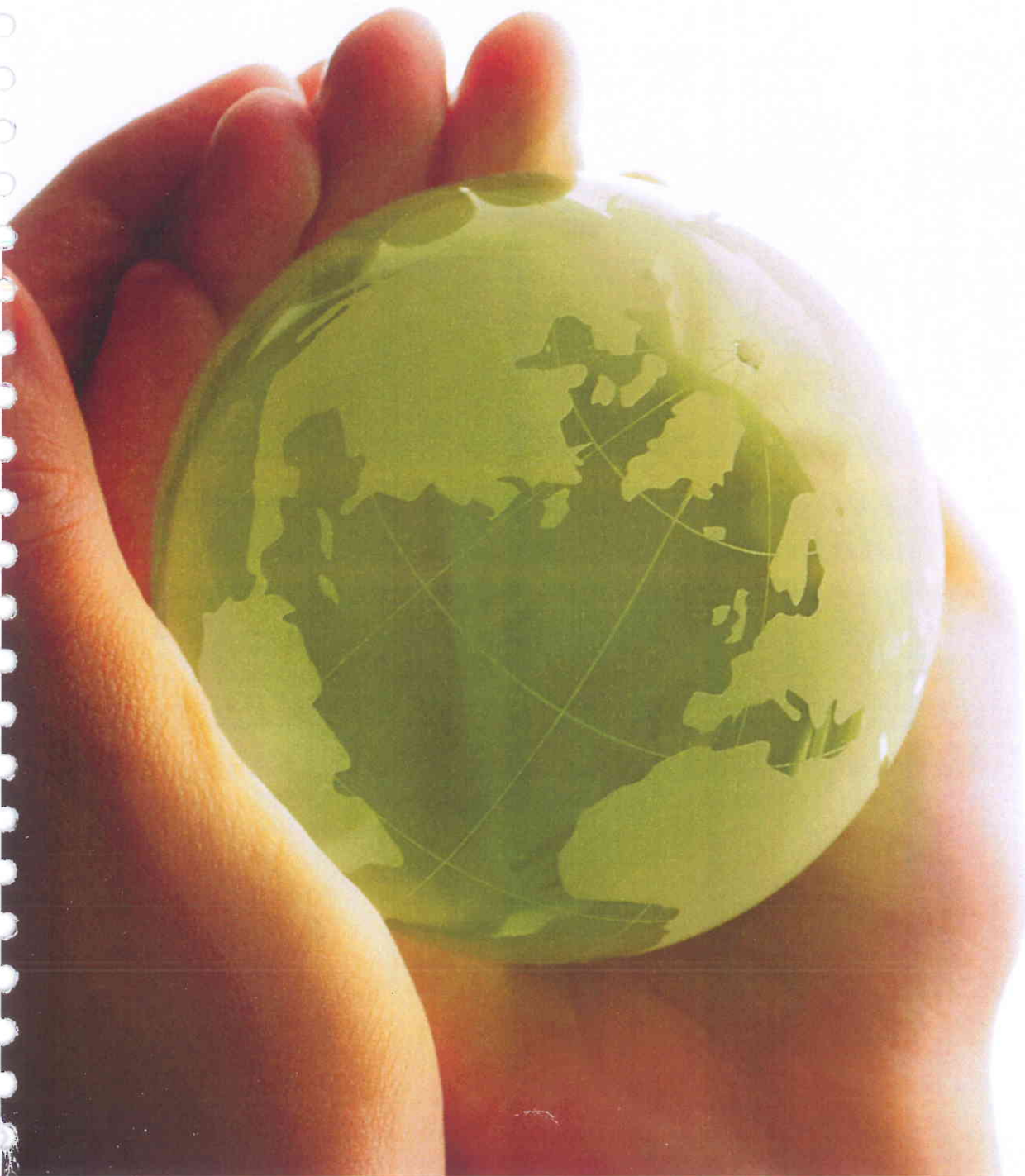


Corporate Social Responsibility & Events

Better late than never...



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Final Project Report
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Preface

Better late than never...

After my internship in 2005 at ICAD in Ottawa I started to work.

After a few restarts that were usually paired with employment changes, I finally found the right direction for my final paper. I work for Boenk, a catering and event organization that is situated in the city center of The Hague.

The topic I have chosen is of interest to me as my clients have this high on their priority list. In my opinion it is important that we try our best to preserve the world for the next generations. Working in an environment that tries to do their best is motivating.

For this paper I used different sources. The director of Boenk (Fred Weerdenburg), my colleagues and my own knowledge about the organization. In addition I used my network to get in touch with competitor caterers and organization agencies.

With this paper I tried to link Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to Events. Especially the events that Boenk is known for. The readers should become familiar with Boenk, CSR and green events.

By writing this essay it became clear that I should have written it during my internship period. Now it is difficult to combine the writing process with a (more than) full time job and a busy social life. An advantage is that I have the experience of real life. By finishing my education it is also time to develop myself as a working professional. It is time for new challenges, maybe even in a different working environment.

In the end I would like to thank my supervisor, Manuela Hernandez Sanchez, who helped me, every time I knocked on her door. Even though there were periods that I did not get in touch for weeks or months. My sister, Desirée, for trying to motivate me and sitting down with me every Monday evening to push me a bit further. My parents and Marvin, just for being there for me.



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But we cannot wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow is now."*

Eleanor Roosevelt

Executive summary

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a term that is used frequently. Many organizations try to be social responsible and do business in such a manner. It is an organization's own duty to act upon CSR.

This paper is about Boenk, a catering and event organization that is situated in the city centre of The Hague. Their main clientele group is Ministries and city council; they provide 80% of the revenue. Since January 2010 this group has set CSR ambitions and the sustainable public procurement program was developed. If one wants to keep delivering services and products to Governmental institutions, organization's need to meet the requirements set in the program.

It is important to sort out how far Boenk is in the CSR process and if they can develop an event concept that is suitable for their main clientele group. Many conversations were held with Boenk's director, Fred Weerdenburg. To see how Boenk's main competitors and other event organization agencies incorporate CSR they were researched. Additionally it is important to figure out if they offer green events.

Boenk is an organization wants to incorporate CSR in their every day business and be known as a true CSR caterer. Many steps are already taken, but there are plenty of opportunities.

By coupling the main findings of this paper the following can be concluded concerning CSR and green events. Firstly, Boenk's competitors in the catering market do not offer standardized green events. They can distinguish themselves by creating a green event concept. Boenk does have to incorporate CSR in their strategy. Secondly, this event needs to be promoted well, especially to their main clientele group. There are plenty of opportunities for Boenk to promote itself as a true CSR caterer. This group needs to get familiar with the idea of this new event concept. Thirdly, Boenk needs to make sure that CSR is incorporated within the whole organization. All employees need training and need to make aware of the importance of CSR for Boenk and its main clientele group. To anchor CSR in the organization a project group consisting out of employees can be formed.



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Introduction

Problem statement and justification

Boenk is an organization that operates in the event business and is specialised in catering. The company is situated in The Hague and the venues where they cater are mainly in the city centre. Their clientele consists mainly of but is not limited to Ministries, the city council of The Hague and other (non-governmental) organizations such as Raad van State, Van Ginderen, Haagse Orde van Advocaten, Dröge & van Drimmelen.

Since January 2010 Boenk's largest clientele group (Ministries and the city council) have to respect the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) guidelines for products and services delivered. If Boenk wants to keep selling their services to these organizations, they have to meet the CSR requirements that these organizations set. Current trends show that other (non-governmental) organizations are also more interested in CSR. If Boenk is not able to conform to these CSR principles they risk losing potential assignments and clients in the near future.

If an event has to be delivered according to the CSR guidelines it becomes a custom made service. This will cost extra time and money, because there is no standardization. Still, a guarantee for an optimum delivery of the catering service has to be possible.

CSR is booming business, every organization claims to work according to CSR guidelines. How can Boenk not only prove it has conformed to these new method, but most importantly, distinguish itself from other caterers?

The main question is if Boenk can offer a standardized event concept that works in the advantage of both the client and Boenk. The goal of this research will be to provide Boenk with an advice as to how they can present a CSR event concept to their clients.

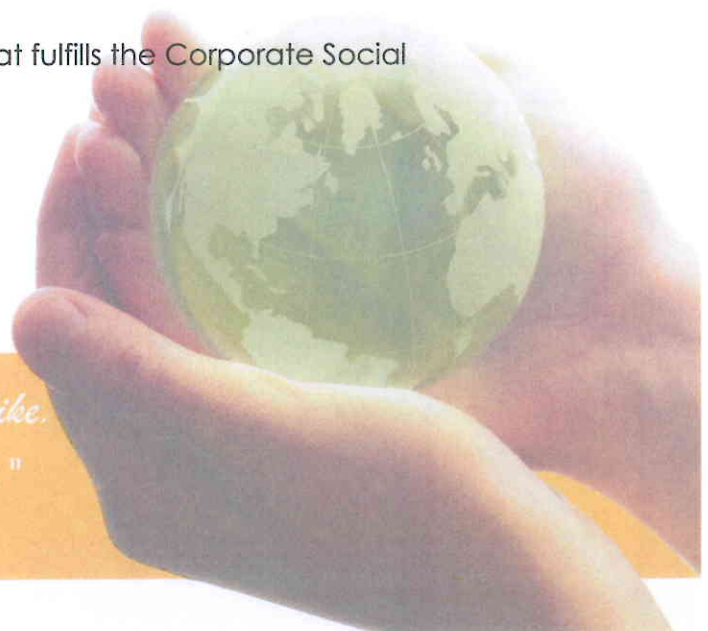
This leads to a specific central question and several sub questions, as discussed and answered in the following chapters.

Central question

How can Boenk develop an event concept that fulfills the Corporate Social Responsible needs of its main clientele group?

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Eleanor Roosevelt



Sub questions

1. What is the existing business market wherein Boenk is operating? (Chapter 1)
2. What is Corporate Social Responsibility and what are the characteristics? (Chapter 3)
3. What are trends in CSR and are there existing CSR events? (Chapter 3)
4. Is Boenk able to implement an adjusted communication strategy because of CSR? (Chapter 4)
5. How can the final event concept be communicated internally and externally? (Chapter 5)

Description and justification of the research methods

For this research I used desk research (literature and internet) and field research (interviews). First a literature study was done to clarify Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). After this it had to become clear in what business market Boenk is operating. To receive the correct information many conversations were held with Boenk's director. To find out if there are already CRS events and if there are any trends notable competitor caterers and event organizations were contacted.

Limitations

Boenk only has venues in the Haaglanden region as 80% of its revenue is directly generated through government clients and the city council in this specific area.

Preview on all chapters

In chapter one Boenk is being introduced. From how they were founded to the market they operate in today. In chapter two the dynamics of the organization are analyzed through an internal and external analysis. With the help of a SWOT- analysis a lot of information will be revealed. Corporate Social Responsibility will be explained in the following chapter. CSR, trends and events in the event business will be treated in chapter as well. In chapter four Boenk's communication strategy is clarified. In the final chapter the new event concept is revealed and how it can be communicated best, internally and externally. The conclusion and recommendations can be found after the last chapter.



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Chapter 1. Organization and context

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This first chapter allows the reader to get familiar with Boenk. From how the company was founded to the recent profile of the organization. Their vision, mission and strategy are being discussed. To complete the first chapter the organizational structure and the company culture are clarified.

1.1 History

In 1991 Ben Boenk and Patrick de Groot founded a catering and event organization called Boenk & de Groot. After an explosive growth the company was in need for a suitable location and was situated from 2001 on in Pulchri Studio.

In July 2003 the company was taken over by former operational manager, Fred Weerdenburg, and former sales manager, Karlien de Jonge, who saw plenty of opportunities. In three years time the turnover was doubled, still with 80% of the staff that was working for the company at the time they performed the buy out (A. Koppelaar, personal communication, September 10, 2010).

1.2 Recent profile of the organization

In March 2009 it was time for a change, Boenk & de Groot felt no match with their identity anymore. The old fashioned house style did not correspond with the company's new ideas. After many intensive sessions with the Management Team and a stakeholder's analysis (by Bouwmeester & van Leeuwen, appendix 1) among customers, suppliers and employees, a conclusion was drawn up: Boenk & de Groot is considered to be an honest, professional company that hosts receptions on every level. A company from The Hague, with a distinct character (appendix 2). Their focus is on events in the Haaglanden area, and each event is a special one. The company name was changed into 'Boenk, catering with character'. Former Alderman City marketing, Frits Huffnagel, revealed the new company logo.

Figure 1.1: Former logo



Figure 1.2: New logo



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If clients enter one of the event venues Boenk wants them to be positively surprised. Nowadays Boenk has three exclusive locations as well as 19 public venues in the Haaglanden area in their portfolio. Boenk organizes events with catering. Their revenues come for 80% from events hosted by the Ministries and city council.

In this paper an event means the following: an organized happening in which a predetermined content is presented to a selected audience. This audience becomes part of the event (Kuiper, 2008, p. 17).

During an event all details need to be right. They want to take care of the visitors and the organization from the first idea until the actual event. In the organizing process they listen well to the client's specific wishes, but also think and act proactively to make the event a big(ger) success.

1.3 Vision & mission

Boenk claims to have no overall vision, but they do have a vision about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). For this paper the following definition of CSR is being used: Corporate Social Responsibility means that besides the aim for *profit*, one has to take into account the effects of the undertaken activities on the environment (*planet*) and that there is an eye for human aspects within and outside the organization (*people*). The goal is to find balance between people, planet and profit, which are the cornerstones of CSR. It is also important to take responsibility if there is a lack of regulations (Doets, 2010, p. 1-15).

According to the director, Fred Weerdenburg, CSR is more than just an expression: It is a vision, a way of life and of doing business. For the company this means that CSR should be incorporated in everything. From producing organic culinary items to responsible waste management.

It can become an obstacle that their vision about CSR is not supported by an overall vision, because it has to be carried throughout the whole organization. Furthermore the lack of an overall vision can create communication problems.

Boenk's mission is to offer a hospitable culinary experience in which the aim is to surpass the expectations of the clients with their committed and impassioned skilled professionals (F. Weerdenburg, personal communication, June, 10, 2010).

One of Boenk's aims is to provide customers with high quality events at a continuous level.



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1.4 Current strategy

According to Boenk's director, the strategy is linked to Boenk's objectives. There is no official statement of a strategy. Boenk operates on certain key objectives. A distinction has to be made between key objectives for the organization and for their clients.

The key objectives are as followed:

Boenk:

- To guarantee quality and continuity. This has to be created and stabilized
- To keep customer satisfaction at a high level
- To expand consumer awareness of the brand name

Clients:

- To guarantee quality and continuity
- To be recognizable and deliver a distinct product. Every event and thus every experience need to be 'Boenk like'. This means distinctive and associated with Boenk.

This paper focuses on Boenk's main clientele group which is situated in the Haaglanden area. Therefore it is necessary to find out if there are challenges for this group, whilst always keeping in mind Boenk's key objectives and how Boenk reflects on its own organization in relationship to CSR.

Figure 1.3: Map of Haaglanden area

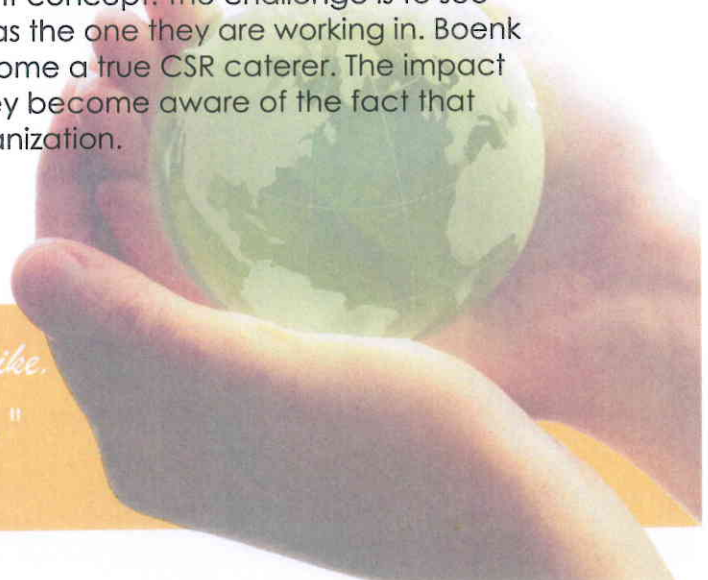


To guarantee quality and continuity is a big responsibility on its own. Boenk believes that they have enough quality and knowledge among their staff members to keep providing high level events throughout industry changes. The fact that CSR is becoming more and more important is a perfect example of a new trend.

Boenk wants to be recognized for their distinct products. This can mean being recognized as a CSR caterer with a green event concept. The challenge is to see how they can do this in a competitive market as the one they are working in. Boenk believes that they are well on their way to become a true CSR caterer. The impact on their main clientele group could be that they become aware of the fact that they are doing business with a sustainable organization.

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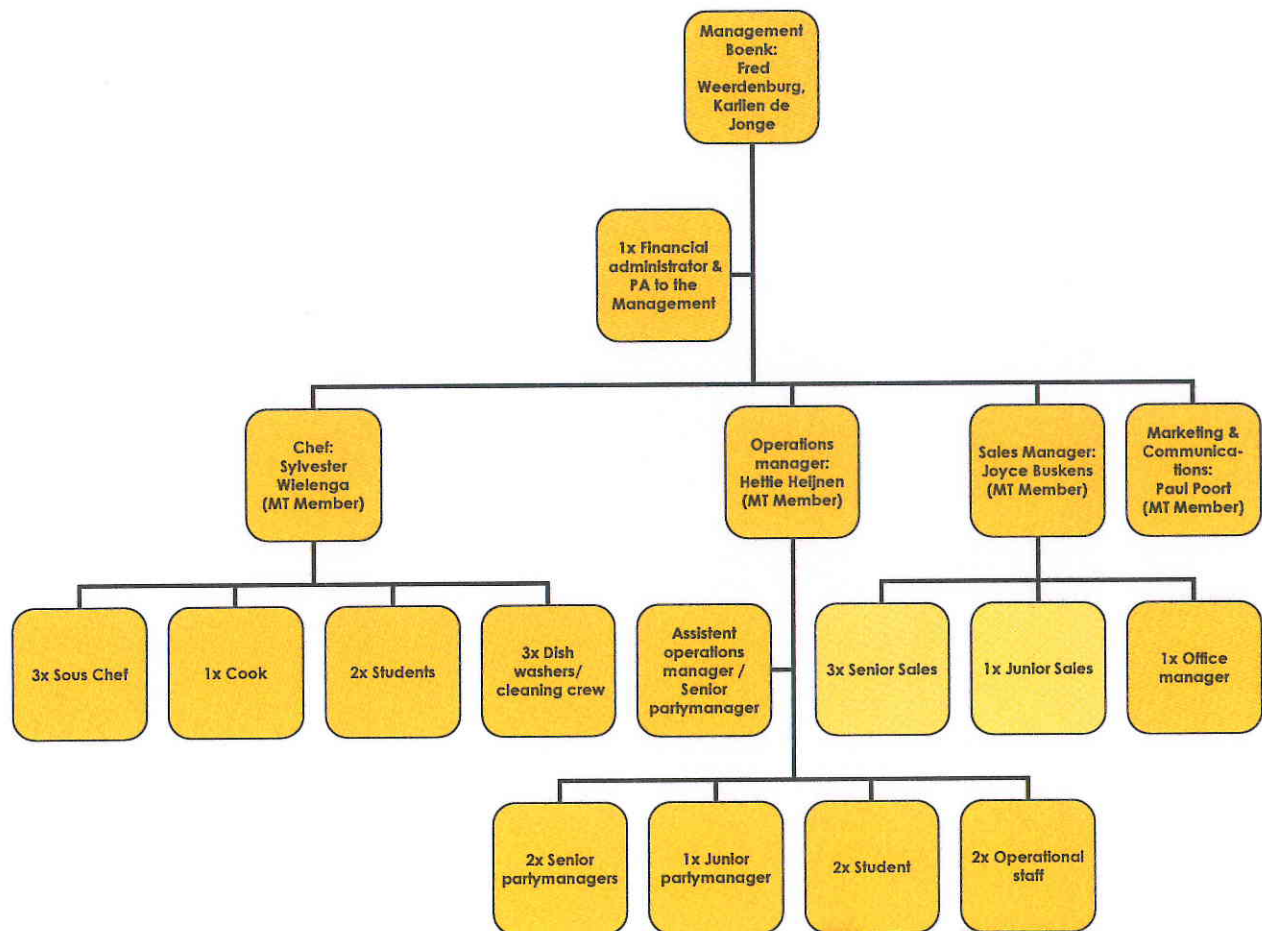
Eleanor Roosevelt



1.5 Organizational structure

As can be seen in the organizational structure, Boenk does not have many layers in the organization. The direction and the managers together form the Management Team (MT). All other employees are linked to one of the managers. Boenk is to be classified as a hierarchical organization. There are only a few layers and it is easy for employees to approach the Management. In a structured work environment procedures are followed according to set rules (Brooks, 2009, p. 190 - 224). The rules are set by the Management, but not all rules and procedures are followed by the staff as they should be. Communication is often done in an informal way and not all rules are set on paper. Therefore they are not always as efficient as they could be.

Figure 1.4: Organigram Boenk June, 1st, 2010



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1.6 Company culture

Boenk fits best in the profile of Collaborate (Clan) Culture. The Collaborate Culture emphasizes on flexibility and discretion. There is an inward focus, with concern for integration (Tharpe, 2009). The following components are of interest:

- Flexibility: Management is flexible towards employees by supporting them in time of financial difficulty.
- Team based: Divisions work in teams, information is shared and if necessary colleagues can manage each other's tasks to cover sick leave or holiday.
- Openness: It is an open place to work where people share a lot of themselves. For instance employees often have lunch or dinner together.
- Discretion: Often high profile guests are involved in the events Boenk organizes or works for, and they never inform media or social networks about this.
- Personnel: Boenk is getting too big to feel like an extended family. The staff could get some extra attention from their managers (D. Drolinga, personal communication, January 10, 2011).

1.7 Conclusion

Boenk is an organization that grew rapidly since the take over in 2003. They organize events with catering, mainly in the Haaglanden area. This paper is focusing on Boenk's main clientele group; Ministries and city council. Boenk's wants to keep quality and continuity at a high level. Additionally they want to keep clients satisfied. They do need to see if expansion of their event portfolio is wishful, because there are changing requirements for events (e.g. CSR, sustainability). Boenk wants to be a CSR caterer in a competitive market therefore they need to urgently focus on distinguish themselves from competitor caterers. They seem to be a stable company with a hierarchical organizational structure and quite informal company culture. With the lack of an overall strategy it is possible that communication gaps are developing in the organization.



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Chapter 2: Internal and external analysis

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To clarify the dynamics of the organization an internal and external communications analysis is necessary. For the internal and external analysis a SWOT analysis is used. With the SWOT analysis the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of an organization can be analyzed (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008, p. 52-53). For the internal analysis the strengths and weaknesses are discussed. How is Boenk performing with the tools they have? In addition an analysis of the results has to be made. For the external analysis the threats and opportunities are being analyzed. In addition the field of forces will be presented.

In the table below the different elements of the SWOT are shown (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008, p. 52-53).

Table 2.1: the elements of the SWOT analysis

Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
	Internal capabilities that may help a company reach its objectives	Internal limitations that may interfere with a company's ability to achieve its objectives
External	Opportunities	Threats
	External factors that the company may be able to exploit to its advantage	Current and emerging factors that may challenge the company's performance
	Positive	Negative

2.1 Internal analysis

2.1.1 SWOT (part one)

Using the SWOT analysis for the internal analysis, the strengths and weaknesses of the organization are now being discussed. This part is explicitly about the internal elements.

Strengths

Boenk has many strengths and one of them is that they are a caterer situated in The Hague and that 95% of all assignments are in the direct area. Their revenues come for 80% from events hosted by the Ministries and city council. With the rules and regulations about sustainability it is good that Boenk already operates in a CSR manner. Boenk works with a loyal staff that can perform multiple tasks. Boenk has a good network in The Hague. Marketing and communications is mainly being done on a personal base (mouth to mouth). Another advantage is for Boenk is that events can be organized in several categories. For example receptions, meetings, congresses and weddings. Culinary products for these events are produced with fresh organic ingredients, based on the wishes of the client.

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Weaknesses

Boenk, like every organization, has weaknesses and areas in need of improvement. Boenk caters in many historic locations in the Haaglanden area. Many of these locations have a monumental character and it can be hard to make them sustainable. It is continuously challenging not to let their events have any permanent effect on these structures. These locations do not offer Boenk events exclusively which makes it difficult to distinguish themselves from competitors. The marketing and communication tools for informing clients about being a CSR caterer are not fully being used. There are limited investments in staff, marketing and communications. Boenk's network, out of the Haaglanden area, is limited. Standardization is difficult because every client expects something different and special on culinary level.

Conclusion Strengths and Weaknesses

Boenk seems to be a caterer loyal to its region, The Hague, with almost all events held in the Haaglanden area. Their network is good, but they could use marketing and communication tools to become known as a true CSR caterer. Different events can be made possible, but there is no unique event by which they can distinguish themselves from fellow caterers.

2.1.2 Analysis of the results

In an interview held with Fred Weerdenburg in June 2010 the forecast for 2010 is about € 3,900,000.00. The revenue is about € 40,000.00 more than last year. Appendix three will give an insight in the Business by the Book (BOB) of Boenk in June 2010. The BOB contains budgets, comparisons to former years, prognoses and forecast and realized revenues. Every 14 days a new BOB is created to give the Management an insight on how things are going.

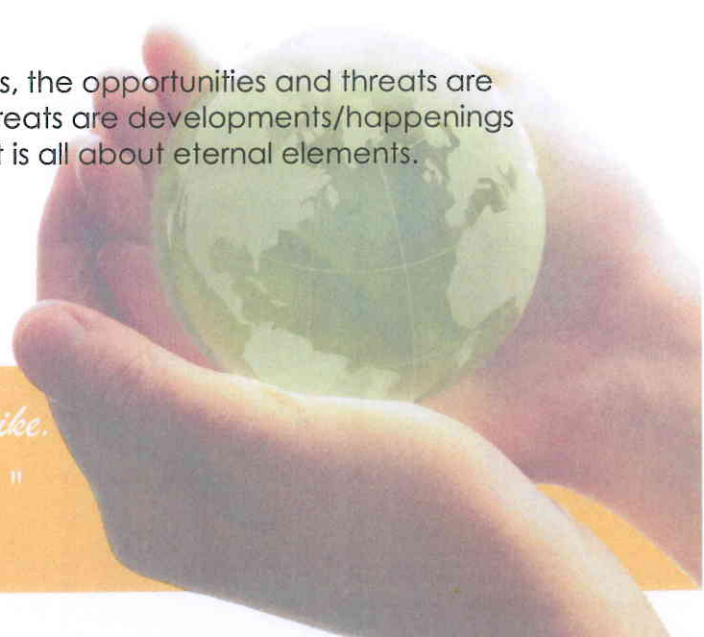
For now it is not possible to indicate the profit margin per event. Only since two months all cost prices need to be mentioned in the booking system. It will take about two years before the profit margins per event can be appointed.

It is quite impossible to measure Boenk's market share in the Haaglanden area. Boenk's director has been talking to competitors about this specific subject and none of them dares to express their opinions (F. Weerdenburg, personal communication, August 15, 2010).

2.2 External analysis

2.2.1 SWOT (part two)

Using the SWOT analysis for the external analysis, the opportunities and threats are now being discussed. The opportunities and threats are developments/happenings to which the organization is subject to. This part is all about eternal elements.



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Opportunities

There are many opportunities for Boenk in several areas. They can try to find more sustainable venues in the Haaglanden area and add them to Boenk's' location portfolio. To distinguish Boenk from other catering organizations they can create a standardized unique (green) event concept. In this concept they can combine standards with options, in a way that more standardization is possible, but still making sure that clients can choose.

Investment and training for employees should be made available to keep them motivated and up date about the developments in the current (CSR) market. Boenk can expand their network, not only focusing on the Haaglanden area. They can develop a broader business and private clientele group of clients, together with marketing and communication activities for a more sufficient promotion of Boenk and of their CSR activities.

Threats

There are also some threats, even though many more opportunities seem to rise. One of the threats is that 95% of the assignments are in the direct area. Many of these assignments are given to Boenk from regular clients. If something happens, for example the Ministries leave for Amsterdam, the expectations is that revenues will go down drastically. If staff is not motivated and triggered they might look for challenges elsewhere.

Additionally Boenk is afraid they lose the characteristic of being a true local caterer, if they expand their network and even their location portfolio to outside the Haaglanden area.

Conclusion Opportunities and Threats

There are many opportunities for Boenk to become known as a true CSR caterer. For instance by finding more sustainable locations and presenting a green event concept to their main clientele group. Boenk should be promoted as a true CSR caterer; therefore investments need to be made. If Boenk is serious about being associated with CSR they will have to commit and invest in a CSR strategy.



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2.3. SWOT matrix

To get a better insight into the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and a good image of opportunities and threats it is necessary to present a SWOT matrix (Vos & Otte & Linders, 2003, p. 34).

Table 2.2: the elements of the SWOT matrix

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
High quality and diversity of food production	No standardization	To communicate that Boenk is a CSR caterer	Competitors in this market, Boenk needs to distinguish itself
Events in different categories	No unique events	Green (CSR) event	
95% of all events are in the direct area	The historic locations have no sustainable characteristics	Find more sustainable locations	Still keep the regular clientele bound to Boenk
Boenk caters in a CSR manner	No skills present to communicate this to the clients	Ministries and city council need to follow CSR guidelines	Boenk needs decent promotion as a true CSR caterer
Personnel can perform multiple task	Little investment in education and motivation of staff	More investment education of personnel	Employees seek for other challenges
Good network in The Hague area	80% of clients are Ministries and city council	Reach out for clients outside the Haaglanden area	Lose the characteristic of being local

2.4 Context

To see in what context Boenk is operating it is important to research their field of forces. It is important to clarify which parties are involved. The main internal and external parties are being mentioned. Most important is to establish which parties are interested in CSR and can play a role in developing a suitable event concept (Vos & Otte & Linders, 2003, p. 43-48).

Boenk's Field of forces:

The production column

- Suppliers (food): Boenk needs suppliers for the production of their culinary products

Government and politics

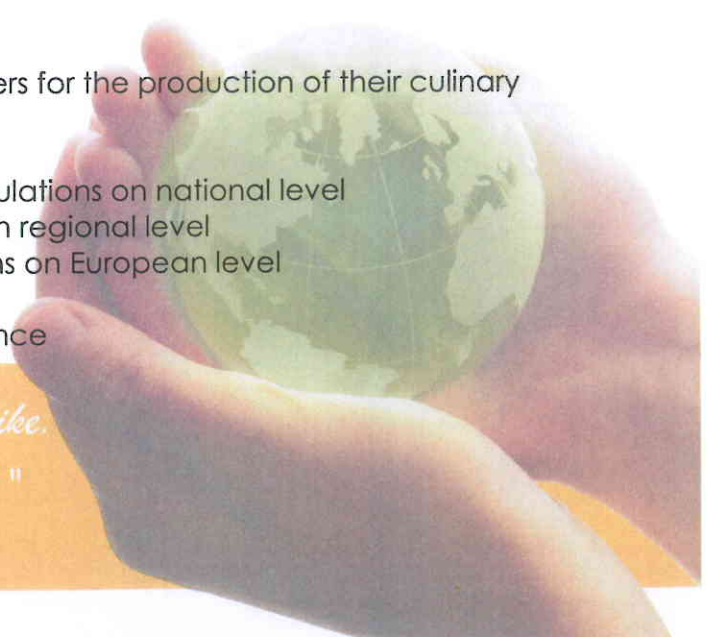
- National government: Rules and regulations on national level
- City council: Rules and regulations on regional level
- European Union: rules and regulations on European level

Financers

- Bank: Boenk needs the bank for finance

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Interest and Pressure Groups

- Consumer organizations such as animal welfare and nature conservation can be approached to become affiliated with Boenk
- Branch organizations: Boenk is a member of the 'Nederlandse Vereniging van Erkende Partycaterers' (Dutch Association of Certified Party Caterers)
- Charity events: Boenk has specific charities that they support. For example: 1000 kaarsjes voor Juultje, Ronald McDonald House The Hague.

General

- Customers: Beside their main clientele group Boenk also has a group of business and private clients
- Locations: The exclusive locations and all other venues where they come for their events
- Media: Magazines (e.g. Business Haaglanden) and newspapers (e.g. AD Haagse Courant)
- Competitors: Other caterers that also work in the same business and specifically in the Haaglanden area
- Employees: all people working full-time or part-time for Boenk. Extra service staff is hired from 1 employment agency for catering (Mise en Place)
- Suppliers: supplying all technical appliances, furniture and other material that Boenk does not have of their own.

2.5 Conclusion

Boenk offers qualitative good events in the Haaglanden area, in unique locations to their main clientele group (Ministries & city council). With the 80% of revenue they bring in, this is their main business market. They can and have to expand their market to see if other (non-governmental) organizations are interested in their (CSR) product. There is a lot of competition; they need to distinguish themselves from other caterers. They can not lose their objectives out of sight, so they need to keep quality and continuity as a focus point. It is important to find out if a unique CSR event can be developed and how this needs to be promoted. To keep delivering the quality their clientele is used to investments maybe have to be made.



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