

Internal Communication at DaimlerChrysler South Africa: A Qualitative Perspective on Two-Way Symmetrical Communication and Internal Marketing

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This article investigates internal communication at DaimlerChrysler South Africa (DCSA) from a two-way symmetrical model of internal communication and internal marketing perspective. Results show that, for DCSA to improve effective internal communication and corporate efficiency, it needs to adjust its corporate culture and nature of internal communication according to the principles of both two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Kennan and Hazleton (2006, p.312) debate that the relationship between management and employees has never been an easy one and often characterized by frustration and hostility. Yet, organizational success (financially or socially) has always been connected to the effective link between the efforts of both management and staff. According to Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002, p.15) and Walker (1997, p.37), one way to establish this connection is through effective internal communication, which is also an important requirement if organizations want to achieve their goals and objectives.

This article discusses internal communication in the marketing and administrative division of the former DaimlerChrysler South Africa's (DCSA) head office in Zwartkop, Centurion. This office is located approximately 25 miles from Johannesburg.² The authors use two theoretical perspectives to analyze DCSA's internal communication, namely internal marketing and two-way symmetrical communication.

The importance of internal communication and internal marketing in the South African business context is evident when one examines results from a survey of 400 heads of marketing at various companies in 2007. These respondents indicated that (Anon, 2008, pp.8-11):

- Their marketing department was very involved with their companies' internal communication (63%) as well as employee satisfaction initiatives (46%);

- Aligning employees with the company brand (52%), internal communication (47%), building stronger relationships within the organization (46%) and internal marketing (33%) were serious challenges their marketing departments faced; and
- Half of them intended to spend more money on internal communication in 2008.

DaimlerChrysler South Africa (DCSA) – a Profile Description

DCSA is a wholly owned subsidiary of DaimlerChrysler Aktien Gesellschaft (DCAG). DCSA became one of the largest foreign investors in South Africa when the global company opened a R1.4-billion plant (approximately \$198 million) in East London in 2000 (Bezuidenhout, 2003, p.2; Schnetler, 2002, pp.151-153). The company's local head office houses its marketing and administrative divisions (DaimlerChrysler, 2005, p.1).

DCSA subscribes to the "CORE" values of Customer Excellence (that employees would always place customers first), Ownership (that employees would manage and participate in the business as if it were their own), Respect (that employees will show real trust in their colleagues, leaders and staff) and Example (that employees would show a positive attitude and "walk the talk") (Bezuidenhout, 2003, p.1). These "CORE" values are of particular interest to this article, as they all depend on and are affected by effective internal communication.

DCSA's internal communication initiatives are, however, implemented in an emerging market context where the South African business environment presents a number of political, economic, financial and operational risks to management (Van Wyk, Dahmer & Custy, 2004). In addition, the prevalent German organizational heritage still requires employee loyalty to the company amidst a hierarchical internal culture that exerts strong influence and control (Workman, 2008a; Workman, 2008b). These contrasting realities present obvious challenges to effective internal communication.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is defined as the full series of strategies people in an organization use to communicate with each other (Orsini, 2000, p.31). As such, it is a catalyst for organizations to reach their goals and objectives, as it enables them to effectively develop structure and culture (Grunig et.al., 2002, p.480).

Employees' satisfaction with internal communication is an important factor in their performance (and ultimately organizational success) (Erasmus-Kritzinger, 2002, p.15). Effective internal communication can give meaning to jobs, make people feel connected and accountable and increase productivity (Roberts, 2002, p.20). Internal communication policies should thus encourage frequent, honest, open, job-related, two-way communication among managers and subordinates facilitated by an accommodative internal environment (Van Heerden, 1994, p.96).

Unfortunately, this is not always the case. According to Maitland (2002, p.62) research shows that employees are often unhappy with both the quality and quantity of information they receive. Moreover, they want to be a part of something significant and see their work make a difference (Taylor & Cosenza, 1997, p.5). Employees thus want more interaction with management, personal job-satisfaction, more responsibility and more control over the decisions that affect them (Roberts, 2002, p.20). Heil, Parker and Stephens (1999, pp.20/21), however, differ. They found that few employees want responsibility, know more, learn more or be accountable for more because they fear the risk and failure often associated with responsibility.

To combat the Theory X-inspired culture described above (see Daft, 2008, p.49) organizations must create an environment that encourages employees to see mistakes as opportunities, and view failure as temporary and the key to learning (Heil et.al., 1999). This environment requires open communication – the "glue" that keeps interdependent parts of an organizational system together (Puth, 1994, p.5).

Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication

People establish and maintain interpersonal relationships, which require varying degrees of interaction and interdependence. It therefore also requires different levels of social, political and economic exchanges (see Rensburg & Cant, 2003, p.34). Scholes (1997, p.110) similarly argues that “(t)he key to communication is understanding another’s needs, and putting yourself in their shoes, so that sender and receiver are literally on the same wave-length.”

The purpose of the two-way symmetrical model of communication is to gain mutual understanding and build dialogue (Woodward, 2000, p.258) between parties based on two-way communication with balanced effects (Wilcox, Ault, Agee & Cameron, 1998, p.50). In this model, communicators thus use research and dialogue to manage conflict, improve understanding and build relationships (Grunig & White, 1992, p.39). As such, it represents the most acceptable and mutually rewarding form of communication (Stoker & Tusinski, 2006, p.156; Fill, 1999, p.399).

The same is true for two-way symmetrical communication in an organizational context. Mersham, Rensburg and Skinner (1995, p.39) argue that “People should be given equal opportunity and be respected as fellow human beings. Anyone, regardless of education or background, may provide valuable input into an organization”. McGowan (2007, pp.63-64) found that internal activism among employees can even prompt two-way symmetrical communication among management.

In the two-way symmetrical model of communication, power is spread equally between the organization and its stakeholders; communication is reciprocal; all parties are prepared to adjust their attitudes and behavior; and a true dialogue subsequently emerges (Gower, 2006, p.178; Fill, 1999, p.399). Fluid feedback also exists up and down reporting channels (Holtz, 2004, p.127; Roberts, 2002, p.20) – an element Rensburg and Cant (2003, p.71) consider vital in any communication process.

Given these characteristics, two-way symmetrical communication presents the benefits of building a participative culture that increases employees’ motivation and job satisfaction (Grunig et.al., 2002, p.xi); fosters their loyalty to and identification with the organization they work for (Grunig et.al., 2002, p.329); and facilitates understanding between managers and staff (Argenti, 1998, p.168; Scholes, 1997, p.103; Foreman, 1997, p.23).

Internal Marketing

As industries have matured, changes in market demand and competitive intensity shifted the marketing focus from transaction marketing to relationship marketing (Payne, 2006, p.6). The latter approach recognizes the importance of relationships with various stakeholders (e.g. employees, suppliers, distributors, retailers rather than only customers) founded in extended markets. As a result, relationship marketing also emphasizes the role of employee-focused internal marketing (Kale, 2006, p.3), which supports the management of relationships between the organization’s decision-makers and internal markets (employees) (Hollensen, 2003, p.66).

According to Grönroos (2000:ix) internal marketing is an umbrella concept for a range of internal activities in an organization aimed at enhancing a service culture and maintaining a service orientation among its employees. In this way, internal marketing aims to develop awareness among employees of their external *and* internal customers (Payne, 1995, p.38).

Although internal marketing lacks a widely accepted definition (Mosley, 2007, p.128), Mahnert and Torres (2007, p.55) offer the following inclusive definition:

Internal marketing is the accumulation and application of functions and tools aimed at the formation and maintenance of a consistent, efficient, effective and customer-oriented workforce. These objectives are achieved through the communication with and attraction, retention, motivation, education and management of suitable employees. Suitable employees in this context are defined as those employees who are conscious of and committed to the needs of the organization and other employees at all levels in the internal value chain.

The objective of internal marketing is therefore to establish and maintain relationships between management and employees and between organizational functions (Kelemen & Pappasolomou, 2007,

p.748; Gummesson, 1999, p.161) – arguably one of the most promising uses of internal marketing (Davis, 2001, p.126). Building and maintaining relationships occurs through a unifying organizational culture based on the values of internal and external customer service, employee empowerment and service quality (Kelemen & Papsolomou, 2007, p.745; Yoon, Choi & Park, 2007, p.386; Papsolomou & Vrontis, 2006, p.178; Miller, 2002, p.1; Barnes & Morris, 2000, p.S473). Various studies (e.g. Chang & Chang, 2007; Keller, Lynch, Ellinger, Ozment & Calantone, 2006, p.123; Hwang & Chi, 2005, p.291) also found significant correlations between the above values and organizational performance (also see Ahmed et.al., 2003, p.1227). Mutually beneficial relationships also holds the benefit of attracting and retaining good quality employees, saving organizations the cost and trouble of having to hire and train new ones (Mahnert & Torres, 2007, p.55; Hennig-Thurau & Hansen, 2000, p.184). This enables organizations to respond to external market conditions by better aligning their internal capabilities with external opportunities (Gounaris, 2006).

The mechanics of internal marketing imply the use of marketing-like techniques to facilitate employees' understanding of how individual objectives align with organizational goals (Ferdous, 2008, p.223; Mosley, 2007, p.128; Keller et.al., 2006, pp.111; 123). One of these techniques refers to internal promotion – the design and distribution of positive messages that instill productive employee attitudes, openness and interest in the workplace. Internal promotion relies on affirming communication and positive reinforcement (Keller et.al., 2006, p.117). Managers can utilize this communication approach to create a fair and non-threatening work environment, enhance feelings of ownership, belonging, camaraderie and bonding among employees (Kale, 2006, pp.8-9) and ultimately increase job satisfaction (Lee & Chen, 2005, pp.663; 671).

Given the above, Ferdous (2008) developed the concept of Integrated Internal Marketing Communication (IIMC) by extending the notion of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) to the organization's internal market. One of the prerequisites for implementing IIMC is that the organization creates the appropriate atmosphere for internal communication and subsequently improves its profitability by fostering employee 'buy-in', commitment and trust.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Problem and Research Objectives

This article critically and qualitatively analyzes the nature of internal communication at DCSA's head office, as perceived by its management and staff. The researchers aimed to determine how:

- Management perceive internal communication at DCSA's head office in light of the theoretical perspectives of two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing; and
- Staff perceive internal communication at DCSA's head office in light of the same theoretical perspectives.

Research Design

The researchers followed an interpretive approach, aiming to understand social reality from the perspective of those *in it* (Henning, 2004, p.19; Daymon & Holloway, 2002, pp.4, 14). As such, they aimed to capture the (organizational) lives of participants in order to understand and interpret the meaning they (respondents) attach to events or objects related to internal communication. Consistent with the interpretive view, the researchers used qualitative research methods to explore the way people "make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings through language, sound, imagery, personal style and social rituals" (Deacon et.al., quoted by Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p.4).

To substantiate data obtained from the different respondent groups, the researchers implemented three types of triangulation, namely (Janesick, 1994, pp.214-215; Du Plooy, 2001, pp.39, 81):

- **Data triangulation** (using qualitative data from manager and staff respondents);

- **Theoretical triangulation** (using two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing frameworks to interpret a single set of data); and
- **Methodological triangulation** (using semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with the two respondent groups).

Research Population and Sample

The research population included all managers and staff at DCSA's head office. At the time of the research, the company employed approximately 180 employees on top, senior and middle management levels, as well as approximately 650 employees on non-managerial levels.

The researchers drew a purposive sample of five key top and senior managers, based on their expertise and knowledge of internal communication at DCSA. Two respondents held top positions in the Corporate Affairs department, while the other three were senior departmental managers. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with these respondents.

The researchers also selected 45 staff members for focus group interviews based on the organizational levels on which they were appointed and the departments in which they worked at DCSA's head office. These samples were drawn on a volunteer and availability basis.

Research Instruments

As indicated above, the research instruments for this study consisted of semi-structured and focus group interviews to obtain managers' and employees' personal perspectives and interpretation of internal communication at DCSA (Murphy as quoted by Hocking, Stack & McDermott, 2003, p.210).

Given the theoretical backdrop of two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing, the researchers developed an interview framework for the semi-structured interviews. However, interviewees had the freedom to introduce and discuss related topics not included in the original interview schedule. The researchers subsequently used these topics to revise the interview schedule for focus groups. Interviews lasted approximately one hour.

Researchers in organizational communication often use focus groups to probe respondents about their attitudes, values, and behaviors in attempts to identify their true feelings and motivations (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005, p.201; Hocking et.al., 2003, p.204; Litosseliti, 2003, p.1). Similarly, the researchers in this study used focus group interviews with members of DCSA's non-managerial staff to probe their perspectives and experience of the company's internal communication.

Although the researchers developed an interview framework for the focus groups (Wisker, 2001, p.176) discussions were kept interactive and semi-structured (Litosseliti, 2003, p.2). Respondents often built their responses on the views expressed by others in the group.

At the point where the fourth focus group started to discuss some of the same issues expressed by the first group, the researchers knew that they were reaching a point of data saturation (see Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p.340). Each focus group discussion lasted approximately one hour.

Data Collection

The researchers conducted interviews with management over a two-day time period. Data from focus groups was collected over a four-week period after the researchers completed the management interviews.

Data Analysis

Because of the interpretive and qualitative nature of the research, all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researchers then analyzed the transcriptions in light of the theoretical perspectives discussed earlier. This text also served as a framework to develop themes upon which data was organized (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p.234).

RESULTS

Internal Communication

Results indicate that **managers** perceive DCSA's internal culture and value system predominantly authoritarian and top-down in nature, resulting in most of the internal communication problems they experience. Despite these views, managers also indicated that they strike a purposeful balance between authoritative and participative communication, depending on the issue they wish to communicate. For instance, when they want to achieve a strategic goal and get staff's buy-in, they would rather take a participative communication approach. Some managers indicated that an authoritative communication and management style is detrimental to organizational progress and that they refrain from using it. In general, however, managers stated that the level of participation and feedback in each department depends on individual managers' communication style. Those with good interpersonal relationships in their departments, experience "open" communication and feedback.

Staff members described internal communication as "authoritarian", "top-down" and "them versus us", with managers rather focusing on mistakes than achievements. As a result, staff feel isolated, unheard and unappreciated.

This indicates that internal communication at DCSA displays more of a top-down authoritative (asymmetrical) character. In other words, the transactional rather than relational character of internal communication at DCSA neither displays characteristics of two-way symmetrical communication nor internal marketing.

Internal Communication Instruments

According to **managers** DCSA has no formal policy that instructs managers on how to use the internal communication instruments available to them. Departments and managers primarily made independent decisions on this issue. Nonetheless, managers describe formal internal communication structures as "good"; "consistent" and "standardized", hosting plenty, information-rich, top-down communication instruments. Managers mostly use these instruments to inform staff on decisions and how these will affect departments and the organization as a whole. However, managers expressed the need for more targeted information, as they acknowledge that the current communication approach often leaves employees feeling "left out".

Staff, however, experience miscommunication and non-targeted messages as a big problem at DCSA, despite the company having "adequate communication structures" in place. In their view, email is over-used and has taken the place of interpersonal communication and relationships. They subsequently prefer alternative communication instruments.

Formal internal communication structures and instruments at DCSA thus seem firmly established, providing (almost excessive) information. Despite this, the lack of a formal internal communication policy hampers the effective use of internal communication instruments. The challenge for DCSA is thus not to introduce different or additional communication instruments, but to use the existing ones more effectively.

Nature of Internal Communication Between Managers and Staff

Results on the nature of internal communication between managers and staff indicate the following:

- **Communication approaches: Managers** seem to realize the importance of caring for and treating employees well in order to reach organizational goals. As one manager commented, having "the right people who are empowered ... happy and smiling, content and motivated" will enable DCSA to lead the marketplace. Their interview comments also showed that they realize the need to change staff attitudes and loyalty and make employees proud to work for DCSA. Failing to do this will prevent them from being the company they aspire to be. Focus group data, however, shows that management has probably not achieved the above yet. **Staff** responses show that they neither feel empowered nor proud to be part of the company. They

also highlighted their need to “belong”, be recognized and involved in decision-making processes. In their view, the majority of management is uncaring and lacks transparency.

Results thus show managers’ intent to treat staff members well, be caring toward them and make them proud to work at DCSA – all elements of internal marketing. However, the fact that staff experience the exact opposite indicates that managers do not effectively implement these principles yet;

- **Open-door policy:** In managers’ perspective, they have an open-door (communication) policy – visibly illustrated by the open plan office layout. Although they believe that adequate opportunities for communication exist, they also acknowledge that negative relationships between themselves and staff often prevent effective dialogue.

Staff fondly described the individual managers who they perceive as transparent and inviting to open dialogue. However, they also expressed the need to be “heard” more often and to “participate” in dialogue. According to staff, time pressure is one of the main factors preventing effective dialogue.

Results show that physical infrastructure and layout do not necessarily translate into effective internal communication. Instead, managers’ personalities, communication styles, and relationships with subordinates play more decisive roles to facilitate or internal communication;

- **Communication flow:** DCSA managers discussed how communication flow depends on the issue and the urgency thereof. They described that company policies are communicated in a top-down fashion, whereas departmental and team communication is more multi-directional.

Staff agree. They stated that they find it easier to speak up in more informal situations, although many seem reluctant to speak up during meetings with management. They again emphasized individual managers’ role in communication flow. Depending on the manager, staff’s ideas either reach those higher up in the organizational hierarchy, or they do not.

Results highlight a one-directional communication flow, restricting two-way symmetrical communication and compromising effective internal marketing. Communication flow thus also displays characteristics of transactional rather than relational communication;

- **Feedback: Managers** are of the opinion that DCSA must create an environment conducive to open, honest and constructive feedback. They agree with staff that individual managers’ leadership styles determine staff’s ability to give and receive feedback. In addition, managers acknowledged that (especially junior) staff members do not feel at liberty to effectively communicate with their managers.

Some **staff members** agree. They indicated that DCSA’s formalized, documented and impersonal organizational structure often prevents them from giving feedback. They also discussed the fear of making a “career-limiting move” by not utilizing formal feedback channels. Other staff members, however, have a positive view on opportunities for feedback. They perceive managers as accessible when they want to discuss an issue, although they experience that staff should still take the initiative for this to happen.

Respondents’ desire for more effective communication and feedback underlines the need for more effective implementation of both two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing principles;

- **Employees’ responsibility for upward organizational communication:** Managers hold the opinion that enough formal opportunities exist for upward organizational communication at DCSA. They emphasized, however, that both managers and staff are responsible to utilize these opportunities. In their view, some employees complain about a lack of feedback opportunities and criticize management, but fail to take ownership or utilize existing initiatives (such as a letters column in the company newsletter and suggestion box). Managers did, however, express their ambition to improve this situation.

Staff members agree that they share the responsibility to improve upward internal communication. Yet, they expressed their inability to do so, because they lack courage and empowerment. They admitted that they do not “push” for better communication.

This situation prevents DCSA from effectively implementing either two-way symmetrical communication or internal marketing;

- **Availability of information:** According to **manager** respondents, employees have access to an abundance of information. In their view, DCSA should rather distribute less information and provide more focused information, especially through informal communication such as conversations and social gatherings.

Staff members agree – they even complained about information overload. Nevertheless, they believe that a lack of time sometimes prevents managers from distributing vital information to them.

The amount of information available at DCSA satisfies the prerequisites of two-way symmetrical communication. The untargeted nature thereof, however, violates a principle of internal marketing, namely targeting information to suit the needs of the intended audience; and

- **Interdepartmental communication:** From **managers’** point of view, a “silo mentality” persists in DCSA, making it easy to forget that all departments and functions form part of the same company. In their view, collaboration across departments and functions can be a key factor to address this issue.

Staff members agreed, outlining that the extent to which different departments function separately (and in competition with each other) creates communication barriers. However, this view also strongly depends on the department in which individual staff members work.

The above views violate the premise of free flowing communication supported by both two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the article outlines recommendations on how DCSA can improve internal communication at its head office in Zwartkop, Centurion, based on the principles of both two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing.

- **Internal communication:** It will benefit DCSA to employ a more participative approach if it wishes to improve the nature and effectiveness of internal communication. This implies that managers should actively listen to staff and establish an environment that facilitates and encourages bottom-up communication – not only to reach organizational goals, but also to empower staff and benefit the company’s other constituencies;
- **Internal communication instruments:** It will be to DCSA’s advantage to establish a formal internal communication framework. In addition, managers will benefit from organizational training and support that will help improve their ability to use the available internal communication instruments. This will assist in improving internal (and departmental) communication in a standardized manner;
- **Nature of internal communication between managers and staff:** For managers to reach their organizational and internal communication goals, the company needs a formal framework that guides the use of internal communication. If DCSA aims to follow an internal marketing approach, it must ensure that it effectively implements the various aspects thereof. In line with the two-way symmetrical approach to communication and internal marketing, internal communication should focus on building open, trusting and reciprocal relationships;
- **Open-door policy:** Even though managers stated that they currently have an open-door approach to internal communication, it is important that they also establish and maintain better relationships with staff. One way to achieve this is to communicate with staff in a symmetrical way, empowering the latter group to contribute to the conversation. Given the company’s

organizational culture, managers may have to take the initiative in this process. The company should deliberately assist managers who lack interpersonal communication skills to achieve this through a formal communication policy and training initiatives;

- **Feedback:** It is imperative that managers respect employees and listen to them interactively and frequently. As part of a formal internal communication policy, the company will benefit from creating an environment in which managers and staff can interact and communicate openly and informally. Given staff members' view of horizontal communication, it is important that managers encourage this type of communication during departmental meetings, in attempts to promote interpersonal relationships and teambuilding;
- **Direction of communication flow:** For internal communication to be interactive, it should be two-way and symmetrical. Given staff members' perspective on the current direction of communication flow, managers should consciously create opportunities for more informal communication between themselves and subordinates;
- **Employees' responsibility for upward organizational communication:** Since DCSA's organizational structure (and thus the foundation for internal communication) is firmly established it currently is managers' responsibility to implement effective organizational communication. This responsibility can only be delegated to staff once the company is successful in establishing sound interpersonal and symmetrical internal communication structures. An environment that encourages staff to see mistakes/failures as opportunities will ultimately empower them to give feedback to their superiors and increase their ownership of responsibilities delegated to them;
- **Availability of information:** It will benefit internal communication processes at DCSA if the organization works on segmenting information into relevant, department-specific formats. Such a move will assist departments to more effectively communicate and perform their responsibilities. Moreover, the company should work towards distributing information in a timely, honest and direct manner, in an attempt to combat information overload and miscommunication. Finally, the company will also benefit from managers investing time in communicating with staff in an informal environment and manner; and
- **Interdepartmental communication:** DCSA needs to establish and maintain an environment that contributes to open, symmetrical communication in and among departments. This will assist the company to reach interdepartmental and organizational goals more effectively.

CONCLUSIONS

This article qualitatively investigated internal communication at DCSA from the theoretical perspectives of two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing. The researchers found that internal communication at DCSA neither fully subscribes to the principles of either these perspectives. These findings are consistent with a qualitative study by Kelemen and Papolomou (2007, p.760) about internal marketing in the banking industry. This study found that effectively implementing internal marketing principles is a difficult process that can result in "divisions, ruptures and ambiguity" in organizational culture. Papolomou (2006) also argues that bureaucratic organizations find it difficult to implement internal marketing when their mechanistic structures counteract their efforts.

This seems to be the case at DCSA where an organizational culture that originated in a traditionally hierarchical and authoritative society (Workman, 2008a) must now be implemented and adapted in a multicultural, multilingual and compromising South African society. This situation presents an opportunity for the company to implement and benefit from two-way symmetrical communication, as Guiniven (2002) found that such communication tends to gain greater acceptance in a society that embeds compromise. It seems as if the company can succeed in this process by adjusting its internal communication approaches according to the principles of two-way symmetrical communication and internal marketing.

ENDNOTES

1. This article is based on a paper read at the 2009 Southwest Academy of Management conference in Oklahoma City.
2. In May 2007 DaimlerChrysler AG (the global company) sold the Chrysler business unit. In October of the same year, DaimlerChrysler AG was renamed Daimler AG and in December 2007 DaimlerChrysler South Africa (Pty) Ltd was renamed Mercedes-Benz South Africa (Pty) Ltd (Mercedes-Benz South Africa, 2010).

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