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“Can I Be Successful Here?”
Discursive Construction of Identity and Identification
in an Indian Call Center

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Abstract

This thesis explores issues of managing identity and creating identification in a multinational offshoring company. This study provides a discourse analysis of the company's efforts to achieve identification through a corporate text, and considers the potential implications of these efforts on the identity and perceptions of employees. Through the use of discursive psychology (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), the study was able to investigate the interplay between the multiple and conflicting discourses in text and analyze how the company uses various discursive practices to work to shape identity, guide behavior, handle controversial issues and help workers understand their role in the company. This study advances a discursive perspective on the process of identification and contributes to our understanding of organizational discourse.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1	1
Chapter 2	7
Organizational Discourse	7
Discursive Psychology	9
Identity as a Discursive Construction	14
<i>Social Identity and Affiliation</i>	18
Identity and Identification	23
Identification as Organizational Control	33
<i>Concertive Control</i>	33
<i>Identity Regulation</i>	37
Chapter 3	41
Chapter 4	48
Research Question 1: Characterizing Employees	48
Research Question 2: Construction of Elite Corporate Identity	51
Research Question 3: Using Identification to Handle Culture	57
Research Question 4: Attending to Control and Subordination	64
Research Question 5: Identity Regulation and Identification	70
Chapter 5	80
Research Findings	81
Implications	89
Limitations	91
Suggestions for Future Study	93
Conclusion	95

References	96
Appendix	100

Chapter 1

Introduction

The American customer service industry has made a huge shift in recent years, embracing the practices of outsourcing and operating offshore sites. Demand for 24/7 immediate technology services and other customer support has expanded the call service center industry dramatically, while companies have begun to look for ways to reduce the cost of this effort. One industry in particular, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), involves contracting certain business processes, such as service and support call centers, to a third-party company. Largely as an effort to reduce the cost of labor, many of these companies are moving their call centers to other, often less-developed countries. This process is called offshore outsourcing, and it enables companies to employ skilled and technology-competent labor at much lower wages.

In many of these companies, the work practices (as well as the customers) are predominantly rooted in host-country (for the purposes of this paper, U.S.) customs and norms. As such, there is a strong potential for conflict due to the clash of cultures (Pal & Buzzanell, 2008; Jack & Lorbiecki, 2007; Mirchandi, 2004). Such conflicts bring to light interesting challenges and tensions in this industry and its management. For example, there is the paradox of cultivating investment and dedication in employees who are in effect serving a foreign company for foreign customers, while operating under culturally divergent norms (Pal & Buzzanell, 2008; Mirchandi, 2004). One instance of this paradox is the issue that many off-shored call centers that operate in India have primarily American customers calling in, requiring the workers to adjust to the callers' cultural expectations (Pal & Buzzanell, 2008). Thus, these companies must

consider: How do companies gain dedication and loyalty with employees when the company is both managed by and created for Americans (or any host-country)? How does the company communicate the expected role and behaviors of workers from such culturally diverse backgrounds?

Such companies offer a fascinating site for the study of discursive practices as they relate to the formation of identity, the understanding of employees' relationship to the company, and organizational identification. This thesis will explore these concepts through a discursive analysis of one corporate text provided to Indian employees by the one such company, Convergys Corporation. This BPO, headquartered in the U.S. with branches in dozens of countries throughout the world, is currently ranked 20th among the list of the largest BPOs in India (<http://www.bpoindia.org/knowledgeBase/bpo-rankings.shtml>). Further, Convergys has become one of the top employers in India, winning multiple awards such as "BPO of the Year" and enjoying the status of a highly sought-after and respected employer in India. This study hopes to gain provide into how Convergys has built such a reputation in India, how it attempts to create and use identification with its Indian employees through discursive practices, and how these discursive practices communicate the workers' role in and relationship to the company.

There is also a growing body of literature that discusses the role of new technology in organizational discourse and identification. Scholars have begun to place increasing attention on the use of corporate websites and their communicative value. Braddy, Meade and Kroustalis (2006) examined the importance of website use for companies, allowing them to distribute large amounts of information about the company to potential employees. Companies use these websites to communicate important

insights about the company culture and shape a prospective applicant's perception of the company's values and goals, as well as outlining employee benefits, expectations and opportunities. Applicants and new employees can use corporate websites to understand their role in the company and relation to it, based on "perceptions of the culture of the organization" (p. 526). This study focuses on organizational discourse to advance the claim that language helps organizations strategically "construct, maintain, and communicate organizational identities, image, and culture" (Braddy, Meade and Kroustalis, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

With constant downsizings, increasing temporary and short-term workers and the growing number of "telecommuters" in today's organizations, efforts to gain loyalty and dedication associated with identification may seem wasted or misguided, and some scholars have questioned the desirability of such processes (Gossett, 2002). However, the work in multinational offshoring companies is unique in that it may require or encourage an employee to adopt and internalize another nation's culture and conform to that country's preferred organizational form and practices (Pal & Buzzanell, 2004; Mirchandi, 2004). Thus, because of the nature of this work, it is apparent that in this organizational setting, identification serves as an important tool for organizations in attracting and motivating offshore employees. Additionally, the instability and constant flux these organizations consider "the norm" would make identification all the more important as an organizational and managerial tool.

In the present study, I seek to examine how Convergys creates its identity through this discourse, how its discursive practices shape how an employee

understands the company and his or her place in it, and how the company attempts to promote identification through the text. Through the use of discursive psychology (Potter & Wetherell, 1998; Potter & Edwards, 1981; Potter, 2005; Potter, Wetherell, Gill and Edwards, 1990), this study will analyze the text to identify the linguistic practices that enable the company to adopt a certain position, and how its discursive practices assign positions to its employees. This approach will enable me to identify multiple discourses at work in the text, and how Convergys uses these discourses to create its own. Specifically, this study will analyze how Convergys constructs a particular narrative of its corporate identity, which may serve to counter alternative versions of how employees could see the company's identity and practices. Additionally, this study will examine the way the company uses identification techniques to promote this positioning and understanding of the company's identity, and to encourage acceptance of the narrative self-construction they have developed and associated behaviors.

Expected Contribution

Identification has long been discussed as a method of encouraging employee loyalty and investment (Cheney, 1983a; Foote, 1951; Bullis & Tompkins, 1999). Additionally, many studies have attended to the practices and effects of organizational control, hegemony, and domination on employee identity (e.g. Pal & Buzzanell, 2004; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). However, few studies have examined *how* such practices and effects are achieved discursively. I will examine the way Convergys attends to issues of control and culture through discursive practices, exploring the interplay of discourses that create opportunities to promote identification, the linguistic tool kit that identification discourses supply to prospective employees and the ways in which control

is attempted and enacted through them. I will also explore the discursive efforts this multinational company employs in an effort to cope with cultural differences.

Additionally, an examination of the way multinational companies employ such strategies, and to what end, is extremely important in today's ever-growing, globalized world. As companies continue to expand across many countries and cultures, it is important to investigate how these companies interact with host cultures. Finally, in light of the prevalence of multinational organizations, as companies are increasingly moving toward managing the "whole person" (Deetz, 1995) and are increasingly intermingling with workers' identities it is important that we expand studies of these practices and influences to multinational organizational settings as well to see how such efforts are influencing local cultures.

Thus, this study contributes to the discursive organizational communication literature, as well as broadening our view of corporate cultivation of member identification in today's ever-changing organizational forms. It will particularly address a new and growing area of research, exploring the pervasive issues of identity and identification in a multinational setting using a discursive perspective. This study seeks to provide a better understanding of the managerial efforts being made in such organizations and explore some of their implications, so that we can more fully understand how multinational companies interact with and guide sensemaking and identity in international employees.

Chapter two provides a review of some of the relevant literature, establishing the theoretical framework for the study. The literature review will provide a discussion of discourse analysis, a discursive perspective of identity, and the concept of identification.

Chapter three provides the methodological approach this study employs, and presents the text and setting for the study. In chapter four, the text will be analyzed and the findings will be discussed. Finally, Chapter five discusses the analysis, implications of the findings in light of past literature, and considers the limitations and suggestions this study reveals for future study and practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This paper explores issues of managing identity and creating identification in a multinational offshoring company. Through a discursive analysis, I will analyze Convergys' efforts to achieve identification in this setting and consider the potential implications of these efforts. I will utilize discursive psychology to investigate the presence of multiple and conflicting discourses in company texts that work to shape identity, constrain behavior and potentially subjugate workers. By analyzing the interplay between discourses and the discursive construction of identification, I will identify issues of identity and areas of potential conflict in the linguistic and constructive efforts of the company in this text. I will begin by locating my study within a discursive perspective, where I will discuss the concept of discourse, approaches to discourse analysis, and discursive psychology. I will then discuss identity as a discursive construction. In this section, I will discuss poststructuralism as it influences this study. Following this discussion, I will introduce the concept of identification, and its use as a form of organizational control. Throughout these discussions, I will present the research questions that guide this study, and then I will transition into an explanation of my research method in Chapter 3.

Organizational Discourse

This study is grounded in a discursive approach to organizational life. I will rely on discursive psychology, which allows me to examine the practices, interactions and dominant systems of thought that create and shape the organization and its members through viewing at least two levels of discourse. In order to understand the full scope

and aim of discursive psychology, it is necessary to first understand its theoretical and conceptual underpinnings.

Discourse is a term with many meanings. Following Alvesson and Kärreman's (2000) effort to clarify these multiple views, I will first distinguish between two broad understandings of this term before discussing the forms of discourse analysis associated with these different views. I will then explicate my chosen approach for this study.

Generally speaking, many scholars and discourse analysts differentiate between at least two understandings of “discourse” by referring to “big D” or “little d” discourse (see Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairhurst, 2007; Jian et al., 2008 for examples of this discussion). The term *discourse* (in this case, written with a “little d”) refers to the study of talk and texts in social practices. For scholars focusing on “little ‘d’ discourse,” discourse analysis represents the study of language use and talk-in-interaction such as conversation analysis (discussed below). In this view, discourse is considered a local achievement and a medium for social interaction (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Analysts embracing this view will often focus on the formative role of everyday language use as central to the interaction process and constitutive of social practices.

The second view of discourse is differentiated from the first by referring to it as Discourse (with a “big D”). As described by Foucault (1972), Discourse is viewed as the general and enduring systems of thought, historically and culturally rooted in systems of power and knowledge. In this view, power and knowledge relations are established in culturally standardized Discourses and formed by constellations of talk patterns, ideas, logics, and assumptions that constitute objects and subjects (Foucault, 1972).

Discourses order and naturalize the world in certain ways, as well as informing social practices by constituting a form of subjectivity in which human subjects are managed and formed (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000).

An important element of Foucault's view of Discourse is its disciplining power (Foucault, 1975). He sees discourse as a form of control as well as a constituting agent; that is, Discourse constitutes what is true, and through it, power is manifested in specific discursive practices. Foucault draws on the example of Bentham's Panopticon, in which prisoners are constantly able to be observed but never know when such observation is coming. Over time, the prisoners become disciplined and conduct themselves according to the desires of the prison guards, because they believe themselves to be under constant observation. Through this example, we can see the disciplinary power of Discourse to control and influence.

While many scholars primarily focus on one or the other conception of discourse for analysis, several approaches have been developed in an effort to study multiple levels of discourse, in effect, the interplay between "little d" and "big D". One approach that follows this course is discursive psychology.

Discursive Psychology

Discursive psychology is a type of discourse analysis that was first introduced by Potter and Wetherell (1987). Before discussing this approach's treatment of discourse, it is first important to understand that it was also developed as an opposing view to the more traditional psychological perspectives that were rooted in cognitive psychology. Studies from the cognitive psychology perspective take an etic view, seeing talk as an

expression of an individual's inner workings, thoughts and psychological concepts. Thus, psychological states and processes in this view are revealed or evidenced by social action. That is, such studies may view discourse as something to "see past," so that researchers can "get at" the individual's true beliefs and attitudes (Edwards, 2003). Researchers focus on giving a technical account of these actual psychological states that underpin and partly explain action.

Discursive psychology takes a drastically different approach to psychological issues, relying on the belief that reality and psychological phenomena are constructed through language and acted out in social contexts. This approach locates the creation of meaning and reality *in* social interaction; individuals as social actors *actively create* reality and shape identity through their talk. Potter (2005) explains this view further, arguing that descriptions of psychological and social objects can be studied for the way social actors invoke them in the course of certain activities, such as blaming or complimenting. Thus, in this view, "the psychological categories that make up the mental thesaurus can be studied as a kitbag of resources for doing things" (p. 740). Given this understanding of psychology and social interaction, discursive psychology focuses on the way reality and the mind are *constructed* by people through language, throughout their everyday execution of practical tasks (Potter & Edwards, 2001).

Drawing on this perspective, discursive psychology is uniquely positioned to challenge, yet complement, two previous approaches to discourse analysis. It addresses the perceived shortcomings (Wetherell & Potter, 1987) of conversation analysis and the post-structuralist Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis, "little d"

and “big D” discourse, respectively. I will discuss each approach briefly for its treatment of “discourse” and contribution to the formation of discursive psychology.

Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis focuses on the detailed organizing of talk-in-interaction and the accomplishment of sensemaking in conversation (Heritage, 1995; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1992). This approach examines such procedures as turn taking, member categorization, and agenda setting in interaction, to understand how actors use these different interactional methods to produce their activities and intersubjectively make sense of the world. As such, conversation analysts are interested in examining how members make sense of things, as they intersubjectively build social order (Wetherell, 1998).

Some scholars were not fully satisfied with the scope of this type of analysis. For example, Wetherell (1998) claims that conversation analysis is only useful to analyze small pieces of conversation in detail, and that it rests on an “unnecessarily restrictive notion of analytic description and participants’ orientation” (p. 402). She explicates this argument with a metaphor, saying that conversation analysis cuts out a piece of social interaction from the “argumentative social fabric” for analysis, and then promptly disregards the argumentative “threads” which make the very foundation of the interaction and connect the piece back to the greater cloth of society.

Wetherell (1998) contends that conversation analysis does provide a useful form of discourse analysis, aimed at closely examining that piece of the social fabric for insights about the complexity of that social interaction. However, she argues that it alone is not able to offer an adequate answer to the important question a researcher should ask about a piece of discourse: “why this utterance here?” (p. 388). Discursive

psychology attempts to broaden the scope of the analysis by recognizing that discourse is always embedded in socio-historical, local and contingent social practices that define a particular context, concepts explored more fully in Foucault's conception of genealogy (1980). Thus, Wetherell (1998) argues that this genealogical approach suggests that in seeking to analyze their partial piece of the argumentative social fabric, researchers should look also to the broader forms of intelligibility (Discourse) that run through the texture of the fabric more generally (p. 403).

Post-structuralist Foucauldian Analysis and Interpretative Repertoires

Potter, Wetherell, Gill and Edwards (1990) were equally dissatisfied with the Foucauldian view of discourse (represented by the "big D"), which they saw as overly abstract and prone to reification. While these authors acknowledge the importance and usefulness of this view, they also criticized this view as having become "something akin to the geology of plate tectonics – great plates on the earth's crust circulate and clash together; some plates grind violently together; others slip quietly over top of one another" (p. 209). In other words, Discourse in this view is seen as overly systematized and coherent, reified as "sets of statements" rather than seen as a constitutive part of social practices (Potter et al., 1990). Discursive psychologists sought to reframe the significance of Foucault's view and expand on its importance for discourse analysis.

Thus, discursive psychologists attempt to narrow the focus of the Foucauldian view, seeing Discourse instead as a "constitutive part of social practices that are situated in *specific* contexts" (Potter et al., 1990, p. 209). They argue that Discourses function as *interpretative repertoires* for communicating actors. Wetherell (1998) defines interpretative repertoires as "culturally familiar and habitual line[s] of argument comprised of recognizable themes, common places and tropes (doxic)" (p. 400).

In essence, interpretative repertoires can be identified generally as clusters of terms, descriptions, figures of speech and “clichés” that are often used with metaphor or vivid imagery, and often have distinct grammatical construction and style (Potter et al., 1990). The authors compare this concept to a ballet dancer’s repertoire, but they substitute terms, tropes, metaphor, themes, habitual forms of argument and the like (Potter et al., 1990). These “moves” function as the social actor’s tools for sensemaking in a particular context (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 109). Through this understanding, we as researchers can view interpretative repertoires as discursive resources for social actors in their effort to understand and create identity within multiple competing Discourses. We can identify or infer the presence of Discourses through actors’ linguistic choices (in discourse), as they are invoked through the familiar terminology, stories, and lines of argument.

Drawing from the critique and reevaluation of these other types of analysis, discursive psychology seeks to offer “a more synthetic approach” (Wetherell, 1998, p. 388), which seeks to ground Discourse (as interpretative repertoires) in discursive practices. It draws from both the fine-grained analysis influenced by conversation analysis and a more global analysis inspired by post-structuralism and Foucault (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). In so doing, this form of discourse analysis does not limit itself as conversation analysis does, nor does it overly broaden or make abstract the Discourse at work in the analysis.

Through a discursive psychological approach, I will examine the Convergys corporate texts for their strategies of identification as they emerge, revealing the larger Discourses at play—and, in the process, revealing something of the “Convergys

Discourse” this company attempts to construct for prospective employees. Discursive psychology is particularly useful for this study as it enables me to identify these Discourses and examine ways in which they interact with each other and the audience..

A discursive approach will enable an examination of the role of Discourse in this organizational setting, as well as the interplay between Discourse and discursive practices in the text and implications for organizational members. This study will use discursive psychology and the concept of identification to examine the discursive construction of the “desired employee,” how the company encourages identification as a form of organizational control, and how the company handles issues of control and cultural differences in the text. The functioning of these Discourses can have serious implications for organizational member identity as well as issues of control and subjugation in organizations. Thus, it is first necessary to examine the concept of subject positioning, and the view of the self as discursively constituted and situated among multiple competing Discourses.

Identity as a Discursive Construction

This paper draws from a poststructuralist view of the self as socially created and discursively constituted. In this view, the self is not conceived as a fixed or stable entity. Rather, the everyday self is one whose meaning emerges out of reflexive social interaction with others (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Meaning, and thus identity and the social world, can never be fixed; it is always in flux and ever-changing (Laclau & Mouffe, 1987). Poststructuralist identity theories argue that the self is constituted through participation in competing Discourses, a perspective that “acknowledges a discursively

constituted self, a self subjected to and by discourses of power and in an increasingly complex, destabilized, and multivocal world” (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005, p. 171).

This concept of subject positions is a central component of this view for the present study. Drawing from Mouffe’s (1992) post-structuralist account, subject positions refer to the idea that a subject is created and categorized through certain Discourses. The social agent is seen as constituted by a plethora of “subject positions,” such that he or she can never be seen as fixed or stable. We can conceptualize subject positioning as the linguistic terms that are used to characterize a subject within a Discourse.

In this view, Discourses are a source of power and control in identity formation, working “to ‘fix’ identities in particular ways that favor some interests over others and thus constrain alternative truths and subject positions” (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005, p. 171). Indeed, power can be seen as the ability to articulate and to make those articulations stick; in so doing, they become persuasive and hegemonic (Laclau & Mouffe, 1987). Thus, individual self-identities are at once created and subjected by competing Discourses. Because of the significant role that Discourses play in self-identity, it is important to examine the competing Discourses in which an individual participates, as well as how and why those Discourses have been created.

Despite this perspective of the self as discursively constituted--and thus constantly created and recreated, rather than fixed and stable--the poststructuralist view acknowledges that the self is still treated at times as an “object” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). Self-identity can be seen as a reflexively constructed narrative, created as an individual interprets and comes to understand the

self as they participate in competing Discourses (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Tracy & Trethewey, 2005).

Additionally, identity is constructed “in relation to Discourses that construct employment and (subject) positions in institutional settings” (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005, p. 171-172; see also Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). That is, organizational Discourses encourage an individual to enact a certain identity—often the identity that the organization perceives as the “ideal self” for members of their organization, as it aligns with the organization’s needs or interests. Indeed, the creation of the self can be largely influenced by organizational interests. Through various organizational processes, the identities and self-conceptions (and thus, the subject positions) we are “hailed’ to assume by organizational [D]iscourses are prestructured to facilitate actions that are ideologically productive” (Taylor, 2005, p. 124). The effort by the organization to create and communicate this “ideal self” will be expanded in the next section in discussing the formation of social identity, but it will become an important concept in the discussion of the creation of identifications later in this paper.

Through this poststructuralist, discursive view of the self, it has become apparent that organizations have an enormous potential to influence the identity of employees. For example, Tracy and Trethewey (2005) argue that individuals are likely to form their identities based on organizational or work groups, in some cases more than even their home lives, race, gender, age, ethnicity or nationality (p. 125). Given this strong tie to the organization, they claim that individuals may create a fragmented identity, conceptualizing the “real self” as lying outside the “fake” self they are made to perform in service of organizational goals. However, given the extreme permeation of

organizational life into personal life, as will be discussed in a later section of this paper, this brings up concerns for the workers' ability to define a sense of self.

Given the importance of identity issues as they relate to the organization, the concept of identification becomes closely related to identity issues. It is important to look at the process of identification, the organization's role in it, and effects this can have on employee identity. Further, exploring this issue in the context of a multinational company brings up further layers of potential conflict, such as the clash of national identity for the host and home cultures of the organization. If multinational companies maintain the work norms of their home country (as Convergys certainly does), how will efforts to encourage employees to identify with these culturally divergent norms affect an employee's sense of self? How does the company attend to and address such issues through discursive practices?

Before moving on, it is important to note that this view does not assume that individuals are entirely at the mercy of these competing Discourses, without agency or the ability to engage in resistance. Indeed, the poststructuralist view that identity is not "fixed" as it acknowledges that it is constantly open to being negotiated and rethought, open to both organizational efforts to shape it as well as other influences (Holstern & Gubrium, 2000; Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). Holmer-Nadeson (1996) and others addressed the individuals' ability for resistance, emphasizing that the poststructuralist view of the self did not seek to simply reduce individuals to subject positions.

Individuals are not passive or without agency. Rather, when competing Discourses create clashing subject positions, individuals are capable of resistance and innovation. With each Discourse comes an expanded interpretative repertoire, effectively expanding

an individual's "tool kit" of repertoires from which they can draw to make sense of events. Thus, individuals may be able to reflect upon and challenge hegemonic articulations of their identity, creating a "space of action" in which they can position themselves or maneuver within competing Discourses and enable small or large acts of resistance to the controls being imposed on them from organizational forces. Holmer-Nadeson (1996), Foucault (1995) and many other scholars have explored extensively the human capacity for resistance, which for Foucault is inherently tied to power and control. His view of power is "relational" for just this reason (Foucault, 1995).

While they are an extremely important element of post-structuralism and discursive studies, the efforts of resistance and the creation of a space of action (Holmer-Nadeson, 1996) by organizational members are issues that lie outside the scope of this project. While areas that present a potential for such efforts will be mentioned, the focus of this study is to examine and understand the way organizations use Discourses to supply members with the linguistic resources that shape identity formation that, in turn, operate as forms of organizational control. Because the self is so susceptible to the effects of Discourse, we need to study these Discourses themselves and look critically at their creation and use.

Social Identity and Affiliation

Central to the process of identification is the understanding that human beings are naturally compelled to seek affiliation, esteem, and a solid sense of self (Burke, 1950; Cheney, 1983b; Cheney et al., 2010). This social element to identity is key in the process of identification, which Cheney et al. (2010) describe as "a process through which our personal identities achieve social currency" (p. 112). Scholars have identified

several ways in which our psychological needs shape our interactions within our social context and affect identity. In this section, I will discuss several of these arguments, and explore how this understanding contributes to the creation of a “social identity.”

As described above, a poststructuralist view of identity sees it as “the everyday self, whose meaning emerges out of reflexive social interactions with others” (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). As such, identity is not a fixed or stable construct, nor is it a completely individual creation. Our identities are largely dependent on receiving continuous validation from significant others (Mead, 1934). Through these validations and our own self-reinforcing associations with social groups, we negotiate and develop our sense of self. In effect, “we get to know who we are through the gaze of the other” (Cheney et al., 2010, p. 112).

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) explore the effects of social practices on identity formation. They argue that the self is shaped by the interrelated processes of identity regulation and identity work. The former is a concept that will be discussed at a later point in this paper as it relates to issues of organizational control. Identity work is an interpretive activity through which self-identity is reproduced and transformed—essentially, the process of creating one’s conception of one’s self-identity. It is described as a process individuals engage in constantly to form, maintain, repair and revise self-constructions in the effort to achieve a constant sense of self. These efforts, if successful, produce a “sense of coherence and distinctiveness” (p. 626), which is essentially the desired end-state of all identity work. In other words, identity work is the effort individuals make to achieve some sense of continuity or comfort with their self-

identity, which is constantly being challenged and re-defined by the ever-changing societal backdrop of norms and rules (read, Discourses).

Thus, identity work can be understood as the constant process of reflexive social interaction through which individuals create and re-create self-identity in the midst of competing Discourses that work to challenge and change it. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) argue that any sense of contradiction or disruption that is felt as a result of these sometimes conflicting Discourses—in other words, the tension of constantly re-working and re-negotiating the self—will prompt “remedial identity work,” thus making this process continuous and full of tension. This tension, they claim, is stopped or suspended when an individual is “open to identity-securing positions and routines” and is given opportunity to invest the self in organizational practice (p. 625). It must be noted that this solution that sounds very similar to achieving or giving in to identification, which will be discussed in detail in a later section. Thus, the authors link identity work to the concept of identification and its capacity to anchor identity and secure a sense of self, albeit an organizationally-prescribed one. This connection will be further expanded in the discussion of identity regulation and control mechanisms later in this paper.

Alvesson and Robertson (2006) also examined the interplay between social practices and employee identity construction through the concept of social identity, as it relates to our need for affiliation. The authors explore this concept and its implications in an organizational setting. Social identity, first developed by Tajfel (1972), refers to an individual’s knowledge that he or she belongs to certain social groups, which often have some emotional and value significance, where one shares and shapes elements of the self with a group of socially significant others (Alvesson & Robertson, 2006; Hogg &

Terry, 1995). This theory argues for a system of social categorizations that serves to shape and define an individual's place in society.

Alvesson and Robertson (2006) argue that this cognitive process of social identity formation is achieved through the process of self-categorization that will eventually enable individuals to foster identification. Through this process, groups are able to accentuate their perceived similarities and pronounce differences with "others" who do not share the same categories. To begin this process, individuals evaluate the available categories and determine which ones fit their current self-concept—essentially, this is evaluating how well one thinks one would fit into a particular social field. For example, the authors found that in a certain type of knowledge-intensive organization, "innovative" and "intellectual" were two examples of accessible self-categorizations, which would allow individuals to fit well within the social context of the organization.

In addition to fitting with an individual's self-concept, categories must also have a structural and normative fit within the social context. That is, categories can account for situationally relevant similarities among the employees, and must also account for context-specific behaviors and norms. For example, one would perhaps find such categorizations as "innovative" and "intellectual" odd or less-than-compelling in an organization that focuses on more menial, unspecialized labor, such as working on an assembly line. Perhaps "perseverant" or "dependable" would be more accessible self-categorizations for such an organization. The search for a "fit" in this first step is important for the creation of associations and similarities among people within their specific context.

Influenced by both the social context and organizational structure, the group attaches itself to certain of these self-categorizations to form what is called an “in-group prototype.” Essentially, they create an “idealized self,” which enables them to highlight similarities among their own group members while simultaneously differentiating the group from “others” who are not members. In building these associations, an individual takes important steps toward forming their own identity as it relates to the social context. When one feels belonging with a social category, this “provides a definition of who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of the category—a self-definition that is a part of the self-concept” (Hogg & Terry, 1995, p. 206). This is a fact that organizations have learned to use to their advantage, as discussed later in this paper.

Finally, when a specific social identity becomes salient in a certain context, the group reifies this prototype as a standard for conduct, and self-perception and conduct become in-group stereotypical and normative (Hogg & Terry, 1995), and often the group will become a strong force compelling adherence to it (Alvesson & Robertson, 2006). In this way, groups can foster identification through the negotiation of shared values and norms. An understanding of this concept is important for understanding of the “individual side” of the process of identification, a point taken up below.

A clear issue in the process of self-categorization and social identity formation is that in an organizational setting, the “idealized self” that the group agrees upon is necessarily influenced by the organizational Discourses that surround the entire process. I will examine the role organizations can take up in these processes in a later section.

Additionally, it is important to understand that individuals are not passive receptors or helpless victims in the process of organizational identification. Organizational members participate in its creation, while simultaneously participating in their own subjugation—and it is precisely this involvement in the process that makes identification such a powerful, pervasive process in organizational life.

Identity and Identification

In this section, I will explore the concept of identification and its relation to identity and social practices. The esteem and affiliation needs described above drive us to seek identifications, which are important as they “aid us in making sense of our experience, in organizing our thoughts, in achieving decisions, and in anchoring the self” (Cheney, 1983a, p. 342). There is a clear link between identification and considerations of self-identity. I will examine the social implications of identity discussed above as they relate to the process of identification, and then I will explore the idea that organizations can use identification strategically as a form of organizational control.

Organizational identification has been a topic of study for many decades (see Cheney, 1983a; Pratt, 1998; Cheney & Tompkins, 1987; Dukerick et al., 1998). In these studies, scholars have investigated extensively the way that organizational members become attached to and find “belonging” in organizations. Organizations have emerged as an important source of identity for many around the world, especially those in industrialized nations, prompting researchers to increasingly examine how organizations use this power and what implications there are for organizational members. Cheney describes identification as “a feeling of oneness with an organization, such as when

members define themselves in terms of the organization, internalize its mission, ideology, and values, adopt its customary ways of doing things” (Cheney et al., 2011, p. 135). This deceptively simple concept has multiple layers of significance, which will be explored in this section.

Identification as a Social and Organizational Process

To fully understand the scope and potential implications of the identification process, it is important to recognize the multiple aspects of identification and the underlying motives. A useful understanding of identification is as “an active process by which individuals link themselves to elements in the social scene” (Cheney, 1983b, p. 342). This definition highlights the three essential components of identification: it is a *process* that individuals *actively engage* in; there is an element of *agency* with the individuals involved; and there is an important *social component* to it. For the purposes of this paper, it is useful for us to explore identification in light of these three elements.

The first important aspect of Cheney’s definition is that identification must be recognized as a socially embedded process. Burke (1950) describes identification as a reactive measure to counter the divisions inherent in organizations and society. Earlier in this paper, I discussed the human need for affiliation and a sense of “belonging” that are evidence of Burke’s assertion, and illustrate how our identities are largely dependent on social context. As a result of this, we *act* to affiliate ourselves with social groups, often those that share similar interests, goals, and values to our own, allowing us to create a place for ourselves in society (Alvesson & Robertson, 2006; Cheney et al., 2010; Cheney, 1993b). That is, we actively seek out identifications as the natural result of these affiliations, and through them, we are validated and socially anchored. As a result of this need, we are susceptible to efforts on the part of the organization to

try to persuade us to form identification. Organizations are in a unique position to take advantage of such a situation, and many do.

The social nature of identification leads to the second key issue emerging from Cheney's above definition of identification, which requires that we recognize it as an *active* process of linking oneself to society; individuals have a measure of *agency* in this process. It is often easy to accept the idea of individuals as passive victims who are subject to the whims of those in power. Yet this is a grossly one-sided view of this concept.

Because of the emphasis on fulfilling personal needs and the focus on the formation of one's personal identity, identification could be conceived as an individual process. However, as I will explain below, it is in fact mutually constructed and reified. Indeed, much of the power of identification lies in this fact that it *is socially created*. If it were a phenomenon completely separate from the self, imposed upon individuals by those in power, there is much evidence to suggest that it would be marginally if at all effective. There would be a much greater chance for resistance and opposition, for as Foucault said, power and resistance are interrelated and co-create one another; that is, for every effort to exert power and control, there will be some form of resistance (Foucault, 1995). This resistance in turn reifies and validates the power source. Thus, because of its socially constructed nature, identification is all the more powerful and influential, having the ability to both benefit employees and potentially involving individuals in their own subjugation.

Thus, the third important aspect of Cheney's definition requires that we think of identification as a *process*. Indeed, the process of forming a social identity and

“idealized self,” as discussed from Alvesson and Robertson (2006) above in detail, may be seen as the first component of the process of identification. Through the collaborative effort to embrace a certain self-conception, and the reification of that into the “idealized self,” organizational members are essentially choosing a target for identification and then promoting *group* identification with it, as they hold one another accountable to that image.

As discussed earlier, organizational Discourses often encourage individuals to enact particular identities. An organization can use discursive practices to offer certain characterizations of either itself or others—in this case, the employees—that are in line with the dominant corporate Discourses. These characterizations in a text can be analyzed discursively for the way they create this certain desired identity. In a study of couples in marriage therapy, Edwards (2004) explains that in an account of a past event, a husband discursively created an identity for his wife as flirtatious and sexually motivated. He does not come out and say this, but by making those characteristics inferentially available through his talk, he subtly creates ways to enact doing or being “flirtatious” and “sexy.” In the same way, organizations can create identities for workers by offering certain characterizations through discursive practices.

In this way, these discursive practices often have the capacity to guide the way we shape and construct our own identities and can be used to guide the identification process as well. Following this logic, the organizational Discourses that surround this process of social identity formation could be used to privilege the organizationally-desired qualities or characteristics, such that organizational members are only provided with the discursive resources (or interpretative repertoires) promoted by the

organization. In selecting self-categorizations, then, individuals and the group would be limited in their choices to what the organization has deemed appropriate or acceptable. For example, Alvesson and Robertson (2006) found that certain organizations encouraged employees to develop an “elitist” identity in line with the organization’s elite reputation, in order to affect useful instrumental behaviors, such as self-imposing high standards of performance. The self-categorizations made available to them in corporate talk included “innovative,” “intelligent,” and other related terms, all of which reflect the elitist identity the organization is trying to promote.

This discussion illuminates how organizations represent the second major component of the identification process, in which they make efforts to encourage facilitate identification (Cheney, 1993b). Organizations “help” facilitate identification by providing discursive resources, recognized in the text as interpretative repertoires, with which an individual can shape it. An organization may communicate its values, goals, and other information—loosely comprising their “organizational identity”—through guidelines for behavior and action of the individual and the whole. Through these factual descriptions, we can see certain characterizations being offered and a specific identity being constructed. In effect, the mission and philosophy statements of an organization function as a Discourse as does its “story” of how it came to be.

Given this consideration, it will be important in my analysis to examine those Discourses and discursive practices evidenced in the Convergys text to see what kind of “organizational self” or self-categorizations the company presents and privileges in its effort to attract and retain “the right kind” of employees. In my analysis, I will attempt to explore this issue and resulting tensions in my first research question:

RQ1: What self-categorizations does Convergys offer to discursively characterize its desired employee identity through the corporate texts?

To address this question, I will examine the discursive resources (indicative of corporate Discourses) Convergys provides to offer appropriate self-categorizations in their construction of the “appropriate self.” I will explore how the company discursively characterizes and communicates the qualities and values it seeks in its workers.

Organizations encourage identification in many tangible ways, such as organizing fitness centers, company sports teams, and social clubs (see Zoller, 2003). An extreme example of such an effort is the creation of corporate burial plots in some companies in Japan (Cheney et al., 2010, p. 112). Organizations also use certain rhetorical strategies to encourage integration into the organizational community.

Cheney (1993b) found four strategies that were commonly used in corporate literature to try to facilitate identification. These strategies were termed the common ground technique, identification by antithesis, the assumed “we” and unifying symbols. The *common ground technique* involves making explicit connections between the rhetor (company) and others. This technique is apparent in instances where employees are told directly that the company shares his or her values; for example, “Like you, I value hard work and patriotism.” Identification by *antithesis* involves efforts to unite organizational members against a common enemy—commonly, this will be a “threat” from “outside” of the organization, and will portray such “others” as misguided, unfavorable, or otherwise negatively. This tactic reinforces the cohesion of one’s “in-group” by differentiating it from “others” and positioning the group as superior. The *assumed or transcendent “we”* is a more subtle tactic that can serve to create

identification between parties with little in common. Finally, *unifying symbols* include logos, brand, rituals, and any other cultural artifacts that try to embody the “essence” of an organization. I will use these strategies as a starting place for analyzing Convergys’ corporate text in order to identify and examine strategies of identification and their implications.

Efforts to “help” facilitate identification could also involve presenting certain qualities as targets in the process of social identity formation, as discussed above. That is, an organization can try to present what it thinks would be appealing qualities or self-categorizations in order to make itself more attractive to employees. Alvesson and Robertson (2006) found that the creation of an “elite” organizational identity could attract and build identification with organizational members. The authors found that shared identity of elitism can promote self-discipline among employees, help attract and retain quality workers, create an image which appeals to the market, and enable workers to function even in highly ambiguous situations (p. 196). The authors found that an organizational identity grounded in elitism might give members a sense of self-esteem and distinctiveness, which would appeal to the affiliation and esteem needs identified by Burke as central to the identification process. If these efforts succeed and an individual is already inclined to identify with an organization, she or he will be more open or susceptible to persuasive efforts by the organization to create identification (Cheney, 1983a; Alvesson & Robertson, 2006). Given Convergys’ highly elite status in India as a top employer, top BPO, and seemingly highly sought-after employer, it seems that this company may be tapping into the benefits of this elite identity. This prompts the question, how can organizations intentionally promote these benefits of elitism by

providing members with elitist or other relevant qualities that could entice them to foster identification? This will be a second key focus in the analysis of the Convergys text:

RQ2: Is there evidence in the text that Convergys attempts to discursively create an “elite” organizational identity?

To address this question, the study will look for evidence of an “elitism” Discourse in the factual descriptions and discursive practices of the text. It will then analyze the identification techniques the company uses, starting with Cheney’s (1983b) four strategies. The analysis will examine how these techniques are used to affirm or encourage acceptance of the company’s constructed identity, and how that identity is then offered as a discursive resource for worker identification.

The organization’s attempt to “help” by offering discursive resources for identification does not complete the process. After the organization provides these discursive resources, an organizational member must then “complete” the process by “adopting or adapting to the organization’s interests, doing ‘what’s best’ for the organization, and perhaps even developing a salient identification with the organization as a target” (Cheney, 1983b, p. 147). When identification exists, the individual perceives that their personal interests and those of the organization will overlap or coincide (Cheney, 1993b). Cheney (1983a) tied identification to decision-making. When individuals identify strongly with an organization, they will consider first the values, goals and principles of the organization, rather than their own personal considerations when making a decision or solving a problem. In effect, what an organization may perceive as “successful” identification could result in an individual’s

own values, goals, and interests being effectively replaced by or becoming secondary to organizationally-determined interests.

This result reveals troubling concerns about the effect on the individual's self-conception and could present a state of identity crisis or confusion, particularly if the values underlying the Discourses of personal interest and organizational identification are incompatible. Thus, when we conceive of identification as a two-sided process (at minimum), we begin to see the spaces where power, hegemony, and control fit in. , and how the company can use this understanding through discourse. I will discuss how the company discursively attends these issues at length in the next section.

These implications of identification also raise interesting questions about its effects in a multinational company. If organizations use identification to replace individual premises with organizational premises, effectively enabling them to “override” workers’ personal interests to get them to act in favor of the organization, how would it function in an intercultural setting? Could identification in combination with certain discursive strategies have the potential to transcend cultural barriers and cause overseas employees to interpret the company’s identity and practices as company-specific, rather than culturally-rooted? This study will address these considerations in the third research question:

RQ3: How does Convergys attempt to use identification and certain discursive strategies to counter cultural considerations, and to depict a certain corporate environment?

This study will identify and analyze the identification strategies in the Convergys text and the surrounding Discourses to see how the company seeks to normalize practices

which could potentially conflict with cultural norms through discursive strategies. It will analyze the subject positions created for employees, and consider how these positions may encourage behaviors that could reveal a certain cultural perspective.

Given the ability of this process to privilege organizational premises over individual concerns, there is great incentive for organizations to try to promote identification, which can produce a number of outcomes the organization would perceive as positive. Such “positive” effects include employee loyalty, increased investment in one’s work, and the influence of organizational goals and values as a guide to behavior for employees. This could be a further effort to create the “organizational self,” discussed earlier from Tracy and Trethewey (2005). With increased efforts to use identification to tie the organization’s interests to the employee’s identity, the “organizational self” slowly begins to replace the individual, making personal goals and values secondary to organizational considerations.

Despite the power and ethical concerns it raises, positive effects of identification could be perceived by organizational members. Along with providing a feeling of community and belonging, it could encourage a feeling of investment and self-satisfaction in one’s work. It could also potentially correlate with more creativity or greater effort by workers to improve their performance and the work processes they engage. However, an important consideration is the role of the organization in promoting identification. This consideration raises concerns about how and why an organization does this and implicates itself as a potential element of organizational control.

Identification as Organizational Control

As discussed above, organizations have become aware of the potential importance of organizational identification (see Pratt, 2000; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Cheney, 1983b; Cheney & Tompkins, 1985; Larkey & Morrill, 1995). This is especially so in today's organizational structures, which require more symbolic and perhaps subconscious forms of control to foster loyalty and commitment (Cheney et al., 2010; Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000). Organizations' increasing efforts to encourage identification in members has provoked a flurry of research tying identification to issues of organizational control (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Barker, 1993; Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1997; Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). Through measures of unobtrusive control (see Tompkins & Cheney, 1985), organizations link employees' perceptions with corporate values and norms, such that the employee will view an organizationally-prescribed or appropriate decision as also being their natural self-choice (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005; Cheney, 1983a). In this section I will discuss concertive control and how organizations attempt to increase and strengthen ties with their individual members as a mode of control. I will also examine some of the concerns scholars have raised about the potential implications of such efforts.

Concertive Control

In light of the dramatically changing forms of today's organizations toward flatter, more democratized and decentralized structures (see Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Larkey & Morrill, 1995; and Cheney et al., 2010 for discussions of this shift), forms of organizational control have been shifting away from more conventional, overt means of

control. Cheney et al. (2010) described four ideal systems of organizational control based on the literature. The first, termed simple control, is the most obtrusive or apparent, with a direct and personal relationship between supervisor and worker. Second, a technical system of control utilizes technology to supervise workers; supervision is impersonal, indirect, and systematic. The third and most common system of control is the bureaucratic system, in which a system of standards, rules, and policies govern all employees; supervisors are viewed as secondary to the system. In this system, workers are controlled by the shaping of their knowledge about correct or appropriate behaviors—"the right way to act and interact in the organization" (Barker, 1993, p. 409). Control is hidden within the hierarchies and rules, which constrain workers in an inescapable "iron cage" (Barker, 1993).

Finally, the fourth type of control system is a concertive control system, which encourages self-supervision, employee empowerment and team-based supervision. Organizations using the concertive control system are often high-tech firms, and often stress innovation, creativity and adaptability (p. 274). This form of control was developed in response to the oppressive, constraining qualities perceived in the bureaucratic system (Barker, 1993). In theory, it represented a shift in control from management to the workers, who achieve consensus about how to shape their behavior according to a set of core values, such as those in a corporate vision statement. Thus, it becomes a Discourse of control; according to Barker (1993), "this negotiated consensus creates and recreates a value-based discourse that workers use to infer "proper" behavioral premises: ideas, norms, or rules that enable them to act in ways functional for the organization" (p. 412).

Because of the changing organizational forms, the more obtrusive or apparent forms of control are no longer effective. Rather, there has been a general movement toward more unobtrusive or subtle forms of organizational control (Cheney et al., 2010; Tracy & Trethewey, 2005; Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000; Alvesson & Robertson, 2006). Drawing from Deetz (1995), Tracy and Trethewey (2005) acknowledged that “indeed, forms of organizational control are increasingly tied to the ways in which organizations attempt to harness the ‘insides’—the hopes, fears, and aspirations—of workers” (p. 172); similarly, Albert, Ashforth and Dutton (2000) noted that “increasingly, an organization must reside in the heads and hearts of its members” (p. 13). These efforts are reflected in the process and emphasis on identification. These observations about the shifting locus of organizations reveal a troubling potential for conflict, ethical tensions, and the (intentional or potentially inadvertent) mistreatment of workers.

Indeed, this type of system is the least obtrusive, although it is by no means the least constraining. Barker (1993) called this form of control “more powerful, less apparent, and more difficult to resist than that of the former bureaucracy” (p. 408). He concludes that concertive control is more powerful, and has a greater ability to control, than the bureaucratic system (p. 433). By their very nature concertive control systems demand that all members of the team act as both supervisor and subordinate, as they constantly create and subjugate themselves. Such systems include “micro-techniques of discipline [that] regulate and normalize individual and collective action in organizations” (Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1997). For example, a work group in a call center operating under a concertive control system might set a number of calls each of them should make by the end of the day. In so doing, they have created a standard for

performance that each must achieve, and they hold themselves and one another accountable to that standard through micro-disciplinary (or not organizationally-provided means) means.

Barker's concerns about the constraining and contested nature of concertive control systems have surfaced in several other studies. In particular, one study investigates the idea that such systems, while espousing more participative cooperation and worker-centered control, may serve as Discourses of empowerment that mask the true Discourse of hegemonic control (Papa, Auwal & Singhal, 1997). Alvesson and Willmott (2002) further explain these concerns: "In the context of work organizations, the language of liberalization and self-actualization may be promulgated as a seductive means of engineering consent and commitment to corporate goals such that the 'feel-good' effect of participation and 'empowerment' disguises their absence" (p. 624).

Given the ethical and identity-forming concerns associated with this type of control, it is important to investigate how organizations attend these issues in corporate discourse. This concept will be an important focus of the analysis of the Convergys text. Thus, it informs the next research question that guides this study:

RQ4: How does Convergys discursively attend to issues of control and subordination in the text?

This question will be addressed by exploring the way Convergys uses a specific Discourse in the text, and to what end. The analysis will examine how the Convergys text addresses issues of control and accountability for both itself and its workers. Additionally, the analysis will examine Convergys' factual descriptions and how it uses evaluative expressions to position itself, to communicate the expected role and relation

of the employee in the organization, and to create certain work norms and expectations of behavior.

This research question addresses an important issue scholars must attend to, as we continue to study the evolution of managerial systems. In the past, there was an emphasis on locating the self within the organization, as companies encouraged individuals to take pride in their work and their employer. Organizations focused on how an individual could contribute intellectually to his or her work, encouraging ideas to improve processes and products. These new forms of control go beyond this, requiring personal investment as a very minimal contribution to the organization. By locating the essence of the organization within each of its employees—and presumably, the disciplining power and control that shape it—, these systems set the stage for conflict and tensions within the individual employees, as well as within the organization. Thus, an important first step in examining the effects of these efforts is to study the processes these organizations use in an effort to promote this locating of the organization within the self and how such issues are attended in organizational discourse.

Identity Regulation

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) explore one such form of control, termed “identity regulation,” which involves the organization’s attempt to intentionally influence self-identity formation. This concept is intended to explain the process through which organizations induce members to construct certain self-images, aligned with management-defined objectives, as a form of organizational control. This form of organizational control involves the interrelated processes of “identity work” (discussed

earlier in this paper), self-identity and identity regulation that are part of the negotiation of shared meanings, values, and goals within an organization.

Identity regulation is defined as the “more or less intentional effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction” (p. 7). It relates to the idea of organizations attempting to control identity formation or direct identity work in favor of certain organizational interests. The authors found that identity regulation serves as a Discourse of normative control. It influences many of organizational members’ everyday discursive practices and shaping identity formation through such practices, which are “developed in ways that have implications for the shaping of identity” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). They argue that organizational practices such as induction, training, and promotion procedures all have implications for shaping the development of identity: “when an organization becomes a significant source of identification for individuals, corporate identity (the perceived core characteristics of the organization) then informs (self-) identity work” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 7).

Thus, identity regulation can be tied to identification as it influences and guides identity formation. Recalling the discussion earlier in this paper about how identification can encourage organizational members to accept and enact certain Discourses, we can employ a different definition of identification to better understand its ties with organizational control and identity: “‘Identification’ occurs when individuals accept the identities provided in the dominant discourse; that is, they define self and their relations with others in the terms of the dominant discourse” (Holmer-Nadeson, 1996). Thus, a company can provide characterizations of their “desired” employee (as I will address in Research Question 1), and then use identification strategies and certain discursive

practices to guide identity work and identity regulation and encourage the workers to accept the positions and identities created through their corporate Discourse. With this understanding, identification can be seen as the real mechanism of control in this text, encompassing the degree to which individuals adopt and internalize managerial definitions and evaluations of their subject positions (Holmer-Nadeson, 1996), which are communicated through the corporate text.

This concept can be further understood by linking it to the discussion of identity work earlier in this chapter. When an individual encounters contradiction or tension in the course of forming and managing identity, this tension is stopped or suspended when an individual is “open to identity-securing positions and routines” and is given opportunity to invest the self in organizational practice (p. 625). I argue that a great potential source of such tension would arise in instances where personal (or cultural, for the purposes of this paper) identity diverges from the behaviors and rationalizations promoted by the organization. In these cases, the individual would be encouraged to fall back on the familiar, routinized organizational processes that direct identity in the “appropriate” direction (i.e. the organizationally-preferred direction) and as such, identity work and self-concept are directed by organizational interests. In essence, this argument is saying that once an individual accepts the identity being offered by the dominant Discourse, he or she will again be comfortable and secure.

Identity work then becomes a mechanism for, as well as a result of, organizational control, and is interrelated with the development of organizational identification. In a way, it is used to discursively control a worker’s efforts to position him or herself within the competing Discourses. Organizational mechanisms and

practices of control are intertwined with the formation of individual self-definition, and thus are able to help shape and mold the very development of a person's self as the organizational management sees fit.

The theory of identity regulation reveals another primary focus of my analysis, which will be addressed in my final research question:

RQ5: How does Convergys discursively shape identity work and direct employees' self-conceptions? How does it use identity regulation to promote identification and encourage acceptance of these efforts?

Drawing from the characterizations and attributes I found in answering my first research question, I will analyze the text for evidence of these processes of identity regulation and examine how Convergys discursively positions employees and shapes their role in and expectations within the organization. I will examine the instances of identity characterization and the use of evaluative expressions to see how they are offered strategically and in combination with identification strategies to direct identity work toward the development of a specific identity. Finally, I will analyze the use of identification strategies in the text to see how they are strategically used to support or encourage these efforts, and normalize the corporate Discourse and its associated identity and practices.

Chapter 3

Methods

The research questions in this thesis seek to analyze the discursive practices Convergys uses, and the way multiple Discourses are attended in the corporate text. As such, this study uses a type of discourse analysis called discursive psychology. This approach enables an examination of at least two levels of d/Discourse in the text, and will allow the study to examine the discursive constructions that will shape how employees view the company and their role in it.

Discursive psychology scholars seek to analyze the ways psychological, material and social objects are invoked and attended in social interaction and other activities; this is the *practical* focus of discursive psychology (Potter, 2005; Potter & Edwards, 2001; Potter et al., 2001). Instead of analyzing talk and interaction as something to “see past” in order to reveal an individual’s “true” beliefs and attitudes, discursive psychology locates the creation of meaning and reality *in* social interaction; individuals as social actors *actively create* reality and shape identity through their talk (Edwards, 2003). Thus, psychological states are studied for the way they are attended in talk, rather than what they reveal about the speaker (Edwards, 2003). For example, rather than analyzing an interaction to see how prejudice is revealed through the person’s talk, discursive psychologists would be interested in how prejudice is attended in the talk.

Given this focus, discursive psychologists seek to analyze how a person’s talk can create his or her own identity, shape the identity and position of others, and can do interactive work such as countering an undesirable image of oneself. Indeed, Potter and Edwards (2001) note Edwards and Potter’s (1992) argument that claims and

descriptions offered in discourse are often “designed to *counter* potential alternative versions and resist attempts (perhaps actual, perhaps potential) to disqualify them as false, partial or interested” (p. 104). Thus, scholars using a discursive psychology perspective will analyze talk and interaction to see how individuals use characterizations and evaluative expressions to attribute identity and motive to others, how they counter and respecify others’ descriptions of their identity or actions, and how psychological themes are handled and managed implicitly (Edwards, 2004).

However, it is important that discursive psychology not be cast as just a methodology; indeed, scholars have suggested that to think of it as such might be misleading and unproductive (Potter, 2003). Rather, it is an analytical approach that is embedded in social constructionist assumptions, as outlined in detail in the previous chapter. Typically, researchers using this approach will draw on the method of conversation analysis to study the ways in which interpretative repertoires (Discourse) or linguistic resources surface in talk-in-interaction (discourse). Recalling the extensive discussion in Chapter 2, we remember that interpretative repertoires are ways of talking embedded within larger societal or cultural Discourses, which supply linguistic resources to communicating actors in the form of habitual forms of argument (Wetherell, 1998), terminology, metaphor, and other language devices (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). These linguistic resources are necessary in order to form identities and shape representations of the world through talk-in-interaction.

Thus, through the use of discursive psychology, I will analyze how Convergys’ Discourse creates certain discursive resources, conceptualized as a linguistic tool kit, which will become available to employees as they engage with this Discourse. I will

look for evidence of this linguistic toolkit in the form of arguments, terminology, metaphors, themes, imagery, and various linguistic devices, which Convergys draws upon in order to describe, explain, or justify their statements and description of the company and its practices. Specifically, I will look at the company's use of factual descriptions, evaluative expressions and cognitive terms to examine how it constructs identity and handles potentially controversial issues. I will examine how the company draws from certain Discourses to handle issues of control and culture discursively I will explore the company's efforts to create subject positions for its employees, how it uses discursive strategies to shape workers' identity creation, and the strategies of identification it utilizes to accomplish this and use it as a form of control.

The type of data typically used by discursive psychologists has historically been open-ended interviews although there is a more recent push for f situated interaction and records of interactions in natural settings (Potter & Edwards, 2001; Potter, 2005; Edwards, 2004). The use of open-ended interviews has come to be seen as more of a focus on perception, understanding, and even information processing, rather than the actual use of discourse in everyday activities (Potter, 2005).

However, this study is a form of textual analysis inspired by conversation analysis and grounded in discursive psychology. I have chosen to use discursive psychology to analyze corporate texts distributed by Convergys to its Indian employees in order to understand the nature of the Discourse Convergys creates as a social actor, as it creates its identity through Discourse while also attempting to create certain subject positions for employees.

In his study of identification strategies in corporate house organs, Cheney (1983b) cites Levinson's (1972) argument that such texts may be "viewed appropriately as messages from 'the organization'—as represented by top policy and decision makers—to the employee" (p. 149) because of the controlled nature of their creation by high-level managers or employees under their close advisement. He further argues that corporate texts such as these are recognized as carrying organizational viewpoints, attitudes, and policies, making them "a rich resource for the examination of organizational strategies of identification" (p. 149). I argue that these texts also serve as a rich resource for examining the creation of corporate identity and the positioning of the various actors through organizational discourse.

Before beginning my analysis of this text, it is first important to gain a broad understanding of the setting surrounding this company, its employees, and this corporate text.

Setting

The unique social and economic situation in India contributes to the content of the corporate text in many ways. India faces the unique problem of what has been called "educated unemployment" (CIPD; Nishant, 2009; Somvanshi, 2009). In recent years, there has been a rising surplus of highly educated youths who are just leaving the education system for their first experience in the working world. These highly skilled, inexperienced individuals provide Convergys an excellent workforce from which to recruit.

However, the company has found that these individuals are looking for careers and advancement opportunities, which the company often cannot realize. Jean-Herve Jenn, former president of the international operations at Convergys, reflected on the issue: “The young workforce here expects to get promoted every 6-12 months. In a globally competitive environment, you have to play by the rules and in no other geography do promotions happen so often” (Convergys Beyond India). Given this situation, it would be important for the company to attempt to foster strong identification with employees and potential employees, to ensure that they can attract and retain the needed personnel.

A second important consideration of the setting is the nature of offshore call center work. As was discussed earlier in this paper, Convergys has made efforts to move a job from one pool of employees to a very different set of employees, while keeping the job itself rather the same.

Scholars have identified certain practices that are common to offshored call centers. Mirchandi (2004) identified three practices of scripting, synchronicity, and location masking. These practices are important to the company that wishes to keep its service the same and only embrace the financial incentive to move a center to another country. These practices highlight one challenging component of offshore call center work: “Taylor and Bain (2004: 20) note that ‘the call centre with its distinctive labour process can be offshored less easily than other non-customer facing, routine servicing activities.’ Or, to put it another way, ‘cultural distance is a bit harder to kill [when] company and customer are talking to each other on the telephone’ (Economist, 29

April 2000).” (Mirchandi, 2004). This author and others indicate that offshoring companies necessarily seek to control the way employees display to customers, rather than just seeking to manage their behavior. These insights indicate that the management of identity may be a major focus, even perceived as essential to the success of the company.

These struggles are evident in Convergys. Despite these increasing efforts to move call centers to India and the Philippines, the company still conducts a majority of its business in North America. In a 2009 SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, it was reported that Convergys generated approximately 86.1% of its total revenues from North America (MarketWatch). Thus, Convergys must face the challenge of convincing highly qualified individuals to identify with the company and a job that is managed by and requires almost exclusive service to individuals from another culture and country.

These elements of the situation Convergys operates in present some of the challenges the company might face when communicating with and attempting to manage employees in the Indian sites. These considerations will be an important focus throughout the analysis of the discursive practices Convergys employs, and may shape some of the Discourses at play in the text.

Selection of Texts

In this study, I will examine a website training text distributed by Convergys to its employees and prospective employees in its Indian locations. The data I will analyze is the text from the company’s New Hire Orientation website for Indian sites, which

functions to welcome and orient new employees to the company. This website includes fourteen pages split into four sections: an introduction, a section about the company's values and vision, a section about the company culture, and a section about the employee's expectations and involvement with the company.

This text was selected because it represents the most widely available resource for Indian employees that is explicitly intended to communicate the company's identity and the employee's expectations and relationship to it. This text provides resources for the employees to make sense of the company and understand their role in it, as well as their relationship to their employer.

In the next section, I will analyze the text from the Convergys India new hire website, as well as the supporting texts, in an effort to answer my five research questions. Using discursive psychology, I will be able to examine how Convergys constructs its own identity and how it handles issues of control discursively as it creates an alternative narrative of itself and its practices. I will explore the company's efforts to create subject positions for its employees, how it uses discursive strategies to shape workers' identity creation, and the strategies of identification it utilizes to accomplish this and use it as a form of control. I will analyze the role of Discourse in the text, and look for evidence of the linguistic toolkit that is created through Convergys' Discourse, which will assist employees as they engage with the corporate text

Chapter 4

Results

By relying on the principles of discursive psychology, this analysis will examine the interplay between multiple Discourses and the text, and theorize implications of this interplay for the company and organizational members. The first two questions will examine the efforts of identity construction throughout the text. The third and fourth questions seek to uncover how the company attends to issues of culture and control, respectively, and how identification strategies are used to those ends. The last section will draw from these findings and analyze the methods of identity regulation enacted in this text, and examine the overall implications of the discursive practices of the company on the creation of identification.

Research Question 1: Characterizing Employees

In this first section of analysis, the text was analyzed to see how Convergys offers self-categorizations in an effort to construct a certain identity for employees. This analysis answers the first research question: *What self-categorizations does Convergys offer to discursively characterize its desired employee identity through the corporate texts?*

Recall from Chapter 2 that a major focus of discursive psychology is the way in which social actors construct their own and others' identity through specific forms of language such as terminology, metaphors, categories, and arguments. This is also done indirectly, but analysis can reveal what the company is portraying as the qualities of its "ideal" employee. Although the company does not expressly indicate that certain qualities are looked for or must be displayed by the new employees, there is much in

the text that works to depict an image of the “ideal” employee qualities and make them attractive and attainable to new employees.

There are two primary ways in which the company offers characteristics of the desired employee. Categorizations are offered where the company explicitly describes employees’ qualities, and also more inferentially where the company describes itself and its own practices.

Throughout the text, Convergys offers some overt descriptions of its employees. As discussed in the literature, one can identify specific self-categorizations the company offers employees throughout the text that are a part of the interpretative repertoire of a “Convergys Discourse.” This is most often evident in instances where the company creates an identity for the employee by describing the qualities and characteristics of “the employees.” The text seems to describe the company’s employees as universally behaving the same and holding the same values. Thus, by describing these constant or shared character qualities, the company invites the reader of this text to “fit in” with such descriptions, if he or she wishes to fit in with the employee base.

The second way the company offers self-categorizations for employees is more indirectly, through describing its own identity, values, and practices. It makes statements about company values and practices in combination with certain identification strategies, such as the inclusive “we” (Cheney, 1983b). This method does not overtly characterize employees, but rather makes certain self-categorizations inferentially available to employees who wish to be included in the “we” of the company.

These methods are used to depict distinct qualities of employees. The first shared categorization depicted in the text is that employees of Convergys India are

highly accomplished. There is a constant effort throughout the text to offer categorizations of expertise, talent, and skill. For example, in the opening section of the website, “Letter from Our CEO,” the company characterizes its employees outright:

We pride ourselves on devoting tremendous energy and resources to attract, develop, and retain **individuals of exceptional talent and potential**.

In the Vision statement, the company follows a similar pattern:

We attract the **best and brightest** and our commitment to the development of our people helps them become a **key point of differentiation** and competitive advantage.

Throughout the text, such descriptions are repeated frequently, and associated with expertise and high-quality performance.

The second shared quality is that employees are hard-working. This categorization is most often offered inferentially, through descriptions of company practices or the behavior of employees:

Around the clock, each and every day, Convergys employees **interact with millions of people** in almost every area of our planet.

Again in this statement, the self-categorization is made inferentially available by describing what Convergys employees do. It does not specifically indicate that the employee reading this text should have this quality, nor does it explicitly say the employees work hard or have any kind of strong work ethic. However, this categorization is implied and indeed necessitated by this kind of description of employee behavior. The company is saying that employees might expect to work

constantly, or “around the clock,” and hints at the scope of customers they will have to provide service to on a daily basis.

Finally, the third categorization offered is that employees are focused on personal and professional development. For example, in the “Letter From Our CEO,” it is indicated that “we value our participatory culture where employees take **individual responsibility and accountability** for their careers and their success at Convergys.” This statement is loaded with significance and interactional work, but for this section of the analysis I am interested in the way this statement creates the character and intent of the employees. The company does not overtly state the values their employees hold, but it makes the characteristics of hard work and self-improvement inferentially available to the employees who wish to be included as a part of that ‘we’.” Thus, in describing “what employees do,” the company offers these qualities as shared among all employees, and making those desirable qualities for an organizational member through the inclusive “we” (Cheney, 1983b).

Research Question 2: Construction of Elite Corporate Identity

From the literature, it was shown that an organizational identity can be a significant factor in promoting identification. Indeed, “the stronger the attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity, the stronger a person’s organizational identification” (Dutton et al., 1994, from Alvesson & Robertson, 2006, p. 197). Thus, it is important to analyze both how the text characterizes employees, as well as how the company discursively creates its own identity through the text. This will be examined in the analysis of the second research question: *Is there evidence in the text that Convergys attempts to discursively create an “elite” organizational identity?*

The analysis found that Convergys employs a Discourse of elitism throughout the text in its construction of its own identity and practices. A Discourse of elitism is marked by the construction of the organization as clearly superior to and distinct from its competitors, and includes claims of the company's special practices or distinct advantages, privileges, and economic benefits (Alvesson & Robertson, 2006). It should also include some indication that this elite status is confirmed by "significant others" or broader groups. Again, as with the previous research question, this analysis found that the elitist identity construction is handled both directly and indirectly in the text.

Often, the text will offer a direct characterization of the company through use of objective factual descriptions. Stating things in this way allows the company to present the qualities it seeks to display, while at the same time removing itself from the assessment and offering those qualities as "objective fact" rather than its own opinion. Through analysis, familiar characterizations and descriptions can be identified that make up part of the tool kit of the Discourse of elitism. This tool kit includes familiar terminology in the form of catch-phrases, such as "best and brightest," "cutting-edge" and "highly rated;" arguments of excellence such as "we are the best;" and categorizations such as "innovative" and "leader."

The website text is described as a resource for learning "why [Convergys is] a Fortune 1000 company." The text builds this claim throughout, focusing on *how* the company is so elite and what special features make it so. Through the construction of the "Convergys narrative," or the story of who Convergys is, the company strategically highlights these clues throughout the text, supplementing its explicit claims of

excellence by making extra proof or indication of its elitism inferentially available to the reader.

An illustrative example of this strategy is seen in the “What We Do” section, where the company is described as such:

Convergys is a **major** enterprise, employing over 74,000 people in locations **all around the world**... Much of what we do involves contact centers (which used to be known as call centers), the programs they use to deliver their goods and services, and the associated expertise needed to make all of that work for our contracted clients (of which there are **hundreds**).

Unfortunately, this doesn't really tell the **enormous scope** and reach of our products and services. Around the clock, each and every day, Convergys employees interact with millions of people **in almost every area of our planet**.

In this section, there are several statements that carry strong constructive implications, but are stated as objective fact and not just the company's own assessment or opinion. For example, there are many references to the company's size and scope, with descriptive and evaluative terms like “major,” “enormous,” “all around the world,” “hundreds,” and “almost every area of our planet,” as well as statistical figures like “over 74,000 people” are used to depict the size and reach of the company, establishing it as both a global presence and a vastly influential one, reaching and effecting many people. All of these descriptors contribute to the creation of the Convergys identity and build the case for its perceived elitism.

These efforts are seen throughout the text. Another section demonstrated how Convergys uses these indirect constructive details to depict its elite nature, in the “How We’re Organized” section of the website. The company begins this section:

Think about the technology and logistics that go into a company that has 74,000+ employees, in over 125 offices, in 60 countries around the globe, **delivering multiple products and services**. That’s Convergys, **so it’s no surprise we are very complex**.

In this statement, the company is offering a “factual description” of itself. Recall from Chapter 3 that this type of practice is used by a speaker to handle attributions of intent, agency, and character without directly addressing them or requiring an overt description. In this statement, there are indications of both the character and the practices of the company. It highlights that the company is large, globally pervasive, and a significant employer, all attesting to the company’s credibility and large global impact. The statement also attends the company’s practice, “delivering multiple products and services,” which when placed just after this description of its size and reach implies that these products and services are many and widely desired across the globe. There is also an indication of the organization and hi-tech nature of the company, as it implores you to consider how these must be qualities of the company in order to achieve all of the things they go on to describe. This statement could also be used to counter opinions that the company might be too complex, too fragmented, or have too many different branches to be appealing.

The statement above is followed by a short description of each of the company’s four distinct services or sectors: customer care, employee care, information

management, and international information management. Each of these sections of the company, in turn, offers its own factual description. For example, Employee Care is described as such:

Information Management (aka **IM**):Convergys Information Management offers proprietary billing software including the **award-winning** Infinys for the convergent telecommunications marketplace, including real-time, transaction-based rating and billing for wireless/mobile, Cable/Broadband/DBS, wire line and **next-generation** service providers.

In this description, there are several important and highly constructive elements. Most notably, it uses phrases such as “award-winning” and “next-generation” in describing its products and services, offering these as categories for characterization of the company as highly recognized and respected, as well as modern and in on the latest technology. By evoking images of itself as innovative and high-tech, the company taps into the Discourse of elitism.

Another interesting discursive practice in this text is the use of “emotional” descriptions rather than, and alternating with, cognitive expressions (such as know, believe). This practice can be highly constructive of the nature and accountability of events or actions (Edwards, 2004). An example of this strategy is found in the “Our Vision” section:

We are **acknowledged as the best** in the world at enabling organizations everywhere to **enhance the value of their**

relationships with customers and employees

We are both a **thought leader** and **market share leader** in the markets we serve

We attract the **best and brightest** and our commitment to the development of our people helps them become a **key point of differentiation** and competitive advantage

We are a **Fortune 500** company with shareholder **returns in the top quartile** of that group.

Here, we see an interesting use of “emotional” descriptions and cognitive states. For example, the company is “acknowledged as the best.” Words such as “best” and “everywhere,” which carry a certain amount of “emotional” weight, place the company’s efforts on a global scale, indicating that they are not contained to one location or area of expertise. They are also highly indicative of the Discourse of elitism, with key terminology such as “best and brightest” and “thought leader” as well as key argument, such as “we are acknowledged as the best” and “thought leader and market share leader.” This section also reflects the company’s greater effort in the text to differentiate itself. Thus, it uses arguments such as how its employees are a “key point of differentiation,” and how the company holds a unique “competitive advantage,” to further bolster its elitism and set itself apart from other organizations.

Yet, in keeping with the aim of discursive psychology to understand the construction of psychological states in language, it is important to note the use of cognitive terms in combination with these “emotional” descriptions. The use of cognitive states such as “acknowledged” in this section signals that these characterizations are

not simply from within the organization. This term defines the characterization of “the best in the world” cognitively, as a judgment rather than a feeling. This indicates that there is a community that accepts these characterizations, such as the industry or competitors, an important element of the Discourse of elitism as discussed by Alvesson and Robertson (2006). Rather than saying “we are the best,” a subjective evaluation, it instead uses objective evaluative practices to describe itself. The former could have been seen as a form of “personal reaction,” a telling of the company’s own attitude or opinion of itself. By using the objective evaluation, this allows the company to locate the creation of these evaluations—“the best,” “thought/ share leader,” etc.—outside the company’s own opinion of itself, thus countering the notion that the company is speaking out of its own psychological disposition.

Thus, instead of simply creating a narrative of “who we are,” the company engages in identity construction to answer “*how* we are among the best.” It positions itself within its market and industry as a leader, financially profitable, and “the best in the world.” It leverages its own self-construction to offer its elitism as a shared identity of all its employees. As I found in analyzing my first research question, the company makes these key organizational characteristics available to employees in order to create this shared elite identity.

Research Question 3: Using Identification to Handle Culture

Another focus of discursive psychology is analyzing how social actors handle potentially controversial issues in talk and interaction. This section of the analysis will examine how Convergys handles cultural issues in this text in an effort to answer the third research question: *How does Convergys attempt to use identification and certain*

discursive strategies to counter cultural considerations, and to depict a certain corporate environment? This analysis found that the company highlights a “Convergys Discourse” and uses this focus to avoid or counter some of the issues associated with managing employees across cultural and geographic barriers. It also found that the company handled issues of outsourcing and some of the criticisms of offshore call centers in interesting ways. Finally, the company relies on identification strategies to accomplish these efforts, as well as to create a solid sense of identification that could be used as an attempt to transcend cultural barriers.

Convergys acknowledges very briefly the somewhat controversial topics of outsourcing and call-center work in this text. There is one significant statement in the text which seems to use the identification strategy of *identification by antithesis* (Cheney, 1983b) to address such a topic. In the “What We Do” section, the company describes its operations on a very broad level and subtly depicts itself as “other than” a certain view:

Much of what we do involves contact centers (which used to be known as call centers), the programs they use to deliver their goods and services, and the associated expertise needed to make all of that work for our contracted clients (of which there are hundreds).

The distinction here of contact centers versus call centers was particularly interesting. This could be a way for the company to counter the potentially negative or unappealing perceptions associated with “call center” work in the past, briefly outlined in Chapter 3. This mention is immediately followed with a statement depicting the expertise of the industry, as well as the wide reach of the company, which serves “hundreds” of clients.

This could be seen as an effort to bolster the reputation of the industry, or simply to enhance the perceptions about its practices.

The company also minimally addresses the issue of outsourcing. Although this is a very controversial issue, especially in developing countries like India, the company mentions it in passing in a description of two of its three major sectors:

Customer Care (aka CC): Convergys is the **largest provider** of outsourced customer management services in the world. More simply put, Customer Care is about **Contact Centers**. Customer Care manages a global system of sites, networks and employees that process millions of customer calls and transactions 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week / 365 days a year, supporting clients such as P&G and Sprint.

Employee Care (aka EC): Due to market conditions, advancements in technology, and the need to control costs, **outsourced servicing of employee benefits** is an important new idea. We are on the cutting edge of this market, and has an organization that is growing to meet that need. HRDirect, which manages Convergys benefits, is in this area.

To a certain extent, the first section avoids the controversy of outsourcing, framing it as a simple classification of a type of work and going on to congratulate the company on being so pervasive in this industry. In the second section, the company constructs a very brief justification for the practice: as a response to market conditions, as a result of new technologies, and admittedly, as a way to reduce costs. It is interesting that the company mentions this in reference to *other* companies, as in their clients, but does not

acknowledge its own role in the practice in that section. Thus, it seems that Convergys largely avoids any criticisms of outsourcing, but perhaps makes available a positive interpretation of it through its description of others.

The company also handles cultural work norms in this text by creating a certain corporate environment. It uses factual statements and objective evaluative expressions in combination with identification strategies to normalize a certain work culture, addressing its own policies and practices in a way that overrides or perhaps avoids culture-specific norms and attitudes that could be present in the Indian sites.

To further this effort, the company uses the “common ground” (Cheney, 1983b) strategy several times in the text, to depict itself and its practices as created in response to employees’ needs and wants, rather than its own interests. Two notable examples from the text are the introductions to two major sections of the website:

“Benefits are so important today. Since you want peace of mind in regards to your health and safety, they have become an integral part of total compensation here at Convergys.”

“Because Convergys’ growth and success is linked to our individual growth and success, our company strongly supports and encourages personal development.”

The company presents these sections of the text—benefits and professional development, respectively—as though they were created in response to the employees, highlighting the importance the company depicts of meeting its employees needs. This technique serves two functions. It fosters identification by creating the impression that

the company is truly invested in its people, using the inclusive “our” in this case, and making its practices seem genuinely targeted to serve the employees’ interests.

However, this strategy also normalizes or assumes certain values and qualities of the employees, and by stating them as objective evaluative expressions, the company is able to depict them as normal and universal. Thus, while the company is “reactive” to the interests of the employees, the company also seems to be defining them—or at least, identifying what it believes those interests to be. Here, we see that employees are taken to assume that their company will ensure health and safety are addressed, and that they should be incorporated into the concept of “compensation.” Additionally, growth and development are taken to be both important motivating factors for employees, as well as highlighted as an important component of the company’s success. These assumptions are not necessarily novel or surprising of a corporate setting, but they do contribute to the positioning of the employee within the Convergys Discourse and the relationship being built between the company and its employees.

The creation and normalization of certain work norms and assumptions is also overtly seen in the “Expectations” section:

“These are the general expectations for all Convergys employees.

- If you believe in the importance of setting goals and creating plans **you've made a great decision** to come to Convergys.
- If you regularly seek and share performance feedback, **you won't be disappointed** in your choice to join us.
- If you incorporate personal development into your every day work life and realize that learning happens as much outside the classroom as inside, **you'll fit**

right into the Convergys family.

- If you do business by focusing on results, people, collaboration and communication, **you're going to work with a team of people just like you.**
- If you assume accountability for yourself and your actions, **you're going to find success here.** We've got a company that doesn't point fingers. Our focus is on taking responsibility for our actions and learning from experiences.
- If you take it upon yourself to get the information you need, when you need it, **you're going to love it here!** We've got extensive online tools and resources to help you get what you want, when you want it and it's all at your fingertips.”

This section contains a unique identification strategy, which is used to privilege the terms, clichés, and sentiments associated with the Convergys Discourse and downplay cultural elements of the practices being described. This strategy functions more complexly than the previous strategies identified in this paper, and merits a thorough exploration.

These statements first ask the reader to consider their level of acceptance or identification with statements that reflect certain personal and professional orientations and qualities. While intentionally ambiguous and vague, these statements reflect certain work and cultural norms and assumptions. For example, they appeal to such values as “the importance of setting goals and creating plans,” incorporation of personal development into one’s work life, and doing “business by focusing on results, people, collaboration and communication.”

Once an individual has considered this value set and chosen to identify with or reject it, the statements affirm the presumed positive response they have gained. They

use traditional metaphors or cliché inclusive language, such as “you’ll fit right into the Convergys family,” “you’re going to work with a group of people just like you” and “you’re going to love it here!” to build the sense of community and belonging the company hopes to foster.

The values or orientations presented in these statements may seem to be common corporate values, but they do reflect certain cultural assumptions about the nature of work and the role of various employees at different levels throughout a company. Using Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory as a framework for general cultural differences, some potential cultural differences can be viewed as potentially problematic. For example, the ideas of collaboration and open communication might be extremely uncomfortable for a Chinese employee, many of whom are socialized in a high power-distance culture that would advocate that employees not question the authority of superiors. Indeed, the notion of “business through collaboration and communication” could take on any number of practical forms; in Russia, which ranks high on global Corruption Perception indexes (Transparency International, 2010), this could play out very differently than negotiation or collaboration in a culture where these values are more common.

Likewise, asking a superior to give a critical assessment of one’s performance at work might be unheard of in certain cultures, especially those with a high power-distance where criticism may be taken as very negative and counter to face-saving preferences. Additionally, the focus on individual success and development might be less-than-compelling in certain collectivist cultures, in which the focus is often the good of the group rather than the individual. A high uncertainty-avoidance culture might be

less receptive to the high degree of self-direction expected in jobs. Another consideration is the compensation and motivation norms particular to a culture. Although pay-for-performance compensation models are becoming more common and more widely accepted in India, this still represents a certain perspective on the corporate environment and the norms that are accepted. It is important to note that Hofstede's dimensions are highly generalizing, and do not account for the wide variability that is common throughout all nations and cultures. Yet they do give us some insight into how cultural differences could impact work norms and assumptions.

Interestingly, the affirmative ending to the statements actually laud the reader's presumably correct answer or agreement, affirming that they hold "the right" values or goals and implying subtly that the reader is certain to find acceptance and association in this organization (ie. "you're going to work with a team of people just like you"). The statements use phrases such as "you've made a great decision to come to Convergys," "you won't be disappointed in your choice to join us" and "you're going to find success here." In this way, the statements are able to encourage the employee to agree with the premises put forth in them, and highlight the community and acceptance theme while avoiding any cultural implications. This could be a way the company attempts to transcend cultural issues through identification strategies to instead advocate the "Convergys Discourse."

Research Question 4: Attending to Control and Subordination

This section of the analysis examined how the company employed specific Discourses to create certain interpretations of itself and its practices in an effort to answer the fourth research question: *How does Convergys discursively attend to*

issues of control and subordination in the text? Through this analysis, a Discourse of empowerment was identified, which the company used to normalize certain corporate expectations and locate accountability in significant ways in the text.

The company uses a Discourse of empowerment to depict its practices in a certain way, and to try to encourage employees to interpret and understand its discursive practices as empowering, rather than controlling. The Discourse of empowerment reflects an organization's attempt to promote a sense of ownership in the company and of one's own work, and is often used to try to promote participation among organizational members. This analysis argues that an important element of this Discourse is its use of identification strategies. These strategies enable the company to reinforce the reading of the text as empowering and exciting, and aid the company in avoiding more negative interpretations.

One important function of this effort is how the company uses the Discourse of empowerment to counter or avoid the more negative interpretations available to the audience of its practices. In fact, the company explicitly acknowledges the alternative view it seeks to counter within the text. The company introduces its view on personal development before it goes on to describe the various opportunities it offers:

We believe personal development is owned by each employee. The idea that your growth is somehow determined, controlled and manipulated by others just isn't true. At Convergys, personal development is viewed as a personal responsibility, one that accompanies you wherever you go, whatever you do.

This statement acknowledges that one could understand certain policies, practices, or statements as “controlling” or manipulative of one’s personal growth, and implies that this negative view is commonly held by employees. By explicitly presenting the point of comparison or view that it will go on to try to counter, the company is ensuring that employees will be tuned in to see how this company is able to differentiate itself.

The sequential positioning of this statement is also important to the text. It is situated in the section discussing employees’ opportunities for personal development, but also just before the section detailing employee expectations and policies. Thus, this statement encourages employees to engage with the material that follows through the lens of this Discourse of empowerment. It offers a specific interpretative repertoire to support the reading of its expectations as empowering by making specific arguments available to the employees in support of this interpretation, while providing alternative arguments related to the company’s intentions, behavior, and accountability.

This effort is also evident in the previously analyzed “Expectations” section:

These are the general expectations for all Convergys employees.

“If you believe in the importance of setting goals and creating plans you've made a great decision to come to Convergys.

- If you regularly seek and share performance feedback, you won't be disappointed in your choice to join us.
- If you incorporate personal development into your every day work life and realize that learning happens as much outside the classroom as inside, you'll fit right into the Convergys family.
- If you do business by focusing on results, people, collaboration and

communication, you're going to work with a team of people just like you.

- If you assume accountability for yourself and your actions, you're going to find success here. We've got a company that doesn't point fingers. Our focus is on taking responsibility for our actions and learning from experiences.
- If you take it upon yourself to get the information you need, when you need it, you're going to love it here! We've got extensive online tools and resources to help you get what you want, when you want it and it's all at your fingertips.”

Here, the company also uses familiar clichés, metaphors, and terms to depict their “expectations” as rather appealing and typical qualities, and indeed, frames them as exciting and empowering. Control mechanisms such as being subject to constant performance monitoring, feedback and evaluation, meeting goals and having performance quotas, and accepting blame and responsibility for actions and decisions are re-specified as empowering and exciting opportunities through the Discourse of Empowerment. As noted earlier in the chapter, the company uses identification strategies to further encourage this interpretation of the text. By coupling these “expectation” statements with such identification strategies, the company makes its preferred understanding more attractive and available to employees, by tapping into the social nature of humans and our inclination to see groups we are a part of as more positive as discussed in Chapter 2.

Finally, the company handles accountability in argument form, simultaneously claiming it as a major component of its corporate practice and locating it in the employees themselves. Throughout the text, the company depicts itself as a major advocate and supporter of the personal development of its employees. Yet, upon

analysis, it seems that the company makes a great effort to remove accountability for this from itself, locating it instead within the employees.

The handling of accountability is first evident in a section of the “Letter from Our CEO”:

...we value our participatory culture where employees take **individual responsibility and accountability** for their careers and their success at Convergys. In support of that, **we have programs** in place for employees to seek out mentors, to receive and give regular feedback on their performance and that of their manager, and to identify and develop our high potential employees for career **opportunities** and advancement.

Here, the text is strategically and carefully phrased to allow the company to subtly locate accountability. The first interesting thing to note is that the company depicts itself as offering and providing opportunities actively, yet phrases its own behaviors objectively, which distances it slightly from those behaviors. To say “we offer programs” or “we provide opportunities” would be a more active phrasing, and could indicate a higher level of involvement. The company “supports” and “values” efforts for employee development, yet then it locates accountability and agency in the employees themselves: “...for employees to seek out.” This discursive construction indicates that the employee is doing the action, and should be responsible for his or her own development and use of resources, and takes the responsibility for these things off the company itself. It should be noted that this paragraph also contains some of the control mechanisms seen in the “Expectations” section, such as the constant performance

monitoring and evaluation; but again, this is framed as a positive “opportunity” for growth, rather than a mechanism of control.

The introduction to the “Expectations” section contains similar discursive practices:

How does Convergys get results? Why is this such a great place to work? The answer is the environment we create, the expectations we set for you, and **your commitment to fulfilling these expectations every day**. These are the general expectations for all Convergys employees.

The interesting thing in this statement is that it locates the success of the company—how Convergys “gets results”—partly on the employee’s “commitment” to following the rules. Here again, issues of control are countered and respecified as opportunities for growth and empowerment.

A final example of this effort is in the section describing personal development: Convergys acknowledges its responsibility to create a **supportive environment** for your personal development. This includes, whenever possible, reasonable access to opportunities and resources, useful tools to help you evaluate your progress and growth, and managers that can support your personal development goals.

In this statement, accountability is again placed on the employee, who should take responsibility for utilizing the opportunities and resources they come across, and who should evaluate their own progress and growth. Convergys constructs its own role in this, which is simply to provide a “supportive environment” by allowing employees access to the resources. All of these statements are interesting in that at a glance, they

seem to depict a company that is very interested in helping its employees develop and grow. Yet the text handles accountability by making the company responsible for very little, and instead encouraging the employee to direct their own growth and development in whatever ways they can.

By mobilizing key arguments and language in a Discourse of empowerment, the company seems to be attempting to access an alternate interpretation of itself and its practices, as more focused on helping employees grow and less focused on controlling them or creating “organizationally-defined” selves. The text downplays any area where this interpretation could emerge, and where they describe any practices that could be seen as geared toward this end.

Research Question 5: Identity Regulation and Identification

Throughout the first four research questions, Convergys uses several discursive practices to define and position itself and its employees. This final section will analyze how the company uses all of these practices to discursively guide identity work, and how this text can be seen as an effort to enact the identity regulation process. These efforts will attempt to answer the final research question posed in this study: *How does Convergys discursively shape identity work and direct employees’ self-conceptions? How does it use identity regulation to promote identification and encourage acceptance of these efforts?*

This analysis gives an illustration of how identity regulation functions, and how its use can contribute to a more discursive understanding of the process of identification. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) describe nine modes of identity regulation, or how a company can target identity through organizational discourse and practices. These

modes can be grouped into four general focuses of identity regulation. Modes of identity regulation can focus on *the employee*, in which the employee is directly defined or implied by reference to another; *action orientations*, in which the field of activity is constructed with implications to the appropriate work orientations; *social relations*, or regulations focusing on belonging and differentiation; and *the scene*, regulations indicating the kind of identity that fits into the larger social, organizational, and economic terrain in which an individual operates. Through this framework, this section of analysis examined efforts of identity regulation that are evident in the text, and explored how the company handled these efforts in light of various Discourses and in support of creating identification.

Through these modes, the company is able to encourage individuals to engage in their personal identity work by reflecting on ‘who I am and how I act’ and ‘who I need to be and how I need to act to fit into this community.’ Through the text, the company enacts identity regulation by mobilizing specific interpretative frameworks (the various Discourses), which invite a certain understanding of the meaning of their work and their role within the company. Finally, the analysis investigated how the company uses identification strategies to encourage acceptance of these efforts, and the active internalization of (and thus adherence to) these self-concepts and practices.

Through analysis of this text under the lens of identity regulation, one immediately notices how the company has set this website up as a discursive exercise in guiding identity formation. The website is framed as a guide for identity work, beginning with the very first lines. The website’s main heading asks:

Can I be successful at Convergys?

This introduction website has been designed to **help you answer that question** by providing an interesting and insightful look into Convergys, its culture and the people who work here.

This statement invites employees to engage the rest of the text that follows with attention to how they would “fit in,” or how their own personal identity interacts with the descriptions of the company’s identity and practices. By offering this orientation, the company encourages employees to intermingle their own identity and self-conception. Recalling Burke’s (1950) work on affiliation and the social nature of identification, this exercise, aimed at new employees who have just joined the company, would likely encourage employees to view the contents of this website more positively and compel them to more actively seek ways their identity can align with components of what is offered in the text.

The company continues these efforts through its descriptions of the company itself. The text introduces the section containing the company’s structure, vision and mission with this statement:

These are the guiding principles at Convergys. **Think about** how these influence our work and products, and **consider how successful you would** be in that environment.

Here, the company is setting up the description of its own identity as a resource for employees to create their identity.

In both of these instances, the company is not necessarily directly stating that what follows are the “appropriate” self-categorizations for employees. Yet they make these self-categorizations inferentially available and attractive by inviting employees to

engage the material through the lens of identity and how they would fit in. This will encourage the employees to understand and make sense of the material in a certain way, and to accept and draw from this interpretative repertoire offered by the “Convergys Discourse” as they engage the text. This analysis examined the rest of the text under the framework of several of the most salient methods identified by Alvesson and Willmott (2002) that companies may try to enact identity regulation, and explored how these methods function in the text.

One major way identity regulation is enacted in this text is the use of the self-categorizations (identified in RQ1) being offered to strategically guide or influence identity work. These efforts are evidence of Alvesson and Willmott’s (2002) first discursive practice of identity regulation: *defining the person directly*. The authors explain that in this method, the company makes explicit references to characteristics that contain some validity and distinguish a person from others (p. 629). The characteristics the company highlights suggest expectations of those people, and imply how they should behave in the company.

These categorizations carry implications for how the employee will conduct him or herself, and how they should see their role in the organization. For example, if one is characterized as “accountable,” they may be expected to disclose any mistakes or problems, take responsibility (or perhaps blame) on themselves for such issues, and be open to discussions about these issues and corrective measures. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) note that the more precise the definition, the less vague are its implications (p. 629). Likewise, if a company uses rather general or ambiguous terms to

define employees, the company may have greater flexibility in interpreting what such definitions mean for employees.

In framing the text as a guide to determine “how one will fit in” to the company, the company signals employees to engage the self-categorizations at the level of their own personal identity. Thus, employees are invited to seek to identify with these categorizations, and actively work to align their own self-conception with them, effectively strengthening the process of forming identification. That is, when employees come across certain categorizations in the text, they are encouraged or invited to evaluate them in light of their own personal values and goals. By coupling such efforts with identification strategies, the company encourages employees to adjust their sense of self or highlight the similarities between these values or goals and their own.

There are also important identity regulation efforts in the company’s factual descriptions about its own identity and the company’s practices. As I described in the analysis of the previous research questions, the company uses “factual descriptions” and objective evaluative expressions to depict a certain identity and a certain environment of the company. Often, these efforts are a way to avoid issues of cultural work differences and to counter Discourses of control. These discursive practices reflect Alvesson and Willmott’s (2002) eighth discursive form of identity regulation, *establishing and clarifying a distinct set of rules of the game* (p. 631). Here, the authors claim that establishing ideas and norms about the ‘natural’ way things are done in the company can have major implications for identity construction (p. 631).

For example, recall the “Expectations” section discussed several times throughout this chapter, and the identification strategy used in these statements: offering a value-laden characterization, and then offering affirmation of that quality. Perhaps most interesting about this section is that the statements actually laud the reader’s presumably correct answer, affirming that they hold “the right” values/goals and implying subtly that the reader is certain to find acceptance and association in this organization (ie. “you’re going to work with a team of people just like you”). In a sense, this could be construed as a “test”: answer correctly, and you can be an employee of this company.

Through these statements, Convergys displays the “normal ways of doing things” or the proper conduct to be displayed as an organizational member. Through these discursive practices, the company provides a “network of meanings” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) and indirectly and discursively creates a “guideline” (read, Discourse) for how to function and “get by” in the Convergys setting. It uses the affirmative ending to the statements as a way to assure the worker that if they display these particular characteristics, they will be successful and find community in the company. The statements offer guidance on what is normal or what is necessary for corporate work to function, and for the employee to successfully participate in the company(p. 631). Thus, these efforts invite or encourage employees to create identities that align with these premises. In this way, by normalizing these “rules” and standards, the text calls for the worker to adapt a particular self-understanding in order to identify with the interests being depicted here.

These same efforts can be seen in other areas of the text, such as in statements that are intended to describe the environment in which the company is operating. Here, one finds evidence of Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) ninth discursive practice of identity regulation: *defining the context*. Here, the company invokes a particular identity and action orientation by depicting the scene and its associated conditions that determine how people should act in such a scene.

An example of this practice is found in one of the "factual descriptions" and objective evaluative statements that refer to the corporate climate and the company itself, rather than to the employees' specific expectations. Recall the statement that began the Continuous Development section:

It is a given that in today's competitive and challenging workplace, we either continue to improve or we get left behind. **Staying in one place is not an option.** Because Convergys' growth and success is linked to our individual growth and success, our company strongly supports and encourages personal development.

In a previous research question, I discussed how this statement communicated values to employees of continuous improvement and performance, and how it contributed to the "Convergys Discourse." This statement depicts a certain corporate environment with the underlying inherent norms and values of competition, continuous improvement, and success. It depicts the company's corporate values and norms as a given and universal and uses objective expressions to frame this as an accepted and pervasive "condition" to which the company and employees are equally subject. This allows the company to encourage or normalize certain behaviors and attitudes. In depicting the

conditions under which the company operates in this way, the company is implying that employees must adopt the values of hard work and self-improvement. This statement invites employees to adjust their self-conceptions to highlight these certain characteristics or dispositions, which it promises will make them successful.

Another mode of identity regulation that is evident in this text is what Alvesson and Willmott (2002) call *providing a specific vocabulary of motives*. With this vocabulary, the company provides another contribution to the interpretative repertoire (read Discourse) through which employees are encouraged to understand the meaning and their motivations for their work. This method again establishes a certain set of understandings about what is important and what is natural to do within the organization.

One salient example of this method is the company's use of future-orientation throughout the text. As the analysis of the fourth research question described briefly, this practice served to counter a general criticism of many offshore call centers that promotion through the company is not frequent or is not a central focus of managers. The company uses future-orientation in both its construction of its own identity and practices, and in its descriptions of employees, to create a sense and promise of long-term success.

In its construction of its own (elite) identity, the company employs future-orientation to create a promise of long-term success of the company itself. This focus allows the company to both add to the elite identity it seeks to create, as well as depicting itself as an established, fixed, and stable entity which will only continue to improve and expand long into the future. Several examples of this orientation:

“Convergys is expanding our **leadership position** in the markets we serve.”

“Convergys is headed in the **THE RIGHT DIRECTION.**”

“We are both a **thought leader** and **market share leader** in the markets we serve”

These efforts would appeal to an employees’ desire to affiliate themselves with a successful organization and in a long-term manner, with promise of their own development within an ever-improving and successful company. This emphasis on employees’ own prospects for success and development are evident in the company’s descriptions of employees’ positions and identity within the company.

By mobilizing the Discourse of empowerment, the company guides formation of workers’ identities by inviting workers to engage the company text through that interpretative repertoire. Specifically, the company invites employees to engage the material regarding personal growth and organizational practices through that interpretative repertoire, and thus read the text as promising for the future, or oriented toward building a long-term career with the company. In this way, the company counters possible images of its practices as short-term oriented or not offering much for employee development and promotion.

Indeed, by locating accountability for personal growth within the individual employees, as we found through the previous research question, the company is signaling that the employees should be motivated by their own desires for future success, rather than being dependent on the company to create future opportunities. In highlighting social and self-improvement motives, such as having fun, taking advantage

of resources, and a feeling of community, the company encourages employees to work for their future, and could downplay the company's practices which might be focused on this to a greater or lesser extent. That is, if for example the company's practices are not necessarily geared toward employee promotion and growth outside of their organizational role, this could serve as an effective way to downplay that element of the position and instead encourage employees to incorporate that element into their jobs themselves.

In conclusion, the five research questions guiding this study analyzed how the company constructs identities, handles issues and uses discursive practices to enact identity regulation. In the next chapter, these findings will be reviewed and implications will be discussed.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The goal of this study was to provide insight into how one multinational company manages identity and attempts to create identification through its corporate texts. This study examined how Convergys uses its new hire orientation text to position itself and employees, and how it discursively handles issues of identity, motive, and culture through this corporate text. This analysis attempted to identify multiple Discourses at work in the text, and explored the implications of a “Convergys Discourse” at work. Through this analysis, this study attempts to contribute to an understanding of how corporate discourse—particularly, socialization texts—functions, and how it can be used to shape and influence employees.

The analysis drew on discursive psychology to engage the text and examine how the multiple Discourses functioned within it. Recall that discursive psychology is a form of discourse analysis that examines a more Foucauldian view of Discourse as it surfaces in language use to see how psychological or mentalistic concepts (in this case, “identity”) are constructed in and through language. However, its treatment of “Discourse” focuses on an interpretative repertoire of terms, categories, metaphors, stories, and arguments that social actors deploy in language, thus affording us the opportunity to see how Discourse comes alive in language choices (Potter et al., 1990). Thus, the analysis focused on the company’s use of factual descriptions, evaluative expressions, and cognitive terms to examine how it constructed identities and positioned them within the text. In this way, the analysis was able to identify elements

of the distinct Discourse and associated interpretative repertoire offered throughout the text to prospective employees, and this section will consider the implications of these efforts. As described above, an “interpretive repertoire” refers to the linguistic tools available to actors drawing from different Discourses (Potter & Wetherell, 1992).

This section will begin by reviewing the major research findings from the analysis and discussing the implications that can be drawn from these results in light of previous research and practice. This will be followed with the limitations of this study, suggestions for future research, and finally a concluding remark.

Research Findings

This study proposed five research questions. The first research question asked: ***What self-categorizations does Convergys offer to discursively characterize its desired employee identity through the corporate texts?*** The analysis indicated that Convergys offered categorizations of employees as highly skilled, hard-working, and committed to personal development. The company offered these categorizations both overtly and indirectly by making them inferentially available to employees through the text. The company constructed these qualities as shared characteristics of all its employees, and by combining these offerings with various identification strategies, they encouraged employees to seek to affiliate themselves with them. These efforts would be all the more effective if considered in light of Burke’s (1950) understanding of the social nature of identification. By framing the qualities as shared and positive, the company was able to tap into the individual need for affiliation. Thus, the categorizations were offered and made attractive to employees whose desire to “fit in”

with the rest of the company would be strong. This would become an important element in the company's efforts at enacting identity regulation.

The second research question asked: ***Is there evidence in the text that Convergys attempts to discursively create an "elite" organizational identity?*** The analysis found that Convergys employs a Discourse of elitism throughout the text in its construction of its own identity and practices. A Discourse of elitism is marked by a construction of the self and the organization as clearly superior to other companies, efforts to differentiate the organization, and claims of special practices or advantages, privileges, and economic benefits (Alvesson & Robertson, 2006). It should also include some indication that this elite status is confirmed by "significant others" or broader groups.

The analysis found that the company used both overt and indirect methods to make elitist categorizations inferentially available to the reader, enabling it to communicate these qualities strongly through the text. This involved using factual descriptions, objective evaluative statements and cognitive terms to construct an elitist identity, describe *how* it is elite, and to offer a sense of social validation. For example, the company used familiar catch-phrases, such as "best and brightest," "cutting-edge" and "highly rated," claims of excellence that it was "acknowledged as the best in the world" and "a thought leader and market share leader," and categorizations such as "innovative" and "leader."

The analysis of the second research question lends interesting insight into the company's operations in light of the concept of identification discussed at length in Chapter 2. Based on the literature, the creation of a collective identity based in elitism

is likely to increase identification with the organization, given the prestige associated with the term (Dutton et al., 1994). Thus, a self-categorization that indicates or enables belongingness to an exclusive group can provide feelings of high self-esteem and would likely be very attractive to employees.

Indeed, viewing this technique through the lens of the process of identification and social identity formation as detailed in Chapter 2, it is clear that constructing the company's identity as such would offer categorizations to employees that would be highly accessible. Alvesson and Robertson (2006) argued that the self-categorizations offered by the company must be accessible and have a structural and normative fit within the social context. As such, categorizations that imply or signify "excellence" or "the best" would fit well for an employee with the company's elite identity. These qualities would also be particularly accessible to Convergys' most valued employee market, the young recent graduates, new to the workforce, who might be eager to affiliate themselves with such an elite and promising organization. Thus, by employing the Discourse of elitism, the company attempts to make itself all the more attractive to its employee base, encouraging and strengthening identification.

Finally, the company's use of objective evaluative expressions and factual description allows it to depict the elitist identity as an accepted fact, imposed by "others" on the company rather than the company's own opinion. The analysis found that the company uses cognitive expressions such as "acknowledged" and "believed to be" to locate the assessment of its elitism outside the company itself. Alvesson and Robertson (2006) talk at length about the importance of social support in the construction of any identity, especially an elite one. Identity can be vague and

ambiguous, as Convergys' identity certainly is, but it must appear credible, and there must be social support from "significant others" for the elite social identity to be accepted. It must be credible and confirmed, requiring the company to depict a level of social support or validation. Thus, the construction of a successful (i.e. a credible and confirmed) elite identity could be very useful in the company's effort to attract and retain highly qualified labor.

The third research question asked: ***How does Convergys attempt to use identification and certain discursive strategies to counter cultural considerations, and to depict a certain corporate environment?*** The analysis found that Convergys used a "Convergys Discourse," which included terms of excellence and elitism, metaphors of community and family within the company, identification strategies of inclusion and similarity, and assumptions about the environment in which the company operate. The company then used identification strategies to support this Discourse and make the organizational interests being conveyed more accessible to the employees. They likely created such a Discourse in combination with identification strategies to transcend, even cloak, potential differences in cultural work norms.

Through the use of factual descriptions and objective evaluative expressions, the company presented certain cultural values or assumptions. For example, it depicted a company in which the employees were focused on benefits and were self-motivated to attain their own professional growth and development. It also handled the issue of outsourcing by describing it in terms of its advantages for *other* companies, effectively avoiding the controversial side and re-specifying the practice as positive.

In this way, the company handled the cultural considerations it offered by avoiding the cultural differences that could be problematic and, instead, reframed them as part of the “Convergys Discourse.” For example, instead of directly addressing potential differences in cultural assumptions about the nature of requesting and accepting feedback or criticism, the company respecified this corporate practice as a norm of the company and avoided any cultural implications. The company also avoided any consideration of compensation and motivational differences in culture, instead assuming that employees would be receptive to a pay-for-performance model and motivated by competition and personal success. The text invited the employee to construct him or herself as motivated by self-improvement, rather than pay or other motives. Further, the company used identification strategies to encourage the employee to overlook cultural considerations as well, instead encouraging them to read the text through the tools offered by the Convergys Discourse.

This analysis also uncovered a unique identification strategy, in which the company offered a certain self-categorization and then affirmed it with inclusive clichés and terminology, as in the “Expectations” section. This strategy further sought to transcend or re-specify cultural considerations, privileging instead the company-specific environment and norms. Thus, the analysis of this research question provides insight into how identification can be discursively constructed and handled, and how the social elements can be used strategically. This unique identification strategy relies heavily on the social nature of humans and their need for affiliation, as described by Burke (1950). This strategy is complex, as it simultaneously validates the employee’s “fit” with the organization, affirms the holding of the “right” values/goals, and offers confident

assurance that in answering that value statement “correctly,” the text’s author can “tell” that the reader will find fulfillment and achievement at this company (e.g. “you’ll fit right in”). Thus, the analysis revealed a new technique for promoting identification and demonstrated some of its implications.

The fourth research question asked: ***How does Convergys discursively attend to issues of control and subordination in the text?*** The analysis identified a Discourse of empowerment that the company uses to counter and re-specify issues of control that could be perceived in the text. It also uses certain discursive practices to normalize corporate expectations and locate accountability for professional development in the employee rather than the company.

A Discourse of empowerment is used to instill a sense of ownership in the employee, and often encourages a higher level of participation of organizational members. It is marked by arguments that one is responsible for one’s own success, and where an organization attempts to locate accountability within the employee.

This Discourse of empowerment was used to depict a sense that the employee is responsible for his or her own professional development within the company. It is also used to counter possible interpretations of certain practices or policies as controlling or manipulative. By framing certain organizational practices as part of one’s opportunity to develop oneself, the company subtly re-specifies practices of organizational control. This finding supports Deetz’s claim that companies are increasingly trying to manage the “insides” of employees—their hopes, fears, and aspirations—as it indicates increased ownership and responsibility placed on employees for their involvement with the organization. It can also be viewed as illustrating how a company might discursively

handle the increasing effort to enact concertive, rather than overt, methods of control, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The final research question drew from the above findings and attempted to answer: ***How does Convergys discursively shape identity work and direct employees' self-conceptions? How does it use identity regulation to promote identification and encourage acceptance of these efforts?*** This analysis revealed a greater understanding of identity regulation and its relationship with identification. The website itself could be read as an exercise in guiding identity work and regulating identity. The most significant of Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) forms of enacting identity regulation found in this text were *defining the individual, establishing and clarifying distinct rules of the game, defining the context, and providing a specific vocabulary of motives*. Indeed, many of these tactics were identified in the first four research questions, and this section of the analysis explained how they were used in this text as an effort to regulate identity: the company offered categorizations and its own interests through the text, and invited employees to incorporate them into their own self-identity work, encouraging them to accept these premises into their own self-concept. Through these efforts, the company attempted to position employees in line with organizational interests.

The analysis of this research question provides further insight into the concept of subject positions, described in the second chapter. Recall that this concept refers to the idea that a social agent is constituted through a variety of "subject positions," or the linguistic terms that are used to characterize a subject within a Discourse (Mouffe, 1992). In this view, Discourses are a source of power and control in identity formation,

working “to ‘fix’ identities in particular ways that favor some interests over others and thus constrain alternative truths and subject positions” (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005, p. 171). This analysis demonstrated how Discourses can be used as an effort to try to “fix” identities that align with certain interests—in this case, those of the company.

This analysis contributed to the study of subjective positions in discourse. Because of the significant role that Discourses play in self-identity, it is important to examine the competing Discourses in which an individual participates, as well as how and why those Discourses have been created.

This analysis highlighted the social elements of identity regulation efforts, and how this process can be used to try to promote identification within employees. Recalling Burke’s (1950) and Cheney’s (1983b) work on affiliation and the social nature of identification, this exercise, aimed at new employees who have just joined the company, would likely encourage employees to view the contents of this website more positively and compel them to more actively seek ways their identity can align with components of what is offered in the text. Similarly, considering these efforts in light of Cheney’s concept of identification, these efforts would resonate strongly with new hires. Cheney’s claim that “we are keen to protect and affirm positive perceptions of the organizations to which we belong” (2010, p. 112) would indicate that these employees would be more likely to try to interpret this website—and thus the company and its practices as they are presented here—as positive. Of course, the full effect of the Discourses promoted through these efforts depends upon how employees actually do interpret and respond to them. However, this analysis enables a better understanding of what the company offers and what it makes available to employees through the text.

Implications

Through careful analysis of these five research questions, this study was able to contribute to existing literature in several important ways. First, I argue that viewing identification and the employee-company relationship from the lens of discursive psychology is a very productive way to gain a broader understanding of how companies handle issues of identity, control, and multiple and competing Discourses in corporate texts. In particular, discursive psychology shows us how companies create Discourses designed to function as an interpretative repertoire (read, linguistic tool kit) for their (would-be) employees. Indeed, this analysis enables us to see the discursive practices of the company as they construct desirable identification strategies. Further, by employing the complex view of the discursive creation of identity and subject positions enabled by discursive psychology, this study offers a more complete and complex understanding of the creation, use and implications of the interplay between multiple Discourse and the discursive practices that make up the Convergys text.

Second, this study indeed found that identity regulation serves as a significant discursive practice to exclude certain alternative interpretations of the company's identity and practices, and to advocate instead the "appropriate" or desired understandings. Through this analysis, it becomes clear that efforts at identity regulation may be effective in pushing an employee to accept the dominant Discourse presented in the text, thus promoting and resulting in identification. It is important to see how such efforts at organizational control are handled discursively and through corporate texts, such as Vision and Mission statements, codes of conduct and training materials. This study demonstrates the potential influence such texts can have on

orienting the employee to the organization and defining self-concept and behavior in line with organizational interests. In the absence of reflexivity or the production of counter-Discourses, these efforts could have serious implications as means of concertive control and normalizing practices that could be construed as subjugating or controlling (Barker, 1993).

Third, the use of discursive psychology further illuminated the social element of identification, demonstrating how discursive practices can construct an image of social support or validation for the identities being constructed, as demonstrated in the second research question. The inclusion of cognitive (belief) rather than emotional (feeling) terms was strategically important to promote acceptance of the identity the company wishes to construct in its text. Indeed, as we learned from the literature, there must be support from socially significant others in order for an identity to be plausible. Thus, these characterizations are made credible and somewhat universally accepted by using objective evaluative expressions, factual descriptions, and cognitive terms that locate the opinions or ideas being expressed outside the company's own opinion. This finding contributes to our understanding of the complex way human beings—and organizations—use discursive practices to create specific versions of reality, including depicting social validation and credibility through language.

Finally, this study contributes to our understanding of the interplay between identification and Discourse in organizational settings. This analysis showed how identity regulation can be tied to identification as it influences and guides identity formation. Recalling the discussion earlier in this paper about how identification can encourage organizational members to accept and enact certain Discourses, this study

allows a better understanding of the implications and practice associated with Holmer-Nadeson's (1996) Discourse-oriented definition of identification: "'Identification' occurs when individuals accept the identities provided in the dominant (D)iscourse; that is, they define self and their relations with others in the terms of the dominant discourse."

The analysis demonstrated how a company can achieve this form of identification by providing a repertoire of characterizations of their "desired" employee identity and then use identification strategies and certain discursive practices to guide identity work and enact identity regulation to encourage the workers to accept the positions and identities created through the company's Discourse. In this way, the company attempts to foster a strong sense of identification within its employees. With this understanding, identification can be seen as the real mechanism of control in this text, encompassing the degree to which individuals adopt and internalize managerial definitions and evaluations of their subject positions (Holmer-Nadeson, 1996), which are communicated through the corporate text. These findings suggest the need for future study to more fully explore the implications of Discourse and identification in organizational settings.

Limitations

One potential limitation of this study was its focus on only one of the two pieces of identification identified in Chapter 2. Recall that although the organization can play a role in promoting identification, it is also dependent on the organizational members who are the targets and indeed, often the instigators of the formation of identification. This study focused on only one text, which was crafted and distributed by the company and therefore excludes other outside perspectives of those involved such as employees

and, arguably, the inside perspective the company would offer in legitimizing accounting practices. Incorporation of more texts to represent the employee half of the equation, especially, makes the implications more significant and impactful.

Another significant limitation is the data that was analyzed. Due to concerns about access and time, the study was only able to focus on one corporate text. The text that was analyzed was a website titled “New Hire Orientation” in a Convergys training website. Although this site is part of a website intended only for Convergys employees, requiring a password for logon, due to a technical issue the website is available publicly online. It was found with a quick internet search, and can be easily accessed by anyone interested. I argue that the website is intended for employees already hired by Convergys, but it could be argued that the document was written for a wider public audience as well. This could have significance for the implications of this study’s findings.

Additionally, some of the implications of this study are necessarily speculation and would require a future study incorporating employee perspectives to examine exactly how the company’s efforts interact with and affect employees. Issues of agency and resistance were not able to be explored in this study, and those are significant elements of this story. The full implications of this study cannot be assessed without further study into the reaction of employees to these efforts. However, this study demonstrates that without resistance or proper counter-Discourses, the efforts of this company to create identification and control employee self-definition could be extremely powerful and affective.

Finally, a potentially significant limitation of the study was its inability to address the complexity and significant impact of culture on this text. Cultural differences in a multinational company are a huge and essential consideration, and this study was not able to address the implications of the handling of such differences. Again, this was in part due to the choice of data; a focus on employees' perspectives would have allowed for greater insight into these issues. However, to a great extent, this limitation was a natural result of the methodological approach, which offers only a certain perspective on such issues in a discourse. Many areas of this study invite a more critical lens, and a more insightful look at how issues of power and control fit in, and such a lens is suggested for further work building on this study.

Suggestions for Future Study

This study has demonstrated the potential influence of corporate discursive practices on the identity and self-concepts of employees. It is imperative that scholars continue to research all aspects of corporate life, including texts, practices and policies, to gain a full understanding of how organizations are influencing and attempting to influence the whole self of the employee.

Future studies on identity and culture in organizations would similarly benefit from a discursive lens. There are many interesting and important implications for understanding corporate culture that should be thoroughly investigated in this age of globalization and multinational corporations. For example, discourse studies could give critical insight into the ongoing struggle for multinationals of how much to alter or adapt organizational practices and policies to the many and different cultures in which they

operate. Study on both the organizational efforts and the implications for organizational members will continue to be important, and such a lens can help identify the multiple and conflicting Discourses employees must maneuver within when trying to balance their own home culture and their company's culture-defined practices.

This also signals the importance of future studies enriching this topic by incorporating employee perceptions and accounts. As the review of literature highlighted, identification is a two-sided process, and in order to fully examine its influence and functioning, one must address both perspectives to fully explore how the discursive practices in this text impact organizational members. It will also be important to investigate the issue of agency to explore how employees react to these efforts and how they can try to create a "space of action" within these competing Discourses.

Another important focus of future study should be how the practices addressed in this text actually play out in daily operations in the company. For example, this study concluded that the company's handling of accountability could imply that it is not focused on professional development, or perhaps does not offer many resources for this explicitly in employees' daily work practices. Yet this can be only speculation without a study to identify *how* such issues play out in practice. Indeed, the efforts identified in this study are much more complex in practice, and their meaning and function would be dependent both on organizational effort and the response of the employees. A study incorporating both perspectives would allow for much fuller, more meaningful implications and an insightful view into the actual workings of such sites.

Conclusion

This study was intended as a start to the exploration of the interaction between multinational companies and their employee workforce in various nations and cultures. By using discursive psychology as one approach to social constructionism, this study was able to analyze the multiple Discourses at play in the text and examine the interplay with the language and implications for employees. There is still much more to explore in this area, and such research will only become more important and necessary as the world continues to grow into a globalized world.

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Appendix

CAN I BE SUCCESSFUL AT CONVERGYS?

This introduction website has been designed to help you answer that question by providing an interesting and insightful look into Convergys, its culture and the people who work here.

■ **AN INTRODUCTION** has a welcome letter from our CEO, a highly recommended video ("You're Ready For Convergys") as well as a print-friendly overview of our company.

■ Convergys is headed in the **THE RIGHT DIRECTION**. You'll get a better understanding of what we believe (our mission and values are important to us), what we do and how we are organized.

■ This is a **GREAT PLACE TO WORK** - we embrace diversity, are involved in the community and care about employees' health and development.

■ There's a **BRIGHT FUTURE FOR YOU** at Convergys. In addition to reading about expectations, you can discover more ABOUT YOUR WORKPLACE.

So learn what makes us one of the most successful companies in the world.

And welcome to Convergys. We're glad you're here.

"An Introduction"

Welcome From Our CEO

Welcome.

As president and CEO of Convergys, I'd like to personally welcome you to the company. We pride ourselves on devoting tremendous energy and resources to attract, develop, and retain individuals of exceptional talent and potential. You have joined an organization that has more than 75,000 employees serving clients in 70 countries, and we work hard to foster a work environment that respects and values everyone's contribution and acknowledges the importance of a diverse global workforce.

This Web site is an **introduction** to Convergys. As you will see, Convergys is expanding our **leadership position** in the markets we serve and is a **great place to work**. I am confident there's a **bright future for you** at Convergys and would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about what we do and what we value.

At Convergys, we are focused on helping organization's drive improved business performance and competitive advantage from their customer and employee relationships. Our approach is unique to our experience and our expertise in customer care, information management, and HR management over the past 20 years. Simply put, we identify and deliver solutions that not only reduce transactional costs but also drive added value through the interactions between an organization and its customers and employees.

Supporting what we do is what we value. We take great pride in living everyday our values of *Unparalleled Client Satisfaction, Teamwork, Respect for the Individual, Diversity, Developing People, Shareowner's Trust, Corporate Citizenship, and Integrity*, which make Convergys a great place to work and lie at the core of our business success.

In addition to this, we value our **participatory culture** where employees take individual responsibility and accountability for their careers and their success at Convergys. In support of that, we have programs in place for employees to seek out mentors, to receive and give regular feedback on their performance and that of their manager,

and to identify and develop our high potential employees for career opportunities and advancement.

Exciting opportunities lie ahead for you. At Convergys, we all must be constantly "*Outthinking and Outdoing*" to develop our talents and apply them to consistently deliver extraordinary results that directly impact our business success with our clients, their customers and employees.

Thank you for joining us.

Sincerely,

Dave Dougherty
President and Chief Executive Officer

Introductory Video

"You're Ready for Convergys"

An outstanding brief video about working at Convergys, with insights from many Convergys employees.

You'll learn about who we are, what we do and why we are a Fortune 1000 company.

Video Coming Soon

An Overview of Convergys

Want to learn more about our clients, our markets, our organization and how Convergys came to be a Fortune 1000 company?

Click this **CONVERGYS FACT SHEET** for a brief but comprehensive overview of Convergys.

“The Right Direction”

What We Do

Convergys is a major enterprise, employing over 74,000 people in locations all around the world. However, it is still a relatively young company, with its official existence beginning in April, 1998. (Its foundation companies - - CBIS and MATTRIX Marketing had been under Cincinnati Bell for a few years.)

Much of what we do involves contact centers (which used to be known as call centers), the programs they use to deliver their goods and services, and the associated expertise needed to make all of that work for our contracted clients (of which there are hundreds).

Unfortunately, this doesn't really tell the enormous scope and reach of our products and services. Around the clock, each and every day, Convergys employees interact with millions of people in almost every area of our planet.

The corporate Convergys web site - - www.convergys.com - - contains a wealth of information. There is one piece, however, that provides a lot of information about our products and information in a very concise way. Click **HERE** to look at that piece.

How We're Organized

Think about the technology and logistics that go into a company that has 74,000 + employees, in over 125 offices, in 60 countries around the globe, delivering multiple products and services.

That's Convergys, so it's no surprise we are very complex. Perhaps the easiest way to understand how we are organized is to consider the major business units listed below. (Another highly recommended resource is www.convergys.com.)

Customer Care (aka **CC**): Convergys is the **largest provider** of outsourced customer management services in the world. More simply put, Customer Care is about **Contact Centers**. Customer Care manages a global system of sites, networks and employees that process millions of customer calls and transactions 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week / 365 days a year, supporting clients such as P&G and Sprint.

Employee Care (aka **EC**): Due to market conditions, advancements in technology, and the need to control costs, **outsourced servicing of employee benefits** is a an important new idea. We are on the cutting edge of this market, and has an organization that is growing to meet that need. HRDirect, which manages Convergys benefits, is in this area.

Information Management (aka **IM**):Convergys Information Management offers proprietary billing software including the award-winning Infinys for the convergent telecommunications marketplace, including real-time, transaction-based rating and billing for wireless/mobile, Cable/Broadband/DBS, wire line and next-generation service providers.

IM - EMEA: IM works under so many different requirements around the world, it has become necessary for Convergys to give this area its own identity. EMEA actually stands for Europe, Middle East and Africa. Two other international areas are also under the management structure of EMEA - - LATAM (Latin America) and AsiaPac (Asia Pacific.)

What We Believe

These are the guiding principles at Convergys. Think about how these influence our work and products, and consider how successful you would be in that environment.

OUR MISSION

Convergys provides billing, customer care, employee care, and transaction management software and services that add value to our clients' customer and employee relationships.

OUR VISION

We are **acknowledged as the best** in the world at enabling organizations everywhere to **enhance the value of their relationships** with customers and employees

We are both a **thought leader** and **market share leader** in the markets we serve

We attract the **best and brightest** and our commitment to the development of our people helps them become a **key point of differentiation** and competitive advantage

We are a **Fortune 500** company with shareholder **returns in the top quartile** of that group.

OUR VALUES

Unparalleled Client Satisfaction, Teamwork, Respect for the Individual, Developing People, Diversity, Shareowner's Trust, Corporate Citizenship and Integrity.

"A Great Place To Work"

Embracing Diversity

Our individual differences produce genuine competitive advantage in today's global market. By making the most of the diversity of our workforce, we maximize our productivity and enhance the quality of the service we offer our clients. To learn more about diversity at Convergys, click **[HERE](#)**.

Community Involvement

One of Convergys' key values is Corporate Citizenship. We work to improve the quality of life in communities where our employees live and work.

What Employees Do

Thousands of Convergys employees give their time and talent to countless non-profit organizations. These employees volunteer on a site-by-site basis to meet the specific needs of their communities. These efforts encourage individual expressions of community and civic service and promote teamwork and camaraderie among Convergys employees. Convergys is proud of these contributions and the reputation it builds for us in the community.

What the Company Does

The Convergys Community Relations Program looks for funding opportunities that reflect the diversity of the company and generally serve large portions of our communities. We offer financial support, services or equipment as available and appropriate. The company also organizes community action teams that take a more regional approach to community services.

Your Wellbeing

Benefits are so important today. Since you want peace of mind in regards to your health and safety, they have become an integral part of total compensation here at Convergys.

Because we are a global company, benefits can vary. Generally, if you work in a location where it is customary to voluntarily select benefits that suit your family's needs, you will have important decisions to make about these benefit choices. For other locations, some benefits are statutory, meaning they are automatically provided by law. In these instances, Convergys may supplement those benefits to ensure that your benefits package is comprehensive. Some benefits are fully paid by Convergys; some others may be paid by you. You may not only have access to health and accident coverage, but you may have paid time off for rest and relaxation, and opportunities to have retirement benefits.

Suffice to say Convergys continues to explore, develop and provide outstandingly competitive opportunities for employees.

Continuous Development

It is a given that in today's competitive and challenging workplace, we either continue to improve or we get left behind. Staying in one place is not an option. Because Convergys' growth and success is linked to our individual growth and success, our company strongly supports and encourages personal development. Convergys is a great place to work, because we encourage continuous learning.

Who "owns" personal development? We believe personal development is owned by each employee. The idea that your growth is somehow determined, controlled and manipulated by others just isn't true. At Convergys, personal development is viewed as a personal

responsibility, one that accompanies you wherever you go, whatever you do.

Convergys acknowledges its responsibility to create a supportive environment for your personal development. This includes, whenever possible, reasonable access to opportunities and resources, useful tools to help you evaluate your progress and growth, and managers that can support your personal development goals.

What are the development opportunities and resources? Many new employees tend to equate personal development with classroom training. They are surprised to learn that Convergys employees take a broader view about personal development. We think "learning" and not just training. This broader perspective creates thousands of development opportunities and resources, covering an incredible range of topics, and delivery options. Many of these are provided directly by the company, many of them free.

There are several different Convergys resources devoted to development and learning. For many employees, the Personal Development Center (PDC) has become the best source for development information and administration. There are similar other online resources for other areas of the company.

"A Bright Future"

Expectations

How does Convergys get results? Why is this such a great place to work? The answer is the environment we create, the expectations we set for you, and your commitment to fulfilling these expectations every day. These are the general expectations for all Convergys employees.

- If you believe in the importance of setting goals and creating plans you've made a great decision to come to Convergys.

- If you regularly seek and share performance feedback, you won't be disappointed in your choice to join us.
- If you incorporate personal development into your every day work life and realize that learning happens as much outside the classroom as inside, you'll fit right into the Convergys family.
- If you do business by focusing on results, people, collaboration and communication, you're going to work with a team of people just like you.
- If you assume accountability for yourself and your actions, you're going to find success here. We've got a company that doesn't point fingers. Our focus is on taking responsibility for our actions and learning from experiences.
- If you take it upon yourself to get the information you need, when you need it, you're going to love it here! We've got extensive online tools and resources to help you get what you want, when you want it and it's all at your fingertips.

A Message To Your Family

When you agree to work for a company, you have made a big decision that affects not only you, but also the people close to you (family and friends.) These individuals will be there to hear about your first day and the days and weeks that follow.

Most employees could not perform their best without the support of these important people in their lives. Convergys recognizes the role that these individuals play in the success of our company. As a result, we encourage you to share all the information you've been exploring in

this web site. Nothing here is proprietary. This information is valuable not only for you, but for them. And don't forget to also explore www.convergys.com together.

Most importantly, we want to thank these individuals for all they do to support us by supporting you.