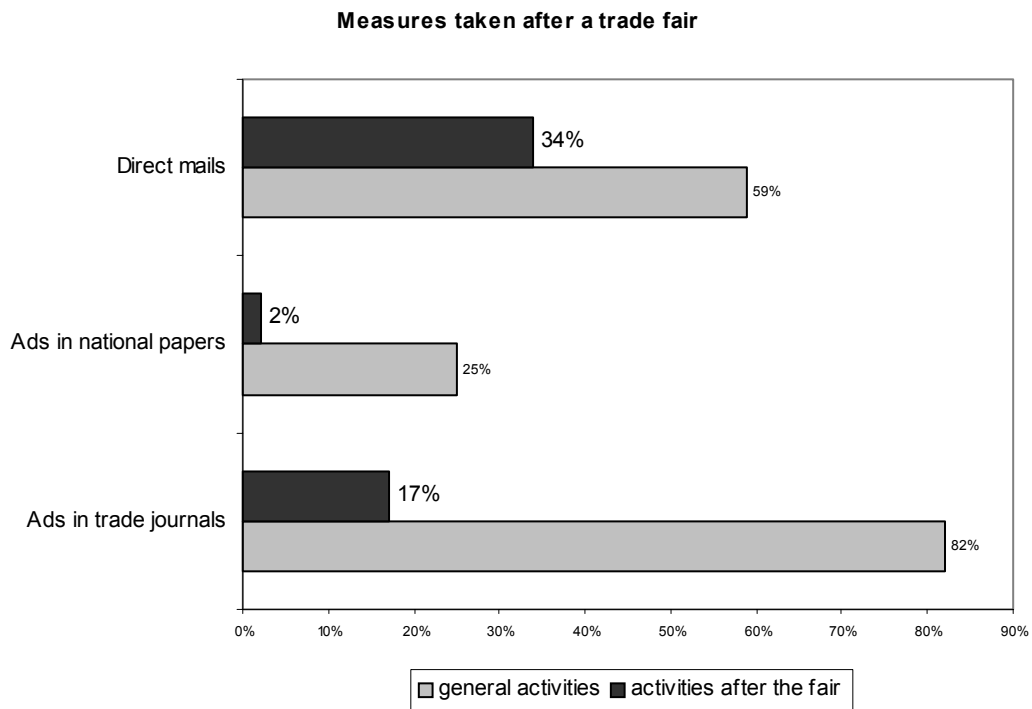
Fig. 6.7. Communication measures after the fair[113]

Again, Strothmann's results presented above largely correlate with the findings of this study:

	General marketing activities	Activities after a trade fair
	(percentage of companies that rated these measures "important" or "very important")	
Adverts in trade magazines	46.1%	8.8%
Press work	57.9%	21.3%
Direct marketing	63.0%	27.5%

The divergence between the importance of those activities in general and after a fair is astoundingly obvious. Most companies seem to think that after a fair, no marketing needs to be done – and that although Strothmann suggests that the

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[113] Cf. Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.27f.

awareness of a brand is significantly increased after its participation in a trade fair![114] This means that there is hardly a better time to place ads and send out direct mails than after a trade show, a finding which is the exact opposite of common marketing practise!

"Vorbehaltlich weiterer Untersuchungen auf diesem Gebiet ist generell den Ausstellern zu empfehlen, ihre kommunikationspolitischen Anstrengungen auch in der Nach-Messezeit fortzuführen. Dies gilt umso mehr, als im Anschluss an die Messe die Fachbesucher - wie die Untersuchung zeigt - für die Aufnahme anbieterseitiger Informationen in besonderem Maße sensibilisiert sind."[115]

Thus, in order to maximise the outcome of a trade fair, after-fair measures must not be restricted to seeking personal or telephone contact, as appears to be common practise, but the increased awareness of visitors should be fed with additional presence of the brand in the media and with direct mail campaigns.

Which measures do you take after a trade fair?

	German fairs	International fairs
We place adverts in print media	8.8%	7.7%
We notify the press of our participation	21.3%	13.5%
We evaluate visitor data	81.3%	76.9%
We get in touch by phone	80%	69.2%
We send out the required materials	87.5%	86.5%
We send out direct mails	27.5%	28.8%
We send representatives	51.3%	50%

Fig. 6.8. Measures taken after the fair

6.6. Domestic vs. international trade fairs

Within the framework of this investigation on the international marketing activities of Saxon companies, the main focus was not merely on trade fairs in general, but specifically on international trade fairs. I divided the sector of *international trade fairs* into German fairs with an international orientation and fairs outside Germany. First

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[114] Strothmann, K.-H., T. Ginter, S. Prüser, *Nachmessemarketing. Effizienzsteigerung durch ein optimiertes Messemarketing.* Fachreihe "Dialog der Marktpartner" 16 (Würzburg: Vogel Verlag und Druck 1994), p.27f.
[115] Ibid, p.28.

of all, I intended to find out which international trade fairs are relevant to Saxon companies. Secondly, the marketing measures taken in relation to international fairs had to be assessed, and thirdly, these had to be compared to what is done by Saxon companies to prepare, present and evaluate their participation in trade fairs on the German market. Are there vast discrepancies between the presentation in Germany and abroad? Are German fairs prepared, presented and evaluated more professionally than international fairs? And do Saxon companies present themselves as professionally to their international markets as they do to the German market?

From the answers to these questions, I would like to derive a couple of suggestions of what can be done to improve the presence of German companies at international trade fairs and how the immense costs can benefit German companies.[116]

In general, Saxon SMEs put as much effort in the preparation and implementation of their participation in international trade shows as they do in order to prepare or implement their national shows. The figures for the participation in international trade shows are generally slightly lower. Therefore I will only concentrate on the areas where a significant difference in the use of certain marketing tools can be observed between national and international fairs, which applies to the following areas:

	National fairs	International fairs
Before: Ads	45%	23.1%
During: Attractive stand	88.8%	73.1%
After: Press releases	21.3%	13.5%
After: Telephone contact	80%	69.2%

Fig. 6.9. Comparison of communication measures at domestic and international trade fairs

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[116] Note: On analysing the results, a major decision had to be made: If the evaluation of positive replies was based on the entire sample of participating companies (103 in total), it occurred that the marketing measures taken before, during and after a trade fair are absolutely insufficient as only a very small percentage of companies appeared to market their participation in trade shows professionally.
Therefore, I decided to base the evaluation only on those companies that had stated before (in reply to question 5.3) that the participation in trade shows is an "important" or "very important" marketing tool for them, which yielded a basis of 80 companies out of 103.
This difference has even more significant consequences for the evaluation of the marketing measures in connection with international trade fairs. Based on the entire sample, the positive replies were disappointingly low, and at the same time incorrect, as only 52 out of the 103 companies stated in question 7.2. that they do participate in international trade fairs. It is obvious that a company that does not take part in international fairs does not need to prepare or market its participation in any way. Consequently, I based the evaluation of the marketing measures taken before, during and after international fairs also on the number of companies that explicitly stated that they do participate in international fairs, which meant 52 companies out of 103.

Not surprisingly, apart form the stand design[117] these are exactly the fields where much communication is involved. Creating and placing ads in international magazines, issuing press releases after the fair and talking to international customers are all communication activities which require excellent foreign language skills, mostly in English. If we consider Strothmann's findings that corporate communications are particularly effective after a fair, it is really a shame that companies fail to make the most of their participation in international fairs. Again, the services of a translator or a communications consultant could prove very useful indeed and considerably enhance the effect of the participation in the show.

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[117] As mentioned above, the differences in this point can be mainly traced back to the fact that on international fairs, many companies do not participate with their own stand, but rather on a joint stand that does not leave much freedom for an individual and eye-catching design.

7. Advertising and Sales Literature in Saxon SMEs

There is a wide variety of publications issued by companies to support their sales efforts: Catalogues, brochures, flyers, leaflets, product information sheets, data sheets, technical information and specifications, operating manuals, presentation material, and last but not least the presentation of the company on the internet. Starting from the functions of sales literature in general, the following section sheds light on which of these publications are used most widely by SMEs in Saxony, analyses strengths and weaknesses, compares publications targeted at the domestic market and at international markets and tries to give an outlook of what can be improved in order to boost sales.

7.1. Functions of sales literature

Functions of printed sales literature are to inform the customer about products, to supplement and support the sales talk and consultancy, and last but not least to confirm the decision to buy. Another crucial factor of sales literature is the formation and establishment of a certain brand image, as is confirmed by a study of the IMAS institute[118]. The expectations of professional sales literature are high: "Die Headline in einem Katalog sollte nicht schlechter sein als in der klassischen Werbung", demands Wolf Heumann, Creative Managing Director of one of the leading German advertising agencies Jung von Matt, Hamburg. The high demands on the quality of sales literature are justified: Manfred Pernitsch, Manager International Sales Literature at BMW Munich, quotes their internal market research and claims that every client takes the sales folders "between 7 and 14 times in his hands"[119].

This draws the link to one of the major advantages of printed sales material: Its optic and haptic benefits. Unlike the internet, customers can touch the brochure, leaf through it, get an immediate overview of its entire contents and follow the prescribed reading structure. Photos and images have a much more enticing effect and a more appealing clarity than on the internet. The following example illustrates the special appeal of print material:

"In den BMW Katalogen ist das Produkt ebenfalls nicht alles. Seit die Münchner vor drei Jahren ein neues Konzept entwickelt haben, geht es um übergeordnete Dinge. Opulente Fotostrecken und ausführliche Informationen zu Ausstattung und Technik

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[118] "Wichtige Helfer am PoS", in: *W&V* 50/2002, p. 34ff.
[119] Ibid.

sind nur ein Teil. Daneben hat jeder Katalog ein Thema. (…) Ziel ist es, neben der Beschreibung des Fahrzeugmodells eine Lebenswelt aufzubauen."[120]

Whereas print material often pursues the objective to appeal to emotions and to establish an enticing brand world, the product presentation on the internet focuses rather on facts and figures. The interconnection of internet and print materials is one of the major requirements of leading brands and should be taken seriously by SMEs as well. It should be a matter of course that the corporate identity is clearly conveyed in both media. Most major brands do not make many differences between print and web: BMW and the white goods sector of Siemens offer the opportunity to download a slim version of their catalogue from the web, Audi uses the same images in web and print, and the watchmaker TAG Heuer virtually presents its original catalogue on the web.

7.2. Types of sales material in SMEs

What types of sales literature do Saxon SMEs use for the promotion of their products and services? The following chart gives an overview:
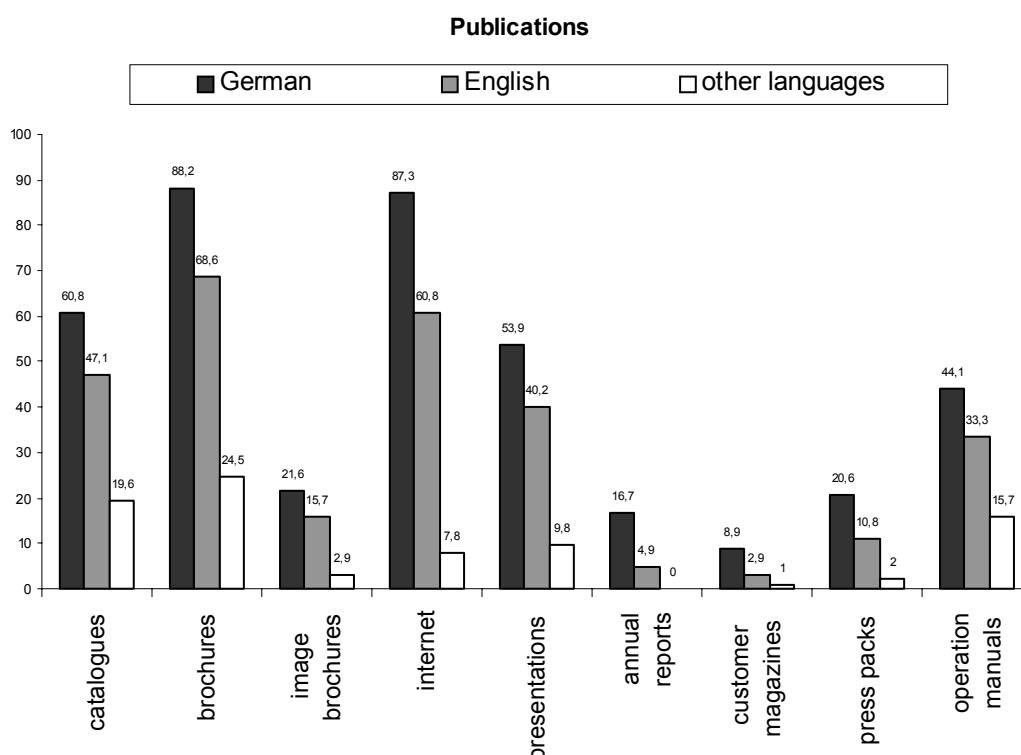
Fig. 7.1. Sales publications of Saxon SMEs

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[120] "Wichtige Helfer am PoS", in: *W&V* 50/2002, p. 34ff.

Brochures (88.2%) and the presentation of the company on the internet (87.3%) are the most important kinds of sales literature for small and medium-sized companies. Other informative publications such as catalogues (60.8%), presentation material such as slides or transparencies (53.9%) and operating manuals (44.1%) are also used by the majority of companies to inform customers and business partners about their company, their products and services. Image brochures (21.6%), annual reports (16.7%), press kits (20.6%) and customer magazines or newsletters (8.9%) range further behind in importance and frequency.

It is striking that most companies put a premium on necessary and factual information, such as product brochures (88.2%), catalogues (60.8%) and operating manuals (44.1%), whereas the publications with a "softer" or more emotional focus such as image brochures (21.6%) or customers magazines / newsletters (8.9%) are considered significantly less important. This suggests that Saxon SMEs only produce the publications they consider absolutely necessary to provide vital information for their customers, but that they neglect the strategy of building an image for their company and enhancing their products with a certain brand value.

This seems to be one of the most central weaknesses in the marketing practices of Saxon SMEs. Instead of providing their customers with a world of experience, promising benefits and advantages, they focus on facts and figures and fail to establish a long-lasting emotional relationship with their customers. The specifications of a product solely appeal to reason, and if a competitor provides better facts and figures, the customer will not hesitate to change fronts. Long-term customer relationships can only be established on an emotional level, and in order to appeal to customers on that level, an emotional approach in advertising is essential and inevitable.

When I asked the executives in charge of marketing and advertising about this peculiarity, most of them uttered that they consider an emotional appeal the right strategy for consumer products, but that it does not apply to B2B-oriented companies. Their customers are only interested in hard facts, they claimed, and do not want to have their eyes watered with emotional verbiage. This view is supported by recognised marketing experts such as Philip Kotler, who also maintains that "it is widely believed that industrial buyers are most responsive to rational appeals", and

he produces the following evidence: "They are knowledgeable about the product class, trained to recognise value, and accountable to others for their choice."[121]

True, consumer advertising focuses on emotions to a much stronger extent, but I think it is a dangerous pitfall to believe that B2B advertising can rely on facts and figures only. After all, the decision makers in the purchasing departments are also human beings, and the positive reaction to a brilliant photo and a catchy headline is universally human. Moreover, emotional appeals take effect on a subconscious level and appeal to purchasing managers as well, even if their task is to concentrate on the hard facts. The assumption is not that a bad product sells better when disguised in emotional niceties, but in today's competitive marketplace where one product is similar to the other, a little emotional add-on can make the difference between a successful product or company and a product nobody knows.

The more the saturation of markets proceeds, the more important a strong image becomes for the success of small and medium-sized companies. The image of a company expresses what the basis of success is. This is especially true of medium-sized companies: their corporate mission, their philosophy is what convinces customers to buy from that company out of a vast array of competitors who offer more or less the same product with the same specifications, as the philosophy suggests that this is a company the customer can trust and rely on in a long-term perspective. Thus, future success of SMEs will be built on a foundation of a clear mission statement, a clear positioning on the market, the establishment of strong brands and a powerful image, and the clear and appealing communication of their competitive edge.

The fact that so few companies put a premium on establishing a strong image and pursuing the branding process is mirrored in the deficiency of being able to think strategically. A company with a clearly laid-out strategy will always base this strategy on a special philosophy and an image, and it will be eager to communicate this positioning and its competitive edge to the market. After all, this provides their customers with a considerable added value. In practice, however, it becomes obvious that only very few companies have a clear concept of what they actually strive for and what they represent. The claim "quality and tradition", which is so over-used by almost every single SME in this sample is a vital prerequisite for being

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[121] Kotler, P., *Marketing Management* 7th edn. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall) 1991, p. 575.

able to exist in today's marketplace, but it is by no means a differentiation from competitors and does not promise a special benefit to the customer.

One of the most urgent recommendations in relation to this survey is therefore that small and medium-sized companies must put a greater importance on developing their own brand(s). Branding is not only about a name, a logo or a slogan. Rather, it is all about the philosophy of a company, about its mission and the benefits it wishes to bring to its audiences. Branding is about how the company sees itself and how it wishes to be perceived by others. "It is about achieving a consistent, confident approach to communication – across different media, in different contexts, to different audiences"[122].

Most smaller companies think that good branding is something that only applies to large multinational companies. Many SMEs do not consider themselves a brand, hence they do not even attempt to communicate the mission and the benefits of their brand to their customers. But any company that has a clear direction, which is supported 110% by all their employees, any company that is committed to what they do, convinced of their products, any company that lives its values and knows what it does, and any company that understands their customers and gives them what they want – they all have a strong brand, whose values need to be communicated internally to the employees and externally to customers, the media and potential investors. The efforts in communication are bound to pay back – with greater customer retention and trust, and ultimately with higher sales figures. "It's a shame that many small or medium-sized businesses perceive branding as an expensive irrelevance. Some think it is an activity that large companies can afford but they, the smaller companies, cannot. Some think it is for consumer-facing businesses rather than for business-to-business companies. This is not only incorrect, it is harmful to potential company profits and, even, company survival. In the long term, the only companies that thrive are those that take branding seriously."[123]

So what can be improved?[124] Customer orientation is the key. Good advertising is made for the customer and needs to reckon with the customers' expectations, requirements and wishes. It has to appeal to the customers' emotions and tell them exactly what they want to hear, always paying tribute to the maxim of truth, of

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[122] Bell, C., "Why smaller companies need good branding", published on http://www.webpronews.com
[123] Ibid.
[124] Cf. Chapter 12 and 13 for a detailled analysis of improvement strategies on the linguistic and semiotic level.

course. So, marketing executives should make up their minds with regard to the following questions and communicate the truthful answers in their sales literature:

- Who are we?
- Who are our customers?
- Who are our competitors?
- What do we have that others don't?
- What are our strengths, our philosophy, our weaknesses?
- Why should the customer buy from us of all companies?
- How does our product make life easier for our customer?
- What added value does it offer, apart from the hard facts?
- What emotional argument could appeal to our customers?

Last but not least, marketing specialist Klaus Kitzmüller gives 5 pieces of advice on how good sales literature should be made[125]:

1. Appearance

The design guidelines must be flexible enough to leave enough scope for creativity. The products are supposed to live, and not to be choking in formal requirements.

2. Presentation

The products must be presented in a dynamic and covetable way. The customer must want to buy them. He will most certainly do so if he is promised a world of experience.

3. Orientation

The reader must find it easy to follow the structure of the publication. Icons, tables and charts can be useful guides for the readers.

4. Credibility

The only criterion for the design and presentation are the preferences of the target group.

5. Adaptations

Multilingual sales literature should convey a consistent message. Regional differences must be taken into consideration.

Only if advertising agencies are briefed professionally with reference to all these aspects will they be able to produce high-quality, efficient and successful sales literature. The preparation, however, needs to be carried out by the marketing

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[125] "Wichtige Helfer am PoS", in: *W&V* 50/2002, p. 34ff.

department of the companies, ideally drawing on the expertise of a communications consultant with regard to the coordination of international marketing activities.

7.3. International sales literature

Comparing the sales publications that Saxon SMEs provide for their national and international markets (cf. Fig. 7.1.), it becomes obvious that apart from sales literature in German, the majority of companies also have publications in English. Other languages, such as Russian or French, are only of minor importance. Brochures are the most important type of marketing literature in German (88.2%) and in English (68.6%), followed by the English internet presentation (60.8%), catalogues in English (47.1%), presentation material (40.2%) and operating manuals (33.3%) in English. In analogy with publications in German, image brochures (15.7%), press kits (10.8%), annual reports (4.9%) and customer magazines and newsletters (2.9%) are of minor importance among the literature published in English.

For other languages, only brochures (24.5%), catalogues (19.6%) and operating manuals (15.7%) are relevant types of sales literature.

Glancing at the absolute figures of Saxon companies that have publications in English, the results are still somewhat astonishing. 97.3% of the companies in this sample claim that English is either "very important" or "important" for their company. Still, only about two thirds of the companies have sales literature in English. This means that there are still some Saxon companies that try to sell their products and services abroad without providing English sales literature for their international clients.

Another important criterion for the professionalism of international marketing in SMEs is the question of how often the companies update their sales material. Keeping sales literature up to date is not only a matter of changing contents, but also embraces the design and the appearance of the material. There is nothing more embarrassing than a brochure that gives away its old age at first sight due to an old-fashioned design or outdated appearance.

Most companies in this sample have recognised the significance of up-to-date marketing material. 40.8% republish their material every year, another quarter (26.5%) update their sales literature every two years. One sixth of the companies issues an updated version of their marketing materials more often (every six months), another sixth does so less often than every two years. That means that about 85% of Saxon SMEs regularly update their sales material and put a premium on contemporary design and contents.

7.4. Intercultural adaptation

7.4.1. Awareness of intercultural differences

About two thirds of the companies participating in this survey publish a part of their corporate literature not only in German, but also in other languages. But as pointed out in chapter 4.3.1., a simple translation is often not enough. The material must be adapted to the taste and expectations of the target audience in terms of contents, style and design. "Effective translation bridges the gap between cultures, not merely words."[126]

Every second company in this sample (49.0%) appears to be aware of the cultural differences between various markets. 49% of the companies claim that "a profound knowledge about the target culture of our clients is an important precondition for successful international business". On the other hand, 16.7% believe that "the culture of our international business partners is so similar to German culture that intercultural differences play only a subordinate role". Almost one third of the companies in this sample even admit that they "have never thought about this matter".

When queried as to which extent they adapt their international sales material to the cultural peculiarities of the target markets, 19% of the companies in this sample replied "strongly", 51% stated they do so "only little", and 30% claimed they do "not at all" adapt their marketing material to the culture of the target markets.

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[126] Sprung, R. C. (ed.), *Translating into success: Cutting-edge strategies for going multilingual in a global age* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2000), p. XIV.

To what extent do you reckon with intercultural differences in the creation of your international sales material?

not at all
30%

strongly
19%

little
51%
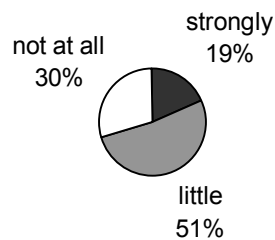
Fig. 7.2. Intercultural differences in international sales material

Out of those companies that do adapt their marketing material reckoning with intercultural differences, 36.3% make changes in content, i.e. they focus on different arguments or select different areas of importance. 16.7% also adapt the visual appearance, e.g. colours or symbols. 20.6% pay attention to cultural-specific stylistic differences, such as the difference between formal and informal style or personal and impersonal address.

A problem with regard to the intercultural adaptation of sales material is the fact that many small and medium-sized companies often have their material translated into English, but direct their marketing activities not exclusively on Anglophone markets. Rather, they use English as a lingua franca, and the publications are distributed among customers from a variety of different countries. This often makes it difficult to reckon with culture-specific peculiarities of the target countries. The best solution in those cases might be to make the brochures and other material as culturally neutral as possible, or to present the company specifically as a German manufacturer in order to put a premium on the identity of the country of origin.

A very important finding of this study is that the more intercultural differences are considered in international marketing material, the more revenue a company generates abroad[127]. This underlines the importance of intercultural awareness for successful international business.

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[127] For 1996, this correlation is significant on the 10% level only, 1998 on the 5% level, and in 2000 even on the 1% level. It needs to be taken into account that in 2000, 95 out of the 103 participants in this investigation answered the question on the annual turnover abroad, in 1998 there were 88 responses, and for 1996, there were 83 replies. There are several reasons for that. Some companies may not have exported yet in 1996 and/or 1998, or they cannot provide exact figures for those periods. Moreover, there is a positive correlation of the annual turnovers from those three periods of time, which is significant on the 1% level.

7.4.2. Guidelines for intercultural adaptation

The first step for the cultural adaptation of the sales material is the marketing concept. Companies that develop different marketing concepts for their various international markets will be more aware of cultural and country-specific differences. Consequently, they often try to adapt the style and the appearance of their materials to the target markets. Almost two thirds of the companies in this sample (62.2%) claimed that their marketing concepts differ between markets and countries.

Cultural adaptation starts with simple formalities. In Britain and America, weights and measures are often quoted in inch or pounds instead of using the metric system. For example, when translating a case study about a British supermarket chain into German, a literal translation of the statement "Today, the stores have a total sales area of 108 million square feet" would have been impossible. The same applied to the translation of the catalogue of a German company producing traditional folklore items such as Christmas angels or nutcrackers. All the sizes were given in centimetres in the German version, but when translated into English, it appeared that a conversion into inch-sizes was much more adequate to the expectations of the target audience.

Another small difference that can have significant consequences is that whereas in Germany thousands and millions are separated by dots in figures, this separation is made by commas in the English-speaking world. On the other hand, Germans use commas to indicate decimal positions, whereas Britons and Americans use a point there instead. Mixing these different conventions up can have serious consequences indeed. After all, it makes a big difference whether the price for a machine is three thousand or three million Euro!

Moreover, in every international publication, it should be ensured that the addition "Germany" is stated in address lines, and that each telephone number is completed by the country code 0049. Although these seem to be minor matters, they make the difference between a professional publication and a home-made one, and they express the respect for the target audience.

Case study: "Original Erzgebirge" Products

The example of the "Original Erzgebirge" wood items draws the connection to a couple of other matters. For years, international sales of the so-called "Räuchermännchen" had been stagnating. An investigation revealed that the term had often been literally translated into "smoker" or even "smoking man". Due to the strong movement of political correctness in America and to the public rejection of the issue of smoking in general, the whole concept of smoking evokes extremely negative associations – in stark contrast with the "homely" atmosphere the wooden sculptures are supposed to create. After consulting several American native speakers, the industry agreed on the term "incense man", which evokes much more positive associations than the blatant "smoker".

Many culture-specific products require a lot of explanation if they are to succeed on foreign markets. This is particularly true for the wood items from the Saxon region of the Erzgebirge. Whereas the term "Original Erzgebirge" has developed into a brand with a high degree of recognition in Germany, it is widely unknown in Britain or America. Foreign customers do not have positive associations with the term "Erzgebirge", most of them do not even have the vaguest idea what this term is supposed to denote. Therefore, it is paramount that in English "translations" of existing catalogues and brochures, the term is not only translated (commonly into "Erzgebirge", "Erzgebirge mountains" or even "Ore Mountains"), but it must be explained in such a way that the description generates desirable and positive associations with the region, which is then reflected on the products. International clients must be informed that this is a mountainous region in Germany where the mining tradition is very strong, where the people are hard-working and friendly, and where time goes by at a leisurely pace. Only then will they be able to value the quality and meaning of the little wood items that are supposed to spread an air of "good old Germany" in their homes. The following paragraph is taken from the foreword of a catalogue of a manufacturer of Erzgebirge wood sculptures, and it conveys this atmosphere fairly well:

The Erzgebirge - A Spellbinding Ride through an Ocean of Light
In the heart of Germany, time goes by at a leisurely pace. After a day of hard work, we like to sit down, put our feet up and simply call it a day. We fold our working clothes neatly in our wooden wardrobes, put on our snug slippers and then stretch out nice and comfy by the crackling fire. Ah, what a relief! Slowly our eyes start

gazing into the distance: How beautiful it is, our Erzgebirge, the stretch of dark-wooded mountains we call home. Soft green hills sink into ancient forests, which are deeply cut by roaring waters breaking their way through magnificent rocks. The rough, wild landscape has shaped the people here: Hard-working we are, good-natured and modest. We like nothing more than to make ourselves feel at ease and this we can do best in our snug, cosy homes.

All year round, we decorate our mantelpieces, windowsills and shelves with delightful little figures we have made from our local wood. In the springtime, when the first fresh-green leaves are budding on crooked twigs, we lovingly adorn them with hand-painted wooden eggs. When the sun shines brightly in the summer, we decorate our homes with sweet little flower children to ride in on his sunny rays.

The most magical time, however, is the Christmas season and it isn't without reason, that the Erzgebirge is called "The Christmas Wonderland". You must see the Erzgebirge Christmas for yourself. Otherwise you wouldn't believe the enchanting shine of thousands and thousands of bright little lights illuminating the mountainous land. Each and every window sparkles with heart-warming lights. Wooden angels and miners carry their candles to light the way through the dark, wintry night. Come follow us and we'll take you for a spellbinding ride through this ocean of lights!

Our romantic wealth of traditions stems from days gone by and is deeply rooted in the history of the Erzgebirge. In German, Erzgebirge means "The Ore Mountains". In the Middle Ages, vast resources of valuable minerals were discovered in this region. For three centuries, as millions of miners wrought silver, tin, zinc, copper and lead from the mountains, the Erzgebirge prospered.

When the rich resources were eventually exhausted in the 17th century, the miners and their families were desperate for a new way to earn their living. So, the immense, deep forest hit their eyes. They swapped their pick-axes for carving knives and began to work the wood with the same smart skill as they had worked the mountain before. When the wood lathe was finally invented, nothing could stand in the way of the splendour of Erzgebirge wood art. Virtually every single family in the region created their own figures. What all of the wooden incense men, candle arches, angels and miners had in common, though, was their deep connection with the traditions of the miners and their tedious, yet simple and joyful lives.

Keeping this unique wealth of tradition alive is a matter of the utmost importance to the wood artists from Gahlenz. Few firms are able to offer the entire range of original Erzgebirge wood sculptures. Apart from preserving traditions, the Gahlenz sculptors

have declared it their goal to uphold the artistic character of the Erzgebirge figures. So they continually design new models – some true to tradition, others refreshingly modernistic, showing the signs of our time. With every new sculpture, however, the typical Erzgebirge character can be clearly recognised in their shape, colours and message. So every true collector can tell straight away: The Gahlenz wood sculptures are "Genuine Erzgebirge®"![128]

Cultural adaptation is also required for terms such as "Schwibbogen" or "Pyramide". Both terms are typical of Erzgebirge wood art, and yet both terms cannot be found in most dictionaries. When translating these terms, the most crucial objective should be to create the same connotations of "Christmas", "cosy winter night", "sparkling lights" etc. that make these items so coveted in Germany. Suggestions that have proved quite successful are "candle arch" for "Schwibbogen" and "Christmas carousel" for "Pyramide".

7.4.3. Intercultural adaptation of concept and style

Apart from formal aspects and culture-specific terminology, the adaptation of international advertising material comprises style and concept. Many international customers do not put the same premium on typical German sales arguments such as "quality" or "long-standing tradition" as German customers do. Most international clients associate these values with the claim "made in Germany" anyway, which is one of the strongest sales arguments of German companies abroad and which should always be mentioned unless there might be negative implications for the particular type of products associated with it.

Apart from that, many international customers are interested in different information. When they purchase a product from a different country, they want to be informed of matters such as safety, flexibility, delivery terms, customer service, availability of spare parts and communication.

From a stylistic perspective, many international customers believe that German advertising is way too factual, boring and dry. Many people from other countries feel that the presentation of German companies is impersonal and cold. Everything revolves around products, facts and figures, the company, its history and its

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[128] From the catalogue of "Erzgebirgische Holzkunst Gahlenz GmbH", 2002, p.4.

background. People from other cultures, however, are also interested in a picture of the people they talk to, for example.

Moreover, German companies tend to present information in a passive style, whereas English publications use the interpersonal "you" much more often to address the customer directly and to draw a direct connection to the life of the client. In America, many corporate publications also use the first person singular pronoun "I" to present their products and services, which creates the impression that the president of the company himself will take responsibility for the quality of his products. Often, the first person singular also serves as a testimonial of people who have tried and tested the product and are happy with it, thus creating high credibility and authenticity of the advert and the claims made by it.

Due to their attempt to appear as factual as possible, many Germans refrain from the American personal and "boastful" style, characterised by the use of the first person singular, reference to people with their first names and an exaggerative use of superlatives. On Americans, however, who are used to this style of boastful advertising, the presentations of German products and services often make a boring, trite and passive impression. Passive sentence structures, nominal constructions, the reference to people by their last name and mostly in the third person singular, the avoidance of superlatives as well as the focus on facts instead of on soft features[129] make German advertising copy inappropriate to American standards.

7.4.4. Adaptation of product names

Another area where plenty of pitfalls are waiting in international marketing are company and product names. Two criteria are most relevant for the consideration if a brand name can be used internationally: The pronunciation of the name should be easy for speakers in all target countries, and the name should evoke no negative associations[130]. The list of negative examples, where these principles were violated, is long and often amusing – but not for the company that lost its good name and significant market shares due to the choice of a wrong name:

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[129] Cf. chapter 12.
[130] Cf. also Piller, I., *American Automobile Names* (Essen: Verlag Blaue Eule 1996).

Example 1: The car industry seems to be particularly prone to severe misjudgements: The Mitsubishi "Pajero" sold very badly in Spain – little wonder if one considers that "Pajero" is an extremely pejorative term meaning "wanker" in Spanish. And who would like to drive a 30,000 Euro car with the word "wanker" sprawled in bold letters over the rear?

Example 2: A similar mistake was made by Ikea, who typically use Swedish words for their products. They have a shelf called "Jerker", which sells extremely badly in English-speaking countries.

Example 3: Another mishap from the automotive industry: General Motors launched a car in South America with the name "Chevy Nova". Latin tongues soon mocked the car with the slogan "Chevy no va", which means: "It doesn't go".

Example 4: An airline called itself "EMU". Management was puzzled why Australians didn't want to fly with that airline, until they became aware that the emu cannot fly. Or who would like to fly with an airline that calls itself "lame chick"?[131]

Example 5: An English cosmetics company chose the name "Body Mist" for their new body moisturiser. In this case, the embarrassing factor is particularly high, since the term "mist" (meaning "manure" in German) is used in conjunction with "body" and denotes something you can rub your body with.

Example 6: Last, a positive example: In the 1960s, Rolls Royce intended to launch a car with the name "Silver Mist", which sounds beautiful in English and evokes the extremely positive association of cruising in the silver morning light of a fresh summer day. When they learnt, however, what "Mist" means in German, they changed the name into "Silver Shadow" and continued the long success story of their cars with a name containing the component "Silver"[132].

As far as the ease of pronunciation is concerned, it is worth considering whether the foreign sound of the name might also work in favour of the company, as it was the case with the brand names Hutschenreuther or Nixdorf. These names sound so German that international customers readily associate them with German craftsmanship and high quality standards. The latter, Nixdorf, even made a virtue

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[131] Cf. Hollet, V., *Business Objectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992).
[132] Cf. Wirth, F., „…und Lenin hatte sogar zwei davon", in: *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 30.04.2004

out of necessity and ran an advertising campaign in the UK with the slogans "Nixdorf spells frodxin backwards. Maybe that will help." or "An urgent appeal: Help us protect our good name."[133]

> **Case study: Zschimmer & Schwarz campaign**
>
> Interestingly, a medium-sized company from Saxony pursued a similar approach in a recent campaign. The intention was to make the name of the company, "Zschimmer & Schwarz", more widely known on the global market. This name contains phoneme and grapheme combinations which are typical of the German sound set, including the affricates |t∫| or the combination |∫v|. The latter combination of phonemes does not exist in the English phonetic system, and the two initial grapheme combinations <Zsch> and <Schw> are not normally used in English either. That makes this name particularly difficult to pronounce for customers from abroad. So the company opted for an approach in which the name was depicted in phonetic transcription on all adverts, supported by a picture of a person typical of that particular region and the copy: "This how someone from (Australia) pronounces our name." Once again, the difficult pronunciation of German company names was topicalised and used as a means to attract attention and at the same time to establish a strong association with the German origin of the products.

7.4.5. Visual adaptation: symbols and colours

Apart from linguistic and stylistic considerations, the design and visual appearance of corporate literature is also subject to intercultural differences. The different associations with colours and symbols are much-cited examples and can be elaborated on only briefly in this context.

In German culture, the colour green stands for respectability, reliability and tradition. Consequently, it is frequently used as a corporate colour for banks, insurance companies or real estate agents. In tropical countries, however, green is associated with decay and disease and would certainly not evoke the associations the bank or insurance company would like to create.

The German concept of business culture is characterised by a factual approach, personal reserve and an aura of respectability. Emotional aspects, personal involvement and warmth have nothing to do with business. Other cultures do not

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[133] Kreutzer, R., *Global Marketing – Konzeption eines länderübergreifenden Marketing* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag 1990), p. 287.

separate between business and private matters as strictly, and consequently their corporate images emit more warmth and personality in their logos, symbols and colours as well.

Many Asian cultures, for example, put a premium on harmony and interpersonal relations instead of hard facts and fast personal success. The delicate pastel colours or the blossoming apple tree painted in light movements of the brush that form the logo of a Japanese advertising agency symbolise this commitment to harmony. Could anyone imagine these colours to be part of the corporate identity of a German advertising agency (mostly red and black or an electric orange)?

Fig. 7.3. Corporate identity for a Japanese advertising agency[134]

[134] Olins, W., *Corporate Identity Weltweit* (Frankfurt / New York: Campus Verlag 1995), p. 109.

7.5. Summary

Summing up, most SMEs rely on rather informative types of company literature such as catalogues, data sheets and brochures. Image brochures or instruments targeted at customer retention are considerably less popular. The factual approach also becomes obvious in the style of the materials, which focus mainly on facts and figures rather than on conveying emotions and building up a brand image.

From an international perspective, the majority of Saxon SMEs do have sales material in English. About a third of the companies offer material in Russian or French as well. Intercultural adaptation plays a role for about two thirds of the companies, whereas it has to be noted that rather than the subtleties of intercultural communication, the country-specific adaptation of facts and figures is in the foreground.

8. Internet and Online Promotion

8.1. Theoretical and linguistic background

8.1.1. The internet as the communication tool of the future

Ninety-five percent of the companies that participated in the recent study present themselves on the internet. Out of those, almost sixty percent have an English version of their web site. On average, Saxon companies spend nine percent of their marketing budgets on internet promotion. Almost forty percent claim that online-promotion is a "very important" or "important" component of their marketing mix. In international marketing, the corporate web site plays a "very important" or "important" role for 30 percent of the participants in this investigation.

The "MIND"-study issued by the Dresdner Bank found similar results:

"Das Internet wird von Mittelstandsbetrieben mit Web-Zugang bereits stark genutzt. Die Spanne reicht von knapp 58 Prozent bei Unternehmen, die das Netz bei der Beschaffung einsetzen, bis hin zu über 46 Prozent bei Unternehmen, die hierüber Teile der Organisation und Verwaltung abwickeln. Jeweils etwa die Hälfte der Unternehmen mit Internet-Zugang sieht im Web ein Instrument zur Unterstützung von Verkauf und Vertrieb beziehungsweise von Service und Kundendienst.

Hoffen die Unternehmen durch das Internet auf zusätzlichen Umsatz? Hier ist die Antwort keineswegs einhellig. In der einen Hälfte der Unternehmen mit Internet-Anschluss verspricht man sich keinen zusätzlichen Umsatz oder weiß es schlicht nicht einzuschätzen. In der anderen Hälfte der Unternehmen indes wird ein zum Teil sogar beträchtlicher Mehrumsatz erwartet.

So wird in fast 22 Prozent der Unternehmen mit Internet-Anschluss der Umsatzanteil der Online-Geschäfte auf zehn bis 20 Prozent veranschlagt. In über elf Prozent der Firmen rechnet man sogar mit mehr als 20 Prozent. Dagegen wird in knapp 43 Prozent der Unternehmen entweder kein Umsatz im Netz erzielt oder man vermag dies nicht einzuschätzen.

Bei gut 58 Prozent der Unternehmen mit Internet-Anschluss sind die Endverbraucher Zielgruppe. Noch mehr, knapp 66 Prozent, haben das Business-to-Business-Segment im Auge. Die öffentliche Verwaltung ist als Zielgruppe dagegen von relativ geringer Bedeutung. Schon heute hat der Umsatz, den das Internet generiert, bei

vielen Mittelständlern beträchtliche Dimensionen erreicht.

Das Internet-Engagement des Mittelstands geht über die User-Rolle längst weit hinaus. Eine beachtliche Zahl kleiner und mittlerer Unternehmen ist inzwischen mit einem mehr oder minder aufwändigen eigenen Auftritt im Internet präsent.

Dort, wo eine eigene Website bereits vorhanden oder geplant ist, bedient man sich zur Entwicklung und Pflege des Auftritts mehrheitlich externer Spezialisten. 22,6 Prozent der Mittelstandsunternehmen mit eigenem Online-Angebot betrauen mit dieser Aufgabe die eigene EDV-Abteilung, 19,5 Prozent beschäftigen eigene Webdesigner.

Allerdings: Bei anspruchsvollen Internet-Anwendungen wird die Nutzung durch mittelständische Unternehmen innerhalb der nächsten Zeit nur moderat wachsen. Zusätzlich zu den Mittelständlern, die bereits im Netz verkaufen, wollen lediglich weitere 6,6 Prozent aktiv Geschäfte im Internet betreiben. Und Online-Schnittstellen zu Partnern wie Lieferanten und Kunden anzubieten planen nur fünf Prozent. Bei der Beurteilung dieser Werte darf jedoch nicht übersehen werden, dass unter den gegenwärtigen technischen und wirtschaftlichen Bedingungen nur für eine Teilgruppe der Mittelstandsunternehmen die komplexen Internet-Anwendungen überhaupt geeignet und erschwinglich sind.

Eine nicht kleine Gruppe der Mittelständler nutzt überdies bereits die interaktiven Möglichkeiten, die das Internet bietet. So verkaufen schon mehr als 23 Prozent der Unternehmen über das Internet und gut 22 Prozent verfügen über Online-Schnittstellen zu Kunden oder Lieferanten. Vor allem größere Mittelständler (ab 2,5 Millionen Euro Jahresumsatz) setzen immer häufiger Intranet (28,2 Prozent) und andere Online-Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten (29,4 Prozent) ein."[135]

Those figures speak a clear language. Online promotion and corporate internet presentations have become a key element of the national and international marketing mix of small and medium-sized companies. Before analysing the actual situation of corporate internet marketing in greater detail, I would like to give an outline of the linguistic aspects of the internet revolution. How has the internet changed language? In which aspects does language use on the internet differ from

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[135] Dresdner Bank AG, *Mind 02 – Mittelstand in Deutschland* (Köln: Gruner + Jahr Wirtschaftspresse 2001).

other text types used in marketing? And what characterises a good corporate internet site from a linguistic point of view?

8.1.2. The language of the internet

8.1.2.1. General observations

Is the internet changing language? Does it speed up language change? Or does it even change our entire way of communication? Questions like these are currently being discussed in heated debates. On the one hand, there are the language purists who are deeply alarmed by the language that is being used on the web – "wrong" spelling, "wrong" grammar, elliptic syntax that merely yields fragments of sentences. Many of them warn that the internet is the end of the cultivated use of language and of good style.

However, one has to ask for the reasons why people use that kind of language on the web. First of all, it has to be stated that the internet is an informal medium by definition. It has been developed by the young, the dynamic, the non-conformist, and consequently it bears the signs of their language. This register has proven particularly useful for the medium internet. After all, one of the most crucial advantages of the web is that it helps the user save time – time to retrieve information, time to communicate with other people. On the internet, language is thus even more what it is in most of the other registers, too: a tool.

David Crystal, in his book *Language and the Internet*, tries to approach the matter from a more progressive and objective point of view. His starting point is that "it is really kind of misguided to say, is it more like spoken or is it more like written language? It is a new entity in its own right"[136]. Crystal calls the internet the "arrival of a third medium of communication", "a genuine linguistic revolution"[137], and claims we are all in the midst of it.

Crystal describes the major difference between the internet and traditional written language[138] as the difference between the static style of traditional writing and the dynamic character of language on the web. On the web, we can watch the language change while we are looking at the screen. Words start to dance, to change colour,

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[136] Quoted in Stein, D. (ed.), *Cooperating with written texts. The Pragmatics and comprehension of written texts* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter 1992).

[137] Quoted in: Cook, F. "Linguists see Internet as Cultural Catalyst", on: http://www.experteditor.com, 2001.

[138] Cf. Crystal, D., *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of English Language* 2nd edn. (Cambridge: CUP 1997), for the major points of contrast between speech and writing.

to melt with other words into new words. Even paralinguistic features of speech can be expressed on screen. By means of using bold text, italics or colour emotions can be expressed, as in: "I *loved* the presentation you gave to Jack this morning. **Great job!**"[139] Just like we do in personal communication, we can lower our voice in E-Mail as well. Some people use double parentheses to denote 'true inner voice', what in the acting world is called an 'aside'…for example: "The VP of Quality Assurance resigned ((got fired)) today which is going to lead to enhanced relations between Engineering and Testing ((in their wildest dreams))."[140] "Muttering" or speaking silently online can also be expressed by typing without any capital letters.

Another popular way of expressing emotions on screen are the so-called "emoticons". Baker & Baker describe them as follows: "People use these simple keystrokes, found on any keyboard, to express emotions, thoughts, and actions in online communications. They substitute for the computer user's body language, which can't be seen in text-based interactions. These emoticons (also called smilies) are commonly found in E-Mail, Usenet postings, newsgroups, chat rooms, and mailing lists."[141] Examples are the sign :-) to express a smile or happiness or (:-(for a frown.

The web makes language interactive. In E-Mails, we can "frame" a message, as Crystal has called it. That means, we can take a message we have received, leave out a bit, add something to another chunk, comment on your statements directly in the original or refer directly to things in the original message. The message serves as a frame to the reply[142]. The style of E-Mails is rather informal, largely owing to the fact that E-Mails do not possess the finality of a traditional letter: "E-Mail acts as a record which can be re-read for reference, but it tends not to be composed formally as a final draft and final publication. Its status may be more provisional, as in a conversation. As an electronic text E-Mail can be redrafted and re-presented seamlessly. Content can have permanence but not necessarily fixity."[143]

In discussion forums, a thread of conversation that was started by someone can be picked up and continued by any other user at any one time. Messages that have been hibernating for weeks or months can be reanimated and continued around the

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[139] Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 51.
[140] Ibid, p. 45.
[141] Ibid, p. 255.
[142] Cf. also Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 48ff.
[143] Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001).

globe. Crystal calls this phenomenon "elongated interactivity"[144]. Chat, which is yet another innovation of cyberspace, can unite a plethora of voices on one screen. A multitude of conversations takes place on the same plane, "at the same time on a variety of topics, all interlocated, all intertwined"[145]. Due to the intricacies of browsers and servers, sometimes it happens that you can even read the answer before you have seen the question on screen. This can be equalled neither by reading nor by writing.

Last but not least, the world of internet and computer has also added new words to our language. Since the arrival of the multimedia age, numerous new words have entered the English language and have spread from there to many other languages of the world. New words and word formations from this field are e.g. "on-line", "off-line", "download" or "upgrade". Shortis quotes the words "internet", "E-Mail2 and "web site" to be the most popular new coinages of the internet era.[146]

Definitely the use of E-Mail, chat, forums, and web pages will increase significantly over the next couple of years. At the time of writing this paper, as many as 10 billion E-Mails are being sent every day. It is predicted that by 2005, this number will rise to 35 billion E-Mails day in, day out. Which effect this development will have on language can hardly be foreseen. Some scholars, such as Naomi Baron, are afraid that computers will turn ourselves into less sophisticated users of language. She warns that "computer mediated communication, especially E-Mail and instant messaging, drives us to produce writing and send it off without reflecting"[147]. Journalist Terry Waite complained about the effect E-Mail has on English as follows: "This E-Mail English, bashed out without capitals, paragraphs and any idea of composition, is…irritating, tiring to read, and often simply unreadable"[148], and Frank Kermode, editor of the *Oxford Book of Letters* claims E-Mail "fosters promiscuous communication"[149].

Robert Beard, chief linguistic officer of yourdictionary.com, points out that "the underlying components of language – its grammar, vocabulary and syntax – are not fundamentally changed by the medium through which it is interpreted"[150]. Instead of

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[144] Crystal, D., *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001).
[145] Ibid.
[146] Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 67.
[147] Baron, N., *Alphabet to E-Mail: How Written English Evolved and Where it's Heading* (American University in Washington, DC 2000).
[148] Quoted in: Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 81.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Quoted in: Cook, F. "Linguists see Internet as Cultural Catalyst", on: http://www.experteditor.com, 2001.

a linguistic revolution, the internet is more likely to lead to a revolution in communication. "What you're going to see", Beard adds, "is more graphics, more photographs, more motion pictures, more sound…I don't think the internet is revolutionary in terms of language. It's revolutionary for things *around* language."[151]

Thus, web texts are a text type of its own. In the following, I am trying to outline the features and peculiarities that are specific for the text type "web texts". The findings are mostly based on the studies of Jakob Nielsen, who researched into the field of optimising web texts for the Sun Microsystems Corporation. The results of his studies have been published under http://www.useit.com.

8.1.2.2. Structure and navigation

The most noticeable difference between a document on paper and an online presentation is its structure. On paper, the pages of a document are structured in a certain sequence that cannot be changed by the reader. If he wants to get a full grasp of the contents of the document, he usually has to adhere to the sequence designed by the author and to read the document from beginning to end.

On the web, documents are split into multiple pages which are hyperlinked to each other. "Users can enter a site at any page and move between pages as they choose."[152] This has several severe consequences for the structure of the contents of a web site:

1 | Each page has to be independent and has to work without reference to the other pages. It cannot be assumed that the user has read the "previous" page, since there is no obligatory order of pages on the web. The topic of each page needs thus to be explained without assumptions of the other information presented on the site. Therefore, each web page functions only within its own context.

Nielsen points out that hyperlinking does NOT mean just to split a long text in several parts and to state something like "continued on page 2". Rather, each page must be an independent and fully coherent unit. This requires the writer finding one topic for each page and elaborating on this topic only on this one page. To make this

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[151] Ibid.
[152] Nielsen, J., J. Fox, on: http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9606.html

approach as efficient as possible, and to give the reader the information he wants as quickly as possible, the "inverted Pyramid style" has proved most useful.[153]

2 | On the other hand, the possibility of hyperlinking pages provides an amazing scope for background information or additional information. "This allows the creation of very large, infinitely malleable, informationally linked systems of information. Such texts can be multi-modal with animated combinations of visual, auditory, graphical and verbal information. This is at the heart of multimedia.[154]

The reader can be referred to other pages on the same web site for further reference or even to third-party pages. The revolutionary aspect thereof is that all those possibilities are optional. The reader only makes use of them if he feels the need to do so. In other words, the order in which each individual reader will look at a site can neither be predicted nor prescribed. Most participants in Nielsen's study (79%) said they liked hypertext.

So how can these structural requirements be met? As a matter of fact, each web site should be clearly structured. When designing the structure of a web site, one should always see the site from the perspective of the user and keep in mind the users' first and foremost goal: to retrieve relevant information as quickly as possible. Thus, the start page or the frame should give the user a clear overview of what that site is about and what is the quickest way to get to a certain point.

Links are the quickest means to get the user to the most relevant information. Each page should give a summary of its content first and then link to further details. A page can have several hierarchical levels, which are all interlinked. This provides the user with the opportunity to decide if he wants to find more about this particular topic or if he prefers to go to a different topic. Nielsen advises: "Whenever possible, state conclusions and link to supporting details; enumerate categories and link to

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[153] If this was an online text, it would have been easy to underline the term "inverted pyramid style" and to link it to the page where this particular term is explained in further detail. Since this is printed text, however, the reader has to be patient and read on until he has reached the passage where that term is explained!
[154] Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 9.

lists; summarize and link to full-length treatments. This allows the user to scan the contents of a page and select relevant and useful information."[155]

Links are usually highlighted by underlining and therefore also serve as a means to structure the text and to guide scanning. Links can be divided in primary and secondary links. Primary links are embedded in the text. The reader is supposed to follow them in order to gain fuller understanding of the content. It goes without saying that those links should always relate directly to what is said in that very paragraph where they occur and provide relevant background information. Less relevant links, which provide secondary or additional information or which relate to third-party pages should not be positioned in the text as not to distract the user. Rather, they should be positioned in the margin of the page or at the end of the document under a "see also" label.

8.1.2.3. Style and readability

Web texts should be written to be read. In a study from 1997, Jakob Nielsen and John Morkes defined a number of characteristics that enhance the readability of a text on the web. They came to the conclusion that "people rarely read web pages word by word; instead, *they scan the page,* picking out individual words and sentences. 79 percent of test users always scanned any new page they came across; only 16 percent read word-by-word."[156]

> **Web Facts**
>
> 79% of users always scan; only 16% read word-by-word
> Reading from computer screens is 25% slower than from paper
> Web content should be **50% the size** of its paper equivalent

In his study, Nielsen presented web users with 5 different versions of the same text. The content was always the same, what differed was the style:

1) **promotional writing,** using the features of advertising language such as exaggeration, word play, hyperbole and superlatives

2) **concise style**, using only half the word count

3) **scannable layout** with bullets to facilitate scanning

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[155] Nielsen, J., J. Fox, on: http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9606.html
[156] Ibid.

4) objective language using neutral writing style instead of boastful language

5) a combined version that was concise, scannable and objective.

The results were astounding: "measured usability was dramatically higher for the concise version (58% better) and for the scannable version (47% better). And when we combined three ideas for improved writing style into a single site, the result was truly stellar: 124% better usability".[157]

None of the users liked promotional style. Ironically, this is just the style that is used most frequently on commercial web pages. Nielsen provides the following explanation for this fact: "Our conjecture to explain this finding is that promotional language imposes a cognitive burden on users who have to spend resources on filtering out the hyperbole to get at the facts. When people read a paragraph that starts "Nebraska is filled with internationally recognized attractions," their first reaction is *no, it's **not***, and this thought slows them down and distracts them from using the site."[158]

Another vital requirement to enhance the readability of web texts and to meet the stylistic expectations of the users is the application of an informal style. The internet is an informal medium[159]. It started as the medium of the young, the non-conformist and the independent. This has significantly influenced the style that is used on the web. Many language-preservationists complain about the decay of formal writing in E-Mails. The same "decay" is true for texts on the web, with the restriction that I would not call it "decay" but rather the most efficient way of target-oriented writing. Opponents overlook that web texts cannot be classified as pure written language, but that they rather "mix the features of both speech and writing. "On screen, a good deal of writing, like speech, disappears without trace. It has none of the finality of print, for what is written can be endlessly altered. People converse in writing through E-Mail. So, strangely, the computer reintroduces behaviour reminiscent of an oral culture. Promises are made again without signatures."[160]

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[157] Nielsen, J., on: http://www.useit.com/jakob
[158] Ibid.
[159] Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 24f.
[160] Cook, G., *Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992), p. 24. Cook also remarks on the close connection between the oral style of web writing and advertising language: "Advertising is very much a child of this secondary orality. Even when printed it affects the style of personal spoken communication." (ibid)

On the web, there is not much space for niceties and elaborate ornations. Language has to be quick, and the quickest way of expression is speech, informal speech. Speakers use contractions and short sentences with a simple sentence structure. This style also works most efficiently in web texts. As a matter of fact, texts on screen are 25% harder to read than on printed paper. Most people report that they detest reading long texts on the screen, and this may well be brought down to the fact that they find reading harder if the text is on screen. Many people even admit that they print out E-Mails and web pages to read them in print.

In informal spoken language, speakers also provide their counterparts with "hooks" for interactive dialogues, i.e. if the speaker has the feeling that the partner has failed to understand a certain utterance, he can require his feedback by asking "do you understand", "do you know what I mean", "you know" or many others. If the partner wants more information, he can simply say so. Hyperlinks and feedback functions on the web, such as forums or the option to write an E-Mail, fulfil the same interactive function that is typical of spoken language.

"Ich bin davon überzeugt, dass das Lesen und Schreiben im Web sehr viel mehr Ähnlichkeit mir dem Sprechen und Zuhören in einem natürlichen Dialog hat als z.B. in Print-Medien. Dort kann man auch personalisiert schreiben, aber im Web ist es besonders wichtig rasch zum Kern der Dinge zu kommen. Dafür eignet sich ein Text, der einer Konversation entspricht, ausgezeichnet, viel eher als ein unpersönlicher und meistens von Stilsünden, Substantivierungen und Bandwurmsätzen gespickter Text."[161]

Short text blocks, a clear structure and a communicative style are the cornerstones of good style on the web. Conversation on the web is much more personal and interactive than the traditional corporate brochure. Providing relevant information in condensed form, highlighted by a sensible use of unobtrusive graphic elements is the key to successful writing on the web.

8.1.2.4. User-friendliness

More than any other text type, web texts have to focus on their users. No other medium allows its readers to quit reading if they do not like what they see as quickly as the internet. If a user is dissatisfied with the contents of a web site, he will close

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[161] "Psychologie und Ergonomie im Webdesign", Interview mit T. Wirth, on: http://www.marketing.de

the window and never return again. Thus it is crucial to give users what they want and to present the information in a style that both captures their attention and at the same time provides relevant information. Quick information retrieval and topicality of the contents are thus vital requirements of good writing on the web.

The fact that web pages can be updated at any time is one of the internet's greatest advantages. On the other hand, it puts the medium under enormous pressure to actually fulfil these expectations. Users expect a good web site to be current. This does not mean that each page should sport the statement "Last update: date". How up to date a page really is can be easily read between the lines. Statistics, numbers and examples all need to be recent. The news value of a web site also contributes to its credibility. If users feel that there is someone who regularly takes care of that site they will value that page higher than a site that has been rotting in cyberspace for years and consequently they will return more often to visit it.

Writing for the web means to provide the users with the information they are looking for – and making sure they can find this information. The text of a web page should always be written in such a way that search engines will find the page. This holds true both for the text on the page, which should include most of the keywords and meta-tags given in the source text, and for the meta-tags, titles, keywords and summaries of a page that are entered in the backup of the page. The most important terms from the text should always occur in the keyword meta-tags, together with their most common synonyms and generic terms. Also, each page is backed with a title and a summary. When creating the wording of these, it needs to be kept in mind that title and summary must make sense even if they are read completely out of context, as these two things are most likely to be displayed in the result lists of search engines alongside hundreds of other entries. Thus, the 40-60 character headline and the 150 character summary should give a précis of the page that is as precise as possible.

Understanding the needs of web users is the keystone to good web publishing. Surfers on the World Wide Web pursue one main purpose: They want to find the information they are searching for – quickly. Reckoning with these basic requirements yields a couple of guidelines of how a good, i.e. a user-friendly web site should be written. To name the most crucial criteria, a good page should be scannable, concise, objective and credible.

8.1.2.5. Scannability

Out of 18 participants in Nielsen's study, 15 scanned a text before reading it. Only 3 started reading the text word by word. Scanning saves time. It helps get an overview of what that page is about and facilitates the decision whether or not this page is worth reading.

Features that facilitate scanning include:

◌ **headings**	◌ **graphics**
◌ **large type**	◌ **captions**
◌ **bold or coloured text**	◌ **topic sentences**
◌ **highlighted text**	◌ **tables of contents**
◌ **bulleted lists**	

Moreover, the following features all contribute to enhanced readability of a web text:[162]

- highlighted **keywords** (hypertext links serve as one form of highlighting; typeface variations and colour are others)
- meaningful **sub-headings** (not "clever" ones)
- bulleted **lists**
- **half the word count** (or less) than conventional writing
- **one idea** per paragraph (users will skip over any additional ideas if they are not caught by the first few words in the paragraph)
- the **inverted pyramid** style, starting with the conclusion.[163]

The inverted pyramid style bears clear references to news writing. In a news article, the most important information is also given first and arouses the interest of the reader. Then the reader has the choice whether or not he wants to continue to find deeper details or if his interest is satisfied. "The purpose of the pyramid is to show that the points in a news story are made in descending order of importance. News is written so that readers can stop reading when they have satisfied their curiosity – without worrying that something important is being held back."[164] The majority of the

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[162] http://www.useit.com/jakob, also Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), chapter 2.
[163] Also cf. Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 210.
[164] Hicks, W., *Writing for Journalists, (*London: Routledge 1999), p.16.

participants in Nielsen's study expressed their liking of web writing that presents news, summaries, and conclusions up front because it is useful and saves time.

This shows again the many parallels of web writing with news writing rather than promotional or scientific writing. In scientific writing, an article is usually built up in the inductive style. The facts are presented first, usually in a logical or chronological order. Then each fact is illustrated with examples, figures and other evidence. As the climax of the whole piece of writing, the conclusion is presented at the very end. This approach would not work on the web, just as it would not work in a newspaper. If readers cannot decide immediately if that page holds something relevant for them, they will skip the whole page and never return. Promotional style, on the other hand, violates the maxim of objectiveness that readers value so highly in web content.

8.1.2.6. Conciseness

Nielsen advises using only half the word count of that in conventional writing to make the text as short as possible. This also helps the writer to really focus on the objective facts that provide relevant information to the user and to cut out all unnecessary stylistic play. As a guideline Nielsen suggests that a web page should fit on one screen. A great percentage of users hate scrolling. The result is that text that needs scrolling will usually not be read at all.

8.1.2.7. Objectivity

A web text should focus on the objective facts containing true information value. Any kind of boastful language, exaggeration, metaphors and puns should be avoided, Nielsen advises. The last is particularly true for web texts that are intended for international use since non-native speakers often fail to understand the ambiguity and thus do not get the fun. This does not mean, however, that humorous language should be avoided on the web. In contrast, all testees liked humorous style in web pages, even if they had indicated before that they do not. However, puns were mostly considered "stupid" by the test persons. What was generally approved of was cynical and sarcastic humour[165].

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[165] Ibid, also cf. chapter 11.1.5.1. on puns.

8.1.2.8. Credibility

The internet is a medium for everyone. Anyone can publish documents there without any form of control. This is what makes the internet so democratic. On the other hand, this also gives way to a lot of abuse and even criminal use of that medium. Users have become wary, and a web site must win their trust. A web site must communicate that it is credible and trustworthy - by the way it is written, by the contents it provides and by professional design. A magazine that is well done sets a certain tone and impression that are carried through the content. A web site conveys an image, too. If it is tastefully done, it can add a lot of credibility to the site.

Objective language can contribute a great deal to earning the users' trust. If a web site is written in boastful "marketese", i.e. the typical advertising style with a lot of exaggeration and hyperbole, users quickly put it down as blatant advertising instead of the objective information they are looking for.[166]

Links can also enhance the credibility of a web site, especially if they link to third-party pages. It helps present sites in a larger context and shows the user that the owner of the site is not afraid to compare with other sites.

Another way to increase the credibility of a web site is to give it a personal touch. Anonymous pages are more easily put down as deceptive than pages where the user can recognise the person responsible for its contents. It should be a matter of course to indicate address, telephone number and other contact data[167] of the site owner. However, a lot of companies expressed fear in giving away the names of the people in charge or to picture them in a photo. But such little measures can contribute significantly to enhanced credibility. They also create a positive feeling of users towards a site.

8.1.2.9. Graphics

Graphic elements are undoubtedly one of the most efficient tools to make a web page attractive. Visuals catch the users' attention and should ideally complement the message of the accompanying text. This being said, it is crucial that each visual element should have a function that contributes to the overall meaning of the page.

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[166] Cf. Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), chapter 3.
[167] In fact, an imprint containing the contact details of the person responsible for this site has been compulsory in Germany since 1 July 2002.

However, other than in printed advertising material, corporate web pages are explicitly more content-dominated. The user visits a web site in order to access information quickly. Therefore it is advisable to limit the use of graphics and not to overload a web page with beautiful artwork if the content suffers. In particular, the designer should always reckon with the time it takes to download the graphics and with the fact that most users will give up waiting for a page to download if this takes longer than 7 seconds.

Of course, graphics can add greatly to the attractiveness of the site, but they should always be subordinate to the content and be in an obvious supportive relation to the information presented on the site. Playful or animated graphics for their own sake are often an annoyance for the business user whose sole aim is the quick retrieval of relevant content.

"Kleine Effekte sind die Gewürze der Website und machen sie zum interaktiven Erlebnis. Aber: Zuviel schmeckt auch nicht. (…) Eine gute Präsentation beeindruckt vor allem durch inhaltliche Kompetenz und ein funktionierendes, unverwechselbares Layout."[168]

How can such a layout that is both functional and unique at the same time be created? Some cornerstones can help companies get on the way to meeting these requirements[169]:

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[168] "Visuelle Kommunikation im World Wide Web", Informationsbroschüre des SAGeG Kompetenzzentrums Elektronischer Geschäftsverkehr.
[169] Ibid.

- Where are the logo and the name of the company placed?
- Where and how do navigation elements appear?
- What will the background of the page look like?
- Will there be a common colour code, or will different sections be allocated different colour codes?
- Which typefaces will be used for headlines, subheads and body copy?

As a matter of fact, the basic concept of a web site should be adhered to throughout the whole presentation, i.e. headlines should always be designed in the same style, the logo should always appear in the same position and there should be a consistent use of colours. The pages should never make the impression of being overloaded. A clear design is the mirror of a well-thought-about structure. Only important parts should be highlighted or animated so as not to distract attention from the essential elements. All recurring components should always be designed in the same colour, size and style. A mess of too many font types should also be avoided, two or three different fonts is the absolute maximum.[170]

No doubt, professional artwork greatly contributes to the way the user perceives the image and professionalism of the company. Therefore, the time when a hobby web designer from the company could design the internet presentation, and when being present on the web was more important than a professional presentation are gone. Users have developed a sense for good design, and it should be a matter of course that corporate web sites sport an attractive and professional design. "Gutes Webdesign braucht die Kompetenz des Gestalters, das technische Wissen des Multimediaspezialisten und die unkonventionellen Ideen des Werbers."[171]

Comparing this requirement of modern markets to the actual situation in Saxon SMEs reveals some positive outlook, but also some potential for further improvement. On the question of who is responsible for their international internet presentation, 38% of the companies replied that external service providers take care of their appearance on the World Wide Web. Still, 52% of the companies stated that at least part of the responsibility lies in-house. The share of the members of executive management that are in charge of the web presentation is surprisingly high at 20%, and the question is justified of what qualification and expertise a

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[170] It is important to know that on the screen, only a very limited range of font types can be represented.
[171] "Visuelle Kommunikation im World Wide Web", Informationsbroschüre des SAGeG Kompetenzzentrums Elektronischer Geschäftsverkehr.

managing director of a medium-sized company brings in to be the right person for web design and content management!

Put in a nutshell, professional web design can be characterised by the following features:

> **clear structure and easy navigation**
>
> **good graphics, coherent with the content**
>
> **scannable, concise and objective writing style**
>
> **page must be found by search engines**

8.2. Practical analysis: international online marketing in Saxon SMEs

8.2.1. Online marketing strategy

Having a good web site does not suffice to be successful on the World Wide Web. The crucial point is to draw traffic to a site so that the greatest possible number of people will find it, and more importantly, that they are kept on the site once they are there. Thus, online as well as offline marketing play a key role for the success of a corporate internet site, and of course good content and relevant service features are vital to make the site attractive to its visitors and make sure the site offers the added value the user was looking for. This is particularly true for international online marketing, as most visitors to the web site will get there incidentally and all they get to know about the company is conveyed by the way it presents itself in cyberspace.

Before launching a web site in a foreign language, it is vital to find a solution for a number of challenges that go hand in hand with the step into the World Wide Web on a global scale. Michael Beck names the following steps for entering the world of cyberspace with global reach[172]:

- *Development of an online concept*
  - Is the purpose of the web site merely to present the company, or shall it offer a platform for e-commerce solutions?
- *Development of a web site concept*
  - What content is to be conveyed? How is this content going to be structured?
  - What languages shall the web site be offered in? Are cultural adaptations necessary?
- *Development of an online-marketing concept*
  - What is the objective of the presentation?
  - What is the strategy to achieve these goals?
  - Which steps need to be taken?
  - What budget is necessary / available for reaching the objectives?
- *Finding solutions for logistics, payment, transport of goods, communication*
- *Development of an internationalisation concept*
  - Which countries are to be reached with the international internet presentation?

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[172] Beck, M., (2001) "Internationalisierung von Online-Marketing", interview on:
http://www.marketing.de

o Who are potential customers, distributors, partners, agencies, suppliers etc. in the respective countries? Many contacts can be found via internet research.

There are four main criteria for marketing a company and its products successfully on the World Wide Web: Retrievability, offering information and service, linguistic localisation and cultural localisation.

8.2.1.1. Retrievability

No doubt a web site only makes sense if users can find it. There are numerous ways of promoting corporate web sites online – i.e. making use of the means the web itself offers; and offline – i.e. using the classic communication channels such as print materials to promote the web site and to encourage users to visit the site. Ideally these two means of online and offline communication should interact so as to maximise the effects. According to this investigation, 37.4% of companies advertise their web presentation via classic communication channels such as press work or print advertising. It has become standard to mention the internet address in all printed sales material, starting from business cards and brochures to print adverts and letterheads. The web address has become an integral component of the company's contact data and is considered as important as the postal address or the telephone number for most enterprises[173].

There are plenty of different ways of advertising a web presence. Werner quotes an investigation of the GVU WWW User Survey that interrogated web users about "How do you find out about WWW pages / sites?" and presents the following results:

78%	Following hyperlinks from other web pages
74%	Internet search engines (e.g. Google, Alta Vista, Lycos etc.)
65%	Friends
61%	Magazines / newspapers
58%	Internet directories (e.g. Yahoo)
41%	Television advertisements
31%	Signatures at end of E-Mail messages
28%	Books
26%	Usenet newsgroups
24%	Other sources[174]

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[173] Cf. Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001).
[174] Source: http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user-surveys/survey-1998-10/graphs/use/q52.htm, quoted in: Werner, A., *Site Promotion* 2nd edn. (Heidelberg: dpunkt Verlag 2000), p. 5.

This survey underlines the great importance of offline promotion (magazines, books, TV) as well as the significance of online promotion tools such as search engines and web catalogues. Moreover, it confirms that word-of-mouth and community advertising also play a major role in making a web site more widely-known.

The internet itself offers a plethora of opportunities to advertise web sites. The most commonly known and most widely practised method is listing the web address in search engines and web catalogues. This service, which used to be free of charge in the early days of the web, is meanwhile often charged for by the major search engines with regard to business presentations.

The search engines and web catalogues offer a wide range of additional opportunities for promotion. The struggle for top positions in search engines has sparked an entire service industry and has become a major source of income for search engines and service providers alike. Companies can become "premium partners", which results in their sites being listed at the top of the regular search results, or they can place little ads that appear every time a user enters a pre-defined search term, e.g. "translation German English" or "milling machine". This so-called "cost per click" method is one of the most measurable methods, as costs for this kind of advertising only occur if a user actually clicks on the link to the advertised site[175]. The web catalogue Google, one of the largest companies offering cost-per-click advertising, describes the benefits of this method as follows:

"Durch die Suchmaschinenwerbung kann das Marketingpotenzial des Internets effektiv nutzbar gemacht werden. Die Zielgruppe der Suchmaschinenbenutzer ist riesig und wird in ihrem Umfang nur von der Anzahl der E-Mail-Benutzer übertroffen. Jeder Suchende ist mit einem speziellen Thema beschäftigt, das durch die von ihm eingegebenen Keywords klar beschrieben wird. Benutzer, die auf der Suche nach Informationen sind, können zeitgleich von Unternehmen angesprochen werden, die die betreffenden Waren und Dienstleistungen anbieten.

Bei der Suchmaschinen-Werbung wird zur Platzierung der Werbung ein Auslöser benötigt: die so genannten Keywords. Sie sind mit Abstand das wichtigste Instrument, wenn es darum geht, eine Werbebotschaft genau dorthin zu tragen, wo sie erwünscht ist. Ein Keyword dokumentiert Motivation des Nutzers, beschreibt ein Interesse und lässt auf die Absicht schließen, weitere Maßnahmen zu ergreifen, die sich nach dem Suchergebnis für

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[175] "Am Ende zählt der Umsatz", in: *W&V* 18/2003, p.75ff.

das Keyword richten.

Von der Zielgruppe wird diese Anzeige als Antwort auf eine Frage wahrgenommen. Die Benutzer merken schnell, dass die Anzeige ihnen weiterhilft. Sie legen eine erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit an den Tag und sind manchmal regelrecht begeistert. Zielsicher angesprochene und vorausgewählte potenzielle Kunden sind der Traum aller Marketingverantwortlichen."[176]

The results of this study show that the majority of SMEs in Saxony make use of the basic forms of internet promotion. Almost 80 percent claimed to be listed in search engines and web catalogues. The percentage of companies that use this marketing method on an international scale is similar at 77.6%. Regarding the listings in international web catalogues and search engines, it became obvious in the intensive interviews that many companies have listed the English version of their web sites in the common German search engines, but not in search engines that are used in the target countries!

Apart from search engines, there are countless portals and platforms on the internet that are a collection of links to web sites relevant to their special area of expertise. It requires only some research activities to find out the portals that are of importance for a company, and getting listed is free in most cases. If not, the charges are reasonable and affordable to most SMEs. Still, only one third of the companies that participated in this survey make use of this online marketing method. Another successful method of drawing attention to a company's web site is sponsored or syndicated content, including product placement in the story line.[177]

Banner ads, which are among the oldest form of internet advertising, and which have been declared dead many times, are still one of the most popular form of online promotion. A variation of banner ads are buttons, which are usually smaller than banners and can thus be integrated more easily into a web site's content.[178] The major drawback of banner ads is that they are charged at "page impressions", i.e. every time the banner pops up, the company that placed the banner has to pay,

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[176] 1&1 Webhosting 4.0 newsletter, special edition from 11 July 2003.
[177] Zeff, R., B. Aronson, *Advertising on the Internet* (New York: John Wiley & Sons 1997), p. 51.
[178] Ibid, p. 48.

even if the web user did not click on the link. The advertising industry has developed a multitude of variations of the classic banner ad, ranging from pop-up windows to animated banners or banners with sound. At the same speed, however, have "defence programmes" been developed, which are to protect the computers of users against any kind of advertising. At present, the internet is still considered a "private sphere" by many users, i.e. a zone where they do not want to be disturbed by advertising or other kinds of interference with their privacy.

Robin Zeff and Brad Aronson maintain that successful banner ads should always contain a response element urging the user to react immediately. Banners can include a call to action, e.g. by offering the opportunity to win a prize, receive a discount as well as the request to "click here" or "click now".[179] In the recent study, only six percent of the companies stated they use banner ads as a form to promote their corporate web site. On an international scale, only 1.7% consider banner ads a suitable form of online promotion.

A recent study of the European Interactive Advertising Association (EIAA), London, came to the conclusion: "Online-Werbung steigert bei medienübergreifenden Kampagnen signifikant Reichweite und Erinnerungswerte"[180]. Companies that advertise their products and services in TV commercials as well as with web banners, could increase their net reach by 16%, the recall could even be increased by 31%. For motives that were only placed on the web, the recall has risen by 4.7%. "Die Ergebnisse unterstreichen den berechtigten Anspruch der Online-Werbung auf eine stärkere Rolle im Mediamix."[181]

Which promotional activities do you use to market your internet presentation?		
	German	English[182]
Entry in search engines and web catalogues	79.8%	77.6%
Entry in portals and platforms	33.3%	32.8%
Links to important sites of other companies	29.3%	18.4%
Banner advertising	6.1%	1.7%
E-Mail campaigns	16.2%	12.1%
Classic advertising (press, print advertising)	37.4%	29.2%

Fig.8.1. Online promotion tools used by Saxon SMEs

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[179] Ibid, p. 43.
[180] "Mehr Werbewirkung", in: *W&V* 47/2002, p.18.
[181] Christian Muche, Commercial Director of Yahoo, Munich, in: "Mehr Werbewirkung", in: *W&V* 47/2002, p.18.
[182] The results for the online marketing activities for the English version of the web site are based on the total number of 58 companies, i.e. those companies that stated to have an English version of their corporate internet presentation.

Apart from search engines, web catalogues and banner ads, there are a number of other things that can be done in order to enhance the retrievability of a web site:

1)   The more active a company and its employees are on the World Wide Web, the more popular and well-known it will be. Participating in e-groups, newsgroups[183], forums, mailing lists, expert roundtables or newsletters can greatly enhance potential customers' awareness of the company and its services.

2)   Many search engines search for the meta tags of a web site. Thus, every company should make sure that each page of their web site features the keywords in all the languages of the target markets the company wants to tackle.

3)   Top level domains are another way of increasing the awareness of a company among the internet community. If a company is active in Great Britain, Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland, it should make sure its web site is available with all the respective top level domains, i.e. http://www.company.co.uk, http://www.company.at, http://www.company.cz, http://www.company.pl. This is a sign of respect to the people in the respective countries. Furthermore, it clearly signals that the company takes these markets seriously.

   In some cases, however, it can be useful to use the German TLD .de only, particularly when the content of the web site is clearly related to something typical of Germany. Tourist attractions are an example – http://www.erzgebirge.co.uk would sound somewhat strange indeed. The same applies to products with a clear connection to Germany, such as wood art items from the Erzgebirge. However, an additional .com domain ending cannot be harmful either!

4)   Links are one of the most effective form of online marketing[184]. Not only are many search engines more and more directed towards "link popularity", i.e. evaluating how many other web sites provide links to that site. What may be

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[183] Newsgroups are "Bulletin board areas that draw people with similar interests to discuss their opinions". Cf. Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 207.
[184] Cf. Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 215f.

even more important is that links are a sign of credibility. If another respectable site links to a company site, it is a sign of authenticity and respect – comparable to word-of-mouth recommendations in the "real world". Moreover, in group-oriented cultures such as in many Asian countries, links are the most popular and, in fact, the only effective method of marketing a web site. The presence in portals, platforms, forums etc. that was mentioned above is a good way to create a multitude of links. Moreover, every company should strive to get a link from the web site of their business partners, suppliers, partner firms or satisfied customers. It is the cheapest and most credible form of online marketing.

8.2.1.2. Areas of use of the world wide web

Users expect a corporate web site to provide relevant information in a well-structured way. If a web site offers useful services that provide added value to the user on top of that, chances are great that the user will keep coming back to the site. A recent study revealed what business users are looking for when they log on to the World Wide Web:[185]

▪ exchange of information, communication with colleagues	70.8%
▪ getting information about my job, industry, field of specialisation	63.8%
▪ research on business-related products and services	55.5%
▪ research about computer / telecommunication	39.8%
▪ use of free databases and archives	35.6%
▪ research of data and statistics	34.2%
▪ purchase of business-related products	23.8%
▪ selling products	14.6%
▪ analysing competitors	9.7%
▪ online auctions	8.8%
▪ reading online magazines	8.3%
▪ using databases / archives that are charged for	7.9%
▪ exchanging data and information with business partners	5.6%
▪ newsletters / lists / discussion forums	3.2%
▪ experts and business-related chats	2.7%
▪ teleworking	0.9%
▪ video conferences	0.5%

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[185] "Wo das Web zur Wirkung kommt", in: *W&V* 44/2002, p. 108; several answers were possible.

It becomes obvious that the World Wide Web is primarily a tool for research. The first six points are all related to getting information. However, the interactive aspect of the internet also becomes very obvious. Communication as well as purchasing and selling products range among the most popular business activities on the web. Somewhat surprisingly, other interactive tools, such as chats, forums, teleworking and video conferences, are not as widely used in business as could be expected after all the hype that was made about these "revolutionary" features of the World Wide Web. Teleworking, for example, was a buzzword for a couple of years at the end of the 1990s, but apparently the personal contact to the colleagues in the office has ousted the comforts of working from home and communication via wires. The same seems to apply to chats and forums. In theory a fine way of exchanging experience with experts and colleagues, these forms of communication are only reluctantly accepted – whereas conferences, meetings, congresses and other gatherings where you can meet "real" people in person are booming more than ever before.

8.2.1.3. Keeping the web site up-to-date

Keeping a web site up-to-date is one of the most basic and at the same time most crucial steps of successful online-marketing. 84.2% of the companies participating in this investigation stated that they update their internet presentation "regularly". In the intensive interviews, however, it became clear that "regularly" means every two years for most of the interviewees. In practise, most companies regularly update certain sections of their web site, such as the list of trade shows they will attend. It is very important that if a web site contains sections that require regular updating these parts are indeed regularly updated. There is nothing worse in cyberspace than finding the trade show dates from two years ago or a press release from 1999 announcing the very latest product which has already gone out of production. Particular attention should be paid to keeping contact names, E-Mail addresses and telephone numbers up-to-date. After all, the internet is an interactive medium and invites people to get in touch.

8.2.1.4. E-commerce and online shops

There are many other interactive elements that contribute to the attractiveness of cyberspace presentations. Many of them can even result in considerable cost savings, especially if time and material consuming paperwork can be replaced by quick online processes. It is amazing how much time, paper and effort can be saved if orders, invoices and other transactions are handled electronically.

In which areas of business do you use e-commerce?	German	English
offering information on products, services and company	68.7%	79%
enquiries	59.6%	69%
orders	36.4%	27.6%
payment	31.3%	13.8%
service / customer service	22.2%	24.1%
online job offers and applications	21.2%	12.1%
online shopping	14.1%	6.9%

Which service features do you offer on the World Wide Web?	German	English
links	48.5%	50%
shop, online orders	29.3%	29.3%
downloads / updates	26.3%	24.1%
online service, consultancy	21.2%	19%
newsletter	20.2%	15.5%
guest book, chat, forum	12.1%	6.9%
entertainment	7.1%	6.9%

Fig. 8.2. E-Commerce and service features

The majority of the companies that participated in this study have recognised the great influence of the internet on communication and the exchange of information, which have proved to be the most critical aspects of internet use among business users (see above). Offering information on their products, services and their company is the most widely offered service function of corporate web sites of Saxon SMEs. Activities with a communicative and a commercial aspect range closely

behind, such as answering enquiries or processing orders and payments.[186] About one fifth of the companies that participated in this survey offer online customer service and consultancy. About 20%, a surprisingly low share of companies uses the web as a medium for offering jobs and recruiting staff.

Online shops are also a frequently used tools of small and medium-sized companies. 14.1% of the companies that participated in this survey claimed they have their own online shops. According to the MIND study issued by Dresdner Bank, 23 percent of medium-sized companies sell their goods via the World Wide Web, and another 6.6% plan to engage in this field in the near future[187]. Investing in online sales seems to be promising. Many analysts claim that now the time is ripe for large-scale online sales, as most customers have overcome their initial inhibitions to purchase from the anonymous source internet.

According to the Hauptverband des Deutschen Einzelhandels, online sales rose by 60 percent to a total turnover of 8.5 billion Euro in 2002, whereas at the same time the sales in classic retail shops declined by 3.5%. The Online Reichweiten Monitor 2003 I, issued by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Internet Research (AGIREV), counted 15.39 million active online shoppers in Germany in 2002 – that is almost 20% of the total population[188]. The most important features users expect from a trustworthy online shop are competitive prices, immediate availability of the goods, swift delivery and low costs for postage and packaging. Credibility and trust are the major benefits an online shop needs to promise its clients.

Baker & Baker reveal that 4 out of 5 visitors to the average web site never return, and they claim that "retention plays a key role on the Internet as it enables one-to-one relationships, repeat purchases or visits, and a channel for feedback and sharing of ideas about company products, services and (…) business practices."[189] Ernst Hoffmann, consultant at Deloitte Consulting, underlines the following criteria for qualified customer retention in online shops:

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[186] Payment processing is rated significantly lower on the English version of corporate web sites, which might be due to the greater obstacles that need to be overcome for international payments.
[187] Dresdner Bank AG, *Mind 02 – Mittelstand in Deutschland* (Köln: Gruner + Jahr Wirtschaftspresse 2001).
[188] "Treue Kunden durch E-Mail", in: *W&V* 15/2003, p.58.
[189] Ibid, p. 249.

1   Personalised content conveys an atmosphere of intimacy. Customers love to be welcomed with their name – even if they are aware that the welcoming line is generated automatically.

2   The presentation has to be consistent and credible. The keystone to success is the quality of products and services.

3   The ordering process should be as easy as possible. Automatically generated user profiles can facilitate the process of ordering.

4   Additional benefits such as background information on products, services and the company contribute to the shopping experience. Users also like to get recommendations on what other users have bought.

5   Integrated bonus programmes can enhance the willingness to buy more and more often.[190]

In spite of these promising prospects of online shopping, only 4.1% of the SMEs participating in this survey stated that their online shop is also available in English. The main obstacles in selling goods internationally via the internet are the high postage and transportation costs for deliveries abroad, customs and duty regulations and the reluctance to communicate in English, many interviewees confirmed.

Additional features that can greatly enhance real and interactive communication with customers and business partners, such as newsletters, chats or forums are used only by a small percentage of companies. The little importance that was attributed to the aspect of entertainment came also as somewhat surprising and illustrates the attitude that many companies might still take themselves a little too seriously. The same attitude became apparent in the section on trade fairs, where only 28.8% of the companies claimed that demonstrations, multimedia presentations or other entertaining activities form part of their presentation at trade fairs.

A trace of understatement and self-irony, a sense of humour and the ability not to take themselves too seriously, however, is an attribute that is highly valued by online customers. But many enterprises fail to recognise this, as these three out of the 95 theses of the Cluetrain Manifesto confirm:

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[190] "Treue Kunden durch E-Mail", in: *W&V* 15/2003, p.58f.

"Companies need to realize their markets are often laughing. At them."

"Companies need to lighten up and take themselves less seriously. They need to get a sense of humor."

"Getting a sense of humor does not mean putting some jokes on the corporate web site. Rather, it requires big values, a little humility, straight talk, and a genuine point of view."[191]

8.2.1.5. E-Mail campaigns

E-Mails are an ideal tool in a business environment that is getting ever quicker and ever more service-oriented. By means of E-Mail, companies can react quickly to enquiries and complaints, and they can analyse, store and optimise their customer contacts. Moreover, E-Mails are an ideal marketing tool and offer a wide range of opportunities to enhance customer relationship management, such as newsletters, customer service, advertising messages, feedback, surveys etc. The costs for an E-Mail campaign are considerably lower than for a classical marketing campaign, often they are lower than one fifth of the traditional advertising methods. Moreover, a good campaign can generate response rates of 5 up to 15%, compared to the average 0.5 to 3% of a classical direct marketing campaign. Baker & Baker further maintain that permission E-Mail marketing usually "yields more than five times the response rates of banner ads (that usually cost much more)."[192]

With more than 95 million Europeans having access to E-Mail, this medium is growing fast into the most popular form of business communication. According to a study conducted by Ecircle AG, two thirds of companies will make use of E-Mail marketing in future. 77% consider the greater opportunity for interaction a major benefit of E-Mail marketing. Two thirds value the simplicity of the medium. For 82% of companies, E-Mail is ideally suited as an instrument for customer retention.[193]

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[191] Levine, R., C. Locke, D. Searls, D. Weinberger, "The Cluetrain Manifesto", on: http://www.cluetrain.com, 1999.
[192] Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 208.
[193] http://www.ecircle.de

Still, E-Mail campaigns are one of the most disputed forms of online marketing. In Germany, it is prohibited to send unsolicited E-Mail – often called "spam"[194] – to private and business recipients. Still, unsolicited commercial E-Mail can hardly be escaped, and many companies are using this method to advertise their products and services. Many list brokers offer E-Mail addresses for sale, and of course, one can use addresses of people one has had E-Mail contact with before. Another popular way to generate E-Mail addresses are online shops, newsletters, forums and online forms (e.g. order forms) where people have to give their E-Mail address and tick whether they want to receive further information material on that subject.

It is perfectly OK to inform existing customers, partners, suppliers and other regular business contacts per E-Mail about new products and services. Sending E-Mail is by far the quickest and cheapest way to reach a multitude of people all around the world. Sixteen percent of the companies that participated in this recent survey have recognised the power of this modern marketing method and make use of this communication channel. Internationally, this percentage is somewhat lower, which can be partly traced back to communicative barriers.

When sending E-Mail messages to customers, potential customers, business partners and suppliers, it is important to be as clear and precise as possible. The subject line is of particular importance, since it is here where the reader decides whether or not he is going to open this E-Mail and read it. Therefore, the subject line should always refer as explicitly as possible to the contents of the E-Mail. Suspicious subject lines such as "Earn money quickly" or "Great business opportunity" should be avoided as they make the E-Mail sound like spam and drastically reduce the chance that it will be opened.

Baker & Baker have compiled a ranking of which parts of an E-Mail are most likely to be read by the recipient[195]:
   1. The headline
   2. Any captions for photos or drawings

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[194] From the linguistic point of view, there are two interesting theories about the origin of the word "spam":
The first theory suggests "spam" is an acronym dating back to the early days of the internet, and it stands for "Simultaneously Posted Advertising Message". According to the second theory, the word goes back to a sketch by the British comedy troupe Monthy Python: "The sketch takes place in a restaurant where every single dish is served with spam, a tinned luncheon meat. In the background, a group of Vikings keeps singing: 'Spam, Spam, Spam, wonderful spam!'" ("Wonderful spam", in: *Business Spotlight* 1/03, p. 47). Spam is everywhere, and it cannot be escaped, just as unsolicited commercial E-Mail. Also cf. Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 45 and Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 69.
[195] Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 209.

    3. Any large text subheads

    4. The post script (PS) message

    5. The order section, if one is included in the message

    6. The text of the E-Mail.

This ranking underlines once more the paramount importance of a subject or head line that really gets to the point.

8.2.1.6. Linguistic localisation

Apart from retrievability and offering useful services, the third major aspect about a company's presentation in the World Wide Web is the linguistic orientation towards its customers. It is beyond doubt that virtually every user prefers information in his own language. According to a study by the American consultancy firm "Global Reach", 70% of Europeans prefer web sites in their mother tongue[196]. Thus, if possible, every company should strive to analyse exactly where their target audience is located, what languages they speak and then try to provide web content in the languages of their target market.

English is still by far the predominant language on the web. More than two thirds of all web sites in the world are in English. German is the second most important European language, however, lagging far behind at 5.77%. Other important European languages on the web are French (2.96%) and Spanish (2.42%), Russian (1.88%) and Italian (1.56%). A large share of the web is also dominated by the big Asian languages, such as Japanese (at 5.85% the second largest language community on the internet) and Chinese (3.87%).

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[196] "Internationalisierung von Online-Marketing", Interview with Michael Beck, on:http://www.marketing.de

Web Pages By Language[197]		
Language	**Web Pages**	**Percent of Total**
English	214,250,996	68.39
Japanese	18,335,739	5.85
German	18,069,744	5.77
Chinese	12,113,803	3.87
French	9,262,663	2.96
Spanish	7,573,064	2.42
Russian	5,900,956	1.88
Italian	4,883,497	1.56
Portuguese	4,291,237	1.37
Korean	4,046,530	1.29
Dutch	3,161,844	1.01
Swedish	2,929,241	0.93
Danish	1,374,886	0.44
Norwegian	1,259,189	0.40
Finnish	1,198,956	0.38
Czech	991,075	0.32
Polish	848,672	0.27
Hungarian	498,625	0.16
Catalan	443,301	0.14
Turkish	430,996	0.14
Greek	287,980	0.09
Hebrew	198,030	0.06
Estonian	173,265	0.06
Romanian	141,587	0.05

[197] Pastore, M., "Web Pages by Language",
http://cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/demographics/article/0,1323,5901_408521,00.html

Icelandic	136,788	0.04
Slovenian	134,454	0.04
Arabic	127,565	0.04
Lithuanian	82,829	0.03
Source: www.vilaweb.com		

Fig. 8.3. The most important languages on the World Wide Web in 2000

A more recent study by Global Reach revealed similar results. The share of English web sites is considerably lower here, whereas Asian languages feature much more prominently. Comparing the latest results from September 2003 with the results from March 2001 from the same study, it becomes obvious that Asian languages are the fastest-growing sector in general. The share of Chinese web sites has grown by more than 3 percent within two years. Also the German community has grown by one percent. Unmistakable, however, is the steady decline of the relative amount of English web sites, which has slumped from 47.5% in 2001 to 35.6% in 2003. This does not mean, however, that there are fewer web sites in English, but it is rather an indication of the increasing number of web sites in other languages. Not least is this a clear signal that ever more people expect to be addressed in their own language on the web, and that an extensive localisation of web sites is becoming more and more important for global business.

Online Language Populations
Total: 680 Million
(Sept.. 2003)

Dutch 1.8%
Russian 2.5%
Portuguese 2.6%
Italian 3.3%
French 3.7%
Korean 4.0%
German 7.0%
Spanish 8.0%
Japanese 9.5%
Chinese 12.2%
English 35.6%
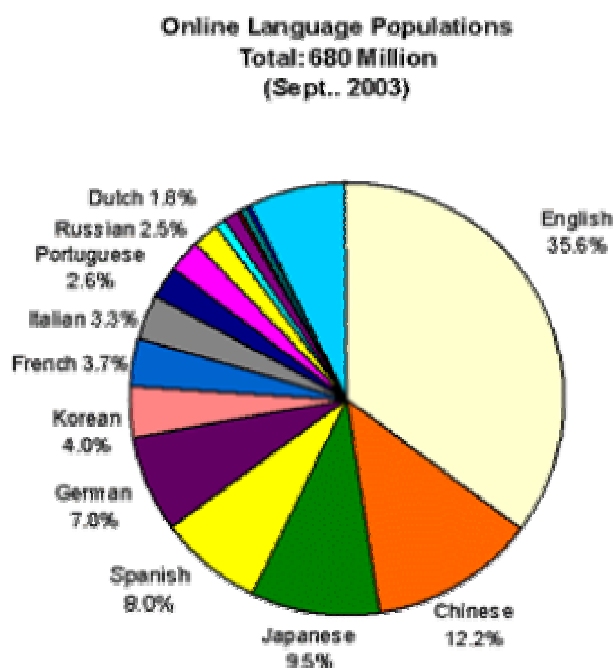
Fig. 8.4. The most important languages on the World Wide Web II (September 2003)[198]

According to my study, almost 60% of Saxon SMEs have an English version of their web site. This corresponds with the percentage of companies whose export rate is higher than 10%. That suggests that all companies for whom export plays a larger role have a web site in English. Eight companies claimed to have a web site in another European language apart from English. The importance of an English web site was confirmed in the expert interviews, where all managers agreed that an English web site is the gateway to international trade.

The translation of the web site in all the languages of the potential target market is the ideal case, it is, however, often too costly for small and medium-sized companies. English as the lingua franca is often considered sufficient as a first step on the road to online globalisation. Moreover, there are little things that make corporate communications honest and appealing. If a company expects much traffic from Hungary, for example, but is unable to offer the entire web site in Hungarian, a simple comment can win great sympathy abroad, such as "We are sorry we can not offer our web site in Hungarian at the moment, but please feel free to send us E-Mail in Hungarian. We will get back to you immediately." If this comment is found on the

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[198] http://www.global-reach.biz/globstats/index.php3

homepage of a Hungarian top level domain, i.e. http://www.company.hu, Hungarian customers will be convinced that they are treated with respect and that the company is a reliable business partner.

However, creating an English web site is not enough. It is essential to contemplate what is going to happen if there is really an enquiry from an English-speaking customer. Are there capacities within the company that can communicate in English? What additional material and information is available in English that can be provided to the customer? What about payment terms, invoices, customs, shipping? These questions are an integral part of successful international online marketing.

8.2.1.7. Cultural adaptation

Although the World Wide Web is a global medium by definition, it is also affected by the various cultural backgrounds of its users. Any web site that aims at true success on an international scale therefore needs to reckon with the cultural peculiarities of the target culture. A few examples are to illustrate this aspect.

In Germany, business is usually considered an inherently serious item. There is a strict separation of private and business life, and this separation is reflected in web design as well. Whereas private web sites are often brimming with gimmicks, providing fun and entertainment, and flaunting a colourful or even playful design, corporate web sites are dominated by factual information, an impersonal style and unobtrusive colours. This approach works fine with German business partners, but many international visitors will interpret it as cold, impersonal and boring. Characteristics considered a virtue in German culture, such as factualness, honesty and punctuality, are often conceived as inflexibility, impoliteness and emotional coldness in other cultures.

The factual approach to web design and content was also confirmed by some of the results of the recent questionnaire. Whereas the factual, informative aspects of their corporate web site were valued highly by most participants in this study, only a small percentage claimed that they also provide entertainment and fun on their web sites, such as chats, guest books or forums.

Colours are another indicator of emotion on the web. In fact, most German corporate web sites are dominated by unobtrusive business colours such as dark

blue, green or gray. In other countries, web designers and corporate designers are much more daring and playful in their design, thus automatically conveying a greater emotion on their pages that appeals to their clients and users in the respective culture.

German culture also strictly distinguishes between person and function, a separation which is not as rigid in other cultures. As a consequence, users will hardly find photos of the people in charge of certain matters on the web site – an omission which is taken amiss by many Asian clients who deem personal relationships very highly, and who love to know what their business partners look like. CVs of American business people and public figures often yield much more private information than their German counterparts, which mostly consist of hard facts only, covering education, experience and objectives.

Cultural differences can even influence the contents and structure of a web site. In Germany, it is important to provide information on the products and their specifications as well as about the history of the company. Consequently, most web sites are structured "The Company, Our Products, Our History, Contact" with several subcategories. Especially in Asia, however, customers and potential business partners search for entirely different information as their main interest is on establishing long-lasting personal relationships. They are interested in:

- Does the company already have business relations with customers in Asia?
- Is the company interested in establishing a lasting relationship?
- How is the customer service organised?
- What does the boss look like?
- What does the person I always talk to look like?

If a German company clearly targets at Asian markets, and if it fails to provide this kind of personal information, the chances of building a successful cooperation will be rather poor.

Culture also affects the habits of the web users[199]. Americans are generally much more prone to risk-taking than Germans, as was confirmed by Hofstede's classical

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[199] Cf. Wrobel, U., *Andere Länder – Andere Sites. Ein Vergleich US-amerikanischer und deutscher Websites im Kontext interkultureller und werblicher Kommunikation* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang 2003).

cultural studies[200]. On top of that, they enjoy consumerism much more than their German counterparts. When internet shops were developed in America, there was a "BUY"-button and that was it. The first online shops in Germany adapted this approach and wondered why nobody was buying. Only when an additional safety measure - the shopping basket - was introduced, could the sceptical Germans be convinced to try online shopping.

Apart from culture-related considerations, there are some country-specific features that need reckoning with. An important aspect are connection capacities and download times. Whereas in Germany, almost every company works exclusively with an ADSL or at least an ISDN connection, most eastern countries use much slower modems. This can result in major problems when the amount of data provided on the page is too high. As soon as opening a site takes more than 7 seconds, the user is likely to leave the page. Web developers must therefore bear in mind that a page that opens quickly on their sophisticated DSL connection might take ages on a personal computer in Russia, Hungary or even America, where due to the low telephone fees, many households still work with slow modems. As a consequence, many American web pages are much more text-dominated than German sites, which are largely dominated by slow-loading pictures.

When developing a web site that is targeted at international markets, companies should be aware that what is considered standard in Germany does nor necessarily work in other countries as well. Therefore, it is a wise step to analyse some competitors' web sites with regard to the following aspects:

- What is the typical structure of the web sites?
- What kind of information is presented in which style?
- How personal / emotional is the approach as opposed to factuality / serious-mindedness?
- What colours are dominant?
- What is the relation of texts and pictures?

Following these guidelines, speaking the language of the customers and reckoning with country-specific peculiarities will result in a web site that really leads to international success.

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[200] Cf. Hofstede, G., *Culture's Consequences. International Differences in Work-Related Values* 12th edn. (Newbury Park: Sage 1994).

As a conclusion, this study confirmed that the internet is gaining ground as one of the major marketing tools for SMEs. Although most companies are still somewhat reluctant to try the more intricate aspects of e-commerce, the majority of SMEs do have their own internet presentation, and all export-oriented companies also have an English version of their site. Other languages play only a minor role. Online marketing is largely confined to basic forms such as the entry in search engines, and most companies promote their web site offline as well.

9. Media Relations

9.1. Building successful relations with the media

Professional media work is a key ingredient of a successful communication mix. Establishing and maintaining contacts with the press considerably enhances the public image of the company.

Still, a glance at the figures reveals that media work is one of the most underdeveloped fields in the corporate communication of Saxon SMEs. 83.6% of the participating companies state that they are present in the press either sporadically (52.0%), seldom (25.5%) or never (6.1%). Only the small percentage of 16.3% maintains regular press relations.

How often is your company mentioned in the press?
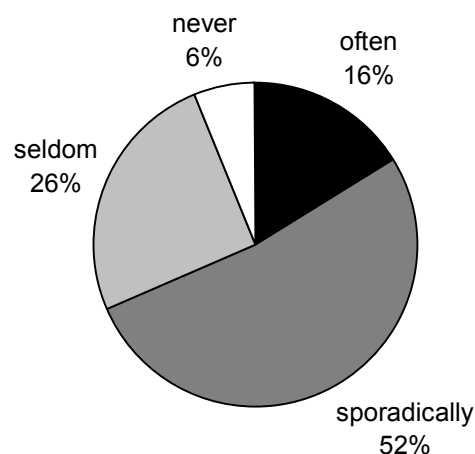
Fig. 9.1. Frequency of press articles about Saxon SMEs

The media landscape offers a wide range of opportunities to present a company in public from a variety of different perspectives and via various channels. Specialist magazines are considered the major medium of communication by the majority of participants in this survey. More than half of the SMEs have established a close cooperation with the specialist press (54%). Against the background that 85% of the sample focus on B2B relations, however, this figure yields that there still lies a huge potential that needs developing, as that indicates that about 30% of B2B-oriented

companies maintain no or only insufficient relations with their major mouthpiece, the special interest press.

Apart from special interest media, contacts to the consumer and business media prove highly valuable for companies, even if they are mainly focussed on B2B markets. Of course, it is a matter of the information that is presented whether or not the consumer press expresses an interest in the corporate affairs of a company. An investment that creates new jobs, innovative new products with an enhanced customer benefit, the opening of a new production site, events or open house days or the successful participation in important trade shows can be relevant for public interest as well. Issuing a press release on the occasion of one of the events mentioned above does not create considerable costs nor is it very time-consuming, but the effects and benefits can be substantial.

Still, only a quarter of the companies issue press releases to regional or national newspapers. Consumer magazines play virtually no role at merely one percent. Next to trade journals and special interest magazines, business magazines (16.7%) and business newspapers (13.7%) are important media for corporate communications.

Another channel that plays a major role in the media landscape are press and news agencies. Their task is to collect and distribute news to the relevant media as well as to freelance reporters and journalists. They function as multipliers in the media business, and they should be an integral part of any press list. Still, only 14.7% of the companies that participated in this survey have included this channel in their media work, on an international scale this share even shrinks to 6.9%.

Radio and television are two other essential ingredients in the media mix. One out of ten companies maintains contacts to those media, which seems reasonable from the perspective that most companies clearly focus on B2B relationships, whereas radio and television are consumer-oriented by definition. Nevertheless, as the medium TV is increasingly specialising and more and more specialist channels will evolve in the near future, it will develop into an interesting medium even for smaller companies. Many media experts predict a stronger regionalisation of TV, coupled with an increasingly specialist approach, which will result in a smaller, but more clearly defined target group. As the number of viewers per channel will continue to decline, prices for placing spots and commercials will also shrink, which will make

TV advertising a reasonable alternative even for smaller enterprises and turn it into an important medium for the communication of SMEs in future.

However, we are not talking about commercials here, but about media relations, which mainly means whether or not SMEs inform TV and radio stations about certain activities or innovations. And considering the fact that there are numerous regional and even municipal TV stations, it even becomes a necessity to notify the press about major or publicity-affine events within the company.

The internet and related online services are evolving more and more into one of the most important sources for media relations. It offers a wide range of exciting and efficient opportunities to spread corporate news all around the world, both to national and international media and to consumers. Most traditional press agencies are meanwhile present on the web as well, and they all offer the opportunity to deliver press releases electronically. Apart from the traditional press syndicates and agencies, there are countless platforms and press portals as well as interest-related online newsgroups. Thanks to their high degree of specialisation, these online newsgroups are very target-oriented. It can be assumed that all readers of the messages have voted voluntarily to do so, and if a corporate message is received by someone who has opted out of his own free will to do so, the effect will be significant. In spite of all those benefits of online newsgroups and related services, only three out of the 103 companies participating in this sample have ever tried this new method.

Apart from genuine press portals, there are numerous trade specific and industry related portals and newsgroups on the web that offer regular newsletters and forums and even invite their users to interactively contribute to them. This provides the opportunity to become active as an author and to discuss topics that are of interest to a wider circle of users. That creates not only respect, but also credibility of the conveyed information.

One of the exciting new features offered by the World Wide Web is the possibility to send out press releases online. When queried in the intensive interviews, most entrepreneurs replied that in their company, press releases are still sent out by fax. Sending them per E-Mail is not only way faster, but also incurs only a fraction of the costs. All that is needed is an up-to-date mailing list of the relevant media

representatives, and at the push of one button the release is issued to thousands of recipients all around the globe.

Moreover, electronic communication offers a spectrum of additional opportunities to enhance communication and to make the release not only more informative, but also more successful. In the body of the E-Mail, hyperlinks to the corporate web site can be included, where interested journalists can find relevant background information, contact names for further enquiries and high resolution images for download. The latter service is considered particularly important by many journalists, as it enables them to prepare their article, feature or report swiftly and effortlessly.

The corporate web site of the company is one of the main sources of information for journalists and persons of the media in general. Therefore, a press section where all the information relevant to the press is provided in a clear structure is absolutely essential for successful media relations. In a recent study, Jacob Nielsen interviewed journalists about what their five major reasons were for visiting a company's web site. These are the answers:

- "find a PR contact (name and telephone number),
- check basic facts about the company (e.g. spelling of an executive's name, his/her age, headquarters location, etc.)
- discover the company's own spin on events / crisis management
- check financial information, and
- download images to use as illustrations in stories."[201]

The basic information must be easy to find and cleansed of all marketese and exaggerated language that is typical of most public texts. Journalists look for the facts, and their job is to present them in a language that suits the medium they work for. Baker & Baker describe the benefits of an online press kit as follows: "A web-based press kit can help keep visitors abreast of your company's latest news, events and accomplishments. The traditional press kit is a collection of articles and information packaged in a presentation folder and sent via E-Mail. The online press kit can contain the same information and more – but put on a web site. Online press kits have the added advantage of being able to include audio and video clips."[202]

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[201] Nielsen, J., "PR on Websites: Increasing Usability", on:
http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20010401.html
[202] Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 215.

Comparing these requirements with the actual situation on the web sites of SMEs, it appears that only very few of them do have a separate press section at all. If so, this press area contains the latest press releases ("the latest" often means three releases, one from each year). Names and telephone numbers of executives are given away only very reluctantly, the same applies to financial information. High-resolution images could be found on only two of the analysed web sites. Including this information in the corporate web site is a small step, but it can greatly enhance the media relations and consequently the media coverage of a company. Moreover, a professional press section on the internet does not only make the work of the journalists easier, but is at the same time a demonstration of the appreciation and respect of their work.

What media do you regularly issue press releases to?

International	Media	National
4.9%	Consumer newspapers	22.5%
2.0%	Consumer magazines	1.0%
7.8%	Business newspapers	13.7%
5.9%	Business magazines	16.7%
30.4%	Special interest magazines / trade journals	54.9%
6.9%	Press agencies, press pools	14.7%
4.9%	Radio and TV stations	10.8%
1.0%	Online newsgroups	2.9%

Fig. 9.2. Media involved in press work of Saxon SMEs

9.2. International media relations

On an international scale, Saxon SMEs are even less involved in public relations activities than on a national level. Special interest magazines are the most important mouthpieces of Saxon companies abroad. Almost one third of the companies participating in this survey claimed they notify international special interest media about their activities, products and services. Business newspapers and magazines are the second most important medium of international communication for Saxon SMEs.

In the interviews, it became apparent that in most cases, these "international" media are publications of German publishing houses that issue an international magazine which reports on German companies two to four times per year. These publications

are then distributed abroad. True relations with the international press seem to be very rare among Saxon SMEs.

But establishing relations with the international press is much easier than many PR officers in Saxon SMEs seem to think. Once a media list including relevant magazines abroad has been compiled, the press release needs to be written or translated into English, or the respective language of the target country, and then it can be sent off by E-Mail. In the interviews, many people in charge of marketing and public relations confirmed, however, that they have never actually thought about that possibility. Many of them were reluctant to compile international press lists and to issue a release in a foreign language. Comparing the costs for the translation or the entire organisation of the international press work with other costs of generating business contacts abroad, professional international press work turns out to be an inexpensive and very efficient form of international corporate communications.

9.3. Guidelines for successful media relations

The analysis of the sample reveals that Saxon SMEs could do a lot more to enhance their relations with the press and other media. Successful press work starts with issuing successful press releases. But what makes a press release successful?

9.3.1. The media database

The basis for effective media work is an up-to-date media database. Every company should compile a list of all the media relevant to their products, services and corporate events. This list should not be short-sighted, however, and it must provide enough scope for a variety of topics and perspectives. Therefore, it should comprise business and special interest media as well as consumer and general interest titles. It should include print media as well as TV and radio, traditional channels as well as electronic media. Also it should include freelance journalists as well as large press syndicates and news agencies.

Of course, such a comprehensive media database does not mean that every piece of news is actually released to all the media in the list. Rather, the list needs to be reviewed for all the media that might be interested in that particular piece of information. This is a very sensitive issue. Journalists and editors can react very

grumpily if they are bombarded with information that is useless to them, so every company should be very careful about what piece of information is sent to what kind of medium.

9.3.2. The text type 'press information'

Professional press work means that company-specific information is prepared in a recipient-oriented way. That means it needs to be targeted at two aspects: the style and concept of the target medium (magazine, newspaper, business or consumer oriented) and the expectations of its readers (age, interests, readership structure, reading habits, preferences, linguistic abilities).[203] Only then can we speak of target-oriented press work, which is the precondition of successful press relations.

The text type 'press text' can be divided into several subcategories, each of which has its own rules and stylistic requirements that need to be met. Franco P. Rota distinguishes between 8 different types of press releases[204]:

1. The Press Invitation

An invitation is usually issued to invite press representatives to a press conference or an important event within the company. It should include the place and time of the event, the reason, the kind of event, the agenda, as well as an incentive for the press to be present. Ideally, this incentive should contain a relation to the medium itself and give the reporter a clue how he can turn this corporate event into a story that interests his readers. Another incentive that is used quite frequently is the information that excellent catering will be provided during the event.

2. The Press Announcement

The idea of a press announcement is to notify the press about an important corporate event of public interest (e.g. a trade fair, an open house day). It should be as brief and concise as possible, as this increases the chance that the announcement will be published without editing.

3. The Press Notification

This is the most universal form of press releases, and it comprises any kind of statements, explanations, justifications, messages and background information that

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[203] Cf. Rota, F. P., *PR- und Medienarbeit in Unternehmen*, 2nd edn, (München: Beck dtv series 1994), p.104.
[204] Ibid.

is issued by a company and targeted at the media. There is always a concrete reason for the notification, which should be the central piece of information and which should be explained and illustrated. Facts and figures need to be referred to their respective sources.

4. The Press Report

Reports are issued *after* an important corporate event, especially if the press or some important representatives were not present during the event itself. The report should be factual and include facts and information about the event. It can be completed by quotations, indirect speech and brief explanations of the background of the event. A good press report is only complete with a good photo. Many papers only print the photo with a brief caption, but this form of public relations is one of the most efficient.

5. The Press Photo with Caption

Instead of an entire report, a professional photo with a brief explanation of the related event and a catchy caption is an effective way of notifying the press, especially of events that are not attractive or important enough to invite a representative of the press (e.g. Christmas parties or corporate anniversaries).

6. The Article

This form of public relations is most appropriate for the cooperation with special interest media or trade journals. Before the PR officer of the company starts writing the article, he should contact the medium and agree on the exact subject, the length and the kind of information required. Advantages of this form of cooperation are that the target group usually receives the information with great interest. Moreover, the author can complete the article with photos, graphs and figures to make it more vivid and convincing.

7. The Press Interview

As a special form of the press report, the interview is an attractive mode of presenting corporate information on a personal level. In most cases, media representatives want to conduct the interview themselves in order to retrieve the information they and their readers are really interested in. In some cases, they send the questions in advance so that the interviewee can prepare the answers, or sometimes the interview is prepared entirely in-house and then sent to the press. It should be noted, however, that the personal impression and a certain "natural" flow

are important ingredients of an interesting interview, and the fear that most executives have of unprepared interviews is unjustified most of the time, as serious journalists aim at eliciting relevant information and not at disparaging the interviewee.

8. The Press Story

This is the most subjective form of media work. In contrast to other forms of press releases, it is not tied into a rigid framework of facts and figures, but it can include the personal experience and impressions of the author. For example, a press story can be a case study, a report on an everyday situation or standard procedures within a company. It can focus on the atmosphere, the people, their work, their hopes and fears and their success. Attractive photos can considerably increase the chance that the story will actually be published.

9.3.3. The right perspective

Issuing information that is of interest to the respective media is not only a question of the quality of the information. Rather, it is a matter of perspective. The same information can be prepared to be relevant to a variety of media, if it is presented from various angles. This shall be illustrated using the example of a product innovation:

The special interest press will be interested in the technical aspects, in the research and development activities that preceded the launch of the product, and in differences to competing products on the market. This is where most small and medium-sized enterprises stop. They write one release (if at all) containing the information mentioned above and will send it either only to special interest media only or to everyone in their list, most of whom will throw it away, however, as it does not fit their range of interests.

In the intensive interviews, many people in charge of writing press releases admitted that they have huge difficulties in presenting their information in a variety of different perspectives and in various different styles. This deficiency was confirmed by all of the journalists and editors that were interviewed against the background of this study, who all complained that they usually get a very technically-minded text, backed with loads of specific information, but not the kind of information that really interests their readers.

This brings up the question of responsibility. In most companies, press work is carried out by the person in charge of marketing. In companies where there is no such position, either the managing director himself or the secretary are responsible for notifying the press about important events within the company. It is understandable that due to their vast array of tasks and to the limited budget of time, both functions have not enough time to pursue the issue of maintaining good relations with the press in a regular and professional manner – one of the reasons why press work is such a neglected field in SMEs. It is therefore highly advisable that companies either appoint a clear responsibility for press relations internally, or that they outsource this responsibility either to a PR agency or to a communications consultant.

Professional press work starts if the same factual information is prepared in many different ways. This is how it could continue, illustrated at the same example of a product innovation: The general interest press will certainly be interested in the number of jobs the new product will create, the marketing activities and events linked to its launch or the benefits the product offers its users. The business press will be interested in the financial consequences of the innovation, the costs the development incurred and the expected profits. TV stations will be interested in seeing the product in motion or in visiting a demonstration. Print media will be eager to get high resolution images. If all these requirements of the different media can be met, it is fairly certain that the company will get excellent media coverage for their innovation.

The same procedure holds true for other newsworthy cases and events. One of the major obstacles for successful corporate press relations, however, is the reluctance of many companies to recognise which piece of news is actually newsworthy: "Many people overlook the merit of a press release thinking that perhaps their business is not newsworthy. If it benefits anyone, it is newsworthy."[205]

What do executives in charge of press relations in SMEs consider newsworthy? This study provides the following answers: New products and innovations are by far the most popular reasons to release a press notification. Fifty-nine percent of the sample companies claim they inform the press about new developments. The participation in important trade fairs is a piece of news that is deemed relevant by

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[205] Rashkow, C.; D. Sygrove, "Will a Press Release Bring Customers to your Door?", in *WebProNews* 12/07/01 (http://www.webpronews.com).

every second company (51%). Events (34.3%) are the third most important reason for issuing a press release, followed by winning a new customer or being awarded an important contract (15.7%). Only 5.9% report on their financial situation and the annual report or turnover in general.

The most alarming answer was that only 2% of the companies consider the press an important partner in crisis management. "Crisis management is one of the key responsibilities of public relations"[206] and it has meanwhile developed into a separate field of specialisation among PR professionals. Most companies vastly underestimate the importance of including the press in their measures to overcome a crisis. "Of course, journalists know when there are highly visible problems in a company, and they must refer to such issues in their stories. They will, however, include the company's reaction and explanation - if one is available."[207]

Most companies fail to provide the press with factual and true information about corporate crises, which leaves journalists only the choice of relying on rumours. If the company managed to provide information, most serious journalists would be happy to include this information in their articles. This assumption is confirmed by one participant in Nielsen's study, who refers to a recent financial crisis of a company called Tyco, whose former CEO was charged with looting hundreds of millions of dollars: "Delightfully, according to the Tyco web site, the BBC and everybody is wrong because this stuff didn't happen. At this stage I would be falling off my chair... There may be a mention of corporate amnesia in my article. So if there were something on the web site that said… in a statement, Tyco said *'we apologize to our investors and we are cooperating fully with the District Attorney…'* that would be in my story. But I so far haven't found it…"[208]

A more positive outlook is presented by the result that almost one third (29.4%) of the companies participating in this study ticked the option "We sometimes notify the press even without an actual reason – there is always a hook you can build your story on." These companies have recognised what American PR specialist Charlene Rashkow advises her clients: "Any business, product or service can be considered newsworthy if presented in the right manner."[209]

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[206] Nielsen, J., "PR on Websites: Increasing Usability", on:
http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20010401.html
[207] Ibid.
[208] Nielsen, J., "PR on Websites: Increasing Usability", in: http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20010401.html
[209] Rashkow, C.; D. Sygrove, "Will a Press Release Bring Customers to your Door?", in *WebProNews* 12/07/01 (http://www.webpronews.com).

9.3.4. The right manner

But what exactly is the "right manner" of a press release? What should be included? Which style should it be written in? The countless guidelines and advisory books generally agree on a number of criteria that basically apply to any kind of utterance (cf. Grice's maxims of communication[210]):

- It should be up-to-date and represent the latest state of information.
- It must be written in a clear and comprehensible style.
- Its content must be true.
- It must present information and figures in a neutral and factual way.[211]

There are certain general guidelines of what a press release should contain. The opening section should always contain the phrase "For immediate release" or "For release on…", including the date of when the information is to go public. Then, there should be the contact information, including the name, telephone number and E-Mail address of the person who has written the release. Journalists prefer to talk to a person instead of the anonymous body of a company when calling for more information, so it is insufficient to state the company name and central telephone number or general E-Mail address. It should be clear, however, which company the release comes from. This can either be expressed in the headline, or the press release is sent on letter-headed paper or a headed E-Mail to its recipients.

When composing the press release, the writer must be aware that the headline is the decisive element for the success of the information being printed or even read. Charlene Rashkow gives the following advice on designing a successful headline: "(The) headline is the … most important part of your press release. This is what grabs the attention of the reader and probably counts for more than 90% of your press release. If it doesn't appeal to the reader it will be overlooked. Most importantly, remember the reader only spends a few seconds on the heading and if it doesn't sound interesting, they are gone in a flash…Don't be in a hurry when composing your headline but try to come up with something that intrigues. Remember though, if you are making professional claims, be sure you can stand behind your product or service. Most importantly you are writing a press release for

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[210] Grice, H. P., "Logic and Conversation", in: P. Cole, J. L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics.* Vol. 3: *Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press 1975), pp. 41-58.
[211] Cf. Rota, F. P., *PR- und Medienarbeit in Unternehmen*, 2nd edn, (München: Beck dtv series 1994), p. 86.

the attention of the news media. You are trying to gain attention and customers but with professionalism."[212]

It is useful to stick to the "6 Wh's" in the opening of the press text, which refer to the 5 major WH-questions that should be answered in the first paragraph of each release:

Who   -   is issuing the release?
What   -   is the information about? / has happened?
Why   -   has it happened / will it happen?
Where -   did it happen / will it happen?
When   -   did / will it happen?
How   -   did / will it happen?

In the next paragraph, the writer can go into greater detail, elaborating on the facts given in the first paragraph, following the "inverted pyramid style"[213]. The overall length of the press release should not exceed one page, and it is useful to provide an internet address where the journalists and editors can access further information or pictures if required.

If a company pays attention to these requirements, successful press relations will soon enhance their portfolio of corporate communications, and they will realise that their overall media coverage gradually increases. Further steps that can be taken to improve media work in SMEs are a press section on the corporate web site[214] and the existence of an up-to-date, professional press kit that can be supplied to journalists searching for facts and information about the company.

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[212] Rashkow, C.; D. Sygrove, "Will a Press Release Bring Customers to your Door?", in *WebProNews* 12/07/01 (http://www.webpronews.com).
[213] Cf. Hicks, W., *Writing for Journalists,* (London: Routledge 1999), p.16.
[214] Cf. Chapter 8.

9.3.5. The press kit

"A press kit is like a resume for your company or professional service. It's a collection of company information and articles put together to inspire interest from media, investors, clients, and potential employees. The goal is to create a press kit that grabs readers' attention, creates a killer impression, helps them remember you, and makes them hunger to know more."[215]

Interviews with press representatives and people in charge of press relations in Saxon companies revealed that most companies do not have such a press or media kit ready at hand. According to the results of this survey, 20.6% of the companies provide a press kit in German for national media, and only 10.8% have a press kit in English to support their international media relations. In other words, only one out of five companies has a press kit, although this should be an essential component of the communication mix and although it does not even incur considerable costs to produce a couple of press kits or to have them produced by an external service provider.

Most companies provide journalists with information material on request, but journalists complain that these press kits only rarely contain the kind of information they are looking for. In many cases, one journalist reports, the press kit includes all the advertising brochures of a company, completed by some technical specifications and fact sheets.

But what do journalists expect to find in a well-prepared press kit? A press kit should provide basic information about the company, including key figures and financial information such as the turnover of the past few years. Moreover, it should include a collection of the most recent press releases, and a selection of basic information on major products and services for the press. This information can be completed by photos in professional quality that can be used royalty-free by various media.

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[215] Baker, K., S. Baker, *How to say it online* (New York: Prentice Hall 2001), p. 215.

9.4. Benefits of professional media work

Professional media work amounts to only a fraction of the costs that are incurred in conjunction with other forms of creating public interest such as advertising. Publications based on press releases are usually free. Apart from the cost factor, this form of arousing public interest has several other major benefits that make it one of the most effective forms of public relations: It creates credibility and gets more attention than the blatant boasting typical of most advertising messages.

Philip Kotler lists the following three major advantages of public relations and press work[216]:

- "*High credibility*: News stories and features seem more authentic and credible to readers than ads do.
- *Off-Guard:* Public relations can reach many prospects who might avoid salespeople and advertisements. The message gets to the buyers as news rather than as sales-directed communication.
- *Dramatisation:* Public relations has, like advertising, a potential for dramatising a company or a product."

Professional PR consultant Charlene Rashkow supports these views: "As professional Marketing Consultants we believe that a press release can be your most fruitful and empowering marketing tool. In comparison to other forms of advertising, a press release is relatively inexpensive yet gives you an opportunity to be heard without being blatantly promotional. In general it is a much more effective and professional way of getting noticed in comparison to almost all other types of promotional literature. If constructed masterfully, your press release can be the difference between being a totally obscure business to a company that shines high above the crowd."[217]

It is high time that Saxon SMEs recognise the power of professional press work and start promoting their companies, products and services in this unobtrusive and inexpensive, yet extremely credible and efficient way.

Summing up, part 1 has provided a quantitative overview of which communicative measures are taken by Saxon SMEs in order to market their products and services

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[216] Cf. Kotler, P., *Marketing Management* 7th edn. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall) 1991, p. 585.
[217] Rashkow, C.; D. Sygrove, "Will a Press Release Bring Customers to your Door?", in: *WebProNews* 12/07/01 (http://www.webpronews.com).

internationally, first reckoning with the areas of marketing in general and focusing then on trade fairs, sales literature, the internet and media relations respectively. This quantitative analysis was based on the empirical evaluation of a questionnaire illuminating the individual aspects of the marketing discourse. In addition to this quantitative discourse analysis, I will, in part 2, provide a qualitative linguistic and semiotic analysis of the language of advertising as a special sub-category of marketing discourse. Chapter 10 illustrates the general functions of advertising as the basis of the linguistic peculiarities, chapter 11 analyses the linguistic and semiotic features of advertising, while chapter 12 provides a functional stylistic analysis of 24 sample brochures from the companies which participated in this survey. Together, these three chapters are going to illustrate the linguistic and communicative quality of sales material provided by Saxon SMEs to their international markets.

PART II

SEMIOTIC AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS
OF PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE

10. Functional Analysis of Advertising

Over the past 250 years, advertising language has established as a text type of its own.[218] It can be distinguished from other text types by a variety of typical features on the lexical, morphologic, syntactic, stylistic and pragmatic level. The driving force behind the development of such a unique text type has always been the specific function of advertising texts, which is significantly determined by the relationship between sender and recipient and the goal the sender intends to achieve.

The functions of advertising can be grouped into the following categories:
1) Information about products and services
2) Motivation of consumers to buy a certain product
3) Reinforcement of buying motivations
4) Socialising function
5) Entertaining function[219]

From a pragmatic point of view, advertising speech acts can often be described as acts of recommendation or acts of presentation[220], but ultimately advertising mostly has the nature of an act of persuasion.

10.1. Conveying information

Most consumers object to the statement that advertising aims at improving their information about products and services. In 1992, only 20% of consumers believed that advertising provides trustworthy information about products and services. For comparison, 20 years before, almost twice as many people believed that advertising conveys true and useful information[221]. The question of truth in advertising is one of the most heatedly debated issues in advertising philosophy. Daniel Boorstin, for example, has argued that advertising has "profoundly altered the whole concept of 'truth'":[222] "The advertiser's art, then, consists largely of making persuasive

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[218] Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001).
[219] Kroeber-Riel, W., *Strategie und Technik der Werbung*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1993), p. 612.
[220] Cf. Nusser, P. (ed.), *Anzeigenwerbung* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 1975).
[221] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 2.
[222] Quoted in: Hughes, G., *Words in Time* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 158.

statements which are neither true nor false. He does not violate the old truth-morality. Rather, like the news-maker, he evades it."[223]

However, the informative function of advertising must not be underestimated. Providing the market with information about products and services is one of the oldest, most obvious and most important functions of advertising. Arguably, the content of information varies from ad to ad. However, this is owing to different stages in the life cycle of the products that are advertised for. In economy, we distinguish between four different functions of advertising that are directly related to the stage in the life cycle of the product. Consequently, these four functions also relate directly to the content of information that needs to be conveyed.

1. *Introduction advertising:* A new product is to be launched to the market. The customer does not know the product yet. Consequently, a lot of information must be provided to the consumers in order to get them acquainted with and eventually convince them of the advantages of the product.

2. *Penetration advertising:* After the new product has been launched, it must be distinguished from competing or rivalling brands. At this stage, two strategies are common: Some brands try to establish themselves by means of factual information, others rely on a rather emotional appeal.

3. *Cutthroat advertising:* This stage is entered when the market has been sated. The main objective of this kind of advertising is to win market share from competitors. At this stage, information no longer has much relevance, because consumers are quite well-informed about the product. Moreover, in many cases, the differences between competing products are so negligible that they can hardly be grasped by cognitive means. Therefore, most advertisers rely on a heavy emotional appeal to distinguish their products from competing brands. This is the stage where image advertising features most frequently.[224]

4. *Expansion advertising:* This strategy targets at getting new customers for a product that is well established on the market. New market shares are not taken away from competitors, but the main objective is to convince new

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[223] Boorstin, D., *The Image or What Happened to the American Dream* (New York: Atheneum 1962), p. 217f.

[224] This is what most people deem to be "real" advertising – just a nice picture, the logo, perhaps a headline, that was it. However, it must not be forgotten that in order to be successful with this kind of image advertising, millions of dollars and decades of market presence are required. It cost Marlboro millions of dollars and more than 50 years to establish a brand awareness that enables them today to print a big poster of the Marlboro Man and everyone knows it is an ad for Marlboro cigarettes.
This approach is inadequate for small or medium-sized companies. They have to go through all the other stages of providing information and establishing a positive image BEFORE.

customers of the advantages of the product. The content of information plays a more significant role in expansion advertising than in cutthroat advertising.[225]

Moreover, the information value of an advert does not only depend on the stage in its life cycle, but also on the type of product the advert promotes. With luxury goods such as perfume, for example, the appeal is almost solely based on emotional factors, which are largely conveyed by visual elements. Thus, a typical perfume ad consists of a large picture which captures a pleasant atmosphere. Factual information, e.g. what kind of ingredients the perfume consists of, is missing. This type of ad is also termed "tickle ad", since it tickles consumers' emotions rather than convincing them on the cognitive level.[226]

On the other hand, true innovations or capital goods require a higher amount of factual information, which often results in a longer advertising copy presenting a plethora of arguments in favour of the product. For those goods, the old advertising principle "Long copy sells"[227] holds particularly true. The more arguments put forward in favour of the product, the higher the chances that the customer is convinced.

10.2. Motivating the customer to buy

The basis on which all motivation to buy a certain product is built is the *appeal* of the ad. Therefore, particular care has to be applied as to what is the right appeal for the product. When choosing the right appeal for an ad, it is essential to view the product with the eyes of the consumer. Many unsuccessful ads fail just because of getting this wrong. Manufacturers are often so proud of their own accomplishments that their advertising is full of praise for their achievements, without asking themselves what advantages the product offers to the buyer. Thus, instead of telling customers about the world's best seed, they should focus on praising the world's best lawn.[228]

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[225] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 9f.
[226] Cf. Cook, G., *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992), p.10.
[227] Cf. Caples, J., *Tested Advertising Methods* (Englewood: Prentice-Hall 1994) and Ogilvy, D., *Ogilvy über Werbung* (Düsseldorf: Econ 1984).
[228] Caples, J., *Tested Advertising Methods*, (Englewood: Prentice-Hall 1994), p. 71.

In marketing, this appeal is often referred to as the USP, short for Unique Selling Proposition. It is the basis of any successful communication strategy and describes the product benefits to the consumer and differentiates it from competing products.

Definition of USP:

> ▪ "Each advert must make a **proposition** to the consumer…
>
> ▪ The proposition must be one that the competition either cannot, or does not, offer. It must be **unique** – either a uniqueness of the brand or a claim not otherwise made in that particular field of advertising…
>
> ▪ The proposition must be so **strong** that it can move the mass millions, i.e. pull over new customers to your product…"[229]

Kotler differentiates between rational appeals, emotional appeals and moral appeals. Rational appeals appeal to the audience's self-interest and show that the product will produce the claimed benefits. Emotional appeals try to arouse negative or positive emotions that will motivate purchase. Moral appeals are directed to the audience's sense of what is right and proper.[230]

Cook makes the distinction between "reason ads" and "tickle ads": "Reason ads suggest motives for purchase…Tickle ads, on the other hand, appeal to emotion, humour and mood"[231]. A slightly different approach is the distinction between "hard sell" and "soft sell". Hard selling makes a direct appeal, the prototype involving a salesperson in a suit, "talking loudly and directly…about low cost, limited availability and guaranteed reliability. Soft selling relies more on mood than on exhortation, and on the implication that life will be better with the product. The possessor reflects the possessed: this is the major unspoken promise of all soft-selling ads."[232]

Cooks latter remark also bears psychological relevance. It is true that emotional advertising is usually built on a desirable feature or quality that is said to reside in the product. The promise is that by using the product, this desirable feature will be transferred to its user, thus equipping him with exactly the same kind of quality that was attributed to the product before. By smoking a Marlboro cigarette, for example, the user is suggested to become as strong, virile and attractive as the "rugged,

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[229] Reeves, R., *Reality in Advertising* (New York 1961), p. 47f.
[230] Kotler, P., *Marketing Management* 7th edn. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall) 1991, p. 575.
[231] Cook, G., *Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992), p. 10.
[232] Ibid.

virile-looking" Marlboro man promising "man-sized flavour" all in a "bold red-and white" package.[233]

In modern markets, where the tangible differences between products of various brands are more and more diminishing, the USP is often an emotional claim. "The essential displacement of product by image, and of referential language by emotive, has now become an accepted mode."[234] Major brands excel in the art of creating claims that are unique and inseparably connected to the image of the product, such as the current global Vodafone slogan: *How are you?*

The awareness of the importance of a unique selling proposition is often only insufficiently developed among small and medium-sized companies. Most companies describe their products with commonplace sales arguments that are not at all distinguishable from the competitors'. Favourite selling propositions – the attribute "unique" is deliberately omitted here – among Saxon SMEs that participated in the survey are above all quality and tradition (used by about 70% of all SMEs in this sample), flexibility, innovation and service. Those arguments are far from being unique. Rather, these are attributes that customers expect as a precondition for any company entering the market! It is thus fairly useless to express that a company offers high-quality products plus great service – if it was not, they would have no chance whatsoever of selling their products.

Therefore, it is one of the most urgent demands to Saxon SMEs to clearly define their positioning (i.e. where they are in the market and where they want to be in future) and their exact target group and then develop an advertising strategy based on a selling proposition that is truly unique and that appeals to the relevant target group.

The creation of one unique selling proposition is one of the strongest advantages of successful brands. In recent research, the idea of the USP has been developed into the so-called "GOOD-FOR-WHAT", a term created by the advertising expert Vilim Vasata in his book "Radical Brand"[235]. This good-for-what is nothing revolutionary new, but it impressively stresses both the importance of a strong differentiation from

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[233] Cf. Hughes, G., *Words in Time. A Social History of the English Vocabulary* (London: Blackwell 1987), p.176. Hughes interestingly remarks that Marlboro cigarettes were originally targeted at a female audience, carrying a female image. Only when this approach failed, started one of the most spectacular cases of "transvestism", as Packard has called it (Packard, V., *The Hidden Persuaders* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1956), p. 84f.).
[234] Ibid, p.172.
[235] Vasata, V., *Radical Brand* (Düsseldorf, Wien: Econ 2000).

other brands as well as the easiest approach of how to find the USP of a certain product: The guiding question must be: What is this product good for? What benefit does it offer to the consumer? And this is where we have arrived at the ancient guideline for good marketing as the epitome of customer orientation. If a product fails to promise a relevant benefit to potential consumers, it will fail as a whole.

10.3. Reinforcing the decision to buy

Advertising is much less suited for winning completely new customers, who have neither heard of the product nor used it before, than to convince customers who have already had positive experience with this product to buy more of it more often. To achieve that is one of the main functions of advertising: "Die Unterstützung eines Verhaltens, das auch ohne die Werbung bereits gezeigt wurde, ist eine sehr wichtige Funktion, auf der ein großer Teil der Werbewirkung beruht."[236]

10.4. Socialising

Another function of advertising is to "provide standards and models for consumer behaviour"[237]. This function comes particularly to the foreground when new patterns of behaviour are to be established, either owing to the introduction of a "true innovation" or because the attitude of consumers towards a certain product shall be changed. As an example, the various campaigns promoting the use of condoms aim at changing social standards. Or, when non-alcoholic beer had been invented, a lot of socialising was required to make beer drinkers accept this new product.

10.5. Entertaining

Clearly, advertising has an entertaining function as well. Although most consumers deny that they actually enjoy watching TV commercials or looking at print adverts, advertising forms an essential part of contemporary popular culture. Adverts are considered art or at least a special form of popular art by many people. Culture determines advertising, and advertising determines culture.

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[236] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 9.
[237] Kroeber-Riel, W., *Strategie und Technik der Werbung*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1993), p. 612.

10.6. Strategies to achieve the communication objectives

The overall aim of advertising is to influence consumer behaviour. By means of presenting their products to the market, by pointing out advantages of the product and by distinguishing their products from competing makes, manufacturers and advertisers aim at convincing people to BUY their product. In order to achieve that overall aim, a number of different strategies have been developed, which are presented in the following figure[238]:

Stages	"AIDA" Model[239]	"Hierarchy-of-effects" Model[240]	"Innovation-Adoption" Model[241]	"Communications" Model
Cognitive Stage	Attention ↓	Awareness ↓ Knowledge ↓	Awareness ↓	Exposure ↓ Reception ↓ Cognitive response
Affective Stage	Interest ↓ Desire	Liking ↓ Preference ↓ Conviction	Interest ↓ Evaluation	Attitude ↓ Intention
Behavior Stage	↓ Action	↓ Purchase	↓ Trial ↓ Adoption	↓ Behaviour

Fig. 10.1. Different motivational theories about the functioning of advertising

Common to all these different models, which were developed over a period of more than 40 years, is the differentiation into a cognitive stage, presenting the consumer with the facts and rational elements and arguments of a product, then the progress onto an affective stage that tries to change people's attitudes towards a certain

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[238] Cf. Kotler, P., *Marketing Management* 7th edn. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall) 1991, p. 573.
[239] Cf. Strong, E.K., *The Psychology of Selling* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1925), p.9.
[240] Cf. Lavidge, R. J., G. A. Steiner, "A Model for Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness", in: *Journal of Marketing* October 1961, p. 61.
[241] Rogers, E. M., *Diffusions of Innovations* (New York: Free Press 1962), pp. 79-86.

product in a favourable and emotional way, and last but not least the behavioural stage that gets the customer into action.

First of all, a successful ad must catch the *attention* of the onlooker. Looking at some figures, it becomes evident that most advertising is doomed to fail already at that early stage: Kroeber-Riel claims that a maximum of 5% of the advertising messages actually reaches their recipients[242]. Due to information overload, consumers are able to actively process only 1% of advertising messages, compared to an amazing 30% to 40% back in the 1960s.[243] These figures give a first impression of the efforts advertising has to take in order to be heard at all.

However, psychological studies have found out that our attention can also be attracted by stimuli we are not consciously aware of. The typical situation at a cocktail party may serve to illustrate this point: We are talking to someone, and actually we are concentrating on what our partner says. Suddenly, however, we overhear a piece of the conversation between our neighbours, because they mentioned a familiar name. The same holds true for the situation when our name is announced in a busy airport terminal. Our attention is caught when our name is mentioned, even though we are not consciously listening.

The same phenomenon takes effect in advertising. We perceive information even if we do not concentrate on it, and even if we are not consciously aware of it. Psychologists claim that a medium level of attentiveness is most effective in advertising. If we concentrate on the advertising message with full attention, it is much easier to find counterarguments or to reject the message as irrelevant. If we are just passing by, however, the message has a chance to enter our subconscious mind without being cognitively processed.[244]

Closely related to that phenomenon is the so-called "mere exposure effect". The bottom line of that psychological phenomenon is that people have a more positive attitude towards information they have perceived before – especially if they are not aware of the previous exposure! That means, a low level of attention affects the attitude towards a certain product that is presented in advertising in a positive way – without being noticed by the recipient.

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[242] Kroeber-Riel, W., *Strategie und Technik der Werbung,* p. 15.
[243] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997)*, p.4.
[244] Ibid*, p. 81f.

One experiment described by Felser may serve to illustrate this finding: Testees were asked to browse through a magazine with the task to concentrate on certain articles. After they had finished, they were presented some of the products that had been advertised for in that magazine. None of them remembered to have seen any of the ads (since there task had been totally different), but yet they all had a more positive attitude towards the products that had been advertised in the magazine. The result of this test was that the testees liked the ads they had seen before, and associated positive feelings with them. Felser concludes: "Um eine positive Einstellung gegenüber den Anzeigen zu erzeugen, genügte es offenbar, die Versuchspersonen den Werbevorlagen auszusetzen."[245] For advertising, that means that placing adverts in print media *is* effective. It does not necessarily increase the memory rate of the ad, but it does result in a more positive attitude towards the product.

In addition, there are a number of design devices that can contribute to a better perception and to a higher level of attention:

- use of pictures (the larger in relation to the total size of the ad, the more attention)
- use of colour
- semantic ambiguity and metaphoric language (particularly in the headline)
- new stimuli (e.g. a violation of the principles of good form or creative language)
- size (doubling the size of an ad results in 1.4 times higher attention)
- movement
- position (top left half of a page is looked at first, according to our reading habits)[246]

In general, we can formulate the rule that the eye must not be forced to reverse. It goes without saying that the picture is looked at first. If the text is to be given a fair chance to be read at all, it must be placed AFTER the picture. That means: The headline must be placed UNDER the picture. Headlines that are placed under the

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[245] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997)*,* p. 128-131.
[246] Ibid*,* p. 86f. The question of where or how to position an ad inside a magazine is given fuel again by a study published in *Close Up* 1/2000 about special ad formats, such as pop ups, inserts, response postcards or scent strips. Its authors claim that special ad formats reach "exzellente Beachtungswerte von über 80%" ("Aktion und Reaktion III: Sonderwerbeformen in Zeitschriften" (Hamburg: Bauer-Research 1999), quoted in *Close Up* 01/2000, p. 33).

picture have a 10% higher chance of being read. Text that is placed to the right of the picture is more likely to be read than if it is placed on the left.[247]

When an advert has succeeded in attracting the attention of its onlookers, it has ousted 95% of its competitors. This vast advantage must not be given away. Catching attention is only the first step. The next vital step is not to disappoint the consumers and to stir their *interest*. Whereas the major tools of catching attention are the visual elements of the ad, the textual elements come into play when interest is to be created.

Apart from a catchy headline, which presents an appeal that exactly meets the desires of the consumer, the information conveyed by the body copy plays an important role in keeping the reader's interest. The more convincing arguments in favour of the product are presented in the most attractive way, the more likely is the onlooker to develop the *desire* to buy the product. This desire, however, is worth nothing, if it is not transformed into *action.* After all, as stated above, the major aim of advertising is to make people buy a product, not just to find an advert attractive or to be interested in a certain brand.

The next chapter is going to explore how these requirements and functions of advertising illustrated in chapter 10 can be met by linguistic and semiotic means and how language can be used to serve these functional requirements.

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[247] Cf. Ogilvy, D., *Ogilvy über Werbung* (Düsseldorf: Econ 1984), and Felser, G., *Werbe-und Konsumentenpsychologie*, p. 283.

11. Linguistic and Semiotic Analysis of Advertising

11.1. Linguistic features of the language of advertising

11.1.1. Functions of advertising language

Is there such a thing as advertising language? Certainly, the language of advertising is neither a variety nor a register in its own right. Rather, the language of advertising is able to take on any form that is required for communicating its message, thus covering and utilising the entire linguistic continuum. After all, speaking the language of the recipient is one of the major prerequisites of successful sales talk.

It has to be noted that the description of the linguistic features of advertising language in this and the following chapters does not represent a comprehensive overview, but rather an operational selection with regard to which of the numerous linguistic features and details can actually be operationalised for serving the marketing-relevant functions of advertising.

Furthermore, I would like to stress that out of the many possible approaches to analysing the variations of advertising language, I will focus mainly on the functional style of advertising language. According to Peter Auer's classification of styles[248], linguistic variation can be classified into variations within the language system (varieties) and variations in use (styles). Both variations occur on the regional, social and functional levels. Out of all the possible approaches for description, the focus of this analysis will be on functional stylistic aspects rather than on the analysis of social variations such as different linguistic approaches to different target groups. The reason for this functional approach is meeting the objective of this paper to provide guidelines for the practical implementation of the linguistic findings.

The text type "advertising text" will be considered a rather prototypical type, and I will focus on the prototypical features rather than the peripheral variations. One has to bear in mind, however, that variation and creativity plays a major role in advertising language in particular. Without doubt, the ability to ceaselessly reinvent itself, to produce ever new shapes and to create ever more unexpected elements of surprise to attract attention and to remain up to date is one of the most typical features of advertising language in general. Advertising language has always tried to change styles and to break with conventions, I would even go as far as to say that

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[248] Quoted in: Dittmar, N., *Grundlagen der Soziolinguistik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer 1997).

change is one of the most fundamental stylistic principles of advertising language, also against the background of its function to create ever new attention and to move with the times.

Bearing in mind that this enormous creative potential is one of the fundamental features of the text type of advertising in general, it can be said, though, that the other basic features, such as the simple syntactic structure, the direct appeal to the recipients, the high rate of repetition etc. etc. remain largely unaffected by the creative variation[249]. After all, in spite of all its creative activity, the text type of advertising copy has to remain recognisable to the recipients as such and to meet their basic expectations. Moreover, the companies commissioning the creation of advertising texts put a premium on security. They want to rest assured that the money they invest in their advertising campaign meets their objectives, and the safest way to reach that aim is to rely on tested and proven techniques and strategies, also from a linguistic point of view. Thus, in spite of inevitable variations and deviations from the prototypical "norm" of an advertising text, the majority of the texts adheres to these proven and established principles described below.

Advertising language can be defined by its major functions, i.e. to attract attention and to persuade people to buy the product or service it presents. As Cook rightly claims, "this is not the only function. (An ad) may also amuse, inform, misinform, worry or warn."[250] But from the predominant persuasive function, a set of typical linguistic features can be derived, which can be considered characteristic of the language of advertising, as they best serve the purpose of attracting attention, persuading and convincing as well as entertaining the recipients.

The appellative function is the first and foremost function of advertising language. However, this does not always become clearly obvious, and the function to appeal to the recipients and persuade them to buy is often concealed underneath or accompanied by other functions such as the descriptive, narrative, expressive or poetic and aesthetic function of language.

Descriptive language in advertising is most frequently found in product descriptions. However, as Gläser suggests, the descriptive function of advertising texts is only

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[249] If changes in these basic features occur, they mainly function as deliberate violations in order to attract attention or to establish a special tone of voice. If, for example, a brochure of a private bank displays long-winded sentences and high-end vocabulary, the recipient will notice this deviation from the norrm as a special creative approach.
[250] Cook, G., *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992), p. 5. Also cf. chapter 10.1.

fulfilled in very few cases: "Die Darstellungsfunktion des Werbetextes, die in der sachlichen Beschreibung eines Verkaufsartikels oder in der Information über eine Dienstleistung bestehen sollte, wird nur in wenigen Fällen erfüllt."[251]

Narrative elements are essential to so-called testimonial ads where pseudo-users report on their experience of using the product. Advertising language takes on an expressive function when the sender of the message, i.e. the company advertising its products or services, makes statements about their history, philosophy and visions.[252] Last but not least, the language of advertising frequently uses figures of speech and other stylistic devices that are considered typical of poetic language, such as puns, metaphors, neologisms, alliteration, assonance or rhyme. This bears witness to the high degree of creativity involved in advertising language and contributes to the secondary function of advertising to entertain the recipients.

Due to its highly appellative character[253], advertising language is one of the most efficient vehicles of ideology. Leech has called the language of advertising "loaded language"[254], describing its intention to influence and change the will and the attitude of its recipients. A book on advertising by D. Bolinger even bears the title "Language: The Loaded Weapon".[255] This aim is achieved by using simple language with a relatively weak structure grouped around a simple unit of meaning that can be easily remembered. Hughes has called advertising "linguistic capitalism", maintaining that "advertising is, from a linguistic point of view, a dubious manifestation of free enterprise in which the language, the common property of the speech-community, becomes a natural resource which is exploited by agencies in the sectional interests of their clients' marketing programmes."[256]

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[251] Gläser, R., "Sprache und Pragmatik der englisch-amerikanischen kommerziellen Werbung", in: *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 18 (1970), pp. 314-323.

[252] One of the distinctive features of advertising language is that the sender can often not clearly be identified because there are several senders. On the surface, there are often people in the picture who seem to utter the message to the recipient. These people, however, convey the message an advertising agency has put into their mouths. In TV ads, for example, "there are, rather, many strata of senders, ranging from the manufacturer through the agency and its creative department, to the actors and camera crews who produce it. For each stratum, the function may be different...For these reasons we shall need to distinguish different kinds of function, such as addresser-function, sender-function, addressee-function and receiver-function." Cf. Cook, G., *Discourse of* Advertising (London: Routledge 1992), p. 6. The basic sender, however, is always the company whose products are being advertised.

[253] Cf. Fluck, H.-R., *Fachsprachen: Einführung und Bibliographie* (Tübingen, Basel: Francke 1996).

[254] Cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

[255] Cf. Bolinger, D.,, *Language: The Loaded Weapon* (London: Longman 1980).

[256] Hughes, G., *Words in time* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 159. Hughes adds: "Words have the added advantage of being free for the taking, unlike images and sounds, which cost money to make." (ibid)

Leech identifies four major functions of a successful advertisement, each of which has consequences on the language used to achieve those aims[257]:

1. ATTENTION VALUE

Adverts need to attract attention and arouse curiosity. On the linguistic level, this can be achieved by breaking conventions of language use such as using wrong spelling, neologisms, puns, grammatical solecism, rhymes, semantic deviations and putting language in inappropriate or unorthodox contexts.

2. READABILITY

Once the advert has succeeded in catching the reader's attention, this interest needs to be sustained, always reckoning with the fact that the reader searches for quick and simple information. Therefore, the style of adverts is mostly colloquial, using simple and familiar vocabulary[258]. Leech has called this practice of using informal language associated with private contexts in public or business communication "public colloquialism"[259]. Informal styles suggest an easy-going social relationship between reader and writer, and they are characterised by informal address terms, direct address to the reader, mostly with the second person pronoun *you*, casual colloquial expressions and a relative lack of politeness markers.[260] In adverts, even written language shows many features of spoken language[261].

First, advertising language is characterised by a high level of redundancy due to a high degree of repetition and parallelism. Moreover, there is the frequent use of deictics referring either to the user as an exophoric referent or to endophoric references such as pictures and other sentences in the copy. Terms like *this*, *that*, *those*, *it*, *here* and *there* indicate items in the immediate context and occur very frequently in advertising copy. Elliptic sentence structures are another sign of spoken communication that are typical of advertising language. Moreover, phrasal verbs, idioms and contractions are characteristic features of advertising language bearing witness to its strong degree of colloquialism.

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[257] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[258] Cf. Caples, J., *Tested Advertising Methods* (Prentice Hall), p. 134ff.
[259] Cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[260] Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 24f.
[261] Cf. Goddard, A., *The Language of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1998), p. 41ff. and Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

3. MEMORABILITY

The message of an advert needs to be remembered by the recipient and recognised as familiar. Repetition is one of the most frequent techniques used in advertising to enhance memorability. Sowinski confirms that repetition is "das am meisten angewandte rhetorische Mittel der Werbung."[262] Sander defines repetition ("Wiederholung") as follows: "Von *Wiederholen* spreche ich, wenn die Intention des Sprechers so verstanden werden kann, als habe er die Wiederholung als Wiederholung intendiert"[263], and she observes that interestingly, the rate of repetition is often aligned with the ability of the short-term memory: "Meist fällt die Wirkung des Wiederholens anscheinend mit der Reichweite des Kurzzeitgedächtnisses zusammen."[264]

From a linguistic point of view, several linguistic devices are highly repetitive by definition and therefore feature fairly frequently in advertising language[265], such as alliteration (repeating the initial sound), metrical rhythm (repeating the same rhythmic pattern), rhyme (repeating the same ending sounds), grammatical parallelism (repeating the same grammatical structure) as well as semantic and syntactic repetition (i.e. using the same syntactic structure or words from the same word field) and lexical repetition. It has to be noted that repetition and variation often go hand in hand. Semantic repetition, i.e. the repeated use of different words from the same word field, is an incidence of lexical variation which at the same time functions as a repetitive device.[266] Moreover, the continuous repetition of slogans, brands and product names equally contributes to the memorability of the product and the related advertising messages: "Auch die in Werbetexten übliche Wortwiederholung wurde schon genannt. Der Name der Ware oder der Firma soll hier unbedingt auffallen, er erscheint daher meist in Bildern, Überschriften und mehrmals im Text, oft an auffallenden Satzstellen oder im pointierten Schlussteil."[267]

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[262] Sowinski, B., *Deutsche Stilistik* (Frankfurt / Main: Fischer 1991), p. 59.
[263] Sandig, B., *Stilistik* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 1978), p. 90.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Cf. Sowinski, B., *Deutsche Stilistik* (Frankfurt / Main: Fischer 1991), p. 57ff.
[266] Cf. Sandig, B., *Stilistik* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 1978), p. 92f. on the synergy of variation and repetition.
[267] Sowinski, B., *Deutsche Stilistik* (Frankfurt / Main: Fischer 1991), p. 62.

4. SELLING POWER

Ultimately, advertisements want to sell. Prompting people to take the right kind of action can be best achieved by clear instructions as what to do next. Imperatives are ideally suited to tell people clearly what kind of action to take and therefore feature very frequently in advertising language. Not without reason are imperatives one of the most frequently used syntactic forms in advertising language[268]. Due to the tendency to use elliptical sentence structures and omitting subjects, however, imperatives are often not perceived as open instructions but rather as shortened sentences or fragments of statements.

Moreover, advertising copy strives to be positive and to give its recipients a positive outlook. Prohibitions and negative forms are usually avoided, unless they are used as an element of surprise to create attention value. This approach is also justified from a psychological and cognitive perspective, as negative forms require a longer processing time than positive statements.[269] The strategy of using positive forms also extends to the lexical level. Particularly adjectives with a positive meaning play a major role in advertising language[270]. Leech quotes the following adjectives to be among the most frequent ones in advertising language:[271] new, good / better / best, sure, delicious, free, fresh, nice. All of these words have an entirely positive meaning. John Caples advises advertisers to "avoid, when possible, headlines that paint the gloomy or negative side of the picture. Take the cheerful, positive angle."[272]

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[268] Cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

[269] Cf. Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 281.

[270] Gieszinger revealed that "strikingly, the number of adjectives with negative connotations has not decreased although psychologists have emphasised that advertisers should describe their products from a positive point of view rather than from a negative one, because negative writing and thinking may produce a negative response." Cf. Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), p. 154.

[271] Cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

[272] Caples, J., *Tested Advertising Methods* (Prentice Hall), p. 31.

11.1.2. Functional and practical stylistics of advertising language

These functional requirements described above result in a functional advertising style, which is determined by the correlation of exophoric determinants such as the fields of application, the relationship between sender and recipient, the modes of communication and the social functions of this text type on the one hand and typical modes of use on the other. Against the background of a "discourse of advertising"[273], it becomes obvious that the linguistic features of advertising cannot be described without reference to the situation in which this text type occurs.

Thus, the heavy use of the pronoun *you* cannot be seen in isolation from the appellative character of adverts, with the sender trying to present a personal appeal to the recipients in order to persuade them to ultimately buy their product. The pseudo-personal appeal of the pronoun *you* must be considered in conjunction with the media of mass communication, which are the major mode of distributing advertising messages. Although every recipient knows that *you* actually refers to an audience of many millions of people, they are still inclined to believe that they are personally being addressed.

Furthermore, the predominance of positive grammatical forms and lexical items with a favourable meaning can be traced back to the social function of motivating the recipient to follow the instructions of the sender and to go and buy these products. This peculiarity can also be seen in relation to the pragmatic nature of advertising texts as acts of persuasion, which naturally focus on a favourable way of presentation.

Thus, the functional style of advertising language, whose characteristic features are outlined below, sets the guidelines for practical stylistics, describing – rather than prescribing – what advertising language should be like. It is a matter of fact that, in spite of the much-appraised creativity of the text type of advertising language, it follows a fairly narrow scheme of linguistic features which make advertising copy easily recognisable as such and provide the recipient with a guideline of how to interpret the statements and how to deal with such texts. By not adhering to these standards, the expectations of the recipient can be severely violated, leading to frustration and misunderstanding, which is why I consider it very important for Saxon

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[273] Cf. Cook, G., *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992).

SMEs to meet the requirements the text type of advertising imposes and to follow certain "rules" in the sense of functional stylistics[274].

For this reason, I will complete the descriptive analysis of the features of advertising language following in the next subchapters with a practical analysis of marketing material supplied by the participants in this investigation and compare both styles with each other in order to provide recommendations in the sense of practical or normative stylistics to show what Saxon SMEs can improve with regard to their marketing collaterals in order to meet the requirements of the functional style of advertising or promotional language.

11.1.3. Lexical features of advertising language

De Voe has described the lexical preferences of advertising language as follows: Familiar words are preferred to the unfamiliar, concrete to the abstract, simple to complex and short words to long ones[275]. I would like to add that advertising copy prefers positive to negative words. All these features bear the signs of informal spoken language that have been identified as crucial to advertising language.

On the lexical level, conservatism and creativity compete against each other in advertising language. On the one hand, the basic vocabulary of advertising language is very restricted, repeating the same words and expressions over and over again. On the other hand, advertising language is characterised by a high degree of creativity that puts advertising language on the same level with poetic language in certain respects and that justifies the assumption that advertising copy has an aesthetic or poetic function as well.

On the conservative side are the twenty most frequently used verbs and adjectives listed by Leech[276], including *new, good/better/best, free, fresh, delicious, full, sure, clean, wonderful, special, crisp, fine, big, great, real, easy, bright, extra, safe* and *rich* among the adjectives and *make, get, give, have, see, buy, come, go, know, keep, look, need, love, use, feel, like, choose, take, start* and *taste* from the word class of verbs. Most of these English words have Germanic roots and belong to the most simple stock of everyday oral communication. Many of them have a very general meaning, which can however be extended in manifold ways by forming

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[274] Sowinski, B., *Stilistik: Stiltheorien und Stilanalysen* (Stuttgart: 1992).
[275] De Voe, M., *Effective Advertising Copy* (New York 1956).
[276] Cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

phrasal verbs. Almost all of them are morphologically simple, consisting of one morpheme only, thus enhancing understandability, shortness and memorability.

These basic words of the English vocabulary are turned into an incredible plethora of meanings by means of word-formation and semantic and syntactic creativity. The language system provides a rich array of possibilities of forming new words and meanings, illustrated in the figure below.
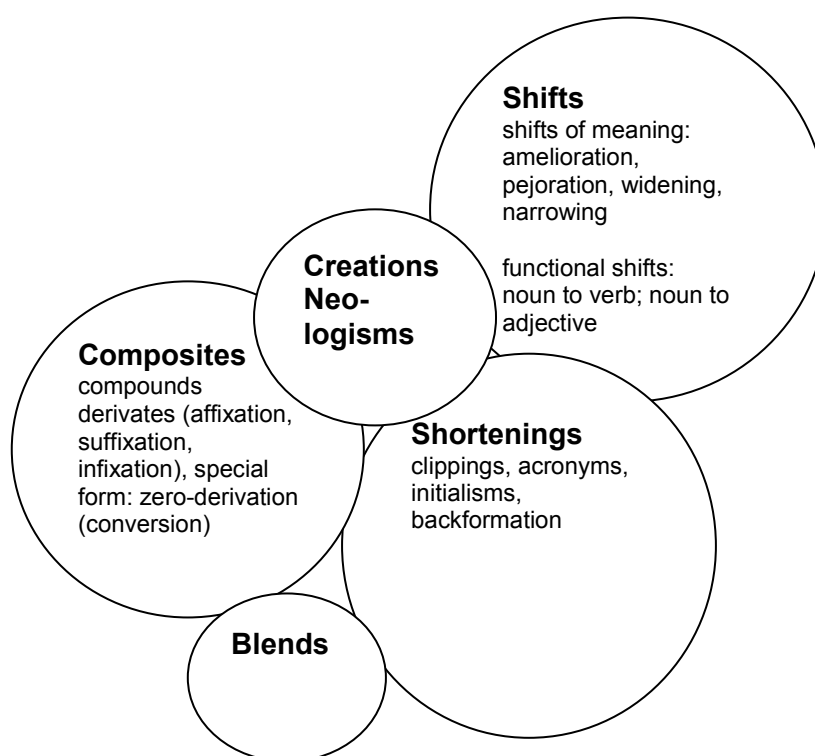
Fig.11.1. Classification of word formation[277]

As peculiar to the language of advertising, Leech observed an abundance of adjectival compounds[278], combining noun + adjective (*feather-light, top-class*), adjectives ending
in –y with another adjective (*creamy-mild*), present participles + adjective (*sparkling-clean*), noun + past participle (*home-made*), adjective + past participle (*full-flavoured*), noun + present participle (*record-breaking*) and adjective + present participle (*good-looking*). Another peculiar feature is the frequent use of complex nominal groups that can consist of several nouns such as *Innoxa Shadow Soft Eye Shadow*. On the one hand, this kind of block language is one way of avoiding

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[277] Cf. Algeo, J., *Cambridge History of English Language* (Cambridge: CUP 1999), p. 85.
[278] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

awkward or old-fashioned genitive forms[279], on the other hand it is characteristic of specialist language and thus gives the impression that the speaker is an expert in this particular field.

Peculiar from a syntactic point of view is the predicative use of compounds in embedded groups such as in *a wholesome, ready-to-eat cereal* or *its wonderful fresh-milk taste*[280]. Moreover, many fancy compounds can only be interpreted at the metaphorical level or within the context of the specific advert, such as *top-of-the-tree flavour*. Hughes states that "in general it can be claimed that advertising, like journalism, has increased the grammatical flexibility of words, particularly in the extension of nouns into adjectives and verbs, i.e. in a more dynamic direction"[281], thus making use of conversion or zero-derivation as a creative means to form new words. Leech maintains that neologisms often exceed the limits of word-formation and quotes examples such as *peelabilty*[282]. On the other hand Aitchison, who gives the examples of *jumbification* for an airline that used too many jumbo jets and *Autoguzzlosaurus Rex* for a large car with an excessive thirst for gas that is in danger of extinction, argues that such creative word formations are an integral part of everyday communication: "These new usages occur continually, though most are quite temporary visitors to the language."[283]

Moreover, words with favourable connotations such as *luxurious, craftsmanship, fresh, pure, gentle, brilliant* are often abstracted from their familiar context and used in "incongruous alliances", as Hughes has called this process, and he quotes the "typically outrageous example" of 'such a blissful sink'.[284] This extravagant use of certain words has linguistic consequences: First, "terms that used to be unique become widely appropriated and greatly generalized by being used very loosely."[285] Furthermore, the excessive usage of some words in an advertising context has affected a semantic change of words such as *quality, design* or *performance*, which used to be neutral but are now used to suggest "exclusive or excellent achievements".[286]

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[279] Koskensalo, A., *Finnische und deutsche Prospektwerbung* (Tostedt: Attikon-Verlag 2000), p.97.
[280] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[281] Hughes, G., *Words in Time* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 172.
[282] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[283] Aitchison, J., *Words in the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987), p.152.
[284] Hughes, G., *Words in Time* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 172.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Ibid, p. 161.

This process of semantic changes due to an advertising discourse is nothing new.[287] One of the keywords of modern advertising, *luxury*, has undergone a significant process of semantic amelioration. In its earliest sense after having been borrowed into the English language in the fourteenth century, the word *luxury* had the predominant meaning of sinful self-indulgence, usually sexual in nature, and was associated with lasciviousness and lust. Against the background of the hedonistic culture of Western society, these formerly negative connotations have adopted a favourable flavour, and "luxuries have been converted into necessities"[288]. Thus, semantic change reflects the morale and attitudes of society.

Euphemisms are particularly prone to semantic change, especially when used in the fast-living world of advertising. Whereas *blend, scent* and *flavour* are the preferred synonyms for *mixture, smell* and *taste* today, their latter profane counterparts were used in a positive meaning only some decades ago.[289]

Especially with the marketing of products that require a certain level of explanation, such as computers or other electronic and technical devices, advertisers increasingly make use of a new style hybrid termed "advermation style",[290] defined as a blend of information and persuasion. "Claims made in such discourse may relate to desirable aspects which encourage purchase…as much as the dissemination of information."[291] In this jargon, specialist terms feature particularly frequently. The language is largely descriptive and it uses "a rhetoric of numbers applied to complex specialist terminology"[292] that may well be not understood by the non-expert recipient. "Neben der Information kann diese Art des Fachwortgebrauchs auch eine Autoritätswirkung ausüben. Der Autor kann durch das Einfügen von Fachwörtern einen vorhandenen oder vorgetäuschten Wissensvorsprung … ausspielen und so seinem Urteil oder seinen Anregungen einen größeren Nachdruck verleihen."[293] To balance this effect, the descriptive elements of language are often sizzled up with evaluative adverbs, comparative and superlative forms, informal style of speech as well as metaphoric language and personification.

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[287] Cf. Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising language* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang 2001).
[288] Hughes, G., *Words in Time* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 161.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 24.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Cf. Sowinski, B., *Deutsche Stilistik* (Frankfurt / Main: Fischer 1991), p. 246.

11.1.4. Grammatical and syntactic features of advertising language

11.1.4.1. Syntactic features

Annikki Koskensalo speaks of "Hackbrettstil"[294] and Geoffrey Leech uses the term "block language"[295] for the syntactic structure of advertising language, referring to the kind of disjunctive and abbreviated grammar typical of advertising copy. Block language can be compared to the language characteristic of headlines, providing only lexical words conveying meaning and omitting grammatical function words of low information value.

Typical features of abbreviated grammar are the use of the infinitive with future meaning, the use of the past participle as an indicator of the passive (the auxiliary form as a mere function word being omitted) and the use of the present participle denoting the present continuous (again omitting the auxiliary verb form for the sake of shortness).

From a syntactic point of view, the omission of function words and determiners results in incomplete sentences, also referred to as ellipses. Both Leech and Goddard identify ellipses as typical of impromptu speech[296]. Downing and Locke note that "in conversational exchanges in English, minor clauses and abbreviated clauses play an important part in their ability to realise initiations (offers, commands, statements or questions) and responses to initiations."[297] Goddard compares ellipses to a kind of "shorthand" and claims that "advertising language often attempts to reproduce the elliptical nature of spoken language in order to establish closeness with the reader."[298]

The precondition for using elliptic structures is shared knowledge or context by sender and recipient. The grammatical elements to be omitted are usually grammatical words of low information value, thus ensuring that the message can be got across without risking a loss of information or a lack of context. "The omission doesn't let you fill in what you want. It makes you active in interpreting the

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[294] Koskensalo, A., *Finnische und deutsche Prospektwerbung* (Tostedt: Attikon-Verlag 2000), p.97.
[295] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966). The term "block language" is described as the language typical of notices, newspaper headlines or announcements. Block language is based on situational ellipsis, omitting elements that can be recovered from the extra-linguistic context (cf. Downing, A., P. Locke, *A University Course in English Grammar* (New York: Phoenix 1994), p. 242).
[296] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[297] Downing, A., P. Locke, *A University Course in English Grammar* (New York: Phoenix 1994), p. 168.
[298] Goddard, A., *The Language of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1998), p. 123.

sentence."[299] Leech defines the three most frequent elements of elliptical omission as follows:

1) Subject of a clause

example: [It] fits in everywhere.

2) Subject + first word of predicator

example: [Are you] sure there is enough?

3) Determiner in an initial nominal group

example: [The] point is…[300]

Sowinski notes that many shortened syntactic forms in advertising texts are no genuine ellipses, but rather interpunctional interpretations as in the example: "Dieser Wagen ist geräumig und bequem. Mit Platz für fünf Personen" (VW advert). This is actually a full sentence, but the latter element is isolated by the full stop and appears as if it were an independent sentence. Sowinski explains: "Durch die Isolierung des jeweiligen Satzgliedes zwischen zwei satzbegrenzenden Satzzeichen (Punkten) soll der optische Eindruck einer selbständigen Aussage erzielt werden. Die Einzelsetzung gewinnt so die Wichtigkeit einer Satzaussage und findet stärkere Beachtung. Da diese Form der "offenen Syntax" weitere Assoziationen erlaubt, wird sie in Werbetexten oft verwendet."[301]

Advertising language is dominated by main clauses. From a semantic perspective, subordinate clauses do occur, but they are often disguised as another pseudo-main clause, separated by a full stop, as in *We can't afford to waste water. Because we need it for living.*

The independence of minor or non-finite clauses is thus peculiar to advertising language. This method of "impressionistic" grammar, as Leech calls it, contributes to the principle of simplicity. Basically, it can be said that there is a tendency to present every chunk of information in a separate "sentence" or rather in a separate clause, separated from the main clause by a full stop instead of a comma, thus violating the rules of punctuation.

Leech claims that 75% of all clauses are independent. 20% of all independent clauses contain neither subject nor predicate and can thus be classified as minor

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[299] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 55.
[300] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[301] Sowinski, B., *Deutsche Stilistik* (Frankfurt / Main: Fischer 1991), p. 119.

clauses. "One can read whole ads without coming across a main verb."[302] About one quarter of independent clauses are imperatives, which by definition have no subject either. Rather than the sentence, the highest grammatically complex unit in advertising English is thus the group.[303]

Typically, these groups are coordinated rather than subordinated, either by means of linking, usually with additive conjunctions such as *and* or *or*, or by means of parataxis (i.e. sequencing two main clauses) or alternatively by means of apposition. The latter is defined as "the placing of a word next to another, especially the addition of one noun to another, in order to qualify or explain the first."[304] Most frequently, appositions are used in advertising language as the juxtaposition of the product name and a nominal phrase explaining it, as in: *Churchman's Olympic Tipped – the cigarette that leads the way.*[305] This structure could equally be analysed as an ellipsis where the verb form *to be* has been omitted.

11.1.4.2. Spelling

In their attempt to catch the attention of their readers, advertisements often resort to unusual forms, including creative spelling. Simplified spelling is particularly popular among advertisers[306], including omnipresent deviations from standard spelling as *lite, nite, donut* or *kwik*. Some phonetic spellings have even become institutionalised in American English, such as the forms *hiway* for *highway* or *thru* for *through*[307]. Others are more striking and more genuinely creative, such as *ezkleen* for *easy clean*[308] or product names like *Sunkist* or *Kitekat*. Unusual letters such as *X* are a popular tool among advertisers to endow products with a catchy appearance. Myers quotes brand names such as *Dulux, Halifax, Kleenex, Exxon, Radox, Dettox* and *Biotex*[309] to provide evidence for this point. The letter *Z* is also becoming increasingly popular in English and American product names, as can be seen in *Daz, Oz, Jazz* or *Lucozade*[310]. Another popular tendency in English advertising is to

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[302] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 55.

[303] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

[304] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English,* 9th edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995), p. 60.

[305] Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).

[306] The idea of simplified spelling was originally initiated by the American lexicographer Noah Webster, who attempted to undercut silent consonants and aimed at a phonetic spelling for the (American) English language.

[307] Webster, N., *Webster's Universal Dictionary of the English Language* (Cleveland: World Syndicate Publ. Co.).

[308] Cf. Hughes, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 163.

[309] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 38.

[310] Ibid.

replace the fairly common letter *C* with a *K*, as in *Kopy Kwik* or *Kustom Kar*, both being names of American shops.[311]

Myers points out that the preference of certain graphemes can differ considerably between countries. The decisive factor for a striking appearance is the frequency with that the letter occurs in the language. For example, *C* is much less frequent in German than in English, whereas *J* is quite common in German. Consequently, a dishwashing liquid called *Jif* on the English market is sold as *Cif* in Austria and Germany.

A recent article in *Spotlight* observed that the next hype letter could be "e", as it has been used widely in new coinings related to information technology and now occurs in new word formations such as *E-Mail, e-commerce, e-procurement* or *e-maintenance*[312]. In this case, the orthographic change goes hand in hand with a morphological change of the English language, as the grapheme *e* and the phoneme [iː] have come to be equipped with a distinctive meaning, namely "referring to electronics or information technology" and can thus be considered a new morpheme in the English language that has the ability to form an unlimited number of new words.

Sometimes, spelling is changed for the sake of alliteration (the repetition of initial sounds), which is a popular stylistic device in advertising and contributes to attracting attention due to the visual and phonological repetition of the same sound or letter. Moreover, repeated letters can provide the basis for the visual design: "If a firm has a name like Kopy Kwik, it may appear on the logo with a huge K in front of *opy* and *wik*."[313]

Not only individual words are affected by creative spelling, but even entire groups of words and compounds. In German advertising language there is the tendency to split up compounds into their individual elements and to link them with a hyphen, such as in *Englisch-Dozentin* or *Ablage-Box*. This is supposed to enhance readability and to enable readers to grasp the meaning of each component at first

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[311] Interestingly, this tendency is in contrast to German advertising language, where the common *K* is often replaced with a *C* so as to give the word an exotic appearance and thus increase the attention value. The decisive criterion for which letter is considered attractive is thus the relative frequency of that letter in the particular language.
[312] Cf. *Spotlight* 5/2003.
[313] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 38.

glance. Another effect of this strategy is that by establishing each component as a word in its own right, it is endowed with primary significance[314].

Hyphenation is also a popular means of word formation and emphasis in English advertising language, at the same time standing out due to its unusual appearance in spelling and condensing information into a minimum of lexical units. Hughes quotes the examples of *king-size, oven-fresh* or *do-it-yourself*, which have become established in standard English, and more artificial creations of copywriters such as *handy four-on-the-floor gearshift, booster-assisted system* or *glance-of-the-eye instrumentation.*[315] He observes that especially "in technical areas compounds proliferate greatly, since they produce an opaque jargon which impresses the layman."[316]

In English, we can observe the trend towards the pattern of *and* being abbreviated to *'n* and being used to link two words, such as in *Nice 'n Easy* or *Turn 'n Tender.*[317] Apart from using phonetic spelling or spelling imitating the actual pronunciation of a word (often within a certain social group), "there are many ads that alter spelling to make it represent sound"[318] as in Myers' example below:

IF YOU FIND
MY S-S-S-STAMMERING
F-F-F-FRUSTRATES YOU
HOW DO YOU THINK
I F-F-F-F-FEEL?

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[314] This tendency is in analogy with the separation of semantic units on the syntactic level described above, i.e. to divide individual groups of meaning by a full stop so as to make the individual chunks easier to grasp.

[315] Hughes, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 171.

[316] Ibid.

[317] Ibid, p. 163. Hughes claims that this pattern can be traced back to the success of the spelling *Rock `n Roll.*

[318] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 39.

11.1.5. Ambiguity in advertising language

In order to be simple, memorable and persuasive at the same time, advertising language needs to be rather vague on the lexical-semantic level. Advertising language is highly ambiguous, avoiding clear and concrete statements and resorting to vague utterances that offer numerous layers of potential interpretation. Ambiguity in advertising becomes manifest on the levels of semantics, syntax and reference.

11.1.5.1. Semantic ambiguity and puns

On a lexical level, advertising favours words with multiple meanings, or, as these have been called in an advertising context, "weasel words"[319]: "A weasel-word is one which, by its calculated ambiguity, erodes the meaning of the phrase or sentence in which it is used."[320] A favourite strategy used by advertisers to create ambiguity is the literal interpretation of idiomatic expressions. Hughes quotes the examples "Every girl needs her Mum" (deodorant), "We have your interest at heart" (bank) or "the down to earth garden tool".[321]

Cook calls these expressions "visual metaphors"[322], which can occur in two different forms: either the phrase is written and its two senses illustrated, as in an ad for Gordon's Gin which has been poured "over jaffa" (i.e. an orange), visualised by a person holding this glass in their hands and standing on a balcony with a view over the city of Jaffa.[323] In other cases, "a phrase can be evoked wholly pictorially, without any use of writing at all,"[324] such as in a washing powder ad where money is pouring down the drain. Cook maintains that this technique is used to revitalize many dead metaphors, which supports Myers' view that "an ad can bring the deadest of metaphors back to life in the right circumstances."[325]

Not without reason are wordplays a favoured linguistic means in advertising copy, on the one hand attracting attention due to their element of surprise, and on the other hand offering at least two possible levels of meaning. Moreover, there is the element of humour in puns which, according to Tanaka, is one way of overcoming

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[319] Cf. Cook, G., *Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1987), p. 169. Cook quotes several sources that the expression "weasel word" has been around since about 1900 in the English language to denote the ambiguous and deliberately deceptive character of advertising vocabulary. Its origin is said to be a metaphoric reference to the weasel's ability to suck out the contents of an egg without doing obvious damage to the shell (cf. ibid).

[320] Ibid.

[321] Hughes, G., *Words in Time* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 162.

[322] Cook, G., *Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1987), p. 54.

[323] Ibid.

[324] Ibid.

[325] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 125.

the distrust that the addressee holds towards the sender[326]. Tanaka noted that the "lack of trust and social co-operation between communicator and addressee creates problems for the advertiser, and it is suggested (…) that humour, more specifically punning, is one way in which the advertiser attempts to improve social relations with his audience."[327]

Many advertisers, however, hold the view that puns are not an adequate means of conveying sales messages to the recipient. Redfern reports on a survey he conducted among leading advertising agencies, and he quotes one ex-advertiser's words: "Spending money is usually a serious business…People do not buy from clowns."[328] In spite of that view that punning has become outdated in contemporary advertising language and that it rather belonged to the early days of advertising when people could still be persuaded by such simple means of ambiguous communication, I share Tanaka's observation that "puns are popular with advertisers (…), whatever advertisers may say"[329]. The assumption that advertisers tend to consider wordplay outdated but still rely heavily on using it is illustrated convincingly in Gieszinger's investigation of the history of advertising language. She produces evidence that "language play has become increasingly popular among advertisers. The number of advertisements including rhetorical figures and/or linguistic jokes has grown considerably since the eighteenth century."[330]

Tanaka also suggests that there are cultural differences in the use and popularity of puns, quoting *The Independent* from 1 July 1992: "The British like humour, especially irony and puns. But you have to change this for the Germans and Swedes."[331] This coincides with the observation that Germans tend to be very factual and business-like in their corporate communications, and that they consider any kind of emotion or even fun in business out of place. Bürli-Storz also shares the view that "a specialty of the language of British advertising is the use of humour"[332], and even advertising icon David Ogilvy points out that "British commercials tend to be less direct…funnier and more entertaining"[333] compared to their American counterparts.

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[326] Tanaka, K., *Advertising language* (London: Routledge 1994), p. 59.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Redfern, W., *Puns* (Oxford: Blackwell 1984), p. 130.
[329] Tanaka, K., *Advertising language* (London: Routledge 1994), p. 62.
[330] Gieszinger, S., *The History of advertising language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), p. 157.
[331] Anholt, S., in *The Independent* 1 July 1992.
[332] Bürli-Storz, C., *Deliberate Ambiguity in Advertising* (Bern: Francke 1980), p. 9.
[333] Ogilvy, D., *Ogilvy on Advertising* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons 1983), p. 173.

"Pun" has been defined as "the humorous use of a word to suggest different meanings, or of words of the same sound and different meanings"[334]. Polysemy (words with several related meanings), homonyms (two formally identical lexemes, which are semantically unrelated), and homophones (different words sounding the same) are the basis for punning.

An example for a pun based on homonyms is an advert of London Transport, which read:
Less bread. No jam. At first glance, this hardly makes sense, as both words seem to refer to food items. The meaning of this utterance can only be understood when the secondary level of meaning is unfolded. Considering that *bread* is not only something to eat but also a slang term for *money* and that *jam* does not only refer to a sweet food but also to cars stuck in traffic, the double meaning becomes clear: Pay less, and enjoy trouble-free transport.

Homophony is the basis for deciphering the following pun, which was used by a Saxon manufacturer of dyeing chemicals in an advert run in the UK: *We need water for living. Not for dyeing.* On a phonetic level, [daɪjɪŋ] can refer to the forms *dyeing* and *dying* at the same time. The first and obvious interpretation is *dying*, due to the close proximity and the contrast with *living* that is established by the context, since both lexemes come from the same word field. The spelling, however, creates an element of surprise, as it refers to exactly the other form than the one the reader would have inferred from the context. Only when the reader indulges deeper in the text will he find out that the company has developed a new dyeing auxiliary that uses much less water than other methods and that it therefore helps preserve life[335].

Very often, ambiguity has a clear erotic component of meaning, and advertising copies are full of sexual insinuations[336]. Covert eroticism can be conveyed by means of stereotypical expressions such as *love at first sight*, in associative product names such as *Naughties* for women's underwear or *Lip Blushers* for a new lipstick, or in ambiguous phrases and headlines, e.g. *Kidnap your wife.*[337]

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[334] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English,* 9th edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995), p. 1110.
[335] The same case of homophony, however, was used wrongly to the disadvantage of another Saxon manufacturer explaining their dyeing machine as "dying machine" by mistake (cf. Appendix III – Linguistic analysis of 24 sample brochures).
[336] Cf. the description of "snob appeal" or "sex appeal" in Packard, V., *The Hidden Persuaders* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1956).
[337] Gläser, R., "Sprache und Pragmatik der englisch-amerikanischen kommerziellen Werbung", in: *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 18 (1970), pp. 314-323.

That justly rouses the question of relevance. It is true that puns often violate the expectation of the reader to find relevant information at first sight, referring to Grice's maxims of quantity and manner[338] that should apply to all linguistic utterances. "Advertisements including linguistic jokes do not provide sufficient contextual information to disambiguate the ambiguous item at once and/or contain obscure expressions." Therefore, "recipients have to put more effort into resolving linguistic jokes, because text producers violate the maxims of quantity and manner."[339]

Tanaka explains the functioning of a pun from the Relevance Theory point of view as follows: "two or more interpretations are intentionally triggered by the speaker of a pun, but the hearer rejects the most accessible interpretations in search of a more acceptable interpretation. The speaker usually intends to communicate a single interpretation which the hearer has to recover. … Thus the essence of the pun lies in its access to multiple interpretations."[340] Only when the recipient knows both meanings can he see the humour in the pun. That is one of the reasons why using puns is so difficult with non-native speakers of the language, as their knowledge of the language might be confined to only the most obvious, the primary meaning of the word.

Another semantic means of using ambiguity in advertising language are metaphors, defined as "a non-literal level of meaning where one thing is represented as another".[341] Two ideas or objects are compared to each other, without the *tertium comparationis* being mentioned[342]. The *tertium comparationis* is the quality that the analogy is based upon, i.e. if we say *She is as fresh as an apple*, the quality of freshness is the *tertium comparationis* that justifies the comparison. If the analogy is expressed as above, i.e. if the *tertium comparationis* is mentioned explicitly, it is called a simile. In a metaphor, however, the recipient has to figure out the reason of the analogy himself – the example stated above would read as a metaphor: *She **is** an apple.*[343] In advertising, the key to interpreting the metaphor correctly is usually provided by the brand name, the headline or body copy or by the visual elements of the advert.[344]

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[338] Cf. Grice, H. P., "Logic and Conversation", in: Cole, Peter, J. L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*. Vol. 3: *Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press 1975), pp. 41-58.
[339] Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), p. 198.
[340] Tanaka, K., *Advertising language* (London: Routledge 1994), p. 62.
[341] Goddard, A., *The Language of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1998), p. 83.
[342] Cf. Leisi, E., *Praxis der englischen Semantik* (Heidelberg: Winter) 1985.
[343] Cf. Aitchison, J., *Words in the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987). p. 146.
[344] Cf. Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 125.

Aitchison holds that the incomparability of the semantic features of the two items compared in a metaphor is one of the basic preconditions for the functioning of the figure of speech. *Whiskey is wine* does therefore not make a good metaphor, since the semantic features of the two compared items are too close to each other[345]. On the other hand, a metaphor such as *her eyes are typewriters* is not a good one either, as both elements share not enough common semantic features[346]. Leech believes that in advertising language, it is the violation on the lexical and semantic level that makes metaphors an apt means to create an element of surprise and to suggest the right kind of emotive association with the product, establishing a symbolic identity between the literal and the figurative meaning.[347] This element of surprise typical of figurative language functions as an important eye-catcher and has at the same time a high memorability quality.

Apart from metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche and personification are other frequently used stylistic devices in advertising language. Synecdoches (the name of a part of something is referred to the thing as a whole) often occur as visuals in ads, such as the dashboard instruments standing for the entire vehicle in car advertisements.[348] Metonymy means referring to an item by referring to something related to it, as in "next door lives a Mercedes". Adverts frequently use metonymy where the product is associated with some person or surroundings, such as a car parked outside a fancy country club or a drink held in the hands of a beautiful woman.[349] Again, the relation between the two things to be associated with each other is often expressed by visual means[350].

As to the difference between metaphor and metonymy, Myers makes the noteworthy point that the effect of metonymy is different from that of a metaphor: "In a metonymic ad, we think of the product and its surroundings as naturally associated. Metaphors, on the other hand, are foregrounded; they only make sense if the audience sees the violation of expectation and makes the interpretative lap."[351]

When products are attributed human features, we talk about personification or anthropomorphism[352]. This technique is widely applied in advertising in order to

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[345] Cf. Aitchison, J., *Words in the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987). p. 146ff.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[348] Cf. Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 127.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Cf. chapter 11.2.
[351] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 128.
[352] Cf. Shortis, T., *The Language of ICT* (London: Routledge 2001), p. 25, who defines anthropomorphism as "attributing a human feature to anything irrational or impersonal".

dramatise products and to enhance informative texts with an entertaining element. Shortis quotes several examples from computer adverts that make heavy use of personification so as to make electronic processes easier to understand by drawing a parallelism to our existing experience. We all apply this strategy when we talk about things like "the protocol handler got confused" or "the programme is trying to do something".[353] In an advert for Dell computers, the machine was described as a willing employee, who is "impatient" and "eager to get down to work".[354]

11.1.5.2. Syntactic ambiguity

The tendency of advertising language towards syntactic ambiguity is reinforced by the tendency of using elliptical sentences. In English, this is aggravated by the fact that many words can be converted into a different word-class by simple zero-derivation. This freedom in word-formation makes multiple interpretations possible and leaves room for multiple meanings. Leech observes that this kind of "disjunctive language", as he calls it, i.e. language lacking coherence and giving only little clue about the exact grammatical functions of certain words, contributes greatly to the effect of vagueness which makes it hard to decide whether the respective statement is true or false.[355]

11.1.5.3. Ambiguity of reference

This ambiguity of reference is further enhanced by the frequent use of adjectives with a highly subjective and evaluative meaning such as *good, wonderful, excellent, great* as well as unqualified comparatives lacking a referent such as *whiter teeth*. There is no answer (and often not even the question on the side of the recipient) what these comparatives refer to, i.e. *whiter than what*? Grammatically, comparative forms always require two referents, but advertising language often confines itself to omitting the vital piece of information. Since communication always happens on two sides, however, it has to be noted that most recipients fail to fulfil their responsibility to demand relevant utterances by accepting such vague statements unquestioned. Apart from unqualified comparatives, superlatives are another linguistic form that requires no particular reference and that features frequently in advertising language. "Weasels multiply in the unclaimed area between 'true' and 'false'. Often they take the form of 'open comparatives' or 'bogus superlatives'".[356]

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[353] Ibid.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966).
[356] Hughes, G., *Words in Time* (London: Blackwell 1987), p. 169.

Words with a universal meaning also contribute to ambiguity of reference. A claim running *For men* includes every single man in the world. It is characteristic of advertising language to use general terms instead of lexical items with a specific meaning. Hyperonyms are preferred to hyponyms[357]. The same holds true for determiners such as *all*, *every* (according to Leech the most common determiners in advertising language next to articles), *always*, *everyone*, *no*, *never* or *nobody*[358].

Opposed to ambiguous reference, there is the tendency in advertising language to establish a uniqueness of the product[359]. One of the most frequently applied means of expressing uniqueness is the use of the definite article as a form of absolute deixis. The statement *The correct shaped toothbrush* implies that there is only one correct shaped toothbrush. On a lexical-grammatical level, uniqueness is often expressed by the word *only* and by superlatives, which are unique by definition[360].

11.1.6. A pragmatic approach to the language of advertising

From the perspective of speech act theory[361], advertising can be considered a highly suggestive indirect speech act. As a matter of fact, all advertising messages function as acts of persuasion. On the surface, however, advertising messages are presented as acts of presentation, acts of recommendation or acts of expression[362]: "Die immanente Pragmatik des Textes, durch die Stimulierung der Verbraucherbedürfnisse den gewünschten Markt zu schaffen, wird durch ein reichhaltiges rhetorisches Instrumentarium (…) wirkungsvoll unterstützt."[363] Insinuative and ambiguous headlines, original and creative product names and neologisms, associative adjectives, semantically positive expressions as well as the unorthodox use of grammar, punctuation, orthography, vocabulary and stylistic devices contribute to an emotionalisation of advertising language and help conceal its true intention of urging people to buy.

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[357] Cf. Leisi, E., *Praxis der englischen Semantik* (Heidelberg: Winter 1985).

[358] It has to be noted, however, that negative forms are only half as frequent in advertising language as their positive counterparts (cf. Leech, G., *English in Advertising* (London: Longman 1966) as to ensure an overall positive perspective of the advertising message.

[359] Cf. chapter 10.2. on USP.

[360] Superlatives are often considered a grammatical category frequently used in advertising. However, Gieszinger points out that the number of superlative forms used in adverts has dropped considerably since about 1937, and she concludes: "Absolute praise of products, which is also the most conspicuous form of praise, has become less frequent in modern advertising texts." Cf. Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), p. 154.

[361] Cf. Searle, J. R., *Ausdruck und Bedeutung. Untersuchungen zur Sprechakttheorie*, 2nd edn. (Frankfurt / Main: Suhrkamp 1990).

[362] Cf. Flader, D., "Pragmatische Aspekte von Werbeslogans", in: Wunderlich, D., *Linguistische Pragmatik* (Athenäum), p. 341-376.

[363] Gläser, R., "Sprache und Pragmatik der englisch-amerikanischen kommerziellen Werbung", in: *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 18 (1970), pp. 314-323.

Generally speaking, the sentence types of commands, questions and exclamations feature most frequently in advertising language.[364] It has to be noted, however, that the formal sentence types do not necessarily reflect the true intention and meaning of the utterance. An exclamation such as *What a wonderful cake!* can at the same time be interpreted as a question (*Can I have a piece of it?*) or as a command (*Please give me a piece of it!*). Even ironic interpretations are feasible. This tendency of advertising language to conceal its true intention by applying indirect speech acts is further enhanced by the use of ellipses and abbreviated grammar which often make it impossible to exactly define the type of utterance. Basically, however, it can be said that the generic type of utterance in advertising is the command, because, after all, "all ads are urging us to some action."[365]

11.1.7. An illustrative linguistic analysis of headlines

Headlines are the most important linguistic element of advertising literature, and they exemplify the typical features of advertising language in an almost ideal way. Therefore, they will serve as the basis for a more meticulous analysis of the linguistic properties of advertising texts in this chapter in order to provide further evidence for the stylistic peculiarities of advertising language.

Whereas the picture catches attention, it is the job of the headline to create *interest.* The headline is the first thing about an advert or catalogue page that is read, and after reading the headline the consumer decides whether or not he will turn the page. Linguistically, headlines are metalinguistic signs which refer the reader to the linguistic signs of a text by providing a summary of the following text or at least mentioning one aspect of the text that is to follow.[366] "Inquiry returns show that the headline is 50 to 75 percent of the advertisement"[367]. Thus, the few words of the headline decide over failure or success of an advert. In fact, Caples quotes an example of an ad that sold 19 ½ times as many goods as another – the difference was only in the headline.[368]

To John Caples, one of the icons of American advertising business, the headline was everything. He says: "What do people see of advertising? Headlines! What do

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[364] Cf. Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 47ff.
[365] Ibid, p. 47.
[366] Cf. Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), p. 53.
[367] Caples, J., *Tested Advertising Methods* (Englewood: Prentice Hall 1994), p. 13.
[368] Ibid, p. xiii.

you yourself see when glancing through a newspaper or magazine? Headlines! What decides whether or not you stop a moment and look at an advertisement, or even read a little of it? The headline! (…) What good is all the painstaking work on copy if the headline isn't right? If the headline doesn't stop people, it might as well be written in Greek. If the headline of an advertisement is poor, the best copywriters in the world can't write copy that will sell the goods. They haven't a chance. Because if the headline is poor, the copy will not be read. And copy that is not read does not sell goods."[369]

The sample of the headline shall serve as an example to illustrate the functional, stylistic and linguistic features of text in advertisements in general. The characteristic features of headlines apply to most sub-types of advertising copy and can thus be considered typical features of advertising language.

11.1.7.1. Stylistic features of headlines

- **Conciseness:** Five to eight words are considered the ideal length for a headline. This is the number of digits we can process and remember as one chunk of information. This is also the number of words that fit into one line of bold print. We must keep in mind that in those few words, an entire idea or thought must be conveyed. Therefore, headlines are often elliptical or violate grammatical rules, or rather, there are separate rules for the grammar of headlines (see below).

- **Nominal or block style:** The demand of a nominal style[370] is the logical consequence of the headline being short. If we have only 5 to 10 words at our disposal, and we are supposed to express a valid idea with those limited resources, we need to be economical. Function words are an unnecessary burden, because they are semantically empty. The only frequently used function words are the pronouns *you* and *I*. Verbs express action, whereas nouns convey properties, ideas, content. This is what counts in a headline.

- **Direct address:** Although this guideline sounds almost trivial, it is one of the most difficult things about writing a headline. Again, it comes down to the requirement that a headline must be customer-specific. The headline has two

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[369] Ibid, p. 15.
[370] Jucker, A. H., *News interviews. A pragmalinguistic analysis* (Amsterdam: Benjamin 1986).

important tasks: It must select logical prospects for the product. Second, "it offers the prospects a solution to some problem close to their hearts"[371].

  - Active and positive approach: Both passive constructions and negations take up a longer processing time, because more complex cognitive processes are involved. In general, the recipient first perceives the positive, active, conventional meaning. In a second cognitive process, he then transforms this content into the passive or he negates it[372]. Apart from taking longer, passive constructions and negatives are more often misinterpreted – because the recipient did not take the time for the second transfer process and just perceived the active, the positive, the first-level semantic meaning of the words. From this point of view, the headline "Even deep wrinkles will be reduced" (which could be misremembered as "deep wrinkles" only) could easily be changed into "Reduces deep wrinkles", which would add to both understanding, clarity and speed of perception.

11.1.7.2. Linguistic peculiarities of headlines

°*Verbs are often left out* for the sake of shortness, resulting in a nominal and elliptic style[373]. What remains are noun clusters resembling extended compounds, such as *single-move pull'n fold mechanism* or *rat skull shape steering box cover*. In these cases, the modifying nouns often take the function of adjectives describing the head noun. In ordinary discourse, a full sentence would have been used to explain those compounds in a clearer way, such as *An innovative mechanism enables you to pull and fold the scooter with a single move*, or *The cover of the steering box is shaped like a rat skull*. Often, the sentence is kept almost intact, with only the verb being omitted, such as in *At last! A steam iron with a magic brain* (…*has been invented*), or (*Here is…*) *A small business offer just for you*". In the latter cases, the sentences are elliptic. The order of syntactic elements is regular, but the writer has left out the information that can be presupposed to be inferred by the reader either from the context, from the illustration or from his common knowledge. When inferring omitted elements, our knowledge of the text type *advertising copy* is often of great help. Since we know that adverts often present new products and inventions, we have little trouble completing the fragment *A steam iron with a magic brain* correctly by adding *has been invented at last*. Sandig confirms the frequent

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[371] Caples, J., *Tested Advertising Methods*, p. 67.
[372] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 281.
[373] Cf. Jucker, A. H., *News interviews. A pragmalinguistic analysis* (Amsterdam: Benjamin 1986).

use of this pattern in advertising and provides evidence from linguistic pragmatics: "Den Referenzakt als selbständigen Akt zu äußern ist eine Regel für Überschriften unter bestimmten Bedingungen, auch für Reklamen. (…) In dieser Form von Äußerungstypen wird mit der vollzogenen Referenz die Existenz dessen präsupponiert, worauf referiert wird. In Reklamen (…) wirkt sich deshalb diese Regelart so aus, dass der Äußerungsakt als Referenz u n d (implizite) Prädikation verstanden wird."[374]

°*Function words are omitted* frequently. Articles, auxiliaries or prepositions are very often left out. The headline concentrates on the lexical words which lend substance to the message. The reader is attributed a good enough command of the language to complete the structure himself. Moreover, such shortened syntactic structures add to the attention value of a headline, for they present something unusual. As an example, the headline *The tallest recycling story ever told* would read in a full sentence: **This is** *the tallest recycling story* **that has** *ever* **been** *told*. Determiner, main verb, relative pronoun and two auxiliaries have been omitted to keep the headline short and catchy.

°*The tenses are often used differently from normal discourse*. When verbs are used, the present tense features most prominently, and it is also frequently used to refer to future events, such as in *You can speak French by October 15* or *Why G.E. bulbs give more light this year*. This is also owing to the demand of shortness in headlines. *You will be able to speak French…* takes three more words to explain the same fact – without adding to the meaning.

°*The past tense* is mainly used in headlines with a story appeal. Examples are *How I improved my memory in one evening* or *They laughed when I sat down at the piano*.

°*The past participle* is used to express the present perfect and past perfect tenses as well as the passive voice. In such cases, the rule applies that auxiliaries are often omitted. Which auxiliary that is can be found out easily from context and grammatical structure. *A toothbrush guaranteed for 6 months* is short for the passive sentence *A toothbrush* **that is** *guaranteed for 6 months*. This form of short relative clauses is popular in colloquial language, too. The past participle in *Just published* expresses both the passive voice and the present perfect. Subject and auxiliaries

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[374] Sandig, B., *Stilistik* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 1978), p. 80.

have been omitted, the full sentence would read: ***This encyclopaedia*** [can be seen in the picture] ***has*** *just* ***been*** *published*.

°***Imperatives*** feature very prominently in advertising headlines. Those headlines pursue the "hard sell" strategy and get straight down to urging the reader to act. They function directly at the behavioural stage[375]. The range of imperatives covers the blatant request, such as *Order now…Pay after January 10* or the negative imperative *Don't buy car insurance until you have read these facts*. Some of the imperatives are rather hidden, because they could just as well pass as ellipses where subject and pronoun have been omitted, such as *Burn fat faster*, which could also be interpreted as ***You will*** *burn fat faster* (…*when you use our product*). Other imperatives are rather an advice, such as *Grow up. Not old* or *You've earned it. Now enjoy it*. De Voe points out that imperatives have also the power of addressing people directly[376], and Myers reminds us to "note that advertisers use commands, not because telling you to do something really makes you do what they say, but because it will create a personal effect, a sense of one person talking to another."[377]

°***Conditional Sentences*** are also popular with copywriters. Conditional type 1 and 2 occur quite often, such as *If they ever build an autobahn stateside, you'll be ready* (Type 1) or *If they gave awards for cash management, we'd be thanking the academy* (Type 2). These two types of conditional clauses do have a reference to reality, they express realistic conditions, which is essential to an advertising promise. This is also the reason why type 3 is extremely unlikely to appear in a headline, since a statement like *If we had invented these running shoes earlier, you wouldn't have ruined your knees* fails to promise any realistic solution to the consumer and offers no incentive to buy.

It is notable, however, that the conditional clauses used in headlines are often followed by a present form in the main clause. That means, the statement following the if-clause does
not express a possibility, but it refers to a fact or a realistic condition which can be fulfilled[378]. This gives propositions made in the main clause the flavour of being true – as a matter of fact. Whereas a *will*-form in the main clause leaves a trace of the chance of not being fulfilled, there is no doubt about the truth of a present form in

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[375] Cf. chapter 10.6.
[376] De Voe, M., *Effective Advertising Copy* (New York 1956).
[377] Myers, G., *Words in Ads* (London: Edward Arnold 1994), p. 47.
[378] Cf. Ungerer, F.; G. E.H. Meier, K. Schäfer, S. B. Lechler, *A Grammar of Present Day English* (Stuttgart: Klett 1992), p. 147.

the main clause. Promises such as *If you savour growth and security, we give an edge* or *If you want a worthy comparison, ask to see it in green* offer a solution that is realistic, tangible, and true. It's situated neither in the future nor in the past, but you can go to the shop right now and fulfil your condition.

° **Direct references** to the product, such as *this* or *these* can be very important for the success of a headline. Caples quotes the example of the two headlines (1) "Are you afraid of making mistakes in English?" and (2) "Do you make these mistakes in English?"[379] Headline (2) was tested considerably more successful than (1). The reason is the direct reference *these*, which builds a cohesive link to the body copy and thus initiates the reader to read on. The demonstrative pronouns *this* or *these* are deictic in character[380]. This means they always refer to something concrete, to something that is close in space, and this makes the ad interesting. "This arouses the reader's curiosity and self-interest. Here is free information"[381]. Thus, the appeal used in the headline should always be expressed as concretely as possible in order to show the reader that the solution to his problems is right here.

° Whether a headline should be formulated as a **question** is one of the most controversial issues among advertising professionals. David Ogilvy was one of the staunchest opponents of question-headlines. He was convinced that headlines which only make sense after reading the copy are "blind"[382]. The reader must be provided the most important information at first glance. This is in accordance with Caple's opinion that the best sales argument must be presented at the most prominent place – and that is the headline. The best appeal is wasted if it is hidden in the copy. After all, the copy is read by less than 5% of the audience.

On the other hand, a headline that poses an open question is one of the best incentives to actually read the copy. A headline such as *Can you pass this memory test?* clearly invites the reader to carry on reading and to find out more. However, this technique only works if the question contains at least one direct, naturally a cataphoric reference[383] to the copy and if the reader can infer therefrom that his question is going to be answered. *(…) this memory test* is a cataphoric reference to

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[379] Caples, J., *Tested Advertising methods* (Englewood: Prentice Hall 1994), p. 14.
[380] Downing, A., P. Locke, *A University Course in English Grammar* (New York: Phoenix 1994), p. 414.
[381] Caples, J., *Tested Advertising methods* (Englewood: Prentice Hall 1994), p. 14.
[382] Ogilvy, D., *Ogilvy über Werbung* (Düsseldorf: Econ 1984), p. 76.
[383] Cataphoric references are forward-references and provide the solution to what they refer to only later in the text. This makes them particularly suited for arousing curiosity and stimulating the reader to read on. Cf. Downing, A., P. Locke, *A University Course in English Grammar* (New York: Phoenix 1994), p. 431 and Haliday, M., R. Hasan*, Cohesion in English* (London: Longman 1979).

the copy, just as the *which* in *Which is the best battery value for your car?*. The reader knows that he will find the solution in the copy, and this stimulates him to read on. In contrast, a question such as *Wie viele Ihrer Mitarbeiter sprechen eigentlich Chinesisch?* is really blind, because even after reading the text the sense of this headline has not become clear.[384]

Rhetorical questions are also a sensible form of attracting attention. At the same time, they are a handy tool in selecting the right target group. A question such as *Haben Sie sich auch entschlossen, niemals dick zu werden?* presents a strong appeal and picks all those who might be interested in the product.

°The most frequently used **pronouns** in headlines are *you* and *I*. From this fact we can conclude that ads aim at constructing a dialogue between the sender and the reader. The form *you* addresses the reader directly, which is an essential tool for catching his attention. The more personally relevant an ad is, the more attention it will get. The use of 2nd person pronouns is one step in that direction.[385]

The first person singular pronoun *I* features very frequently in headlines of American ads. This can be directly related to the popularity of so-called testimonial ads there. Testimonials are adverts that quote a direct statement either from an expert in this field or from a satisfied customer who is a person 'like you and me'.

Another effect of using the pronouns *you* and *I* in a headline is the creation of an intimate relation between (anonymous) sender and (mass audience) recipient. The attributes *anonymous* and *mass audience* become blurred in a sentence like *Let me tell you how I reduced for creeps*. The lucky circumstance that *you* can refer both to a singular and a plural recipient in English facilitates pseudo-personal communication. It sounds as if the person in the paper was speaking just to me. This makes believe the communicative setting is personal – a situation that is much more effective for influencing people. Personal communication is much better suited to influence people than mass communication. Behind the veil of *you-and-I*, clever advertisers make language work for them.

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[384] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 280.
[385] Other means of personalisation are used particularly in direct advertising. Most salutations in direct mail letters use the real name of the addressee instead of the generic "Dear Sir or Madam". What is more, personal data can be used in the copy of the serial letter, such as "Wie die Bewohner der Schlossstrasse 40% ihrer Heizkosten sparen können" (quoted from Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 281). Deutsche Post AG now even offer a software tool for using flexible layouts that are tailormade to the needs and preferences of the receiver. (*Postplus* 4/2001, Kundenmagazin der Deutschen Post World Net)

Another interesting aspect of testimonials is their different use in different cultures. Whereas headlines such as *Why I offer you this kind of pipe for $ 5* work perfectly in America, such a statement would probably be considered plump and blatant in Germany. In general, Germans prefer the more subtle tones and between-the-lines-approach to blaring sales talk. Americans, however, are more accustomed to hard sell, which may be one reason why they are more prone to using '*I*' testimonials.

° ***Word play and ambiguity in headlines***[386]

Semantic ambiguity is one of the best eye-catchers. Here is an example from Caples[387]:

"Tired of the daily grind? Try our monthly grind." (coffee) Here, the pun is based on the ambiguity of the word *grind*: 1) daily chores, and 2) ground coffee. Moreover, there are phonetic as well as syntactic parallels between the two sentences. *Tired* alliterates with *try*, and *daily* is located on the same semantic continuum as *monthly*.

Another example is: *Grow up. Not old.* Based on the phrasal meanings of two combinations with the verb *to grow*, the two phases are linked by the ellipsis in the second phrase. The reader automatically infers the 'missing' verb, thereby linking the two clauses to one meaningful and funny unit.

In an advert for MZ motorcycles that was aimed at recruiting dealers in the US, we formulated the headline: *MZ gets you on a roll*. In the context of motorcycles, and placed underneath a picture of a victory parade of old MZ bikes, this phrase lives on its double meaning. *To get someone on a roll* means *to make someone ride a motorcycle*, which supports the idea expressed in the picture. At the same time, it means *to make someone successful*, which incorporates the strong appeal to potential dealers, which is in plain words: *If you sell MZ motorcycles, you can make good money*. Plays on the verb *to roll* were continued throughout the copy, in sentences such as *MZs are rolling out all over America* and *Enrol as a dealer now*.

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[386] Cf. chapter 11.1.5.
[387] Cf. Caples, J., *Tested Advertising Methods* (Englewood: Prentice-Hall 1994).

11.2. A semiotic analysis of visual communication in advertising

11.2.1. Functions and visual rhetoric

"Man kann bei der Werbegestaltung nichts Dümmeres tun, als sich für eine sprachliche Gestaltung zu entscheiden, wenn man ebenso gut eine bildliche hätte wählen können."[388]

Although all-text ads do exist, the picture features as the most vital element in the majority of print adverts. What is more, the importance of the picture has risen steadily within recent years. Advertising is becoming less and less argumentative[389]. Catching attention in a flash is crucial for an ad. Consequently, the percentage of adverts without body copy rose from 16% to 37% between 1960 and 1990. In other words, 37% of ads build their effect solely on the picture and the headline. Gieszinger's study reveals that in 1996, three out of four advertisements included illustrations.[390] At the same time, pictures have taken up more and more space of the total area of an ad, and the length of the body copy has decreased accordingly.[391]

Do those findings suggest that the trend clearly moves towards all-visual advertising? Will headlines and body copy have become extinct in a couple of decades? Without doubt, the increasing dominance of visual communication is owing to the information overload. It is becoming increasingly difficult for an advert to be noticed at all. That is the function of the picture – making the ad attractive, and making people look at it. Big pictures are one of the best tools for attracting attention, hence their rising significance.

Still, people have not ceased asking for information. But the channels of conveying the desired facts may have changed over the years. People have become more active, and there is a myriad of new forms of exchanging information. Thus, the

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[388] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 114.
[389] Consequently, the tendency towards shorter copy that started at the end of the 19th century (cf. Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), p. 50) has continued ever since and has led to the current state of "minimalist advertisements" presenting the reader with "a striking illustration and the barest amount of written text" (Toolan, M., "The Language of Press Advertising", in: Mohsen Ghadessy (ed.), *The Registers of Written English. Situational Factors and Linguistic Factors* (London: Francis Pinter 1988), pp. 52-64.). On the other hand, there seems to be a tendency towards "more text" and "longer copy" in the advertising of the 21st century, as was pointed out in various recent issues of *Werben & Verkaufen*, the leading German trade magazine of the advertising industry.
[390] Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), p. 253.
[391] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 288f.

function of ads is no longer as comprehensive as it used to be 40 years ago. The focus of print adverts has shifted more towards the function of attracting attention and creating an image, at the expense of providing relevant information. But this does not mean the consumer does not get informed. Rather, consumers can decide themselves what kind of information they want and how they want to learn about it.

The woman who thinks about buying a new car may be attracted by an advert she saw in a woman's magazine. Then she is likely to check the manufacturer's site on the internet, and maybe she'll fill in a form there where she can order a brochure or an information leaflet. Once she has done so, she will be continuously provided with information material by the car company, either by direct mail or by being sent a customer magazine. Maybe she has also ticked that she would like to receive the online newsletter regularly. The bottom line is that the argumentation and exchange of information still takes place – maybe even more so than 40 years ago, when corporate communications was largely restricted to print advertising. What has changed, however, are the channels of communication. The last decades have produced a great variety of different channels of reaching consumers. Communication takes place in print adverts, on TV, at events, on the internet, in the press, in customer relation magazines, and each of those channels focuses on a different function. At the end of the day, however, all the traditional stages need to be gone through: Print ads are responsible for attracting attention; customer magazines or brochures arouse interest and provide information; TV commercials create desire; and events, direct mail campaigns or the internet make people take action.

Still, the picture is the most important element of advertising literature when it comes to attracting attention. Pictures function as eye catchers, they can be easily understood and processed extremely fast[392]. A lot of information can be conveyed in the shortest possible time, even if the recipient is not paying attention. Pictures are credible, they are learnt faster and remembered better. Unlike in a text, where understanding depends on the succession of information, many bits of information can be grasped simultaneously when presented in a picture. Last but not least, pictures can have a very strong emotional effect on the onlooker. Therefore, they are suited perfectly to affect people on an emotional level, and to change or

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[392] Even when a picture is seen only for such a short time-span so that testees are unable to retell what they have seen, they were able to recall positive or negative associations with the pictures. "Die Verarbeitung der Bildinhalte hat also bereits einen gewissen Grad von semantischer Analyse erreicht, bevor die Versuchspersonen die Inhalte benennen können." (Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 289)

influence attitudes and opinions.[393] The last effect can mainly be traced back to the fact that pictures are processed in the right hemisphere of our brains, the same place that is held responsible for processing and creating emotions and affective reactions. Therefore, the processing of pictures is believed to follow less rational rules than the processing of linguistic symbols.[394]

There is a variety of different theories that try to explain the function of pictures. The traditional semiotic approach is the "Abbild-Theorie" that is based on the belief that a picture represents reality. A picture has a direct relation to an object existing in reality. For the design of advertisements this approach means that pictures should be "simple, close to reality and affirmative"[395].

An alternative approach that aims at describing the function of pictures is the theory of "visual rhetoric"[396]. According to Scott's theory, the meaning of a picture is determined by a bundle of cultural rules. Pictures do not necessarily represent reality, but they are rather subject to certain rules of visual rhetoric. As soon as a certain pattern of use has been culturally established, a picture can be used for communication following the same rules as language when it is used in rhetorical figures of speech. Felser quotes some examples of how visual rhetoric functions in advertising:

Free association: A picture can be associated with virtually any other picture. Due to the spatial proximity of the two things, we try to find links between the two items that equip the product with totally new features. When a Philip Morris cigarette floats in space just like a satellite, we immediately attribute features such as "out-of-this-world" or "light" with this product. It would have been very hard to establish those associations by means of verbal communication, especially within the fraction of a second. The functioning of this technique is based on corresponding semantic features of both items. Although on the denotative level, it would be quite hard to detect similar features between a cigarette and a satellite, the technique of free association allows us to proceed to the connotative features, and on that level, it is possible to find a link between almost any two items in the world[397].

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[393] Cf. Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 289.
[394] Ibid, p. 290.
[395] Ibid, p. 290.
[396] Scott, L.M., "Images in advertising: The need for a theory in visual rhetoric", in: *Journal of Consumer Research* 21(2), 1994, p. 252-273.
[397] Cf. Aitchison, J., *Words in the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987).

Visual Analogies: This is the frequently applied "as if" technique, in classical rhetoric this would come close to a simile. The picture suggests a relationship between the product and an item of comparison. When Ford had their new *Orion* visually accompanied by a galloping race-horse, the car was to be perceived "as if" it was a horse. All the positive features we associate with fast horses were thus transferred to the car: Speed, strength, power, good looks, luxury, and high value.

Visual Metaphors: Whereas the analogy or simile presents the "tertium comparationis" explicitly, a metaphor does not mention the item that the product is compared to. Rather, the relation between the two is so obvious that the comparison is self-explicatory. Felser quotes the example of a shining pea lying in an open seashell. In this case, the picture does not suggest that the pea resembles a pearl. In this case, the pea *is* a pearl.[398]

However, not all people associate the same things with a certain image. Whereas an S-class Mercedes is the epitome of self-fulfilment and success to many business people, the same product is a symbol of snobbery and lavish extravagance to the more down-to-earth rationalist, or it can even become a symbol of hatred to those whose situation will never allow them to even think of owning such a car.

11.2.2. Types of visualisation

Following the theory of a visual rhetoric, Werner Gaede has developed a system of categorisation that describes the different functions a picture can have within an advertising context.[399]

1) Analogy: The picture visualises a similar situation to the one described in the text.

> *Example: "Car drivers give each other a lift". The picture shows a kangaroo giving the "passengers" in his pouch a lift.*

2) Evidence: The picture presents a piece of evidence or a strong sales argument for the

proposition made in the text.

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[398] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 292.
[399] Gaede, W., *Vom Wort zum Bild. Kreativ-Methoden der Visualisierung* (München: Wirtschaftsverlag Langen-Müller, KNO 1992), p. 29ff.

Example: "You won't rupture yourself when you lift our typewriter". In the picture, a little girl is effortlessly holding the typewriter in one hand.

3) Associative Links: The picture activates existing associations, which can be presumed to exist in the target group's knowledge.

Example: "Wilhelm Tell". The picture shows an apple with a target.

4) Pars pro toto: The picture portrays a part of the whole.

Example: "Holland" is symbolised by a windmill.

5) Cause and Effect: The picture shows the effect of what is said in the text.

Example: "Tax Liabilities". The picture shows a man behind prison bars.

6) Repetition: The picture repeats the proposition of the text.

Example: "The deodorant for the whole body". The picture shows how the deodorant can be used all over the body.

7) Exaggeration: The picture exaggerates the proposition made in the text.

Example: "A dirty life". In the picture, we can see an environment that is so dirty that it is impossible to live there.

8) Addition: The picture adds a new dimension to the idea of the text.

Example: "You can use Cream 21 not only for your face". The picture shows the backside of a beautiful woman.

9) Continuation: The picture continues or completes the proposition made by the text.

Example: "What people think about the situation of German industry…". In the picture, we see a man almost drowning.

10) Connection: The text and the picture present two things that are supposed to be connected within the same context. Attributes of one thing shall be transferred to the other.

Example: "The Citroen SM is a luxurious car". In the picture, the car is presented in   a wealthy context by placing it in front of luxurious manor house.

11) Estrangement: The expectation arising from the text is contradicted in the picture. The effect is an element of surprise.

Example: "The silent majority". The picture shows a veterans' cemetery.

12) Symbolisation: The picture summarises the idea of the text in symbols that are well- established in the target culture.

Example: "Love" is symbolised by flying hearts.[400]

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[400] Examples adapted from Felser, G., *Werbe-und Konsumentenpsychologie*, p. 294f. Gieszinger divides the different functions of pictures used in advertising into the following categories: product description and presentation, pictures as arguments, visual proof of what is stated in the text, a causal relation between text and picture and the alienation effect leading to a higher level of attention

From these examples, it becomes obvious that visual rhetoric works on the same basis as verbal rhetoric. The only difference is that what can be done with words can be done with pictures much quicker. In verbal rhetoric, the situation must be described in words, which takes up much more time for reception on the one hand, and for decoding on the other. A picture, however, can convey a whole scenario within the fraction of a second.

This is particularly true of pictures that make use of so called schemes or frames. In psychology, these two terms describe situations that we are confronted with so frequently that we have patterns of interpretation ready at all times. We already have a set of affective associations that are activated as soon as we perceive a schematic image.

Out of the 12 methods of visualisation mentioned above, the ones that are supposed to work best are those that convey the same message as the text. The message reaches its goal quickest when it is dually encoded, i.e. if the references made by the message are represented in our brains both as a linguistic and as a visual sign.[401] This is particularly true for concrete meanings, such as *tree*, *car* or *woman*. In accordance with de Saussure's model of the linguistic sign[402], there exists a direct link from the linguistic sign to a mental image of the object, which is a more or less realistic representation of the 'real' thing. Whereas the linguistic sign is stored in the left brain, the visual image is located in the right brain. Both brains are thus activated when we encounter a dually encoded term, which leads to better memorisation and quicker processing of the message.[403]

An interesting finding from a linguistic point of view was that the effect of visual encoding can not only be achieved by means of pictures, but equally well by metaphoric language. When the verbal signs create a context that is full of visual images, the effect on processing and memorisation is the same as if the recipient is presented with a picture.[404]

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due to an element of surprise. Cf. Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001), pp. 270-282.

[401] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997)*,* p. 112.

[402] Cf. Saussure, F. de, *Course in general linguistics* (Paris: Payot 1990).

[403] Abstract terms, such as "love" or "hope" can at best be represented by a visual symbol or by a schematic image. However, there is no direct link between the linguistic sign and its visual representation. Rather, the linguistic sign is then linked to the mental concept we connect with that term.

[404] Unnava, H.R.; R.E. Burnkrant, "An imagery-processing view of the role of pictures in print advertisements", in: *Journal of Marketing Research* 28 (2), p. 226-231.

"Der Vorteil der dualen Codierung ist aber nicht auf ein bestimmtes Bild angewiesen, solange nur der Inhalt, der abgespeichert werden soll, bildhaft ist.(…) Bei stark bildhafter Werbesprache konnte eine passende Abbildung gar keine weitere Steigerung der Erinnerungsleistung bewirken."[405]

11.2.3. Other visual elements
11.2.3.1. Corporate design

Apart from pictures, an advert is rich in other visual elements that contribute considerably to its effect on the recipient. Form takes effect before content. Colours, font type and font size are therefore of vital importance to the success of an ad. However, those elements are not only used in advertisements. In order to successfully convey the image of a company, visual elements generally play a crucial role. Each company that aims at communicating a clear message to the market must strive for a very clear and convincing corporate design, which forms a part of corporate identity.

"Eine Organisation (kann) durch die Einführung und das Festhalten an einem groß angelegten Corporate Identity Programm ihre Struktur und Strategie verdeutlichen und ihre Vision artikulieren. Die Organisation tut dies, um sich von der Konkurrenz zu unterscheiden, um Marktanteile zu gewinnen und um die neu eingeschlagene Richtung zu unterstreichen. (…) In solch einer Konstellation umfasst Corporate Identity ein komplexes Netz von Managementaufgaben, wie zum Beispiel Unternehmensverhalten, Marketing, Kommunikation, Forschung und fast immer auch Design (…). In diesem Zusammenhang steht das Design freilich nicht unbedingt im Mittelpunkt, aber es bildet das maßgebliche Mittel zur Präsentation der (…) Positionierung. Aus diesem Grunde ist es eines der wichtigsten Instrumente der Spezialisten für Corporate Identity."[406]

Corporate identity begins with the attitude of every single employee towards the company, it pervades management styles and marketing strategies. And it has its effect in the attitude of customers towards the products and services of the organisation. The communication of that vital tool for success is based on symbols,

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[405] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997)*, p.112.
[406] Olins, W., "Corporate Identity und Design", in: Morgan, Conway Lloyd (ed.), *Corporate Identity Weltweit* (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag 1995), p. 8.

logos, style and colours – i.e. the corporate design presents the positioning of a company to the outside world.

11.2.3.2. Colours

Colours can direct attention.[407] What is more, colours affect emotions. "Bunte Bilder wirken sympathisch."[408] In addition, colours facilitate the quick identification of an object. We all share the common knowledge that margarine is yellow. Consequently, margarine ads or commercials are often bathed in yellowish hues.[409] Adverts for light cigarette mostly feature "light" colours.

Most colours are associated with specific emotional values[410]. As the result of extensive psychological research, the following attributes have been accredited to the colours blue, green, orange, red, yellow, black and white:

blue: soothing, confidence-building, reliable, trustworthy, educated, sophisticated
green: forgiving, traditional, positive, compassionate, eternal, health
orange: creative, full of energy, motivating, energizing, vigorous, exciting, refreshing
red: power, wealth, success, heat, danger, ambition, energy, courage, love
yellow: draws attention fastest, easy-going, sunny, joy of life, activity, faith, wisdom, glory, but also jealousy, treachery, cowardice, illness
black: formality, business setting, darkness, mystery, danger, evil, sin, death
white: purity, chastity, simplicity, calmness, inner peace[411]

Red, orange and yellow attract attention, whereas green, blue and purple allure to the senses. Red is commonly associated with warmth and energy, yellow is known for its brightness, and blue is perceived to be cool.

Interestingly, these findings were even confirmed in a cross-cultural study.[412] This suggests that some aspects of colours seem to be culture-specific, such as the

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[407] A colourful section of a page is always looked at before the black-and-white part. Coloured ads are believed to be twice as successful as black-and-white ones, cf: Ogilvy, D., *Ogilvy über Werbung* (Düsseldorf: Econ 1984).
[408] Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 283.
[409] It is interesting to note that although most ads appear in full colour, most of them are not actually "colourful" in the sense of using the full scale from red over yellow and green to blue tones. Rather, most ads are dominated by a certain shade, which is in relation to the product advertised.
[410] Küthe, E., F. Küthe, *Marketing mit Farben* (Wiesbaden: Gabler 2003).
[411] Davis, E., B. Phillips, T. Toebben, "Communicating with Color", unpublished presentation at the ABC European Convention *Business Communication. Europe and Globalisation.* Dresden 24-26 May 2001. Also cf. Lakoff, G., *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things. What categories reveal about the mind* 5th edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1991).

common piece of knowledge that white expresses mourning in many Asian countries, or the fact that the Japanese seem to prefer "sweet", pastel colours even in business communication. Other aspects of our perception of colours, however, seem to be universal. Red seems to be associated with danger and with love in every culture around the globe.

This may be explained with George Lakoff's theory of experiental realism. In his book "Women, Fire and Dangerous Things", Lakoff researched into the associations we have with elementary things in life, such as love, fire or danger. He found out that our perception seems to be determined by experience – by our own experience, but also by the common experience shared by all humans that was transferred to us from our ancestors. When we see fire, we perceive its red colour. When we then experience that fire is hot and therefore dangerous, we associate the red colour with other things that are dangerous or hot - such as a woman. The biological reason for that is that our body releases the same chemical substances in similar situations. When we are in love, the level of adrenalin in our blood rises, just as it does when we are in danger or when we see fire. Those substances affect perception and communication. When we feel we have the same experience, we use the same words to express our feelings – a very convincing explanation of the function of metaphors, visual and verbal ones alike. When a man sees a beautiful woman, adrenalin is released in his blood. This "reminds" him of his personal or culturally transmitted experience of fire, causing him to flash up a "red" context and to describe his perception with the word "hot".[413] This approach is propped by prototype theory, which also uses categories for the explanation of metaphors[414].

Lakoff and Johnson describe this effect as follows: "It's not just a device of the poetic imagination but an everyday practice, which shapes how we think…The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get round the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience and what we do is very much a matter of metaphor."[415]

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[412] Cf. Felser, G., *Werbe- und Konsumentenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 1997), p. 285.
[413] Lakoff, G., *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things. What categories reveal about the mind.* 5th edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1991).
[414] Cf. Aitchison, J., *Words in the Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell 1987).
[415] Cf. Lakoff, G., M. Johnson, *Metaphors we live by* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1981).

This strategy of creating atmospheres and appealing to archetypal emotions by the use of words and by the use of colours is one of the key techniques in advertising. Advertisers are very well aware of the power of colour. Colour is one of the strongest pillars of corporate identity. The right colour can transport the image of the company and its mission statement quickest and most convincingly. This is particularly true for small and medium-sized companies, which cannot afford extensive campaigns. They have to rely on a small range of powerful marketing tools that convey a clear and strong message. Logos, business cards, letter heads, the interior design of the company building or the company cars – all those factors can communicate the image and the positioning of the company.

11.2.3.3. Fonts

Apart from the picture, another important visual element in an ad is the text. Not only does the text convey factual information, but it also functions as a design element. The appearance of the text can draw our attention to certain passages, and it can support or contradict its content by creating a certain emotional atmosphere. Font size and font type are the two major dimensions that contribute to our visual perception of the text.

Font types evoke emotions. However, psychology has not found sufficient evidence yet to explain this phenomenon. Probably, our perception of a certain font-type as "old fashioned" or "70s-style" is determined by our cultural experience. Each period or "creative age" favours a certain type of font. The more often we see a certain font type in connection with a certain topic, product or time, the more readily we will associate that font type with that item. Although this culture-determined approach may serve as one explanation of the emotional effect of font types, there seem to be deeper principles of perception. Similar to the onomatopoetic quality of sounds, which are in fact more arbitrary than they appear, there exist certain rules that determine our perception. Paralinguistic features such as the selected font type can thus exert a vast impact on the effect of an advert[416].

In addition, the text as a whole can function as a graphic element as well. In some perfume ads, the body copy is set in the shape of a flacon of perfume, and an advert

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[416] Cf. Cook, G., *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992) and Gieszinger, S., *The History of Advertising Language* (Frankfurt / Main: Lang 2001).

for France took the shape of a map.[417] Although such gimmicks may work to catch attention, they usually fail as soon as the potential reader really tries reading the text. Such exotic settings violate our reading habits so much that most readers will soon give up.

In the next chapter, the general linguistic and semiotic features of advertising texts described in chapter 11 will be put to the test and serve as a basis for a qualitative analysis of 24 sample brochures issued by Saxon SMEs.

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[417] Cf. Cook, G., *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge 1992) and Ogilvy, David, *Ogilvy über Werbung* (Düsseldorf, Wien: Econ 1984).

12. A Linguistic Analysis of International Sales Literature in Saxon SMEs

12.1. Evaluation of samples

One of the objectives of this paper is to assess the current state of the art of international advertising in Saxon SMEs and to compare it with the typical features of advertising language which have developed as a consequence of the functional stylistic requirements of this text type. The typical features of advertising language described in chapter 11 will provide the stylistic standard against which the publications by Saxon SMEs will be measured in the sense of functional stylistics, although the intention is not to *pre*scribe the style in a normative sense, but rather to provide suggestions on which areas need improving and what Saxon companies could do in order to comply with established linguistic standards that are proven to be best suited to meet the objectives of advertising material.

It has to be noted, however, that the linguistic features of advertising language described in chapter 11 are mainly based on the analysis of print adverts. Generally, linguistic research in the field of advertising largely concentrates on print adverts and/or TV spots. Corporate literature, such as catalogues, brochures etc., have been analysed only in a handful of studies, such as Koskensalo's work on the cultural differences between Finish and German sales brochures[418].

Therefore, I need to point out that some of the prototypical features of print adverts show certain variations when applying them for the analysis of corporate sales literature such as brochures, which can mainly be brought down to a difference in function. Whereas print adverts focus on attracting attention, a brochure strives to convey information. This objective justifies the use of more complex syntactic structures and more specific vocabulary, as sometimes intricate processes need to be explained. Since the communication in the brochures analysed in this sample is mainly directed at the B2B market, a somewhat more formal approach also makes sense. These differences have to be borne in mind when evaluating the findings from the following linguistic analysis of sales brochures. Thus, some deviations from the *norm* as described in chapter 11 need not necessarily reflect a stylistic imperfection of the author of these texts with regard to his or her text type

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[418] Cf. Koskensalo, A., *Finnische und deutsche Prospektwerbung: linguistische Analysen kulturspezifischer Marketingkommunikation* (Tostedt: Attikon-Verlag 2000).

competence, but can often be justified with regard to the different requirements of the text type "brochure".

However, the basic requirements of an advertising text – to be attractive, readable, memorable and convincing – also apply to the communicative form of a brochure. Therefore, in spite of some justified deviations from the general features of advertising language specifically defined for print adverts, the basic requirements such as presenting information from the customer's perspective, a coherent and creative structure, sticking to conventions and a comprehensible way of presentation can be assumed to be fundamental requirements of brochures as well.

The following analysis of the *communication form* brochure therefore refers to the general features of the *text type* of advertising copy outlined in chapter 11, reckoning with the functionally determined deviations for that particular text type as opposed to print adverts. The stylistic focus of this analysis is on the *functional level*, i.e. rather than attempting a comprehensive description of the features of sales brochures in general, I will analyse what kind of language SMEs use to inform their customers and prospects about their products and services in their sales brochures[419].

For this purpose, the companies participating in this survey were requested to provide samples of their current advertising materials targeted at their foreign markets. This request was followed by 24 companies[420], and the sales collaterals they provided were analysed against a set of communicative criteria, represented in 13 different dimensions.

Based on the linguistic theory of advertising language, its purpose, functions and special features as described in chapter 11, the material was evaluated against the following criteria[421]:

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[419] The reason why brochures were chosen as the medium for this analysis is that they are the most important kind of publication of Saxon SMEs (cf. chapter 7.2.). 88.2% of the companies claim that brochures are an important means of communication for them.

[420] Owing to the relatively small number of samples analysed in this chapter, it has to be pointed out that this analysis is not based on a quantitative, empirical approach such as the investigation in part 1 of this thesis, but rather represents an exemplary description of features of sales brochures, which might serve as a basis for a more comprehensive analysis later on.

[421] The lighter coloured arrows of the dimensions represent the desired state, i.e. the characteristics typical of the language of advertising.

Perspective

Information can be presented from various points of view, and the same message can fulfil different functions. It can inform the readers, appeal to their emotions, underline the relationship between sender and recipient or initiate the reader to take a certain kind of action. In this step of the analysis, the perspective of presentation was scrutinized, investigating whether the entire concept of the brochure was rather product and service oriented versus the much acclaimed customer orientation, the first dimension thus being product orientation vs. customer orientation.

Dimension 1:

Customer orientation   vs.   Product orientation
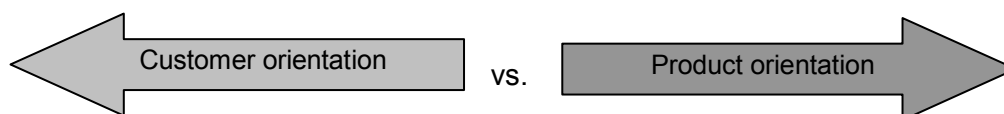
Use of Pronouns

The frequency with which certain pronouns are used results in a different perspective on a similar matter as described in dimension 1. In consumer advertising, which usually takes a heavy focus on customer benefits, *YOU* is undoubtedly the dominating pronoun, describing the product from the perspective of the user. However, other referents are widely used in corporate advertising as well, such as the *we*-perspective or the impersonal reference to the company and the customer in the third person perspective. All forms of reference are related to a certain perspective of presentation. It is self-evident that a presentation from a *we*-perspective naturally puts the company, its history and the pride it takes in its products and accomplishments in the foreground, but at the same time provides room for expressive or even emotional utterances, whereas references to a third person always leave a rather impersonal note.

Dimension 2:

Customer orientation (*you*)   vs.   Self-orientation (*we*)

Dimension 3:

Personal   vs.   Impersonal approach
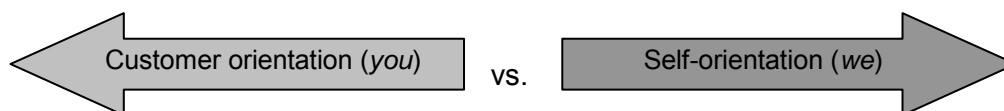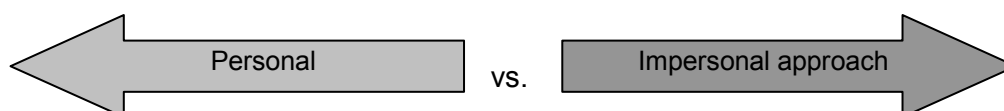
Structure: Title, Headlines, Subheads, Captions and Slogan

These five elements are the backbones of a professional advertising concept of the sales collaterals from the copywriter's point of view. They add the required jot of creative genius to the publication, providing scope for wordplay, linguistic creativity and a consistent style, differentiating it from purely factual texts such as reports or contracts and at the same time enabling a clear, consistent and logical structure of the brochure. A professional brochure typically has an emotional or appellative title, a consistent headline concept adhering to a certain linguistic pattern, and is structured by subheads. Pictures are explained by captions, and there should be an omnipresent slogan differentiating the company from its competitors and conveying a clear USP, ideally with an emotional appeal.

Dimension 4:

Creative structure vs. Factual structure
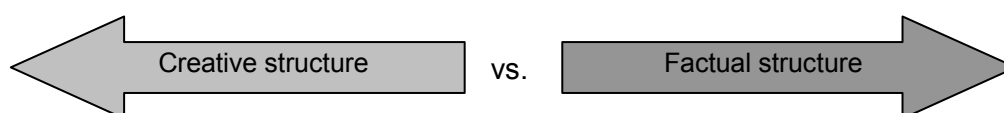
Creativity: Use of Stylistic Devices

The use of stylistic devices such as metaphor, alliteration, rhythm, rhyme, puns, assonance, parallelism, repetition and many more is the added value of advertising language, differentiating advertising from more straightforward text types and adding an emotional, appellative or even poetic appeal to advertising texts.

Dimension 5:

Use of stylistic devices vs. Straightforward tone
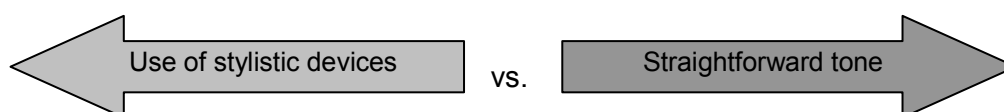
Syntax

A simple syntactic structure is one of the key features of the advertising text type. The idea is to present one message per sentence so that it can be grasped even if it is perceived with a reduced level of attention. Characteristic features of complex syntactic structures such as nominal style, passive constructions or inversion are generally out of place in advertising texts. Moreover, advertising language incorporates many features of spoken language, resulting in so-called block

language, i.e. ellipses or clusters of lexical words omitting functional syntactic elements.

Dimension 6:

| Simple syntax | vs. | Complex structures |
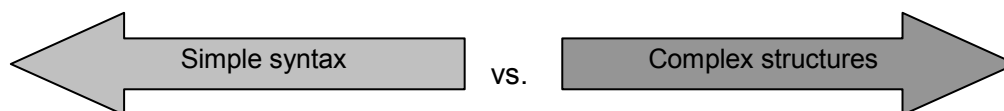
Register

As mentioned above, advertising language incorporates many features of spoken language. The syntactic structure is characterised by omissions and ellipses, active forms and simple sentences.[422] The vocabulary is largely basic, informal and only sometimes enhanced by specialist terms, which mostly have the function of adding an expert touch.

Advertising language is informal by nature, because it intends to grab people's attention in their immediate private environment. A fairly obvious sign of informal style is the use of contractions such as "don't". It is important to keep conformity of style, i.e. not to mix informal features with formal elements.

Dimension 7:

| Informal | vs. | Formal |
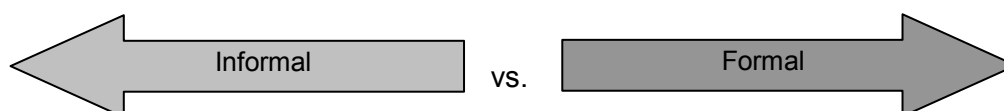
Spelling / Grammar

It should go without saying that professional sales material should be flawless. Typos, wrong spellings or grammatical mistakes are completely out of place in any text that goes into print. This requirement is aggravated, however, when it comes to a publication in a foreign language, which is often not understood by the people in charge of the publication or the typesetters actually implementing it. What is required here is a well-functioning and flawless cooperation between the company, the advertising agency and the translator, who should ideally be a native speaker. At least, the text should be proofread by a native speaker of the respective language before it goes to print in order to avoid awkward mistakes that might ridicule all the noble intentions of the publication.

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[422] Cf. Sowinski, B., *Deutsche Stilistik* (Frankfurt / Main: Fischer 1991), p. 77f.

Dimension 8:

| Correct spelling | vs. | Spelling mistakes / typos |

Dimension 9:

| Correct grammar | vs. | Incorrect grammar |
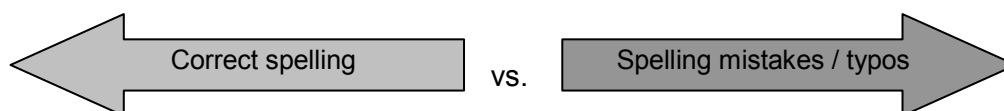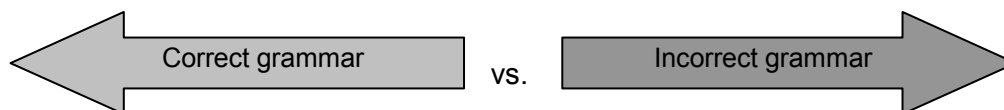
Cultural Interference: Conventions

When producing a publication in a foreign language for an international market, there are always certain conventions that need to be taken into account, and there is the danger of linguistic interference when adapting the material to the foreign market. On the side of conventions, matters like the country code in the telephone numbers were analysed, or the separation of decimals and thousand which is exactly the other way around in German-speaking and Anglophone cultures. Another convention that was taken into account was the choice of the variety of English, in most cases British or American English and the consistent use of the respective conventions and features.

Dimension 10:

| Adherence to conventions | vs. | Violation of conventions |
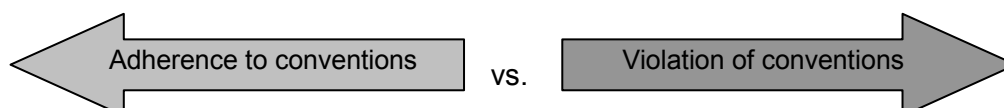
Linguistic Interference

Linguistic interference is most obvious and dangerous in the fields of vocabulary and syntax. On the vocabulary side, there are the so-called "false friends", i.e. words existing in German which either seem to be English but do not exist in English at all (e.g. "hometrainer" or "bar keeper"), or English-sounding or English-looking words which have a totally or slightly different meaning in English, such as "handy" or "chef"[423]. These words are major pitfalls for translation, but it can be assumed that every professional translator who provides quality translations is aware of those interferences on the comparative level. If such words occur in an official publication

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[423] Cf. Parks, G., *German English False Friends* (Southampton: Englang Books 1993), 3 vols.

they are an inevitable sign of a low-quality translation and no correction by a native speaker.

Dimension 11:

True English vocabulary vs. Lexical interference
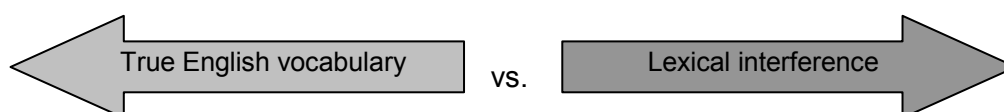
Linguistic interference can also occur on the syntactic level. One of the most frequent mistakes made by speakers of German is the attributive use of information that should have been a relative clause in English.

Dimension 12:

Proper English syntax vs. Syntactic interference
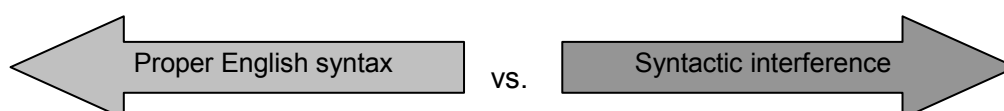
Visual Appearance, Use of Photos, Layout / Scannability

The visual presentation of the information was taken into account as well, because it forms part of the paralinguistic features by providing the visual context for the information. High-quality paper, an expensive finish, an unusual shape and a professional design greatly contribute to the way a message is perceived and interpreted by the recipient. Another factor considered in the analysis was the adherence to the corporate design, i.e. the predominance of specific corporate colours or a clear design concept. The quality of the images is another important indicator of how professionally a publication is made. The choice of images provides valuable hints on the perspective and the focus of the brochure, i.e. if the products are in the centre of attention as opposed to the people actually using these products. Last but not least, scannability was used as another criterion for assessing the quality of the brochures. A scannable layout is the basic prerequisite for a brochure to be actually read. Scannability is enhanced by structural elements such as headlines, subheads, images, captions, tables, charts and the use of keywords, all of which should ideally be arranged in a consistent pattern and layout.

Dimension 13:

Professional design vs. Unprofessional appearance
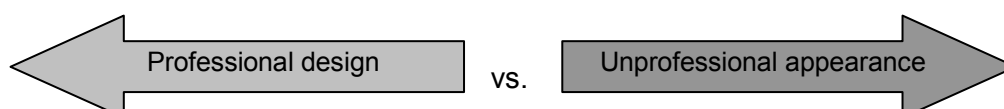
12.2. Qualitative sample analysis

Twenty-four brochures, which had been supplied by the companies participating in this survey, were analysed against the set of criteria described above. The objective was a stylistic evaluation based on the standard features of advertising language in order to reveal discrepancies between the linguistic 'norm' which is expected by the recipient of a promotional text and the actual state of the art in the sales materials issued by Saxon SMEs.

The analysis revealed that basically, there were four different levels of quality – supposing the highest level of quality is determined by those texts that adhered most closely to the 'standard' features of advertising language, e.g. establishing a (pseudo-) personal relationship with the recipient, conveying the message in a positive tone, presenting and structuring information in an easily digestible way, adding a humorous note or elements of surprise, exploring ambiguities to create several levels of meaning and reference, employing repetition and other memorability enhancers or establishing a close semiotic relationship between text and pictures in order to reinforce the message.

Another crucial point in this analysis was the issue of linguistic correctness. After all, the investigation dealt with marketing material developed for a *foreign* market in a *foreign* language, so particular attention had to be paid to whether the rules of the target language were adhered to or if there were mistakes with regard to spelling, grammar or lexical and syntactic interference[424].

The following four extracts of the qualitative analysis[425] exemplify the four different quality levels that appeared from the analysis. In order to cover the entire range of semiotics, including the interplay of text and images, the qualitative analyses are completed with images from the respective brochures, illustrating appeal, style and approach.

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[424] All these features are relevant for any form of communication within the broader text type of advertising copy. Thus, although the development of the 13 dimensions was based on the linguistic features of print adverts, these requirements just as well apply to the language used in corporate sales brochures.

[425] The complete analysis of all 24 brochures can be found in the Appendix. I would like to stress one more time that this analysis is exemplary rather than empirical, and that the number of positive or negative variations does not represent an exact quantitative analysis, but rather attempts to give an overview of the linguistic quality of corporate sales literature in Saxon SMEs.

Level 1 is characterised by a semiotic unity of text and pictures and full adherence to the requirements of advertising style.

Example 1: Quality Level 1

Sample No.	1
Industry	life sciences, pharmacy
Perspective	information presented in appellative style, backed with emotional stories and slices of life, customers experiencing the benefits of the products; very good mix of perspectives
Use of pronouns	WE: "We are at home all over the world"; 3rd person sing.: "XX GmbH has a good pedigree - and this is perceptible in many respects."; YOU: "Your vision will supply us with new challenges."; different perspectives mixed freely, sometimes within the same sentence, often within the same page. Still, the overall impression is that of a customer-oriented approach.
Title	purely informative "XX GmbH. Pharmaceuticals, fine chemicals, renewable resources"
Headline concept	yes, emotional headline concept, statements of general truth: "It is good not to be alone.", "What really counts in life is a reliable partner."
Subheads	yes, emotional and focussing on customer benefits: "It is getting easier to lead a healthy life" or "Competitiveness results from flexible thinking and pinpoint action", others are purely factual introductory statements: "Substances with a potential" or "Innovation: Biodiesel"
Captions	no, but images rather serve to create impressions than actually refer to something concrete, very emotional images of people using the products mixed with informative images presenting the production process; images are mostly sufficiently explained by headlines and subheads
Slogan	no
Syntax	some ellipses: "Otherwise the best idea is worth nothing.", sentences starting with additive conjunctions: "And if someone else has a good idea, we do not hesitate to purchase it and combine it with ours." or "Or for processing natural resources."; general syntactic structure: short

	sentences with one clear message; some keywords for easy grasp of contents
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	factual, formal, some idioms and phrasal verbs: "In spite of its difficult handling, chlorine is indispensable for economically and ecologically viable production processes."
Spelling/grammar	no mistakes
Conventions	well adapted
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	no
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	yes, but moderately used and well-explained to ensure broader understanding
Syntactic interference	none
Visual appearance	high-quality images, professional layout, premium paper, folder with flap, consistent layout
Use of photos	high quality images with an emotional appeal
Layout / scannability	very good, combination of images, headlines, structured by subheads, some highlighted keywords to enhance scannability, use of charts and bars
Overall impression	very good, attractive mix of information presented in an emotional style appealing to customer **rating: very good**

On level 2, the brochures created a professional impression with regard to appeal and appearance, but at closer scrutiny revealed several flaws or shortcomings either in terms of customer orientation or linguistic quality. Some samples in this category had too many linguistic mistakes or incidents of linguistic interference, others were characterised by an uneven or inconsistent style.

Example 2: Quality level 2

Sample No.	17
Industry	foundry
Perspective	information presented in an appellative style, backed by emotional claims and

Use of pronouns	3rd person predominates (the company and the customers): "XX has always wheathered the ups and downs of history, because the company has always striven for the better and always has had the power to change.", "The product is determined by the customer's individual use. The customer does not have to adhere to standards but has the freedom to determine his product.", few WE references: "We always offer our customers the freedom of turning to new paths."; no YOU references
Title	"Frei-Zeichen" (in German only, but conveying a figurative meaning and setting the leitmotif for the entire brochure)
Headline concept	yes, very good, based on the leitmotif of "freedom" and interpreting it in a new way on every page.
Subheads	no
Captions	no, not necessary due to very abstract photos illustrating the figurative meaning of the headline
Slogan	no
Syntax	some ellipses: "Freedom of thought beyond departments, firms and countries.", otherwise simple sentence structure
Creativity: stylistic devices	leitmotif of "freedom" interpreted in various expressions and lines of thought: "We took the freedom of putting the new first", "No casting process gives the engineer more freedom of scope than investment casting.", "The XX GmbH has committed itself to the freedom to search for new ways.", "The freedom for more boldness", use of poetic language incorporating archaic forms: "Never let your strength and your will wither, to rise from better to the best. Only when your spirit always yearns for progress do you live, 'tis only those who live that create!"; use of idioms and phrases: "This is on par with our management philosophy of providing freedom to all units of the company...", "...has always wheathered the ups and downs of history,..."
Register	formal structures (e.g. inversion): "Not only did we find partners in India, we have made friends there as well", combined with features of informal language (contractions): "Since we feel that we can't attain and fulfil all customer

	requests with German procedures and the German school of thought, we've decided to..."
Spelling/grammar	"wheathered"
Conventions	okay (e.g. 0.1mm)
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	no false friends, some false renderings of intended meaning, e.g. "The days in which data processing <u>dictated</u> administrational processes are past." German equivalent: "Die Zeiten, in denen die Datenverarbeitung Verwaltungsabläufe <u>nachvollzog</u>, sind vergangen."; "keine Störungen" translated as "the absence of malfunctions"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some, but reasonably explained by context
Syntactic interference	some syntactic interferences, German word order: "XX Control Systems had been looking as early as 1983 for new ways….", German nominal style: "manufacturing nowadays is done using 18 different materials", passive constructions where an active form would have been used in English: "The work of the staff is aimed at reaching the 50 million € mark within a few years.", some unusual usages of relative pronouns: "The days in which...", "'tis only those who live that create"
Visual appearance	Ultra-high-gloss paper, very good haptic features, good execution of CI (all images are in the same greenish hue)
Use of photos	large-format images (full-size A4 on right hand side), crisp image quality, symbolic value rather than concrete message
Layout / scannability	paragraphs divided by coloured stripes, no keywords, charts nor tables
Overall impression	high-quality brochure with almost poetic/philosophical approach casting a fresh light on the issue of casting in an emotional and appellative way **rating: good**

Level 3, covering the majority of the sample, features both linguistic weaknesses and shortcomings with regard to the requirements of promotional literature. A widespread flaw was the strong self-focus and a purely informative style, dominated by facts, poorly illustrated and applying a style that is way too formal for this text type. The interplay of text and images was also insufficient, with the pictures being either of poor quality, conveying too little relevant information or not being properly assigned to the content.

Example 3: Quality Level 3

Sample No.	4
Industry	research, metallurgy
Perspective	products and applications, purely informative, factual and product-oriented
Use of pronouns	WE (predominating) and "the customers" (3rd person): "The demands are a great challenge to us. Our customers need solutions for the future.", some direct references with YOU: "You give preference to precious metal surface coating?"
Title	name of company, purely informative
Headline concept	naming production methods
Subheads	no subheads (text blocks are short enough)
Captions	one picture is explained in caption, although all pictures would need explaining
Slogan	no
Syntax	no block language, complex sentence structure
Creativity: stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	very formal style, specialist language: "Whether it is a question of ores, recyclable waste material or useful material, we optimally adapt the necessary reprocessing steps to the forerun material and guarantee efficient and environmentally compatible processes."
Spelling/grammar	few spelling mistakes (e.g. capitalisation in: "using State-of-the-art equipment"), a few grammatical flaws: wrong tense in: "For over fifty years, the XX IS the competent contact of the industry."; frequent omission of definite articles as in: "in beverage industry";

Conventions	okay
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	frequent mistake: "technique" instead of "technology" "as in "thin-film technique" or "solar technique", some words are left in German without explanation ("according to the Kreislaufwirtschaft- und Abfallgesetz"); wrong choice of words in: "only in the later case"; superfluous use of infinitive particle "to" in: "All these processes and also laser technology help us TO meet the special demands of our customers."; "series production" instead of "serial production"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many (e.g. sputtering targets, clamped construction, vacuum plasma spraying, wave and reflow soldering in reactive inert gas…)
Syntactic interference	typical German nominal style as in: "Complete takeover of these process steps is also possible.", extensive attributes: "materials diagnostic investigations"
Visual appearance	semi-gloss paper, oblong format, high-quality images, good implementation of corporate identity (the colour blue predominates photos, images and design elements).
Use of photos	good quality, mostly showing products or machines
Layout / scannability	clear structure, some charts and drawings
Overall impression	very technical brochure of high information value, but lacking emotional elements or customer appeal to a wider audience apart from experts **rating: satisfactory**

A few of the analysed brochures did not meet the requirements of a piece of advertising literature at all, lacking relevance, a clear structure, customer orientation and even information value, let alone creativity, linguistic correctness or stylistic devices.

Sample No.	13
Industry	stationery
Perspective	focus on products and company
Use of pronouns	3rd person only, referring to "the company", "the customers" and "the products"
Title	only one sheet, no title

Headline concept	two headlines: "Company profile" and "The range of products comprises"
Subheads	2 product-related subheads ("Files in format A4 and A5")
Captions	product descriptions function as captions (printed directly under pictures)
Slogan	no
Syntax	simple sentence structure ("All types of made-to-order products can be supplied")
Creativity: Stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	formal
Spelling/grammar	spelling mistake: "XX GmbH AS reprivatised in 1990."
Conventions	overall okay, strange rendering: "Manager: Mr. X" (first name would have been given in Anglophone culture)
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	Ersatzeinlagen translated as "replacement sheets", "manager" for "managing director"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some ("printed foil with gold blocking")
Syntactic interference	use of passive constructions where active forms could/should have been used in English, e.g.: "Customers' specific wishes in the area of advertising are fulfilled down to the smallest detail."
Visual appearance	very simple
Use of photos	product photos
Layout / scannability	okay (headline - short introduction - keywords)
Overall impression	very simple promotional leaflet, **rating: poor**

All in all, four out of the 24 brochures in this sample received an overall rating that was "very good" (Level 1), featuring an attractive and creative visual and verbal presentation that was both customer-oriented and emotionally appellative. Another five brochures incorporated promising elements in this respect (Level 2). The majority of 13 companies (54%) were rated satisfactory (Level 3) regarding the quality of their corporate collaterals, featuring an average design and various linguistic deficiencies. Two companies failed to meet the requirements of adequate

international marketing material altogether, thus receiving the rating "poor" only (Level 4).

Overall Rating

Rating	Count
very good (Level 1)	4
good (Level 2)	5
satisfactory (Level 3)	13
poor (Level 4)	2
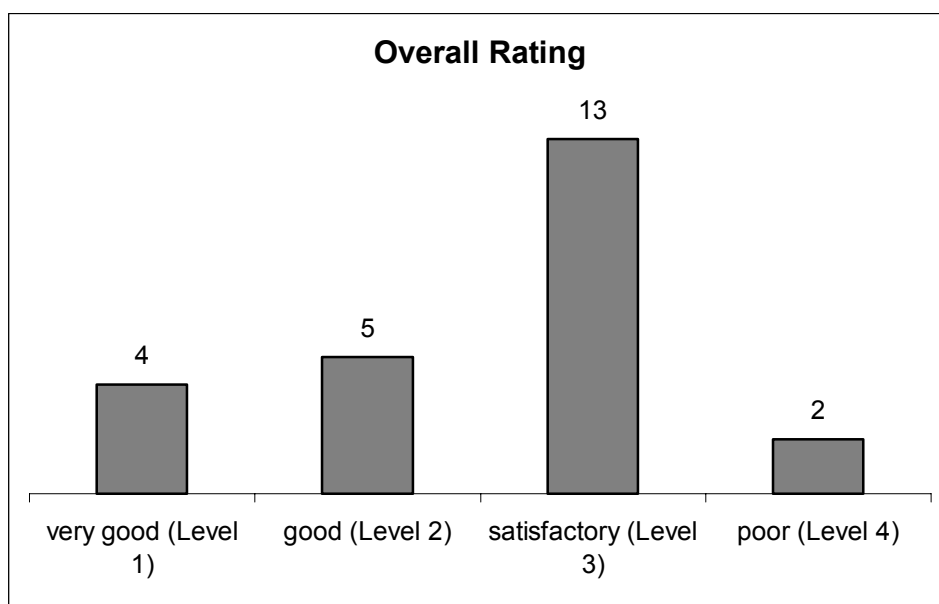
Fig. 12.5. Overall rating of brochures

12.3. Analysis of individual criteria

Whereas the previous part aimed at providing an overview of how the qualitative analysis was carried out and of the overall results it yielded, this chapter examines the actual implementation of the dimensions defined in chapter 12.1., which reflect the stylistic requirements of advertising language. The question is now in how far do Saxon SMEs succeed in meeting the stylistic standards, where are the most obvious deviations, and what consequences result from these?

12.3.1. Perspective

Language can have various functions, and every linguistic message can be presented or interpreted in various ways. The semiotic triangle by Ogden / Richards (1923) served as a basis for Bühler's "organon-model", which describes three basic functions of language as the appellative function, the expressive and the objective function. The appellative function presents a direct or indirect appeal to the recipient, usually to the end of making them do what the sender intended. The expressive function gives the sender the opportunity to express emotions and feelings, whereas the objective function focuses on the object of the message and is largely factual in nature.

This functional model of language was further developed by Friedemann Schulz von Thun into a model of communication[426]. This model is based on the idea that every message has four different components:
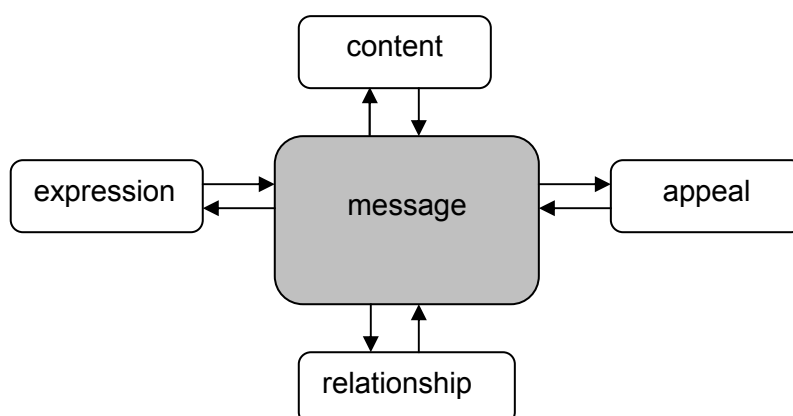
content

expression — message — appeal

relationship

The content:

What is the objective meaning of the message?

Focus on information

The appeal:

What does the sender intend to achieve with this message?

Focus on action

The relationship:

What is the relationship between sender and recipient?

Focus on relation

The expression:

What does the sender reveal about himself?

Focus on emotion

These models formed the basis for the evaluation of the perspective of the analysed sales materials. Although conveying information is one of the most fundamental functions of advertising, this information is often presented in an appellative or emotional way, focussing on the relationship between sender and recipient. Advertising material should therefore strive to wrap the content in emotional ways of presentation to make sure it appeals to the recipient and eventually strengthens the relationship between company and customer. Therefore, an emotional or appellative approach is much more efficient in advertising than the purely informative presentation of hard facts.

The analysis of the brochures revealed that in spite of these requirements the majority of small and medium-sized companies rely on a purely informative approach. 50% present only facts, without any appellative or emotional elements. Another 25% feature some appellative elements, usually when requesting the customers to get in touch with the company. Some of these companies use the direct reference *you* to directly address the recipient, another third (8 out of 24) make use of imperatives. Five companies mix information with appellative AND emotional elements, and one company merges information and emotion without directly appealing to the recipient.

On the one hand, the predominance of the factual approach is more justified in a corporate brochure than it is in an advertisement, since the major aim of a brochure is to present information. On the other hand, this approach leads to an impersonal, product-oriented presentation of SMEs. Instead of focussing on the benefits the products can bring the client, they are losing themselves in complacent descriptions of product features and specifications. Figures predominate over benefits. When asked for reasons why they have chosen such a factual way of presentation, most representatives replied that they do not deem it suitable for a supplier of high-tech solutions to water convincing hard facts with emotional humdrum. They insisted their clients are interested in facts only.

They may be right, but there are a couple of very positive examples from the sample showing that there are different ways to success, too. High-tech companies such as a telecommunications supplier, a life sciences company or a foundry excel with outstanding brochures that bridge the gap between conveying facts and content and presenting those in an appellative style with emotional elements. The life-sciences company shows people using the products in slice-of-life situations. The telecommunications supplier focuses on people, too, and shows how their products can make life much easier, and the foundry uses the metaphor of "freedom" as a leitmotif to present their products. These publications are targeted at a specialist audience, but they rightly presume that even experts are human beings and like to be addressed as such. This makes these brochures so appealing.

Dimension 1[427]: Perspective

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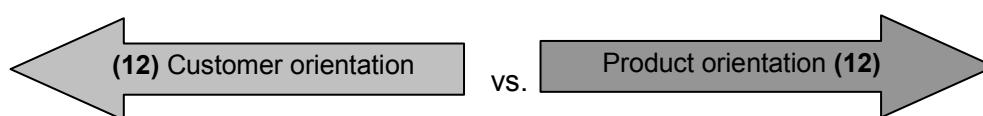
[427] The length of the arrows proportionally represents the actual share of the respective criterion. The shorter an arrow, the fewer the companies that have fulfilled the criterion.

12.3.2. Use of pronouns / referents

The perspective is also reflected in the use of pronouns predominating the presentation[428]. A major share of the companies present themselves in the *we*-perspective. The pronoun *we* is the most frequently used pronoun in the brochures that were analysed for this investigation. This has various consequences on point of view. If a text is written in the *we*-perspective, it is hardly possible to take the customer's view and to describe the benefits the products or services offered have for the customer. So, the frequent use of the pronoun *we* goes hand in hand with the self-focussing, factual perspective typical of these publications. Style determines content, so it is hardly surprising that the content which is presented from that *we*-perspective concentrates on the company, its products and its history in the majority of publications. This is true of 20 out of the 24 analysed brochures.

Dimension 2: Pronouns

Customer (4) vs. Self-orientation (20)

This is not to say that the remaining 4 brochures do not convey information on their products, their services and their company, but they do so in an unobtrusive way by putting the customer using the products in the centre of attention. Consequently, these four brochures feature a much higher percentage of *you* references and other direct references to the recipient, i.e. in the form of imperatives.

Some of the information-oriented brochures also make use of direct references to the recipient by using the pronoun *you*, but here it mainly occurs in the contact section where the customer is encouraged to get in touch with the company.

Another frequently used perspective is the 3rd person reference to "the company" and "the customer". Thirteen out of 24 companies referred to themselves (at least sometimes) in the third person singular, either as "the company", "our company" or

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[428] Note on methodology: The evaluation of the use of pronouns was performed on a qualitative rather than on a quantitative level. In fact, the majority of the analysed brochures contains all pronouns mentioned here, i.e. some facts were presented from the "we" perspective, others from the position of the customer, using the pronoun "you", and most publications also included some 3rd person references. But all brochures revealed a predominating approach, most of them being dominated by the "we" perspective. Consequently, the pronouns were not actually counted, but the evaluation was made on a rather intuitive basis, taking the *predominating* pronouns into account.

by the name of the company. Often, the customers are not addressed directly but are referred to by the indirect form "the customers" or "our customers". This frequent technique to avoid personal references by using indirect references in the 3rd person instead supports the informative strategy favoured by the majority of the companies and is one of the reasons why the analysed brochures feature such a small degree of personal involvement and direct appeal.

Dimension 3: Personality
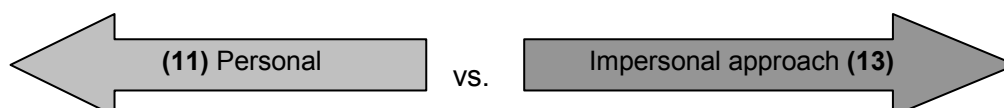
Although the *we*-perspective is predominant in 83% of the brochures, they all mix the various forms of reference quite freely. So, in one and the same brochure, a company can be referred to as "we", "the company" or by its name.

12.3.3. The title

The title is the most important element of a brochure, deciding whether or not the publication will be opened and read. In this respect, it fulfils the function of a headline in a newspaper advertisement. The importance of a good opening headline or title to grab the attention of the reader has been extensively elaborated on in chapter 11.1.7. Therefore it comes quite surprising that 13 out of 24 companies (54%) present nothing on the front page but their name, completed in some cases by a description of their services, resulting in a purely informative opening. Three out of the remaining 10 companies which do use an appellative title had a German title printed on their first page, although the brochure was (at least partly) in English, such as "Kästchen für Kostbares", "Frei-Zeichen" or "Guter Strick". The title was the element where stylistic devices were used fairly frequently. Some companies used a metaphor or fixed phrase to attract the attention of the readers, such as "Heading for Harmony" or "What nut can we crack for you?", others presented a short version of their company philosophy in the title, such as "More than 30 years Innovation, Tradition, Competence", and some companies used an emotional claim: "The better connection. People generating ideas."

12.3.4. The headline concept

A consistent headline concept is decisive for the quality of a professional brochure. Ideally, the headlines should focus on a certain benefit the product offers to the customer, and they should, if possible, follow the same grammatical or stylistic pattern as in "Commitment through reliability", "Innovation through vision" etc.; or "Products and Processes", Engineering and Production", "Applications and Customer Service" (two nouns connected by the additive conjunction *and*), or always state a piece of general truth, such as "It is good not to be alone" or "What really counts in life is a reliable partner".

Only eight out of 24 companies (30%) used a consistent headline concept that endowed the entire publication with a wider perspective and a stylistic concept. Five companies used no headlines in their brochures at all, and another 11 companies (46%) applied a purely factual approach in their headline concept, i.e. they used the headlines to structure the informative content. A typical method for structuring the content were the product categories or a structure which can be best exemplified by the following sample: "The Technology", "Fields of application", "The Company" and "Scope of Services." This approach is not wrong, but uncreative, and the positive examples show that even a technical company can benefit greatly from giving their headlines a creative touch. After all, the headline is often the only element where creativity is really justified, so why should this opportunity be left untaken?

The absence of a consistent headline concept sheds light on another shortage in the service sector: The development of headline concepts and its adequate implementation is the job of the copywriter / conceptionist responsible for the publication on the side of the advertising agency. But most advertising agencies in Saxony do not employ a professional copywriter. The result is that the advertising agencies concentrate on the graphic concept of sales collaterals. Contents are commonly delivered by the clients and taken over unaltered into the layout. This is one reason why the majority of the brochures is presented from the self-indulgent *we*-perspective, focussing on services and products instead of customer benefits. Actually, it would be the task of a copywriter to adapt the input provided by the companies and convert it into an appellative presentation, but very often, this vital step towards a professional presentation is not taken.

12.3.5. Subheads and captions

Subheads – if used at all – were largely considered functional elements by the companies in this sample. They were used to structure the text in a factual way. Fifty percent of the collaterals analysed in this sample did not use subheads and/or captions at all. Out of those that did structure the copy by means of subheads, only three used creative techniques to endow this structural element with a tinge of creativity. Some companies use captions describing what the people in the pictures do in an emotionally appealing way, others incorporate headlines with an emotional focus on customer benefits such as "It is getting easier to lead a healthy life", and some companies have printed the initial words of the key sentences in bold print, thus elevating them to the function of a subhead, as in "**Demand has grown** and we will soon have to increase our capacity again…". The structure of the brochures is therefore strongly factual. Creative elements feature only rarely.

Dimension 4: Creative Structure

Crea-tive **3)** vs. Factual **(21)**
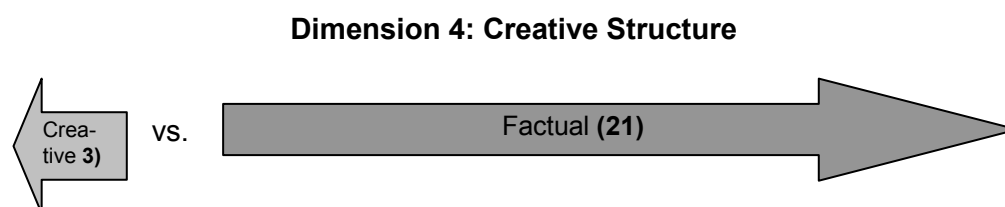
12.3.6. The slogan

The slogan, which is commonly considered one of the major backbones of an advertising strategy, appears to be the stepchild of SMEs. Actually, a slogan should form an essential ingredient of a company's advertising message, embodying its philosophy and clearly differentiating it from its competitors. However, only one in four companies (6 out of a total of 24 in this sample) have a slogan at all: "In alliance with the future.", "There is a name for beautiful hair", "The better connection", "For the perfect climate", "With a passion and love for detail we can bring your visions to life", and "A Tradition of Excellence and Reliability". Three out of these have a direct reference to the sort of services offered by the respective company ("hair" for hair care products, "connection" for telecommunication services, "climate" for heating systems). All of them feature at least one emotional element, i.e. a word or an expression with a strong associative value and positive connotations: "future", "beautiful", "passion", "love", "visions", "life", "excellence". Therefore, they can be

considered successful in their attempt to fulfil one of their foremost functions: appealing to the emotions of the customer.

Another vital function of a slogan is to be so memorable that the customer will automatically link it with the name of the company. The phonetic features of a slogan are an essential tool to achieve this aim. For that purpose, a slogan should be short and ideally feature a certain rhythmic pattern. And indeed, an analysis of the rhythmic pattern reveals that three of these slogans are based on a rhythmic pattern: "There is a name for beautiful hair" is (with a little jolt in the 4th feet) a 4-feet trochee; "For the perfect climate" is a clean three-feet iamb, and "In alliance with the future" is (almost) a double anapaest. Also the slogan "The better connection" features the same rhythmic pattern in its two halves, both starting and ending with an unstressed syllable embracing the stressed syllable.

Moreover, many slogans employ stylistic devices to enhance attractiveness and memorability. In our sample, two of the slogans employ the technique of personification, i.e. attributing human features to their offer in order to make it more appealing to the customers: The hair care company gives beautiful hair a name, and a provider of engineering services brings visions to life. So, the few companies that do have a slogan have done their job quite well. The only question is why have the remaining three quarters not even thought about it?

12.3.7. Stylistic devices

Apart from some figures of speech used in the creative elements of the texts, i.e. in headlines, titles, subheads and slogans, stylistic devices were used only scarcely in the analysed publications. Only seven brochures featured stylistic devices in any form. This comes as somewhat surprising, as advertising language actually thrives on flirting with the magic of words.

The style of the majority of these brochures was predominantly descriptive. This sort of text usually leaves little room for stylistic niceties, as it is solely focussed on facts and figures. One assumption was that perhaps the foreign language provided an obstacle to linguistic creativity that might have been present in the original German versions. But this assumption could be rejected, as most companies provided their sales material in both languages, thus facilitating direct comparison, which led to the

result that the German versions featured as few stylistic devices as their English adaptations.

Originally, I had included another category in the section of "linguistic creativity", which was supposed to focus on the formation of new words. But no single company out of those whose brochures were analysed in this sample were as creative as to coin new words or to develop new word formations, so this criterion was removed from the analysis altogether.

Four out of the 24 companies in this sample used stylistic devices in their body copy, and not surprisingly, these were the 4 "model companies" in terms of advertising techniques that stand out positively with regard to many other criteria as well. One company uses numerous "fight" or "war" metaphors, such as "at the front edge of technology" or "at the forefront of developments". Another company interprets the leitmotif of freedom in various fresh and exciting ways. Moreover, they even used one example of poetic language and employed numerous idioms, phrases and metaphors such as "…has always weathered the ups and downs of history." The telecoms supplier also uses many idioms to add a breath of fresh air to their copy, such as "at breakneck speed", the workforce has "mushroomed" and "we have our fingers at the pulse of the time." The hair care specialists swear by alliterations to enhance their style, such as "Heading for Harmony" or "working wonders", and they use metaphoric expressions such as "combat stubborn dandruff", which embodies another example of war terminology which features fairly frequently in the aggressive environment of advertising language in general.

Dimension 5: Style

(7) Stylistic devices   vs.   Straightforward tone **(17)**
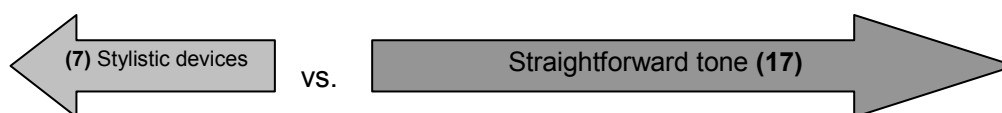
12.3.8. Syntax

Advertising language should be short, catchy and to the point. From a syntactic point of view this means simple sentences, often so simple that any grammatical burden is omitted as well, resulting in elliptic structures or so-called 'block language'. Such a simple, shortened structure also resembles the structure of spoken

language, which is a close relative of advertising language. This principle of simplicity also leads to a predominance of active, positive statements and the absence of complex or advanced syntactic structures such as participle constructions, gerunds or inversions.

But exactly the latter are prevailing in the sales material of Saxon SMEs. Long sentences, not necessarily very complex, but long at any rate, are the predominating syntactic feature found in these publications. Often, these sentences became long due to endless enumerations and long attributive phrases (such as the sample sentence: "A quality assurance system and the most up-to-date production technology ensure an extraordinarily high quality standard along with procedural reliability, economically viable production as well as the observance of ecological requirements.").

Although this use of rather complex sentence structures is partly owing to the complexity of the information that has to be conveyed and to the functional requirements of the communication form brochure, in many cases, clumsy participle constructions, passives, negations and nominal phrases aggravate readability and style. A typical example illustrating this finding is the following sentence: "Our staff, numbering more than 40, embodies many years of experience gathered in all spheres of textile machine building, starting from thread and fabric production up to textile finishing and the manufacture of ready-made clothes."

This tendency can certainly be considered a case of interference between German and English, as in German advertising copy this sort of style is more acceptable than in English. A general piece of advice that could be sent to German SMEs is to use shorter sentences in an active voice and to try to express nominal phrases by means of a simple predicate, which would often solve the problem of the over-use of passive constructions as well. It would have been easy to rewrite sentences like the two following in a more active, personal and less nominal style: "Manufacturing nowadays is done using 18 different materials" or "The work of the staff is aimed at reaching the 50 million € mark within a few years."

Ellipses are used only reluctantly. Again, the companies representing level 1 are pioneering this trend with phrases such as "Like the shampoo and balsam from the new Londial hair care range.", "Solutions provided by the people for the people.", "The future – together – now!" or "Otherwise the best idea is worth noting". In total,

only a quarter of the companies applied ellipses as a syntactic device in their brochures at all. All the others featured complete sentences and/or keywords only.

Dimension 6: Syntactic Structure
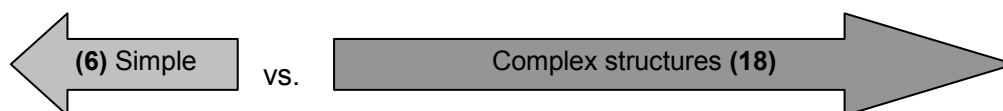
12.3.9. Register

The complex syntactic structure used by the majority of the companies analysed in this sample naturally leads to a rather formal register. This impression is supported by further criteria such as the use of specialist vocabulary and formal expressions such as "The aforesaid applications". As a matter of fact, a corporate brochure aiming at B2B relations may be more formal than a print advert. Also, the use of specialist terms can be hardly avoided when explaining intricate concepts and ideas, but the question is how well they are explained, either in the text or in the pictures, and to what extent they hinder general understanding. The latter applied to 9 out of the 24 brochures, in which specialist expressions and terms were used so extensively that it was very hard for a non-expert to understand what the brochure was about.

What was conspicuous was how many companies mixed formal syntactic structures and specialist terms with contractions in auxiliary verb forms such as "don't" or "there's", which are an indicator of informal style. A typical example of this mix of registers is the following sentence: "Since we feel that we can't attain and fulfil all customer requests with German procedures and the German school of thought, we've decided to..."

In total, out of the entire sample consisting of 24 brochures, five were written in an informal style, using many ellipses, contractions, general vocabulary and a light tone of voice, four featured a mix of formal and informal devices, whereas this mostly meant complex syntax and specialist terms combined with contractions that were rather out of place, and the large majority of 15 companies were written in a decisively formal style.

Dimension 7: Register

(9) Informal	Formal (15)

12.3.10. Spelling and grammar

Ten out the 24 brochures in this sample featured more or less severe spelling mistakes, bearing witness to a non-professional translation, and 9 brochures contained grammatical mistakes.

12.3.10.1. Spelling and punctuation

The spelling mistakes that occurred in the analysed material can be divided into proper mistakes, i.e. mistakes the translator or typesetter did not perceive to be incorrect, and slips and typos that might have happened in the process of typesetting or just been overlooked. Proper spelling mistakes, which can often be traced back to some kind of interference with the German cognate, include "chaine" for "chain", "researche" for "research", "construktion" for "construction", furthermore "trimm cuts" and "consistant".

Typos include the frequent mistake "ist" for "its" (which often occurs due to an automatic correction by the Word programme if it is set at the German spellchecker), furthermore "pleces" for "pieces", "as reprivatised" instead of "was reprivatised", "state-o-the-art" and some incidents of missing spaces ("The teamresponds", "Extendcylinder").

Capitalisation was a problem in several cases. Mostly, this was due to interference with German spelling conventions that require a capitalisation of nouns, which was sometimes transferred incorrectly to the English version as in "Woven Tapes" or "Preparating Room Equipment for Anatomy Institute".

Some minor comma-related mistakes such as the omission of the separation of a non-defining relative clause ("This company which is also located on the German plant site, performs for us…") need mentioning, as well as incidents of wrong hyphenation as in "longterm and high quality cooperation" or "packaging-items".

There is a great insecurity about hyphenation issues among German speakers of English in general, and they generally tend to overuse hyphens.

As a general rule, abbreviations should not be used in marketing collaterals, first because it cannot be assumed that all readers are familiar with the abbreviations, especially internal ones, and second it is considered a violation of good style in this particular text type. Still, some publications featured abbreviations that can not be regarded as generally approved, such as "elt." for "electric" or "hydr." for "hydraulic". Such renderings do not only aggravate reading but also show disrespect for the value of the written word.

In some individual cases the spelling mistakes were so severe that they did not only ridicule the intended meaning, but even led to serious misunderstandings due to semantic overlaps, such as "fork" instead of "fog" or "internal curses" for "internal courses". All of that was topped by the macabre typo in the caption "shift change at the *dying* machine", which was, to make it even worse, written next to a picture showing two people, a machine and a warning sign saying: "Vorsicht! Säure und Lauge".

Generally, it was alarming to see how many spelling mistakes and typos occurred in these publications. This is a clear sign of how carelessly most companies deal with their international marketing material and how little importance and attention it is awarded. Normally, it should be a matter of course that the person who translates the material, no matter if this is done internally or by an external service provider, carefully checks and double-checks correct spelling. Moreover, every word processing programme features a spellchecker nowadays, so that such a high degree of spelling mistakes and typos could have been avoided at any rate if a little more devotion had been paid to the creation of the materials.

Dimension 8: Spelling

(14) Correct spelling   vs.   Spelling mistakes **(10)**

12.3.10.2. Grammar

Typical German grammatical forms that were applied in the analysed brochures were incorrect comparative structures with "like" or "then" instead of "than" as in "no better sound like" or "less then" and the omission of articles as in "reversible key offering all advantages of classical pin tumbler system" or "in beverage industry". There were some cases of incorrect subject-verb-correspondence as in "The rests are nearly each construction material…" and wrong plurals: "data's", "various combination" and "5 dimension". In one brochure, there was a high percentage of incorrect choices of modal verbs as in "The workpiece is to be placed into a die...". Unmarked adverbs were another mistake that occurred fairly frequently, as in "The CNC programs are central organised" or "high precise lathe".

Tenses, however, which normally present another tricky source of mistakes for German speakers of English, were used with great care. There was only very little interference in this respect, as in the following sample where the present perfect was confused with the simple present, a typical incident of Anglo-German interference: "For over fifty years, XX *is* the competent contact of the industry."

Dimension 9: Grammar

(15) Correct grammar vs. Incorrect grammar **(9)**
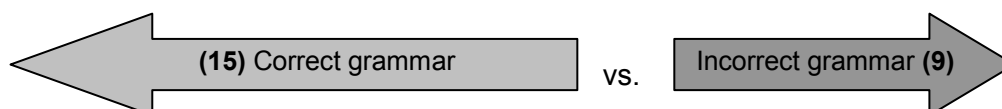
12.3.11. Conventions

The correct use of cultural and stylistic conventions is another indicator of how well thought-out and prepared an international marketing strategy of a company is. Minor things such as mentioning the German country code in the telephone number can have a major impact on the respect with which a foreign customer feels to be treated. Other things, such as the culturally correct use of commas and dots to separate decimals and thousands in English respectively can have more serious consequences when interpreted wrongly. Therefore it is fairly alarming that 9 out of the 24 companies analysed in this sample violate those conventions in one way or another.

An outstandingly positive example was a company which did not only adapt the figures perfectly to the Anglophone standards of usage, but even converted square metres into square feet.

Within this context I also investigated the use of British or American English. One in six companies (i.e. four in total) applied American spelling conventions ("fiber", "center", "program", "specialize", "favorite"), and one company mixed British and American spelling (control programs", but "machining centres").

Dimension 10: Conventions

(15) Adherence to conventions   vs.   Violation **(9)**
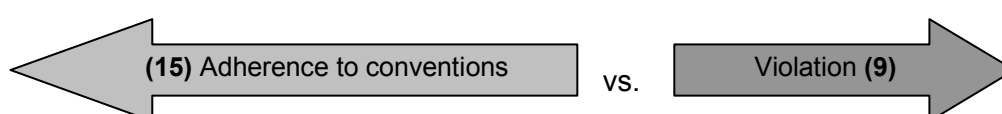
12.3.12. Interference

Adapting sales material to a foreign market always imposes the dangers of lexical and syntactic interference. Therefore two criteria of this analysis scrutinized how well SMEs have circumnavigated the dangerous rocks and which pitfalls were most frequently encountered.

In total, only three out of the 24 brochures were flawless in this respect. There, one could not tell if the text was written by a German or a native speaker of English, suggesting that these three companies had their publications proofread by a native speaker. Obviously all the others (87.5%) had not. False friends, i.e. incidents of lexical interference, were found in 14 out of the 24 brochures, and 18 featured more or less severe syntactic interferences.

12.3.12.1. Lexical interference

Considering lexical interference, it is alarming how many very basic mistakes were made: "Informations" instead of "information", "branches" for "Branchen" or "classical pin tumbler system" instead of "classic" – all these false friends should belong to the basic knowledge of any halfway qualified translator. Thus, the occurrence of false friends of this basic nature suggests that the respective brochures were translated by someone from the company, an assumption which is

backed up by the results of the question of who is responsible for translation tasks in the company (cf. chapter 4.3.).

Other incidents of lexical interference are excusable, but actually should not happen in this form of professional corporate presentation either. Examples are "departure Siebenlehn" for "motorway exit", "technique" instead of "technology", "construction department" for "design department", "assemblage" for "assembly" or "company portrayal" instead of "portrait".

Some of them, however, are so severe that they entirely ridicule the intentions of the text, particularly when seen alongside the very formal style which does not allow for a case of self-irony or a hearty laugh, such as "titan" instead of "titanium", "curses" for "courses" or "preparating equipment" instead of "dissection equipment" (in mortuaries).

Often, lexical interference does not really lead to misunderstandings, but results in rather clumsy expressions due to the wrong choice of words in the respective context. A major reason for that is the word-by-word translation from the German text, which results in renderings such as "workpieces *can be subjected to* one-stop cutting" or "…product development and customer service *are carried out* by our experts". Would it not have been much easier and much more English to say: "Our experts are responsible for product development and make sure you feel well looked after"?

Sometimes, one cannot get rid of the feeling that the translator just could not find the right word and opted for a secondary alternative which is not quite fitting, though, as the translation "manufacturing" for "Bearbeitung" or "reliability" for "Kompetenz".

Dimension 11: Lexical Interference

(10) True English vocabulary   vs.   Lexical interference **(14)**
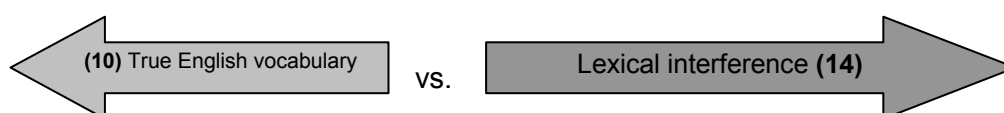
12.3.12.2. Syntactic interference

Syntactic interference becomes manifest in three major forms: First and foremost, the attributive use of descriptive information that should have been expressed in a relative clause in English, secondly the application of German word order and third the inadequate over-use of English nominal and passive constructions.

The most obvious and most frequent incident of syntactic interference from German structures is the attributive use of relative clauses as in: "The many years experience in the production of…" or "the reopened in 1992 opera house" (from a brochure about the city of Chemnitz not included in this sample).

An example of German word order is the sentence "XX GmbH installed here as already in the shopping centre of the same kind in Dresden the complete heating facilities for renowned companies." Had commas been used to separate the individual clauses from each other, understanding could have been enhanced. What remains an incident of syntactic interference, however, is the inadequate use of the temporal adverbial "already" which is heavily overused by German speakers when speaking English in general. Other incidents of German word order are "Should a key be lost, or it is required that it be changed…" or "keyed alike groups". The principle of the sequence subject – predicate – object – adverbials is violated in "XX had been looking as early as 1983 for new ways to…"

German syntax also influenced the style of the texts. As mentioned above, passive constructions and nominal phrases feature much more prominently than in an average English text. Sentences such as "Complete takeover of these process steps is also possible" illustrate the predominance of nominal constructions. The same message could have been put across in a more dynamic way by using an active verb construction, for example: "Our staff will be happy to take care of the entire process." Many passive constructions could have been easily transformed into an active structure. "Manufacturing nowadays is done using 18 different materials" could have been expressed as "Today, our production department can process 18 different materials", and the sentence "The work of the staff is aimed at reaching the 50 million € mark within a few years" could have been transformed into: "Our staff strives for reaching the 50 million Euro mark within a few years." And why not rewrite this clumsy formal, nominal and passive construction "By optimising the loading capacity of the components and applying work-hardening, weight reductions can be made possible" into a more dynamic, verbal and more informal "If the load

capacity is optimised and the work is hardened, the weight can be considerably reduced." True, this is still a passive, but it is not dominated by clumsy, formal and impersonal nominal forms and thus more appealing to the reader. The request for active renderings is particularly urgent in utterances with an appellative aspect. Instead of saying "If application support is needed the representative is only a phone call away…", the company could establish a better relation to the customers by addressing them directly: "If you need support with an application, our representative is only a phone call away…".

Dimension 12: Syntactic Interference

(6) English syntax   vs.   Syntactic interference **(18)**
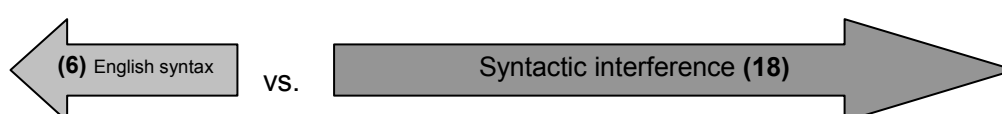
12.3.13. *Visual appearance, scannability, use of photos*

Within this framework, I am going to give but a brief evaluation of the visual aspects, as the major objective of this section was an analysis of linguistic features. However, words and visuals always go hand in hand, and even the most professional appearance can be destroyed by a faulty copy and vice versa.

Most of the publications were visually attractive, although some of them looked rather old-fashioned and were styled in a design dating from a couple of years ago. Only six companies presented themselves in folders that can be said to be truly innovative or creative with regard to design and layout, and also the use of photos often left vast room for improvement. Another general observation was that only very few companies used captions to explain the images, which often left many open questions. Again, this is a signal for a lack of customer orientation, as it is not anticipated that some customers might not know what exactly is depicted in this particular photo. Moreover, the images used in most publications were rather product-oriented. A step for improvement could be the incorporation of more pictures showing people actually using the products.

Most companies used keywords and other structural elements to enhance scannability, but much too often the brochures were too dominated by non-syntactic

elements such as keywords and phrases, thus failing to provide a broader context and to add emotional elements.

Dimension 13: Layout and Design

(6) Professional   vs.   Average appearance **(18)**
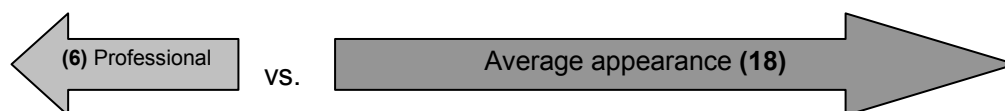
12.4. Summary

Overall Analysis
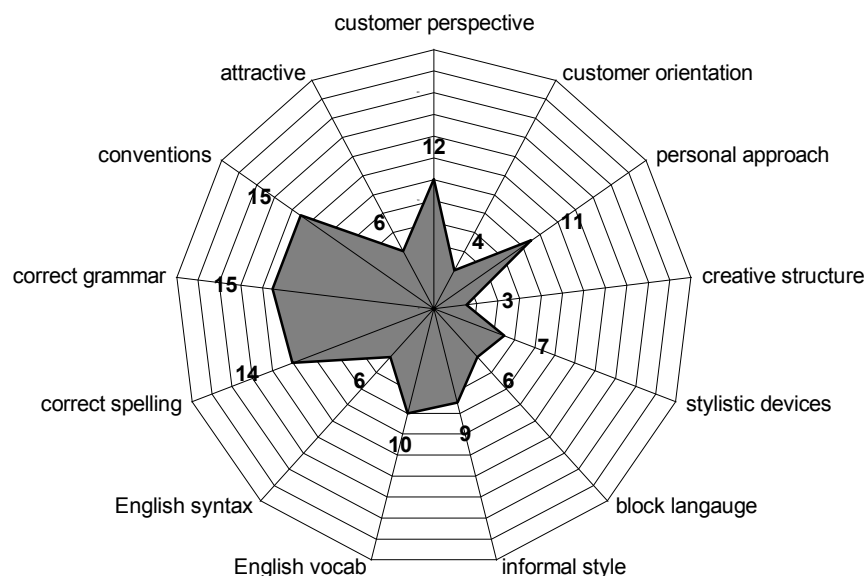
The above spider web chart depicts a summary of the analysis of the brochures in this sample measured against the 13 dimensions[429]. The outer circle represents the ideal state, i.e. if the entire area had been filled, all brochures would have been perfect in every respect and would have met all the requirements defined in the "stylistics of advertising". Naturally, this is not quite the case. However, it cannot be denied that the coloured area, which represents the actual state of the art, is extremely small, which is a clear indicator that there is vast scope for improvement with regard to the advertising materials issued by SMEs. Without attempting to impose normative requirements, it can be noted without doubt that areas for improvement are above all a more creative approach to designing a marketing brochure (in visual and linguistic terms, e.g. the use of stylistic devices), the

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[429] It is important to note that the major focus for the interpretation of this web chart is not on the exact number of positive of negative incidents, but rather on the overall relation between required quality and actual characteristics. The most important result is thus the relatively small grey area as opposed to the ideal state represented by the outer circle. Some of these deviations are due to differences between print adverts and brochures (i.e. the relatively small number of brochures with an informal style or block language), but most of the insufficiencies provide true scope for improvement in order to adhere to the requirements of advertising language meeting its functional objectives in an ideal way.

devotion to customer orientation in all respects (perspective, use of pronouns, argumentation, direct address, references in pronouns, emotional appeal etc.), a professional structure (with regard to title, headlines, subheads and captions), a more informal style (with regard to simpler sentence structures, informal constructions and everyday vocabulary) and for publications in a foreign language, linguistic correctness with regard to grammar, vocabulary and syntax with a special focus on avoiding linguistic interferences and adhering to the conventions of the target market.

PART III

MERGING RESULTS

13. Conclusions: International Communication in Saxon SMEs and the Functions of a Communications Consultant

In the face of ongoing globalisation, internationalisation is one of the major tasks small and medium-sized companies will have to tackle in the future. In order to become and remain competitive in the global marketplace, SMEs "must progress from incremental, ad hoc efforts to internationalise the company to a more proactive and strategic approach."[430]

Various studies have tried to identify the major barriers for successful internationalisation of small and medium-sized companies. "The international SME", a study conducted by the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce in conjunction with partners in the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Latvia and the Republic of Ireland, investigates the major obstacles that SMEs are facing in their effort to internationalise[431]. Apart from operational problems such as obtaining relevant information on the target market and the local competitors, defining the right price, setting up the distribution channels and adhering to all the relevant laws, standards and regulations; language and culture were made an important strategic issue in this study. Only if companies manage to excel in international communications can they be successful on the global marketplace.

My study provided an analysis of the current state of the art of international communications in SMEs. In an empirical research, I investigated the major fields of marketing communications and scrutinized the current state of marketing discourse in Saxon SMEs. The empirical results were then backed up by a linguistic and semiotic analysis of advertising and promotional literature from Saxon SMEs in order to build the bridge between the functional and stylistic requirements of marketing discourse. The results are visualised in chart 13.1. below.

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[430] Industrie-und Handelskammer zu Leipzig et al. (ed.), *The International SME* (CD-ROM 2001), p.7.
[431] Ibid, p.8f.

13.1. Management of international communication tasks in Saxon SMEs

English as a lingua franca
Language

Intercultural factors
Culture

International marketing strategy
Marketing

Budget
Finances

INFLUENCES

Online presen-tation

Advertising/ sales literature

Interna-tional Communi-cation

Everyday communi-cation tasks

Press work / PR

Trade shows

The Communications Consultant

- coordinates / organises
- manages
- creates
- evaluates
- trains
- supervises

Language aptitude of management and employees

External communication service providers (translators, advertising agencies)

Language training

Language reference centre

Quality assurance

Criteria for choice / evaluation

Fig. 13.1. Communicative Tasks in Saxon SME's

International communication tasks in SMEs include five major areas: everyday communication, presentation of the company at trade shows as the major marketing instrument, advertising and sales material, online presentations and last but not least media work and PR. On an international scale, this communicative circle is influenced by linguistic and strategic factors. On the one hand, there is the international marketing strategy of the company, which is again determined by the financial scope and the budget available for communication tasks. On the other hand, there are the "soft" factors such as language and culture that considerably contribute to international success.

In general, the major communicative challenges within Saxon SMEs can be summarized as in the following table:

Communicative challenges	Promotional challenges
Language management Language aptitude of people in charge of international communication Training and qualification Lingua franca Language training Cooperation with professional partners Linguistic quality of promotional material Compliance with stylistic requirements Correctness and localisation Management of language quality *Intercultural Management* Awareness Training and Qualification Adaptation of marketing tools	*Marketing Strategy* Differentiated marketing Definition of plans and objectives Marketing and advertising budget *Implementation* Cooperation with professional partners Choice and application of suitable marketing tools Quality Management

Fig. 13.2. Communicative challenges in international SMEs

This study reveals a number of common misperceptions with respect to the importance of the individual ingredients of the international communication concept. In the following, I will compare the major fields of improvement as they were defined by the companies themselves with the finds from this study regarding the major areas of improvement resulting from the evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative analysis in part 1 and 2 of this paper.

13.2. Areas of improvement from the companies' perspective

According to the results of this study, the companies themselves take the following stance with regard to the necessity of international communication tasks: Strategic economic issues such as "generating new leads abroad" (46.1%) and "market research on export markets" (30.4%) were required most frequently. The second most urgently demanded field of support was advertising and promotion. 26.5% of the companies in this sample would appreciate professional support in "international advertising and PR" and with the "creation and development of international sales literature" respectively. Another 23.5% would like support with their "international internet presentation and e-commerce", and 21.6% would like to develop their international media work with the help of a professional assistant.

Tasks involved in everyday business routine were not perceived as requiring as much support. One in ten companies (10.8%) would be happy if they were supported in business correspondence and telephoning, 8.8% respectively would appreciate an interpreter to negotiate at international meetings, and to help prepare and evaluate international trade fairs. During the fair, 12.7% of the companies in this sample would like to have the professional support of a multilingual assistant. The preparation of speeches and presentations in a foreign language was considered a relevant task by only 7.8% of the companies, looking after international guests by only 6.9%.

Intercultural aspects such as preparing expatriates for their stay abroad (14.7%) and intercultural training (13.7%) were required by one in seven companies. International contracts are considered an area of great importance by 15.7%. Last but not least, the most traditional service provided by linguists for companies, namely foreign language training, is still considered one of the most important tasks. More than one

third (36.3%) of the companies participating in this study expressed their wish to get more support in English language training for their staff.

13.3. Comparison with the communicative needs defined in this study

Comparing the areas which are considered important by the companies with the areas of improvement revealed in this analysis yields a number of misrelations, which shall be discussed in the following.

Naturally, strategic and sales-related business issues have top priority for most companies. Communicative aspects are generally valued less immediate factors for the international success of a company. Still, it is gratifying that between a fifth and a quarter of the companies in this sample have recognised the necessity to improve certain fields of international communications, including advertising, media work and the online presentation of the company. Comparing this percentage with the results of the qualitative analysis of advertising materials, however, makes it clear that there is still a large number of companies with a huge potential for improvement, which are apparently not aware of these requirements and the valuable market opportunities they are missing due to an insufficient quality of their international (and national) communication measures.

To overcome these discrepancies in perception and to make companies and the people in charge of communication aware of these shortcomings is one of the major tasks of any person functioning as a communications consultant. The questionnaire that formed the basis of this study, in combination with the dimensions defined in chapter 12, can serve as a professional guideline for a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the communicative status quo in small and medium-sized companies. Based on the evaluation of these individual data, the communications consultant can define the major areas of improvement for these individual companies and set up an international communication strategy tailored to the specific needs of the company.

13.4. The concept of a "resource" or communications consultant

The further development of the concept of the "language consultant" was one of the basic objectives of this study from the very beginning. This term was coined in analogy with Zeh-Glöckler's "Sprachenberater" and Embleton/Hagen`s "language consultant"[432]. Due to the great variety of tasks that needs to be tackled by such a resource, I decided to choose the more general term 'communications consultant' instead of "language consultant", as it also includes strategic and marketing qualifications.

During the process of completing this study, however, I realised that the original concept as I had imagined it will hardly be feasible in Saxon SMEs. But before discussing the limitations of and deviations from previously developed concepts, I would like to present the research in this field that preceded and actually spurred this investigation.

Research indicates that one of the most effective ways to improve international corporate communication is through the provision of a dedicated assistant or "resource". Several previous studies, including Zeh-Glöckler's study from 2000, Louhiala-Salminen's study from 1995[433] and "The International SME", have come to the conclusion that by providing professional assistance to small and medium-sized companies, they can be effectively prepared for succeeding in international markets.

All the communicative tasks within a company should be coordinated, organised and supervised by one person in charge of international communications. This can be an internal communications manager or an external communications consultant. Put in a nutshell, the communication consultant is supposed to be responsible for helping the company meet the challenges of international communications on a global marketplace, including the following:

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[432] Embleton, D., S. Hagen (eds*.), Languages in International Business: A Practical Guide* (London: Hodder & Stoughton 1992).
[433] Louhiala-Salminen, L., *Drop me a fax, will you?: A Study of Written Business Communication* (Jyväskyla 1995).

Tasks of a communications consultant

- Development and coordination of an international marketing and communication strategy
- Planning and controlling the international advertising budget
- Coordination, creation and development of international advertising and PR measures and sales literature; and cooperation with other professional service providers (e.g. advertising agencies, printers, translation agencies)
- International press work
- International e-commerce; development and maintenance of the international internet presentation
- Preparation and delivery of foreign-language presentations, speeches, tours of the company
- Looking after international visitors to the company
- Translations
- Interpreting during negotiations
- Foreign language business correspondence and telephoning
- Assistance with international contracts, customs regulations etc.
- Preparation of and assistance during international trade fairs
- Market research on export markets
- Generating new leads abroad
- Preparation of stays and journeys to other countries
- Intercultural training
- Language training

The first and foremost responsibility of a communications consultant should be the coordination of international communication tasks. The consultant could answer international phone calls, answer non-specific enquiries himself or forward the call to the person in charge. When that person has difficulties conversing in English, the consultant could interpret the telephone conversation, which can easily be handled with the technical feature of a three-party conference. Moreover, the consultant could assist the employees with their business correspondence, either handling it himself or offering advice if the people in charge are at a loss. The consultant could also be present during negotiations that are conducted in the foreign language and interpret or assist if the need arises.

Taking care of international visitors of the company could be another area of responsibility of the communications consultant. Not only could he be present when the guests are shown round the company, but he could also be responsible for making the guests feel at home. He could spend lunch or dinner with the guests or take them on a guided tour to sights of the town. This procedure would not only save the valuable time of the senior executives of the company, but it would at the same time give the visitors the feeling of being well looked-after and cared for. The embarrassment that many executives expressed when they have to spend their leisure time with foreign guests because they do not speak their language properly could be avoided.

The same applies to international trade fairs. The presence of a person who feels at home in English, which is no doubt the lingua franca in international business, could not only create a more open atmosphere at the company's stand, but also generate a considerably greater number of business contacts at the fair. Many co-workers of the company who are responsible for presenting their company at international fairs complain that they avoid addressing passers-by or inviting them to visit their stand because they do not feel confident enough to speak English. If there is a person at the stand, however, who feels at ease with the foreign language and who is not afraid of talking to international visitors, the number of international contacts made at a fair could be vastly increased.

It goes without saying that the communications consultant should also be responsible for all the company literature that is published in a foreign language. Printed sales material, press work or the English version of the company's presentation on the internet are fields of responsibility that could be handled, coordinated and supervised by the communications consultant. His task would be to ensure consistency, accuracy and appropriate style of the publications that represent the company to the outside world, to customers, business partners or potential investors.

Many companies might claim that they already do make use of the services of several language service providers. Still, the concept of the communications consultant is different due to a number of aspects:

Instead of using various service providers, the language consultant is the central address for all foreign language issues. He is responsible for the coordination and

implementation of foreign language tasks, starting from internal translations and assistance with telephone calls and business correspondence to looking after international visitors and interpreting negotiations. The language consultant supervises the creation and development of international sales material and makes sure it complies with the linguistic and cultural requirements of the target market.

The advantage for the company is that the language consultant is always available whenever the need arises. This can be ensured either by hiring a language specialist, or by making use of freelance services. If a company decides to cooperate with a freelancer or with an agency, it is highly recommendable to put the service providers on a retainer. The benefit of this procedure is that costs become predictable and plannable, which reduces the inhibitions to engage a language specialist for small or individual tasks. Most companies make use of those retainer services with law firms or advertising agencies, so why not extend this practise to language specialists as well?

Another advantage is that there is one central person in charge of all foreign language tasks. This results in greater familiarity of the consultant with the philosophy of the company and with its products and services as well as with the specific terms relevant for this company. The consultant can provide guests, visitors, partners and customers with competent information, knows who are the right contacts within the company and can represent the company himself. After a short time, the language consultant will start to identify himself with the company and will be a valuable representative and the outward face of the firm with a foreign tongue.

Originally, the idea was that companies cooperate with one single person, ideally an external service provider, who coordinates all communication tasks within the company, concentrating on international communications, advertising, public relations, translations and language training. It became clear, however, that such a comprehensive approach can probably not be implemented and realised by one single person, one obvious reason being that this would require such a wide-spread range of various competences – being a teacher, an advertiser, spokesperson, translator and business expert at the same time – which can hardly be fulfilled by one single person. A second obstacle is the sheer amount of tasks that would have to be fulfilled – organising and implementing foreign language classes, developing advertising material, writing advertising copy and supervising the production of

materials as well as the cooperation with advertising agencies, translating, interpreting during negotiations and trade shows, looking after international guests and dealing with the specialist press, to name but a few - which can hardly be met by one single person. A third hindrance factor are the costs, which is always a major problem for investments in so-called soft skills or soft factors. Only very few companies said they would be ready to invest in this particular area. 42.9% said they would like to benefit from communicative support, but cannot afford it.

Limitations to the implementation of the concept thus seem to be of rather economic nature, starting from cost considerations to organisational challenges. The great variety of required competences poses another threat to the successful implementation in practice. However, most of these limitations are not as severe as they seem to be and do not actually hinder the implementation of the concept. With regard to the costs, most companies make use of many of the services involved in this concept anyway, but they often lack a coherent structure and organisation. Practise shows, for example, that translation jobs from different departments are often given to different translators or that if a brochure is to be translated, yet a different company is commissioned with the translation by the advertising agency. The same applies to the internet presentation, whose translation is often carried out either by someone from within the company or by an external translator commissioned by the agency responsible for the creation and maintenance of the website. This results in several different translators being involved in the presentation material of the company. When it comes to language training, most companies apply yet a different person, and many foreign language tasks are carried out internally without being approved by a central organ. What is worse, there are even a lot of tasks that are not carried out at all, such as calling potential customers and prospects after exhibiting at an international trade show, the reason being a lack of competence and clearly assigned responsibility within the company. To all these challenges, the communications consultant could prove to be a valuable solution.

Thus, regardless of these practical limitations, the idea of the communications consultant is more valuable than ever. This study provides evidence that it is not a question of whether or not such a service is necessary - there is no doubt it is - but rather a question of how it can be implemented. The "resource", as the consultant has often been called, could just as well be an entire communications department as we know it from larger companies, or it could be external as well as internal. The

major point is that there *is* someone who is responsible for organising, implementing and supervising the vast range of national and international communication tasks.

The key to successful international communications is an *increased awareness* within the companies and the people in charge with regard to the immense contributions that a professional communication concept, which is professionally implemented, can have on the international success of a company. This lack of awareness seems to be the major reason for the rather unstructured approach to the international communications management in Saxon SMEs, much more than the often cited reasons of costs, competence and organisational challenges. To build awareness within SMEs for the major importance of communication for the success on national and international markets is thus the greatest challenge that needs to be tackled.

There are various models of how this awareness can be achieved. Many countries have implemented promising support programmes for SMEs that intend to become international. "Resources are generally provided on a short term intensive basis to carry out a specific task, thereby overcoming the operational barriers (…), or on a longer term basis with the objective of addressing some of the more strategic issues. In the case of the latter, this resource will be able to identify, sift and analyse the information required by the company, assist in the formulation of an appropriate strategy and become the central focus for implementation and transferring know-how into the company."[434]

In Germany, several public institutions provide substantial support programmes for small and medium-sized companies, including exchange programmes, the funding of an export consultant and the development and translation of international sales literature, usually in relation with the participation in an international trade fair. Due to this short-term perspective, however, those programmes often induce short-sighted measures targeted only at the one fair, thus further promoting the lack of strategy that has been identified as one of the major weaknesses of Saxon SMEs.

Other countries have successfully tried and tested a variety of different approaches: "A typical example of the task centred resource is the British Export Market Research Scheme which provides for highly subsidised short term consultancy to explore a chosen market. In France, a similar scheme is offered by the Regional

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[434] Lester L.-R., in: Industrie-und Handelskammer zu Leipzig et al. (ed.), *The International SME* (CD-ROM 2001), p.11.

Assistance and Consultancy Fund. In Denmark, the 'Expert Assistance Training Programme' is an 18 month programme which includes two month placements within companies. In Sweden, the 'Export Manager for Hire' programme is sponsored by the Swedish Trade Council. This initiative permits a company to hire between 20% and 40% of an export manager to spearhead their internationalisation effort for a period of two years. In terms of academic institutions, one of the most successful programmes geared to assist small firms to internationalise is the British Teaching Company Scheme operated by Durham University Business School (DUBS). This scheme provides a full time graduate for a period of two years and is a model for a number of similar schemes within British Universities." [435]

Particularly the latter seems very reasonable, and I would like to plead with the Germans to investigate the possibility of implementing such a graduate programme as well. But whereas most of the existing support programmes focus on assistance in economic matters and issues, this study suggests that is highly necessary to consider a support programme for communication and marketing issues as well.

The latter requirement includes that the resource or the graduate needs to be qualified in a variety of subjects, ideally in languages and marketing. The University of Chemnitz provides a very promising and future-oriented approach to solving this problem. Unlike other universities, where students are educated either in humanities or in business administration, Chemnitz University has developed the so-called "Chemnitzer Modell", which allows students to study two majors, one from humanities and one from natural sciences or business administration. As a result, graduates from Chemnitz can do their degree in marketing and English language or in controlling and intercultural communication at the same time, yielding versatile, far-sighted, future-oriented and highly-qualified young professionals, who often have spent some time abroad. These young graduates would be perfectly suited to function as "communications consultants" to small and medium-sized companies.

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[435] Ibid.

13.5. Executive summary

Based on the results of this empirical investigation and the semiotic analysis, the objective of this study was to define the range of communicative tasks within small and medium-sized companies that need professional support. The assumption was that apart from the traditional fields of activity such as language training and translations, there are many more fields of international communication where a language professional can prove incredibly useful to companies and organisations. Therefore, I interviewed more than 100 companies about their international communication practices and came to the conclusion that many of those tasks are not implemented with the adequate professional approach. A communications consultant or an entire communications department could fill this breech and support companies in coordinating their international communication tasks in order to become successful players on the global marketplace.

Summing up, there is a lot to be done for a communications consultant or even for an entire communications department in SMEs – and 71.4% of Saxon SMEs would appreciate this kind of support in international communications in one way or another. Only 28.6% of the companies stated that this kind of service would not be interesting for them. 42.9% said they would like to benefit from communicative support, but cannot afford it. 8.8% would like to make use of this service from an external provider, and 12.1% said they would consider employing someone for these tasks. 7.7% claimed they already invest in this field.

The results of this investigation are proof that international communication in SMEs is an area with a huge potential for improvement. If companies were able to afford this kind of service, almost 80% of SMEs would appreciate professional support in international communications management. The first step, however, is to achieve an increased awareness in SMEs of how important professional corporate communications are for their national and international success. How this can be achieved, and what areas should be tackled in order to reach a more professional and competitive quality of international communications in SMEs and thus ultimately boost their success abroad, has been outlined in this study.

Zusammenfassung der Arbeit auf Deutsch

Ziele und Methoden

Diese Arbeit befasst sich im Rahmen einer empirischen Untersuchung mit den internationalen Kommunikationsstrategien, die in mittelständischen Unternehmen bei der internationalen Vermarktung ihrer Produkte und Dienstleistungen zur Anwendung kommen. Der besondere Schwerpunkt lag dabei auf der sprachlichen und stilistischen Umsetzung, insbesondere vor dem Hintergrund der englischen Sprache als internationaler Verkehrssprache einer globalisierten Wirtschaft und den Besonderheiten des Texttyps Werbetext, dessen Merkmale sich in den internationalen Vermarktungsmaterialien der Unternehmen wiederspiegeln sollten. Ziel der Arbeit war neben der empirischen und linguistisch-stilistischen Analyse auch die Erarbeitung eines praxisrelevanten Konzepts, welche Schritte mittelständische Unternehmen zur Optimierung ihrer internationalen Kommunikationsstrategien ergreifen können, um so ihre Präsenz am internationalen Markt noch effektiver gestalten zu können. Neben Aspekten des Marketing und der sprachlichen Umsetzung stand dabei auch die Prüfung der Validität eines sogenannten "Communications Consultants" als personelle Ressource für international agierende Unternehmen zur Debatte, ein Konzept, das bereits in der Vorgängeruntersuchung zu diesem Thema von Miriam Zeh-Glöckler beleuchtet worden war.

Die Arbeit teilt sich in zwei Teile, die in einem dritten Teil zusammengeführt werden. Teil 1 befasst sich mit der quantitativen Auswertung der empirischen Untersuchung der kommunikationsbezogenen Aspekte des Marketingmixes in mittelständischen sächsischen Unternehmen. Teil 2 widmet sich der qualitativen sprachwissenschaftlichen und semiotischen Analyse von Werbematerialien der beteiligten Unternehmen und vergleicht deren tatsächliche sprachliche Umsetzung mit den theoretischen Anforderungen, die der Texttyp 'Werbetext' an solche Materialien (Broschüren, Kataloge, Prospekte) stellt, um eventuelle Schwachstellen aufzudecken und Potential zur Verbesserung aufzuzeigen. Im dritten Teil werden dann die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse auf ihre praktische Lösbarkeit durch den Einsatz eines Kommunikationsberaters hin untersucht.

Grundlage der empirischen Untersuchung im ersten Teil war eine Befragung mit Hilfe eines Fragebogens (siehe Anhang), der im Herbst 2001 an 741 mittelständische Unternehmen im Wirtschaftsraum Südwestsachsen verschickt

worden war. Für die Teilnahme an der Befragung waren gezielt Unternehmen mit einer nachgewiesenen Exporttätigkeit ausgewählt worden, um deren Relevanz für die Fragestellung dieser Untersuchung sicherzustellen. Die Rücklaufquote des Fragebogens belief sich auf sehr erfreuliche 14,6%, das entspricht insgesamt 103 verwertbaren Antworten, die mit Hilfe des Statistikprogramms SPSS ausgewertet wurden und durch die Ergebnisse aus zirka 50 individuell durchgeführten Intensivinterviews mit Führungskräften der sächsischen Wirtschaft und Industrie gestützt wurden.

Marketingkommunikation

In der nun folgenden quantitativen Diskursanalyse der Marketingkommunikation sächsischer Unternehmen wurde zunächst die bedeutende Rolle des Marketingmixes mit seinen vier Grundkomponenten Produkt, Preis, Vertrieb und Kommunikation für eine erfolgreiche Vermarktung auf dem Weltmarkt im Detail erläutert. Dabei stellte sich heraus, dass nur etwa die Hälfte der teilnehmenden Unternehmen ihre Marketingaktivitäten im Ausland strategisch und langfristig planen. Bei der Vorbereitung ihrer Auslandsaktivitäten bauen viele Unternehmen auf institutionelle Hilfe z.B. von der IHK, deren Angebot für die Vermarktungsunterstützung im Ausland von etwa 70% der Unternehmen gern genutzt wird. Private Dienstleister hingegen spielen bei der Eroberung von Auslandsmärkten nur eine untergeordnete Rolle.

Rolle des Englischen

Unbestritten hingegen ist die äußerst wichtige Rolle der englischen Sprache als Lingua Franca in der globalen Wirtschaft. 97,1% der Unternehmen gaben an, dass Englisch für sie "sehr wichtig" bzw. "wichtig" ist. Andere Sprachen spielen eine eher untergeordnete Rolle. Französisch und Russisch werden lediglich von 38% bzw. 33% der befragten Unternehmen als "sehr wichtig" oder "wichtig" eingeschätzt. Aus dieser dominanten Stellung des Englischen als Wirtschaftssprache ergibt sich die Frage, wie gut die verantwortlichen Mitarbeiter in den Unternehmen dieses so wichtige Kommunikationswerkzeug beherrschen.

Um diese Frage zu klären, wurden zunächst einmal die Verantwortlichkeiten für die verschiedenen Kommunikationsaufgaben in den Unternehmen untersucht. Dabei stellte sich heraus, dass ein überraschend großer Teil der Kommunikationsaufgaben intern durchgeführt wird und externe Dienstleister nur in wenigen Fällen zu Rate gezogen werden, insbesondere für die Erstellung internationaler Werbematerialien

und den Internetauftritt auf Englisch. Besonders bei Übersetzungen und der Vertragsgestaltung ist der verhältnismäßig niedrige Anteil externer Dienstleister überraschend, vor allem, wenn man bedenkt, dass die durchschnittliche Bewertung der Fremdsprachenkenntnisse der mit diesen internationalen Kommunikations-aufgaben betrauten Mitarbeiter nach eigener Einschätzung bei einer Schulnote von lediglich 2,6 liegt. Auch der hohe Anteil der Geschäftsführung an der Verantwortung für alltägliche Kommunikationsaufgaben war erstaunlich. Als Grund für die relativ geringe Einbeziehung externer Experten gaben die Befragten neben Kostengründen auch die mangelnde Vertrautheit rein sprachlich geschulter Dienstleister mit den Besonderheiten des Unternehmens und dem entsprechenden fachlichen Hintergrundwissen an - ein Dilemma, dem durch den Einsatz eines langfristig mit dem Unternehmen verbundenen und umfassend eingearbeiteten Communications Consultants effektiv Abhilfe geschaffen werden könnte.

	Geschäfts-führung	Mitarbeiter mit guten Fremsprachenkennt-nissen	Externe Dienstleister
Übersetzungen	35%	**58%**	49%
Erstellung fremdsprachlicher Werbematerialien	28%	34%	**53%**
Pressearbeit / internationale PR	**34%**	18%	21%
Internetauftritt auf Englisch	20%	32%	38%
Betreuung internationaler Gäste	**69%**	52%	6%
Internationale Fachmessen	**54%**	42%	12%
Präsentationen auf Englisch	43%	**44%**	16%
Verhandlungen	44%	**48%**	30%
Internationale Verträge	**53%**	31%	27%
Geschäftskorrespondenz / Telefon	50%	**71%**	2%

Abb. 1: Verantwortung für internationale Kommunikationsaufgaben in den Unternehmen

Erfreulich hingegen ist das große Engagement der Unternehmen im Bereich der Englischweiterbildung. Jedes zweite Unternehmen in diesem Sample bietet derzeit entsprechende Kurse für seine Mitarbeiter an. Vergleicht man die Ergebnisse dieser Befragung mit der von Zeh-Glöckler aus dem Jahr 1999, scheinen diese Initiativen sogar erfreuliche Früchte zu tragen, denn das Vertrauen in die eigenen englischen

Sprachkenntnisse hat sich laut eigener Angaben der Befragten in dieser kurzen Zeit mehr als verdoppelt. Das heißt nicht, dass die Sprachkompetenz tatsächlich um das Zweifache gestiegen ist, doch das Vertrauen derjenigen, die tagtäglich im Rahmen ihrer Arbeit auf Englisch kommunizieren müssen, ist beträchtlich gestiegen – eine wichtige Voraussetzung für den Abbau von Sprechhemmungen und das Erreichen der für die Alltagskommunikation so wichtigen kommunikativen Kompetenz.

Kommunikationsinstrumente

Ausgehend von den kommunikativen Elementen des Marketingmixes wurde nun untersucht, mit welchen Mitteln und Medien sächsische Unternehmen mit ausländischen Märkten kommunizieren. Im Mittelpunkt des Interesses standen dabei die Kommunikationsinstrumente Messen, Vertriebsmitarbeiter, Anzeigenwerbung, Onlinewerbung, Direktmarketing, PR und Events sowie die Pressearbeit.
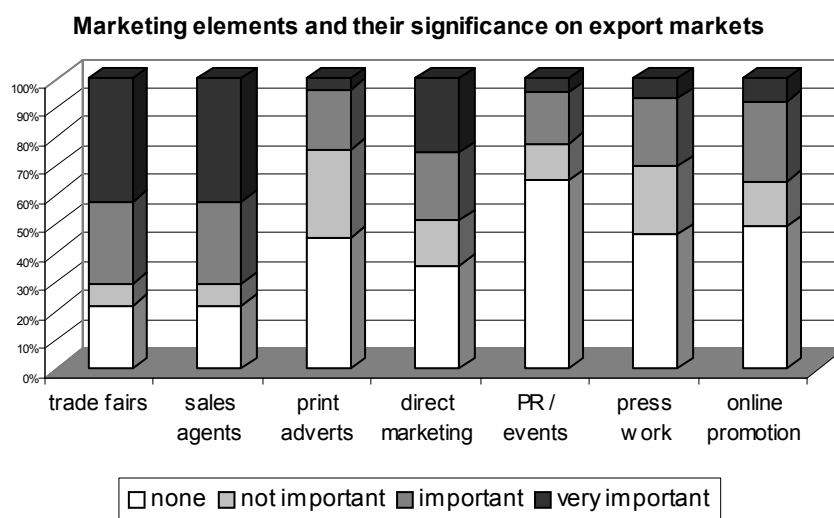
Abb. 2: Kommunikative Elemente des Marketingmixes und deren Bedeutung auf Exportmärkten

Es stellte sich heraus, dass Messen das mit Abstand wichtigste Marketinginstrument mittelständischer Unternehmen sind. Mehr als drei Viertel aller Befragten gaben an, dass Messen für sie "sehr wichtig" bzw. "wichtig" sind. Konsequenterweise entfällt auch fast die Hälfte (44%) des Marketingbudgets – sofern vorhanden – auf die Finanzierung von Messeauftritten. Die anderen Marketingmaßnahmen werden in ihrer Bedeutung von den Unternehmen in folgender Reihenfolge bewertet: Direktmarketing (62,8% sehr wichtig bzw. wichtig), Pressearbeit (57,9%), der persönliche Kontakt durch Vertriebsmitarbeiter (51%) sowie Anzeigen- und

Onlinewerbung mit jeweils 46,1%. PR und Events spielen nur für 34,3% der Unternehmen eine Rolle. Dabei zeigt sich, dass der persönliche Kontakt, der bei Messen, Vertreterbesuchen und auch beim Direktmarketing im Vordergrund steht, eine äußerst wichtige Rolle in der Marketingkommunikation spielt, wodurch die Bedeutung guter sprachlicher Kenntnisse erneut unterstrichen wird.

Ein bedeutsames Ergebnis der Untersuchung ergibt sich aus der Frage nach dem Marketingbudget. Zunächst stellte sich heraus, dass ein Großteil der Unternehmen überhaupt kein explizites Marketingbudget besitzt und über die Ausgaben vielmehr ad hoc entscheidet. Dies ist ein schwerwiegender Schwachpunkt, der den Mangel an strategischer Planung der Marketingaktivitäten, der bereits an anderer Stelle deutlich wurde, noch erschwert. Dazu kommt, dass die Unternehmen im Allgemeinen zu wenig in Marketing und Werbung investieren. Ausgehend von der allgemeinen Forderung, dass ein Unternehmen in Abhängigkeit von verschiedenen Faktoren mindestens zwischen 2 und 10% seines Umsatzes in Marketing und Werbung investieren sollte, zeigt sich, dass lediglich 37,8% der Unternehmen diese Forderung erfüllen. Mit anderen Worten ausgedrückt heißt das, dass 62,2% der Unternehmen zu wenig in ihr Marketing investieren.

Messen

Im Folgenden standen die Auftritte auf nationalen und internationalen Fachmessen als wichtigstes Kommunikationsinstrument im Mittelpunkt. Es wurde untersucht, mit welchen Maßnahmen die Unternehmen ihren Messeauftritt vorbereiten, durchführen und nachbereiten, um die beträchtlichen Aufwendungen optimal zu nutzen. Bei der Messevorbereitung stehen Einladungen an wichtige Kunden sowie das Versenden von Informationsmaterialien hoch im Kurs. Anzeigenwerbung und Pressearbeit spielen hingegen eine eher untergeordnete Rolle.

Bei der Durchführung der Messe legen die meisten Unternehmen viel Wert auf eine attraktive Standgestaltung sowie auf eine kompetente und freundliche Betreuung. Überraschend war jedoch, dass der Unterhaltungswert der Präsentation, der beispielsweise durch Demonstrationen oder Multimediavorführungen erhöht werden kann, als eher unbedeutend eingeschätzt wurde. Die meisten Unternehmen legen den Schwerpunkt eher auf sachliche Informationsvermittlung. Noch erstaunlicher war, wie verhältnismäßig wenig Bedeutung der kommunikativen Kompetenz der Standbetreuung beigemessen wird. Nur etwa 70 Prozent der Unternehmen, die sich an internationalen Ausstellungen beteiligen, geben an, dass das Standpersonal die

Sprache der Besucher spricht und dass Informationsmaterial in mehreren Sprachen zur Verfügung steht. Bleibt die Frage, wie die verbleibenden 30% mit ihren potentiellen Kunden und Interessenten kommunizieren?

Auch bei der Messenachbereitung gibt es Potential zu Verbesserungen. Eine generelle Beobachtung ist, dass viele Unternehmen das hohe Kontaktpotential nach einer Messebeteiligung ungenutzt vergehen lassen. Durch eine erneute Schaltung von Anzeigen beispielsweise lässt sich der Erinnerungswert der Besucher an den Messeauftritt des Unternehmens signifikant erhöhen, und auch der relativ geringe Prozentsatz der Unternehmen, die nach einer internationalen Messebeteiligung telefonischen Kontakt mit den Interessenten aufnehmen, lässt auf kommunikative Schwachpunkte schließen, die es zu beheben gilt.

Werbematerialien

Als nächstes standen die unterschiedlichen Werbematerialien im Mittelpunkt des Interesses, welche mittelständische sächsische Unternehmen ihren nationalen und internationalen Kunden zur Verfügung stellen.
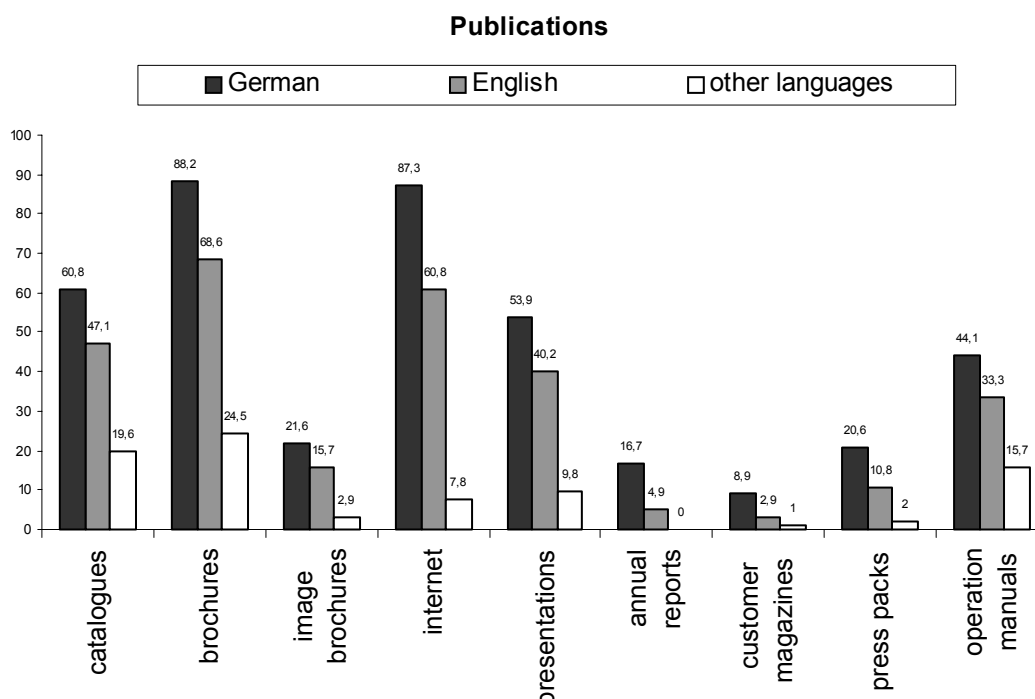
Abb. 4: Publikationen sächsicher KMU

Es zeigte sich, dass Broschüren (88,2%) sowie die Internetpräsentation (87,3%) zu den beliebtesten Formen der Kundenkommunikation zählen, gefolgt von Katalogen (60,8%), Präsentationsmaterialien (53,9%) und Bedienungsanleitungen (44,1%).

Imagebroschüren (21,6%), Jahresberichte (16,7%), Pressemappen (20,6%) sowie Kundenzeitschriften und Newsletter (8,9%) erfreuen sich hingegen weniger großer Beliebtheit. Dies zeigt, dass die meisten Unternehmen ihren kommunikativen Schwerpunkt auf sachlich relevante Informationen legen und sich auf das Notwendigste konzentrieren. Zusätzliche und eher emotional ausgerichtete Publikationen wie Imagebroschüren oder Kundenzeitschriften werden nur von sehr wenigen Unternehmen eingesetzt. Dieser Mangel an Emotionalisierung ist ein genereller Schwachpunkt mittelständischer Unternehmen in Sachsen, wie sich auch später bei der sprachlichen Analyse zeigen wird.

Internetpräsentation und Online-Promotion

Das Internet ist ohne Frage das Kommunikationsinstrument der Zukunft. Besonders aus sprachlicher Sicht wirft dies einige interessante Fragen auf, verschmelzen doch in der Cyber-Kommunikation Schriftlichkeit und Mündlichkeit zu einer völlig neuen Art der Kommunikation. Die Kommunikation im Internet ist gekennzeichnet durch eine eigene, nicht hierarchische Struktur, die Freiwilligkeit der Informationsaufnahme, den informellen Stil, der eher der gesprochenen als der geschriebenen Sprache ähnelt, und der absoluten Nutzerorientierung, die sich in einem informationsorientierten Stil, einfacher Lesbarkeit und Strukturierung, einer objektiven Darstellungsweise sowie in Kürze und Glaubwürdigkeit der dargebotenen Informationen manifestiert.

Neben einer professionellen Präsentation im Internet, die all diese Anforderungen aus kommunikativer Sicht erfüllt, spielt auch die Vermarktung des Internetauftritts eine entscheidende Rolle. Dabei setzt der Großteil der Unternehmen auf "klassische" und kostenlose Online-Vermarktungsformen wie Suchmaschineneinträge (ca. 80%). Andere Werbeformen, wie der Eintrag in Branchenportalen, die Verlinkung mit anderen Seiten oder die aktive Beteiligung an Fachforen wurden erst von wenigen Unternehmen als wirksames Werbemittel erkannt. Auch bei der Bereitstellung von Serviceangeboten wie kostenlosen Downloads, der Möglichkeit der Ferndiagnose oder der Auslösung von Online-Bestellungen haben viele Unternehmen noch ein großes Potential. Die meisten beschränken sich auf eine informative Präsentation zu den grundlegenden Angaben ihres Unternehmens. Etwa 60% der befragten Unternehmen bieten eine englische Version ihres Internetauftritts an.

Presse- und Medienarbeit

Pressearbeit ist eines der am meisten vernachlässigten Kommunikations-
instrumente mittelständischer sächsischer Unternehmen – und das, obwohl gerade
dieses Instrument bei richtigem Einsatz zu den kostengünstigsten und gleichzeitig
effektivsten zählt. Über die Hälfte der Unternehmen wird nur sporadisch in der
Presse erwähnt, ein Viertel sehr selten und ganze sechs Prozent niemals. Nur 16%
der Unternehmen unterhalten regelmäßige Beziehungen zur Presse.

Die Gründe dafür liegen einerseits in einem mangelnden Bewusstsein von der
Wirksamkeit dieser Kommunikationsmaßnahme und demzufolge in einer
unzureichenden Verfolgung und Pflege der Pressekontakte. Nur wenige
Unternehmen verfassen regelmäßig Pressemitteilungen, die meisten Unternehmen
haben einfach Schwierigkeiten, Berichtenswertes in ihrer Firma zu entdecken. Dabei
gilt es als erwiesen, dass jeder Anlass berichtenswert ist, wenn er nur in der
richtigen Weise und aus der richtigen Perspektive an das richtige Medium
übermittelt wird.

Fachzeitschriften sind die wichtigsten Medienpartner sächsischer KMU. Mehr als die
Hälfte (54%) unterhalten Beziehungen zur Fachpresse. Die Wirtschaftspresse spielt
ebenfalls eine Rolle, andere Medien wie Tageszeitungen oder Zeitschriften, Radio
und TV hingegen haben fast gar keine Bedeutung für die Unternehmen. Auf dem
internationalen Markt sind diese Verhältnisse noch gravierender.

International	Medien	National
30.4%	Fachzeitschriften	54.9%
4.9%	Publikumszeitungen	22.5%
5.9%	Wirtschaftszeitschriften	16.7%
6.9%	Nachrichtenagenturen	14.7%
7.8%	Wirtschaftszeitungen	13.7%
4.9%	Radio und TV	10.8%
1.0%	Online Newsgroups	2.9%
2.0%	Publikumszeitschriften	1.0%

Abb. 5: Präsenz sächsischer KMU in nationalen und internationalen Medien

Gerade auf dem Gebiet der Presse- und Medienarbeit haben viele sächsische
Unternehmen großen Nachholbedarf, besonders auf internationalem Terrain. Ein
erster Schritt wäre zum Beispiel die Zusammenstellung einer professionellen
Pressemappe und die Einrichtung eines Pressebereichs im Internet mit aktuellen
Pressemitteilungen und Materialien zum Download. Momentan verfügen gerade mal

20% der befragten Unternehmen über eine Pressemappe auf Deutsch, auf Englisch sind es gar nur 10%. Auf diesem Gebiet könnte sich die Unterstützung eines professionellen Communications Consultants ebenfalls als äußerst nützlich erweisen.

Linguistisch-semiotische Analyse der bereitgestellten Werbematerialien

Im Anschluss an die qualitative Auswertung der empirischen Untersuchung folgte die semiotisch-linguistische Analyse der Werbematerialien, die von einem Großteil der teilnehmenden Unternehmen bereitgestellt worden waren. Zur Unterlegung der theoretischen Hintergründe erfolgte zunächst eine Übersicht über allgemeine Funktionen der Werbung sowie über die daraus resultierenden sprachlichen Besonderheiten.

Die fünf wichtigsten Funktionen der Werbung lassen sich wie folgt zusammenfassen:

6) Information über Produkte und Dienstleistungen
7) Motivation der Kunden zum Kauf des Produktes
8) Verstärkung der Kaufentscheidung
9) Sozialisierung
10) Unterhaltung

Daraus ergibt sich eine Reihe sprachlicher und semiotischer Besonderheiten von Werbetexten, die im Folgenden kurz erläutert werden sollen.

Der appellative Charakter der Werbesprache manifestiert sich in der direkten Ansprache des Rezipienten, in der häufigen Verwendung von Imperativen sowie dem informellen Stil, der eine pseudo-freundschaftliche Beziehung zum Empfänger aufbaut. Dieser informelle Stil zeigt sich beispielsweise in einem sehr grundlegenden und eingeschränkten Vokabular, der Verwendung informeller Redewendungen, subsprachlicher grammatischer Formen, elliptischer Syntax und sehr kontextbezogener Ausdrucksweise.

Werbesprache ist gekennzeichnet durch einen hohen Aufmerksamkeitswert, einfache Lesbarkeit, einen hohen Erinnerungswert sowie eine starke Überzeugungskraft. Der hohe Aufmerksamkeitswert wird erzielt durch sprachliche Neologismen und andere Formen sprachlicher Kreativität, wie zum Beispiel durch

den Einsatz zahlreicher stilistischer Mittel, von Wortspielen, Humor und *puns*. Auch der aufmerksamkeitssteigernde Einfluss visueller Faktoren muss an dieser Stelle erwähnt werden.

Der informelle Stil trägt entscheidend zur einfachen Verständlichkeit von Werbeaussagen bei, ebenso wie der hohe Grad der Wiederholung durch Parallelismen und lexikalische, semantische, phonetische und grammatische Repetition. Diese Wiederholung führt gleichzeitig zu einem hohen Erinnerungswert. Ihre Überzeugungskraft gewinnen Werbetexte nicht nur aus der hohen Frequenz von Imperativen und versteckten Imperativformen in Form von Ellipsen und anderen Spielarten der sogenannten *block language*, sondern auch aus der dezidiert positiven und aktiven lexikalischen, semantischen und grammatischen Darstellungsweise.

Aus diesen funktionsbestimmten Merkmalen habe ich als Grundlage für die linguistische Analyse 13 sprachliche Dimensionen abgeleitet, die ein Werbetext erfüllen sollte, wenn er seiner Funktion aufzufallen, zu motivieren, zu informieren, zu unterhalten und zu überzeugen gerecht werden will. Diese Dimensionen sind in ihrer positiven Ausprägung wie folgt definiert: Kundenorientierung, persönliche Ansprache, Kreativität, Einsatz stilistischer Mittel, einfache syntaktische Strukturen, informelle Darstellungsweise, korrekte Rechtschreibung und Grammatik (insbesondere bei fremdsprachlichen Publikationen), die Einhaltung kultur- und landesspezifischer Konventionen, die korrekte Verwendung fremdsprachigen Vokabulars und die Vermeidung lexikalischer und syntaktischer Interferenzen sowie eine ansprechende und professionelle visuelle Gestaltung.

Anhand dieser Kriterien wurden insgesamt 24 Broschüren mittelständischer sächsischer Unternehmen untersucht. Es ergaben sich zahlreiche schwerwiegende Schwachpunkte insbesondere im Bereich der Kundenorientierung und Kreativität. Die meisten Unternehmen präsentierten ihr Unternehmen aus einer überwiegend selbstbezogenen Perspektive und gingen nur unzureichend auf die Vorteile ein, die sie den Kunden bieten können. Argumentation, direkte und persönliche Ansprache, die direkte Bezugnahme bei den Personalpronomen sowie der emotionale Appeal sollten besser auf die Erwartungen und Bedürfnisse der Rezipienten abgestimmt werden. Verbesserungen sind auch im kreativen Bereich wünschenswert. Dies bezieht sich insbesondere auf eine durchgängige kreative Struktur der Publikationen sowohl in visueller als auch in sprachlicher Hinsicht (z.B. durch die Verwendung

eines durchgängigen Headline-Konzepts oder den Einsatz stilistischer Mittel). Vom sprachlichen Register her waren viele Broschüren zu förmlich gehalten. Dies könnte durch einfachere syntaktische Strukturen, informelle Konstruktionen und die stärkere Verwendung von alltäglichem Vokabular korrigiert werden. Bei Publikationen in einer fremden Sprache muss außerdem auf verstärkte sprachliche Korrektheit geachtet werden. Linguistische Interferenzen bei Satzbau und Vokabular waren bei einem Großteil der Broschüren zu beobachten, und auch bestimmte landestypische Konventionen wurden oftmals nicht beachtet.

Overall Analysis
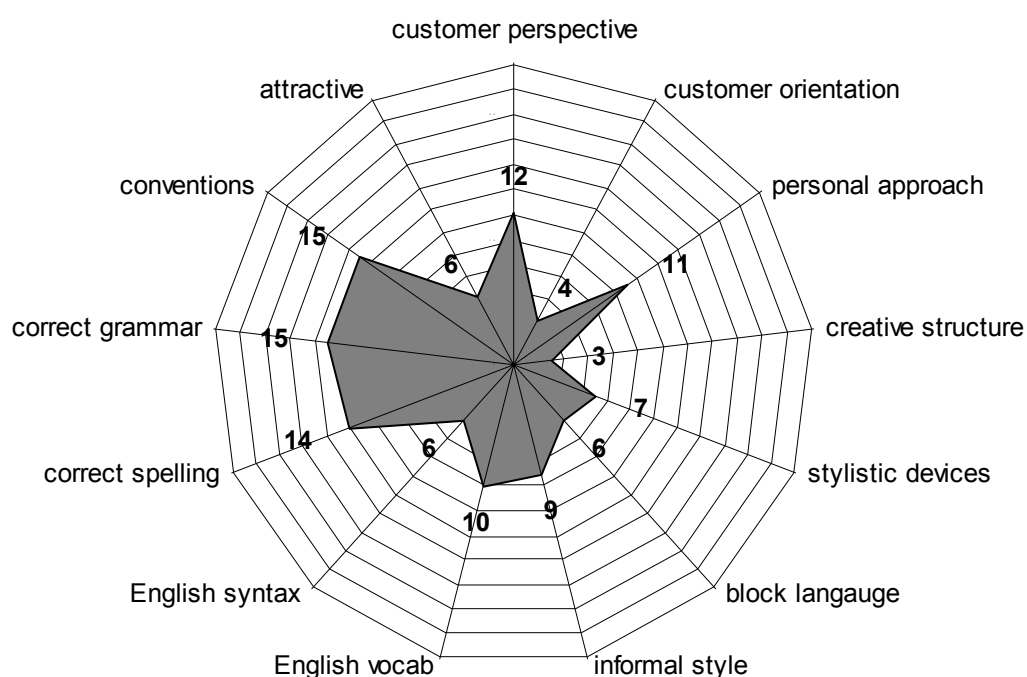
Abb. 6: Erfüllung der werbesprachlichen Anforderungen in den Werbebroschüren sächsischer KMU[436]

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[436] Der grau gekennzeichnete Bereich repräsentiert die tatsächliche Qualität der einzelnen Dimensionen, d.h. wie viele Unternehmen haben die jeweilige Dimension in ihrer positiven Ausprägung erfüllt. Der äußere Ring steht für die optimale Erfüllung der jeweiligen Anforderungen aus sprachlichen Gesichtspunkten, d.h. wenn die Gesamtheit der analysierten Broschüren diese Anforderung erfüllt hätte.

Zusammenfassung

Als Lösungsansatz für die identifizierten Kommunikationsdefizite in mittelständischen sächsischen Unternehmen wurde in dieser Arbeit das Konzept eines Communications Consultant diskutiert. Unter Communications Consultant verstehen wir einen Kommunikationsexperten, der als ständiger und langfristiger Begleiter für alle Belange rund um die internationale Kommunikation im Unternehmen verantwortlich ist. Mögliche Aufgabenbereiche umfassen zum Beispiel die Entwicklung und Koordination einer internationalen Marketingstrategie im Unternehmen; die Planung und Kontrolle des internationalen Werbebudgets; die Koordination, Kreation und Entwicklung internationaler Werbematerialien, auch in Zusammenarbeit mit externen Dienstleistern; internationale Pressearbeit; die Betreuung des internationalen Internetauftritts sowie die Pflege und Koordination der Online-Promotion; die Vorbereitung und Unterstützung bei internationalen Präsentationen; die Betreuung internationaler Geschäftsbesucher; die Ausführung und Koordination von Übersetzungsaufgaben; die Unterstützung der Mitarbeiter des Unternehmens bei internationaler Geschäftskorrespondenz und Telefongesprächen; die Unterstützung bei der Gestaltung internationaler Verträge; Recherche und Kontaktaufnahme zu potentiellen Kunden und Interessenten im Ausland; Marktforschung im Ausland; die Vorbereitung und Unterstützung bei der Durchführung internationaler Fachmessen; die Vorbereitung von Auslandsreisen und –aufenthalten anderer Mitarbeiter und zuguterletzt den gesamten Bereich des Sprachunterrichts inklusive des interkulturellen Trainings.

Aus diesen vielfältigen Aufgaben ergibt sich, dass ein solcher Kommunikationsberater über eine breite Palette an Kompetenzen verfügen muss, sowohl im sprachlichen als auch im betriebswirtschaftlichen Bereich. Um die Ausbildung einer solch hochqualifizierten Fachkraft zu gewährleisten, sind Ansätze wie zum Beispiel das sogenannte "Chemnitzer Modell" erforderlich, die eine fachübergreifende und integrative Qualifikation ermöglichen.

Die Notwendigkeit der kommunikativen Unterstützung mittelständischer Unternehmen ist sowohl durch die empirische Untersuchung als auch durch die qualitative linguistisch-semiotische Analyse der Werbematerialien eindeutig belegt worden. Auf die Frage der Akzeptanz einer solchen personellen Ressource antworteten fast drei Viertel der befragten Unternehmen (71,4%), dass eine solche Dienstleistung für ihr Unternehmen von großem Nutzen wäre.

Appendix I: Blank Questionnaire used as a basis of the empirical investigation

1. Allgemeine Angaben zum Betrieb

1.1. Zu welchem **Sektor** gehört Ihr Betrieb?

☐ Industrie   Branche? ....

☐ Dienstleistungsunternehmen Branche?...

1.2. Wie viele **Mitarbeiter** beschäftigt Ihre Firma?

☐	1 – 19	☐ 50 – 99		☐ 250 - 499	
☐	20 – 49	☐ 100 – 249		☐ > 500	

1.3. Wann wurde Ihr **Unternehmen gegründet**?

☐vor 1920   ☐1921-1945   ☐1946-1989   ☐1990-1993   ☐nach 1993

1.4. Wo befindet sich der **Hauptsitz** Ihres Unternehmens?   ....

2. Export allgemein

2.1. Wie viel Prozent Ihres **Jahresumsatzes** erzielten Sie **im Ausland**?

	1996	1998	2000
0-10%	☐	☐	☐
10-20%	☐	☐	☐
20-30%	☐	☐	☐
30-40%	☐	☐	☐
40-50%	☐	☐	☐
> 50%	☐	☐	☐

2.2. Welche **Entwicklung Ihrer Exportquote** erwarten Sie in den nächsten Jahren?

☐	gegenwärtige Quote halten	☐	Exportanteil wird sinken
☐	Exporttätigkeit wird steigen	☐	Export wird stark steigen

2.3. Welches sind Ihre **Hauptexportländer**? Bitte ordnen Sie die Länder nach deren Wichtigkeit, beginnend mit dem wichtigsten.

....
....
....
....

2.4. **Kaufen** Sie im Ausland ein?   Ja ☐   Nein ☐

Wenn ja, in welchen Ländern?   ....
....
....

2.5. Welche **Vorbereitungen** treffen Sie, wenn Sie einen neuen Markt erschließen möchten? [*]

☐ Wir definieren genau unsere Ziele und erarbeiten einen strategischen Plan

☐ Wir beschaffen uns genaue Marktinformationen

☐ Wir organisieren Vertriebsstrukturen auf dem neuen Markt

☐ Wir führen Werbemaßnahmen und Marktkommunikation durch

☐ Wir kontrollieren den Erfolg und überarbeiten ggf. die Strategie

☐

andere:...

....

2.6. Mit welchen **Institutionen** arbeiten Sie bei der Erschließung Ihrer Exportmärkte zusammen? [*]

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[*] Mehrfachnennungen möglich

☐   IHK / Auslandshandelskammern
☐   Bundesstelle für Außenhandelsinformationen (bfai)
☐   Botschaften
☐   Private Beratungsunternehmen
☐   Internationale Werbeagenturen
☐   Andere:..

3.   Marketing

3.1.   Erarbeiten Sie einen strategischen **Marketingplan**, um Ihre langfristigen Ziele zu erreichen?

Für den deutschen Markt: ☐ja   ☐nein
Für Ihre Exportmärkte: ☐ja   ☐nein

3.2.   Wo werden **Entscheidungen** über die Marketingstrategie Ihres Unternehmens gefällt?

☐   in unserer Mutterfirma
☐   in unserem Hauptsitz
☐   unser Betrieb / unsere Filiale hat dabei Eigenverantwortung

3.3.   Wie viel **Prozent Ihres Jahresumsatzes** geben Sie für **Werbung** aus?
☐ ca..............%

3.4.   Haben Sie einen **Werbeetat**?   ☐ Ja   ☐ Nein

3.5.   Wie viel Prozent Ihrer **Werbeausgaben** entfallen in etwa auf folgende Bereiche:
Anzeigenwerbung: ....%   Messen:.............%
Werbematerial (Broschüren etc.): ....%   Internet:..............%
Sonstiges:...........%

3.6.   Wie viel Prozent Ihrer Werbekosten entfallen auf **internationale Werbemaßnahmen**?   ....%

3.7.   Welche externen **Dienstleister** beschäftigen Sie in Sachen Marketing?[*]

	Deut. Markt	Exportmärkte
Werbe-, Marketing- und PR-Agenturen	☐	☐
Unternehmensberatungen	☐	☐
Übersetzungsbüros	☐	☐
Keine	☐	☐
Andere:......................................	☐	☐

4. Internationale Geschäftskommunikation

4.1.   Wer ist in Ihrem Unternehmen für folgende **Aufgaben** der internationalen Geschäftskommunikation zuständig?*

	Geschäftsleitung	Sprachlich gut ausgebildete MA	Externe Dienstleister	Andere (Wer?)
Übersetzungen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Erstellung von fremd-sprachlichem Werbematerial	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presse/PR international	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internetauftritt auf Englisch	☐	☐	☐	☐
Betreuung intern. Besucher	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internationale Messen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Präsentationen auf Englisch	☐	☐	☐	☐
Verhandlungen/Dolmetschen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internationale Verträge	☐	☐	☐	☐
Korrespondenz / Telefon	☐	☐	☐	☐

---

[*] Mehrfachnennungen möglich

4.2. Welche **Bedeutung** haben diese Fremdsprachen für Ihre internationale Kommunikation?

	Sehr wichtig	wichtig	unwichtig	keine
Englisch	☐	☐	☐	☐
Französisch	☐	☐	☐	☐
Russisch	☐	☐	☐	☐
Andere:	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.3. Wie würden Sie die **Englischkenntnisse** derjenigen Mitarbeitern Ihres Unternehmens, die mit der Abwicklung internationaler Geschäfte betraut sind, bewerten? (wie Schulnoten 1-6): ....

4.4. Welche Maßnahmen ergreifen Sie zur **fremdsprachlichen Weiterbildung** Ihrer Mitarbeiter?
☐ Wir bieten Sprachkurse im Unternehmen an, deren Teilnahme kostenlos ist
☐ Wir bieten Sprachkurse im Unternehmen an, an deren Kosten sich die Mitarbeiter beteiligen
☐ Unsere Mitarbeiter sorgen selbst für ihre sprachliche Weiterbildung

4.5. Welche Bedeutung messen Sie der **interkulturellen Kompetenz** Ihrer international tätigen Mitarbeiter bei, d.h. deren Sicherheit im Umgang mit fremden Kulturen?
☐ Fundiertes Wissen über die andere Kultur ist die Voraussetzung für unsere erfolgreichen Auslandsgeschäfte
☐ Die Kultur unserer internationalen Geschäftspartner ist der deutschen so ähnlich, dass interkulturelle Unterschiede kaum eine Rolle spielen
☐ Darüber haben wir uns noch keine Gedanken gemacht
☐ Anderes:..

5. Marketing und Werbung auf internationalen Märkten

5.1. Unterscheidet sich das **Marketingkonzept** für Ihre Auslandsmärkte von Ihrem deutschen Konzept?
☐ ja, wir betreiben differenziertes Marketing
☐ nein, unser Marketing ist standardisiert

5.2. In welchem Bereich **werben** Sie hauptsächlich?
☐ B2B (Business-to-Business = Geschäftskundenwerbung)
☐ B2C (Business-to-Consumer = Endverbraucherwerbung)

5.3. Welche der folgenden **Marketinginstrumente** setzt Ihr Unternehmen auf den jeweiligen Märkten ein? Welche Bedeutung besitzen die einzelnen Maßnahmen für die Marketingstrategie Ihres Unternehmens?*

Auf dem deutschen Markt					Auf Exportmärkten			
Sehr wichtig	Wichtig	Un-wichtig	Keine		Sehr wichtig	wichtig	Un-wichtig	Keine
☐	☐	☐	☐	**Messen**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	**Vertreter**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	**Anzeigenwerbung**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	**Direktmarketing**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	**PR / Events**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	**Pressearbeit**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	**Online-Promotion**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	**Andere:**	☐	☐	☐	☐

5.4. Welche **Publikationen** über Ihr Unternehmen stellen Sie Kunden und Interessenten zur Verfügung?*

	deutsch	englisch	Andere Sprachen
Kataloge	☐	☐	☐
Prospekte zur Produktinformation	☐	☐	☐
Imagebroschüren			
Internetpräsentation	☐	☐	☐
Präsentationsmaterialien (Folien etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Geschäftsberichte	☐	☐	☐
Kundenzeitschriften / Newsletter	☐	☐	☐
Pressemappen	☐	☐	☐
Bedienungsanleitungen	☐	☐	☐
Andere:	☐	☐	☐

5.5. In welchem Maße beziehen Sie bei der Erarbeitung und Gestaltung der Materialien für ausländische Märkte **kulturelle Unterschiede** in Ihre Überlegungen ein?

☐ stark ☐ wenig ☐ überhaupt nicht

5.6. In welchen Aspekten passen Sie Ihre Materialien an die kulturellen Gegebenheiten Ihrer Exportländer an?*

☐ Inhalt (z.B. Auswahl, Fokussierung)   ☐ Stil (z.B. persönlich vs. förmlich)

☐ grafische Gestaltung (z.B. Farben, Symbole)   ☐ Andere: ....

5.7. In welchen **zeitlichen Abständen** überarbeiten Sie Ihre Materialien?

☐ Etwa alle 6 Monate   ☐ Alle 2 Jahre
☐ Etwa 1x pro Jahr   ☐ Seltener als alle 2 Jahre

6. Pressearbeit

6.1. An welche nationalen und internationalen Medien versenden Sie **Pressemitteilungen**?
In welchen Medien schalten Sie **Anzeigen**?*

International		Medien	National	
Presse-mitteilungen	Anzeigen	**Medien**	Presse-mitteilungen	Anzeigen
☐	☐	Publikumszeitungen	☐	☐
☐	☐	Publikumszeitschriften	☐	☐
☐	☐	Wirtschaftszeitungen	☐	☐
☐	☐	Wirtschaftszeitschriften	☐	☐
☐	☐	Fachzeitschriften	☐	☐
☐	☐	Presseagenturen/ Pools	☐	☐
☐	☐	Radio- / Fernsehsender	☐	☐
☐	☐	Online Newsgroups	☐	☐
....	....	Andere	....	....

6.2. Zu welchen **Anlässen** informieren Sie die Presse?*

☐ Geschäftsbericht / Umsatz im Vorjahr
☐ Gewinnung eines wichtigen Neukunden
☐ Teilnahme an bedeutenden Messen
☐ Produktinnovation
☐ Veranstaltungen, Events (z.B. Tag der offenen Tür, Sponsoring)
☐ Krisensituationen
☐ Einfach mal so – ein Aufhänger findet sich immer

6.3. **Wie oft** ist Ihre Firma in der Presse präsent?

☐oft ☐eher sporadisch ☐selten ☐nie

7. Messearbeit

7.1. Auf welchen **deutschen Messen mit internationaler Beteiligung** ist Ihre Firma präsent?

....

....

7.2. Auf welchen **Auslandsmessen** beteiligt sich Ihre Firma? (Bitte Name und Ort der Messe angeben)

....

....

7.4. Welche Marketingmaßnahmen ergreifen Sie im **Vorfeld** eines Messeauftritts?*

	Auf deutschen Messen	Auf internat. Messen
Wir laden wichtige Kunden ein	☐	☐
Wir laden Journalisten an unseren Stand ein	☐	☐
Wir versenden Prospekte	☐	☐
Wir schalten Anzeigen in Printmedien	☐	☐
Wir informieren die Presse	☐	☐
Anderes:	....	....

7.5. Welche Maßnahmen ergreifen Sie **während der Messe**, um einen Besuch Ihres Standes für Kunden etc. möglichst attraktiv zu gestalten?*

	Auf deutschen Messen	Auf internat. Messen
Wir treten im Rahmenprogramm auf	☐	☐
Wir sprechen die Sprache der Besucher	☐	☐
Wir halten Material in mehreren Sprachen bereit	☐	☐
Wir setzen nur geschultes Personal ein	☐	☐
Wir gestalten unseren Stand ansprechend	☐	☐
Wir bieten Unterhaltungswert (z.B. Demonstrationen, Multimedia, Aktionen)	☐	☐
Anderes:	....	....

7.6. Wie **bereiten** Sie Ihren Messeauftritt **nach**?*

	Auf deutschen Messen	Auf internat. Messen
Wir schalten erneut Anzeigen	☐	☐
Wir informieren die Presse über den Auftritt	☐	☐
Wir werten die Besucherdaten aus	☐	☐
Wir nehmen Telefonkontakt auf	☐	☐
Wir versenden die gewünschten Materialien	☐	☐
Wir versenden Direktwerbung	☐	☐
Wir schicken Vertreter	☐	☐
Anderes:	....	....

8. Internetpräsenz

8.1.	Präsentiert sich Ihr Unternehmen im Internet?	☐ja	☐nein

8.1.	Existiert Ihr Internetauftritt in einer englischen Version?	☐ja	☐nein

8.2.	Wird Ihr Internetauftritt ständig aktualisiert und gepflegt?	☐ja	☐nein

8.3.	In welchen Geschäftsbereichen nutzen Sie e-commerce?*	Deutsch	Englisch
	Bearbeitung von Anfragen	☐	☐
	Bereitstellen von Informationen (Produkte, Unternehmen)	☐	☐
	Auftragsauslösung / Bestellungen	☐	☐
	Service / Kundendienst	☐	☐
	Zahlungsabwicklung	☐	☐
	Online-Bewerbungen und Stellenangebote	☐	☐
	Online-Shopping	☐	☐
	Andere:..	☐	☐

8.4.	Welche Services bietet Ihre Webpräsenz Ihren Kunden?*	deutsch	Englisch
	Downloads / Updates	☐	☐
	Links	☐	☐
	Unterhaltung	☐	☐
	Newsletter	☐	☐
	Gästebuch, Chat, Forum	☐	☐
	Shop, Bestellmöglichkeit	☐	☐
	Online-Service, Beratung	☐	☐
	Andere:		

8.5. Welche Promotion-Möglichkeiten nutzen Sie, um Ihren Internetauftritt zu vermarkten?*

	Deutsch	Englisch
Eintrag in Suchmaschinen und Webkataloge	☐	☐
Eintrag in Portale und Plattformen	☐	☐
Links auf wichtigen Seiten anderer Anbieter	☐	☐
Bannerwerbung	☐	☐
E-mail-Aktionen	☐	☐
Klassische Werbung (Presse, Printwerbung)	☐	☐
Andere:		

8.6.	Wo liegen die Verantwortlichkeiten für Ihren Internetauftritt ?
	☐ in unserem Hause ☐ bei externen Anbietern

9. Internationales Kommunikationsmanagement

9.1. Wenn Sie die zurzeit in Ihrem Unternehmen eingesetzten Kommunikationsmaßnahmen auf internationalen Märkten analysieren, in welchen Bereichen würden Sie sich professionelle Unterstützung wünschen, um Ihre internationale Marktposition zu verbessern?*

- ☐ Internationale Werbung und PR
- ☐ Internationale Pressearbeit
- ☐ Erstellung fremdsprachlicher Firmenliteratur
- ☐ E-commerce und Pflege des englischsprachigen Internetauftritts
- ☐ Vorbereitung von Präsentationen, Vorträgen etc.
- ☐ Vor-und Nachbereitung internationaler Messen
- ☐ Fremdsprachliche Messebetreuung vor Ort
- ☐ Dolmetschen von Verhandlungen etc.
- ☐ Geschäftskorrespondenz und Telefonate
- ☐ Betreuung ausländischer Geschäftsbesucher
- ☐ Marktforschung auf Exportmärkten
- ☐ Anbahnung von Geschäftskontakten
- ☐ Vorbereitung von Auslandsaufenthalten, Interkulturelles Training
- ☐ Internationale Vertragsgestaltung
- ☐ Englischunterricht für Ihre Mitarbeiter
- ☐ Interkulturelles Training
- ☐ Andere:..

9.2. Könnten Sie sich vorstellen, zur Erfüllung der von Ihnen genannten Aufgaben einen Kommunikationsmanager für Exportmarketing einzusetzen? Hauptaufgabe eines solchen Kommunikationsmanagers ist die internationale Präsentation und Vermarktung Ihres Unternehmens.

- ☐ ja, eine solche Leistung würden wir gern von einem externen Dienstleister in Anspruch nehmen
- ☐ ja, für eine solche Aufgabe könnten wir uns vorstellen, eine qualifizierte Person einzustellen
- ☐ Wir investieren bereits in diesen Bereich und nehmen solcherart Leistungen bereits in Anspruch.
- ☐ dafür haben wir keine finanziellen Mittel
- ☐ nein, das ist für uns nicht interessant

Appendix II: Questionnaire with an overview of the results

1. Allgemeine Angaben zum Betrieb

1.4.	Zu welchem **Sektor** gehört Ihr Betrieb?

☐ Industrie 78,6%
☐ Dienstleistungsunternehmen 20,4%

1.5.	Wie viele **Mitarbeiter** beschäftigt Ihre Firma?

☐   1 – 19 25,2% ☐ 50 – 99 19,4% ☐ 250 – 499 3,9%
☐ 20 – 49 26,2% ☐ 100 – 249 21,4% ☐ > 500 1,9%

1.6.	Wann wurde Ihr **Unternehmen gegründet**?

☐ vor 1920	☐ 1921-1945	☐ 1946-1989	☐ 1990-1993	☐ nach 1993
10,7%	6,8%	15,5%	49,5%	15,5%

1.4.	Wo befindet sich der **Hauptsitz** Ihres Unternehmens? ....

2. Export allgemein

2.2. Wie viel Prozent Ihres **Jahresumsatzes** erzielten Sie **im Ausland**?

	1996	1998	2000
0-10%	52,4%	45,6%	41,7%
10-20%	9,7%	19,4%	20,4%
20-30%	7,8%	7,8%	9,7%
30-40%	5,8%	3,9%	7,8%
40-50%	3,9%	6,85	7,8%
> 50%	4,9%	5,8%	8,7%

2.2.	Welche **Entwicklung Ihrer Exportquote** erwarten Sie in den nächsten Jahren?

☐   gegenwärtige Quote halten 32,7%   ☐ Exportanteil wird sinken 2,0%
☐   Exporttätigkeit wird steigen 58,4%   ☐ port wird stark steigen 6,9%

2.3.	Welches sind Ihre **Hauptexportländer**? Bitte ordnen Sie die Länder nach deren Wichtigkeit, beginnend mit dem wichtigsten.

1. USA / Canada	2. Frankreich
3. Österreich	4. Schweiz
5. Benelux	6. UK
6. Russland / ehem. UdSSR	8. China / Südostasien

2.4.	**Kaufen** Sie im Ausland ein?	Ja 74,5% Nein 25,5%

Wenn ja, in welchen Ländern?
1. Tschechische Republik
2. Italien
3. Frankreich
4. Schweiz
5. UK

2.5.	Welche **Vorbereitungen** treffen Sie, wenn Sie einen neuen Markt erschließen möchten? [*]

45,5%	Wir definieren genau unsere Ziele und erarbeiten einen strategischen Plan
66,3%	Wir beschaffen uns genaue Marktinformationen
45,5%	Wir organisieren Vertriebsstrukturen auf dem neuen Markt
32,7%	Wir führen Werbemaßnahmen und Marktkommunikation durch
28,7%	Wir kontrollieren den Erfolg und überarbeiten ggf. die Strategie
1,9%	andere:...

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[*] Mehrfachnennungen möglich

2.7. Mit welchen **Institutionen** arbeiten Sie bei der Erschließung Ihrer Exportmärkte zusammen? *

72,3%	IHK / Auslandshandelskammern
19,8%	Bundesstelle für Außenhandelsinformationen (bfai)
5,9%	Botschaften
23,8%	Private Beratungsunternehmen
1,0%	Internationale Werbeagenturen
	Andere:...

3. Marketing

3.1. Erarbeiten Sie einen strategischen **Marketingplan**, um Ihre langfristigen Ziele zu erreichen?

Für den deutschen Markt: ☐ja 66,3% ☐nein 33,7%
Für Ihre Exportmärkte: ☐ja 45,4% ☐nein 54,6%

3.2. Wo werden **Entscheidungen** über die Marketingstrategie Ihres Unternehmens gefällt?

☐ in unserer Mutterfirma 8,2%
☐ in unserem Hauptsitz 42,9%
☐ unser Betrieb / unsere Filiale hat dabei Eigenverantwortung 49,0%

3.3. Wie viel **Prozent Ihres Jahresumsatzes** geben Sie für **Werbung** aus?
Ø 2,6%

3.4. Haben Sie einen **Werbeetat**? ☐ Ja 53,9%   ☐ Nein 46,1%

3.6. Wie viel Prozent Ihrer **Werbeausgaben** entfallen in etwa auf folgende Bereiche:
Anzeigenwerbung: 14%   Messen: 44%
Werbematerial (Broschüren etc.): 24%   Internet: 9%   Sonstiges: 9%

3.6. Wie viel Prozent Ihrer Werbekosten entfallen auf **internationale Werbemaßnahmen**? ....%

3.7. Welche externen **Dienstleister** beschäftigen Sie in Sachen Marketing?[*]

	Deutscher Markt	Exportmärkte
Werbe-, Marketing- und PR-Agenturen	54,4%	24,3%
Unternehmensberatungen	6,8%	7,8%
Übersetzungsbüros	10,7%	23,3%
Keine	32,0%	39,8%
Andere:......................................	1,0%	1,0%

4. Internationale Geschäftskommunikation

6.2. Wer ist in Ihrem Unternehmen für folgende **Aufgaben** der internationalen Geschäftskommunikation zuständig?*

	Geschäftsleitung	Sprachlich gut ausgebildete MA	Externe Dienstleister	Andere (Wer?)
Übersetzungen	35%	58%	49%	☐
Erstellung von fremd-sprachlichem Werbematerial	28%	34%	53%	☐
Presse/PR international	34%	18%	21%	☐
Internetauftritt auf Englisch	20%	32%	38%	☐
Betreuung intern. Besucher	69%	52%	6%	☐
Internationale Messen	54%	42%	12%	☐

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[*] Mehrfachnennungen möglich

Präsentationen auf Englisch	43%	44%	16%	☐
Verhandlungen/Dolmetschen	44%	48%	30%	☐
Internationale Verträge	53%	31%	21%	☐
Korrespondenz / Telefon	59%	71%	2%	☐

4.2. Welche **Bedeutung** haben diese Fremdsprachen für Ihre internationale Kommunikation?

	Sehr wichtig	wichtig	unwichtig	keine
Englisch	86,4%	10,7%	1,9%	1,0%
Französisch	10,7%	27,2%	33,0%	29,1%
Russisch	10,7%	22,3%	30,1%	36,9%
Andere:	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.3. Wie würden Sie die **Englischkenntnisse** derjenigen Mitarbeitern Ihres Unternehmens, die mit der Abwicklung internationaler Geschäfte betraut sind, bewerten? (wie Schulnoten 1-6): Ø 2,6

4.4. Welche Maßnahmen ergreifen Sie zur **fremdsprachlichen Weiterbildung** Ihrer Mitarbeiter?
43,4% Wir bieten Sprachkurse im Unternehmen an, deren Teilnahme kostenlos ist
7,1% Wir bieten Sprachkurse im Unternehmen an, an deren Kosten sich die Mitarbeiter beteiligen
44,4% Unsere Mitarbeiter sorgen selbst für ihre sprachliche Weiterbildung

4.5. Welche Bedeutung messen Sie der **interkulturellen Kompetenz** Ihrer international tätigen Mitarbeiter bei, d.h. deren Sicherheit im Umgang mit fremden Kulturen?
49,0% Fundiertes Wissen über die andere Kultur ist die Voraussetzung für unsere erfolgreichen Auslandsgeschäfte
16,7% Die Kultur unserer internationalen Geschäftspartner ist der deutschen so ähnlich, dass interkulturelle Unterschiede kaum eine Rolle spielen
28,4% Darüber haben wir uns noch keine Gedanken gemacht
☐
Anderes:..

7. Marketing und Werbung auf internationalen Märkten

5.1. Unterscheidet sich das **Marketingkonzept** für Ihre Auslandsmärkte von Ihrem deutschen Konzept?
62,2% ja, wir betreiben differenziertes Marketing
35,6% nein, unser Marketing ist standardisiert

5.2. In welchem Bereich **werben** Sie hauptsächlich?
88,9% B2B (Business-to-Business = Geschäftskundenwerbung)
9,1% B2C (Business-to-Consumer = Endverbraucherwerbung)

5.3. Welche der folgenden **Marketinginstrumente** setzt Ihr Unternehmen auf den jeweiligen Märkten ein? Welche Bedeutung besitzen die einzelnen Maßnahmen für die Marketingstrategie Ihres Unternehmens?*

Auf dem deutschen Markt					Auf Exportmärkten			
Sehr wichtig	Wichtig	Un-wichtig	Keine		Sehr wichtig	wichtig	Un-wichtig	Keine
47,1%	29,4%	7,8%	15,7%	**Messen**	42,2%	28,4%	7,8%	21,6%
31,4%	19,6%	15,7%	33,3%	**Vertreter**	42,2%	28,4%	7,8%	21,6%
6,9%	39,2%	28,4%	25,5%	**Anzeigenwerbung**	3,9%	20,6%	30,4%	45,1%
36,3%	26,5%	8,8%	28,4%	**Direktmarketing**	25,5%	23,5%	15,7%	35,3%
10,8%	23,5%	19,6%	46,1%	**PR / Events**	4,9%	17,6%	12,7%	64,7%
16,7%	41,2%	15,7%	26,5%	**Pressearbeit**	6,9%	23,5%	23,5%	46,1%
6,9%	39,2%	16,7%	37,3%	**Online-Promotion**	7,8%	27,5%	15,7%	49,0%

□	□	□	□	**Andere:**	□	□	□	□

5.4. Welche **Publikationen** über Ihr Unternehmen stellen Sie Kunden und Interessenten zur Verfügung?*

	deutsch	englisch	Andere Sprachen
Kataloge	60,8%	47,1%	19,6%
Prospekte zur Produktinformation	88,2%	68,6%	24,5%
Imagebroschüren	21,6%	15,7%	2,9%
Internetpräsentation	87,3%	60,8%	7,8%
Präsentationsmaterialien (Folien etc.)	53,9%	40,2%	9,8%
Geschäftsberichte	16,7%	4,9%	0%
Kundenzeitschriften / Newsletter	8,9%	2,9%	1%
Pressemappen	20,6%	10,8%	2%
Bedienungsanleitungen	44,1%	33,3%	15,7%
Andere:	9,8%		

5.5. In welchem Maße beziehen Sie bei der Erarbeitung und Gestaltung der Materialien für ausländische Märkte **kulturelle Unterschiede** in Ihre Überlegungen ein?
19,0% stark   51,0% wenig   30,0% überhaupt nicht

5.7. In welchen Aspekten passen Sie Ihre Materialien an die kulturellen Gegebenheiten Ihrer Exportländer an?*
36,3% Inhalt (z.B. Auswahl, Fokussierung)   20,6% Stil (z.B. persönlich vs. förmlich)
16,7% grafische Gestaltung (z.B. Farben, Symbole)

5.7. In welchen **zeitlichen Abständen** überarbeiten Sie Ihre Materialien?
15,3% Etwa alle 6 Monate   26,5% Alle 2 Jahre
40,8% Etwa 1x pro Jahr   17,3% Seltener als alle 2 Jahre

8. Pressearbeit

8.1. An welche nationalen und internationalen Medien versenden Sie **Pressemitteilungen**?
In welchen Medien schalten Sie **Anzeigen**?*

International			National	
Presse-mitteilungen	Anzeigen	**Medien**	Presse-mitteilungen	Anzeigen
4,9%	1,0%	Publikumszeitungen	22,5%	12,7%
2,0%	2,0%	Publikumszeitschriften	1,0%	2,0%
7,8%	3,9%	Wirtschaftszeitungen	13,7%	9,8%
5,9%	4,9%	Wirtschaftszeitschriften	16,7%	9,8%
30,4%	25,5%	Fachzeitschriften	54%	44,1%
6,9%	0%	Presseagenturen/ Pools	14,7%	0%
4,9%	1%	Radio- / Fernsehsender	10,8%	3,9%
1,0%	0%	Online Newsgroups	2,9%	0%
....	....	Andere	....	....

6.2. Zu welchen **Anlässen** informieren Sie die Presse?*
5,9% Geschäftsbericht / Umsatz im Vorjahr
15,7% Gewinnung eines wichtigen Neukunden
51,0% Teilnahme an bedeutenden Messen
58,8% Produktinnovation
34,3% Veranstaltungen, Events (z.B. Tag der offenen Tür, Sponsoring)
2,0% Krisensituationen
29,4% Einfach mal so – ein Aufhänger findet sich immer

6.3. **Wie oft** ist Ihre Firma in der Presse präsent?

16% oft   52% eher sporadisch   26% selten   6% nie

7. Messearbeit

7.1. Auf welchen **deutschen Messen mit internationaler Beteiligung** ist Ihre Firma präsent?

....
....

7.2. Auf welchen **Auslandsmessen** beteiligt sich Ihre Firma? (Bitte Name und Ort der Messe angeben)

....
....
....

7.5. Welche Marketingmaßnahmen ergreifen Sie im **Vorfeld** eines Messeauftritts?*

	Auf deutschen Messen	Auf internat. Messen
Wir laden wichtige Kunden ein	77,5%	73,1%
Wir laden Journalisten an unseren Stand ein	17,5%	15,4%
Wir versenden Prospekte	52,5%	48,1%
Wir schalten Anzeigen in Printmedien	45%	23,1%
Wir informieren die Presse	40%	36,5%
Anderes:	....	....

7.5. Welche Maßnahmen ergreifen Sie **während der Messe**, um einen Besuch Ihres Standes für Kunden etc. möglichst attraktiv zu gestalten?*

	Auf deutschen Messen	Auf internat. Messen
Wir treten im Rahmenprogramm auf	13,8%	11,5%
Wir sprechen die Sprache der Besucher	52,2%	69,2%
Wir halten Material in mehreren Sprachen bereit	61,3%	69,2%
Wir setzen nur geschultes Personal ein	68,8%	67,3%
Wir gestalten unseren Stand ansprechend	88,8%	73,1%
Wir bieten Unterhaltungswert (z.B. Demonstrationen, Multimedia, Aktionen)	28,8%	25%
Anderes:	....	....

7.6. Wie **bereiten** Sie Ihren Messeauftritt **nach**?*

	Auf deutschen Messen	Auf internat. Messen
Wir schalten erneut Anzeigen	8,8%	7,7%
Wir informieren die Presse über den Auftritt	21,3%	13,5%
Wir werten die Besucherdaten aus	81,3%	76,9%
Wir nehmen Telefonkontakt auf	80%	69,2%
Wir versenden die gewünschten Materialien	87,5%	86,5%

Wir versenden Direktwerbung	27,5%	28,8%
Wir schicken Vertreter	51,3%	50%
Anderes:	....	....

8. Internetpräsenz

8.1.   Präsentiert sich Ihr Unternehmen im Internet?   95% ja

8.1.   Existiert Ihr Internetauftritt in einer englischen Version?   59,2% ja

8.2.   Wird Ihr Internetauftritt ständig aktualisiert und gepflegt?   84,2% ja

8.4. In welchen Geschäftsbereichen nutzen Sie e-commerce?*	Deutsch	Englisch
Bearbeitung von Anfragen	☐ 59,6%	☐ 69%
Bereitstellen von Informationen (Produkte, Unternehmen)	☐ 68,7%	☐ 79%
Auftragsauslösung / Bestellungen	☐ 36,4%	☐ 27,6%
Service / Kundendienst	☐ 22,2%	☐ 24,1%
Zahlungsabwicklung	☐ 31,3%	☐ 13,8%
Online-Bewerbungen und Stellenangebote	☐ 21,2%	☐ 12,1%
Online-Shopping	☐ 14,1%	☐ 6,9%
Andere:..	☐	☐

8.4. Welche Services bietet Ihre Webpräsenz Ihren Kunden?*	deutsch	Englisch
Downloads / Updates	☐ 26,3%	☐ 24,1%
Links	☐ 48,5%	☐ 50%
Unterhaltung	☐ 7,1%	☐ 6,9%
Newsletter	☐ 20,2%	☐ 15,5%
Gästebuch, Chat, Forum	☐ 12,1%	☐ 6,9%
Shop, Bestellmöglichkeit	☐ 29,3%	☐ 29,3%
Online-Service, Beratung	☐	☐
Andere:		

8.5.   Welche Promotion-Möglichkeiten nutzen Sie, um Ihren Internetauftritt zu vermarkten?*

	Deutsch	Englisch
Eintrag in Suchmaschinen und Webkataloge	☐ 79,8%	☐ 77,6%
Eintrag in Portale und Plattformen	☐ 33,3%	☐ 32,8%
Links auf wichtigen Seiten anderer Anbieter	☐ 29,3%	☐ 31%
Bannerwerbung	☐ 6,1%	☐ 1,7%
E-mail-Aktionen	☐ 16,2%	☐ 12,1%
Klassische Werbung (Presse, Printwerbung)	☐ 37,4%	☐ 29,3%
Andere:		

8.7.   Wo liegen die Verantwortlichkeiten für Ihren Internetauftritt ?
       ☐ in unserem Hause 85,4%   ☐ bei externen Anbietern 10,4%

9. Internationales Kommunikationsmanagement

9.1.   Wenn Sie die zurzeit in Ihrem Unternehmen eingesetzten Kommunikationsmaßnahmen auf internationalen Märkten analysieren, in welchen Bereichen würden Sie sich professionelle Unterstützung wünschen, um Ihre internationale Marktposition zu verbessern?*

       26,5%   Internationale Werbung und PR
       21,6%   Internationale Pressearbeit
       26,5%   Erstellung fremdsprachlicher Firmenliteratur
       23,5%   E-commerce und Pflege des englischsprachigen Internetauftritts
       7,8%   Vorbereitung von Präsentationen, Vorträgen etc.
       8,8%   Vor-und Nachbereitung internationaler Messen
       12,7%   Fremdsprachliche Messebetreuung vor Ort

8,8% Dolmetschen von Verhandlungen etc.
10,8% Geschäftskorrespondenz und Telefonate
6,9% Betreuung ausländischer Geschäftsbesucher
30,4% Marktforschung auf Exportmärkten
46,1% Anbahnung von Geschäftskontakten
14,7% Vorbereitung von Auslandsaufenthalten, Interkulturelles Training
15,7% Internationale Vertragsgestaltung
36,3% Englischunterricht für Ihre Mitarbeiter
13,7% Interkulturelles Training
☐ Andere:...

9.2. Könnten Sie sich vorstellen, zur Erfüllung der von Ihnen genannten Aufgaben einen Kommunikationsmanager für Exportmarketing einzusetzen? Hauptaufgabe eines solchen Kommunikationsmanagers ist die internationale Präsentation und Vermarktung Ihres Unternehmens.

8,8% ja, eine solche Leistung würden wir gern von einem externen Dienstleister in Anspruch nehmen
12,1% ja, für eine solche Aufgabe könnten wir uns vorstellen, eine qualifizierte Person einzustellen
7,7% Wir investieren bereits in diesen Bereich und nehmen solcherart Leistungen bereits in Anspruch.
42,9% dafür haben wir keine finanziellen Mittel
28,6% nein, das ist für uns nicht interessant

Appendix III: Linguistic Analysis of 24 Sample Brochures

Sample No.	1
Industry	life sciences, pharmacy
Perspective	information presented in appellative style, backed with emotional stories and slices of life, customers experiencing the benefits of the products; very good mix of perspectives
Use of pronouns	WE: "We are at home all over the world"; 3rd person sing: "XX GmbH has a good pedigree - and this is perceptible in many respects."; YOU: "Your vision will supply us with new challenges."; different perspectives mixed freely, sometimes within the same sentence, often within the same page; still, the overall impression is that of a customer-oriented approach.
Title	purely informative "XX GmbH. Pharmaceuticals, fine chemicals, renewable resources"
Headline concept	yes, emotional headline concept, statements of general truth: "It is good not to be alone.", "What really counts in life is a reliable partner."
Subheads	yes, emotional and focussing on customer benefits: "It is getting easier to lead a healthy life" or "Competitiveness results from flexible thinking and pinpoint action", others are purely factual introductory statements: "Substances with a potential" or "Innovation: Biodiesel"
Captions	no, but images rather serve to create impressions than actually refer to something concrete, very emotional images of people using the products mixed with informative images presenting the production process; images are mostly sufficiently explained by headlines and subheads
Slogan	no
Syntax	some ellipses: "Otherwise the best idea is worth nothing."; sentences starting with additive conjunctions: "And if someone else has a good idea, we do not hesitate to purchase it and combine it with ours." Or: "Or for processing natural resources."; general syntactic structure: short sentences with one clear message; some keywords for easy grasp of contents
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	factual, formal, some idioms and phrasal verbs: "In spite of its difficult handling, chlorine is indispensable for economically and ecologically viable production processes."
Spelling/grammar	no mistakes
Conventions	well adapted
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	one false friend: "gummy bears" for "jelly babies"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	yes, but moderately used and well-explained to ensure broader understanding
Syntactic interference	none
Visual appearance	high-quality images, professional layout, premium paper, folder with flap, consistent layout
Use of photos	high-quality images with an emotional appeal

Layout / scannability	very good, combination of images, headlines, structured by subheads, some highlighted keywords to enhance scannability, use of charts and bars
Overall impression	very good, attractive mix of information presented in an emotional style appealing to customer **rating: very good**

Sample No.	2
Industry	precision technology
Perspective	purely informative, focus on products
Use of pronouns	WE (predominant): "Having access to all established rapid prototyping methods, we can provide the technically and economically best solution for prototypes in plastic or metal."; combined with "YOU": "Offering individual advice and guaranteeing full protection of your ideas, our strategies will help you find the best possible solutions..."
Title	emotional: "What nut can we crack for you?", visually attractive presentation (hole punched in cover, yields view of a historic press cracking a nut)
Headline concept	no, no structured text at all
Subheads	no
Captions	yes (pictures of sample products with descriptions of what can be seen)
Slogan	no
Syntax	no block language, complex sentences predominate
Creativity: stylistic devices	metaphor on title ("What nut can we crack for you?")
Register	formal
Spelling/grammar	spelling mistakes (researche, construktions)
Conventions	okay
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	okay
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	yes, but explained by pictures
Syntactic interference	long-winding attribute: "Combining classical casting methods with the then only just emerging rapid prototyping technology from the very start…"; wrong word order: "upon request scaled up or down"
Visual appearance	high-quality print and finishing (heavy-weight paper, C-fold and flap, punched cover)
Use of photos	a few: products (cut out) and view of the company building; not very attractive
Layout / scannability	use of captions; table
Overall impression	good print and finishing, average design, poor linguistic quality, self-focussing argumentation **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	3
Industry	production of textiles / fabrics
Perspective	attractive and unusual emotional approach, company presented in slices of life, everyday situations described in news-style keywords and ellipses from the personal perspective (figurative perspective) of an employee or managing partner, conveying both information and creating an appellative atmosphere
Use of pronouns	almost none, because keywords and phrases predominate the style. If pronouns are used, it is mainly a descriptive 3rd person singular: "Mario Röbi Röbert is driving 33.000 km a year with his fork lift truck. If he's not sitting on his truck, he's performing as an entertainer."
Title	"Guter Strick" - attractive summary in German, but why only in German?
Headline concept	no headlines
Subheads	no subheads
Captions	all copy functions as explanatory caption of the pictures on the page, very short copy in general (ca. 20 words)
Slogan	no
Syntax	mostly keywords and phrases, some ellipses: "The knitting plant. 200 metres long, 60 metres wide, totally air-conditioned."
Creativity: stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	informal (use of contractions): "Bernd Wagner doesn't know a better sound like 20.000 industrious rotating knitting needles. Maybe the 'Slavonic Dances' of Dvorak." Or: "If he's not sitting on his truck, he's performing as an entertainer."
Spelling/grammar	many grammar mistakes: "a better sound like 20.000 industrious rotating knitting needles" (wrong comparative particle, adjective instead of adverb); wrong passive formation and wrong punctuation: "Products are only successful, if they are distinguish from each other"; severe spelling mistake with semantic consequences: "dying" instead of "dyeing": "shift change at the dying machine" (next to a picture showing two people, a machine and a warning sign saying: "Vorsicht! Säure und Lauge"); another severe spelling mistake in description of weather: "Fork. Sleet. 2°C." (Fork is supposed to mean *fog*)
Conventions	German conventions: thousands are separated by dots instead of commas ("33.000 km" or "20.000 knitting needles2); wrong separation in "industrio-us"
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	none
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	moderate usage
Syntactic interference	use of German comparison structure: "no better sound like"
Visual appearance	high-quality structured paper, unusual format (A6), wrapped in fabric bag made from the material produced by the company (additional function of serving as a sample)
Use of photos	interesting use of images presenting unusual, very personal

	perspectives, very personal pictures of executives and employees, portrayed in their everyday working environment, creates a very appealing emotional atmosphere, beautiful detail shots and "motion" pictures
Layout / scannability	very short copy does not require means to enhance scannability
Overall impression	very attractive brochure from a haptic and visual perspective, unusual, personal, emotional approach, big plus: copy in four languages (German, English, French, Italian), but unfortunately poor linguistic quality of foreign-language copy ridicules the good intentions. **Rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	4
Industry	research, metallurgy
Perspective	products and applications, purely informative, factual and product-oriented
Use of pronouns	WE (predominating) and "the customers" (3rd person): "The demands are a great challenge to us. Our customers need solutions for the future."; some direct references with "YOU": "You give preference to precious metal surface coating?"
Title	name of company, purely informative
Headline concept	naming production methods
Subheads	no subheads (text blocks are short enough)
Captions	one picture is explained in caption, although all pictures would need explaining
Slogan	no
Syntax	no block language, complex sentence structure
Creativity: stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	very formal style, specialist language: "Whether it is a question of ores, recyclable waste material or useful material, we optimally adapt the necessary reprocessing steps to the forerun material and guarantee efficient and environmentally compatible processes."
Spelling/grammar	few spelling mistakes (e.g. capitalisation in: "using State-of-the-art equipment"); a few grammatical flaws: wrong tense in: "For over fifty years, XX *is* the competent contact of the industry.", frequent omission of definite articles as in: "in beverage industry";
Conventions	okay
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	frequent mistake: "technique" instead of "technology" "as in "thin-film technique" or "solar technique", some words are left in German without explanation ("according to the Kreislaufwirtschaft- und Abfallgesetz"); wrong choice of words in: "only in the later case"; superfluous use of infinitive particle "to" in: "All these processes and also laser technology help us TO meet the special demands of our customers."; "series production" instead of "serial production"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many (e.g. sputtering targets, clamped construction, vacuum plasma spraying, wave and reflow soldering in reactive inert gas…)
Syntactic interference	typical German nominal style as in: "Complete takeover of these process steps is also possible.", extensive attributes: "materials diagnostic investigations"
Visual appearance	semi-gloss paper, oblong format, high-quality images, good implementation of corporate identity (the colour blue predominates photos, images and design elements).
Use of photos	good quality, mostly showing products or machines
Layout / scannability	clear structure, some charts and drawings
Overall impression	very technical brochure of high information value without the slightest trace of emotion or customer appeal to a wider audience apart from experts **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	5
Industry	hair care products
Perspective	appellative presentation of product information
Use of pronouns	YOU predominates: "To feel good from top to toe, you need the right partners.", "work wonders on your hair"
Title	emotional and metaphorical: "Heading for Harmony"
Headline concept	yes
Subheads	yes (names of products)
Captions	yes (photos of products, explained in key)
Slogan	yes: "There's a name for beautiful hair."
Syntax	simple sentence structure, ellipses: "Like the shampoo and balsam from the new Londial harmony hair care range."
Creativity: stylistic devices	yes: alliterations: "Heading for harmony.", "from top to toe", "work wonders"; metaphors: "Heading for harmony", "work wonders on your hair and soul", "combat stubborn dandruff"
Register	informal (e.g. contractions: "There's a name for beautiful hair")
Spelling/grammar	no mistakes
Conventions	okay, American English ("color", "stabilize")
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	none
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	made for general understanding
Syntactic interference	none
Visual appearance	small format (A6), very emotional appearance (pastel shades, happy people using the products, smiling), focus on emotions, curved lines predominate
Use of photos	focus on happy people, products in very professional presentation
Layout / scannability	good
Overall impression	very professional, emotional presentation for end-users **rating: very good**

Sample No.	6
Industry	low-voltage switchgear and control gear
Perspective	informative, product-oriented (presentation of company, its history and products)
Use of pronouns	few pronouns used, references in 3rd person to "the company", some references to "WE" ("…ensure that we can increasingly meet the requirements of our customers…")
Title	no title
Headline concept	none (just one sheet)
Subheads	yes, structural and informative ("company profile", "address" etc.)
Captions	yes (description of products shown in the picture)
Slogan	no
Syntax	simple and complex sentences, no ellipses (e.g. "The technical knowledge and expertise of both companies, the professionalism and skills of their staff, and the many years experience in the production of l.v.h.r.c. material ensure that we can increasingly meet the requirements of our customers much better in future.")
Creativity: stylistic devices	none
Register	formal
Spelling/grammar	no severe mistakes, "controlgear" should be spelt as two words in English
Conventions	okay (e.g. telephone numbers with country code)
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	none
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	yes (due to descriptive nature, e.g. "vertical fuse switch connectors")
Syntactic interference	attributive use of relative clause ("…the many years experience in the production of…") many impersonal constructions due to 3rd person reference ("The company in A. has specialised in the development if l.v.h.r.c. fuses, whereas the company at V. has focused its efforts on low voltage switchgear and controlgear."
Visual appearance	very simple
Use of photos	one photo displaying range of products
Layout / scannability	scannable layout (copy + sections explained in keywords)
Overall impression	very basic promotional material, conveying only necessary information in a very straightforward manner **rating: poor**

Sample No.	7
Industry	packaging systems
Perspective	informative, some appellative elements ("Do you make car components? montara will handle all of your packaging needs."
Use of pronouns	WE / YOU: "What we offer" / "How you benefit"
Title	climax: "Local, Global, Packable – Universal" + name of company
Headline concept	yes, descriptive headlines ("What we offer", "How you benefit", "Contact us")
Subheads	yes (product and service oriented)
Captions	no
Slogan	descriptive slogan: Packaging systems.
Syntax	keywords and simple sentences ("Our skilled staff is highly-motivated and committed to creativity, reliability and efficiency."
Creativity: stylistic devices	climax on title ("Local, Global, Packable – Universal"
Register	informal
Spelling/grammar	wrong plural of data: "data's"
Conventions	okay (e.g. country code in telephone number)
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"construction department" for "design department"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	yes (e.g. "DMU-analysis")
Syntactic interference	none
Visual appearance	simple layout, average design
Use of photos	drawings of products (in relation to design services offered)
Layout / scannability	scannable layout
Overall impression	simple presentation material, linguistic quality OK **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	8
Industry	precision parts
Perspective	informative, focus on products and services
Use of pronouns	WE predominates: "We manufacture:", "We have got:" and "We are supplying:", one reference to YOU: "precision parts according to your drawings or CAD documents"
Title	name of company + claim "Precision is our strength"
Headline concept	yes ("We manufacture:", "We have got:" and "We are supplying")
Subheads	no (not needed in short copy)
Captions	no (although necessary for many application pictures)
Slogan	no
Syntax	keywords only in brochure, simple sentences on accompanying fact sheet
Creativity: stylistic devices	repetition of initial "we" in headlines
Register	okay
Spelling/grammar	incorrect use of plural in "from any machinable materials" wrong attributive use in "with utmost surface finish" wrong plural of "axis": "5 axis" wrong demonstrative pronoun in: "This parts consist of…" wrong comparative particle in "less then" wrong aspect in "We are supplying:" wrong attribute "high precise lathe" (should be either "high-precision lathe" or "highly precise lathe") adjective used in adverbial phrase: "The CNC programs are central organised." wrong subject-verb correspondence in: "The rests are nearly each construction material that can be shaved, like: bronze, brass…" wrong spelling: "Renevals " for "renewals"
Conventions	commas instead of dots to separate decimals: "0,00039 inch", no country code in telephone number, headline for address still in German: ("Unsere Anschrift"); American English ("control programs") mixed with British English ("machining centres")
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"Titan" for "titanium", "Technical dates" for "technical data" "curses" for "courses"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some ("stock removal rates", "heavy carbon steel")
Syntactic interference	German word order: "For production normally milling processing centres are used with up to 5 controlled axis…", "Typical is the usage of small cutter diameters…", "Unusual is the processing of iron, cast material and heavy carbon steel."
Visual appearance	average design, good implementation of CI guidelines (blue is the dominant colour in design elements, images and cover)
Use of photos	many photos showing the machines and the products, some photos with people working on these machines, no captions
Layout / scannability	good scannability (short blocks with highlighted keywords)

Overall impression	basic form of promotional material, poor linguistic quality with too many mistakes, some of them ridiculing the serious intentions (e.g. "Titan 5%", or "Within the internal curses there is a qualification of the employees…") **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	9
Industry	development of textile machinery
Perspective	informative (focus on company, history and services)
Use of pronouns	WE (predominates) and "our customers" (3rd person): "For our customers, we develop new, economical and innovative products and processes to boost their competitiveness", "We attach great importance to establishing personal contacts with our customers."; some YOU references: "With our know-how, you will always have the edge over your competitors."
Title	name of company
Headline concept	structural and informative ("Company Portrayal", "Technical Competence", "Promotion Society")
Subheads	yes (structural function): "Fields of activity", "Technical base"
Captions	logos of reference companies printed into the picture of the respective machine
Slogan	no
Syntax	very long and complex sentences, many participle constructions, semi-scientific style: "Our staff, numbering more than 40, embodies many years of experience gathered in all spheres of textile machine building, starting from thread and fabric production up to textile finishing and the manufacture of ready-made clauses.", "Its origins date back to 1957, when the Institut für Textilmaschinen, which was merged in the 1980's with Nähwirkmaschinenbau Malimo to form the institute Textimaforschung Malimo, was created.", "The tasks of the Promotion Society include the promotion of fundamental research in the pre-competitive stage and of application-oriented research in the field of textile machine building and related fields as well as assisting in the co-operation between textile machine builders, the component-making industry, scientific facilities and other regional bodies."
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	very formal due to complex syntactic structure and choice of vocabulary ("attest to")
Spelling/grammar	no mistakes
Conventions	okay
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"Portrayal" for "Portrait"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	okay
Syntactic interference	complex sentence structure is related to long-winding German originals
Visual appearance	okay
Use of photos	4 photos of machines and 1 picture showing the senior

	executives
Layout / scannability	good structure, headline – subheads- keywords
Overall impression	very factual approach in an elevated, sometimes stilted style **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	10
Industry	medical engineering, mortuary equipment
Perspective	informative, focus on products and services, philosophy, history; some appellative elements: "Don't worry about the future" (which has a macabre taste in the context of funeral products!)
Use of pronouns	WE and YOU: "With our products you work rationally, easily and will save time."; some 3rd person references to products ("XX Mortuary refrigerators don't only prove their worth in fixed locations…"); 3rd person reference to company: "…the company concentrated on manufacturing and distributing…"
Title	company name + claim: "More than 30 years Innovation Tradition Competence" + contact data
Headline concept	yes, product categories
Subheads	yes, structural function (sub-categories of products)
Captions	some images are explained, some are not
Slogan	no
Syntax	mix of short ("More than 30 co-workers are employed for planning, production and assemblage.") and longer sentences with a simple structure ("Modern production technics, especially in stainless steel products, and the extensive market experience of more than 30 years are the foundation for the complete and experienced XX-program."); some ellipses: "Safety" (Headline) "…an important aspect." (continuation)
Creativity: stylistic devices	No
Register	informal (e.g. contractions): "XX Mortuary refrigerators don't only prove their worth…", "Don't worry about the future!"
Spelling/grammar	wrong passive formation in: "Design should be pleasing to be hold, to touch and to use."; mixed use of capital and small letters in captions, e.g. "Parallel Vice made of stainless steel for large animal skulls", "Preparating Room Equipment for Anatomy Institute"; use of abbreviated words ("elt." for electric, "hydr." for "hydraulic"); some spelling mistakes ("chaine" for "chain")
Conventions	no country code in telephone number; American English ("program")
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"assemblage" for "assembly" "modern production technics" instead of "technology" "von der ersten Idee" translated as "from the first notion on" wrong use of word in: "the assembly takes place directly on sight" (meaning "on site"). "preparating" for "preserving" or "dissecting"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	yes, but explained in pictures
Syntactic interference	German word order: "From us you receive:", "to make constantly that which is good even better.";

	some strange renderings: "in case of order"
Visual appearance	two-colour print (black and blue), images in grey-scales, poor image quality, otherwise functional and straightforward design
Use of photos	many photos in poor quality (due to two-colour print)
Layout / scannability	use of many photos with short descriptions, some drawings and tables further enhance scannability
Overall impression	simple appearance, very informative, poor image quality **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	11
Industry	apparatuses
Perspective	descriptive, but containing lots of interesting facts, making for worthwhile reading, many technical details
Use of pronouns	3rd person predominates ("the company", "its customers": "XX has extensive expertise and know-how, which is continually being improved.", "The company is able to offer its customers complete one-stop-solutions…"), some WE references: "Depending on customer's request, our scope of supplies and services may include the development…"; no YOU references at all
Title	name of company and description in German (Apparate- und Stahlbau)
Headline concept	yes, factual approach (history, range of products, manufacture…)
Subheads	yes, factual structuring (welding methods, testing, transport capabilities)
Captions	yes, very good description of pictures, conveying interesting information
Slogan	yes: "A Tradition of Excellence and Reliability"
Syntax	many complex sentences featuring participle constructions: "With the establishment of XX AG on 31 March 1998, a new chapter in the history of XX was opened, the company now being restructured for the requirements currently existing in the apparatus and equipment market." Or: "Having more than 30 years experience in the development and manufacture of complex apparatuses and operating successfully in the market, XX's management is confident that the company will also be able to successfully cope with the challenges ahead."
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	formal ("the aforesaid applications", many gerunds and participle clauses)
Spelling/grammar	minor mistakes (no comma in non-defining relative clause: "This company which s also located on the XX plant site, performs for us:"
Conventions	okay (decimals separated by dots (22.0m, 5.4m)), but no German country code given
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	No
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many ("tubular heat exchangers", "vessels of double-shell type")
Syntactic interference	some incidents of untypical, rather German word order ("We are not just a supplier of apparatuses for the aforesaid applications, but have also the capability …." Clumsy attributes: "a company looking back at a long apparatus-making tradition"
Visual appearance	high-gloss paper, appealing front cover photograph
Use of photos	high-quality photos with high informative value, depicting impressive reference projects of the company; German key to photo of the premises
Layout /	scannable layout due to use of many photos and keyword

scannability	descriptions
Overall impression	interesting presentation with impressive photos, good linguistic quality **rating: good**

Sample No.	**12**
Industry	supplier of parts
Perspective	purely product-oriented plus brief introduction of company history
Use of pronouns	WE, a few references to company and customers in 3rd person singular: "We are, of course, well aware of the importance that our international partners and clients attach to the certified quality standards."
Title	purely informative: name of the company
Headline concept	product categories
Subheads	no, very little copy, enumerating range of products in keywords
Captions	no
Slogan	no
Syntax	keywords, in long copy complex sentence structure
Creativity: stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	formal
Spelling/grammar	no grammar/spelling mistakes
Conventions	okay, e.g. "diameter from 2.5mm to 120mm"
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	none
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many (e.g. assembled phenolic caps for screw-terminal capacitators)
Syntactic interference	use of passive constructions where active forms could/should have been used in English, e.g.: "Even components of extremely high complexity can be designed, manufactured and delivered in good time by our experienced team."
Visual appearance	okay, average appearance
Use of photos	details of products + company building
Layout / scannability	very good scannability (only headlines and keywords)
Overall impression	very technical brochure of high information value without the slightest trace of emotion or customer appeal to a wider audience apart from experts; English and German in one brochure **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	13
Industry	stationery
Perspective	focus in products and company
Use of pronouns	3rd person only, referring to "the company", "the customers" and "the products"
Title	only one sheet, no title
Headline concept	two headlines: "Company profile" and "The range of products comprises"
Subheads	2 product-related subheads ("Files in format A4 and A5")
Captions	product descriptions function as captions (printed directly under pictures)
Slogan	no
Syntax	simple sentence structure ("All types of made-to-order products can be supplied")
Creativity: stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	formal
Spelling/grammar	spelling mistake: "XX GmbH AS reprivatised in 1990."
Conventions	overall okay, strange rendering: "Manager: Mr. X" (first name would have been given in Anglophone culture)
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	Ersatzeinlagen translated as "replacement sheets", "manager" for "managing director"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some ("printed foil with gold blocking")
Syntactic interference	use of passive constructions where active forms could/should have been used in English, e.g.: "Customers' specific wishes in the area of advertising are fulfilled down to the smallest detail."
Visual appearance	very simple
Use of photos	product photos
Layout / scannability	okay (headline - short introduction - keywords)
Overall impression	very simple promotional leaflet **rating: poor**

Sample No.	14
Industry	telecommunications
Perspective	emotional and appellative (focus on people using the products and efforts of the company to enhance customer experience)
Use of pronouns	WE, in good mix with direct "YOU" references to the customers: "At XX we work with you to develop solutions to meet your needs", "But XX can do even more for you. We offer a wide range..."; some references to company and customers in 3rd person: "A further advantage of XX: as an enterprise operating independently of manufacturers, we are in a position to design solutions using products from various suppliers - solutions that are tailor-made to meet customer requirements."; 3rd person used in general statements: "Solutions in this area need to be able to cope with increasingly demanding tasks."
Title	emotional and appellative: "XX - The better connection. People generating ideas."
Headline concept	yes, emotional headline concept, statements of general truth relating to telecommunications: "Behind every development there are people.", "Commitment with distinction", "Our employees are the be-all and end-all"
Subheads	very few, structuring the content
Captions	yes, conveying information in an emotional way ("always searching for new and better communication solutions")
Slogan	yes: "XX - The better connection."
Syntax	attractive combination of complex sentences and promotional block language: "For EDP is another of our strong points.", "Solutions provided by the people for the people. Making commercial processes easier and more transparent, not more complicated. This is what drives us to find the optimal solution for each and every demand. New solutions through creative cooperation.", "Ordered this evening - delivered tomorrow morning."; some advanced sentence structures (inversion): "Not only do we provide our dealers with mobile radio communications solutions, but are also able to take care of ISDN..."
Creativity: stylistic devices	many idioms and metaphorical expressions: "XX has developed at breakneck speed", "the initial figure of six employees has mushroomed into a fully committed professional workforce of over 250 employees.", "…whether you are an old hand or new at the game...", "We have our fingers at the pulse of the times.", "We offer the very best conditions for reaping the benefits of synergy.", "Installation or configuration problems are old hat to us", "A shortcut through the EDP jungle"; self-irony: "A German's favorite toy is his car."; ellipses in slogan style: "The future - together - now!"
Register	mix of formal and informal style, some elements of spoken language (e.g. ellipses)
Spelling/grammar	no grammar/spelling mistakes
Conventions	okay (e.g. "2,000 consignments"), American English ("favorite")
Vocabulary:	none

interference (false friends)	
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	very few, in spite of expert target group, guarantees wide understanding
Syntactic interference	original English syntactic structures
Visual appearance	very professional
Use of photos	many photos, focus on people showing emotions and using the products, small product photos
Layout / scannability	consistent layout, structured by headline on each page, medium-length copy, some highlighted keywords, captions and a few charts and tables
Overall impression	very professional brochure paying tribute to all requirements of a promotional publication, high linguistic quality, many features of true advertising style **rating: very good**

Sample No.	15
Industry	locking systems
Perspective	presentation and description of products, 3 lines presentation of company
Use of pronouns	3rd person (referring to products): "Having proven their worth over many decades and having been continually improved during this period, these safety cylinders are nowadays second to none in terms of their quality."; one reference to WE in introduction: "Our company is looking back on many years of successful manufacture of locking systems and unrivalled expertise in this field."
Title	purely informative (name of company and address)
Headline concept	names of product categories
Subheads	no subheads (no text blocks either, just keywords)
Captions	does not apply
Slogan	no
Syntax	no block language, very complex sentences combined with keywords
Creativity: stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	very formal, featuring formal vocabulary and participle constructions ("The combined installation of safety profile cylinders in locking systems provides for the required security, order and clarity in objects of any size, freeing the personnel at the same time from cumbersome locking procedures.")
Spelling/grammar	no mistakes
Conventions	commas in decimals not adapted to English conventions (36,3mm)
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"classical" instead of "classic" in: "classical pin tumbler system"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many (due to expert tone of product descriptions)
Syntactic interference	German word order in: "Should a key be lost, or it is required that it be changed, the next key can be inserted into the cylinder…"; omission of articles in: "reversible key offering all advantages of classical pin tumbler system"; wrong attribute use in "can be used in one locking cylinder, in keyed alike groups, ..."
Visual appearance	average
Use of photos	only product photos
Layout / scannability	clear consistent layout consisting of headline (name of product), product photo, technical drawing with measures, keywords highlighting product features and a table with different versions and order numbers
Overall impression	very technical brochure, rather a product overview with specifications than a piece of promotional literature **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	16
Industry	engineering services for automotive industry
Perspective	focus on products and services
Use of pronouns	WE/THEY and YOU (only one sentence: "designers develop vehicles and components in accordance with your ideas and technical requirements.")
Title	name of company and service-oriented title: "Kompetenz in der Fahrzeugtechnik - Competence in Vehicle Technology"
Headline concept	product categories
Subheads	no subheads (no text blocks either, just keywords)
Captions	pictures explained by descriptive keywords in text
Slogan	emotional and customer-oriented appellative slogan: "With a passion and love for detail we can bring your visions to life"
Syntax	keywords only
Creativity: stylistic devices	no (descriptive style)
Register	formal
Spelling/grammar	no mistakes
Conventions	okay
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	none
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many ("rapid prototyping", "laminated object manufacturing method")
Syntactic interference	none (only keywords)
Visual appearance	attractive front cover with high-quality finishing (different kinds of varnish), unusual fold (double-gate fold in A4 format), inside graphics medium quality
Use of photos	medium quality, displaying products, no captions, use of many drawings (relation to services offered)
Layout / scannability	good scannability (may keywords), charts, tables, drawings
Overall impression	technical overview of product offerings, a few emotional highlights and professional finishing add value **rating: good**

Sample No.	17
Industry	foundry
Perspective	information presented in an appellative style, backed by emotional claims and
Use of pronouns	3rd person predominates ("the company" and "the customers"): "XX has always wheathered the ups and downs of history, because the company has always striven for the better and always has had the power to change.", "The product is determined by the customer's individual use. The customer does not have to adhere to standards but has the freedom to determine his product."; few WE references: "We always offer our customers the freedom of turning to new paths."; no YOU references
Title	"Frei-Zeichen" (in German only, but conveying a figurative meaning and setting the leitmotif for the entire brochure)
Headline concept	yes, very good, based on the leitmotif of "freedom" and interpreting it in a new way on every page.
Subheads	no
Captions	no, not necessary due to very abstract photos illustrating the figurative meaning of the headline
Slogan	no
Syntax	some ellipses: "Freedom of thought beyond departments, firms and countries.", otherwise simple sentence structure
Creativity: stylistic devices	leitmotif of "freedom" interpreted in various expressions and lines of thought: "We took the freedom of putting the new first", "No casting process gives the engineer more freedom of scope than investment casting.", "The XX GmbH has committed itself to the freedom to search for new ways.", "The freedom for more boldness"; use of poetic language incorporating archaic forms: "Never let your strength and your will wither, to rise from better to the best. Only when your spirit always yearns for progress do you live, 'tis only those who live that create!"; use of idioms and phrases: "This is on par with our management philosophy of providing freedom to all units of the company...", "...has always wheathered the ups and downs of history,..."
Register	formal structures (e.g. inversion): "Not only did we find partners in India, we have made friends there as well." combined with features of informal language (contractions): "Since we feel that we can't attain and fulfil all customer requests with German procedures and the German school of thought, we've decided to..."
Spelling/grammar	"wheathered"
Conventions	okay (e.g. 0.1mm)
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	no false friends, some false renderings of intended meaning, e.g. "The days in which data processing dictated administrational processes are past." German equivalent: "Die Zeiten, in denen die Datenverarbeitung Verwaltungsabläufe nachvollzog, sind vergangen."; "keine Störungen" translated as "the absence of malfunctions"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some, but reasonably explained by context

Syntactic interference	some syntactic interferences; German word order: "XX had been looking as early as 1983 for new ways…."; German nominal style: "manufacturing nowadays is done using 18 different materials"; passive constructions where an active form would have been used in English: "The work of the staff is aimed at reaching the 50 million € mark within a few years."; some unusual usages of relative pronouns: "The days in which...", "'tis only those who live that create"
Visual appearance	ultra-high-gloss paper, very good haptic features, good execution of CI (all images are in the same greenish hue)
Use of photos	large-format images (full size A4 on right hand side), crisp image quality, symbolic value rather than concrete message
Layout / scannability	paragraphs divided by coloured stripes, no keywords, charts or tables
Overall impression	high-quality brochure with almost poetic/philosophical approach casting a fresh light on the issue of casting in an emotional and appellative way **rating: very good**

Sample No.	18
Industry	cutting and welding services
Perspective	informative, description of services and company, some forms of direct appeal (imperatives): "Do not hesitate to contact us for further details…"
Use of pronouns	WE and "our customers": "We provide welded steel constructions…", "In project management teams with our customers, product development and customer service are carried out by our experts"; "the company" (3rd person): "The XX GmbH is equipped with advanced flame cutting machinery."
Title	name of company + "Innovation through vision"
Headline concept	consistent use of the pattern: "(noun) through (noun)": "Quality through perfectionism", "Commitment through reliability", "Innovation through vision" (title)
Subheads	service categories
Captions	no captions, but images explained in subheads (connected by thin line)
Slogan	no
Syntax	simple but long sentences: "The advanced machinery of the XX GmbH, the experience of its personnel, the quality of IST products and their timely delivery are all necessary components in longterm and high quality cooperation with our customers." (note: three different references to same referent – the company: its, their and our)
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	very formal (passive voice and many nominal phrases)
Spelling/grammar	many spelling mistake: " IST products"; wrong punctuation/hyphenation: " longterm and high quality cooperation"; wrong spelling: "TRIMM cuts"; "Pleces" instead of "pieces", space missing in "Extendcylinder"; wrong choice of temporal preposition in: "For a period of 10 years the XX GmbH has acquired an excellent reputation…",
Conventions	commas in decimals instead of dots: "25,0t", country code in telephone number provided
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"Perfektion" translated into "perfectionism" in headline "Quality through perfectionism"; "Kompetenz" translated into "reliability" in headline "Engagement durch Kompetenz"; choice of unusual words: "workpieces…can be subjected to one-stop cutting…", "Bearbeitung" translated as "manufacturing"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many (due to technical perspective): "stress-free annealing", "flame cutting"
Syntactic interference	many passive constructions directly taken over from German version, often German word order and nominal constructions: "…product development and customer service are carried out by our experts"
Visual appearance	average
Use of photos	pictures of products and technical details, many of them without caption or explanation

Layout / scannability	scannable layout (headline on side of page, short introductory copy, keywords with subhead)
Overall impression	very technical piece of company literature with a purely informative approach, too many linguistic mistakes **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	19
Industry	installation of heating systems
Perspective	informative (presentation of company and description of services by means of recent reference projects); some emotional elements ("Complex building services with our personal touch"); appellative elements focussing on customer benefits ("Time-saving reconstruction to the tenant's benefit") and some imperatives ("Call us, and we'll be at your service!")
Use of pronouns	WE and 3rd person as references to the company: "We considered the problems of the preservation of historical monuments…", "…XX GmbH renewed the heating and sanitary installations…"; references to customer in 3rd person: "It is part of our company philosophy to be a competent partner for our customers…"; some YOU references: "Our 80 qualified employees do their job with expertise and awareness of their responsibility, ensuring you an optimum solution to your problem."
Title	no title (single sheets)
Headline concept	yes, focus on customer benefits in "We" perspective: "
Subheads	not applicable (single sheets only)
Captions	yes (description of depicted reference objects)
Slogan	yes ("…for the perfect climate")
Syntax	simple but long sentences: "It is part of our company philosophy to be a competent partner for our customers and to carry out all services in good quality, meeting all deadlines and at reasonable prices."
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	formal style (e.g. gerund and participle constructions) mixed with informal elements (contractions): "we'll be at your service."
Spelling/grammar	incorrect subject/verb correspondence, wrong choice of words: "…moderation is the dictates of the future."
Conventions	does not apply
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	branches for "Branchen", awkward wording in: "Our experienced team realised this building project to an utmost degree of care and attention.", "Generous economic aid…has been used in the Free State of Saxony since 1991."
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	general
Syntactic interference	many passive constructions ("…the closed ensemble of the present castle museum (Schloßbergmuseum) in Chemnitz was restored by reconstructing and renovating the Northern and Western wings in a modern form."); German word order: "XX GmbH installed here as already in the shopping centre of the same kind in Dresden the

	complete heating facilities for renowned companies."; incorrect punctuation and unstructured complexity leads to almost incomprehensible sentences: "Saxony's largest shopping centre – a small service town which with an area of one million square metres has no parallels was created in Röhrsdorf near Chemnitz in 1997."
Visual appearance	single sheets in simple layout
Use of photos	average photos of reference building sites
Layout / scannability	clearly structured, no keywords
Overall impression	simple description of services based on reference projects **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	20
Industry	hydroforming
Perspective	informative (focus on technology and company); some appellative elements (imperative): "Please send us a fax or just give us a call." and direct questions: "Would you like to know more about the hydroforming technology at XX?"; some slightly emotional-appellative elements: "We look forward to meeting you!"
Use of pronouns	3rd person predominates in technical description of processes ("During the hydroforming process the axial punches are closing the tube ends with great force, while at the same time the emulsion (with a pressure of up to 4000 bar) hydroforms the tube wall to the shape of the die."); "the company" (3rd person) and YOU: "A personal meeting would give you the possibility to find out what XX can do for your company."
Title	direct, emotional appeal ("Water forms." In connection with an attractive picture of a beam of water)
Headline concept	factual, structural ("The Technology", "Fields of Application", "The Company", "Scope of services")
Subheads	no
Captions	yes (description of workpieces manufactured by means of hydroforming technology)
Slogan	no
Syntax	very complex sentences, sometimes too entangled due to attribute clusters: "The hydroforming technology is a, if not to say the most important forward- looking and innovative variant of the forming technology at the beginning of the 21st century, with regard to an economical and cost-effective light-weight construction – for instance in the automotive industry, but also in other sectors."
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	very formal (due to complex sentence structure)
Spelling/grammar	many incorrect / unusual choices of modal verbs: "A personal meeting would give you the possibility to find out what XX can do for your company.", "The workpiece … is to be placed into a die consisting of two halves.", "The die will be closed…", "We shall reply immediately", "Yes, the hydroforming technology is to be considered for a specific

	project in our company."
Conventions	decimals separated by commas, no dots, thousands separated by dots instead of commas ("25.000 kN"); country code in telephone number provided
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"Informations" in plural
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	many (due to technical perspective), but for average understanding: "roller tubes", "gas nozzles"
Syntactic interference	many passive constructions (almost exclusively): "By optimising the loading capacity of the components and applying work-hardening, weight reductions are made possible.", "Further cost and production advantages are achieved through a reduction of the number of components and the elimination of welding seams." (resulting in nominal style); German word order: "Already one year later, the second manufacturing shop was opened.", "The production of complex geometrical forms has in part only been made possible through hydroforming technology."
Visual appearance	very attractive, good implementation of corporate design (predominating colours: white and blue)
Use of photos	high-quality images, well-manipulated to match corporate design
Layout / scannability	well-structured, good scannability
Overall impression	high-quality brochure with attractive title and emotional and appellative elements, somewhat too technology-oriented **rating: good**

Sample No.	21
Industry	jewellery cases
Perspective	informative, focus on products and company
Use of pronouns	WE (predominating): "We also stamp client logos…", "Our firm stands in the tradition of…"
Title	"Kästchen für Kostbares." (good, emotional appeal, but only in German)
Headline concept	no (only one page presentation)
Subheads	no
Captions	item number and product name (in catalogue), no description of pictures
Slogan	no
Syntax	simple structure ("The fabrication of cases and packaging-items in A. for all commercial purposes has a history of more than 100 years.")
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	semi-formal
Spelling/grammar	minor punctuation matters: "packaging-items"
Conventions	no country code in telephone number
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	no
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	no
Syntactic interference	German word order of adverbials of time and place: "The fabrication of cases and packaging-items in A. for all commercial purposes has a history of more than 100 years."
Visual appearance	average
Use of photos	good quality
Layout / scannability	simple layout (three text blocks one after another, each in another language)
Overall impression	simple catalogue in three languages, but product presentation and title only in German **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	22
Industry	textiles
Perspective	informative (product description), some appellative elements: "Get in touch with us!"
Use of pronouns	WE (predominating): "To help us develop innovative products which are suitable for the market and to make these available to our customers we work in close cooperation with scientific institutes…"; one YOU reference: "The proper team with the proper technology is waiting to fulfil your order."
Title	name of company (in German)
Headline concept	no
Subheads	yes, structural function
Captions	yes (description of products shown)
Slogan	no
Syntax	simple but long sentences ("A quality assurance system and the most up-to-date production technology ensure an extraordinarily high quality standard along with procedural reliability economically viable production as well as the observance of ecological requirements."); some ellipses: "Stitchbonded nonwovens: Maliwatt, Malivlies, Kunit. A thousand and one features."; some advanced syntactic features (inversion): "Not only does XX have 20 years of experience but is also the largest producer of stitched nonwoven materials in Germany."
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	formal (advanced syntactic structures, choice of words)
Spelling/grammar	incorrect spelling: "consistant", typo: "state-o-the-art", adjective instead of adverb: "…ensure a constant high quality"
Conventions	thousands separated by dots instead of commas ("5.700mm"), country code in telephone number provided
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	strange choice of words almost ridicules intended meaning: "The proper team with the proper technology is waiting to fulfil your order."
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some
Syntactic interference	no German structures
Visual appearance	average
Use of photos	average
Layout / scannability	not very scannable, small print, difficult to read
Overall impression	simple technical presentation of products **rating: satisfactory**

Sample No.	23
Industry	compound materials
Perspective	factual but also emotional presentation of the company and its backgrounds (history, development, philosophy, products and services) creates strong belief; some appellative elements through focus on customer benefits: "Customers will always benefit from the latest R&D results when purchasing products from XX."; personal addresses of the two managing directors add an emotional touch, some emotional words ("we are pleased", "We at XX…take pride in meeting and exceeding your expectations.")
Use of pronouns	WE and "our customers": "We are committed to meet the demands of our customers."; "the customers" (3rd person): "Customers will always benefit from the latest R&D results when purchasing products from XX."; our people (3rd person): "Our people used their know-how to build a modern facility which is second to none in the world today.", "Our scientists keep us at the front edge of technology."; "the company" (3rd person): "Research is another integral part of XX's corporate philosophy."; one YOU reference: "We at XX…take pride in meeting and exceeding your expectations."
Title	purely informative (name of company + products and services)
Headline concept	factual and structural ("Products and Processes", Engineering and Production", Applications and Customer Service"), always consisting of two nouns connected by additive conjunction "and"
Subheads	yes (informative and customer-oriented, focussing on benefits: "Secure Supply", "Quality", "Market Leadership", "Customer Requirements"); in addresses of the two managing directors the initial words of the key sentences are in bold print and function as subheads: "**Demand has grown** and we will soon have to increase our capacity again…", but not consistently applied; sometimes the subhead is not the beginning of a sentence but a summary of the paragraph as in: "**Worldwide demand.** Obviously, we need to be close to our customers…"
Captions	no (although sometimes necessary due to very technical context)
Slogan	yes: "In alliance with the future."
Syntax	simple sentences enhance readability and add to true advertising style: "Nothing is left to chance." "We at XX do anything we can to keep our delivery promises."
Creativity: stylistic devices	metaphorical expressions: "…a modern facility which is second to none in the world today.", "Our scientists keep us at the front edge of technology.", "We are pleased to be at the forefront of developments in this area."
Register	semi-formal
Spelling/grammar	minor typos: missing space in "teamresponds"
Conventions	well adapted (commas to separate thousands, square metres

	even converted into square feet: "23,500 sq. ft.), country code in telephone number provided
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	no
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some, but reasonably explained to ensure general understanding
Syntactic interference	some passive constructions where active forms could have been used in English: "If application support is needed the representative is only a phone call away…"
Visual appearance	high-quality, high-gloss paper, very professional design
Use of photos	average
Layout / scannability	good scannability
Overall impression	very professional brochure creating high interest and a very positive and personal image of the company **rating: very good**

Sample No.	24
Industry	insulating and reinforcement materials
Perspective	informative (focus on company history and its products)
Use of pronouns	exclusive 3rd person perspective of the company and the customers creates an impersonal atmosphere : "The company is a medium-sized enterprise and is characterised by its dynamic growth and technical expertise.", no WE or YOU references at all
Title	name of company + description of services and products
Headline concept	factual and structural ("Markets", "Landmarks in the history of the company", "Insulating materials", "Reinforcement materials"…)
Subheads	yes (recurring structure: "Materials", "Applications", "Products", "Trade marks"
Captions	no
Slogan	no
Syntax	simple sentences, keywords prevailing
Creativity: stylistic devices	no
Register	formal
Spelling/grammar	incorrect plural "various combination according to client's demand", wrong determiner in "an own production center in the USA", some cases of unusual / inconsistent capitalisation: "Woven Tapes", "Non-woven fabrics and Multi-axial layers"
Conventions	country codes provided, American English ("fiber", "privatization", "production center")
Vocabulary: interference (false friends)	"Abfahrt Siebenlehn" (motorway) translated into "departure" instead of "exit", unusual choice of words in: "Inauguration of new production line…"
Vocabulary: specialist terms?	some (broadloom fabrics, needle tubes)
Syntactic interference	long attributes ("manufacture of flax and hemp fiber reinforced building board…")
Visual appearance	high quality
Use of photos	average quality
Layout / scannability	good (due to use of many keywords and subheads)
Overall impression	professional brochure with some linguistic weaknesses **rating: good**

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