

**The Role of Communication Tools in Shopping Centre Management within
the Greater Durban Area**

By

Evashnie Kanny (20354375)

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Dr V.P Rawjee

Supervisor

Date

Mr S. Docrat

Co-supervisor

Date

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Declaration

I, Evashnie Kanny , hereby declare that the work in this dissertation represents my own work and findings except where indicated, and that all references, to the best of my knowledge, are accurately reported.

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Evashnie Kanny

Abstract

In South Africa, the competition between shopping centres has increased significantly over the years due to the increase in the number of shopping centres and the changing shopping behaviour. The success of any shopping centre depends on the revenue generated by customers who frequent the mall to make purchases or use the services of the retail/entertainment outlets. To attract customers to shopping centres, management has to ensure that malls are effectively promoted to relevant stakeholders. Communication is important in any promotional, public relations or marketing activity and should be effective, persuasive and managed in a formal and structured way which fits into the overall goals of the mall. Shopping centre management may use a number of communication tools such as (and are not limited to) advertising, sales promotions, public relations, personal selling and sponsorship. However, do these strategies play a role in generating revenue to promote the overall success of a shopping centre? This dissertation, therefore, sets out to identify and examine the communication tools used by shopping centre managers within the greater Durban area in South Africa. It does so by interviewing marketing managers and the tenant mix of five competitive shopping centres within the greater Durban area in South Africa. Data will be collected from the respondents through questionnaires and an interview schedule. One of the significant results emerging from this study is that the function of tenant relations; promotions; publicity; and public relations plays an integral part in the effective functioning of a shopping centre.

Key Phrases: *Shopping Centre Management, Tenant Mix, Communication tools*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

The term *shopping centre* has evolved since the early 1950's. Today, it is commonly known as shopping malls or lifestyle centres. Shopping malls consist of a planned grouping of retail stores that lease space in a structure that is designed, developed, owned, marketed, and managed as a single unit. Shopping malls are planned with two purposes in mind, namely, to provide a retailing environment for the tenant as well as for the shopping and entertainment needs of customers.

Over the years, the competition among shopping malls has increased significantly due to the increase in the number of malls and the changing customer shopping behaviour. Finn and Louviere (1990) indicate that many customers make decisions regarding where to shop based on their attitude toward a mix of stores, the shopping mall environment and an entertaining shopping experience. Therefore, shopping centre management has to ensure that shopping malls are promoted effectively to ensure their success.

The challenge of shopping centre marketing and public relations has always been to optimise the performance of the shopping mall. This directly relates to the number of customers visiting a shopping centre and the increased turnover of tenants. Events and promotions encourage customers to visit the mall, which ultimately leads to an increase in traffic flow. The benefit of increased traffic flow into the mall directly impacts the turnover. In most cases, when there are more shoppers visiting the mall, the spending power increases tenant turnover and the shopping centre's overall performance.

Special events and promotions within shopping centres, either once off or continual activities, serve as a draw card to attract potential customers. In today's economic climate, it is important to offer the customer a reason to shop at a specific shopping centre and encourage them to make repeat visits. Sales promotions such as competitions and offering free gifts, for example, are a great way to attract customers to a shopping centre. Events and promotions also add to the image of a shopping centre. This illustrates that there are new and different offerings in a shopping centre and also reflects innovations.

The planning and management of any mall promotional activity requires effective communication methods. Shopping centre communication is not only related to the customers but also involves communication with the tenants. This requires the employment of a variety of communication tools and strategies. This study therefore, sets out to examine the role of communication at shopping centres within the greater Durban area.

1.2 The problem and its settings

The success of a shopping mall is reliant on the success of the retail and entertainment outlets within the mall (Cloete 2010:59). The success of these stores also depends on the number of customers who frequent the mall. To attract customers to shopping centres, shopping centre management has to communicate with their customers or target markets (internal and external) about product offerings. Communication is important in promotional, public relations or marketing activities with the general aim of establishing understanding but specifically to persuade, to inform, to influence attitudes, and to bring about action. (Skinner 2007:286). Communication should be effective, persuasive and should be managed in a formal and structured way which fits into the overall goals. There are a number of communication tools that exist such as (and are not limited to) advertising, sales promotions, public relations, personal selling and sponsorship. The responsibility given to the marketing manager is far greater than imagined. Moreover, with the shopping centre market being as competitive as it is, the marketing manager often holds the key to the success or failure of the shopping centre (Cloete 2003). This study, therefore, sets out to examine the role of communication in shopping centre management.

1.3. Aims and objectives

The overall aim of this study is to examine the role of communication at shopping centres in the greater Durban area. The objectives of this study are to:

- Examine the role of communication between centre management and tenants at shopping malls,
- Examine the communication challenges faced by centre management and tenants at shopping malls, and
- Determine whether the communication is perceived as being effective.

1.4. Rationale for the study

Some people go to shopping malls to socialize; others go to the mall to obtain a sense of security or order. The mall is more than just a place to spend money. Richard Francaviglia, Director of The Centre for Greater Southwestern Studies reports that sociologists have long known that people visit shopping centres for far more than commercial reasons (Francaviglia 2008:271). According to Francaviglia (2008: 271), over two decades ago, the idea of "recreational shopping" was revealed. This means that malls are just as important for social communication as they are for purchasing items.

According to Rajagopal (2008: 85), shopping malls contribute to business more significantly than traditional markets which were viewed as a simple convergence of supply and demand. Shopping malls attract buyers and sellers, and induce customers by providing enough time to make choices as well as a recreational means of shopping. Based on the above, it is evident that shopping malls play an important role in people's lives.

This research which aims to shed light on the role that communication plays in the mall management process will add to the body of knowledge of communication tools in shopping malls. The completion of this study will assist mall management in understanding some of the communication challenges experienced by both mall management and tenants.

1.5. Scope of the study

The study's focus is confined to 5 of the biggest shopping malls in the greater Durban area. These five malls include: Gateway Theatre (158 000sqm), The Pavillion (124 000sqm), Galleria (87 000sqm), Westwood Mall (35 000sqm) and The Chatsworth Centre (41 445sqm) (Cloete 2010:56).

1.6. Research methodology

Babbie and Mouton (2005:2) indicate that research design addresses the planning of scientific inquiry in designing a strategy for finding out something. This study will therefore

employ both a quantitative and a qualitative research design in order to accomplish the objective of evaluating the role of communication tools in shopping centre management.

1.7. Division of chapters

Chapter One will introduce the research topic; provide a background and give an outline of the study; highlight the problem statement; outline set objectives and provide the scope of the study.

Chapter Two will present a detailed discussion of the theoretical foundation. A critical assessment of the literature and its relevance to the study thereof will be done in this chapter. Emphasis will be on communication tools used to plan and convey promotional activities in shopping centres.

Chapter Three will examine the methodology that will be employed in the study. This will be done through the determination of the research instrument, sample, the method of obtaining data, and reliability and validity of the research study.

Chapter Four will present the results of the fieldwork conducted in order to analyse and interpret the data gathered from the interviews.

Chapter Five will present the conclusions that were drawn from the study as well as recommendations based on the interpretation of data.

1.8. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research problem, the objectives of the study and justified the necessity for the research. The limitations, the key assumptions upon which the study will be based and the methodology were presented. Finally, the chapter presented an overview of the chapters that follow and laid the foundation for this thesis. The next chapter will identify the tools utilised by shopping centre management, examine the communication challenges faced by shopping centre managers and determine whether communication tools are perceived as being effective.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION AT SHOPPING CENTRES

1. Introduction

The previous chapter has given an outline of the study; which sets out to evaluate the role of communication tools in shopping centre management. This chapter focuses on identifying and examining the communication tools utilized by the shopping centre management. This chapter also discusses the challenges and barriers of shopping centre communication in order to determine whether communication tools are perceived as being effective.

2. The development of shopping Centres in South Africa

The development of shopping Centres in South Africa exhibit many of the characteristics occurring in the rest of the world, especially in the USA. In the 18th century, shops existed in the larger towns and cities, while hawkers on oxcwagons supplied outlying areas with merchandise. (Cloete 2010:50).

During the last four years, South Africa has experienced very high growth in the supply of new shopping centres (Cloete 2010:59). The first true suburban shopping centre in South Africa was the Southdale shopping centre in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg. It opened in 1961, had 15 shops and a supermarket as an anchor tenant and has since been extended a number of times. This development was followed in 1963 by a shopping centre in Berea, Durban. In contrast to the earlier centres, modern centres are characterized by the following features (Schafer 1992): unified architectural structures reflecting a certain image , aggressive marketing of the centre, professional management of services in the centre, tenant mix control, control of shop sizes, controlled environment in the centre, targeting of merchandise to specific segments of the trade area, the centre being integrated with and a focal point of its trade community, and linking into road systems and public transport routes.

There are a number of shopping centres located in South Africa, the table below outlines the shopping Centres located in each province.

Table 2.1 A List of Shopping Centres in South Africa : Cloete (2010:57)

<p>Johannesburg Metropolitan Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brightwater Commons, Ferndale • Clear Water Mall, Northcliff • Cresta Shopping centre, Northcliff • Dobsonville Shopping centre , Dobsonville • Eastgate, Bedfordview • Fourways Crossings, Fourways • Cedar Square, Fourways • Bel Air Shopping Centre, North Riding • North Riding Square , North Riding • Fourways Mall, Fourways • Hyde Park Corner, Hyde Park • Monte Casino Fourways • Maponya Mall, Soweto, Gauteng • Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton • Northgate Shopping Centre, North Riding • Greenstone Shopping Centre, Endenvale • Rivonia Crossing , Rivonia • Rivonia Square, Rivonia • Sandton City, Sandton • Southgate Shopping Centre, Mondeor • Westgate Shopping Centre, Horizon View • The Zone at Rosebank • The Glen Shopping Centre, Gleneagles 	<p>Pretoria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kolonnade, Wonderboom • Menlyn, Menlo Park • Menlyn Retail Park, Menlo Park • Menlyn Maine, Menlo Park • Brooklyn Mall, Brooklyn Bridge • Woodlands Boulevard, Pretoria East • North Park, Pretoria North • Wonderpark, Wonderboom • Jakaranda Sentrum, Rietfontein • Hatfield Plaza, Hatfield • The Grove, Pretoria • The Villa Mall, Pretoria • Lynridge Mall, Lynwood Ridge • Sunnypark, Pretoria CBD 	<p>Cape Town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Route Mall , Tokai • Constantia Village, Constantia • Canal walk, Century City • CapeGate, Brakenfell • Cavendish Connect, Claremont • Cavendish Square, Claremont • Kenilworth Centre, Kenilworth • N1 City, Goodwood • Somerset Mall, Somerset West • Tyger Valley, Bellville • Vangate Mall, Heideveld • Victoria and Alfred Waterfront , Cape Town • Willowbridge, Bellville
<p>Kwa-Zulu Natal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway Theatre of shopping, Umhlanga Rocks • Musgrave Centre, Musgrave • The Pavillion, Westville • The Mall, La Lucia • Westwood, Westville • Chatsworth Centre , Chatsworth • The Galleria, South Coast 	<p>Northern Cape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond Pavilion • Harseshoe Centre • Kalahari Mall • Kathu Mall • Kuruman Centre • Newpark Centre • Riveiro Centre 	<p>Eastern Cape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenaceres Shopping Centre • Hemingway Mall • Circustriangle Shopping Centre • Middleburg Mall • Mthatha Plaza • Walmer Park
<p>Limpopo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycad Centre • Flora Park Centre • Game Centre • Limpopo Mall 	<p>Mpumalanga</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acornhoek Plaza, Acornhoek • Riverside Mall, Nelspruit • Highveld Mall , Witbank 	<p>Free State</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loch Logan Waterfront • Minosa Mall

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savannah Mall • Standard Bank Square 		
North West <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mooi River Mall 		

The table above gives an indication of the shopping centres in South Africa. According to Cloete (2003:39), most of the large shopping centres in South Africa (including the four largest shopping centres) are in Gauteng. Of the shopping centres larger than 20 000 square metres, there are 62 shopping centres in Gauteng, followed by Western Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga . Greater Johannesburg has nine of the fifteen biggest shopping centres in the country.

The basic types of shopping centres which are distinguished are: super regional centres, local centres, neighborhood centres, community centres , and super regional centres. Super regional centres are very large retail facilities offering the widest possible variety of stores, an appealing shopping environment, generous on-grade and undercover parking facilities and a large entertainment component. A super regional shopping centre is a larger version of the regional shopping centre. It encompasses more than 92 900 square metres, has more than 100 shop tenants and is anchored by at least four full-line department stores. A population in excess of 300 000 is required to support it (Alexander and Muhlebach 1999:7).

Levy & Weitz (2004:223) state that a super-regional centre is a shopping centre that is similar to a regional centre, but because of its larger size, it has more anchors and a deeper selection of merchandise and it draws from a larger population base. As with regional centres, the typical configuration is an enclosed mall, frequently with multi levels.

Convenience (strip) shopping centres usually have between 555.56 and 5555.56 m² and are designed as one continuous row of shops, thus the term “strip” centre. The ideal location is on a corner, since a convenience shopping centre can be located anywhere along the street. Most of the tenants are service or food operations. If there is an anchor tenant, it is usually a convenience grocery store. This type of shopping centre may well be developed throughout multiple business districts in a large city and can be successful with a small population base of 1 000-2 500 (Alexander and Muhlebach 1999:6).

Neighbourhood shopping centres usually include at least one anchor tenant but may have two or more. A supermarket is the most common anchor; alternatives are pharmacies or home improvement stores. The small shop spaces are occupied by a mix of services, speciality food stores, and business or professional (medical, dental, legal) offices. Beginning in the 1980s, retailers selling soft goods have been occupying less space in neighbourhood shopping centres than they did in the 1960s and 1970s. Shop space may be leased to fast food or full-service restaurants, banks and service providers. This type of centre can do well with a trade area population of 5 000 - 40 000 (Alexander and Muhlebach 1999:7).

Community centres usually have three or more anchors from among the following: junior department store, discount department store, supermarket, pharmacies, variety store and home improvement centres. The small shops are predominantly occupied by retail, service and speciality food tenants. Most community shopping centres are large open-air strips (although some are developed as enclosed malls) and they need a population base of 100 000 - 150 000 (Alexander and Muhlebach.1999:7).

Speciality Shopping centres are also known as theme or festival shopping centres and they usually range in size from 5555.56 to 33333.33 m². Often they are created by conversion of an existing old building to a new use (adaptive use), although some are new structures. Many perpetuate an architectural theme suggested by the original use of the building or the location. Speciality centres require a minimum population of 150 000 to survive, and they are located in tourist-orientated areas that already have good traffic (most of them do not have traditional anchor tenants). Often, their main attraction is food services, entertainment establishments, smaller shops that are usually one-of-a-kind boutique and speciality stores. Seldom do national or regional retailers locate in a speciality shopping centre, unless they are food operators. Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston and Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco are classic examples of such speciality centres. Faneuil Hall was originally a row of three industrial and public market buildings near the waterfront; Ghirardelli Square had been a chocolate factory (Alexander and Muhlebach 1999:8).

Outlet or Off-Price shopping centres are factory outlet stores that sell manufacturers' surplus merchandise or goods, which may be seconds, irregulars or overruns. Off-price retailers sell first-quality brand name merchandise at low prices. They make special bulk

purchases and pass the savings to the customer. Off-price and outlet stores are frequently found in the same shopping centre, which can be an open-air strip or an enclosed mall. These centres are located away from national or traditional retailers; usually they are smaller communities, adjacent to a major freeway and one or two hours' drive from a major metropolitan area (urban area). A population in excess of 150 000-plus is generally required for their survival (Alexander and Muhlebach 1999:8). Value Centre, which is situated in Springfield, Durban is an example of an outlet or price shopping centre.

Power centres first developed in 1984. These shopping centres were originally known as promotional centres. They are large strip centres anchored by several large promotional, warehouse, or speciality stores that dominate their merchandising category. A prime example is Toys R Us or The Home Centre situated in Springfield Park in the Durban area. Promotional retailers are destination stores known for the speciality of the product mix. Customers tend to visit the shopping centre to shop at a particular store. As a result, power centres have only a small percentage of their area devoted to small shops. Generally, 75-80 percent of the power centres area is occupied by anchor tenants. Successful power centres have the draw of a regional mall from a minimum population of 150 000 (Alexander and Muhlebach 1999:8).

Shopping centres are the principal type of retail location in most suburban areas. A shopping centre consists of a planned grouping of retail stores that lease space in a structure that is typically owned by a single organization. Shopping centres can be classified by characteristics such as size, market served and types of tenants. In order of increasing size, there is the convenience centre, community centre and regional centre (Etzet, Walker and Stanton 2003:425).

Cloete (2010:92) states that a shopping centre is a deliberately planned concentration of shops that is managed as a unit. A shop is a commercial establishment where retail products are sold. Shopping may look like entertainment – but it's a science. Target markets, foot counts, trading density, tenant mix and environmental impact are just some of the many factors that need to be considered when creating a unique identity for a particular shopping centre. Moreover, that differentiation is crucial when competing for that all-important shopper's rand.

The success of a shopping centre is largely due to a greater understanding of consumer behaviour, based on the marketing strategies and the consumer decision-making process, i.e, selection of shopping centre or shopping mall. Marketing managers of shopping centres must study consumer behaviour to gain insights that will lead to more effective marketing strategies such as market segmentation, target market selection, product or service offerings, location and positioning.

Shopping centres have made shopping for people very convenient as they get almost everything under the same roof. Shopping centres have a huge infrastructure and are constructed beautifully to attract more and more customers. Francaviglia (2008: 271) states that the mall is a social scene for every generation. There is a world full of fun to be found at the mall and there are numerous shops and activities to choose from. Shopping centres have become a very significant phenomenon in our economy. The different sizes, areas and environments of a shopping centre are well researched and carefully planned to meet the requirements of customers. In addition, shopping centres have become increasingly important for the variety of product offerings and services provided to individual customers.

Shopping centres also contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The GDP is one of the key indicators of economic growth. The impact of the GDP on retail development is important to consider in the sense that the GDP gives a good indication of the overall wellbeing of the country's economy. Consumer spending plays a big role in the configuration of the GDP (+- 14%) (Cloete 2010:113).

It is also very important to consider the location of a shopping centre. The location of a shopping centre benefits the community in many ways. No other property development has the impact on a community that a shopping centre does. In particular, it provides substantial revenue, a variety of employment opportunities, the convenience of one-stop shopping and a testing ground for new businesses (Alexander and Muhlebach 1999:8). The location of a shopping centre is often quoted as the key aspect associated with retail and shopping centre development. Good location allows ready access, attracts large numbers of customers and increases the potential sales. In the extremely competitive environment, even slight differences in location can have a significant impact on market share and profitability.

In addition to location, Cloete (2010: 330) maintains that competition between shopping centres and the need for shopping centres to attract customers have resulted in changes in the management process. Previously, functions such as financial administration and property maintenance formed the major role of property managers. However, during the course of the last few years, the emphasis of shopping centre management has shifted towards the management of tenants and customers and the role of marketing in a shopping centre has become more and more integral to the overall management process. The above shift clearly points out that, in addition to the location of a shopping centre, the marketing of the shopping centre and the tenant mix is pivotal for the centre's success. Cloete (2010: 330) further argues that management of a shopping centre includes property management, maintenance management and marketing and promotion management. For the purposes of this study this chapter identifies and evaluates the communication tools utilised by shopping centres' marketing managers.

3. Shopping Centre Management

According to Maritz and Ghyoot (1990: 14), there are four levels of management:

- Top or strategic management entails planning the future of the business to arrive at the goal of the business.
- Supervisory management entails overseeing the work being done by others; and
- Self-management is made up of the management of a person by himself/herself and includes planning, organizing, motivating, and evaluating his/her own work.
- Functional management encompasses the management of various functions of an organization such as marketing, personnel and finance.

These four levels of management also apply to property management and would therefore apply to shopping centres. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, only the functional level of property management will be examined.

4. The management of the functional level within a shopping centre

According to Cloete (2010: 422), the management of a shopping centre at the functional level can be divided into the following broad areas:

- Leasing - The leasing activity is critical to the financial returns associated with the property, and includes marketing the space available, setting rental levels, soliciting prospects and negotiating and executing leases.
- Tenant administration - Includes the management of the leases and the maintenance of good tenant relations.
- Risk management - Entails the management of the various physical risks which can influence the property and the people using the property.
- Maintenance - The combination of all actions directed at retaining an item in a state in which it can fulfill its intended function, thereby maximizing the useful life of the item and retaining the value of the investment in the item.
- Management of expense and income - The property manager is responsible for maximizing the net return to the owner. This means that he or she must actively manage both the income and the expenses.
- Budgeting -Record keeping and reporting. "In conducting the business affairs of the owners, the property manager has accepted an implied responsibility to keep detailed records of operations and make timely reports to owners. The actual recordkeeping and reporting systems will vary greatly but the basic areas of concern will not. The owner wants to know about the condition of the property, occupancy, rental rates, collection problems, operating expenses and overall performance of the property.
- Marketing - Certain kinds of properties require, in addition to the leasing activity, a strong marketing involvement of the property manager. Public relations, promotions, publicity and community relations can play a determining role in the success of the property.

This study focuses on specifically the marketing function within shopping centres.

Marketing plays a critical role in shopping centre management and it plays a pivotal role in the success of the shopping centre. Effective marketing requires sound strategic planning at a number of levels in an organization. With the shopping centre industry being as competitive as it is, the marketing manager often holds the key to the success or failure of the shopping centre.

5. The core functions of the Marketing Manager within the context of shopping centres

Depending upon the size of the shopping centre, there are three different formats that the marketing department can take. Where the centre is very small, local centre (up to 10 000m²) the centre manager will act as both manager and marketer of the centre. At a medium sized centre (10 000-40 000m²), a dedicated marketing person would usually be employed to market the centre. This person will then work closely with the Centre Manager in order to determine the best marketing mix for the centre. At the other end of the scale are the regional and super regional shopping centres (40 000m²+) where a dedicated marketing team is usually employed. This team will consist of a marketing manager and a number of assistants who are all based on site. Colete (2010:697), maintains that the marketing manager's responsibilities encompass the following:

- To brief, monitor and interpret the results and evaluation obtained through the appointed dedicated research agency. To use results to formulate a marketing strategy for the centre;
- To distribute the results to tenants so they may use the findings to target their advertising and promotional events to the identified audience;
- To control the expenditure of the budget in accordance with the agreed marketing strategy;
- To conceptualize and execute effective and innovative promotions and to monitor and evaluate the success of same;
- To approve advertising activities;
- To be responsible for a community programme;
- To assign roles to the marketing function and actively communicate with key stakeholders which entails **tenant relations, promotions, publicity and public relations.**

The above marketing functions play a determining role in the success of the shopping centre. In particular, it is evident that the function of tenant relations; promotions; publicity; and public relations play an integral part in the effective marketing and functioning of shopping centres.

5.1. Tenant relations in shopping centres

With a balanced tenant mix, the shops in a shopping centre complement each other in the quality and variety of their product offerings. The kind and number of shops are related to the needs of the population in the trade area of the centre. Bruwer (1997:170) points out that "the tenant mix is critical not only to the landlord and management of a shopping centre, but also to the tenants and their customers. A good tenant mix becomes a win-win situation in which all those involved have the best possible opportunities for success". Cloete (2010:606) states that a shopping centre's performance is improved by building on the strengths of one's tenants. Strengthening stronger relationships with tenants is important because stronger tenants are able to draw more traffic to the centre and produce more sales. Shopping centre managers can improve on tenant relations by being visible and visiting stores regularly and frequently, and through meaningful and focused conversations that are informative and motivational.

It is also important to bear in mind that tenants have expectations about management. These expectations include: (Cloete 2010:605)

- Sound administration and reporting
- Clean, safe and pleasant facilities
- Market knowledge
- Retailing expertise
- Marketing expertise
- Compliance with regulations/statutes/ legislation
- Sound tenant mix management
- Cordial, yet effective tenant relations
- Regular communications

Management, on the other hand expects the following from the tenants:

- Compliance with lease provisions
- Prompt payment
- Participation in centre activities
- Well maintained attractive store
- Disciplined and trained staff

- Reasonable levels of marketing activity
- Appropriate stock levels
- Quality merchandising
- Regular communication

According to Cloete (2010: 698) the most effective help the centre management can provide, is in the marketing strategy. The most value can be added with a marketing strategy that according to Cloete (2010:607) has the following features

- Is participative;
- Well-communicated; and
- Co-ordinated for maximum spill-over

An effective marketing strategy is the foundation for success for any shopping centre. The strategy requires commitment from the landlord and ongoing support from all parties connected with the centre. The marketing strategy must be a working tool for the entire staff. It should be easily accessible, regularly monitored, re-evaluated quarterly and updated annually.

According to Colete (2010:616) it is also critical that there is open and effective communication between centre management and tenants. There are various ways in which management can communicate with tenants. Some of these communication tools include: internal newsletters, meetings, the intranet, workshops, sms, electronic forums and press conferences. The following tools of communication are more commonly used in the shopping centre environment (Colete 2010:616).

- Annual Meetings. These meetings are intended to motivate tenants to improve their operations and sales. It allows management to provide information regarding operational policies and management procedures and to introduce the forthcoming years advertising and promotional schedule.
- Sales Analysis and Statistics. Analysis of sales is an important function of a centre management team. Analyzing the sales and productivity of stores is very important and is categorized by the summary of monthly sales, advertising and marketing campaigns, turnover average rent in rands/rand per square metre, and comparisons with competition/industry.

- Mentorship Programmes. These programmes assist first-time traders with seminars and training sessions.
- Quality Circles. Quality circles are teams of tenants who work together in groups of geographically closely related stores in a centre to critique and improve centre promotional programmes by working together in the implementation.

5.2 Promotions in shopping centres

Promotions are intended directly to stimulate shopper traffic and sales. Promotional strategies will depend on the size, situation and specialties of the centre. When planning the annual strategy, it is important to ensure that the correct timing and mix of promotions is taken into consideration. When planning, it is imperative to take into consideration religious holidays, public holidays, and school holidays. Provision should also be made for major merchandising opportunities and low trading periods must not be forgotten. Before any promotional proposal is accepted, the marketing manager should be satisfied that it will be promoted and advertised adequately so that it will draw additional shoppers to the centre. It may be advisable to issue instructions on the format of advertising posters. Advertising is very necessary to support promotions. Promotion depends on heavy advertising and public relations to build brand awareness and educate shoppers on the product's benefits. According to Ferrell and Hartline (2011:296) advertising is the key component of a promotion and is usually one of the most visible elements of a marketing communications program. Advertising is paid, nonpersonal communication transmitted through media such as television, radio, magazines, newspapers, direct mail, outdoor displays, the internet, and mobile devices. Internet advertising is the fastest growing medium, while traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and magazines are struggling with meaningful declines in ad revenues (Ferrell and Hartline 2011:296). Because advertising is so flexible, it can be used to reach an extremely large target audience or a very small, precisely defined market segment. Advertising promotes all types of products, including goods, services, ideas, issues, people, and anything else that marketing managers want to communicate to potential shoppers. Ferrell and Hartline (2011: 299) state that there are two basic types of advertising: institutional and product advertising. Institutional advertising promotes a corporate image, ideas, and culture, with the goal of creating and maintaining an overall corporate image. This type of advertising often promotes socially approved behavior such as recycling or the

responsible use of alcoholic beverages. Product advertising promotes image, features, uses, benefits, and attributes of products. Product advertising comes in many different forms. For example, pioneer advertising stimulates demand for a product category rather than any one specific brand. The goal is to increase the shopper interest and awareness in the product category in order to increase the size of the entire market- an outcome that benefits all firms in the market. Promotions should attract extra shopping traffic and requires advertising and editorial media coverage before and during the events. There are different types of promotions, which can be based on the type of centre one is marketing. Promotions can include:

- Sales promotions. The idea is to attract maximum shopping and co-ordinate tenants' events to support their retailing objectives. Examples: Sidewalk sale and fashion shows. Sales promotions involve activities that create shopper incentives to purchase a product or that add value for the shopper. There are various types of sales promotions. Shopping centre marketing managers will typically offer one or more of the following types of sales promotions to shoppers:
- Coupons. Coupons reduce the price of a product and encourage shoppers to try new or established brands. Coupons can be used to increase sales volume quickly, to attract repeat purchases, or even to introduce new product sizes or models. To be most effective, coupons need to be accessible, easy to recognize, and easy to use.
- Rebates. Rebates are very similar to coupons except that they require much more effort on the shoppers part to obtain the price reduction. Most shopping centre managers prefer rebates for several reasons. First, shopping centre managers have more control over rebates because they can be launched and ended very quickly. Second, a rebate program allows the shopping centre manager to collect important shopper information that can be used to build a shopper database. The best reason is that most shoppers never bother to redeem rebate offers. This allows a shopping centre manager to entice shoppers to purchase a product with only minimal loss of profit.

- **Samples.** Free samples are one of the most widely used sales promotions. Samples stimulate trial of a product, increase volume in the early stages of product's life cycle, and encourage shoppers to actively search for a product.
- **Loyalty Programs.** Loyalty programs reward loyal shoppers who engage in repeat purchases. These programs are popular due to their potential to dramatically increase profits over the long term.
- **Point-of-Purchase Promotion.** Point-of-Purchase Promotion (POP) includes displays, counter pieces, display racks, or self-service cartons that are designed to build traffic, advertise a product, or induce impulse purchases. POP promotions are highly effective because they are used in a store where shoppers make a decision to purchase.
- **Premiums.** Premiums are items offered free or at a minimum cost as a bonus for purchasing a product. Examples of premiums include a free car wash with petrol fill-up, a free toothbrush with a purchase of a tube of toothpaste. Premiums are good at increasing consumption and persuading shoppers to switch brands.
- **Contests and Sweepstakes.** Shopper contests, games, and sweepstakes encourage potential shoppers to compete for prizes or try their luck by submitting their names in a drawing for prizes. In addition to being valuable information collection tools, contests and sweepstakes are good at attracting a large number of participants and generating widespread interest in a product. Sweepstakes are an effective way to increase sales or market share in the short term.
- **Direct Mail.** Direct mail, which includes catalogue marketing and other printed material mailed to individual shoppers, is a unique category because it incorporates elements of advertising, sales promotion, and distribution into a coordinated effort to induce shoppers to purchase.
- **Community involvement.** This would include schools from the area or scout groups who are allowed to use the shopping centre as a vehicle for their specific purpose;
- **Social Responsibility (CSI).** These promotions have become a very important source of shopping centre marketing in present times. Example: Awareness days. Setting up an education bursary and linking it to a sales-based promotion for tenants, is an excellent way of having the shopping centre perceived as socially aware. However,

it doesn't deviate from the ultimate goal of increased tenant turnover and increased foot traffic;

- Trade specific promotions. These encompass grouping tenants into related merchandise categories, and hosting trade specific promotions around them.

Example: health and beauty fairs.

5.3 Publicity in shopping centres

According to Hult, Pride, and Ferrell (2012:520) publicity is communication in news story form, that is transmitted through a mass medium at no charge. Although public relations has a larger, more comprehensive communication function than publicity, publicity is a very important aspect in public relations. Publicity is the major tool used in the implementation of the public relations strategy. Publicity can be used to provide information about goods and services; to announce expansions, research, or new product launch; or to enhance a shopping centre's image. The advantage of publicity to a shopping centre, is that it can provide more information than advertising, at little or no cost to the centre. Public relations and publicity work together. Public relations is the strategic image-building communication force in a shopping centre, while publicity is the major tool used in the implementation of the public relations strategy. The most common publicity-based public relations tool is the news release. A news release is usually a single page of typewritten copy containing fewer than 300 words and describing a company, event or product. There are several other kinds of publicity-based public relations tools. A feature article is a manuscript of up to 3,000 words prepared for a specific publication. A press conference is a meeting called to announce major news events. Media personnel are invited to a press conference and are usually supplied with written materials and photographs. Letters to the editor and editorials are sometimes prepared and sent to newspapers and magazines. Videos and audiotapes may be distributed to broadcast stations in the hope that they will be aired. Publicity-based public relations tools offer several advantages, including credibility, news value, significant word-of-mouth communications, and a perception of media endorsement. The public may consider news coverage more truthful and credible than an advertisement because the media are not paid to provide the information.

Publicity-based public relations tools have some limitations. Media personnel must judge company messages to be newsworthy if the messages are to be published or broadcast at all. Consequently, messages must be timely, interesting, accurate, and in the public interest. It may take a great deal of time and effort to convince media personnel of the news value of publicity releases, and many communications fail to qualify. Although public relations personnel usually encourage the media to air publicity releases at certain times, they control neither the content nor the timing of the communication. Media personnel alter length and content of publicity releases to fit publishers' or broadcasters' requirements and may even delete the parts of messages that are most important. Furthermore, media personnel use publicity releases in time slots or positions most convenient to them. Thus, messages sometimes appear in locations or at times that may not reach specific target audiences. Although these limitations can be frustrating, properly managed publicity based public relations tools can offer substantial. (Hult,Pride, and Ferrell 2012:523)

5.4. Public relations in shopping centres

According to Hult,Pride, and Ferrell (2012:518) public relations is a broad set of communication efforts used to create and maintain favorable relationships between an organization and its stakeholders. Public relations can be used to promote people, places, ideas and activities. Public relations focus on enhancing the image of a shopping centre. George (2004:260) states that public relations are an organization's overall communication effort to establish and maintain favorable relationships between the organization and its target market, whereas publicity is any promotional communication regarding an organization and/ or its products where the message is not paid for by the organization benefiting from them". Cloete (2003:531) states that a public relations effort is the strategic image-building communication force in a shopping centre, while publicity is major tools used in the implementation of the public relations strategy. Public relations plays an important role in shopping centre promotional strategy. Therefore, public Relations activities in shopping centres should be well co-ordinated and according to Shimp (2000) is divided into the following main functions:

5.4.1. Research

Public relations and marketing activities such as events and promotions have been used in shopping centres to attract shoppers and, therefore, increase traffic flow and revenue. Promotions also allow the shopping centre management to have a social responsibility to the community. Goldlatt (1997: 52) explains that, from the earliest days of the markets of ancient times, sellers have used promotions and events to attract buyers and drive sales. Today, retailers rely on market research to design long-range promotional events that use an integrated approach combining a live event with advertising, publicity, and promotions. Customers might find themselves attracted to malls by promotions like contests and giveaways that malls use to entice customers to their properties.

5.4.2. Target Audience

Public relations objectives are achieved by influencing someone either to take action or not to take action; the action, of course, will have an effect on the industry's operations. The person or persons to be influenced become the target audience. Ideally, the audience should be identified individually by name, but this is not always possible. The best alternative is an identification of the smallest possible grouping of individuals. This is important if massive, expensive communications programmes are to be avoided. It is important that sufficient attention be paid to the internal public—the employees and tenants (Skinner, Von Essen, Mersham, and Motau 2007:108). For effective communication to take place, marketing managers must use specific communication tools in order to run a successful campaign or promotion and to reach out to the different target audience.

5.4.3. Setting of objectives

Objectives .There are important factors for marketing managers to consider when designing and managing the service offerings of the shopping centre. Many shoppers often make product purchases based on the image of the shopping centre or brand of the product upon which they depend to accomplish their objectives. Depending on the success of an event or promotion within a shopping centre, it also helps create an image or reputation of a specific centre (or brand). According to Kotler and Keller (2009), different shopping centres have created different images or “brands. A brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

Kotler and Keller (2009) go on to explain that as consumers' lives become more complicated, rushed and time starved, the ability of a brand to simplify decision making and reduce risk is invaluable. Similarly, shoppers would choose to shop at a centre that can offer services, promotions, discounts, entertainment and a variety of retail stores that will satisfy their needs.

5.4.4. Setting budgets

Marketing managers are responsible for the promotional budget (also known as marketing funds) (George; 2003). Budgeting is the key to financial planning. It is important that marketing managers ensure that their budgets meet the objectives of their planned promotion. The allocation of budgets is always a complicated task for the marketing manager, as it is invariably felt that there is never enough money. According to Cloete (2010:716) the marketing funds are usually collected through the percentage contributed from tenants in relation to their rentals, and the balance is contributed by the owners. The budgeting for centre promotions can take a number of forms. The budget has to cater for all the elements that make up an annual strategy. These range from advertising, décor, PR campaigns, and tenant education. There are a number of items that will form part of the annual budget; these items would be an annual expenditure item, e.g. branded giveaways and festive season décor. The marketing budget includes the following elements:

- Income. Income for the marketing department can be derived in a combination of methods:
 - Tenant contributions
 - Landlord contributions
 - Sponsorship and
 - Hiring of space (Exhibitions)
- Marketing expenses. There are a number of items that make up marketing expenditure. Some costs are fixed and are incurred every month whilst others vary depending upon the promotional activity planned. The fixed monthly costs may include costs such as the marketing company's retainer , the salary bill for the marketing company's staff that are deployed at the centre, an agreed amount for the marketing staff's use of the centre's telephone and photocopier, an

administration fee for certain accounting or administrative functions, and an amount needs to be set aside for annual audit. All other costs are dependent upon the marketing activities planned for the year.

- Allocation of marketing budgets. Budgets can be allocated in different ways. They can be allocated according to promotion or according to season.
- Financial administration. It is imperative that when a marketing budget is prepared that the landlord can see exactly how the money received is going to be spent. They do not want to see that 70% of the income is going towards salaries, retainers and other administration. They want to know that they are getting their money's worth of exposure for their asset.
- Preparation of the Annual Budget. Once the planning meeting has taken place and the estimated costs have been calculated, it is up to the marketing manager to prepare the annual budget. The budget should be split into the various months of the year and set out such that the owners can easily follow how the income is generated and the expenditure allocated.
- Accounting functions. On the whole, the accounts of the marketing fund are managed by the centre management. The marketing manager is responsible for the collection of all income. Once all the income has been collected, marketing's share is paid. From a tenants perspective, it is preferable to have a complete set of books separate from those of the centres, simply so that there is transparency in how the money is allocated and spent.

5.4.5. Messages

According to Skinner, Von Essen, Mersham, and Motau (2007:108) the message is what is communicated to the audience. There may be several target audiences and a different message should be developed to suit each audience. Often, an overall theme is designed by the marketing, advertising, and public relations team to convey the group's message. Szabo (2004) explains that communication is a process of exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages. It is a continuous process. The pre-requisite of communication is a message. This message must be conveyed through some medium to the recipient. It is essential that this message must be understood by the recipient in the same terms as intended by the sender. The recipient must respond within a time frame. Thus, communication is a two-way process

and is incomplete without feedback from the recipient to the sender on how well the message is understood by the former. For communication tools to be effective, marketing manager's management should ensure that relevant information (to both external as well as internal markets) is strategically and effectively conveyed to relevant stakeholders.

5.4.6. Communication channels

Effective communication is significant for managers in the organizations to perform the basic functions of management, i.e., planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Communication helps managers to perform their jobs and responsibilities. Communication serves as a foundation for planning. All the essential information must be communicated to the managers who, in turn, must communicate the plans to implement them. Organizing also requires effective communication with others about their job task. Similarly, leaders, as managers, must communicate effectively with their subordinates to achieve the team goals. Controlling is not possible without written and oral communication. Managers devote a great part of their time in communication. They generally devote approximately six hours per day in communicating. They spend a great amount of time on face-to-face or telephonic communication with their superiors, subordinates, colleagues, customers or suppliers. Managers may use written communication (letters, reports or memos) wherever oral communication is not feasible (Gedess 1995:59). Communication is an integral process involving the use of the following communication tools:

5.4.6.1 Internal communication tools:

- An Internal Newsletter is a proactive way to keep your employees informed. Internal newsletters are especially beneficial for businesses that operate in different locations and have many employees (Fujita and Miura 2011). The internal newsletter (for tenants) is a great way to keep tenants informed, build loyalty, motivate tenants, help tenants perform better, encourage tenants, and boost the shopping centres reputation and growth. Newsletters are relatively easy and inexpensive to produce.
- Employee Relations is every bit as important as public relations. Employee relations

activities provide organizational support for employees with respect to their jobs and lives. Employee relations can encompass many different activities, including training programs, employee assistance programs, and human resource programs.

- Annual Meetings. These meetings are intended to motivate tenants to improve their operations and sales, it allows management to provide information regarding operational policies and management procedures and to introduce the forthcoming years advertising and promotional schedule.
- Workshops or Quality Circles. Quality circles are teams of tenants who work together in groups of geographically closely related stores in a centre to critique and improve centre promotional programmes by working together in the implementation.
- Inserts and Enclosures. The insert is a valuable medium for important notices and news. One obvious advantage of the insert is that the message goes to a strategically targeted public who is interested in the message. A small, lightweight printed insert need not add to postage.
- Bulletin boards and Electronic notices. In order to be effective, bulletin boards and notices need to have regular attention and to be updated often. Seeing the same notices again and again becomes an annoyance and soon leads to inattention.
- Intranet. The intranet is basically a computer network that is behind a firewall. The firewall separates the public internet to the business's intranet. Anything within the intranet is not open to the public because it is behind the network's firewall. Business's use their intranet commonly to host a private website only viewable while at work or when logged into the private network .This website can keep employees up to date on business issues and events as well as provide resources without having to worry about who can see this info from the public side.
- Hotlines. Hotlines and toll free numbers are not just used to communicate with external publics , they are also used to allow employees to call with their concerns
- Face-to-Face Communication. The heart of communication inside an organization is verbal communication. Verbal communication has a significant impact on organizational culture and deserves attention. “Word of mouth” is often the quickest means for communicating information. (Cutlip, Centre, and Broom

2006:243).

5.4.6.2 External communication tools:

- Advertising is any paid, non-personal presentation of information on a product, brand, or business. A well-established shopping centre has a well-balanced assortment of tenant mix selected to meet the needs and wants of consumers due to the promotion mix. Advertising must be generated to attract consumers to the shopping centre so that they purchase and consume the shopping centre's offerings. Effective advertising builds goodwill and an image for the shopping centre to ensure continuous patronage and loyalty from satisfied consumers. Marketing managers use advertising such as the national press, local press, community newspapers, magazines, in house magazines, television, radio, the internet and the World Wide Web to inform consumers about the shopping centre's product and service offerings. The objective of advertising is to create a desirable image in the minds of shoppers of the various shopping centres (Peter and Olson 2005:426).
- With newspaper advertising, one has the choice to reach a large or small geographic collection of people. With national newspaper advertising, the coverage can be huge, but so can the rates. What one has to do here is weigh up if the advertising costs can be justified. However, with regional newspaper advertising, one has the advantage of selecting a local audience and this can be the best option if one is advertising a business on the doorstep of the audience in question. The advantage of print media enables one to send in the copy and have it displayed on the section one wants within a few days. The beauty of print media advertising is that one can be as creative as one wishes. (Ferrell and Hartline 2008: 305)
- Personal selling involves direct personal interactions between a potential buyer and a salesperson. It can be a powerful promotional method for at least two reasons. Firstly, it may increase consumers' involvement with the product and or the decision-making process. Secondly, the interactive communication situation allows salespeople to adapt their sales presentations to fit the informational needs of each potential buyer. Employees of the tenant mix will use personal selling as a tool to increase sales of products and services (Peter and Olson 2005:426).

- Sales promotion involves the provision of direct inducements to the consumer to make certain purchases. This may be a temporary price reduction through coupons, rebates, multipack sales, contests, shows or point-of-purchase taste-tests. Sales promotions are an idea designed to attract maximum shopping and co-ordinate tenant events to support their retailing objectives such as sidewalk sales, fashion shows and shopper competitions. The objective of sales promotions must be designed to increase foot traffic, encourage sale of merchandise, create awareness of merchandise categories, and stimulate the interest or desire of the consumer with special offers during special events and to generate tenant co-operation, support, participation and involvement in the relevant activities (Peter and Olson 2005:426).
- The internet is a goldmine of PR tools and techniques. A company website, blogging and podcasting are examples of internet marketing tools. The Internet could be used for communication in many different ways. For example, email messages are sent over the internet. When people develop websites, that is using the internet to communicate information to the readers. The internet can also be used for instant messaging (texting) or even Voice over Internet Provider (VoIP) which allows live video/audio conversations with people across the internet at other computers or even telephones.
- Magazines build a brand's awareness in several important ways: increase brand consideration, increase brand trial and repeat brand purchase. Magazines provide an array and variety of communication media to reach audiences who share common interests. Magazines enable communicators to target specific messages to specific audiences. (Hult,Pride and Ferrell 2012: 521).
- Radio Advertising. Radio offers a wide range of publicity possibilities. It is a mobile medium suited for mobile people. Many people begin and end their day listening to the radio with the news, sports and information the most popular choice (Cutlip, Centre, and Broom 2006:262).
- Television Advertising. No other medium matches the television's ability to provide a window on the world. A medium that uses printed word, spoken word, pictures in motion, colour, music, animation, and sound effects all blended into one message - possesses immeasurable potency.

- Direct Marketing. This tool uses email, mail, catalogues, encourages direct responses to radio and TV, in order to reach targeted audiences to increase sales and test new products and alternate marketing tactics.
- Twitter is one such resource. Containing 150-word blurbs capable of link transmission, "tweets," as they are called, allow public relations professionals to quickly and concisely pass along real-time information to consumers, the community and shareholders (Ingram 2011).
- Targeted email messages. Email enables public relations professionals to disseminate news about products, investments and ventures to customers, shareholders and other audiences.
- News Releases. A news release is a few pages of typewritten copy-typically fewer than 300 words. It is used to draw attention to a company event or product. News releases can be submitted to newspapers, magazines, television contacts and suppliers. Although the popularity of the printed word may be on the decline, news releases can still benefit public relations professionals. Whether the information is presented online or in a magazine or a newspaper, news releases enable a company's public relations arm to reach important audiences.
- Feature articles. A feature article is a full-length story prepared for a specific purpose or target audience. Feature articles typically focus on the implications or economic impact of a firm's actions. They are also very useful when responding to negative events or publicity.
- White Papers. White papers are similar to feature articles; however, they are more technical and focus on very specific topics. White papers have been utilized extensively in the information technology field, where firms continually work to establish standards and keep up with technological innovation.
- Press conferences. A press conference is a meeting with news media called to announce or respond to major events. Media personnel receive invitations to a specific location, with written materials, photographs, exhibits, and even products given to them. Multimedia materials may be distributed to broadcast stations in the hope that they will air some activities that occurred at the press conference. Press

conferences are usually held when announcing new products, patents, mergers, or internal administrative changes.

- Event sponsorship. Corporate sponsorship of major events has become an entire industry in itself. Sponsorships can range from local events, such as high school athletics and local charities, to international events.

Once the message and /or the PR promotion have been carried out via the above communication tools, it is important to conduct an evaluation to the process to identify and examine the target audience's interpretation and to improve on communication.

5.4.6.3 Challenges with shopping Centre managers

Shopping centre management is faced with many different challenges in order to keep their shoppers happy and cater for all the needs and wants. It is very important that they understand the needs and wants of their shoppers and that they are addressed accordingly for total satisfaction. One of the major challenges that shopping centre managers are faced with, is dealing with communication barriers. Communication barriers may include:

Perceptual and Language Differences. Perception is generally how each individual interprets the world around him or her. All generally want to receive messages which are significant to them. But any message which is against their values is not accepted. The same event may be taken differently by different individuals. (Management study guide 2011).

Information Overload: Managers are surrounded with a pool of information. It is essential to control this information flow or else the information is likely to be misinterpreted or forgotten or overlooked. As a result communication is less effective.

Inattention: At times we just don't listen, but only hear. For example a traveler may pay attention to one "NO PARKING" sign, but if such sign is put all over the city, he no longer listens to it. Thus, repetitive messages should be ignored for effective communication.

Similarly, if a superior is engrossed in his paper work and his subordinate explains to him his problem, the superior may not get what he is saying and it leads to the disappointment of the subordinate.

Time Pressures: Often in organization the targets have to be achieved within a specified time period, the failure of which has adverse consequences. In a haste to meet deadlines, the formal channels of communication are shortened, or messages are partially given, i.e., not completely transferred. Thus sufficient time should be given for effective communication.

Distraction/Noise: Communication is also affected significantly by noise or distractions. Physical distractions such as poor lighting, uncomfortable seating, an unhygienic room also affects communication in a meeting. Similarly, the use of loud speakers interferes with communication.

Emotions: Emotional state at a particular point of time also affects communication. If the receiver feels that the communicator is angry, he interprets that the information being sent is very bad. While he takes it differently if the communicator is happy and jovial (in that case the message is interpreted to be good and interesting).

Complexity in Organizational Structure: Greater the hierarchy in an organization (i.e. more the number of managerial levels), more is the chances of communication getting destroyed. Only the people at the top level can see the overall picture while the people at low level just have knowledge about their own area and a little knowledge about other areas.

Poor retention: Human memory cannot function beyond a limit. One can't always retain what is being told specially if he is not interested or not attentive. This leads to a communication breakdown.

Shopping centre managers are also faced with the challenge of dealing with negative public relations. According to Ferrell and Hartline (2008: 306), one of the most important aspects of public relations deals with the unexpected and often unfavourable public reactions. Sometimes public relations campaigns themselves cause problems, leading to unintended consequences on the part of the campaigns creators.

Negative coverage of a shopping centre or campaign can have quick, dramatic, and long lasting effects. Negative publicity is critically important when its effects reduce the degree of trust that shoppers have in a specific shopping centre. A single negative event can wipe

out a shopping centres image and negate the goodwill generated over decades. Today, the media and shoppers can report incidents through television, radio and the internet faster than ever before. To avoid negative publicity, it is vital to avoid negative incidents and events that can create problems. Marketing managers can achieve this goal through effective ethical and legal compliance programs, safety programs, quality-control procedures, and programs designed to enhance employee integrity. However, no matter how hard marketing managers try to avoid negative events, the potential for negative incidents and publicity is always present. Therefore, marketing managers should have plans and procedures in place to respond to negative events when they occur. In particular, specific policies and procedures for handling the media and the coverage of the event is necessary. It is important that marketing managers expedite news coverage of negative events rather than try to block the news or cover up facts about the incident (Ferrell and Hartline 2008: 308).

5.4.7. Evaluation

Because of the potential benefits of good public relations, it is essential that shopping centre management evaluate the effectiveness of their public relations campaigns. Research can be conducted to determine how well a marketing manager is communicating his/her message or image to their target audiences (Hult,Pride, and Ferrell 2012:523) . There are several evaluation techniques that can be used to measure the real effectiveness of a PR program. Formal research tools include opinion polls, surveys, shopper feedback, detailed analysis of press publicity, foot traffic (increase or decrease during the campaign),entries into various competitions, broadcast returns, hits on the internet advertising Equivalency (AVE'S), return on investment (ROI), and audience attendance. Informal research tools include internal meetings, complaints and criticism.

- Opinion polls and surveys. Studies have shown that companies that use a properly structured audit with clearly defined goals find this method extremely valuable.
- Press publicity. This refers to publicity in all types of newspapers and magazines. The traditional accounting method, and one that can be effectively measured, is counting the number of column centimeters achieved and converting them into rands (using advertising costs as the basis).The direct return in value, an often overlooked

evaluation is that of 'sales leads ' or enquiries that occur as a result of an editorial in a newspaper or magazine.

- Broadcast returns. As with the press, time on the radio or television is another measurement tool.
- Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE). The idea of Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) has been around for many years. It has generated much debate in the Public Relations industry, with this debate focusing on both its reliability and validity. Many people are attracted to it because it appears able to put a dollar value on media coverage and, by extension, allow media relations people to compare their results with advertising. Yet the measure has a number of problems and it is important to anyone considering its use to consider both its strengths and its weaknesses.
- Sales results. Although sales results are difficult to attribute to public relations, there is no doubt that a public relations programme integrated with the marketing and sales plan can have an impact on sales results.
- Internal meetings. Discussions with sales, marketing, and general staff are an effective means of determining how successful a particular programme has been.
- Complaints and criticism. Some companies are more prone to complaints and criticism than others. A programme aimed at negating the issues that tend to cause most of the problems is an obvious and simple yardstick, measurable by the mere reduction in complaints or criticism.

From the above, it is evident that tenant relations; promotions; publicity; and public relations are integral functions in the effective functioning of shopping centres. This study therefore uses these core functions to construct a questionnaire and an interview schedule in order to examine the perceived role of communication activities at shopping centres in the greater Durban area.

6. Conclusion

The above literature review explains and discusses the role of communication tools within a shopping centre environment, the utilization of these communication tools, the challenges and communication barriers that management experience. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology employed for the study will be discussed. An in-depth explanation will be given of the study type; target population; sampling; data collection methods; data analysis; and the reliability and validity of the study.

3.2 Study Type

Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005:52) state that when one conducts research to investigate a research hypothesis or a research question, one collects data from the objects of one's enquiry in order to solve the problem concerned. The results that are obtained should, therefore, shed light on the tenability of the hypothesis and it should give an indication whether to accept or reject the hypothesis. Yin (2003:20) argues that the research approach is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions. Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2005:2) indicate that research design addresses the planning of scientific inquiry in designing a strategy for finding out something. This study will, therefore, employ both a quantitative and a qualitative research design in order to accomplish the objective of evaluating the role of communication tools in shopping centre management. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2004:146) explain how this mixed method approach has an advantage in that it is useful in providing better opportunities for the researcher to answer the research question and it assists in better evaluating the extent to which one's research findings are reliable and valid.

3.2.1 Quantitative research approach

Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalising it across groups of people. Quantitative research has a clearly defined research questionnaire in which objective answers are sought and can be used to generalise concepts more widely, predict future results or investigate causal relationships.

The quantitative research was conducted via the closed questions in the semi-structured interview. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:8), quantitative research does not involve the investigation of processes but rather emphasise the measurement and analysis between the variables in the study. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:8-9) establish the clear and concise purpose of both the quantitative and qualitative methods in the mixed-method approach of the study as highlighted below:

- As a result of quantitative research in dealing with numbers, a process of analysis is established to either confirm or disprove the hypotheses. Flexibility is limited to prevent any form of bias in the presentation of results;
- Quantitative research tries to understand the facts of a research investigation from an outsider's perspective;
- Quantitative research tries to keep the research process as stable as possible and a collection of facts that won't change easily; and
- The investigation and structure of the research situation is controlled by the researcher in quantitative research. This is done in order to identify and isolate variables.

3.2.2 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research seeks out the 'why', not the 'how' of its topic through the analysis of unstructured information – things like interview transcripts, and open-ended survey responses. It doesn't just rely on statistics or numbers, which are the domain of quantitative researchers. Qualitative research is used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. It's used to inform business decisions, policy formation, communication and research. Focus groups, in-depth interviews, content analysis, ethnography, evaluation and semiotics are among the many formal approaches that are used, but qualitative research also involves the analysis of any unstructured material, including customer feedback forms, reports or media clips. Collecting and analysing this unstructured information can be messy and can become time consuming using manual methods. When faced with volumes of materials, finding themes and

extracting meaning can be a daunting task. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:8-9), the following are characteristics of qualitative research:

- Qualitative research is based on flexibility and explanatory methods allowing for a deeper understanding of what is being investigated;
- Qualitative research is aligned with achieving an insider's view of the subjects under investigation; and
- The dynamic and changeable nature of qualitative research produces a wealth of detailed information by adding to the body of knowledge established in the literature.

Qualitative research generally examines people's worlds and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants. Kluge (2000: 1) explains that qualitative field studies can be used successfully in the description of groups, small communities and organisations. Such field studies focus on the behavioural regularities of everyday situations, organisational relationships between individuals or within groups, attitudes and rituals. Qualitative research is based on flexible and explorative methods because it enables the researcher to change the type of data being collected progressively so that a deeper understanding of what is being investigated can be achieved. Based on this understanding, the research instrument will take the form of interview schedules.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative research will assist the researcher in assessing the effectiveness of the communication tools utilised by shopping centre management.

3.3 Target population

A population is a group of potential participants to whom a researcher wants to generalise the results of a study. The target population for a survey is the entire set of units for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences. Thus, the target population defines those units for which the findings of the survey are meant to generalize. Welman (2005:52) states that the population is the study object and consists of individuals, groups,

organisations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. A research problem, therefore, relates to a specific population. A population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. Therefore, the target population selected for this study is based on shopping centre managers and the tenants of these shopping centres.

3.4 Sample

Babbie (2009:224) states that a sample allows the researcher to make relatively few observations but gain an accurate picture of a much larger population. Determining the most adequate size of a sample is crucial. Swetnam (2000: 42) states that a sample is the subset of a population selected to participate in a research study. This study has targeted five shopping centres within the greater Durban area. Interviews will be conducted with all communication managers at these shopping malls.

3.5 Sampling method

“Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Castillo 2009). A convenience sample is a sample where the subjects are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher. The researcher makes no attempt, or only a limited attempt, to ensure that this sample is an accurate representation of some larger group or population. The classic example of a convenience sample is standing at a shopping mall and selecting shoppers as they walk by to fill out a survey. Convenience samples can provide one with useful information, especially in a pilot study. Convenience sampling is also known as opportunity sampling, accidental sampling or haphazard sampling.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the convenience sampling method will be used to select tenants and shopping centre management to answer the questionnaire.

3.6 Sample size

The researcher has targeted the five largest shopping centres in the greater Durban area (figure 3.1). All marketing managers at these malls were interviewed and, depending on the size of the centre, a specific number of tenants were selected to complete surveys.

Table 3.1 Details of the five shopping centres : No of Respondents

<u>Shopping Centre</u>	<u>ShoppingCentre Management</u>	<u>Tenants</u>
Gateway shopping Centre	1	144
The Pavillion	1	52
The Chatsworth Centre	1	28
The Galleria Mall	1	15
Westwood Shopping Centre	1	10

3.7 Data collection method

Data collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can impact the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results. Data collection methods for impact evaluation vary along a continuum. At the one end of this continuum are quantitative methods and, at the other end of the continuum, are qualitative methods for data collection. The quantitative data collection method is concerned with testing hypotheses derived from theory and/or being able to estimate the size of a phenomenon of interest. In quantitative research, the questionnaires are more structured than in qualitative research. In a structured questionnaire, the researcher asks a standard set of questions and nothing more (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

Data will be collected from the tenants via questionnaires. Paper-pencil-questionnaires can be sent to a large number of people and saves the researcher time and money. People are more truthful while responding to the questionnaires regarding controversial issues in particular due to the fact that their responses are anonymous. However, they also have drawbacks. The majority of the people who receive questionnaires don't return them and those who do might not be representative of the originally selected sample (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Questionnaires often make use of checklist and rating scales. These devices

help simplify and quantify people's behaviours and attitudes. A checklist is a list of behaviours, characteristics, or other entities that the researcher is looking for. Either the researcher or survey participant simply checks whether each item on the list is observed, present or true or vice versa. A rating scale is more useful when behaviour needs to be evaluated on a continuum. They are also known as Likert scales (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

Qualitative data collection methods play an important role in impact evaluation by providing information useful to understand the processes behind observed results and assess changes in people's perceptions of their well-being. Furthermore, qualitative methods can be used to improve the quality of survey-based quantitative evaluations by helping generate evaluation hypothesis; strengthening the design of survey questionnaires and expanding or clarifying quantitative evaluation findings. These methods are characterized by the following attributes:

- they tend to be open-ended and have less structured protocols;
- they rely more heavily on interactive interviews;
- they use triangulation to increase the credibility of their findings; and
- generally their findings are not generalizable to any specific population, rather each case study produces a single piece of evidence that can be used to seek general patterns among different studies of the same issue.

A qualitative study takes a great deal of time. The data collection methods must observe the ethical principles of research. The qualitative methods most commonly used in evaluation can be classified in three broad categories: in-depth interview, observation methods, and document review. The researcher will administer questionnaires to collect data from the tenants and will conduct in-depth interviews with marketing managers at the selected shopping centres.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a practice in which raw data is ordered and organized so that useful information can be extracted. The process of organizing and thinking about data is key to understanding what the data does and does not contain. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 150) argue that there is usually no single "right" way to analyse the data in qualitative study. The

data analysis presents the results of the study and conclusions that were drawn from the study. It further presents a set of recommendations based on the interpretation of the results. The data will be collected through interviews and questionnaires. Complex questions and issues can be discussed and clarified as the interviewer can probe respondents' answers. The data obtained from the interviews will be organised through descriptive techniques. According to McQueen and Knussen (2002:139), the descriptive techniques use a series of procedures whose aim is to describe data in a manner that effectively summarises, simplifies, and illustrates. McQueen and Knussen (2002:119) emphasise that the benefit of SPSS is that the researcher's data is sorted, simplified and summarised, where the data is reduced to statistics that will impose meaning on the factor or behaviour they represent and they will be used to draw influences and test hypotheses. Ryan and Bernard (n.d.) state that theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research. Therefore, data gathered from the interviews and questionnaires was organised into manageable themes, analysed and presented as findings using relevant graphs and tables.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 28) postulate that the validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Reliability is the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured has not changed. One can measure something accurately only when one can also measure it consistently. Yet, measuring something consistently does not necessarily mean measuring it accurately. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 28) conclude that reliability is a necessary but insufficient condition for validity. Therefore, both validity and reliability reflect the degree to which one may have error in one's measurements.

Validity concerns itself with whether the research design and methodological approach used will address the objectives and problems raised in the study which it aims to achieve and answer. Swetnam (2000:30) states that validity is about carefully constructing definitions of concepts, hypotheses or propositions so that they can be translated clearly and predictably into detailed operational methods, down to the level of specific questions and observations.

It is about ensuring that there are strong transparent relationships between the conceptual or theoretical part of the research, the phenomenon identified for investigation and the method a researcher intends to use to get access to that phenomenon. Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, and, therefore, an unreliable instrument cannot be valid. Based on this, this study used face-to-face interviews as a valid instrument of collecting data.

Reliability revolves around the consistency of the research and the research itself and whether the findings of the research are true in nature and can be used in future and present research conducted by other researchers in the same or similar field of study (White, 2003:25). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, validity was ensured by doing a pilot study and by asking experts in the field of shopping centre management to examine the questionnaire.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the research methodology employed in this study. It explains the necessary research steps, the instruments used to gather data and the procedures followed in the administration and co-ordination of the research instrument.

Based on the data gathered from the interviews and questionnaires, the next chapter will deal with data analysis. This will analyse and interpret the information from the interviews and use the findings to either confirm or reject the literature review.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology employed for the study. This chapter presents the findings from the fieldwork conducted in order to examine the perceived role of communication activities at shopping centres and then determine whether these tools are perceived as being effective. The findings are therefore presented according to the two broad themes:

- Tenants perceptions relating to the role of communication activities at shopping centres
- Marketing Managers perceptions relating to the role of communication activities at shopping centres

4.2 TENANTS PERCEPTIONS RELATING TO THE ROLE OF PROMOTIONS, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS AT SHOPPING CENTRES

Below is a reflection of the findings from the questionnaires administered amongst shopping centre tenants at the five selected shopping centres in the greater Durban area in order to gauge their perceptions regarding the role of communication activities at shopping centres.

4.2.1 Importance of communication between tenants and management

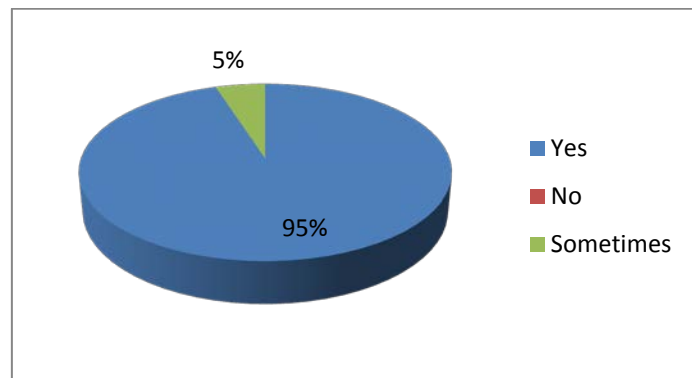


Figure 4.1: Importance of communication between tenants and management

Findings reveal that a few (5%) respondents felt that communication was limited with management, whilst most (95%) of the respondents confirmed that there is always open communication between tenants and shopping centre management. The respondents also indicated that they consider regular communication with centre management as an important aspect in the success of their business. These findings support Szabo's, (2004:241) views that good communication between management and tenants plays a significant role in the overall success of a shopping centre. Communication therefore is seen as an essential element for shopping centre tenants.

4.2.2 Satisfaction relating to tenant mix

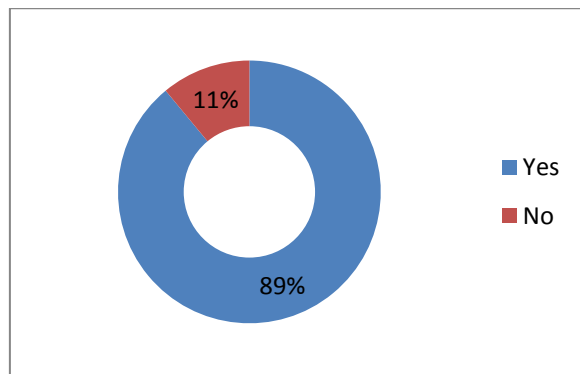


Figure 4.2: Satisfaction relating to tenant mix

Findings revealed that most (89%) of the respondents were happy with the current tenant mix. A few (11%) felt that management should increase the number of anchor tenants to increase foot traffic. These findings imply that respondents felt that including a variety of anchor stores within shopping centres could increase foot traffic which could possibly increase sales. These findings are in keeping with Bruwer's (1997:170) assertion that a good tenant mix is critical not only to the landlord and management, but also to the tenants and their customers to assist in the possible increase in sales.

4.2.3 Are you provided with a plan for promotions, publicity and public relations?

Findings reveal that all (100%) of the tenants mentioned that marketing managers do provide them with a strategic plan for promotions, publicity and public relations. These findings imply that marketing managers do plan in advance for in-store promotions. These findings support the views of Smith, Berry and Pulford (1999:81) that if a strategic plan is put together well before the event or promotion then in most cases that promotion is well

received by the target audience and it assists the marketing manager with tactical planning and clear strategic direction

4.2.4 Is promotions, publicity and public relations activities necessary?

Findings indicate that all respondents (100%) agreed that promotions, publicity and public relations activities are important as it contributes to the traffic flow within the shopping centre. This confirms Goldlatt's (1997:52) assertion that promotions and marketing events are used to attract more customers, thus increasing foot traffic and revenue. Tenants also mentioned that customers find themselves attracted to a shopping centre depending on the promotions, marketing and public relations activities held at the mall.

4.2.5 The main objective of promotions, publicity and public relations activities

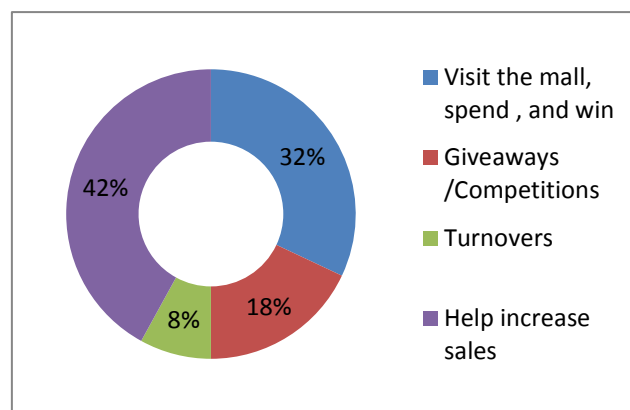


Figure 4.3: The main objectives of promotions and public relations

According to Figure 4.4, most (42%) of the tenants felt that the most common messages sent out by marketing managers were messages to help increase sales. Other respondents (32%) indicated that messages disseminated by marketing managers were used to attract more foot traffic and encourage shoppers to spend, whilst a few (18%) indicated that most messages disseminated focused on issues about giveaways and competitions at the shopping centre. A small percentage (8%) indicated that most of the messages dispatched by the marketing manager related to information relating to turnovers and rental payments.

4.2.6 Tenant satisfaction with sales

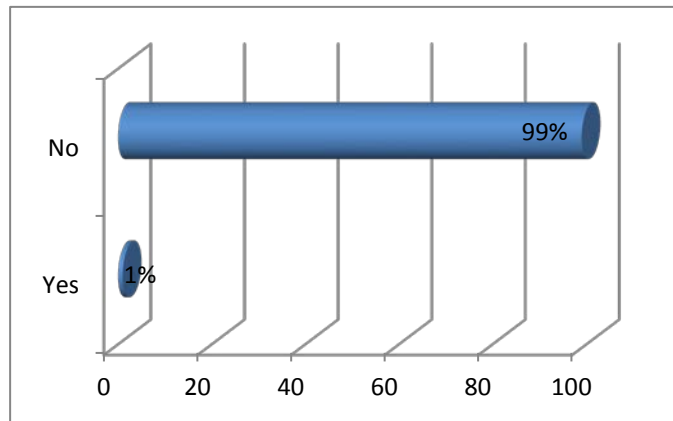


Figure 4.4: Tenant satisfaction with sales

Findings indicate that almost all (99%) tenants are not satisfied with the amount of sales at their stores. They felt that there are insufficient customers who frequent their stores. A very small number (1%) was happy with the number of shoppers that visited their stores. Tenants further revealed that *even if there is a constant flow of foot traffic, it does not mean that there is an increase in sales as not all people who enter the store make purchases*. These findings support Francaviglia’s (2008:271) views that increased foot traffic does not imply increased sales and therefore shopping centre management should ensure promotions, publicity and public relations activities to assist tenants to possibly increase sales.

4.2.7 Budget for promotions, publicity and public relations activities

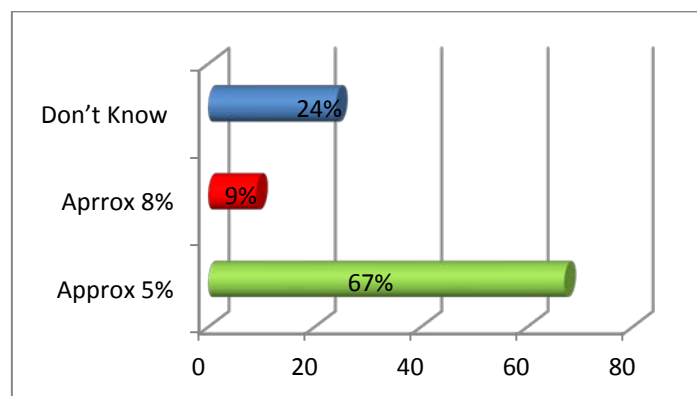


Figure 4.5: Budget for promotions, publicity and public relations activities

According to figure 4.7, most (67%) respondents revealed that approximately 5% of the tenants rental is contributed towards promotional activities, while a few (9%) respondents believe that approximately 8% of their rental is allocated for promotions and marketing activity. The remaining (24%) respondents revealed that they are unsure of the amount that

is allocated. These findings support the view of Fill (2011:14) that the amount of money allocated in the budget for promotions, publicity and public relations activities varies across different centres. Respondents also stated that the amount of money invested in promotions, publicity and public relations activities definitely does influence the success of their stores and invariable the success of the centre.

4.2.8 Rating of communication tools

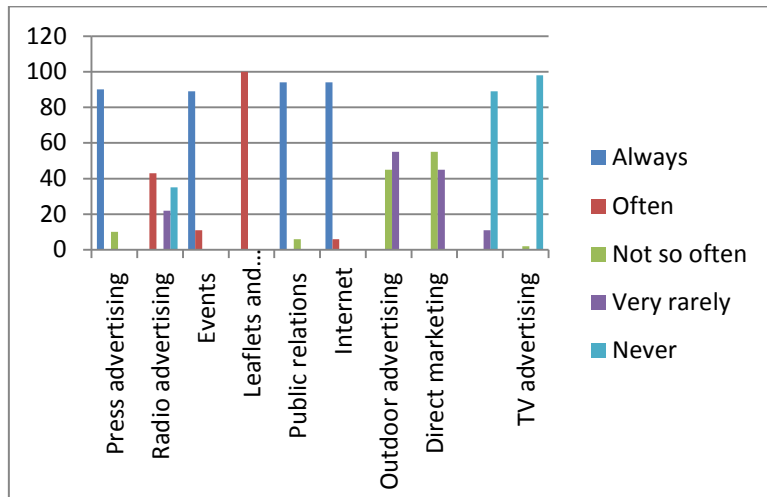


Figure 4.6: Rating of communication tools utilized by management

Findings reveal that promotional literature, public relations events and the internet are the most common tools utilized by the marketing manager for promotions, publicity and public relations activities. Tenants, however, also felt that marketing managers ought to use the communication tools that will carry the message most effectively; which is easy to understand and is easily accessible to the target audience. These finding are in keeping with the views of (Willoughby 2010). However, the most popular communication media used to convey messages to specific target audiences are newspapers, websites, and sms's. This finding supports the views of Peter and Olson (2005:426) who assert that for marketing managers to run a successful promotion, they must use varied communication channels to reach a varied target audience based on the varied stores located in a shopping centre.

4.2.9 Evaluation and communication activities

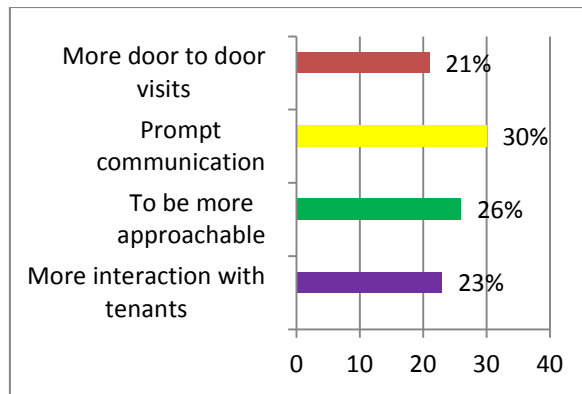


Figure 4.7: Communication challenges

According to Figure 4.7, some of the tenants (21%) felt that marketing managers ought to conduct door-to-door visits to stores to assist with specific complaints and address specific issues. 26% of respondents, feel that management should be more approachable when they are evaluating communication activities. Other (30%) respondents indicated that there needs to be more prompt communication between management and tenants, and the remaining (21%) respondents felt that there should be more interaction between management and tenants. They felt that effective communication is significant for managers to perform their basic functions of management and maintain an open communication between both parties. This finding supports Szabo’s (2004:264) view that there should always be an interactive relationship between tenants and shopping centre management, as both parties need to work together to achieve a positive image and growth of the shopping centre.

4.3 MARKETING MANAGERS PERCEPTIONS RELATING TO THE ROLE OF PROMOTIONS, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS AT SHOPPING CENTRES

Below is a reflection of the findings from the interviews conducted with the marketing managers at the five selected shopping centres in the greater Durban area.

4.3.1 Importance of communication between tenants and marketing manager

Findings reveal that all (100%) marketing managers viewed communication with their tenants as being important. They also stated that it was also *extremely important to communicate with shoppers*. These findings are an indication that marketing managers consider communication as an integral part of their core function. These findings support

Fill's (2011:64) views that communication by marketing managers has a pivotal role in conveying messages to the target audience and therefore has a critical role to play in ensuring shopping centre success.

4.3.2 Frequency of communication between tenants and marketing managers

All (100%) respondents indicated that they have regular meetings with their tenants - at least once a week. They further explained that two-way communication with their tenants is critical in order for them to understand the tenant mix and their tenants' needs and wants. Marketing Managers further stated that communication was crucial with tenants and that they contributed to the success of the shopping centres. These findings reinforce that open communication adds to organizational success (Skinner, 2010).

4.3.3 The role of promotions, publicity and public relations in shopping centres

Below are the marketing manager's views of the role that promotions, publicity and public relations play at shopping centres.

4.3.3.1 Marketing Research

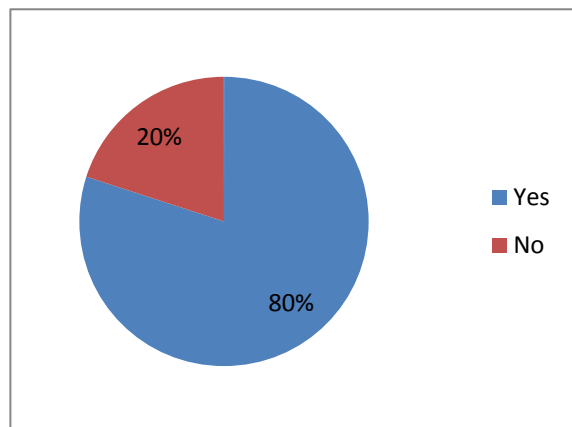


Figure 4.8: Marketing Research

Most (80%) of the respondents revealed that they do in fact use marketing research to inform their marketing decisions. Respondents further indicated that research provides them with an outline of whom to target and how to use the correct marketing tools. They also mentioned that marketing research agencies influence their marketing communications

decisions and help them understand market perceptions, attitudes and behavior. These findings support the views of (Fill 2011:15). The remaining (20%) respondents do not use marketing research to inform their marketing decisions. This implies that they are unable to “forecast” possible outcomes (negative and positive outcomes) for planned projects.

4.3.3.2 The main objectives of promotions, publicity and public relations

All marketing managers (100%) were of the opinion that the main objective of hosting promotional events is to increase the traffic flow (the number of shoppers that enter the mall) with the intention of possibly increasing store sales. They also mentioned that public relations, marketing activities and promotions (competitions, gifts, and samples) have always traditionally been used at shopping centres to attract customers with the intention of increasing tenant revenue. Respondents felt that customers find themselves attracted to a mall depending on the promotions, marketing and public relations activities held at the mall (Goldlatt 1997:52).

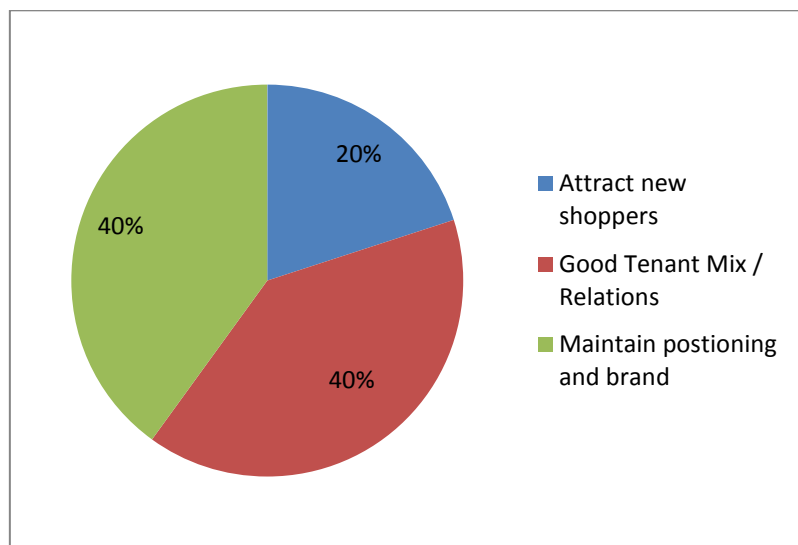


Figure 4.9: The main objectives of promotions, publicity and public relations

In addition further findings, as depicted in Figure 4.6 above indicate that 40% of marketing managers set their marketing objectives in order to maintain the brand position of the shopping centre. They further felt that customers would consider making product purchases or revisit a shopping centre based on the image or brand of that centre. This finding supports the views of (Kotler and Keller 2009). Another 40% of marketing managers

set their marketing objectives by focussing on good tenant relations and the tenant mix. These findings are consistent with Cloete's (2010:330) assertion that a balanced tenant mix could possibly attract shoppers to a centre. Furthermore, Bruwer (1997:170) also points out that a good tenant mix becomes a win-win situation. Therefore, concentrating on tenant relations and the brand positioning of a shopping centre is crucial when determining marketing objectives. The remaining (20%) marketing managers set their marketing objectives in order to attract new shoppers to the centre.

4.3.3.3 Key target audience for marketing activities

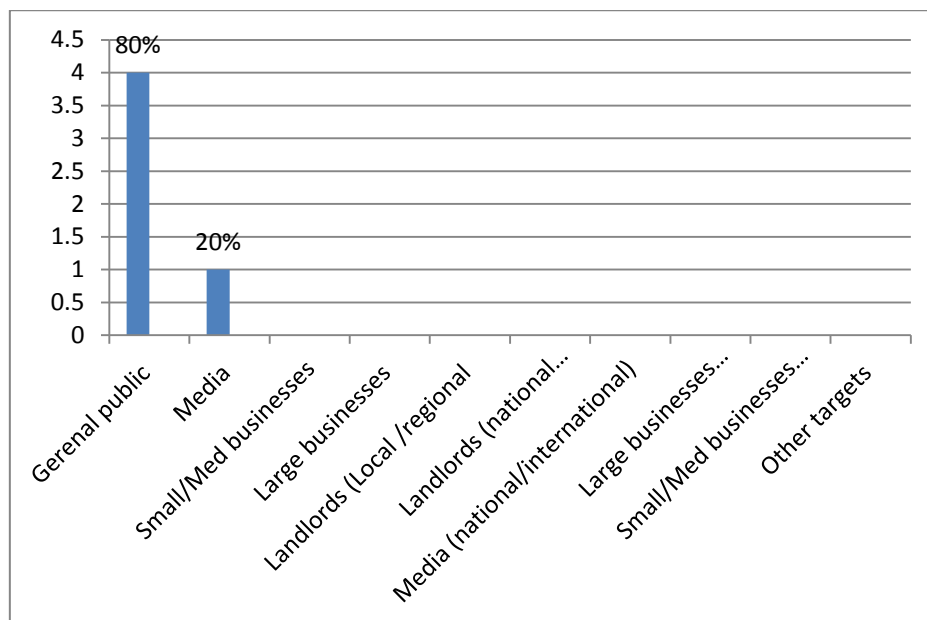


Figure 4.10: Key target audiences for marketing activities

Majority of the marketing managers (80%) identified the general public as the most important target audience when planning for promotions, publicity and public relations activities. The remaining (20%) marketing managers target the media when planning their activities. They mentioned that they rely on the media to portray a positive image/impact of their promotional activity, which contributes to the increased foot traffic and revenue. This is an important tactic as shopping malls have become an important part of the general public lives (Francaviglia, 2008:271).

4.3.3.4 Budget

All (100%) respondents indicated that the budget allocated for promotions, publicity and public relations activities was confidential and that they could not disclose the information. However, they also revealed that the money that is invested in promotions, publicity and public relations activities definitely influences the success of the centre (Fill, 2011:14).

4.3.3.5 Communication activities

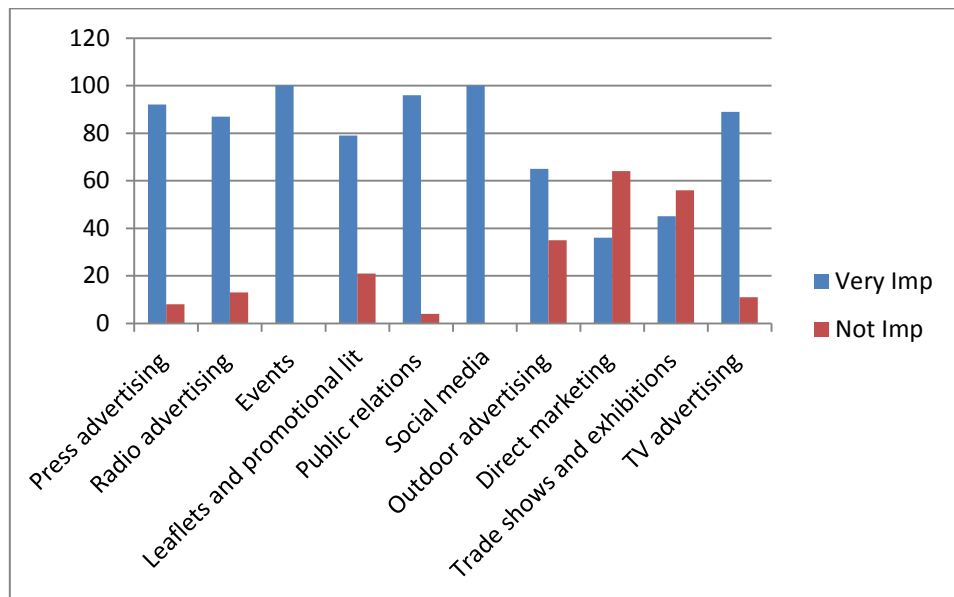


Figure 4.11: Communication activities

Respondents perceived eventing, public relations, and social media communication as the activities of communication. They also indicated that these communication tools assist with communication during specific activities and to effectively communicate with the external public and can reach out to a larger and specific target audience (Olson, 2005:426). Respondents also indicated that these communication tools also provide them with feedback, especially social media, so that they are able to understand the needs of their target audiences.

4.3.3.6 Messages

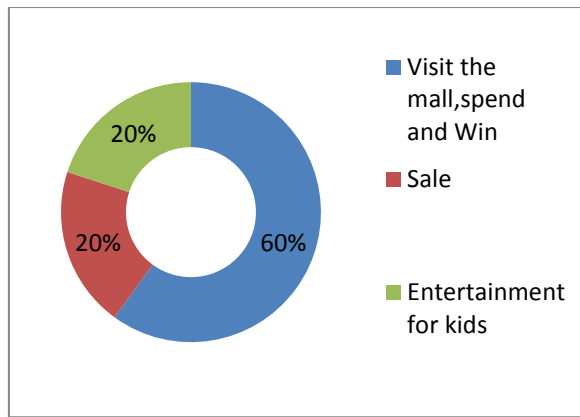


Figure 4.12: Messages

All respondents agreed that the message is the key idea that needs to be communicated. The aim and the objective (of the event or promotion) is carried via the message. Therefore, it is important that the message is planned correctly and that it is clear to understand. Many (60%) respondents revealed that the most common messages used during promotions, publicity and public relations activities is for shoppers to visit the mall, spend and win a prize. The remaining (40%) of respondents stated that the advertising of in-store sales and kids' entertainment usually draw shoppers to the centre.

4.3.3.7 Rating of external communication tools

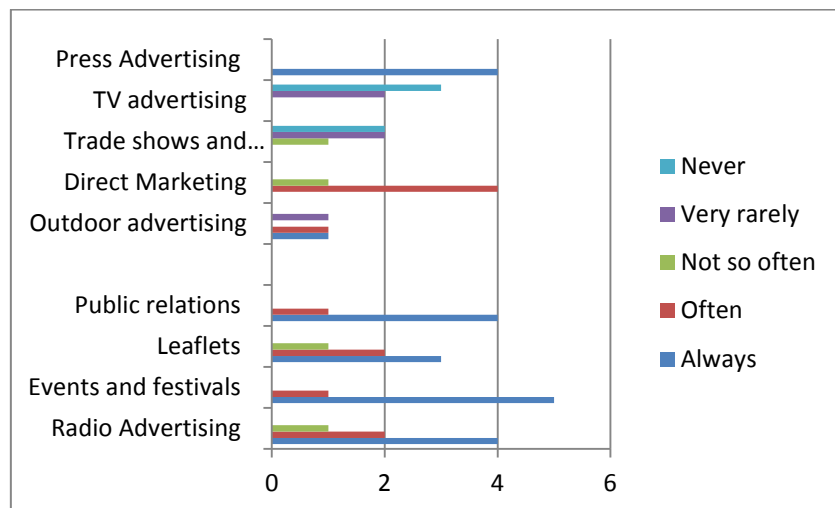


Figure 4.13: Rating of external communication tools

Findings indicate that there are various communication tools utilized amongst marketing managers. The responses revealed that the popularity of the communication varied. The

most frequently used communication tool is press advertising, public relations communications, advertising at events and festivals and radio advertising. Each of the tools of the communication mix performs a different role and can accomplish different tasks. These findings support the views of (Fill 2011:21).

4.3.3.8 Rating of internal communication tools

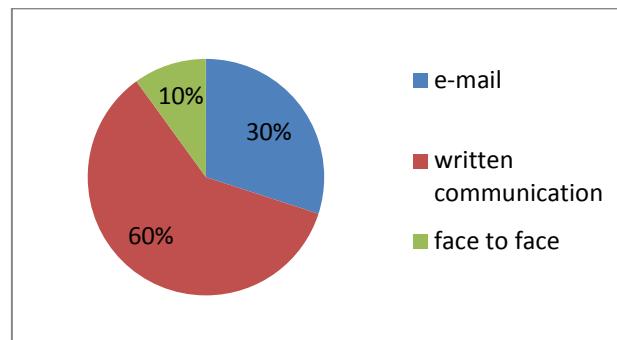


Figure 4.14: Rating of internal communication tools

Findings indicate that there are different tools of communication that are utilized when communicating with internal publics. However, the top three chosen were written (60%) e-mail (30%), and face to face communication (10%). All respondents indicated that a communications strategy is developed during the planning phase of promotions, publicity and public relations activities. They further revealed that planning a good communications strategy creates a bond between tenants and management and also ensures that everyone is aware of what they are trying to achieve. This finding supports the views of (Smith, Berry, and Pulford 1999:81).

4.3.3.9 Evaluation: Methods of evaluation

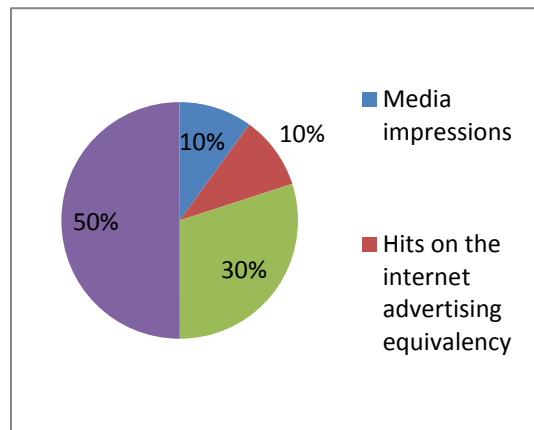


Figure 4.15: Methods of evaluation

Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that the audience attendance was the best evaluation method. They explained that this helped them determine if an event or promotion was successful and well received by the target audiences. Respondents (30%) indicated that the return on investments was a good indicator to evaluate the success of a promotion, while a few (10%) relied on media impressions and internet advertising for evaluation. Respondents also indicated that evaluation is critical as it helps managers develop and improve existing promotions, publicity and public relations activities. They also indicated that evaluation helps them to learn from their mistakes, evaluate what progress has been made and to refine communication activities so that outcomes are achieved.

4.3.3.10 Communication barriers between tenants and marketing managers

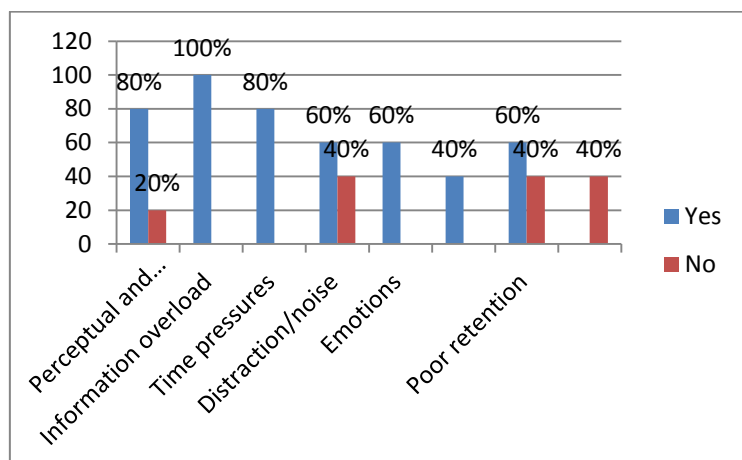


Figure 4.16: Communication Barriers

Communication barriers interrupt the flow of communication from the sender to the receiver, thus making communication ineffective. According to figure 4.16 marketing managers revealed that there are many different barriers of communication that affect the flow of communication in the shopping centre environment. Respondents revealed that the most common barriers of communication seem to be the information overload. This is caused when managers are surrounded with a pool of information and cannot control the flow of this information, thereby causing misinterpretation or the message to be forgotten or overlooked.

4.3.3.11 Communication challenges

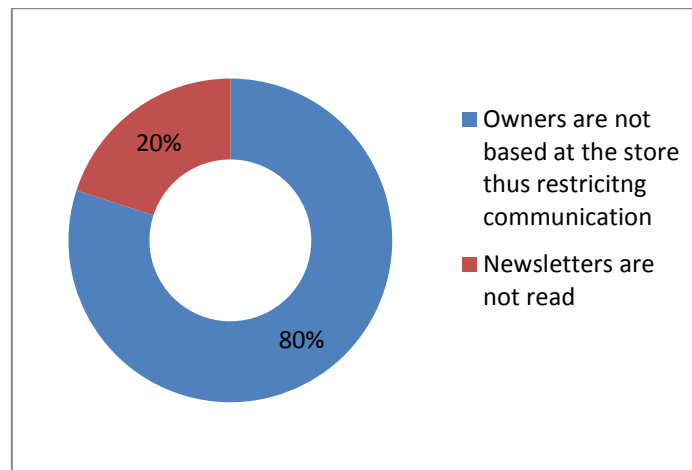


Figure 4.17: Communication Challenges

The majority of respondents (80%) indicated that the main communication challenge is that they are unable to communicate directly with the shop owners, as most of them are not based at the store. Communication with key role players is essential in order to help marketing managers perform their key responsibilities which are: planning, organizing, leading and controlling. A few (20%) respondents felt that tenants do not read newsletters that are circulated, hence causing communication challenges. Open communication between management and tenants is essential to maintain a good working relationship and to achieve mutual objectives.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed and discussed the findings of this study. Results have revealed that the success of any shopping centre depends on the revenue generated by consumers who frequent the mall to make purchases or use the services of the retail/entertainment outlets. To attract consumers, shopping centre management have to ensure that shopping centres are effectively promoted to relevant stakeholders. Findings also reveal that communication is central in any promotional, public relations or marketing activity and should be effective, persuasive and managed in a formal and structured way which fits into the overall goals of the shopping centre. The next chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations based on the interpretation of the results.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results of the study. It analysed and interpreted the data gathered from the interviews and the questionnaires administered to the marketing managers and the tenants. The findings of the study were then compared to the literature review to determine the role of communication tools in shopping centre management. This chapter, therefore, presents conclusions that were drawn from the study. It further presents a set of recommendations based on the interpretation of the results. It will also highlight the summary, conclusions and limitations of the study and offer recommendations based on the interpretation of the results.

5.2 Summary of the study

The overall aim of this study is to evaluate the role of communication tools in shopping centre management. The objectives of this study are to:

- Identify and examine the role of communication at shopping malls,
- Examine the challenges faced with regards to shopping mall communication, and
- Determine whether the communication tools are perceived as being effective.

The study revealed that the success of any mall depends on the revenue generated by consumers who frequent the mall to make purchases or use the services of the retail/entertainment outlets. To attract customers, shopping centres management have to, therefore, ensure that malls are effectively promoted to relevant stakeholders. The literature review revealed that good tenant relations in shopping centres is extremely important and critical. Strengthening relationships with tenants is important because stronger tenants are able to draw traffic to the centre, and generate more sales. One of the significant results emerging from this study is that communication is important in any promotional, public relations or marketing activity and should be effective, persuasive and

managed in a formal and structured way which fits into the overall goals of the shopping centre. Shopping centre management may use a number of communication tools such as (and are not limited to) advertising, sales promotions, public relations, personal selling and sponsorship. These strategies play a role in generating revenue to promote the overall success of a shopping mall.

5.3 Conclusions

The main purpose of this study is to identify and examine the communication tools used by mall managers within the greater Durban area in South Africa. It does so by interviewing communication managers and the tenant mix of five competitive shopping centres within the greater Durban area in South Africa. The following section presents the conclusions to the study based on the objectives set out in chapter 1.

5.3.1 The importance of communication

Effective communication is significant for managers in the organizations to perform the basic functions of management, i.e. planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

Communication helps managers to perform their jobs and fulfil their responsibilities.

Communication serves as a foundation for planning. It is also very important that there is a good communication channel between management and tenants. Such channels play a significant role in the overall success of a shopping centre. Communication is important in any promotional, public relations or marketing activity and is effective, persuasive and managed in a formal and structured way which fits into the overall goals of the mall.

5.3.2 The role of tenant relations; promotions; publicity; and public relations within shopping centres

The findings indicate that the above components play an integral part in the effective functioning of shopping centres. Tenant relations help strengthen stronger relationships which are important because stronger tenants are able to draw traffic to the centre and produce more sales. Promotions help to stimulate shopper traffic and sales, thus fun elements can be carried out in several creative and exciting forms; while publicity is the major tool used in the implementation of the public relations strategy. Public relations is the overall communication effort to establish and maintain favorable relationships between

the organization and its target market. Tenant relations, promotions, publicity and public relations are the most important communication tools used by shopping centre management.

5.3.3 Tenant Mix

Findings reveal that a good tenant mix is critical not only to the landlord and management; but also to the tenants and their customers. It becomes a win-win situation in which all those involved have the best possible opportunities for success. A good tenant mix ultimately contributes to the total success and turnover of a shopping centre. Therefore; it is important that there is a variety of stores under one shopping centre. Findings also revealed that shoppers made a decision on which mall to visit depending on the variety of stores available.

5.3.4 The importance of communication tools in shopping centres

Findings reveal that while there are many different shopping centre communication tools available, marketing managers tend to constantly use the same tools to communicate with their target audience. Some of them felt that these tools appeal to their audience while others stated that certain communications tools were not readily available to them. Each communication tool performs a different role and can accomplish different tasks. Therefore, it is important that marketing managers take full advantage of their potential by utilising the different communication tools available.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The researcher experienced the following problems:

- The study was confined to the greater Durban area, which limited the researcher from investigating communication tools utilized by marketing managers in other regions, and
- Due to time constraints, responses during the interviews were not always substantial.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations, arising out of the study are made:

- Communication serves as a foundation for any planning. Open communication between management and shoppers, between management and tenants and between tenants and shoppers is critical to achieve overall success. However, it is important to note that while communication with shoppers is very important, it is also important that they are not overloaded with too much information. This is seen as a barrier or breakdown in the communication channel.
- Marketing research plays a pivotal role in shopping centre marketing. A proper SWOT analysis and marketing strategy should always be conducted before planning or implementing any public relations activity. This research helps the marketing manager utilize the correct communication tools for a specific activity.
- A good tenant mix is very important in the success of a shopping centre . The type of stores and variety of stores offered under one roof attract traffic flow. The location of these tenants is equally important. Location has a huge impact on sales and foot traffic. Marketing managers should use these busy areas to plan promotions and events. This creates a busy and fun element which can change the mindset of shoppers.
- Marketing managers need to utilise the different and the new technology available in communication tools. A variety of communication tools needs to be utilised in order to meet specific goals. The tools selected also determine the creativity and outcome of a promotion or PR activity ,
- Communication challenges between management and tenants should be addressed. There seem to be minor issues that can be dealt with by management. Tenants want management to be more involved in day- to -day visits and they want to be informed at all times. The relationship between management and tenants is imperative.

5.6 Concluding remarks

This study has highlighted the importance of communication tools utilised by marketing managers and has given insight to some of the communication challenges experienced by managers. It specifically looked at the five largest shopping centres in the greater Durban area. Literature has revealed the importance of communication and the utilization of the

communication tools in order to execute effective PR activities. The data used for this study was based on an interview and questionnaire schedule that was administered to marketing managers and tenants. The recommendations discussed in this chapter are just a few actions that can assist shopping centre marketing managers.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented conclusions that were drawn from the study. It has highlighted the summary, conclusions and limitations of the study and offered recommendations based on the interpretation of the results. These recommendations may be used for further studies.

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To: The Communications Manager/ Tenant

Dear Sir/Madam

I would appreciate your kind assistance in my study.

I am studying towards my Master of Technology: PR Management at DUT. The aim of this research is to identify and examine the communication tools utilised by communication managers and to examine the challenges faced with regards to shopping mall communication.

Your assistance and expertise in the completion of this questionnaire will be highly appreciated. This will take about ten minutes of your time and all answers will be confidential.

Please feel free to respond honestly. A summary of this study will be published and you can be assured that a copy will be forwarded to you for your perusal.

Thanking you for your co-operation

Kind Regards

Evashnie Kanny
Student number: 20354375

Questionnaire for tenants

The following questions shall take a maximum of 20 minutes to complete. The data collected from your survey will be filed in a secure place to safeguard your privacy and ensure confidentiality.

Title of the project:

The Role of communication tools in Shopping Centre Management within the greater Durban area.

Please select your answer by placing a tick inside the relevant box

You may choose more than one option

1. Planning

1.1 Does the marketing management (at your mall) have a strategic plan for promotions?

Yes

No

2. Target Analysis

2.1 At which mall are you a tenant? Please circle.

Gateway	Pavillion	Chatsworth Centre	Galleria	Westwood
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2.2 Are you happy with the number of shoppers that frequent your establishment?

Yes

No

2.3 In your opinion , do your shoppers have an intent on purchasing as soon as they enter the store or are the just browsing ?

2.4 Do you believe that there is a good tenant mix at your shopping mall?

Yes

No

3 Objectives

3.1 Do you believe that special events and promotions contribute to the traffic flow at you store?

Yes

No

4.Budget

4.1 What amount is allocated for promotional activities for a year at your mall from tenants rental?

5.Communication Tools

5.1 Indicate with a “X” what media are used to ensure this flow of information. Regarding events and promotions

MEDIA	INDICATE
Internal newsletters	
Newspapers	
Magazines	
Intranet	
Website	
Electronic forums	
Email	
Workshops	
Meetings	
SMS	
Other: Specify	

5.2 . Is there two way, open communication between tenants and management?

5.3 . Are any of the following communication tools utilized by management at your mall? Please rate on a scale from 1-5.

Rating	1 Always	2 Often	3 Not so often	4 Very rarely	5 Never
Regional Press advertising					
Regional Radio advertising					
Leaflets and other promotional literature					
Public relations (inc. media relations)					
Internet					
Outdoor advertising					
Direct marketing					
Trade shows and exhibitions					
TV advertising					
Community Press advertising					
Local Radio advertising					
Outdoor advertising					
TV advertising					
Facebook and twitter					
Other activities					

5.4. What is your perception of the following communication tools in terms of its importance?

	1 very imp	2 not imp
Press advertising in general		
Radio advertising in general		
Events and festivals		
Leaflets and other promotional literature		
Public relations (inc. media relations)		
Internet		
Outdoor advertising		
Direct marketing		
Trade shows and exhibitions		
TV advertising		
Press advertising		
Radio advertising		

Outdoor advertising		
TV advertising		
Other activities		

6. Messages

6.1 What are the most common messages for promotions used by marketing management in your mall?

7. Evaluation

7.1 In your view, what do you think are the main communication challenges that management should address?

Thank you for your participation.

1.2.2 Interview for centre management

The following questions shall take a maximum of 20 minutes to complete. The data collected from your survey will be filed in a secure place to safeguard your privacy and ensure confidentiality.

Title of the project:

The Role of communication tools in Shopping Centre Management within the greater Durban area.

1. Planning

1.1 What are your strategic plans?

1.2 Is your centre a Super Regional centre (over 100 00m2) , Regional centre (50 000- 100 00m2), or Small regional centre (30 000-50 000m2)

1.3 Does your PR strategies promotions consist of the following categories : Targeting objectives, budgeting, communication tools, messages, programme evaluation ?

Yes No

2. Targeting

2.1 Do you use marketing research to influence your marketing decisions?

Yes

No

If yes, how?

2.2 Who are your most important targeted audiences for your promotional activities?

General public – local/regional	
Media – local/regional	
Small/medium businesses – local/regional	
Large businesses -local/regional	
Landlords/property owners – local/regional	
Landlords/property owners – national/international	
General public – national/international	
Media – national/international	
Large businesses – national/international	
Small/medium businesses – national/international	
Other targets	

3.Objectives

3.1 What are some of the main objectives of your promotions?

4.Budgeting

4.1 What amount is allocated for promotional activities for a year from the landlord and tenants?

4.2 What is the average cost of one competition or promotion?

5.Communication Tools

5.1 Do you use the following communication tools? Rate it on a scale 1-5 (1 being always and 5 being never)

Rating	1 Always	2 Often	3 Not so often	4 Very rarely	5 Never
Press advertising					
Radio advertising					
Events and festivals					
Leaflets and other promotional literature					
Public relations (inc. media relations)					
Internet					
Outdoor advertising					
Direct marketing					
Trade shows and exhibitions					
TV advertising					
Press advertising					
Radio advertising					
Outdoor advertising					
TV advertising					
Other activities					

5.2 How important is communication to your tenants and shoppers?

Extremely important	Tenants	Shoppers
Very important		
Average importance		

Not at all important		
Don't know		

5.3 What aspect do you consider when scheduling activities relating to that promotion?

5.4 How often do you communicate with your tenants?

- Never
- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Once a month

5.5 What are some of the communication challenges you have experienced with tenants?

5.6 Thus far, what has been your most successful in-store in centre event? What tools were utilized in communicating the message to both internal and external stakeholders?

5.7 Have you experienced any of the following communication barriers with your tenants or shoppers?

Perceptual and Language Differences	
Information Overload	
Time Pressures	
Distraction/Noise	
Emotions	
Complexity in organizational structure	
Poor retention	
Environmental influences	

5.8 Which of the following PR communication tools do you utilize ? Please indicate with a tick

Press releases	
Press Kit	

website	
Social Media (Twitter , Face Book)	
Advertising	
Personal selling	
Promotions	
Public relations	

5.9 What is your perception in terms of its importance?

	1 very imp	2 not imp
Press advertising		
Radio advertising		
Events and festivals		
Leaflets and other promotional literature		
Public relations (inc. media relations		
Internet		
Outdoor advertising		
Direct marketing		
Trade shows and exhibitions		
TV advertising		
Press advertising		
Radio advertising		
Outdoor advertising		
TV advertising		
Other activities		

6. [Messages](#)

6.1 What are the most common messages for promotions?

7. [Programme evaluation](#)

7.1 In your opinion, which tools of communication are most effective in your mall when evaluating an event?

7.2 What method of evaluation do you use?

	Yes	No	Not aware of this evaluation method
Media Impressions			
Hits on the internet advertising Equivalency (AVE'S)			
Systematic tracking			
Requests and 800 numbers			
Return on investment (ROI)			
Audience attendance			

7.3 Do you find the current evaluation tactics effective, or would you like to improve some of them in the future?

Thank you for your participation.