Katie Rys Writing Sample
Course: PB418 Corporate Communications
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The following Writing Sample is an excerpt from my final paper for my Corporate Communications course, where we had to write a Memorandum and Theoretical Background for a Corporation advising them on a specific issue related to the corporate communications of their organization, using the theoretical background of the course. This excerpt is the first part of the paper, the Memorandum, where I highlight the current strategic issues that BA Vita, a subsidiary of Fiskars, is currently facing.

Section I: Memorandum

To: Daniel Lalonde, CEO of Vita; Sjoerd Leeflang, Senior Vice President & Head of BU Waterford, Wedgwood; Anette Hasling Jæger, Vice President, BA Vita Strategy & Business Development
Date: 20 April 2026
Subject: Suggestions for the realignment of BA Vita's Communication & Business Strategy and potential applications

Dear Mr. Lalonde, Mr. Leeflang, and the rest of the senior leadership team in Fiskars Group's Business Area Vita,

On February 5, 2026, a Fiskars press release indicated your plans to turn around financial performance and lay the foundations for profitable growth through organizational restructuring, supply chain and manufacturing restructuring, and workforce reduction (Fiskars Corporation, 2026). While elements of this plan, especially a brand-led operating model, could prove effective for a more profitable growth model, supply chain and manufacturing changes may further erode trust within surrounding communities.

With the final steps of the Fiskars Group restructuring complete (Fiskars Corporation, 2024) and BA Vita now acting as a separate independent company, BA Vita has the unique opportunity to reposition its corporate communications and overall development and investment strategy to fit the desired 'brands first' approach through a two-prong audience-focused solution:

1. Rebuild the company's individual brand identities to appeal to audiences by emphasizing each brand's heritage and tradition.
2. Reinstill and create trust with audiences through the creation of dialogue and shared value.

BA Vita's current 12 brand lines show evidence of a past strategic branding campaign that created a sense of cohesive identity among the brands, with more modernized branding and streamlined design (Fiskars Corporation, 2018). However, in creating a cohesive identity for the overall Fiskars' tableware entity, Fiskars essentially erased the individual brands' uniqueness, authenticity, and heritage, all factors that are becoming more important to today's consumers (EY, 2026). In today's age of technologization, customers are favoring trends that emphasize quality, timelessness, and authenticity, such as the "old-money" and "quiet-luxury" aesthetics (Almendral 2025). As a result, 'heritage brands,' specifically from countries like the United Kingdom, have seen a spike in sales and increased consumer interest (Salter, 2025).

Rather than continuing to push for the 'modernization' of its brands and relying on brand recognition alone, BA Vita should shift its overall strategy to reinvigorate each of their brands as luxury 'heritage' brands, placing heritage at the core of each brand's identity. Each brand's current identity underutilizes its country-of-origin markets, original products and designs, and history. Shifting focus to emphasize each of the brand's unique identities would reinforce the real authenticity of the brands that appeal to modern-day consumers and potentially expand the markets to newer customers.

While it may seem counterintuitive in today's economy, this shift in corporate communications should be accompanied by a strategic reallocation of investment towards localized European manufacturing processes. While you have indicated that you plan to scale down manufacturing capacity across European sites to address profitability declines and inventory surpluses, this will ultimately hurt your 'brand-first' initiatives by decreasing trust with current and future European audiences.

Your product brands are deeply rooted in local culture because of their long history and heritage. The manufacturing of these products led to the development of entire communities, villages, and towns. Yet, the continual increase of moving these manufacturing jobs overseas since the early 2000s has led to the destruction of local European economies reliant on those jobs and rising sentiments of resentment and distrust among community members (IrishCentral Staff, 2014). Continuous reduction in local production, while still relying on the authority of "Made in ___" for your products, creates both an inauthentic identity and a further lack of trust among your audiences and consumers.

Instead of continuing the current business strategy, you should focus on growing consumer audiences to increase demand for products by reinvesting in European manufacturing through calculated restaffing and growth of local factories. Combined with a communication strategy that emphasizes news coverage of this revitalization, this action would reassert the authenticity of the heritage of the brands, rebuild trust with audiences most associated with the brands, and expose new consumers to the brands who value the authenticity and "who makes their products." Furthermore, more and more European countries are investing in local manufacturing, which BA Vita can use to their advantage in this investment strategy (Department for Business & Trade, 2026).

I propose testing this combined communication and investment strategy with your Wedgwood brand under the Business Unit (BU) Waterford, Wedgwood. The Wedgwood brand specifically has unique potential to undergo significant growth, due to its rich, deeply British heritage and history, past commercial success, and preexisting manufacturing infrastructure. The brand had previously undergone scrutiny when it was discovered that products being produced in its Indonesian factory were being stamped with "Wedgwood England," making consumers assume it was being produced in England.

Wedgwood Communication Strategy -

1. Continue to market Wedgwood as a "quiet luxury," but also an inherently British product that has been produced since the 18th century. Continue to put 'heritage' at the center of its branding and deploy marketing techniques that appeal to modern audiences' desire to take part in "tradition" and purchase "authentic" goods.
2. Position Wedgwood products within current fashion and design trends, such as "Blue and White Chinoiserie" and "classical interiors," rather than more modern fashion and design trends. Wedgwood's iconic Jasperware has the opportunity to perpetuate and be a continuation of the "Blue and White Chinoiserie" trend.

Wedgwood Investment Strategy

1. Reinvest in Wedgwood's UK Barlaston factory, bringing the majority of Wedgwood manufacturing back to the UK by leveraging the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy. The workforce at this 200-person factory has been reduced to less than 80 people. A calculated restaffing and growth of this factory, combined with calculated news coverage of this revitalization, could rebuild trust lost with the brand's audiences,

specifically British audiences, and also resolidify the brand's authentic identity as a British heritage brand.

With the recent collapse of British brand Denby (an opportunity in itself), it is clear that the current strategy undertaken by tableware brands must shift to accommodate our current consumers' values and needs. I propose that we look to the past as a way to make the identities of our products reflect those of our customers. Every single person around the world uses tableware every day. Let's make BA Vita a part of it.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Rys

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