



Bachelor's Thesis

Brand Development

**- An Investigation from a Branding Agency's
Perspective -**

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ABSTRACT

The aim with this thesis is to gain an understanding of how a brand is developed. My research mainly describes but also explains and explores the branding process and how a brand identity and brand personality can be developed. I have conducted case studies with two companies: *Brand Management Network* and *Brand Consultancy*. I have found it to be of great importance to make sure that the brand's current identity, image and position are clear and understood, before the brand is developed. Moreover, it is important to go through all steps in the branding process and to do them thorough. Furthermore, when developing the brand identity it is useful to look at the brand through four perspectives. Finally, when deciding, which personality traits that should go into the brand personality a company should think of and describe the brand as if it was a person, an animal or a car.

SAMMANFATTNING

Syftet med den här uppsatsen är att skapa en förståelse för hur man utvecklar ett varumärke. Min undersökning huvudsakligen beskriver men även förklarar samt upptäcker hur varumärkes processen ser ut samt hur man kan utveckla en varumärkes identitet och varumärkes personlighet. Jag har utfört fallstudier på två företag: *Brand Management Network* och *Brand Consultancy*. I min undersökning kom jag fram till att det är av stor vikt, vid utvecklandet av ett varumärke, att man noggrant går igenom alla stegen i varumärkes processen. När man skapar en identitet för varumärket är det användbart att se på varumärket ur fyra olika perspektiv. När man beslutar om vilka personlighets drag som ska ingå i varumärkespersonligheten så bör man beskriva och se på varumärket som om det var en person bil eller djur.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this opening chapter, I will first present the historical background and the evolution of brands. Next, a problem discussion will follow in which I describe and discuss brands and branding. Finally, I will present the purpose, research questions, limitations and disposition of my research.

1.1 BACKGROUND - the Evolution of Brands

The first known use of branding dates back to the ancient Egyptians, where craftsmen put unique marks on bricks they produced in order to identify the authenticity of their products (www.brandconsult.com). Evidence also suggests that brands were used during the Greek and Roman eras. At this time, shop-owners hang up pictures above their store to indicate what kind of products they sold. The aim with the symbols (brands) was also to point out retailers' specialties. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992)

In the Middle Ages, branding was used more extensively. Craftsmen with specialist skills began to stamp marks on their goods and trademarks. Branding by that became a guarantee of the source of the product and a form of legal protection against competition. This was necessary, as competition became fiercer when more than one shoemaker, carpenter etc. started up a business in one community. (Kapferer, 1992)

Cattle farmers in the early history of the United States represent another landmark in the evolution of brands. Branding in this case was the process where farmers used a red, hot iron uniquely shaped, to leave clear imprints on their cattle's skin. The purpose with the branding was to make clear to potential interest parties, which animals the different cattle farmers owned. The brands by that worked as differentiating devices and this view of the purpose of brands as being identifying devices has remained with us until the 1960s. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992)

Classic brand management developed in the grocery sector, and we need to go back 100 years in time, to see how brands, in this sector, have evolved and brought us to where we are today. The evolution of brands from the 1800s and up until today is a result of the changing environment in the consumer goods industry. The largest "change agent" is the shift of the bargaining power between the different interest parties: manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers. (Ibid.)

Before the industrial revolution, most goods were sold directly by the manufacturer, in markets, or by traveling salesmen. The advent of the industrial revolution brought about several changes for the manufacturers. Increased urbanization, which decreased the contact between manufactures and consumers, larger markets (through improved transportation) and an increased number of retailers, were the results of the industrial revolution. Due to this, manufacturers and retailers lost their power, and became dependent on wholesalers. The wholesaler put pressure on the price, hence the only way for manufacturers to raise profits was to become more efficient. The power was in the hands of the wholesaler. By selling unbranded goods, the wholesalers made sure that the customer did not develop preferences for a certain manufacturer's products, thus they were able to alter their purchasing by buying from the manufacturer, which could offer the lowest

price. Consequently, up until 1900 most goods on the market were unbranded. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992)

By 1900, the balance of power swung to the manufacturers. This power switch was made possible due to increased consumer demand and technological developments, which brought about an opportunity for manufacturers to gain economies of scale by setting up large-scale production facilities. The cost of establishing these larger production facilities was considerable; hence in order to protect their investment and stabilize demand manufacturers had to decrease the power of the wholesalers. They did this in three ways; registered patents, established brand names and started to advertise directly to consumers (pursued a pull-strategy). At this time, the advertising focused on promoting awareness of reliability, and guaranteeing that goods with brand names were of consistent quality. The power switch, from wholesalers to manufacturers, marked a milestone in the evolutionary period of brands, and the power remained with the manufacturers up until the 1960s. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992)

In the past 30 years, the power in the consumer goods industry has once again shifted. The industry environment has changed and left the retailers with the bargaining power. Centralized buying and centralized warehousing have made retailers more efficient. Retailers use their increased power to put pressure on manufacturers to give large discounts. Large discounts, allow them to keep prices lower, attract more customers, and bring in large profits. Some retailers use these higher margins to fund their own label programs. (Aaker, 1998)

Favorable conditions for retailers to develop their own label programs (distributor brands) are excess manufacturing capacity, products that are perceived as commodities, low levels of manufacturer involvement, low level of technology in the production, and not significant high brand advertising. Retailers' increased investments in own labels, and less support behind manufacturer brands, have changed consumers' perceptions regarding the difference between brands and own labels. Thus, nowadays consumers perceive less difference between brands and own labels. Choice in certain product fields (where the above favorable conditions apply) is therefore more influenced by availability, price and point of sale displays. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992)

Not all manufacturer brands have lost share the past years though. In contrast, some manufacturers have succeeded to develop very strong brands, like for example, *Nestle* and *Unilever*. Companies like these have realized that the future of strong brands lies in a commitment to maintain unique added values and communicating these to consumers. Retailers are aware of these manufacturers' strong commitments behind their brands and want to stock them. They are also more or less forced to stock them as the manufacturers pursue a pull-strategy. In the product fields where strong manufacturers communicate their brands' values to consumers, choice is strongly influenced by quality and perception of brand personality. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992) This is where we are today.

BRANDS TODAY

Nowadays brands play a significant role in the purchase decision, due to the fact that they combine much more than just a name and a symbol. The evolution process throughout the years

has added several components and today the brand concept, according to www.brandconsult.com encompasses the following elements.

- A name
- A symbol (logo)
- The company
- A set of attributes and associations
- Expectations/perceptions (image)
- A statement about the customer
- The actual product/service
- A promise/commitment of some benefits.

The purpose of brands has changed and extended throughout the years. From being seen as just a sign of ownership, an increased number of marketers are nowadays adopting the view of the purpose of brands as being strategic devices. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992) Moreover, brands are considered as very important assets to a company. In fact, in many businesses brands constitute the primary capital. The value of a firm can no longer be measured only in terms of its real estate, tangible assets, plants and equipment. The real value of a company lies outside the business itself, in its intangible assets (i.e. its brands). Evidence, which support this statement, is the fact that companies are bought and sold for sums that far exceed their value on the balance sheet. The *Buitoni* group, for example, was bought for 35 times its earnings. (Kapferer, 1992)

In the 21st century, the real power of brands lies in the brand's capability to add value - to both consumers and companies. For the producer, the value lies in the brand's capacity to generate cash flow. A strong and compelling brand identity will attract more customers and investors and allow higher prices/margins. (www.brandconsult.com) According to Kapferer (1992), the main benefit for a company, to have a successful brand, is the dollar premium, which results from having customers who are committed to the brand and are willing to pay extra for it. Another benefit with having a strong brand is that branding, once in place, is much harder for competitors to copy than product and service features (www.brandconsult.com).

One of the ways that brands deliver value to customers is their timesaving function. By recalling either brand experience or marketing claims, the consumer can save the effort of having to seek for information. (Chernatony & McDonald, 1992) Brands by that work as short hand devices. This is an important attribute in today's crowded marketplace. An additional strength of brands is their ability to add value, which satisfies not only functional but also social and physiological needs. According to Aaker and Biel (1993) one of the main benefits of brands can be the use of them as personality statements (badges). This is because consumers seek brands with personalities that are congruent with either their own or sought after (aspirational or ideal) personality. (Ibid.)

The use of brands have increased and developed throughout the years. The concept itself has evolved and come to encompass several elements, and the importance of brands to companies has also increased as well as their ability to deliver value. Today brands are one of the key determinants of success, and the existence and profitability of a company can depend on their ability to develop a successful brand.

1.2. PROBLEM DISCUSSION

Today's marketplace consists of a myriad of products and services. Therefore, in a purchase situation, consumers are faced with an endless number of options. So, what can a company do to make customers buy their specific product/service, and what is it that makes a company successful? According to Chernatony & McDonald (1992), brands are one of the key determinants to success and this is because a powerful brand can work as a vehicle to get above the market noise. Aaker and Biel (1993) adds that it is extremely important for companies that are involved in international business, to have the knowledge and resources to develop and strengthen brands. This is because even though there are many languages spoken around the world, some words are globally known, like for example, *Coca-Cola*, *McDonald's* and *Disney*. Consequently brands are a global language. (Ibid.)

There has been a growing corporate emphasis on increasing shareholder value throughout the 1980s and 1990s according to the *Ashton Brand Group* (1998). The C.E.O. of a firm is expected to keep the company growing, retain the loyal investment community and keep shareholders happy (Ibid.). Now how can this be done? *Ashton Brand Group* suggests that the solution is to grow the brand. This is because the benefit of a strong brand is consumer and investor confidence in and loyalty to the company. Today, it is not enough to have a product or service that satisfy customer needs, a company also needs to make their offer stand apart from those of competitors; brands can do that (Ibid.). According to www.brandconsult.com a brand can be defined as follows:

“ A brand is a combination of functional and emotional characteristics that define a certain image or personality, which, in turn, drives a level of affinity (usage) among certain customer. “

The actual creation of a brand and a brand identity is done in the minds of each individual consumer. Marketers do not have the power to build a brand, the only thing they can do is to position (or reposition) a product in the mind of the consumer. Once the brand has been positioned, the marketplace builds the bridge from position to perception, not the marketer. (Gardner, 1998) Consequently, in the end, consumers are the ones who actually decide how a brand is perceived (i.e. its image).

BRANDING

Branding is about creating and managing brands. Branding does not only involve creating a brand from scratch but also to strengthen, reposition, restate/rejuvenate, expand or extend an already existing brand. (www.brandconsult.com) When developing a brand it is important, according to Bergstrom (1996), to have a process to get from point a to point b. Furthermore, Bergstrom suggests that branding is a six-step process¹, which starts with getting to know thy brand and ends with a monitor, measure and adjust phase.

Branding has in recent years, come to attract a much broader attention from companies. As markets are becoming more complex and competitive, and the advances in manufacturing, distribution and communication have created a large array of products and services; marketers turn to branding because it offers the best opportunity to create growth (www.brandconsult.com)

¹ Section 2.1 in the literature review chapter will further explain this six-step process.

There is no doubt that brands are powerful in today's market place, and the following statement by King (1998) shows the real power of brands.

" A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless. "

BRAND STRATEGY

A brand should be considered as an asset and it needs, like any other asset, constant attention, investment and managing i.e. a strategy of its own (Fifield, 1998). According to Chernatony & McDonald, (1992), a brand strategy is the result of strategic thinking, which integrates a marketing program across the complete marketing mix. Fifield (1998) adds that when developing a brand strategy care needs to be taken to make sure that the image and positioning of the product is consistent with the organization's business and marketing objectives.

Brand identity, brand image and brand position are three branding concepts that need to be thoroughly researched when developing a brand strategy. Thus, these three concepts are very important to be familiar with. Even though they might sound similar, there is a distinct difference between the three. A brand image is how the brand is now perceived, the brand identity is how the strategists want the brand to be perceived and the brand position is the part of the brand identity and value proposition to be actively communicated to a target audience. (Aaker, 1996)

The purpose with the brand strategy is to work as a guideline to create or develop a strong brand. The ultimate evidence of a strong brand is brand equity. Aaker (1996) suggests that brand equity is a set of assets and these assets are perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty. Brand awareness refers to the strength of a brand's presence in the consumer's mind. Brand loyalty is the strength of preference for a brand compared to other options. Brand associations are the functional or emotional associations that are assigned to a brand. Perceived quality is a brand association and it is the only one, among all associations, that is shown to drive financial performance. (Ibid.) The problem, however, when measuring brand equity is that it is very difficult for companies to identify their brand associations, levels of consumer awareness, or degree of customer loyalty etc. Another problem is that, in the last decade, managers that are desperately for short-term financial results have damaged their brands through price promotions and unwise brand extension. (Ashton Brand Group, 1998)

BRAND IDENTITY

Brand associations, which are one of the four assets that constitute brand equity, are driven by the brand identity—what the organization wants the brand to stand for in the customers' mind. Hence, the key to build a strong brand is to develop and implement a brand identity. A brand identity can be defined as *"a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain"*. (www.brandconsult.com) In his book *'Building Strong Brands'* (1996), Aaker suggests that the purpose of a brand identity is to help establish a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition involving functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits. The question now is, how can a brand identity be developed.

A brand identity can be further developed and the result of expressing a brand identity in personal characteristics is a brand personality. Like a person, a brand can be perceived as sophisticated and stylish, young, old, feminine, masculine etc. A Company will try to build their brand personality with characteristics that are appealing to their target markets. (Aaker, 1996) The problem, however, is that it can be very difficult to figure out which characteristics that should go into the brand personality.

Based on the above discussion, an overall purpose emerges and also some more specific research questions.

1.3. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose with this investigation is to gain an understanding of how a brand is developed.

In order to achieve the above stated purpose, the following three research questions will be further investigated.

- ? How can the branding process be described?
- ? How can a brand identity be developed?
- ? How can a brand personality be developed?

1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Branding is a very interesting subject and there are many things that would be interesting to investigate more in depth. However, due to both limitations in resources and time I have decided to focus on the general branding process and how a brand identity and brand personality can be developed. Moreover, my study will focus on the development of an already existing brand and not the creation of a brand from scratch. These issues will be described and analyzed through a branding agency's point of view. The time limitation has led me to limit my study to two companies.

1.5. DISPOSITION

In this section I will briefly outline the content of chapter two through six.

Chapter two: In this chapter I will present theories related to my three research questions: the branding process, brand identity and brand personality. Methodology is my *chapter three* and in this chapter I will explain and justify the choices of methodology approaches that I have practiced in my study. *Chapter four* encompasses the empirical findings from the two case studies conducted. *Chapter five* combines the empirical findings with the previously presented theories in an analysis. Finally, in *chapter six* I will present my conclusions and implications.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce my theoretical framework. I will begin with a theory about the branding process, next brand identity will be explained and finally a theory about brand personality will be presented.

2.1. THE BRANDING PROCESS: Research Question One

According to Bergstrom (1999) a thorough understanding of branding, a discipline around branding and a process to get from point a to point b are fundamentals in the process of creating a successful brand. Furthermore, Bergstrom suggests that branding is a six-step process.

Step One: Know Thy Brand

Know thy brand is the first step in the branding process and it involves performing a brand audit. A brand audit includes an assessment of the current situation as well as a valuation of the brand. The main purpose of the audit is to gain a deeper understanding of the brand. A firm needs to figure out what their brand means to customers and prospects, their brand's personality and the permissions and limits that the brand has according to customers and prospects. Moreover, what needs to be investigated is how the brand relates to competitor brands and what role the brand plays in the market place and industry. The information, necessary in order to answer these questions, can be gathered by talking to customers and prospects in focus groups.

The use of focus groups represents an excellent way for firms to receive insights regarding the true feelings and attitudes customers have about the brand and those of competitors. By pursuing in depth talks with customers, a brand's strengths and weaknesses can be exposed, as well as customer affinity and loyalty. The brand's customer segment can also be defined by assessing how different consumers perceive and value the brand.

Step Two: Determine an Optimal Brand Future

Once the brand has been defined and described, it is time to determine the ideal or optimal place for the brand. In order to do this effectively, the brand must be viewed in relation to the overall business strategy and plan. The firm needs to consider what business they are in, whom they want to attract as customers, what those customers want, and where the market opportunity is. The brand vision, that the organization creates, should look at least three years out and answer the following question. Where do we want the brand to be, given where the market is headed, where competitors are strong and weak and what permissions and limits customers and prospects are willing to give the brand.

Step Three: Develop a Brand Trajectory

When the brand's current position is mapped out and its future position is articulated, the next step is to identify the trajectory (i.e. path) that the brand needs to take in order to reach its optimal positioning. The trajectory involves determine which products and services that can be developed under the brand umbrella, and which brand attributes that need to be strengthened or weakened.

Sometimes, in order to credibly deliver against its future positioning, the brand trajectory will require the organization to consider developing some additional core competencies.

An important part in the development of a brand trajectory is to determine if the organization is capable of moving from its current positioning to an ideal future positioning. In addition, some important issues need to be addressed. First, is the organizational culture capable of implementing the changes that are required? Second, are there resources available to make the necessary changes? Third, what competitive reactions can be anticipated? By doing these reality checks, a company can prevent creating an environment in which the brand promises something the brand (and the organization behind it) cannot deliver.

Step Four: Create the Brand Strategy

The creation of the actual brand strategy involves most parts of the organization. The people, resources, and approaches necessary to realize the vision have to be identified. Furthermore, what needs to be determined is an appropriate brand strategy framework. Three basic frameworks are available: the corporate or company brand, family brand or individual brand.

Step Five: Identify the Brand Action Steps

This step involves determining the specific brand action steps that can be taken in each functional area of the business where the brand is encountered. There are two advantages in specifying what each area can do to contribute to move the brand to its ideal positioning. First, it represents an opportunity for the brand to be reinforced. Second, it ensures that the brand's attributes are being delivered and communicated effectively. It is in this step that the brand becomes everyone's business. Brand actions for customer service, distribution, delivery, product development, and all other areas must be developed and implementation plans created that sequence the activities in a logical and integrated way. The implementation plan needs to acknowledge that in order to move the brand to its optimal position, everything must work together and some actions have to occur before others.

Step Six: Monitor, Measure and Adjust

This step is the final step in the process to develop a successful power brand. It recognises the fact that brands are dynamic and therefore have to be monitored and measured to ensure they remain relevant to the customer. A company should try to establish a baseline benchmark of specific brand metrics, such as awareness, attribute association, preference, and loyalty. The benefit of this is that as the brand actions are implemented, the return on investment for each action can be measured and rewarded. It is very important to be able to track progress because this will justify efforts and expenses for brand actions.

Table 2-1 summarizes the above six steps, which according to Bergstrom (1999), should be included in the branding process.

Table 2-1: The Branding Process

THE BRANDING PROCESS
1. Know Thy Brand
2. Determine an Optimal Brand Future
3. Develop a Brand Trajectory
4. Create a Brand Strategy
5. Identify the Brand Action Steps
6. Monitor, Measure, and Adjust

Source: Adapted from Bergstrom (1999)

2.2. BRAND IDENTITY: Research Question Two

According to Aaker (1996) the key to building strong brands and thus creating brand equity, is the understanding and management of brand identity. A brand identity is something that makes customers buy the product or service due to how they perceive the brand. Moreover, brand identity is central to a brand’s strategic vision because it provides direction, purpose and meaning for the brand.

“Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members” (Aaker, 1996, p.68)

In his book *“Creating Strong Brands”* (1996) Aaker presents a theory in which he explains the concept brand identity. Aaker suggests that a brand identity consist of twelve dimensions organized around four perspectives. These perspectives are brand-as-product, brand-as-organization, brand-as-symbol and brand-as-person. A company that are in the process of developing a brand identity, should consider their brand from these four perspectives and determine which of the twelve elements that should be used as a part of the brand identity. Now a summary of Aaker’s theory will be presented in which a brand identity’s four perspectives and twelve elements thoroughly will be explained.

2.2.1. THE BRAND AS PRODUCT- PRODUCT RELATED ASSOCIATIONS

Brand associations are the attributes that customers think of when they hear or see the brand-name. Product associations are associations that the consumer makes to the product. In many cases, it is the assessment of the product itself that determines the purchase. Thus, product related associations are very important parts of a brand's identity. The brand-as-product category involves six different associations.

The Product Scope – Associations with Product Class

The product scope involves associations with product class. A product, for instance, *Visa* is associated with its product class, credit cards. It is an advantage, for a company, to have a brand that is recalled when its product class is cued, because this will strongly influence the choice of brand in a purchase situation. If a consumer is to buy, for instance, washing detergent, and immediately think of *Via*, he/she are more than likely to buy the specific brand that he/she instantly recalled.

Product Related Attributes

Product related attributes are directly related to the purchase or use of a product and can provide both functional, as well as emotional benefits for customers. A product related attribute can also add value by offering something extra (like features or services), or something better (like, for example, the *7-Eleven* chain that offers more convenience than grocery stores). Marketers, however, need to be careful not to focus exclusively on product attributes when they create a brand identity. Other perspectives, that can add value and distinctiveness to the brand, also need to be taken into consideration

Quality / Value

Many times' quality represents the heart of a brand's identity. A company can use quality as a core identity element. *Gillette*, for example, positions themselves as "*the best a man can get*". Value, which closely relates to quality, enriches the quality concept because it adds the price dimension. *Wal Mart*, for instance, positions themselves as value retailers.

Associations with Use Occasion

A company that wishes to own a particular use should add this element to their brand identity. *Gatorade*, for example, owns the use context of athletes looking to sustain a high level of performance.

Associations with Users

Another way of positioning a brand is to link it to a specific type of user. *Weigh Watchers*, for example, are associated with those who are interested in weigh control and nutrition. This element is related to a brand's personality, which will be further discussed in section 2.4.

Link to Country or Region

To associate the brand with a country or region (that will add credibility to it) is another way for a company to differentiate their brand. *Champagne*, for example, is seen as French, *Swatch* watches as Swiss, and *Mercedes* as German. In each case, the brand's associations with a country or region implies that the brand will provide higher quality, because that country or region has a heritage of making the best within that product class.

2.2.2. THE BRAND-AS-ORGANISATION

The brand-as-organization perspective focuses on attributes of the organization rather than those of the product or service. An organizational attribute is an attribute that is based on organizational culture, values, and programs (and thus transcends a particular product model context). There are three benefits to why it might be better to base a brand identity on organizational rather than on product attributes. First, it is easier to copy a product than to duplicate an organization with unique people, values, and programs. Second, organizational attributes usually apply to a set of product classes, and a competitor in only one product class might find it difficult to compete. Third, because organizational attributes such as being innovative are hard to evaluate and communicate, it is difficult for competitors to demonstrate that they have overcome any perceived gap. Additional benefits are the fact that organizational attributes can contribute to a value proposition, provide credibility for the product claims of sub-brands, and build customer relationships.

There are many organizational associations available to managers. The following, which are to be discussed more thoroughly, are a representative few of the most prevalent and useful associations.

- Society/community orientation
- Perceived quality
- Innovation
- Concern for customers
- Presence and success
- Local vs. global

Society/Community Orientation

Showing environmental sensitivity, sponsor worthwhile charities and be involved in their communities are some of the things a company can do to create organizational associations with a society/community orientation. *The Body Shop* is an example of a company that has developed associations of being strong community and society oriented. A part of their business and brand identity is campaigning and their society/community commitment is clear in the actions they take to promote social and environmental change. It is *The Body Shop's* organizational culture and the associations that people make about them, that differentiate them from other companies in the same industry. Consumers that are concerned with the world around them, are likely to find *The Body Shop's* brand identity appealing because they can identify with it.

To benefit from showing social responsibility, it is of great importance that the programs and actions that a company participates in, can be translated into perceptions that help them stand out from the crowd. To do this, they must obey the fundamentals of branding. First, have a focus, like for instance, education, the inner city or bicycling trails. This is because a focus enhances both impact and visibility. Second, be consistent over time. To have a long term involvement is likely to have much more impact on customer perceptions than a scattered charity-of the-month-program. Finally, link the program to the brand. One way of doing this is to participate in programs that are related to the firm's business.

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is considered as the main criteria when consumers decide which product/service to buy. A firm can claim that their product is of better quality by demonstrating or arguing, that their brand's product attributes are superior to those of competitors. Another alternative is to use organizational associations to make the quality claim. In this case, the focus will be on the firm rather than on the products. An example of this is *General Motor* (GM) whose slogan is "*GM Mark of Excellence.*" This is a corporate-wide effort spanning all *General Motors* brands and it reflects an organizational commitment to quality.

Innovation

For Japanese firm's, innovation represent an essential corporate brand association. This is also true for some Western firms, especially those who are competing in a product class, in which technology and innovation are important to the customer, like for example, *Gillette* in razors and *Intel* in microprocessors.

It is difficult to have a product or service that is the best at any given time. There is always someone who can do better or there are some segments that are uninformed or unconvinced. Therefore, to have a reputation of being innovative can be an advantage for a company because it is more durable. In addition, a reputation for innovativeness can also provide credibility in making new product claims. The innovative firm will be given the benefit of the doubt because it has a track record of breakthroughs. Firms that make products containing the most advanced features and capabilities are likely to be seen upon as more innovative than less technology advanced companies.

Concern for Customers

To have concern about customers and place them first is a core value for many organizations. The effect, if a firm manages to credibly communicate such a philosophy, is that customers will not only gain confidence in the products and services but also feel that someone cares for them. It is a lot easier to like someone who likes you. Several corporate brands have made this concept of friendship one of the defining elements of their corporate brand identity. *Gateway* computer, for example, has a tagline - "*you have a friend in the business*"- that distinguishes it from competitors who focus on price and features. The friend metaphor is very powerful because it suggests that the brand will deliver what the customer wants (i.e. honesty, caring, dependability, and respect).

Presence and Success

The visibility and presence of the organization behind a brand can create an image of size, substance and competence. It is important for companies; especially those involved in high-tech markets, to have the association of presence and success. This is because many consumers perceives less risk and feel more comfortable in dealing with an organization that has long history of doing business and the resources to back up its products. Visible success, as indicated by sales and/or sales growth, also provides customers with the reassurance of knowing that other customers have selected the brand. Moreover, event sponsorships are ways for an organization to develop a presence and a sense of substance. *WordPerfect*, for example, was an unknown software company in Europe until it became the sponsor of one of Europe's top bicycle racing teams. Through this sponsorship, *WordPerfect* acquired not only exposure but also much of the teams visibility and prestige.

Local vs. Global

An important decision that a company needs to make is if their brand should be a global or a local brand. One strategy is to establish the brand as a local brand from a local company. By doing this a firm can differentiate themselves by emphasizing the regional heritage to customers and by that hope to create a bond. The use of a local route is not restricted to local firms only because some of the most successful U.S. brands in Europe are accepted as part of the local culture and are not viewed as being foreign. The benefit of pursuing a go-local strategy is that it provides a link to customers. It can, for example, suggest that the brand is a part of the neighborhood and stands against the company (from the big city or foreign country) who neither care about nor understand the local culture. Another advantage with establishing a local brand is that it might result in a better understanding of the needs and attitudes of locality. This, in turn, can lead to product refinements and more effective brand identity implementation efforts.

The second identity option is to go global. There are several benefits with this approach. First, a global brand signals longevity, resources to invest in the brand, and a commitment to the brand's future. Second, a global firm will be presumed to be advanced technologically, and have the ability not to only invest in research and development but also to draw on the advancements in the countries in which it competes. Third, because of its ability to compete successfully in different markets a global brand will have considerable prestige. In addition, the global brand is often the established market leader; it can put on a personality of being worldly and cosmopolitan, and these characteristics can (in some product categories) be very important.

2.2.3. THE BRAND-AS-SYMBOL

The successful linking of a symbol to a brand can result in a much stronger brand identity. This is because the use of a symbol can make it easier to gain recognition and recall. Furthermore, the presence of a symbol can be a key ingredient in brand development and its absence can be a substantial handicap. A company can use three different types of symbols.

Visual Imagery

Symbols that involve visual imagery can be both more memorable and powerful. For example, *Coke's* classic shaped can, the *Mercedes-Benz* emblem, and *Nike's* "swoosh". Sometimes all that takes is a glance to be reminded of the brand. This is due to the fact that connections between the symbol and the identity elements have been built up over time, so the visual image alone have the ability to communicate much of its brand's identity.

Metaphor

Symbols will be more meaningful if they involve a metaphor. The metaphor can be with the symbol or a symbol characteristic representing a functional, emotional, or self-expressive benefit. For instance, Michael Jordan's leaping ability is a metaphor for the performance of a *Nike* shoe, and the *Energizer* bunny is a metaphor for long battery life.

The Brand Heritage

A vivid, meaningful heritage can also sometimes represent the essence of the brand. For instance, *Amtrak*² relates its riders' experience to the heritage of first-class rail travel, reminding customers that "there's something about a train that's magic."

2.2.4. THE BRAND-AS-PERSON: BRAND PERSONALITY

The brand-as-person involves extending the brand identity by adding human characteristics to the brand. Like a person, a brand can be perceived as upscale, competent, impressive, trustworthy, fun, active, humorous, casual, formal, youthful, or intellectual. The development of a brand personality will make the brand identity richer and more interesting compared to one that is based only on product attributes. The creation of a brand personality is a key ingredient in the creation of a successful brand. What a brand personality is, how it can be created and how it can help create brand equity will be further discussed in section 3.4.

The four perspectives and twelve different elements are very useful to have in mind when creating a brand. However, not every brand identity needs to use all or several perspectives. Only the perspectives that are helpful in expressing what the brand should stand for, in the customer's mind, should be used. Table 2-2 summarizes a brand identity's four perspectives and twelve elements.

² Amtrak is a U.S. railway company

Table 2-2: Brand Identity

BRAND IDENTITY
BRAND AS PRODUCT 1. Product Scope 2. Product Attributes 3. Quality/Value 4. Uses 5. Users 6. Country of Origin
BRAND AS ORGANIZATION 7. Organization Attributes 8. Local vs. Global
BRAND AS PERSON 9. Personality 10. Brand Customer Relationship
BRAND AS SYMBOL 11. Visual Imagery and Metaphors 12. Brand Heritage

Source: Adapted from Aaker (1996, p. 79)

2.3. BRAND PERSONALITY: Research Question Three

Aaker (1996) defines a brand personality as "*the set of human characteristics associated with a given brand*". A brand personality can be described in the same vocabulary used to characterise a person. In particular a brand can be described by demographics (age, gender, social class, race), lifestyle (activities, interests, and opinions), or human personality traits (such as extroversion, agreeableness and dependability). (Ibid.) When a brand is defined with human characteristics the product or service is given a personality that people can relate to on an emotional level. The most effective brands are charismatic (i.e. has a personality) and provide an advantage over brands that appeal only to logic. (Myron, 1999)

According to Aaker (1996), there are several reasons to why companies should develop personalities for their brands. First, it will increase a firm's understanding of people's perceptions of and attitudes toward the brand. Second, the personality itself can work as a means to differentiate the product and this is particular important in markets where brands are similar with respect to their product attributes. Third, it can guide the communication effort because it is easier to implement and communicate a brand that has a personality rather than a brand that is

specified only in terms of attribute associations. Finally, the number one reason to create a brand personality is that it can contribute to brand equity.

2.3.1. HOW TO CREATE A BRAND PERSONALITY

There are various ways of creating a brand personality. According to Temporal (1999) the brand personality should be matched as closely as possible to that of the consumer or to a personality they like. Furthermore, Temporal suggests that the creation of a brand personality is a four-step process.

1. Define the target audience.
2. Find out what they need, want and like.
3. Build a consumer personality profile.
4. Create the product personality to match the profile.

The aim with this profiling approach is to reinforce the self-concept of the consumers and their aspirations. This approach is specifically suitable for brands that adapt a marketing niche strategy. It can also be extremely successful if a market segment has a high degree of global homogeneity. (Temporal, 1999)

2.3.2. BRAND PERSONALITY DRIVERS

In his book “*Creating Strong Brands*” (1996), Aaker states that the personality of a brand is affected by everything that is associated with the brand and these associations can be both product-related as well as product-unrelated. Table 2-3 summarizes these factors. I will now more thoroughly explain how each of these factors, according to Aaker, can be used to create associations.

Product related characteristics can be primary drivers of a brand personality and these characteristics involve product class, package or feature, price and attributes. A product class can affect the personality of a brand because, for example, banks tend to assume a stereotypical "banker" personality (competent, serious, masculine, old and upper class). The package or feature can also influence the brand personality. For example, the white box with black splotches (reminiscent of Holstein cows) provides a down-to-earth personality for *Gateway Computer*. Furthermore, a brand personality is often affected by product attributes; for instance, *Weight Watcher's* brand personality might be described as slender and healthy (the same way as their food would be described).

Non-product-related characteristics also have an impact on how a brand's personality is perceived. These factors are, user imagery, sponsorship, age, symbol, country of origin, company image, C.E.O. and celebrity endorsers. User imagery can be based on either typical users (people you see using the brand) or idealized users (as portrayed in advertising and elsewhere). User imagery is a powerful driver of brand personality because the use of a person reduces the difficulty of conceptualizing the brand personality. As an example, companies that wishes to portray their clothes as being sporty can achieve a sporty image by having a famous athlete wear their clothes in advertisements. Sponsorship is another way for a firm to influence their brand

personality. *Häagen-Dazs*, for example, helped create a prestigious, upscale personality with its sponsorship of several opera performances under the theme '*Dedicated to pleasure, Dedicated to the arts*'. The age of the brand also influences the personality of the brand, because a relatively new brand such as *Apple* tends to have a younger personality than *IBM*. Furthermore, a symbol can be a powerful influence on brand personality. The benefit of using a symbol is that it can create extremely strong associations. *Apple's* bitten apple and the *Marlboro* Cowboy are examples of strong symbols. Country of origin also contributes to the personality of the brand, for example, a German brand like *Audi* might capture some of the perceived characteristics of German people (such as being precise, serious and hard working). The company image also has an effect. *The Body Shop*, for example, might suggest a social activist working hard to stimulate change. Finally, the personality of a visible C.E.O., (like Bill Gates) or a celebrity endorser (like Michael Jordan) might transfer to the brand.

Table 2-3: Brand Personality Drivers

BRAND PERSONALITY DRIVERS	
PRODUCT-RELATED FACTORS	PRODUCT UN-RELATED FACTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Product Class- Package or feature- Price- Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- User imagery- Sponsorship- Age- Symbol- Country of origin- Company image- CEO- Celebrity Endorsers

Source: Adapted from Aaker (1996)

2.3.3. HOW A BRAND PERSONALITY CREATES BRAND EQUITY

According to Aaker (1996) brand personality can contribute to brand equity in three different ways. First, it can help create a self-expressive benefit that becomes a vehicle for the customer to express his or her own personality. Second, a brand personality can work as a basis for the relationship between the customer and the brand. Third, a brand personality may help communicate a product attribute and thus contribute to a functional benefit. Now a summary of Aakers theory will follow in which I thoroughly explain the three ways that brand personality contributes to brand equity.

The Self-Expressive Model

The self-expression model says that some group of customers buy brands, because, brands for them work as vehicles to express a part of their self-identity. This self-identity can be either their actual identity or an ideal self to which they might aspire. People can express their own or

idealized identity through job choice, friends, attitudes, opinions, activities, and lifestyles. In addition, brands can also provide a vehicle for self-expression because the brand can work as a badge (i.e. a personal statement). A consumer's choice of badge is often determined by the statement that they want to make to friends, neighbors, co-workers or relatives (Ries & Ries, 1998). Sometimes, brands that work as badges have strong social impact, because the presence of a brand can help define the person with respect to others (i.e. determine one's social identity). Thus, product categories such as autos, cosmetics, and clothes contribute to express a person's personality. This is because the use of these products occurs in a social context where individuals evaluate and interpret another person's identity by observing the car they drive and the clothes they wear.

The Relationship Basis Model

The relationship basis model suggests that some brands have the ability to establish a relationship with the consumer analogous to that between two people. Moreover, just as human personalities affect relationships between people, brand personality can be the basis of a relationship between the customer and the brand. The concept of a relationship between a brand and a person provides a different perspective on how brand personality might work. The following are examples of different kinds of personalities that can both explain a brand's personality and the relationship between two people.

- ?? Down-to-earth, family oriented, genuine, old-fashioned (sincerity): *Kodak, Coke*. The relationship might be similar to one that exists with a well-liked and respected member of the family.
- ?? Spirited, young, up-to-date, outgoing (excitement): *Pepsi*. On a weekend evening, it might be enjoyable to have a friend who has these personality characteristics.
- ?? Accomplished, influential, competent (competence): *The Wall Street Journal*. The same as the relationship with a person whom you respect for their accomplishments such as a teacher, minister or business leader.
- ?? Pretentious, wealthy, condescending (sophistication): *BMW, Mercedes*. The relationship could be similar to one with a powerful boss or rich relative.
- ?? Athletic and outdoorsy (ruggedness): *Nike*. When planning an outing, a friend with outdoorsy interests would be welcome.

Two elements affect an individual's relationship with a brand. The relationship between the brand-as-person (analogous to the relationship between two people) is one of them. The brand personality (the type of person the brand represents) is the second one. The benefit with a brand personality is that it provides depth, feelings and liking to the relationship.

The Functional Benefit Representation Model

The functional benefit representation model suggests that a brand personality can work as a vehicle to represent and indicate a brand's functional benefits and attributes. The advantage with this approach is that it, when it works as best, has the ability to capture the value propositioning that drives the brand's strategy. The following are some examples on how a brand personality can help communicate a product attribute and thus contribute to a functional benefit

?? The *Harley-Davidson* personality can be described as a rugged, macho and freedom seeking person. This personality suggests that the product is a powerful and liberating vehicle. The product attributes would be much less convincing without the personality behind them.

?? The *Benetton* brand personality, which is trendy, provocative and imaginative, affects people's perceptions of *Benetton* and its stores.

The ability of the personality to reinforce brand attributes will be greater if a visual symbol or image exists that can create and indicate the brand personality. The *Energizer* rabbit, for example, is an upbeat inexhaustible personality who never runs out of energy, just as the battery it symbolizes runs longer than others do.

A country or region of origin can add credibility to an identity. Furthermore, it can also generate a strong personality that provides not only a quality cue but also an important point of differentiation that can lead to effective marketing and communication programs. *Killian's Red*, for example, has created a strong Irish personality for the brand. With this personality as inspiration promotions have been created that provide links to the Irish tradition of making and enjoying fine brews.

It is of great importance to create a personality for a brand. The benefits of a personality, as stated in the above section, are that it can be used to indicate a brand's functional benefits and attributes, provide a relationship and help the consumer to express something about themselves. These three factors together make the personality a powerful tool to use in order to affect and influence the purchase decision.

2.4. CONCEPTUALIZATION

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the purpose of a conceptual framework is to explain, either graphically or in narrative form the main things to be studied. Furthermore, Miles and Huberman suggest that it is easier to generate a conceptual framework, once the research questions have been stated, as has been done for this study. Below I present the main things to be studied for each research question.

THE BRANDING PROCESS

Bergstrom (1999) suggests that branding is a six-step process. When developing a brand, know thy brand should be the first step and this involves performing a brand audit. Focus groups are a good way of receiving information to the audit. The second step should be to determine an optimal brand future. Develop a brand trajectory is phase three and creating a brand strategy is step four. Once the brand identity is set, it is time to identify the brand action steps. This is step five and it involves determining the specific brand action steps that can be taken in each functional area of the business where the brand is encountered. The final stage in the branding process should be to monitor measure and adjust.

BRAND IDENTITY

According to Aaker (1996), a brand identity is something that makes a customer buy the product or service due to how they perceive the brand. Moreover, Aaker suggests that a brand identity consist of twelve dimensions organized around four perspectives. Thus, when developing a brand identity a company should consider the brand from these four perspectives and determine which of the twelve elements that should be used as a part of the brand identity.

BRAND PERSONALITY

Temporal (1999) suggests that creating a brand personality is a four-stage process. First, the target audience needs to be defined. Then it needs to be revealed what they need want and like. Next a consumer personality profile should be set up and finally the product personality should be created so to match the consumer personality profile. In addition, Aaker (1996) adds that product related and non-product related factors should be considered when developing a brand personality. This is because it is these associations that affect the perceptions of a brand personality.

While sector 2.4. above provides the main things to be studied, I now, in my methodology chapter, will turn to how I will collect data to my study.

3. METHODOLOGY

A method is a tool, a way of solving problems and gaining new knowledge. Not all methods, however, are equally sustainable or can survive critical tests equally. (Holme and Solvang, 1991). In this chapter I will explain and justify the choices of methodology approaches that I have practiced in my study.

3.1. STUDY STRATEGY

According to Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1997) many different ways of approaching a problem and several study strategies are available. When relating a strategy to how well structured the problem area is three different views emerge: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.

An *exploratory* position is suitable when a problem is difficult to structure and when it is not clear which model to use or what characteristics and relations to take into consideration. A *descriptive* position is appropriate when the problem is well structured and when you do not intend to look for a cause and effect relations. The purpose of the descriptive position may be to develop inter subjective descriptions (i.e. empirical generalizations). The objective with an *explanatory* approach is to study cause and effect relations. (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 1997) In addition, the goal can be to develop explicit theory that can be used to explain the empirical generalizations that evolve from the descriptive stage (Reynolds, 1971).

My study is mainly descriptive, due to that my purpose is to describe (how a brand can be developed). Furthermore, my research is also somewhat explanatory. I do not try to establish cause and effect relations, however, I will in my conclusions start to explain how a brand can be developed. My study is also to some extent exploratory. This is because it is not likely that someone else has done an academic study on the same agencies that I have. Hence, I can be said to explore things that have not been explored before.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

There are two types of research approaches: qualitative and quantitative. A *qualitative* approach concerns ideas, feelings and attitudes. This approach is appropriate when you want thorough information. Moreover, the purpose of a qualitative approach is to receive a deeper understanding of the research problem. (Yin, 1994) A *quantitative* approach measures how much and how many. This approach is therefore suitable for statistical methods. (Holme and Solvang, 1991) Which one of these two approaches to choose depends on the purpose of the study and the research questions (Ibid.).

My research questions were of the nature “how” and my results could not be measured in how much and how many. Consequently, I found a qualitative approach to be the most appropriate research approach for my study.

3.3. RESEARCH STRATEGY

When deciding how to collect and analyze empirical evidence five main research strategies are available: *experiments*, *surveys*, *archival analysis*, *histories* and *case studies*. Each strategy has its advantages and disadvantages. There are three things, however, that distinguish these strategies: the type of research question posed, the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. (Yin, 1994) Table 3-1 displays these three conditions; furthermore, it shows how each is related to the five research strategies.

Table 3-1: Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies

Strategy	Form of Research Question	Requires Control over Behavioral Events	Focuses on Contemporary Events
Experiment	How, why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
Archival Analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/no
History	How, why	No	No
Case study	How, why	No	Yes

Source: Yin (1994, p.6)

As shown in table 3-1, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being asked, when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context. Furthermore, Yin suggests that the case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social and political phenomena and that it allows an investigator to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes.

I used case studies as means to collect and analyze data. The purpose of my study was to find answers to “how” questions, it did not require control over behavioral events, it focused on contemporary events and it concerned real life events (a managerial process). I believe that these factors together justify the use of a case study as a research strategy.

According to Yin (1991) the use of multiple cases in a research adds confidence to findings. By looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases we can understand a single case finding,

grounding it by specifying how and where and if possible, why it carries on as it does. Moreover, Yin argues that we can strengthen the precision, the validity and the stability of the findings by following a replication strategy (Ibid.). Miles and Huberman add that if a finding holds in one setting and, given its profile, also holds in a comparable setting but does not in a contrasting case, the finding is more robust.

In my research I did two case studies. The different cases can be considered to be both comparable (both studies involve branding agencies) as well as contrasting since they concerned companies from two different countries. I decided to use multiple and contrasting cases in my study because I wanted to increase the validity and stability and make my findings more robust and interesting.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

According to Yin (1994), evidence for case studies may come from six sources: *documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations* and *physical artifacts*. In addition, Yin says, “ a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (p.91). This use of multiple source of evidence “triangulation” means that the researcher has the opportunity to obtain multiple measures of the same phenomenon. The benefit of using multiple measures of the same phenomenon is that it adds validity to the scientific study. Thus, any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information following a corroborate mode (Yin, p. 92). None of these six sources has a complete advantage over the others. The various sources are highly complementary; therefore a good case study should use as many sources as possible.

The interview is one of the most important sources of case study information. There are three different types of interviews: open-ended, focused and survey. An interview that is of *an open-ended* nature means that the respondents can be asked for the facts of a matter as well as for opinions about events. An open-ended interview should therefore be used when the researcher wants a free and open discussion with the respondent. A second type of interview is the *focused interview* in which the respondent is interviewed for a short period of time. The interview may be open-ended and assume a conversational manner, or follow a set of questions derived from the case study protocol. Consequently, a focused interview should be used when the research is semi-structured and allows informal conversations in the predetermined subject matter for discussion. A *survey interview* involves more structured questions, similar to a formal survey. This kind of survey can be designed as part of a case study. (Yin, p.84).

According to Yin (p. 81), documentary reports are likely to be relevant to every case study topic. This type of information can take many forms and should be the object of explicit data collection plans. The following are some variety of documents.

- ?? Letters, memoranda and other communiqués
- ?? Agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings and other written reports of events.
- ?? Administrative documents—proposals, progress reports and other internal documents.

?? Formal studies or evaluations of the same “site” under study.

?? Newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in mass media.

Documents can help verifying the correct spellings and titles or names of organisations that might have been mentioned in an interview. Furthermore, documents can provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources and inferences can be made from documents. (Yin, p. 81).

I used two sources of evidence in my case study: focus interviews and documentation. There are two reasons to why I chose focus interviews. First, I did not want the interview to be too structured (due to the risk of influencing the result). Second, I wished to have an open conversation with the respondents so that they could describe with their own words the branding process and the development of a brand identity and brand personality.

Documentation was used as a second source of evidence. My documentation consisted of two communiqués and one booklet. Maria Campos-Björkquist at *Brand Management Network* provided all three to me. The benefit with these documents is the fact that I could verify and check the information that I had received in the interview. Furthermore, I got more in depth knowledge concerning some issues that were not so thoroughly discussed during the interview.

The focus interviews represent my primary data and the documentation constitutes my secondary data.

3.5. SAMPLE SELECTION

There are two basic methods of sampling, *probability* and *non-probability* (Chisnall,1992). When I selected companies for my study, I implemented a non-probability judgment since all companies did not have an equal chance of being included in the sample.

I chose two companies for my case studies: *Brand Management Network* (Sweden) and *Brand Consultancy (USA)*. Both these companies are branding agencies. I chose to do my interviews with branding agencies since I wanted to know more in general how a brand is created and not for a specific industry or company. Furthermore, by interviewing branding professionals I had the opportunity to gain knowledge about a subject that might be good for my future career. The reason to why I decided to do interviews with one firm in the U.S. and one firm in Sweden is that I spent the academic year 99-2000 in the U.S. as an exchange student; hence I had the opportunity to do an interview while I was there. Moreover I thought it would be interesting to perform case studies on two in one way similar companies (both companies are branding agency's) and at the same time contrasting (the two companies operate in different countries).

I found the two agencies on the Internet using www.google.com (search word branding agencies and advertising agencies). I selected some companies that I thought would fit my purpose. Next I visited these company's home pages in order to gain additional information. Finally I chose the ones that appeared to be knowledgeable about the development of brands. I wrote down the phone numbers and called them up. The final choice of agency fell on the one's that actually agreed to take the time for an interview.

It was always a secretary that answered the phone when I called these various branding agencies. Therefore, I began with introducing myself and said that I was writing my thesis about branding and that I wondered if there was someone at the company that I could set up an interview with. Then the secretary would connect me to someone else. In order to make sure that I was talking to the right person I explained to the person what the interview would be about (the branding process, brand identity and brand personality). We then set up a time for an interview and a couple of days before the interview was due I sent a brief interview guide so that the respondent would be somewhat prepared.

Both my interviews were performed over the phone. I had set up to do a personal interview with a branding agency in Washington D.C., however, they canceled a week before the interview was due. Therefore, I had to find a new company and with the restricted time that I had left, I was forced to perform also this interview over the phone.

At *Brand Management Network* I interviewed Maria Campos-Björkqvist. I believe she was the right person to talk to because Mrs. Campos-Björkqvist is the one that is involved in building and strengthening brands and positions. Moreover, she was involved in creating the process, which is a specific research method that *BMN* uses when they develop brands. Ward Randall is the name of the person that I talked to at *Brand Consultancy*. I believe that he was the right person to talk to because he is one of the firm's branding experts.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Yin (1994) states that the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies. There are no clear guidelines on how to analyze the material from a case study. Instead, much depends on an investigator's own style and rigorous thinking along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations. Moreover, Yin says that every case study should start with a general analytic strategy. These general analytic strategies, with regards to case studies, provide the researcher with a system by which she/he can set priorities for what is needed to analyze and why.

Yin (1994) adds that before data actually can be analyzed a researcher, using case studies, can choose from two general analytical strategies: relying on theoretical propositions and developing a case description. *Relying on theoretical propositions* is the most common and used strategy (according to Yin, p. 103-104) the result of this is the collection of data based on research questions taken from previous studies. When using this strategy the finding in the study will be compared to previous studies. *Developing a case description* can be used as a strategy as well, according to Yin, but this is less favorable and it should only be used when little previous research has been done. A lot of previous studies had been done in my problem area, thus I was able to use a strategy in which I relied on theoretical propositions.

There are specific techniques that can be used to actually analyze the data, according to Yin (1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) add that the focus is on data in the form of words—in my case, words that emanate from the interviews conducted. These words require processing,

according to these authors, and this process is itself a form of analysis. In their extensive writing on qualitative data analysis, Miles and Huberman (1994) define data analysis as consisting of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion, drawing and verification. Upon first obtaining data during a data collection period," Miles and Huberman explain these three stages of qualitative data analysis as follows:

Data reduction should not be considered to be separate from analysis, but as a part of it. This reduction of the data is analysis that helps to sharpen, sort, focus, discard and organize the data in a way that allows for final conclusions to be drawn and verified. They add that data can be reduced and transformed through such means as selection, summary, paraphrasing and through being subsumed in a larger pattern. In my research I used the case analysis to reduce my data. The data reduction is also somewhat started in the data presentation chapter because there I summarized, in tables, the answers I received regarding each research question.

Data display is the second major activity, which the researcher should go through and this means taking the reduced data and displaying it in an organized compressed way so that conclusions can be more easily drawn. As with data reduction, the creation and use of displays is not separate from the analysis but a part of it. In my study I used tables, to display the answers to each research question (according to the theory, according to *Brand Management Network* and according to *Brand Consultancy*). By displaying these three tables together, I provided both the reader and myself with a brief overview that later made it easier for me to analyze and draw conclusions.

Conclusion drawing and verification is the final analytical activity for the qualitative researcher. It is here that the researcher begins to decide what things mean. This is done by noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, casual flows and propositions. I did this in my conclusion chapter. Furthermore, Miles and Hubermann add that the competent researcher should hold such conclusions lightly, while maintaining both openness and a degree of skepticism. I had that in mind when I drew my conclusions.

3.7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

According to Yin (1994) four tests are commonly used to establish the quality of any empirical research: the construct validity, the internal validity, external validity and reliability. *Construct validity* is about establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. *Internal validity* (for explanatory or causal studies only and not for descriptive or explanatory studies) involves establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships. *External validity* is about establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized. *Reliability* is about demonstrating that the operations of a study—such as the data collection procedures can be repeated, with the same results.

Table 3-2 lists the four widely used tests and the recommended case study tactics as well as cross-reference to the phase of research when the tactic is to be used.

Table 3-2: Case Study Tactics for Four Design Tests

Tests	Case Study Tactics	Phase of Research in which Tactic Occurs
Construct Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use multiple sources of evidence- Establish Chain of evidence- Have key informants review draft case study report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Data collection- Data Collection- Composition
Internal Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do pattern matching- Do explanation building- Do time-series analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Data analysis- Data analysis- Data analysis
External Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use replication logic in multiple case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Research design
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use case study protocol- Develop case study database	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Data collection- Data collection

Source: Yin (1994, p. 33)

Internal validity is not relevant to my research because it is for explanatory or causal studies only. Thus, when determining the degree of validity and reliability, I only consider construct validity, external validity and reliability.

3.8.1. CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

As table 3-2 shows, three different tactics can be used to improve the construct validity: multiple sources of evidence, maintaining a chain of evidence and having key informants' review draft case study report.

My construct validity was improved because I used multiple sources of evidence during data collection: focus interviews and documents. In order to be certain that I measured what I was suppose to measure I made sure that I talked to the right person. This was done by explaining, before setting up the interview, what the interview would be about. In that way I could make sure that the respondent would have the knowledge to answer my questions. Furthermore I used a speakerphone and tape recorder during the interview. This allowed me to concentrate on the interview and the answers instead of taking notes. Documents were my second source of evidence and the benefit of these was that I had the opportunity to verify and double-check the information that I received in the interview.

The principle of maintaining a chain of evidence is according to Yin (1994), to allow an external observer—the reader of the case study for example to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions. Creating a case study database can do this. I did not have the time to set up a formal database. However, I had an informal database

containing case study notes, case study documents, interview guides and tapes from the interviews.

My construct validity was decreased due to the fact that I did not have any key informants reviewing a draft case study report.

3.8.2. EXTERNAL VALIDITY

According to Yin (p.34), external validity deals with the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalisable beyond the immediate case study. Case studies rely on analytical generalization and in analytical generalization; the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory. The generalization, however, is not automatic. A theory must be tested through replications of the findings. The replication logic is used in multiple case studies. The advantage with doing a multiple case study is that the evidence from these studies is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (Herriot and Firestone, 1983). Yin (p.45) says that if one only has access to three cases, the appropriate research design would be to predict the same results for each of the three cases and thereby produce evidence that the three cases indeed involve the same syndrome. If similar results are obtained from all these three cases, replication is said to have taken place.

The results of my study were to some extent similar. This adds to my external validity. However, I cannot generalize country wise because I only did one case study in each country. This therefore decreases my external validity.

3.8.3. RELIABILITY

According to Yin (p.36) the objective with reliability is to be sure that if a later researcher followed exactly the same procedures described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions. One prerequisite for allowing another investigator to repeat an earlier case study is to document the procedures that you do i.e. a case study protocol. Another way is to develop a case study database.

My steps are well documented because I have both an interview-guide and tapes of the interviews. Furthermore, I have notes concerning phone numbers and people that I have been in contact with. The reliability, however, can be decreased due to two reasons. First, if someone were to do the interview again the respondent are likely to be more prepared because he/she has done it once before. He/she might therefore be able to remember more and add more depth to the interview. Second, it is possible that the procedures, techniques and process will be developed and improved through out the years and by that the result of the study might be different.

4. DATA PRESENTATION

The purpose with this chapter is to present empirical data from the two case studies conducted one in Sweden and one in the U.S.

4.1. CASE ONE: Brand Management Network

Brand Management Network (BMN) is a research based, fact oriented branding agency based in Stockholm. The agency, which was started in 1995, has three employees: Rolf Skjöldebrand, Maria Campos-Björkquist and Anders Blom. Companies come to *BMN* when they need help with strengthening, introducing, reposition, extending, or repairing a brand. *BMN*, sees themselves as the link between research companies (that gather information and statistics about a company's brands) and advertising agencies (that develop successful advertising campaigns).

The information to this case was mainly gathered during an interview with Maria Campos-Björkquist. However, some additional sources have also been used in the form of two communiqués and one booklet provided to me by Maria Campos Björkquist. The two communiqués are called “*Branding Processen*” and “*Att Bygga ett Starkt Varumärke*”. The booklet is a small paperback book called “*Processen – Vägen till Framgångsrika Varumärken*”.

In their work, Skjöldebrand, Campos and Blom employ their own method (the process) which is a well tried research methodology consisting of three main elements: current analysis, vision/mission and implementation. In order to create a strong and successful brand, workshops are held in which *BMN*, together with their client, set up a brand strategy. Usually between three to ten workshops are held throughout the process. *Brand Management Network's* role in these workshops is to work as advisers, inspirers and guides. The company's role is to be creative and come up with ideas. The workshops consist of various exercises. The participants are divided into several groups (each group perform the same exercises). Finally, the different ideas are presented and then everyone together decides upon the best ideas and turns them into precise goals and definitions.

BMN emphasizes the importance of having the board of directors involved in the branding process because it is them, together with the agency, that set the actual brand strategy. *BMN's* philosophy is that building strong brands is about building strong relationships and a strong relationship is the result of a clear, strong and communicable brand personality. Furthermore, they believe that the creation of successful brands is about understanding people.

4.1.2. THE BRANDING PROCESS: Research Question One

Brand Management Network has their own specific branding process and, as mentioned earlier, it consists of three main elements. These three main elements can be developed and explained in a six-step model. The model is summarized in table 4-1.

Step One: Establish a Shared View

Before *BMN* start to work with a company, they make sure that their client understands and shares the same philosophy as them regarding what branding is. This is necessary because as Mrs. Campos-Björkquist says 'many people think that brands is just a sign on the door and that it is enough to change logotype'. *Brand Management* has four main principals that their client should be aware of and understand before the process of building a brand is started. These four principals are as follows:

1. To work with brands is about working with visions. You need to be able to put the brand in a context that is larger than the actual company and product.
2. To build brands is about building relationships. Brands are more than just pure facts—it is an emotional thing for the consumer.
3. Branding is about looking at your organization and communicate through the eyes of the consumer.
4. Brand building costs a lot of money. This, however, should be viewed as an investment—not a cost.

Step Two: Current analysis

In this step, a current analysis is performed in which the brand's current position is mapped out. Furthermore, the brand is thoroughly examined and the following things are revealed: the brand's current identity, the reason to why the brand exists, the brand image, the basic views about the brand, how the brand feels and where it is in the minds of consumers. These questions are answered both from the external customers' view and the view of the internal employees. It is of great importance that all employees get to know the brand and what it stands for. The brand needs to be well anchored, well understood and shared internally before it can be effectively communicated externally.

The opinions, views and attitudes regarding a brand's current position need to be anchored in solid research in order to be considered valid and reliable. The information concerning the brands current position is gathered through the company's existing research and through workshops. Sometimes, however, if the company's existing research is not good enough, *BMN* with help from research companies, carry out ad-hoc research.

Step 3: Vision Mission

Once it is known how customers perceive the brand and what position the brand has, it is time to determine what position the brand should have and what needs to be done in order to get there. This is what the third step is about. In this stage, *BMN* together with their client consider where they are going, who they want to be, what their surroundings will look like and what role they will have. With the answer to these questions in mind the vision, mission, position and brand personality is determined. The vision states the direction of the brand (the course). It is a future ideal to strive for. Furthermore, a vision is something that is bigger than just making money. A mission is the task that the company takes responsible for executing. The mission should mirror the vision and its purpose is to work as an inspiration and to guide every day life. Positioning is

about deciding the place that the brand should occupy in the minds of consumers relative to those of competitors and it is the position that later will be translated into communication.

BMN uses workshops as a technique to come up with a vision, mission, position and identity/personality. During these workshops, series of exercises are done involving the board of directors and other key people. Questions that need to be dealt with are, for instance, how you think the future will look like and the role you will have in it. Furthermore, in these workshops several key words are identified. These keywords will then work as a base for the creation of a brand personality. *BMN* sees the brand identity and brand personality to be very closely linked to each other; thus the two are developed more or less at the same time.

When the goals and definitions have been established, the next step is to check them against the company's offers and product portfolio. Consequently, some corrections and developments may be made. The outcome of this step, when the brand's vision, mission, position and personality is determined, is a brand strategy. According to "*Processen*", *BMN's* brand strategy is based on the following five premises: simple, uniform, distinct, economic and emotional. Once the brand strategy is set an implementation strategy is outlined. This involves developing guidelines for the internal as well as the external communication.

Step 4: Internal Implementation

In this step, an internal anchoring strategy is worked out in which *BMN*, together with their client, develop a strategic plan on how the brand personality can be implemented internally. A brand manager/responsible in the company will be selected. Furthermore, an action plan is created in which a timeframe is established and responsibilities clarified. This can regard issues such as training and internal activities. Finally, the action plan is carried out.

Step 5: External Communication

This step involves developing a branding brief to all communication channels. The brief is created by *BMN* and it answers the following questions: Who are we? Whom do we talk to? What do they think about us today? What do we want them to think about us? Why should they believe what we are telling them? The purpose of this brief is to work as a guideline for the external communication effort (e.g. advertising, TV commercials etc). *BMN* emphasizes that it is of great importance that the one's that later will communicate the brand strategy (an advertising agency), do not try to change the branding, but focus on solving it in a creative way.

Step 6: Continuous Following-Up and Correction

In order to make sure that the branding effort is on track, the brand's personality need to be followed up on a regular basis. This can be done through brand research. This is not something that *BMN* usually are involved in though. Once the brand strategy is set, the company should be knowledgeable enough to take care of their branding related issues themselves. This is what the process is all about. It is supposed to be a learning experience in which a company develops branding skills so that they, in the future, can take care of their branding themselves. Some, companies, however, choose to keep *BMN* as a partner an x number of hours a week or month or

they contact them when complex brand related questions arises, which they are not capable of dealing with themselves.

Table 4-1: Brand Management Network’s Branding Process

BRAND MANAGEMENT NETWORK
THE BRANDING PROCESS
1. Establish a Shared View
2. Current Analysis
3. Vision/Mission
4. Internal Implementation
5. External Communication
6. Continuous Following Up and Correction

Source: Own compilation

4.1.3. BRAND IDENTITY: Research Question Two

A brand identity is what the brand actually is; its soul. *BMN*’s process to develop a brand identity starts with establishing the brand’s current identity and this can be revealed by talking to the board of directors or the employees in the company. Next the brand’s image is disclosed by talking to customers either through focus groups or via interviews on the street. Once the current identity and image is known a brand’s future identity is determined; this is done in workshops.

When developing a future brand identity, *BMN* first establish who the brand is and then who they want it to be. Furthermore, it is considered which elements of the current identity that needs to be strengthened or neutralized in order to fit with the new and ideal brand identity. Moreover the development of a brand identity involves establishing some core values. These core values are the essence of the brand and they constitute the value offer. According to “*Att Bygga ett Starkt Varumärke*” the core values should be few but strictly followed and reinforced in all areas of the company where the brand is encountered. It has to be clear what the company stands for. Mrs. Campos-Björkquist says: “*if a core value is to be environmental friendly this need to infiltrate and influence all marketing activities, from architecture, product development, sponsor-events, advertising, internal communication, salespeople etc.*”

BMN works with core values, not different elements when they develop a brand. However, they do recognize that there are some factors that influence the brand identity. Consequently these

factors are something they have in mind when they develop a brand identity. Mrs. Campos-Björkquist mentions a few of these factors and they are as follows: a company's business idea, the corporate culture, symbols, products, brands, packaging, strategies, brand personality, management style, marketing communication and brand heritage.

Table 4-2: Brand Management Network's Brand Identity Development

BRAND MANAGEMENT NETWORK
BRAND IDENTITY
1. Establish the brand's current identity and image.
2. Determine a brand's future identity. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- core values- factors to strengthen or neutralize- take into consideration influencing factors
3. Develop the brand identity with the above issues in mind.

Source: Own compilation

4.2.5. BRAND PERSONALITY: Research Question Three

BMN views the brand personality as a part of the brand identity; hence these two are created more or less simultaneously. Furthermore, *BMN* sees a brand's personality as something unique that comes from inside and they believe that a personality cannot be copied, not created either, however, it can be developed. Before developing a personality the following questions are considered. Who are we, who do we want to be, what values are important externally, what is our heritage and how does it influence how the brand is perceived, what are our owner's intentions and personality and finally what expectations does the customer have about our brand? With the answers to these questions in mind the development of a brand personality begins.

The actual brand personality is determined in branding workshops. To start with, the current personality is determined. Then some key words are defined with the established vision and position in mind. The purpose of these keywords is to work as a foundation for the development of the new brand personality. Once the keywords have been determined, different exercises are done in which the participants are asked to describe the brand as if it was a person or an animal. In the end, this will lead to a decision concerning the personality that the brand currently possesses and the personality the company wants it to have.

When *Brand Management Network* develops a brand personality, they do not take into consideration the target markets personality and try to match it to that of the product/service. They know who they are turning to and with that as a base they think about the expectations that

the target group has about the product and then develop the brand from there. *BMNs* branding process is summarized in table 4-3.

BMN is not involved in the creation of advertising campaigns. This is done by advertising agencies. What they do, however, is a branding brief with the purpose to work as a guideline for the external communication effort. Consequently, *BMN* are not the one's who create associations. Therefore, they are not involved in the decision concerning which product related and product non-related factors that should be used in order to create the "right" associations.

Table 4-3: Brand Management Network's Brand Personality Development

BRAND MANAGEMENT NETWORK
BRAND PERSONALITY
1. Who are we, who do we want to be, what values are important externally, heritage, owner's intentions and personality? What expectations does the customer have about our brand?
2. Determination of current personality
3. Definition of key words with the established vision and mission in mind.
4. Exercises - brand as a person - brand as an animal
5. Development of a brand personality

Source: Own compilation

4.2. CASE TWO: The Brand Consultancy

The Brand Consultancy (BC) is an U.S. based branding agency with offices in two cities: Atlanta, Georgia and Washington D.C. The information to this case was gathered during a branding session one on one over the phone with Ward Randall, a branding expert from *Brand Consultancy's* Atlanta office.

Brand Consultancy was created with the belief that brands are an often misunderstood and under-utilised asset. *BC* helps their clients to unleash the full power and potential of their brands at all points of encounter. Furthermore, they work on expanding brand appeal, brand preference,

and brand loyalty among targeted customers. The agency's team of branding experts has many years of hands-on branding and brand strategy experience. Their areas of expertise include brand research and analysis, brand strategy and brand deployment and implementation. *BC* have worked with hundreds of brands in a variety of industries, including both consumer and business categories. Swedish carmaker *Saab*, for example, is one of the brands that they have worked with.

The people that *Brand Consultancy* has their day-to-day contact with are a company's high ranked marketing people. The firm's vice presidents, presidents, and senior executives are also involved in the branding process, however, not on a daily basis.

4.2.1. THE BRANDING PROCESS: Research Question One

Brand Consultancy's procedure to create a brand is called the Brand Shift Methodology and this methodology is a four-step process. The process is summarised in table 4-4.

Step One: Brand Assessment

Performing a brand assessment involves creating an understanding of the brand's present identity. Together with their client, *Brand Consultancy* assess where the brand currently resides in the minds of its customers, competitor's customers, and partners/affiliates. In order to create a clear understanding concerning the brand's existing identity the different elements, which build up the identity, are thoroughly researched. These elements are core essence, attributes, brand heritage, symbols, tangible identifiers, brand personality and the brand's existing permissions and limitations.

Moreover, in this phase, intensive information gathering takes place. *Brand Consultancy* uses qualitative methods such as focus groups and in depth interviews. Participants in these focus groups and interviews are the brand audience, employees of the firm and management. Furthermore, competitors are being studied as well as the industry. *BC* carefully analyses the industry to see where it is heading. This is because brand building is a long process and by the time the brand strategy is set and the position is communicated; the environment and trends might have changed.

In addition to understand the brand's identity, the brand's different touch points are analyzed. This involves looking at the various functional areas where customers encounter the brand. Issues that are well thought through are how the brand is delivered to customers and what matters and what are important to consumers.

Step Two: Brand Strategy

Once the brand's current identity is mapped out, the future brand strategy is set. In order to do this the brand vision and position is determined. The brand vision involves creating a new brand identity. The company needs to figure out what is wrong with their existing brand identity, how they can change it and what their future identity should look like. A new identity is formed by thinking "if we were to do a brand assessment in five years from now what is the answer we

would like to get". When creating a future identity *Brand Consultancy*, together with their client, use the seven different brand identity elements; they also take into consideration the brand's competitors and the industry environment.

BC defines a brand's position as the market space the brand occupies relative to the competition and along a set of customer need/perception dimensions. Furthermore, they see the position as the part of the brand identity that is to be actively communicated. Mr. Randall describes the identity as a basket of rubber balls and if you were to throw all these balls to a consumer, he/she would only be able to catch a few. Therefore, the company needs to decide which of these balls to throw i.e. which of the elements of the identity to communicate. *BC* usually comes up with three different positions and then they test market these positions and let the target audience determine which is the best. Mr Randall points out that the choice of words is extremely important in the position stage.

When the vision and position has been determined, the brand strategy is set. The brand strategy outlines the broad manner in which the organisation's resources will be deployed to create brand equity.

Step Three: Brand Action Plans

The third stage in the branding process is the implementation phase. The brand needs to be implemented both internal as well as external. The internal implementation is about getting the word out. As a means to get employees active and involved in delivering the brand, workshops are held, in which the employees get started to think what they can do to support the new brand identity.

The external implementation is about getting the new brand identity known to consumers. *BC* is not involved in the creation of advertising campaigns, this they leave up to an advertising agency. However, they present the new brand identity to the agency and explain how they got there. Then it is the advertising agency's responsibility to come up with an advertising campaign. *BC*, however, is still to some extent involved. Usually they are the one's that together with their client evaluate and decide whether to accept an advertising campaign or not. They will look at the suggested campaign and see if it clearly reflects the brand identity and position, if not it will be rejected.

Step Four: Brand Tracking and Measurement

In this last step, which involves brand tracking and measurement *Brand Consultancy* assesses the effectiveness of media plans and the marketing mix. Measurable objectives for the components of brand equity are set and the results of programs designed to achieve those objectives are tracked. Furthermore, current and emerging trends are investigated and future customer needs predicted.

Table 4-4: The Brand Consultancy’s Branding Process

BRAND CONSULTANCY
THE BRANDING PROCESS
1. Brand Assessment
2. Brand Strategy - Vision - Positioning
3. Brand action Plans - External - Internal
4. Brand Tracking and Measurement

Source: Own compilation

4.2.2. BRAND IDENTITY: Research Question Two

Brand Consultancy views a brand identity as a set of brand associations, which represent what the brand stands for. *BC* considers a brand’s identity to consist of seven different elements. These elements are core essence, attributes, brand heritage, symbols, tangible identifiers, brand personality and the brand’s existing permissions and limitations. In the interview, Mr Randall developed and explained the elements as follows.

A brand’s *core essence* is the single most predominant characteristic that defines the brand. For example, *Coca-Cola’s* core essence is “refreshment”. *Brand attributes* are associations that are assigned to a brand by its customers and prospects and they can be either functional or emotional. *Functional attributes* says what the brand physically does while *emotional attributes* are more about feelings—how do you feel about the brand and how does it feel about you. Brand attributes can be either negative or positive and they can have varying degrees of relevance and importance to different customer segments.

Brand heritage is an important factor in a brands identity, unlike some of the other elements, this one cannot be changed, however, it can be more or less emphasised. The use of *symbols* as a part of the identity can have a very powerful effect. *Tangible identifiers* are all the things that make the brand what it is, for example, what differs Saab from other cars. The development of a *brand personality* is a very important part of the brand identity (this element will be discussed more thoroughly in section 4.2.4).

A brand’s *existing permissions and limitations* i.e. what can and cannot be done with the brand are carefully considered before a brand identity is developed. *Brand Consultancy* thoroughly

researches the elasticity of the brand. This means that they establish how far the brand can be expanded or extended. Brand extension is about which product classes the brand successfully can represent and also potential product extension. Brand expansion is about what can be done within the product class, for example expand the market geographically or by users.

When *BC* develops a brand identity they first look at the existing identity, then they create a new identity by using the seven different elements. Those elements that cannot be changed are just more or less emphasised (depending on the new brand identity). Finally, when *BC* is in the process of creating an identity they take into consideration competitors and the industry outlook. Table 4-5 summarises how *BC* develops a brand identity.

Table 4-5: Brand Consultancy's Brand Identity Development

BRAND CONSULTANCY
BRAND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
1. Look at the existing identity
2. Research competitors and the industry outlook
3. Develop the identity by using the following elements <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Core Essence- Attributes- Brand Heritage- Symbols- Tangible Identifiers- Brand Personality- Existing permissions and limitations

Source: Own Compilation

4.2.3. BRAND PERSONALITY: Research Question Three

Brand Consultancy views the brand personality as a part of the brand identity. Thus, a personality is developed in conjunction with the brand identity. *BC* looks at the brand's existing identity before they start to develop a new personality. The actual personality is then developed with help of different exercises, which are performed in focus groups and in depth interviews with the brand audience, employees and management. The people involved are, for example, asked to describe the brand as if it was an animal or a person. Another useful exercise that *BC* uses is to think of the brand as a car and then describe it in detail (what is underneath the hood etc). *Brand Consultancy* does not develop the personality with the target customers' personality in mind. This is because sometimes the customers' personality is very much different from the brand's personality. Thus, it can be very difficult to predict their ideal identity. Therefore, the personality

is created with expectations in mind. Table 4-6 summarises how Brand Consultancy develops a brand personality.

BC is not involved in creating advertising campaigns. This they leave up to an advertising agency. They just present the brand identity and brand personality. Thus, they are not the one's that create associations. Consequently, they do not decide which product related and product non-related factors that should be used in order to create the "right" associations.

Table 4-6: Brand Consultancy's Brand Personality Development

BRAND CONSULTANCY
BRAND PERSONALITY
1. Assessment of the brand's current identity
2. Focus groups and in depth interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the brand audience- employees- management.
3. Determination of target customers' expectations?
4. Exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none">- animal- car- person
5. Development of a brand personality

Source: Own compilation

5. ANALYSIS

In this chapter the collected data will be analyzed. In order to display the data in a more organized way, tables have been put together, which side-by-side, shows the answers to each research question according to the theory, Brand Management Network and Brand Consultancy. These tables are displayed at the beginning of each section, before the analyses are started. First, the data will be analyzed within each case and against theory. Next a cross case analysis will be performed in which I compare the two cases with each other to find similarities and differences

5.1. THE BRANDING PROCESS: Research Question One

According to Bergstrom (1999), six steps are necessary in the creation of a successful brand. I will now, by comparing Bergstrom's six steps with the steps in *BMNs* and *BCs* branding processes, see if the data verifies the theory. Table 5-1 will be used as a base for my analysis.

Table 5-1: The Branding Process according to Theory, *BMN* and *BC*

THE BRANDING PROCESS		
THEORY	CASE ONE: BRAND MANAGEMENT NETWORK	CASE TWO: BRAND CONSULTANCY
1. Know Thy Brand	1. Establish a Shared View	1. Brand Assessment
2. Determine an Optimal Brand Future	2. Current Analysis	2. Brand Strategy
3. Develop a Brand Trajectory	3. Vision/Mission	3. Brand action Plans - Internal - External
4. Create a Brand Strategy	4. Internal Implementation	4. Brand Tracking and Measurement
5. Identify the Brand Action Steps	5. External Communication	
6. Monitor, Measure, and Adjust	6. Continuous Following Up and Correction	

Source: Bergstrom (1999) and authors own compilation

5.1.1. WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS: *Brand Management Network*

BMN's branding process, as shown in table 5-1, is a six-step process: establish a shared view, current analysis, vision/mission, internal implementation, external implementation and continuous following up and correction.

Step one "*Know Thy Brand*" corresponds to *BMN's* "*Current Analysis*". However, not all elements, which according to the theory should be included in this step, are parts of *BMN's* current analysis step. *BMN* do not take into consideration a brand's existing permissions and limitations, how the brand relates to competitors brands and what role it plays in the market place and industry. Consequently, step one is verified, however not completely. *BMN's* step one is to establish a shared view and this is, according to the theory, not included in the branding process, therefore this step does not fit with the theory.

The second step "*Determine an Optimal Brand Future*" is included in *BMN's* branding process. This is the vision, which is a part of their "*Vision/Mission*" stage. In this step, however, it once again differs between the data and theory because *BMN* do not take into consideration a brand's existing permissions and limitations, the industry or competitors. Thus, this step is not completely supported by the data.

"*Developing a Brand Trajectory*" is step three. This step does not correspond to a specific step in *BMN's* branding process. Therefore, in this case the data does not verify the theory. Step four is "*Developing a Brand Strategy*". *Brand Management Network* has this step as a sub step in their vision mission step. Hence, the data verifies the theory.

"*Identify the Brand Action Steps*" is step five. In this case the data verifies the theory because this step is included in *BMN's* branding process as well. It corresponds to *BMN's* step four and five, which is "*Internal Implementation*" and "*External Communication*". The theory, however, does not include developing a branding brief for the external communication and this is something that *BMN* does.

The last step "*Monitor, Measure and Adjust*" corresponds to *BMN's* step six, which is "*Continuous following up and Correction*". Thus, in this case the data verifies the theory.

5.1.2. WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS: *Brand Consultancy*

Brand Consultancy's branding process, as shown in table 5-1, is a four-step process: brand assessment, brand strategy, brand action plans and brand tracking and measurement.

Step one "*Know Thy Brand*" corresponds to *BC's* step one '*Brand Assessment*'. *BC* performs a brand audit in which they, as the theory suggests, analyses the brand's current situation. According to the theory, the brand audit should include an assessment of the brand's current identity, personality and the existing permissions and limitations. In addition, a valuation of the brand should also be done. *BC* take into consideration all these factors in their brand audit except the valuation of the brand. However, *BC* adds more depth to this step because they investigate thoroughly the different element of the identity. This does not fit with the theory. The

identification and analysis of the brand's different touch points is a sub-phase in BC's brand assessment step. This does not fit with the theory either. Step one in the theory is verified by the data, however not completely.

Step two “ *Determine an Optimal Brand Future*” corresponds to BCs vision phase, which is a sub phase in their “*Brand Strategy*” step. In this step, *Brand Consultancy*, as the theory suggests, creates a future brand identity by taking into consideration the competitors, the industry and the brand's existing permissions and limitations. The difference between the theory and data in this case is the fact that *BC*, in combination with developing a future brand identity, also determines the brand's positioning. Furthermore, another difference is the fact that *BC* once again goes more in detail than the theory suggests, because they look at each brand identity element. However, this step as a whole can be considered as verified.

Step three; “*Develop a Brand Trajectory*” is not included in BCs branding process. Therefore, in this step the empirical data does not verify the theory. “*Creating a Brand Strategy*” is step four and it corresponds to BCs step two, which is “*Brand Strategy*”. This step is supported by the data.

Step five; “*Identify the Brand Action Steps*” corresponds to BCs step three, which is “*Brand Action Plans*”. Consequently, this step is verified. However, *BC* divides this step in two sub-phases: external and internal implementation, this does not fit with the theory.

Step six; “*Monitor, Measure and Adjust*” corresponds to BC's step four, which is “*Brand Tracking and Measurement*”. As a result the data once again verifies the theory.

5.1.3. CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

Brand Management Network's and *Brand Consultancy's* branding processes are to a large extent similar. Before they start to develop a brand, both companies perform an assessment of the brand where they create an understanding of the brand's current identity. Once this is done the two companies develop a brand vision and position, which means that the brand's future identity and position is established. In both cases this will later result in an actual brand strategy. Furthermore, *BMN* as well as *BC* has a step in their process, which involves implementing the brand internally and externally. The focuses of these plans are the same. First, get the brand known internally by getting the word out to employees. Second, in order to guide the external communication effort, present the future brand identity to an advertising agency.

One of the differences between the two companies is that *Brand Management Network* starts their branding process with establishing a shared view. This is not something that *Brand Consultancy* does. Furthermore, as a part of the current analysis step, *BC* identifies a brand's different touch points. This is not something that *BMN* does. Moreover, when looking at the current identity and deciding upon a future identity, *BC* takes into consideration the brand's existing permissions and limitations, however, *BMN* does not. Furthermore, *Brand Consultancy* is more involved and has more authority in the external implementation phase than *BMN*. Finally, *BMN* just advises their clients to follow up and measure their brand, while *BC* is actively involved in tracking and measuring the developed brand.

5.2. BRAND IDENTITY: Research Question Two

Aaker (1996) suggests that a brand identity consist of twelve dimensions organised around four perspectives. A Company that are in the process of developing a brand identity, should consider their brand from these four perspectives and determine which of the twelve elements that should be used as a part of the brand identity. I will now, by comparing Aaker's brand identity development process with *BMNs* and *BCs* procedures, find out if my data verifies the theory. Table 5-2 will be used as a base for my analysis.

Table 5-2: Brand Identity Development according to the Theory, BMN and BC

BRAND IDENTITY		
THEORY	CASE ONE: BRAND MANAGEMENT NETWORK	CASE TWO: BRAND CONSULTANCY
<p><i>Brand as Product</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product Scope 2. Product Attributes 3. Quality/Value 4. Uses 5. Users 6. Country of Origin <p><i>Brand as Organization</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Organization Attributes 8. Local vs. Global <p><i>Brand as Person</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Personality 10. Brand Customer Relationship <p><i>Brand as Symbol</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Visual Imagery and metaphors 12. Brand Heritage 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish the brand's current identity and image. 2. Determine a brand's future identity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - core values - consider which elements of the current identity that need to strengthen or neutralize - take into consideration influencing factors 3. Develop the new identity with the above issues in mind. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look at the existing identity 2. Research competitors and the industry outlook 3. Develop the identity by using the following elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core Essence - Attributes - Brand Heritage - Symbols - Tangible Identifiers - Brand Personality - Existing permissions and limitations

Source: Aaker (1996) and authors own compilation

5.2.1. WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS: Brand Management Network

According to the theory a brand should be developed by considering it from four different perspectives and determine which of the twelve elements that should be used as parts of the brand identity. BMN does not use this way of working when they develop a brand identity. As a result, in this case the data does not verify the theory.

When Brand Management Network starts to develop a brand identity they first look at the brand's current identity and image and this is not suggested by the theory. Furthermore, *BMN* see the

identity as whole, not as different parts. Moreover, they do not develop a new identity by looking at the four perspectives and twelve dimensions. Instead they work with core values and this is not suggested by the theory. Furthermore, when developing the new identity *BMN* takes into consideration what parts of the current identity that need to be strengthened or weakened in order to better fit in with the future identity. This way of working does not fit in with Aaker's suggested way of working.

The theory suggests that a brand identity consist of different elements. This does not correspond to *BMNs* way of working. The agency, however, recognizes the fact that the identity is influenced by some factors. Mrs. Campos-Björkquist mentions the following influences: the business idea, the corporate culture, symbols, products, brands, packaging, strategies, employees, marketing and communication. These factors correspond to more or less three of the four perspectives: organization, product and symbol (personality as mentioned earlier is viewed as something that is very close to the identity). These factors, however, are not viewed as parts of the identity, just influences. Therefore, the theory is not verified.

5.2.2. WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS: *Brand Consultancy*

Before *BC* develops a new brand identity, they first look at the existing identity and research competitors and the industry. This is not suggested by the theory. The theory suggests that a brand identity consist of twelve elements. This differs from *BCs* view because they see the identity to consist of seven elements: core essence, attributes, brand heritage, symbols, tangible identifiers, brand personality and the brand's existing permissions and limitations. These elements to some extent correspond to the suggested elements in the theory. In addition, *Brand Consultancy* considers a brand's core essence and existing permissions and limitations as parts of the brand identity. These elements are not included in Aaker's brand identity model. According to the theory, a brand should be viewed from four perspectives: symbol, product, organization and person. *BC* includes three of these perspectives in their brand identity: product, symbol and person. Thus, the theory is to some extent supported by the data.

5.2.3. CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

There are some things that *Brand Management Network* and *Brand Consultancy* have in common when they develop a brand identity. For starters, *BMN* as well as *BC* look at the brand's current identity before they decide upon a future identity. Moreover, both companies take into consideration and determine what it is, in the current identity, that need to be strengthened or neutralized in order to better fit with the future identity.

One difference between the two companies is that before *BMN* starts to develop a new identity, they look at both the old brand identity and the brand image. *Brand Consultancy* takes into consideration the brand identity too, however, nothing implies that they look at the brand image. Moreover, *BC* and *BMN* has completely different work procedures when developing a brand identity. *BC* view a brand identity to consist of seven different elements and it is these elements that they work with, both when they assess the old identity and when they develop the new identity. *BMN* on the other hand works with core values and sees them as the essence of the

brand—the value offer. Furthermore, *BMN* sees the elements as influences, while *BC* see them as parts of the brand identity.

5.3. BRAND PERSONALITY: Research Question Three

Temporal (1999) suggests that creating a brand personality is a four-step process: define the target audience, find out what they need want and like, build a consumer personality profile and create the product personality to match the profile. Furthermore, Aaker (1996) adds that product related and non-product related factors should be considered when developing the brand personality. I will now, by comparing Temporal’s and Aaker’s suggested way of developing a brand personality with *BMN* and *BC* procedures, see if the data verifies the theory. Table 53 will be used as a base for my analysis.

Table 5-3: Brand Personality Development According to the Theory, BMN and BC

BRAND PERSONALITY		
THEORY	CASE ONE: BRAND MANAGEMENT NETWORK	CASE ONE: BRAND CONSULTANCY
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the target audience. 2. Find out what they need, want and like. 3. Build a consumer personality profile. 4. Create the product personality to match the profile. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who are we, who do we want to be, what values are important externally, heritage, owner’s intentions and personality? What expectations does the customer have about our brand? 2. Determination of current personality 3. Definition of key words with the established vision and mission in mind. 4. Exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - brand as a person - brand as an animal 5. Development of a brand personality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment of the brand’s current personality 2. Focus groups and in depth interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the brand audience - employees - management. 3. Assess target customers expectations about the brand 4. Exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - animal - Person - car 5. Development of a brand personality

Source: Temporal (1999) and authors own compilation

5.3.1. WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS: *Brand Management Network*

Brand Management Network does not completely follow the four-step process suggested by Temporal. For starters, before they develop a new identity they start with looking at the brand's current identity. This is not suggested by the theory. The first step, according to the theory should be to determine the target audience. This is something that *BMN* does though. The second step, is to find out what the target customers need, want and like. This is somewhat similar to *BMNs* next step, because they also find out what their target customers need want and like, however, by thinking about the expectations that target customers have about the brand. As a result the first two steps are verified by the data.

The theory suggests that step three should be to create a consumer personality profile. This is not something that *BMN* does. The fourth step should be to create a product personality profile to match the profile. This does not correspond to *BMNs* procedures either. Consequently step three and four does not verify the theory. *BMN* develop the personality in workshops and with the consumers expectations in mind the brand personality is created by looking at the brand as if it was a person or an animal. This way of working does not fit with the theory.

Finally, *BMN* does not, like the theory suggests, take into consideration the product and non-product related factors when they develop a brand personality. This does not falsify the theory though because it is done (not by *BMN*, but by an advertising agency).

5.3.2. WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS: *Brand Consultancy*

Brand Consultancy does not completely follow Temporal's process when they develop a brand personality. For starters, before *BC* develops the new brand personality they look at the brand's current personality and this is not a step in Temporal's four-step process. The first two steps are somewhat similar though, because as the theory suggests, *BC* determine their target audience, they also think about what they need want and like, but they call this step "finding out the target audiences expectations". Thus, step one and two are verified by the data. Step three, according to the theory is to create a consumer personality profile; this is not something that *BC* does. Not the next step either, which is to create a product personality to match the consumer personality. Thus, the theory is not supported by the data in these cases.

BC determine the brand personality in focus group exercises, which involves the brand audience, employees and management. Furthermore, they look at the future identity as a base, instead of the customers' personality. Then with the target customers' expectations in mind, the brand personality is developed through different exercises, in which the participants, for example, are asked to describe the brand as if it was an animal, a person or a car. This way of working does not fit with the theory.

Finally, *BC* does not, as the theory suggests, take into consideration product or non-product related factors when developing a personality for their brands. As mentioned earlier this does not falsify the theory because it is done (not by *BC* but by an advertising agency).

5.3.3. CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

When developing a brand personality both companies have in common that they start with looking at the brands current personality. Furthermore, when deciding upon a future personality, *Brand Consultancy* and *Brand Management Network*, does this with the target customers' expectations in mind. Moreover, when developing the personality, both companies use exercises in which the brand is seen as an animal or a person. Furthermore, either *BMN* or *BC* are responsible for deciding which product and non-product related factors that should go into the brand personality.

There are some differences in *BMNs* and *BCs* way of working when they develop a brand personality. First, *BC* uses focus groups and in depth interviews, while *BMN* uses workshops. Second, *BMNs* workshops include the board of directors and other key people while *BC's* focus groups include management, employees and the brand audience. Moreover, in their focus groups and interviews *BC* does not only use exercises where the respondents are asked to describe the brand as if it was a person or an animal; they also have an exercise where the respondents describe the brand as if it was a car.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this final chapter I will bring my study to an end by formulating findings and conclusions to answer my three research questions: how the branding process can be described and how a brand identity and brand personality can be developed. Since my cases are contrasting, the two companies are operating in different countries; I will draw some specific conclusions regarding the differences in how the two countries handle brand development. I would like to point out though that I am not trying to generalize, my findings and conclusions regard my two case studies only. The chapter ends with a section in which I present implications for management, theory and future researchers.

6.1. HOW CAN THE BRANDING PROCESS BE DESCRIBED? Research Question One

The branding process can be described in six steps. The first step is to perform a brand audit in which the brand's current situation is assessed. The audit includes an analysis of who the brand is (its identity), how it is perceived by customers (its image) and its position (the part of the identity that is communicated). Furthermore, the following questions are answered: why the brand exists, how the brand feels, the basic views about the brand and the brand's existing permissions and limitations. The answers to these questions should come from discussions in focus groups or works shops that include the brand audience, employees and management. Moreover, I have found that in this step it is justified to examine the brand's different touch points (i.e. the functional areas where the customers encounter the brands). In addition, sometimes it might be a good idea, before starting the branding process, to make sure that the agency and client are on the same level regarding what branding is about.

The next step, once the brand's current identity, image and position are mapped out, is to determine the brand vision. The brand vision is the optimal or ideal position for the brand and it includes determining a future brand identity and position. When determining the brand vision, it needs to be taken into consideration where the market is headed, where competitors are strong and weak and the brand's existing permissions and limitations.

In step three the actual brand strategy is set. The brand strategy should, in a broad manner, outline how the brand is going to move from its current position to an optimal, ideal position. It is a road- map on how to realize the vision. First of all the people, resources and approaches necessary to realize the vision need to be identified. Next, it needs to be established if the company has to develop any additional core competencies in order to credibly deliver against the brand's future position. Furthermore, competitor reactions should be anticipated and also what elements of the current position that needs to be strengthened or neutralized in order to better fit with the new identity. When the overall strategy is set, additional sub strategies need to be developed and this is step four and five.

Step four involves developing an internal strategy. In this step, I have found it to be a good idea to get the employees involved and active. This can be done by in workshops, get the employees started to think what they could do to support the new brand identity. Each functional area where customers encounter the brand (i.e. touch point) should be represented in these workshops. The employees should together with the management and the branding agency set up a strategy

regarding what they can do to support the brand. Furthermore, an action plan should be created in which a time frame, specific action steps and goals are clearly established.

Step five concerns getting the new brand identity and position known to the brand audience. In other words implement the brand externally. I have found though that this is not something that the branding agencies are involved in. It is the job of an advertising agency. They are the ones that should come up with the solution regarding how to communicate the brand identity in a creative way. The branding agency, however, should not give the advertising agency free hands. They should develop a branding brief with the purpose to inform the advertising agency about the brand's new identity and position. In this step, I have found it to be a good idea for the branding agency to still, to some extent, stay in control. They should be the ones that in the end determine, or at least have the chance to influence, whether the advertising campaign should be accepted or not. The acceptance/rejection should depend on if the campaign clearly reflects the brand identity and position or not.

The last step in the branding process should be to measure and monitor how effective the different branding programs are in building brand equity. The four assets of brand equity are perceived quality, associations, loyalty and awareness. Thus, brand metrics should be set up to measure how effective the different branding programs are in contributing to strengthen these assets. The brand effort can be tracked both internal and external. The internal follow-up is something that the company can take care of themselves, however, in order to follow up and track the result of the external communication effort some more complex brand research is necessary. If the agency does not have the expertise or resource to follow up, track and measure the brand externally, this should be outsourced to a third party, for instance a brand research firm.

In this section I would like to make the following specific conclusions:

- ?? In order to successfully develop a brand, a firm first needs to consider their brand's current identity, image and position.
- ?? Branding is a six-step process, thus firms that thoroughly follow these six steps are more likely to develop strong brands than firms who do not.
- ?? Branding agencies in Sweden and the U.S. follow a similar process, however, in Sweden it might be necessary to start the process with establishing a shared view, since branding is more of a new phenomenon here in Sweden.
- ?? American agencies seem to have more power and stay in control longer throughout the process because they are the one's that actually have the final say regarding the external implementation of the brand.
- ?? In Sweden the branding process is suppose to be a learning experience for the company so that they later can take care of the branding themselves. Nothing indicates that this is the case in the U.S.

6.2. HOW CAN A BRAND IDENTITY BE DEVELOPED? Research question two

The development of a brand identity involves deciding a future brand identity and what parts of the identity that should be actively communicated (i.e. its position). A brand's current identity and image need to be established before its future identity can be determined. I have found, that

in order to come up with a brand's current and future identity, the brand identity should be analyzed by looking at it through four different perspectives: brand-as-product, brand-as-organization, brand-as-symbol and brand-as-person. Each of these perspectives constitutes different elements that contribute to the identity. Hence, these elements should also be taken into consideration. The product perspective, for example, should include assessing the core essence, the brand heritage, which functional and emotional attributes that should be part of the identity, tangible identifiers and the brand's existing permissions and limitations etc.

The future identity should then be developed with these four perspectives in mind and also by considering which elements that should be included in each perspective. Appendix C lists the four perspectives and various elements that can be useful to have in mind when determining a brand's current and future identity.

Once the new brand identity is determined, some core values need to be agreed upon. These core values should be a few things that represent who the brand is. Furthermore, these values should guide and infiltrate every area where customers encounter the brand. Finally, what needs to be established is which of the elements of the identity that should be actively communicated? This is about determining the position.

In this section I would like to make the following specific conclusions:

- ?? When developing a brand identity, a company should look at their brand through four different perspectives and determine which elements that should be used in order to achieve the desired identity.
- ?? The U.S. and Sweden do not share the same view regarding what a brand identity is. In Sweden a brand's identity is looked upon as the soul of the brand, while in the U.S. it is viewed as a set of associations. Moreover, when working with the identity the U.S. look upon the identity as something that is build up by several elements, thus they work with these elements when they develop the identity. In Sweden, the identity is treated like something more intangible, hence they do not have any pre-determined elements that they work with, instead they work with core values and influencing factors.

6.3. HOW CAN A BRAND PERSONALITY BE DEVELOPED? Research Question Three

The process to develop a brand personality starts with looking at the brand's current personality and future identity. Then the brand's target audience is defined. Next it is established what the target audience needs, wants, likes and also their expectations. Once this is known, the development of the actual personality can begin with the above issues in mind.

I have found that the development of the actual personality should be done in workshops by performing different exercises. In these exercises the participants should be asked to describe the brand as if it was an animal, person or car. Different groups, including employees and management, should do these exercises. Each group should then present what they came up with and finally everyone should together decide upon the best ideas and develop the brand personality from there.

In this section I would like make the following specific conclusions:

- ?? A brand personality is determined by looking at the target customers' needs, wants and expectations.
- ?? In order to decide which personality traits that should go into the brand personality, the brand should be described as if it was a person, an animal or a car.
- ?? The procedure to develop a brand personality is almost identical in Sweden and in the U.S. However, one thing clearly indicates a cultural difference that influences the process, namely the special love and relationship that Americans seem to have to their cars. It is a way for them to express their personality and this is not really the case in Sweden (at least not to the same extent). Thus, when an American agency is in the process of developing a brand personality, they are likely to describe the brand not only if it was a person or an animal but also as if it was a car.

6.4. GENERAL CONCLUDING STATEMENT

I have learned a lot while writing this thesis. I have gained an understanding regarding how a brand is developed and also more specific how a brand identity and brand personality can be developed. I have also come to realize how important it is for companies to develop, strengthening and maintaining their brands. To know your brand, whether it is corporate, company or individual, is to know who you are and what you stand for. In addition, a clear and well-defined brand identity and personality is a benefit because it can work as a guideline for the positioning and the external and internal communication effort.

Brands, if managed correctly, can create a competitive advantage for a company. This holds true not only for multinational companies but also for national, regional and local companies. I think that brand development should not only be restricted to companies with large marketing budgets. I believe that, if a company has clear guidelines regarding the different steps in the branding process and more specific on how to develop a brand identity and brand personality, they could more or less develop the brand themselves. This, however, is not something that I recommend to large corporations but for smaller firms that might not have the resources to hire a brand consultant or branding agency.

Finally, what I would like to say is that if a company do hire an agency, they should make sure that the they are involved and active in the process so that they can use it as a learning experience (i.e. a way to develop their own internal branding skills).

6.5. IMPLICATIONS

The overall purpose with this study was to describe how a brand is developed. This section will cover the implications that this study could have for practitioners, for theory and for future researchers.

6.5.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

For practitioners in the field of developing brands, the use of this study could be to gain insights regarding how a brand is developed. If the manager does not have a clear branding process, this study can work as a guideline, since it includes the steps necessary to develop a brand. Furthermore, for practitioners, that have a specific process, this study might be useful to look at in order to see if their process includes all the necessary steps and procedures. If it does not, maybe they should consider adding them. The following are some specific elements that the practitioner should not leave out in the branding process and the development of a brand identity and brand personality.

The Branding Process

- ?? Consider the brands existing permissions and limitations, how the brand relates to competitor brands and what role it plays in the marketplace
- ?? Develop a brand trajectory
- ?? Analyze the brand's different touch points

Brand Identity Development

- ?? Consider the brand identity to be made up of different elements organized around four perspectives (see appendix C)

Brand Personality Development

- ?? Assess the brands current personality and future identity
- ?? Develop the brand personality with target customers' expectations in mind

6.5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

In this thesis, I have explored how a brand is developed in two branding agencies: *Brand Management Network* and *Brand Consultancy*. I have also described the branding process and how a brand identity and brand personality can be developed. Furthermore, I have, in my conclusions, begun to explain how a brand is developed. What I have explored, described and explained in my study might add to existing theory or make them more thoroughly at certain points, since my study is not focused on how a company can develop their brand but how a branding agency develops brands. Hopefully this will contribute to the overall understanding on how a brand is developed.

6.5.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Due to the limitations in resources and time that I faced when writing my thesis, my study took on more of a general approach to how a brand is developed. Thus, my three research questions can be investigated more in depth. Furthermore, the following are my suggestions, of subjects related to my study, which could be investigated by future researches.

Brand Equity

What methods do companies employ to strengthen their brand equity. Are perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty the only assets of brand equity?

Brand Positioning

How can the brand positioning process be described and in particular how do companies determine the “right” positioning for the brand and what do they do to make sure that the brand identity, position and image are as congruent as possible.

Advertising Campaigns

How do advertising agencies use the branding brief (provided by the branding agency) to create an advertising campaign?

Brand Research Firms

How can the methods that brand research firms use to measure and track the brand externally be described?

Branding Department

How can the branding process be described in a company, which has its own branding department?

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INTERVIEW GUIDE – English Version

Appendix A

GENERAL INFORMATION

- ?? Name of the Company?
- ?? Name of the respondent?
- ?? Why do companies come to you?
- ?? What are your areas of expertise?
- ?? Who are the people you work with?

THE BRANDING PROCESS

1. Explain closer the different steps in your branding process?
2. What role does the brand identity and brand personality have in the branding process?
3. What information gathering methods do you use?

BRAND IDENTITY

4. What is a brand identity for you?
5. How do you develop a brand identity?
6. What different elements do you include in the creation of a brand identity?

BRAND PERSONALITY

7. Do you usually develop personalities for the brands you are working with?
 8. What are the relationship between the brand identity and the brand personality?
 9. What are the different steps in your process when you create a brand personality?
 10. How do you determine which personality traits the brand should include?
 11. Do you develop the personality with the target customers' personality in mind?
 12. What kind of product related factors do you use to create associations that affects the personality of the brand?
 13. What non-product-related factors do you use?
-

INTERVJUGUIDE – Swedish Version

Appendix B

GENERELL INFORMATION

- ? Företagets namn
- ?? Namn på respondent
- ?? Varför söker företag upp er?
- ?? Vilka områden specialiserar ni er inom?
- ?? Vem arbetar ni med?

BRANDING PROCESSEN

1. Förklara närmare de olika stegen i eran branding process.
2. Vad har varumärkes identiteten och varumärkes personligheten för roll i branding processen.
3. Vad använder ni för data insamlings metoder?

VARUMÄRKES IDENTITET

4. Hur ser ni på varumärkes identitet?
5. Hur utvecklar ni en identitet för ett varumärke?
6. Vilka olika delar anser ni att ett varumärkes identitet består av?

VARUMÄRKES PERSONLIGHET

7. Utvecklar ni personligheter för era varumärken?
 8. Vad har varumärkes identiteten för relation till varumärkes personligheten?
 9. Vilka är de olika stegen i er process att bygga in en personlighet i ett varumärke?
 10. Hur bestämmer ni vilken karaktär och personlighet varumärket ska ha?
 11. Utvecklar ni varumärkets personlighet med målgruppens personlighet som grund?
 12. Vilka produkt relaterade faktorer använder ni för att skapa associationer som påverkar varumärkes personligheten?
 13. Vilka icke produkt relaterade faktorer använder ni er av?
-

BRAND IDENTITY PERSPECTIVES AND ELEMENTS

Appendix C

BRAND AS PRODUCT

1. Product Scope
2. Product Attributes
3. Quality/Value
4. Uses
5. Users
6. Country of Origin
7. Core essence*
8. Brand Heritage*
9. Tangible Identifiers*
10. Brands existing permissions and limitations*

BRAND AS ORGANIZATION

11. Organization Attributes
12. Local vs. Global

BRAND AS PERSON

13. Personality
14. Brand Customer Relationship

BRAND AS SYMBOL

15. Visual Imagery and Metaphors
16. Brand Heritage

Source: Aaker (1996) and Brand Consultancy*
