Humanizing the image of multicultural corporation: the case of Motorola

Key words: Motorola, corporate image, multiculturalism, humanistic approach, management.

Introduction

The importance of an organisation image has grown recently becoming one of the most direct information about its profile, philosophy, organisational culture, and consequently its market success and competitiveness. Today it is not enough to produce high quality goods as a company, especially a multicultural global corporation, is faced with the challenge of meeting socio-cultural expectations of its immediate workers, suppliers, stakeholders, and, first of all consumers. The consumption awareness of the latter has undergone a deep evolution and they expect companies not only to excel in their market oriented activities but also to act as citizens, socially responsible actors helping people in underprivileged regions, fighters for global solidarity, democracy and human rights, especially of silent minorities in the workplace. Ethics and transparency, fair trade, respect for ecology, honest and sincere treatment as partners of co-operators, especially when they come from underprivileged world regions, etc. have become a new dimension build into a product, its value added which finally decides about the company market position.

Let me stress that the non-strictly market oriented expectations how modern corporations should be managed today and how they should create their image have become a benchmarking for a company social approval without which it
cannot be a success. This is a result of globalisation and transculturalism which account for ideas and people coming in touch and new actors, e.g. members of the so-called silent minorities, constituting the context, internal and external for a company management. The most important feature of the post-modern transcultural reality is its interconnectedness, which makes people more apprehensive about the values they want to identify with.

The public pressure on a company image has been fuelled by many NGOs and other niche organisations, e.g. Culture Jammers whose aim is to promote certain socio-cultural values and make companies fully adhere to them. Employer branding, social networks, subvertising are only few instruments used by socially conscious individuals to force corporations to change their operating principles. Unfortunately the approach has often become merely a trendy fashion, having nothing to do with authentic deeply human values it stems from. And it is treated as such by many companies which are not interested in spending neither time nor money on activities which are not their fields. On the other hand, they have to react to the social demands and answer the socio-cultural expectations about their image as these have a direct impact on their economic performance.

An analysis of most multicultural global companies today shows their growing concern for humanizing their image and communicating to their workers, stakeholders and customers their management by values and engagement in all kinds of soft issues which deal with basic problems of modern world. Motorola is a good example of such a corporation which has been building its market success making its priority deeply human and people oriented values. They are clearly communicated by means of its image and hence the present article aims at finding out which values have become salient elements in the image building process and how they are related to the post-modern socio-cultural (r)evolution.

However, the corporate activity even of such a socially responsible company as Motorola raises the question about the sincerity of the approach. Although, it will be very difficult to answer it in a unanimous way, the fact that a growing number of corporations have adopted the above philosophy, makes us hope that with the time passing it will become a true value.

1. Motorola on the market

Motorola, today a multicultural corporation which belongs to top global companies, started in the USA in 1928 in Schaumburg, Illinois, as a family business - Galvin Manufacturing Corporation - owned by two brothers, Paul and Joseph Galvin. The history of its spectacular success reminds of the American
Dream from *rags to riches*. The beginning was very difficult as the money the brothers disposed of was merely enough to buy the shares of Stewart Battery Company and the tools to start their own production, firstly battery eliminators and then after the recession - car radios but it did not cover the costs of a marketing campaign to promote their new product. Paul Galvin did not give up and to introduce their invention to a larger public, he fixed the radio in his own car and drove to the mall in Atlantic City where he switched it on to make the passers hear the radio music from his car. The strategy, probably because of its simplicity, turn out to be efficient. His subconscious use of the technique proper to *guerilla marketing* and *buzz marketing* and even *shockvertising* resulted in getting him many orders.

The today brand name *Motorola* is strictly related to the event as it comes from the name of the first car radio which Paul Gavin called in this way. Motorola is a combination of the prefix *moto* meaning the car engine and *ola*, a synonym of sound [Brown, 1999:17-22, MS1, *Explore Motorola Heritage. Music in Motion*, electr. doc.] A dynamic development of the company resulted in the change of its name from Galvin Manufacturing Corporation to Motorola Inc. Its market presence has been noticeable because of its patents and innovations in the field of communication technologies, e.g. 1958, the first Two-Way car radio, a prototype of a CB radio, communication system and equipment for Apollo 11 and NASA in 1969, the first commercial mobile phone in 1983, etc. [MS, *A Timeline overview of Motorola History 1928-2009*, electr. doc.]. Due to economic problems, in 2011 Motorola changed its status and the company created two sub-companies: Motorola Solutions [MSI] and Motorola Mobility Holdings [MMI]. The first one deals with communication technologies for companies and governmental institutions while the second focuses on mobile phones and multimedia for individuals and households [Media Centre, Motorola Solutions Inc. *Motorola Solutions Fact Sheet* electr. doc.].

In its history Motorola went through all four phases of evolution [Adler, Gundersen, 2008:9-13] to change its status from a local company operating on the American market (*domestic phase*) through *multidomestic phase* when Motorola was present on individual international markets and *multinational phase* where the number of its foreign markets has grown significantly to the *global phase* marked by Motorola presence as a giant in the field of information technologies on the six continents (China, Kuwait, Nigeria, Brazil, new Zealand, Russia). Today it is known not only for its innovative high quality products but also for building its corporation image and reputation by means of various activities based on humanistic values which point out its social responsibility, policy of a sincere multiculturalism, business transparency and ethic code of

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1 An abbreviation MS stands for Motorola Solutions Inc. and will be used in the article.
behaviour, care for its own workers who can improve their professional and intellectual capacities and have their ambitions met. Many international awards, e.g. *Swedish Lenses of Equality* (2005) for an equal treatment of men and women in the workplace, *Your Style Company* (2006), *A company of Equal Opportunities* (2006) for gender equality programme within the initiative of the United Nations (UNDP) [Stefańczyk, elctr. doc.] which evidence its high position in various Indices measuring the social engagement and responsibility of Motorola serve as a sound piece of evidence in favour of the previous statement.

2. **Motorola values, its vision and mission**

A global success of Motorola could not be possible without the company creating its very distinct corporate culture based on values. Geert Hofstede [G. Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede, 2007:21] posits that values constitute the core of culture, also corporate culture and although they themselves are invisible and intangible, they impact upon rituals, heroes, symbols and finally practices, which communicate them to a large public and thus contribute to the company image. The understanding of values by Hatch [2002:217] is also very useful when defining the corporate image as they are described as *principles, aims and standards* important for the corporation and reflected in its practices.

The values Motorola identifies with are all grounded in ethics. They embody the corporation deep respect for people and observance of human rights of its own workers and its stakeholders as well as average customers. They also show some serious concern for the society in a larger meaning of the term, both as the members of the community where Motorola has its subsidiaries and a global population, especially the groups which are economically and thus socially underprivileged. It should be stressed that these values serve to create the intangibles of Motorola greatly contributing to its being a competitive company.

The Motorola basic values have been presented by the company itself in form of the following short slogans:

- *We are innovative* – Motorola looks to the future and its aim is to shape it with its innovative products which are to meet the needs of the generations to come. It is a company which believes in progress, openness to new ideas, challenges and a risk taking attitude.

- *We are passionate* – energy, dedication and determination, enthusiasm and engagement as well as a strong need to be excellent in whatever they do defines the approach of Motorola to every challenge it is faced with.

- *We are driven* – inspiration found in the future motivates Motorola to move
always forward. Each opportunity is used to improve its performance as a whole and also to achieve self-improvement, self-development and education of each worker.

- **We are accountable** – business transparency, work ethics and social responsibility implying confidence, loyalty, honesty, creation of public goods belong to the company basic principles.

- **We are partners** – respectful and honest treatment of company workers, stakeholders and customers independently on their cultural identity, relations built on trust, equality, solidarity, co-operation and bonding account for Motorola success being a result of a common work of all of the market subjects [MS, Our values, electr. doc.]

The same type of values is embodied in the corporation founders and its heroes, namely the Galvin brothers, but especially Paul [Petrakis, 1991]. His inventiveness, determination, self-confidence, strength of mind and also a sense of mission that he should give people some inventions which would improve their life and empower them are worth stressing. It is true that an economic success was important for Paul but the true motives of his hard work to make a family business a big scale success was his idealistic vision that he should contribute to human progress. And he did because the communication system produced by Motorola allowed Neil Amstrong, the first man on the Moon, to say the words which started a new epoch: *That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind* [MS, Timeline, electr. doc.].

As corporate culture and organization strategy constitute two mutually dependent and complementary components, both greatly shaped by the company values which correspond to the external and internal context of the organisation [Obłój, 2007:383], an analysis of the vision and mission of Motorola is crucial in the discussion. Metaphorically speaking, a mission of an organization, which stands for its philosophy, shows how its vision can be put in practice as it allows to define the organisation aims in accordance with its values [Zbieg-Maciąg, 2002:78]. Mission translates the ambitions and aims to be met in the future and impacts on the organization strategic choices [Obłój, 2007:389].

Due to different market segments where Motorola Solutions and Motorola Mobility operate, their missions and visions slightly differ but in both cases they are true to the Motorola values. Also both of them serve to build a strong international brand name of the company by stressing not only the excellent quality of its products and systemic solutions but also their role in creating human relationships. They become efficient tools to achieve a higher quality of life, and more exactly its purely human aspects. High quality of products, efficiency and rapidity are to characterize Motorola business contacts which additionally should be built on trust, loyalty and confidence.
Motorola Solutions aims at inspiring its own workers’ innovativeness by providing them with a sense of safety, importance and empowerment as they are made feel responsible for participating in the processes literally changing the world. This, in turn, makes them feel a part of the corporation and strive together with it to attain excellence in all kinds of activities. Such a policy aims at instilling in workers independently on their position in the corporation structure a need for self-education and self-improvement. Thus, Motorola Solutions has formulated its vision as the leading global provider of mission critical and business critical communication solutions [Brown. 2010, electr. doc.]. Its mission is expressed by means of a short slogan with a stress also put on people: We help people be their best in the moments that matter [Brown, 2010, electr. doc.]

The human element is even more explicit in the vision of Motorola Mobility whose offer targets individuals. High quality of its products serves to improve the quality of life by enabling contacts with new people, which is a source of new enriching experiences. Motorola Mobility is helping people realize the promise of this convergence by fusing innovative technology with human insights to create experiences that simply connect and enrich people’s life. [MM Inc. Motorola Mobility Profile, electr. doc] Once more, as was the case of Motorola Solutions, the mission of Motorola Mobility is formulated as a slogan Life M. Powered, whose meaning is ambiguous and makes possible its two interpretations [MM Investor Presentations, electr. doc]. The first one Life powered by Motorola stands for the new dynamism, joy, passion and life rich with new challenges and experiences where all kinds of barriers are possible to overcome. Motorola also means satisfaction of its customers and workers alike. The second one Life empowered by Motorola stresses self-worth, self-recognition and self-esteem, ability to be an active subject participating in the changes in one’s own life and also in the life on its mezzo and even macro scale. All of them are possible by means of Motorola products which as means allow to discover the world enjoying an almost unlimited freedom.

Three more slogans should be analysed: Hello Moto, Intelligence everywhere and Empower people. The first of them stresses the relational context in which Motorola products are used. Its mobile phones and information systems connect people all around the world, allow friendships to be cultivated despite big physical distance. Motorola wants to be perceived as a friend whom we greet with hello, communicating by means of this short and informal expression our sympathy, friendly attitude, willingness to get in touch, etc. Intelligence everywhere, in turn, points out a future orientation of Motorola, its

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2 The abbreviation MM stands for Motorola MObility and is used in throughout the article.
modern technological solutions in the field of communication, excellence of its brand name, know-how and also its aspiration to be a company based on knowledge whose workers continually improve their skills, competences and knowledge through an internal system of seminars, courses, Motorola Academy programmes, etc. The same idea has been graphically expressed by the Motorola logo, batwings, which stand for progress and improvement. Finally, Empower people, which is similar to the Motorola Mobility mission slogan, emphasizes high production standards which allow people communicate freely all over the world, express themselves, share their ideas and opinions, participate in public discourse as responsible global citizens [MS Our values, electr. doc.]

An analysis of the values of Motorola, its vision and mission, clearly indicates that people oriented values dominate in them. This approach stems from the Motorola policy which emphasises the role of the intangibles in generating its own capital. Consequently, its corporate culture is based on the same principles and human values are also used to construct a Motorola identity and to become visible in its image. The humanistic dimensions of Motorola corporate culture are to create an ideational framework which would match corporate and workers' values [cf. Zarębska 2008:75-77]. This, in turn, should facilitate for the workers a strong identification with corporate identity. Additionally, a match between these two sets of values is important for building in them loyalty to Motorola and a sense of belonging to the Motorola community.

3. Motorolans – the most precious asset of Motorola

As already said, human capital is treated as an invaluable source of Motorola capital. Hence, Motorola has developed its own policy to strengthen the Motorola identity of its workers, build their loyalty and provide them with attractive working conditions which would meet their expectations in four fields such as values, needs, education opportunities and life and professional experience [cf. Aniszewska, Gielnicka, 1999:44]. Some of Motorola practices seem to be petty but they point out a consistency of the corporation policy in this respect as well as its considerateness.

The first apparently small change consists in calling all of its workers with a personifying term Motorolans which replaces the anonymous phrases of workforce, staff, workpower. The second one, is reflected by the use of language where the personal pronoun we serves to convey the idea of solidarity, togetherness, mutual respect and equality for all the workers. The plural form stresses the contribution of each and every Motorolan to the corporation prestige, makes all of them architects of its market success, points out delegation of power and treats them as members of one family who socialize together,
celebrate family events, e.g. marriage, child birth, share the pride of being Motorolans. A tangible piece of evidence that Motorola treats its workers with due respect and also cares for them trying to help them when they are faced with some personal problems is an alternative e-Work programme. It allows for a change of location, working hours and time structure (e.g. a part time job or job sharing) to allow Motorolans combine their work and personal life. The policy makes Motorolans feel appreciated and important, which additionally motivates them to work as good as they can. On the other hand, Motorola itself benefits from the e-Work as in such a way it does not lose its most talented workers.

Other examples to show that Motorola take care of its workers are many. It has created a transparent system of awards to motivate and promote them. Apart from incentive plans such as Motorola Incentive Plan (MIP) and Sales Incentive Plan (SIP) for business achievements, Equity Awards which depends on the company market value, Intellectual Property Awards for technological innovations as well as Bravo! Award for special achievements or an exceptional behaviour awarded to the best Motorolans to increase their performance, the corporation provides them with an opportunity to improve their professional knowledge and interpersonal skills by taking part in seminars, attending the courses offered by Motorola University which educates top management (Education Assistance Programmes), or using e-learning system and peer-learning system. Additionally they can use for free an on-line access to professional publications and library. Professional education provided by Motorola helps Motorolans to be promoted by being moved from one team or department to another or by being assigned a different position within the team. Both vertical and horizontal mobility within the corporation allows them to link their life and their career with the corporation. All kinds of financial and non-financial benefits serve to attract the most talented workers to Motorola and then keep them in the corporation. The best and most talented Motorolans are offered especially prepared for them educational programmes and opportunities to work in international projects. Considering the fact that Motorola has its subsidiaries in many countries in the world they are offered a chance to work abroad getting new experience and motivation to meet new challenges. Motorola also helps them financially with moving to their new place of work and it also facilitates their cultural adjustment (entry and re-entry shock) [Wiskowska, 2006].

Additionally, a member of the Global e-Sustainability Initiative, Motorola has created a programme Motorola Partner Empower [MS Channel Partners, electr. doc.]. Its main objective is to assist co-operation with its partners and also to provide its suppliers with an opportunity to develop their know how in the area
of technologies, target markets and specialized skills for innovative customers oriented solutions. [MS Training, electr. doc.]

The presented above workforce management strategies which are proper to employer branding [Molenda, 2009:300] are successfully used by Motorola to build some aspects of its image.

4. Motorola for the world – the policy of Social Corporate Responsibility

Social Responsibility is an extremely important element of Motorola policy which it realizes in nine different fields: 1/innovation and quality, 2/ethics and transparency, 3/ecology and environment, 4/diversity and integrity, 5/health and safety of its workers, 6/global economic growth and global growth opportunities, 7/relations with suppliers, 8/local communities’ needs 9/company value. As for the basic areas of its activities there are four of them: 1/society, 2/suppliers, 3/workforce and 4/environment [cf. MS Corporate Responsibility, MS Motorola Corporate Responsibility Summary Report 2009, MM Motorola Corporate Responsibility Summary Report 2010, electr. doc.]. It is important to mention that in March 2011, Motorola was on the 50th position on the ranking list of the Best Corporate Citizen List by the Corporate Responsibility Magazine, which points out its social appreciation and recognition.

Local communities, especially when they are part of the immediate environment of its subsidiaries are a target of Motorola concern in the areas of education, ecology and humanitarian aid in case of natural disasters. In 2009, for example, Motorola was actively engaged in pro-social aid in 37 countries. As far as education is concerned, in 2011 it spent 5,5 mln USD on a stipend Generation Innovation Grant which served to promote learning mathematics, engineering as well as information and communication technologies particularly among less privileged groups such as women and invisible minorities. The grant has been inspired by the Educate to Innovate Programme initiated by Barrack Obama. It is also part of the federal programme Race to the Top Found [MS Education, electr. doc.]

The Project Hope realized since 1994 is another example of an educational programme addressed to the inhabitants in the economically less developed regions in China. Within the span of 17 years Motorola has helped 30 000 children finish primary education. Additionally, 800 most talented learners – Motorola Hope Stars - have been granted stipends to attend secondary or high schools or even universities. Motorola has also built 108 schools – Motorola Hope Schools - in 25 Chinese provinces, equipped 50 multimedia language laboratories, founded 40 libraries and trained 2000 teachers. [MS Education, electr. doc.] Motorola Poland closely co-operates with Krakow universities – Technical University, Academy of Mining and Metallurgy and Jagiellonian
University. In 2008 Motorola Foundation donated 40000 USD to Jagiellonian University to co-finance a course in Programme Engineering in the Institute of Informatics [Motorola Inc., *Współpraca z uczelniami*, electr. doc.] It also participates in constructing programmes which would encourage technical and engineering studies. Motorolans often lecture to students and share with them their knowledge.

Motorola closely co-operates with American Red Cross to help those in need, especially in the region of natural disasters like Haiti after the earthquake in 2010. It assisted its victims with 2 mln USD. Motorolans often act as volunteers, e.g. organizing each year a *Global Day of Service*. The Polish Motorolans are blood donors, help children in orphanages, perform some socially important jobs.

Ecology and environment belong to other areas of a socially responsible management of Motorola. All Motorola solutions and products meet ecological standards and all subsidiaries have the quality certificate ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001. [MS, *Environment*, electr. doc.]. The Motorola production consists in using environment friendly technologies, materials and renewable sources of energy. There is also a new line of *Greener* products, mainly telephones, totally made from recycled materials. The company also offers its customers a free recycling of used products. To reduce trash, it has promoted a new packaging method eliminating packaging foil. In 2009 it spent 1.1 mln USD on ecology to co-finance green camps for children from economically underprivileged families, planting trees, equipping many American schools with solar energy panels. In 2011 it was 30th on the list of *Environmental Impact Statement National Top 50 List*. It is a list awarding American companies engaged in generating green power [MM 2010 Motorola Mobility CR Summary Report, electr. doc.].

Ethics as a management principle has resulted in two codes: *A Supplier Code of Conduct* and *A Code of Business Conduct* as well as an *Ethics Line*. The first code serves to provide all suppliers with high standards of products and services and to eliminate all non-ethical behaviours if reported. It consists of 13 rules such as: observance of law and compliance with their business conduct, anti-corruption consisting in maintaining integrity, transparency and accuracy in corporate record keeping approach, no unfair business practices - fair competition, antitrust, and accurate and truthful marketing, anti-discrimination, no harsh or inhuman treatment including physical abuse and harassment of employees, assurance of voluntary terms of employment, no children labour, which is often a case of corporations operating in the third world countries, freedom of association and collective bargaining, fair working hours, wages and benefits paid that meet at a minimum, applicable legal requirements, safe and healthy working conditions, environmental sustainability which observes an Environmental Management System (EMS) in accordance with ISO 14001,
the management system which supports the content of the code [MS Supplier Code of Conduct, electr. doc.]

The Code of Business Conduct [MS Code of Business Conduct, electr. doc.] defines the principles which are foundations of the corporation ethics and are observed in its management. It starts with the following statement: Acting with integrity and doing business the right way will ensure that we are always at our best in the moments that matter. The basic values it refers to are avoidance of conflicts of interests, co-operation with governments, business partners, customers, local communities, suppliers and competitors. Mutual confidence, respect, tolerance, openness, sincerity and honesty are the values it cherishes and respects and expects to be respected by its stakeholders, workers and customers. To make it reach the biggest number of Motorolans it has been translated into 12 languages. An implementation and control of ethical behaviours is facilitated by means of Ethics Line, a net of ethics points in all the countries where Motorola has its subsidiaries which serve to anonymously report in any language (via Internet or telephone) all kinds of ethical concerns. A feedback must be given within five days. [MM How to report ethical concerns, electr. doc.] The Motorola workers are assisted in their everyday ethics dilemmas by two departments, a Department of Ethics and of a department of Discipline.

The Programme Inclusion & Diversity (since 2000) is a good example of how Motorola implements ethical principles in its management practices. It is true that diversity management understood as much more than just a lack of discrimination in the workplace, brings many benefits to the company. At the same time, however, it may also create numerous barriers in everyday contacts among workers as its implementation demands tolerance, openness, multiple reality perspective [Nowakowski, 1999:17, Low, Kalafut, 2004:31-34]. The Motorola Programme is realized in three areas: corporation personnel, workplace and market and it consists in creating equal work and promotion opportunities for all the workers, promoting their creativity, innovativeness, making them feel an integral part of the company, treating them with respect, trust and confidence, diversifying products to meet diversified needs, promoting national cultures in subsidiaries, breaking national, racial, gender and sexist stereotypes, practicing recruitment which gives equal chances for all applicants [MS Diversity & Inclusion, electr. doc.] Motorola co-operates with many organizations which represent minority groups, often discriminated and excluded from the mainstream society, e.g. American Foundation for the Blind, League of Black Women, Rainbow Coalition PUSH, etc.
Conclusions

The humanizing aspects of Motorola image are clearly seen in its vision, mission and corporate social responsibility. The corporation acts as a responsible citizen whose market success is not the only and main aim and a raison d’être. On the other hand, such an image whose underlying values correspond to the system of values of its socially engaged and conscious workers, stakeholders and customers accounts for its social positive reception and acceptance, which, in turn, impact upon its success in economic and market terms. Hopefully, the trend to stress the human dimension of the corporation management principles does not belong to mere marketing strategies but stems from an authentic identification of Motorola and Motorolans with them.

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**Netography – Motorola documents:**


Abstract

A growing competition on the global market makes its actors, especially multicultural corporations, become more and more innovative in creating their images by means of cultural devices. Consequently, there can be also observed their growing mindfulness and appreciation of soft components in the process, which, on the one hand corresponds to conspicuous changes in their external and internal environment and, on the other, to new demands put on them due to a shift in value orientation in post-modern societies with the stress on soft skills and people-oriented values. A new cultural paradigm with transculturalism as its sound foundations accounts for a different understanding of corporate culture. Besides, an inclusion in it of culture-oriented issues is somehow forced upon corporations by a new type of multicultural consciousness as well as the concept of modern citizenry which today also applies to business subjects. Usually realized in the form of Corporate Business Responsibility and Public Diplomacy, which have started functioning as benchmarking of a company social acceptance, they are translated into economic and market success building a company competitiveness. It should be stressed that the impact of society in general and of the corporation workers, in particular, on corporate policy and a public company
image have significantly changed in the last decade. Such instruments of social control as various indices - e.g. Gay and Lesbian Index standing for the company recruitment policy - which serve to measure the corporation soft skills, policy of multiculturalism, quality of life and citizenry as well as its focus on the strategies creating the intangibles cannot be ignored any longer even. Modern companies, as shown by their management practice, emphasise their people-friendly policy applied to its stakeholders, its workers, business partners, potential customers etc. and all other actors from their environment. A humanistic approach tends to be seen by a constantly growing number of companies as their most important asset. However, despite their declarations found in the formulations of their missions or even their market activities the question remains still open for how many of them humanistic values are authentic and for how many it is just a new tool of competitiveness whose underlying values are treated instrumentally as the company neither fully identifies with them nor wants to spend money on their practical application.

The aim of the present article is to examine how the changes in a corporation socio-cultural context and social expectations about its social image been implemented in management practices by Motorola. The choice of Motorola is not chancy as it is an unquestionably successful multicultural corporation, a leader in the market and also a leader among the corporations which have undertaken a lot of actions to humanize their image and adjust their corporate culture to the soft values dominating in post-modernism.