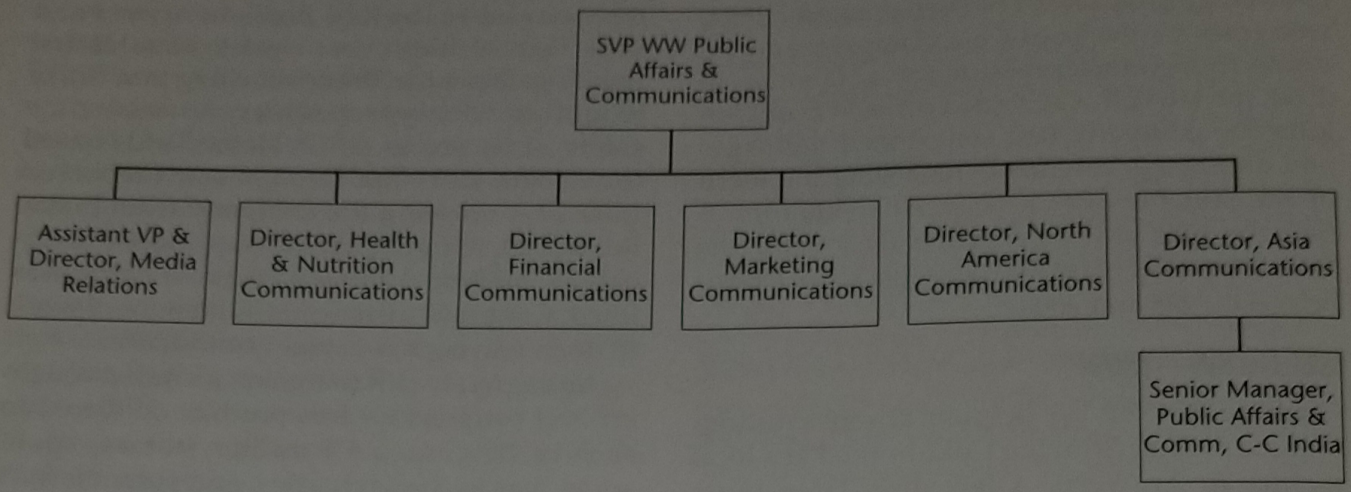
EXHIBIT 10.8 Corporate Communication at Coca-Cola



Source: Case writer derived from Coca-Cola Company website.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AT COCA-COLA

Corporate communication was a critical function at the Coca-Cola Company, given the number of constituencies both internal and external to the company. In addition, the complexity and global reach of the company's operations could not be centrally managed and instead demanded a matrixed team organization.

The senior communications position at the company, senior vice president, Worldwide Public Affairs & Communication, sat on the company's executive committee and reported to the chairman and CEO at the time of the crisis in India. Director-level corporate communication functions included media relations, nutrition communications, financial communications, and marketing communications, but the geographic diversity of the company's businesses required regionally based communication leaders in addition to the corporate resources in place. As a result, five regional communication directors serviced North America, Latin America, Asia, Europe, and Africa with their own teams of communications professionals (see Exhibit 10.8).

NGO ACTIVISM[48]

Nongovernmental organizations initially evolved to influence governments, but by the early twenty-first century, many realized that targeting corporations and key corporate constituents such as investors and customers could be an even more powerful way to effect change. Along with their ability to focus, gain attention, and act quickly was the high level of credibility NGOs had cultivated with many constituencies. This credibility stemmed in part from their emotional, rather than fact-based, appeals and the impassioned nature of their arguments.

The most common tactic of NGOs was to develop campaigns against business through which they garnered support from consumers and the media. These campaigns, such as Greenpeace's attack on Shell Oil following the company's decision to dump the Brent Spar oil rig in the ocean in the 1990s, typically focused on a single issue; targeted companies with successful and well-known brands such as McDonald's and Nike; and were augmented by market trends such as the homogenization created by

[48] Paul A. Argenti, "Collaborating with Activists: How Starbucks Works with NGOs," *California Management Review* 47, no. 1 (Fall 2004).