DELPHI REVISITED: A CONCISE METHOD FOR INDUSTRY CONSULTATION ON CURRICULUM

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Abstract
The Delphi method is a useful and well-respected way of gathering information from a panel of experts. However, in the past it has been time-consuming and clumsy to administer. Here it was modified to be a concise communication tool with a select group of industry leaders for the development of an integrated marketing communications curriculum at postgraduate level. The Delphi iterations were closely focussed and delivered in a time and resource efficient manner. The first part aimed to gather as much diversity of opinion as possible. The results of this were the basis for a second part, a Nominal Group Technique, or face-to-face Delphi. In this meeting structure staff discussed the development of the curriculum using quality input from business leaders. Through this relatively contained effort by the participants, industry input was easily and effectively incorporated into a subject which needs to respond to a rapidly changing business environment. This paper describes, and gives examples of, the processes undertaken.

Introduction
In the present climate of rapid change in the communications industry and the effects that this is having on advertising and promotions, a leading Australian university was concerned that its integrated marketing communications (IMC) subject was at the cutting edge both educationally and in terms of vocational practice for the introduction of a Master of Marketing by multimedia. Recent reports about the quality and diversity of Australian marketing education have been positive (Danaher & Starr 1998; Kwok et al. 1994) but there are concerns that the skills offered by tertiary institutions should contain a complex balance between practical, vocationally oriented skills and current theory (O’Brien & Hart 1999; Lawson et al. 1998). The university has a strong commitment to maintaining good links with industry and the business community and sees this as a crucial step in ensuring that its graduates
are appropriately skilled for the workplace. However, industry leaders are inevitably a small group of very busy people and it is often difficult to devise a method of obtaining their valuable input while concurrently keeping the effort to a reasonable minimum. This dilemma was solved by modifying the Delphi method into two processes, each with its separate intention, but linked to create a single outcome. The results from a Delphi survey provided valuable, detailed input from industry leaders and gave a focus to a Nominal Group Technique structured discussion of the subject for the staff who deliver the program. This combination has led to a cutting edge, vocationally relevant IMC subject in the relatively compact timeframe of one 13-week semester.

**Delphi method**

Devised as a method for forecasting by the Rand Corporation, the Delphi was very popular in the 1970s as a policy and decision making tool. Despite some harsh criticism (Sackman 1975) the Delphi method has been utilised in a wide variety of settings: forestry service planning process (Cary & Salmon 1976), journalism and communication accreditation (Smith 1997), educational planning at doctoral level (Zagari et al. 1995; Paige, Dugger & Wolansky 1996), participative management decisions (Wedley 1980), nursing curriculum (Hartley 1995), supervision of vocational technical education (Chao & Dugger 1996), assessment of marketing models (Larreche & Montgomery 1977), planning health and education services across Europe (Adler & Ziglio 1996; Fatout & Rose 1995; Leirman 1996), competencies for distance educators (Thach & Murphy 1995) and skills for marketing students (Ruhland 1993).

The Delphi method is an interactive form of surveying that uses a question and feedback approach which offers participants the opportunity to reconsider first opinions in later iterations (Delbecq et al. 1975). Once a sample group has been identified and they have consented to take part, the Delphi question, or questions, are sent to the participants. The initial question can be quite broad, as it was in the case described here. After the responses are codified, a second round question is devised on the basis of these responses. The collected responses are sent to the participants in an appropriately summarised
format, along with the second round question, or questions. This process allows participants to see their responses in the context of the overall group and gives them the opportunity to reflect on their first-round position before replying to the second-round question. The second-round question usually asks for justifications of positions and sometimes for some kind of voting on the outcome of round one. The Delphi can run through several iterations, building the process through each survey round, with voting often taking place in the last round, until the purpose is achieved. Depending on the research question, the number of iterations and the size of the participating group can vary widely, for example: 23 participants and three rounds (Ruhland 1993); 103 participants and two rounds (Thach & Murphy 1995); 51 participants and five rounds (Larreche & Montgomery 1977).

Over the years the Delphi method has been used in different ways but the normative, or consensus, Delphi is the most common variation. In this version iterations are developed to draw the group ever closer to consensus and there are usually several iterations to increase the likelihood of agreement amongst the participants. However, even though the number of iterations can increase the level of agreement amongst the participants (Young & Hogben 1975), it has been determined that the Delphi process does not change strongly held views (Cary & Salmon 1976). Agreement only increases for attitudes which are not strongly held (Cary & Salmon 1976, p.35). Additionally, in the normative version there is often a concern to quantify the consensus that exists in the group and so measures of central tendency and dispersion, such as the mean and standard deviation, are calculated. If there is an interest in links across and between groups then larger numbers of participants are used to facilitate regression analysis.

However, this use of statistics has been the source of some potent criticism (Sackman 1975) and the weakness here has been acknowledged by others (Ziglio 1996; Wedley 1980; Cary & Salmon 1976). Essentially the argument is that the Delphi calls for subjective opinion and people are often drawn into positions in order to be part of the group, a phenomenon which is called the ‘bandwagon effect’ (Cary & Salmon 1976, p.4). Therefore statistics here are not able to be rigorous and the process is called into question as a decision-making tool. The response is that the Delphi was not intended for scientific truth and is...
in fact a heuristic device which supports judgemental decision making (Wedley 1980; Cary & Salmon 1976; Ziglio 1996). It is not the Delphi method itself which is at fault, but the use of the method to achieve something for which it was not designed. In other words, although the Delphi method may not offer scientifically inviolable evidence, its value lies elsewhere in clarifying and understanding the position others take on issues and in explicating the problem at hand. With this in mind, there are other uses for the Delphi method.

The Delphi can also be a ‘tool for discovering agreement and identifying differences’ (Cary & Salmon 1976, p.36). The focus Delphi exploits this potential. Identified in the early 1970s, it is described as a method of surveying a number of stakeholder groups concurrently and maintaining divergence of opinion in order to assist planners in their decision making processes (McGraw et al. 1974). Here, the numbers of participants can be high, depending on the number of stakeholder groups involved. It is also possible to aim for consensus within each group, while at the same time maintaining diversity across the study as a whole.

The policy Delphi is another version which does not necessarily seek consensus and where divergent opinion is considered useful. Ziglio (1996) describes this Delphi as appropriate where the problem at hand does not lend itself to scientific techniques and where there are new or unmonitored developments which could benefit from the subjective judgements of experts. The most obvious difference in this Delphi variation is the small number of participants, 10 to 15, but this is especially appropriate for an homogenous group of experts (Ziglio 1996, p.14). The Delphi method in this format helps to overcome the cumbersome nature of the committee process and the drawbacks of round table discussion where some personalities can dominate and the ‘halo effect’ of some group members can have undue influence (Wedley 1980). The Delphi becomes a method for structuring a communication process where the advice and opinions of experts is sought in order that informed judgements can be facilitated. Here the Delphi supports decision making but it does not remove, or reduce, the need to eventually make decisions. As Ziglio asserts:
The Delphi is one method (amongst others) for improving the generation of critical ideas, and the structured collection and processing of information gathered from experts. 

(1996, p.7)

This description of the Delphi certainly seemed to suit part of our purpose. The Integrated Marketing Communications teaching team wanted to gather opinions and ideas about the content that students would require to be relevant in today's rapidly changing world of communications from a relatively small, but homogenous, group of senior managers.

Modifying a method

New technologies are bringing about significant changes in the way that marketing is conducted and these need to be incorporated into a vocationally relevant subject. On the basis of their knowledge and experience, the staff had a number of topics to include in the subject, but they also wanted input on the balance of these in future commercial application. Senior managers are well-placed to advise on relevance and appropriate weight of topics within the practical application of a subject like this. However, with all due respect to the business leaders to whom they envisaged speaking, the staff also wanted to retain the final decision making process within the department as there are other agendas, both pedagogical and institutional, that business experts could not be expected to incorporate.

The study was formulated with two linked but distinct aims: firstly it was directed at accumulating business leaders' opinions about the needs of marketing communication for the next five to ten years; and secondly it needed to incorporate these into the subject in ways that were sympathetic to the rest of the degree structure. The first aim would be satisfied by gathering a diversity of opinions from senior management, while the second aim required staff consensus on the implementation of ideas. To this end a survey Delphi executed in a focussed time-efficient manner would gather information and a second face-to-face Delphi, or Nominal Group Technique, would structure the staff discussion towards consensus in a supportive and inclusive way.
The Delphi survey method offers several advantages to the process of obtaining diverse opinions from stakeholders. It can convene a group of experts but allow them to work asynchronously and therefore avoid the difficulties of finding synchronous time for meetings (Ziglio 1996, p.6). Experts can therefore be selected from a widely dispersed geographic area without time and money costs (Rotondi & Gustafson 1996, p.61) and, when computers are used, the quality and speed of communication with participants can be significantly enhanced (Turoff & Hiltz 1996). A second benefit is that the participants can take time to consider their ideas and responses before they present these, which promotes careful, in-depth thinking. In addition, the Delphi process, unlike meeting notes, offers an accurate record which can provide material for consideration at the time of the study and also be archived for further consideration at a later stage (Rotondi & Gustafson 1996, p.42).

It is often the case that Delphi studies require a great deal of input over a considerable period of time. This study also aimed to achieve its objectives in a relatively compact manner, which would be manageable for busy, geographically dispersed executives without compromising the quality of the results. The time efficiencies were achieved by defining the tasks and allocating these to two linked but separated processes. The input of experts was contained within a Delphi survey stage which was carefully managed and included close, supportive communication with the panellists (see appendix 1 for timeframe). The second process was dependent on the outcomes of the first and therefore followed on, but was satisfied by holding a single meeting as all participants were staff. To accomplish this the Delphi method was modified into a six step model which is outlined in the timeframe (appendix 1) and illustrated in figure 1. There are four steps derived from different Delphi variations which focussed on gathering business opinion: framing the question, the initial research question, a voting and ranking phase and a summary report. As well there were two steps involving staff evaluation of the collected, informed judgements of business leaders in a Nominal Group Technique, which is described by Delbecq, Van de Ven and Gustafson (1975) as the face-to-face Delphi. It was important that the study was thoroughly thought through to create a coherent and specific focus that was linked to a clear time frame and with carefully managed communication with the participants. What
follows describes the Delphi survey process and a later section deals with the Nominal Group Technique, or face-to-face Delphi.

**Figure 1: Model of process to incorporate industry input into curriculum**

**Framework for the study**

**Group selection**

The Delphi method offered a suitable research vehicle for systematically deriving informed judgements, and close consideration of three important issues established the framework for the study. The first and
most important was the composition of the group (Delbecq et al. 1975; Ziglio 1996). The principal criterion for inclusion was expertise in the advertising and promotion industry, particularly in Australia which is where most students are employed immediately after graduation. All participants were engaged with the material in a practical way and all were concerned with the future of the advertising and promotion industry. In addition, Delphi commentators recommend that panellists have well-developed skills in written communication and are able to express priorities (Ziglio 1996, p.140). Integrated marketing communications is a relatively new concept and so an international expert was invited to join the panel on the basis of their practical experience, as well as their expertise as an educator. The final panel of ten included an American professor and nine business leaders from areas such as direct marketing, brand management, services marketing and strategic planning. All of them had international experience, and half of these senior managers were with firms which had an international focus. In addition to their business credentials, half of the group were also experienced tertiary educators.

The Delphi question

A second important issue was the research question and how to present this to the group, bearing in mind the objective of achieving communication with industry leaders in a concise way. This part of the study aimed to gather diverse opinions efficiently, but within a well-defined area without necessarily bringing about consensus. To resolve the apparent dilemma, it was decided that the subject outline would be presented to the panellists as a ‘straw model’ (Rotondi & Gustafson 1996, p.43). This was based on the work already done by staff and brought the Delphi into the process at the point where input was required. While this could be construed as limiting the potential for diversity amongst the panellists, it was decided that the advantages of timeliness would be a significant gain for the process. Therefore, a list of topics to be considered would focus the panellists’ attention and have them generate ideas within a framework (see appendix 2 for the list) and there would be space for the participants to comment extensively if they found this too restrictive. Rotondi and Gustafson (1996) make a good case for using a ‘straw model’ to create a common
perspective and goal. They suggest basing the model on the desired outcome, which due to its inevitable omissions will focus the group's attention on what is required. Rotondi and Gustafson (1996) go on to develop this into an in-depth, conversation style of communication between panellists which was not our intention. We wanted to utilise the survey type approach but found the concept of focusing the group useful.

Clearly the straw model alone is insufficient and the Delphi question has an important part to play. The aim is to focus leading edge business experience on the issue of what is needed commercially and will be significant in the future. The first round question that the participants were asked to consider was:

Using the attached list of options, what do you see as important for business practitioners in 10 years time?

This single, initial question encapsulated the intention of the research and established this as an information gathering exercise. The format focussed the input but the simplicity of the question enabled panellists to bring their experience to the process (see appendix 3 for an example of part of the survey). However, discussions made it clear that close and constant communication with the participants would be crucial.

Number of iterations

The final framework issue was to establish how many iterations of the process would be useful and was crucially connected to the management of communication with the group. It is common for Delphi studies to go through as many as four or five cycles. However, this seemed arduous and beyond the effort believed to be within our objectives, but also, this number of cycles encourages group consensus. Consensus was not our aim at this knowledge gathering stage, but rather diversity of ideas and judgements. This was the first reduction in iterations. Another suggestion was, that when justification of opinions is sought and included in the feedback process, the Delphi can be limited to two questionnaire rounds (Young & Hogben 1978, p.61). This was incorporated into our design and so in the initial round participants were asked to clarify their position or suggestions. Finally,
many Delphi studies are initiated by a generative round to refine the problem at hand. However, in this case the problem was already defined through the ‘straw model’ and so another round could be removed. The combination of aiming for diversity, not consensus, and the prior clarification of the issue allowed this Delphi to use only two rounds of questionnaire. This Delphi structured the communication process and aimed at producing detailed, critical examination without forcing any compromises (Turoff & Hiltz 1996, p.57). After a summarising report was sent to each panel member, a brief third round was included to obtain some feedback from the panel about the Delphi process and the contents of the report through telephone interviews, but this required minimal effort from the panellists. The report is the link between the two parts of the study and it forms the basis for the Nominal Group Technique which is described in more detail in a later section.

**Method**

**First round survey—initial question**

It was imperative that this Delphi be time-efficient and so the reduced number of iterations and a clear focus for the panel needed to be supported by the presentation of the initial question. The straw model options were set out in a grid which allowed space for the panellists to clarify and support their assertions and suggestions (see appendix 3 for an example). The participants were told that they were assisting in the design of a communication subject for a single semester of 13 weeks which was to be aimed at the postgraduate level and could assume that a significant number of students would be marketing professionals. The surveys were delivered through a mixture of email, fax and mail with a letter giving instructions and details. Mail was slower and most members of the group chose to communicate by either fax or email or both. Each round of the Delphi took four weeks to complete, thus some concentrated effort was required to keep to the schedule and maintain the group’s momentum. The personal communication was a significant element of this.
Communication management

Communication management was an important tool in streamlining the Delphi process utilised here. Each participant was contacted personally by a member of staff and, after they had indicated their willingness to participate, the Delphi process was explained in detail to them. This member of staff maintained contact at each stage of the Delphi. The close personal contact with each individual on the panel was a crucial step in managing the timeframe and the level of engagement by the panel members.

A related issue of whether participants should communicate with each other also had to be dealt with. Although the anonymity of participants in the Delphi method has been mooted to be an advantage (Delbecq et al. 1975, p.83; Ziglio 1996, p.8; Turoff & Hiltz 1996, p.61), so has the ability of participants to discuss issues with each other away from the process (Rotondi & Gustafson 1996, p.51). This study decided to accommodate both approaches. The reasons for anonymity rely on the criticisms of group techniques, or committees, where dominant voices and status are shown to affect voting behaviour, and where ownership of ideas makes it harder to reject them or leads to loss of face (Turoff & Hiltz 1996, p.61). More importantly for our purposes, research shows that individuals produce more ideas of equal or better quality when working alone (Wedley 1980, p.10). In the interests of diversity and independent generation of ideas, the first round was sent to each participant without them having clear knowledge of who the others were. For the next step where they commented on the collected responses, it was seen to be helpful that the participants knew who was in the group to give some perspective on who was taking part.

The initial Delphi question coupled with the straw model provoked some interesting and divergent commentary. The next step relied on the information being categorised and integrated to generate the second questionnaire in a timely fashion. In contrast to waiting for the panellists to return their responses to the first survey, this part of the process required quite a significant effort. The project team needed to be in constant contact to discuss the incoming information in detail to determine whether the process was proceeding as expected and how best to format the next step.
Second-round survey—vote and rank

Bearing in mind that the intention here was to generate ideas and opinions, the aim in this second round was to get responses to other participants’ contributions. We opted to do this in two ways which made this stage in the Delphi process quite complicated for the panellists but, by now, staff had developed good levels of interaction and would be able to offer support. For the second round, the participants were given the 21 topics of the straw model again, reminded of the Delphi question, and the 76 comments from round one were incorporated into the grid (see appendix 4 for an example). The first task for the panellists was to select their 10 preferred subjects in descending order, only now they could see the group’s collected commentary in an adjoining box on the grid. The other task was to vote on how appropriate they considered the comments from round one to be, using a Likert-type scale ranging from 5 for most agreement to 1 for least agreement. There was a space to vote for each of the 76 comments from round one. This round was a significant increase in complexity both in terms of the input and in terms of the analysis. However, it remained within the objective of achieving concise communication and this round was also completed in four weeks.

For this step, again a significant, concentrated effort was required to analyse the information in the allotted time span. Part of this task created a summarising table of rank orders. First, all the topics were put into a rank order using the actual score given by each participant out of a possible 10 (see appendix 5, column ‘Actual score’). This was clarified by putting in the rank that each subject area achieved in order (see appendix 5, column ‘Place in order’). While this gave a good overall view, it was decided to also rank the positive scores; the scores where the participants had given from 5 marks and up. So the number of times a subject area scored 5 or over was added and put in order (see appendix 5, column ‘Rank 5+’). This gave a rank order of the subject areas that the panel was most enthusiastic about. In contrast another rank order of the subject areas that scored under 5 showed which items they were less inclined to rate well (see appendix 5, column ‘Rank U5’). Finally, when a subject area had received no vote this was counted as one missing vote. The missing votes for each subject area were added and a rank order of missing votes gave a reversal of the positive, 5 and
over, scores but, interestingly, not an exact mirror image (see appendix 5, column 'No vote given'). Therefore looking at the first line 'Measuring communication' shows an actual score of 71, is first in order, but ranked second for scores of 5 and over, ranked nineteenth equal, or last, for 'No vote given' and came fourteenth equal for a score of under 5. This process gave summarised views of what the group perceived to be important, less important and not important as topics for the IMC subject. Consideration of the issues raised by the summaries leads into an analysis of the voting on the collected commentary from the first-round questionnaire. This was especially helpful in clarifying where participants had divided opinions and why, as well as consolidating support for topics on which they were generally agreed. The overall distribution of subjects reflects the more practical concerns of industry leaders and it has given course development staff a solid, constructive basis from which to work. The table in appendix 5 collects and summarises the information obtained and was a key element of the Nominal Group Technique.

**Summary report and link to the NGT**

The analysis and summary of this second round was condensed into a report which was sent to the group along with a letter of thanks. Their input had been invaluable and achieved in a remarkably short time span without the problem of arranging meetings but with close communication maintained throughout. In conjunction with the delivery of the report to the panellists, there was a third round to this Delphi process. However, for the panellists the bulk of the effort was over. A brief telephone interview established positive feedback and generally supported the concept of being able to repeat the research. The panellists had enjoyed being involved, and this feeling had been amplified due to the communication management, nor had they found the process was too arduous or cumbersome. In fact, the panellists had only been directly involved for eight weeks. However, the overall process continued for staff.

The information gathered from the Delphi suggested that, although some areas of knowledge are critical, the emphasis of other areas may depend on the emphasis of the employer and the rated commentary.
supports this view. Educationally this might suggest that students should be able to choose from a range of topics from within this list to allow them to concentrate on either the strengths or weaknesses of their employer. It also encouraged strong debate amongst staff about the role of these topics in the IMC model as well as the differences in orientation between Australia's leading agencies. Commentators have noted the rapidly changing interface between business and education and in particular the vocational needs of students (O'Brien & Hart 1999, p.80), and the internationalisation of the business curriculum (Lawson, White & Dimitriadis 1998, p.141) which was especially high in marketing in comparison to other business subjects (Kwok et al. 1994, p.5). The mix of options available to students would give some flexibility in course planning while concurrently meeting the dynamic needs of business, especially at the postgraduate level of education. The final planning for the curriculum development was to be the focus of a Nominal Group Technique with staff.

A final step—Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

The face-to-face corollary of the Delphi method is the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (Delbecq et al. 1975), and it was an appropriate methodology for a detailed consideration by the teaching staff of the information that had been gathered from business. This meeting structure aims for consensus which, essentially, is facilitated by the objectivity it enables and democratic participation. Given that meetings have well-documented shortcomings, the moderator has an important role. The moderator must ensure that protocols are adhered to by all participants as these are the processes that reduce the impact of difficult personalities. The first step is the silent generation of responses to the NGT question so sufficient quiet time and a supportive environment must be provided for this activity. The next step is the recording of these responses onto a flipchart or whiteboard for the group to use. This must be done in a methodical way that encourages each member to make their contribution in turn but discourages any discussion or expansive talk by individuals. It is important that this is done equitably and quickly. The ideas or responses are then discussed in turn, clarifying as required and expanding as needed. The following step is
to put the responses into a rank order and then to discuss the ranking. The final step is to vote on the ranked order or outcome.

The focus of this NGT was to take divergent opinions about communications topics from business leaders and come to a consensus on the development of a postgraduate marketing subject. The meeting comprised five members of staff who teach marketing communications. The moderator of the meeting described the Delphi study and the staff were given a copy of the summary report from the third stage. (Other materials including the data from the responses were also made available.) Focussing on the summary table (appendix 5) staff were given time to consider the NGT question:

Is the rank order of topics, in your opinion, the most relevant for the IMC curriculum for the next 5 to 10 years?

After the moderator gathered responses from each staff member in turn, the discussion was opened up and resulted in several significant points. The first, and perhaps most crucial point, was that all staff believed this was a valuable way to initiate a discussion of the curriculum and that the comments of the Delphi panel had helped significantly to clarify their ideas about the subject content. The meeting also agreed that a better balance of vocational outcomes and pedagogy could be achieved. However, staff felt that some of the Delphi panellists held quite specific views on IMC as a result of the kinds of industry from which they were derived. Therefore, staff used the disaggregated data to discuss the ranking of topics in depth. The following subjects would be given a strong position in the subject: Communication Theory (incorporating Measuring Communication), Communication Brief, Branding Issues, Budgets, Organisation, Agency/Client Relationship. Other topics, International/Global, Future Directions, and Social, Ethical and Legal issues would be incorporated throughout the subject as appropriate. The remaining topics would comprise a ‘toolkit’, Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Response, Sponsorship, Marketing PR and Personal Selling, and be given equal weight.

A second important point to note is that, in keeping with the objectives of the NGT, staff did reach a consensus on the topics for inclusion in the subject outline and the weight to be given to them. Finally, staff
resolved that, not only had the process clarified their views and enabled
a valuable consensus, but it had also given them useful ways to talk
about material with prospective and current students. The variations
and divergences of business opinion had given staff valuable insight
into current needs in different parts of the communications industry. In
addition to assisting with curriculum development, the materials
recorded in the Delphi process would also be useful in the pastoral care
of students.

**Conclusion**

This was a well-defined purposeful study, which systematically
gathered knowledge from a small number of informed experts through
the Delphi process and then made use of this diverse information in a
staff forum (NGT) aimed at consensus. The framework for the study
was informed by the close consideration of three issues: the
composition of the group, the research question and the number of
iterations needed to accomplish the aims of the research while
concurrently managing the communication effectively. The straw
model, in conjunction with the Delphi question, not only aimed to focus
the panellists in a relatively precise way, but the intention was also to
gather divergent opinions and ideas within these confines. Although
apparently a contradiction in terms, the combination worked well, in
conjunction with reduced iterations, to generate information in a timely
and contained manner. As a device to incorporate practitioner and
expert opinion on a regular and relatively unintrusive manner in a
concise timeframe, this modification of the Delphi process has shown
itself to be very valuable, particularly when the divergent opinions of
business are then utilised in a linked, consensus-generating Nominal
Group Technique for staff. Here the Delphi data gave an objective
starting point for staff discussions. When pedagogical and business
interests diverge this need not be a difficulty. Instead this can inform
the way in which business schools communicate with their
postgraduate students and be a useful starting point for staff
discussions about curriculum and pastoral care. The Delphi as a
method does not increase the accuracy of results but it does facilitate
communication between stakeholders (Cary & Salmon 1976, p.8) and, in
the process presented here, the Delphi NGT combination enables two kinds of communication necessary in the development of a vocational curriculum to be separated and so become more time-efficient for all concerned.

The resurgence of the Delphi method in the 1990s across geographically dispersed groups, particularly with the information revolution underway, is in some ways not surprising. Opportunities for time- and cost-effective exploration of planning and policy issues, in a systematic and recorded manner which seeks informed judgements through Delphi techniques, abound in a globally orientated education system. The modification described here shows how busy staff and executives can maintain organised and productive liaison to ensure that the business curriculum is relevant in today's rapidly changing marketplace.

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