Brand Building for a B2B Service Provider

Case: Dammega Oy

Lahti University of Applied Sciences
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HOPPANIA, HEIDI: Brand Building for a Service Provider
                                    Case: Dammega Oy

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ABSTRACT

Branding is becoming the new tool of differentiation in the B2B markets. The increased competition in the industrial markets demands companies to find new ways to stay in the game. That is exactly what branding can offer, creating deeper and more meaningful customer relationships that yield higher profit margins. Dammega Oy is one of those companies seeking competitiveness through developing a strong brand. The study focuses on building the Dammega brand based on the company objectives.

The thesis is a qualitative case study. The theoretical framework of the study concentrates on understanding the different dimensions and aspects of branding, and brand building. The theory was gathered from topic related academic books, journals and trusted internet sources. For the empirical part, an overview on the case company along with market environment analysis are reviewed. The secondary data is supported by the primary data which was collected through interviews with members of the company and valued company customers.

Brand building for Dammega Oy is developed based on the interviews and literature review. Aaker's brand building model is used as a base for the brand building and consists of three steps: strategical brand analysis, brand identity system and brand implementation system. Furthermore, company objectives and market environment analysis are used for support.

It is concluded that Dammega should perform different marketing activities in building the brand and reaching the future goal of having a strong brand. A clear message to the target audience should be created, and different marketing channels and methods should be used for active communication of the message.

Key words: Brand, Brand Identity, Brand Equity, Brand Building, B2B branding

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Brändäyksestä on tulossa uusi työkalu erillaistua B2B markkinoilla. Lisääntynyt kilpailu teollisuuden alalla pakottaa yrityksiä löytämään uusia keinoja pysyä mukana pelissä. Juurikin sitä brändäys voi tarjota, syvempien ja merkityksellisempien asiakssuhteiden saavuttamista, joiden avulla voidaan saavuttaa korkeammat voittomarginaalit. Dammega Oy on yksi niistä yrityksistä jotka etsivät kilpailukyvyn kasvattamista kehittämällä vahvan brändin. Tutkimuksessa keskitytään rakentamaan Dammegan brändiä, yrityksen tavoitteiden mukaisesti.

Tämä opinnäytetyö on laadullinen tapaustutkimus. Teoreettinen viitekehys keskittyy ymmärtämään brändin eri ulottuvuuksia ja näkökulmia, sekä brändin rakentamista. Teoria on kerätty aiheeseen liittyvistä akateemisista kirjoista, julkaisuista ja luotettavista internet lähteistä. Tutkimuksen empiirisessä osa tarjoaa yleiskatsauksen yrityksestä yhdessä markkinaympäristön analyysin kanssa. Sekundäärinen aineisto tukee primäärisen aineistoa joka kerättiin haastattelemalla yrityksen jäseniä ja yrityksen arvostettuja asiakkaita.

Haastattelujen ja kirjallisuuskatsauksen perusteella Dammega Oy:lle kehitetään brändin rakentamissuunnitelma. Aakerin brändin rakentamismallia käytetään brändin rakentamispohjana, joka koostuu kolmesta vaiheesta: strateginen brändi analyysi, brändi-indentiteetti järjestelmästä ja brändi täytäntöönpano järjestelmästä. Lisäksi, yrityksen tavoitteita ja markkinaympäristö analyysia käytetään suunnitelman tukena.

Yhteenvetona todetaan, että Dammegan tulisi suorittaa eri markkinatoimenpiteitä brändin rakentamisessa, jotta tulevaisuuden tavoite vahvasta brändistä voidaan saavuttaa. Selkeä viesti kohderyhmälle tulisi luoda, ja eri markkinakanavia ja menetelmiä tulisi käyttää viestin aktiivisessa kommunikoinnissa.

Avainsanat: Brändi, brändi-identiteetti, brändipääoma, brändin rakentaminen, B2B brändäys

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

Among managers, it is a common belief that branding is only relevant with consumer products and markets. These managers associate brand loyalty only in the B2C context where there exists non-rational behavior, unlike in B2B most decisions are rational and objective, and in this type of decision-making process the only concern is in features, price, quality etc. After all, the person in charge of the buying process is a human with emotion. (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

Branding has been acknowledged as a necessity for success in the business-to-consumer (B2C) market for decades. Only in the last decade the business-to-business (B2B) markets have discovered the value of branding. B2B branding research is relatively scarce compared to consumer markets (Roberts&Merrilees, 2007), due to industrial buyers being perceived emotionally unaffected to values associated to brands (Leek&Christodoulides, 2011).

Branding in nature is very complex and the impracticality of it in the B2B context is questioned by companies. In consequence many B2B marketers consider the development of a brand only as a variable marketing expense with a high risk of failure. Branding is a long term investment and B2B companies should understand that evidently they need to invest in branding to allow them to stay in the race, in this ever changing market environment. (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006) have provided guiding principles when considering B2B brand management, see figure 1 below.
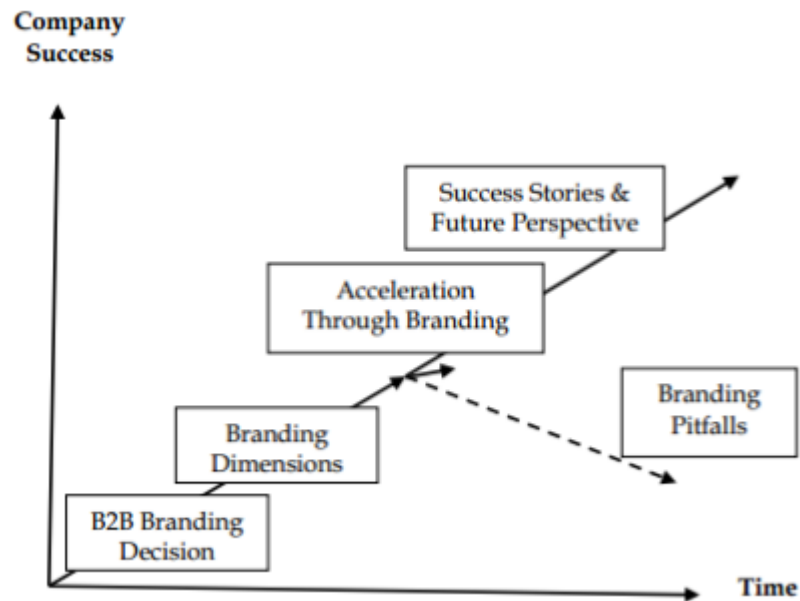
FIGURE 1. Guiding principle of B2B brand management (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

The main steps, decision to brand and branding dimensions are presented in the figure. The relevance of branding in the marketing area is to be determined in making the decision to brand. Branding dimensions are the different aspects of brand and branding such as brand identity, brand communication and brand strategy. Success or failure will depend on how well the company is able to execute each step. (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

The author has always been interested in the subject of branding as our everyday life is surrounded by a fast growing number of brands and they evidently are in the core of all types of businesses. The actual topic of this thesis was developed through close relationship with Dammega Oy and discussion with the company CEO. The CEO expressed interest in finding ways to build the company's existing brand to reach better brand recognition. Based on the discussion the author chose to create a branding plan that could be utilized for the case company's brand building.

The aim for the study is to analyze the Dammega brand and develop ways to build it. The thesis concentrates on understanding branding as an asset that requires strategic brand management. The author's view on the

current situation is that, the existing brand presents good qualities but it is more on the early stages of branding, and there is room for improvements.

1.2 Thesis Objectives, Research Questions and Limitations

This thesis is a case study focusing on brand building for a B2B industrial company, Dammega Oy. The company is seeking to expand their main market area and the company's CEO sees that building a strong brand is vital for the success of future market expansion. Although the company made a successful market entry with the current company brand there is yet no structured plan on how the brand should be build. For building a strong brand a plan is necessary and that is how the idea of creating a plan for brand building was born.

This research is focusing on trying to understand the phenomeno of industrial branding in today's market environment and based on that creating a branding plan. This research is descriptive and explorative, and approached from the case company's perspective.

To serve the goal of the research the following research questions have been formulated. The main research issue is:

How to build Dammega Oy a strong brand?

The sub-questions are:

1. What does brand and branding mean?
2. What is brand equity?
3. How to build a brand?
4. How does branding work in B2B context?
5. How to implement brand building for Dammega Oy?

The main limitation assumed by the author is limited resources. The execution of brand building demands financial investments and personnel. Currently the case company does not have a separate person who is in charge of marketing and other branding activites. Moreover, the research

is focused on a specific industry from a B2B service provider perspective and therefore the approach is not applicable for every industry and market.

1.3   Theoretical Framework

The aim of this study is to provide understanding of different aspects of brand and branding, and implementing the gained knowledge for the brand building of the case company. The study framework follows a four step process, figure 2: concepts, advantages, management and implementation.
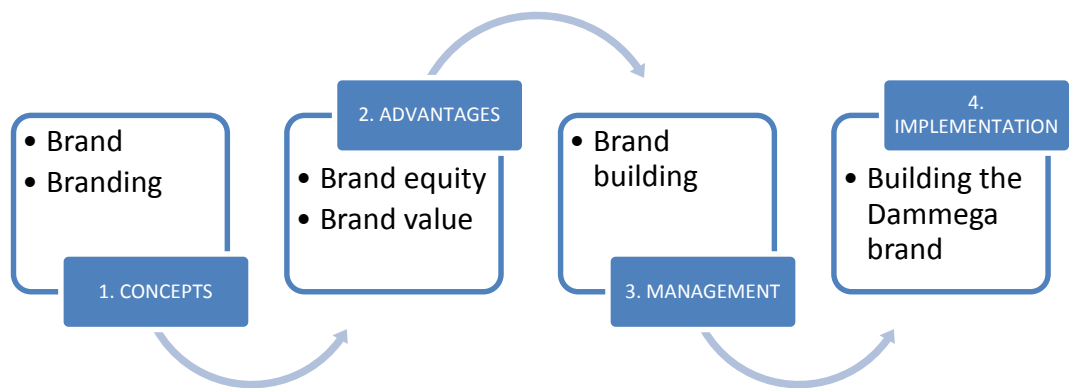
FIGURE 2. Process overview

In the first step, the key concepts related to the study, brand and branding are discussed. These concepts layout the grounds for this study and provides proof for importance of branding. In the second step is showcased the advantages, brand equity and brand values. Brand equity and brand value are the benefits that result from branding. In the third step different brand building models are introduced. In the fourth step one of the brand building models is applied to the current situation of the case company.

1.4 Research Methods and Data Collection

Research methods refers to the different techniques and procedures that are used when obtaining and analyzing data (Saunders, Lewis&Tornhill, 2012). The different approaches and methods used in this research are presented below in the process overview of this research, figure 3.

Research approach	Research method	Data collection
Deductive	Qualitative	Primary data
		Secondary data
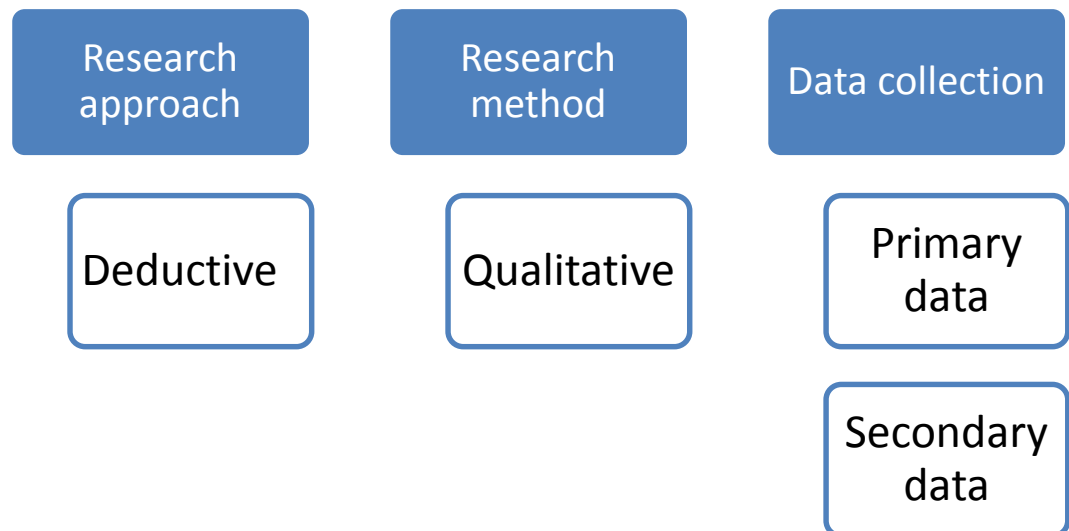
FIGURE 3. Research overview

In this research, deductive approach is applied since the aim is to obtain understanding of the topic by starting from the theory and then designing a research strategy to test the theory. In deductive research, the theory needs to be true in order for the conclusion to be true. (Saunders, Lewis&Tornhill, 2012) This research is a qualitative research as it tries to develop in-depth understanding of the situation with non-numeric data. Qualitative research focuses on the meanings and the relationships between the participants. (Saunders, Lewis&Tornhill, 2012) This means that in collection and analyzing of data emphasis is in words rather than quantification (Bryman&Bell, 2015).

Interviews with the members of the company is conducted by using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews use key questions and list of themes as a base for the interviews. Additional questions can be

asked to explain or better explore the interviewees' responses. Through semi-structured interviews rich and detailed data is collected for the purpose of the research. Case company customers are interviewed by using structured interviews via email to gather information about the brand recognition and brand position compared to competitors. Structured interviews consists questions that have all been formulated prior to the interview. Electronic interviews consist interviews done by using internet or organizational intranet. An email interview consists preliminary contacting to inform the purpose of the interview and a separate email containing the interview questions. (Saunders, Lewis&Tornhill, 2012)

Secondary data is also used widely in investigating branding and B2B branding to form the basis of the research. The secondary data findings support the primary data what was collected in the interviews which provides validity for this research.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis structure is a combination of theoretical and empirical parts which are divided into seven different chapters which can be seen in the below figure 4.

Introduction

Branding

Case Study:
Dammega Oy

Empirical Study
and Analysis

Building the Dammega
Brand

Conclusion and
Suggestions

Summary
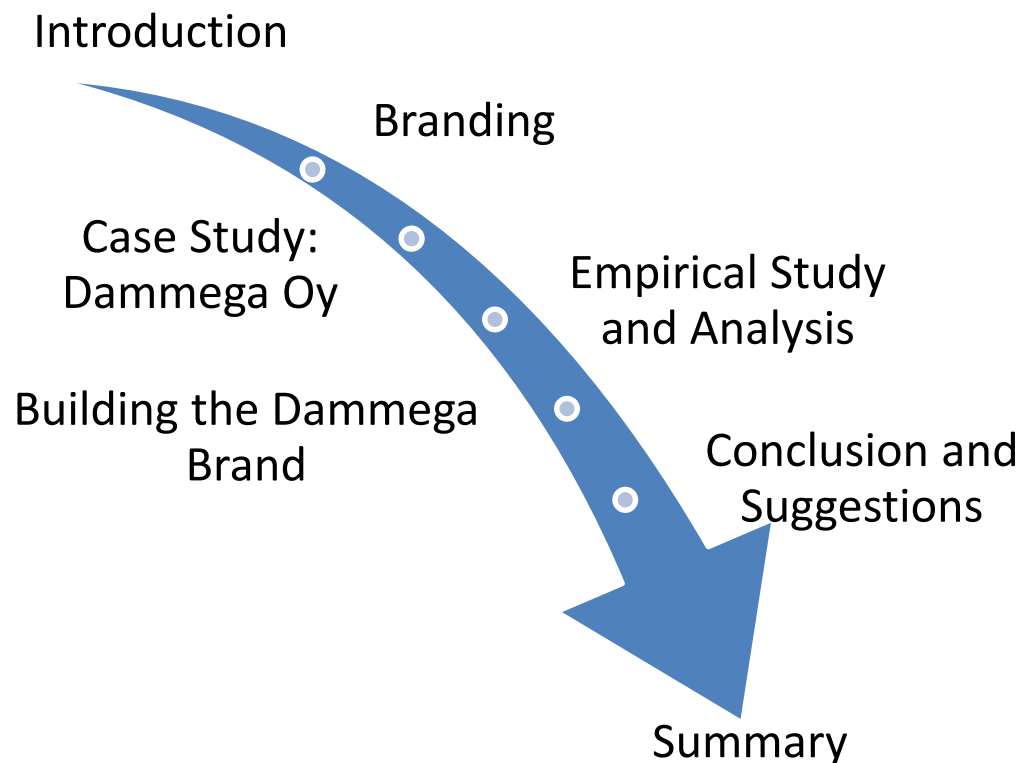
FIGURE 4. Thesis structure

The first chapter, introduction, gives general background information on the thesis and provides the goal of the research with detailed research questions and framework. The second chapter, branding, focuses on providing the necessary theory for the research by presenting the main concepts around branding. The third chapter gives an overview on the case company and also provides insight into the market environment in which it operates, and the current state of their branding.

The fourth chapter consists of the empirical part of the study, in which data collection and interview processes are explained in detail. In addition all

the data is presented and analyzed. In the fifth chapter, the process of brand building for Dammege is created based on the research results. In the sixth chapter, the author lays out the research conclusion and suggestions for Dammega. In the seventh and final chapter the key points of the thesis are pointed out and a brief recap is also provided to the reader.

2   BRANDING

This chapter is devoted to presenting the theoretical framework for this study that consists of the main theories and tools used in this research. The goal is to explain what the different aspects of branding are and how those aspects contribute to actual brand building.

One of the oldest and most well-known brands that still exists dates all the way back to 1706, when the iconic "Twinings" tea brand was introduced to the market. Many other well-known brands like the "Twinings" are still available today, and most of those introduced to the market originate from the pre-industrial era (1760-1830) and Industrial Revolution (1830-70). (Riezebos, Kist&Kootstra, 2003)

Now, decades after the first brands were introduced to the market not only organizations and companies have brands but also persons can have brands (Kapferer, 2008). Brands can be found everywhere and they are impossible to escape (McEwen, 2005). Only in the recent years managers have realized that brands could represent a particular value for the company (Riezebos, Kist&Kootstra, 2003). In some cases the brand can become the companies most valuable asset, for example luxury brand names such as Louis Vuitton and Burberry, brand recognition has made premium prices possible (Johansson&Carlson, 2015).

Kapferer (2008) stated that brand awareness, image, trust and reputation, all painstakingly built up over years, are the best guarantee of future earnings, thus justifying the prices paid. Now multiple business sectors are facing the strategical issue that branding has become beyond the natural brand world of producers and distributors, and head-to-head competition of brands. (Kapferer, 2008) When consumers have learned to trust brands they rely to that trust when making a purchasing decision, and that way allows brands to reduce risk, simplify decisions, and offer emotional benefits (Johansson&Carlson, 2015).

Later in this chapter, these main definitions around branding are described, including what brand consists, brand identity, brand image,

brand equity and also different brand-building tools and models are described.

2.1 What is brand?

In the history of brand, there are as many definitions for it as there are topic experts who have come up with their own definition or nuance to the definition (Kapferer, 2008). One of the founding and traditional definitions of brand is from 1991 when Aaker stated that, "a brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors" (Aaker, 1991, 7). According to Keller brand is a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them" that is meant to differentiate and identify goods and services (Keller, 2013, 30). Both Keller's and Aaker's definitions resonate very much the same identifications for what brands are.

Brand is also much more than just a name or logo that separates different product and service providers, it is also an experience. According to Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009,53) brand experience is "conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environment". By using certain products or services customers can identify, define and express experiences of brands. That is why brands serve a greater purpose when consumers connect with brands through consumer connection. (McEwen, 2005)

These definitions also support the broadened brand definition by Aaker, that brand is more than a product, as seen from the below figure 5.
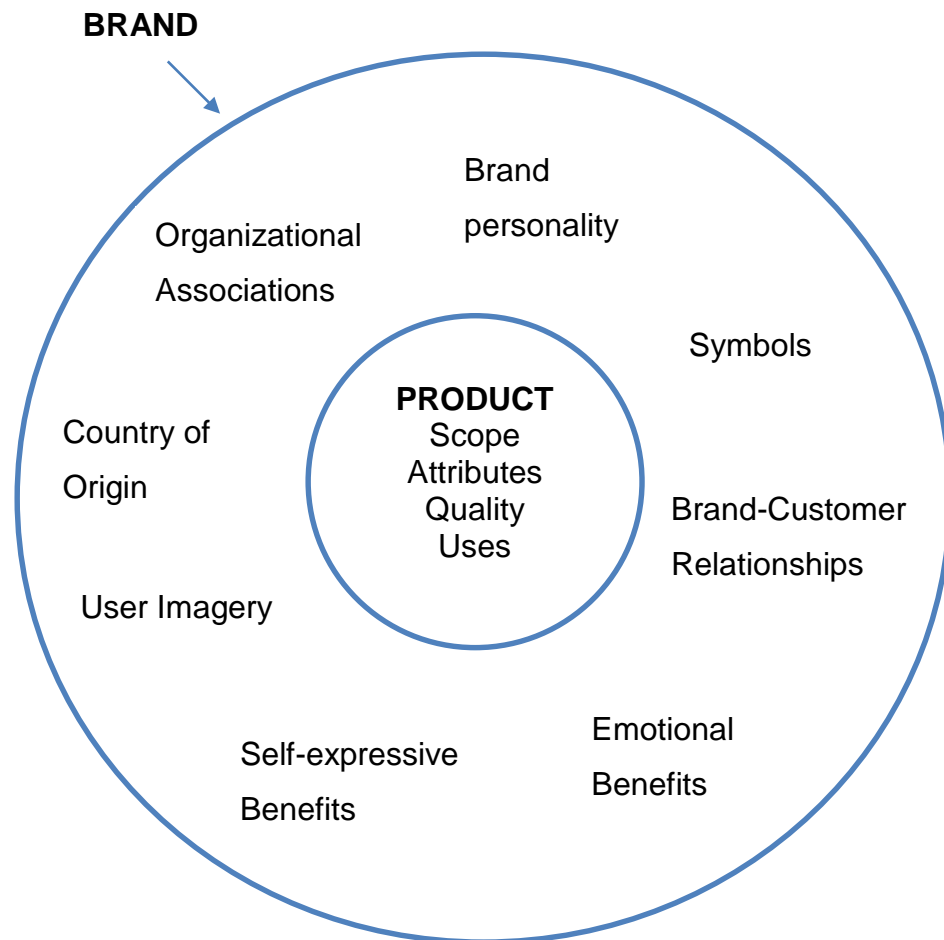
BRAND

FIGURE 5. A brand is more than a product (Aaker, 2010)

A brand consists of the characteristics of a product and even more. Those are brand users, country of origin, organizational associations, brand personality, symbols, brand-customer relationhips, emotional benefits, and self-expressive benefits.

A branded article consists both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes that are the characteristics of the product itself and all other characteristics added to that product (Riezebos, Kist&Kootstra, 2003). Often companies and brand managers forget that the brand attributes are different from brand benefits, attributes are the services the company provides or the ingredients that can be found in their products (McEwen, 2005).

Johansson and Carlson (2015) have provided a frame around how brands work, figure 6, that shows what makes a good brand, and what it can do for consumers and the firms that support it.
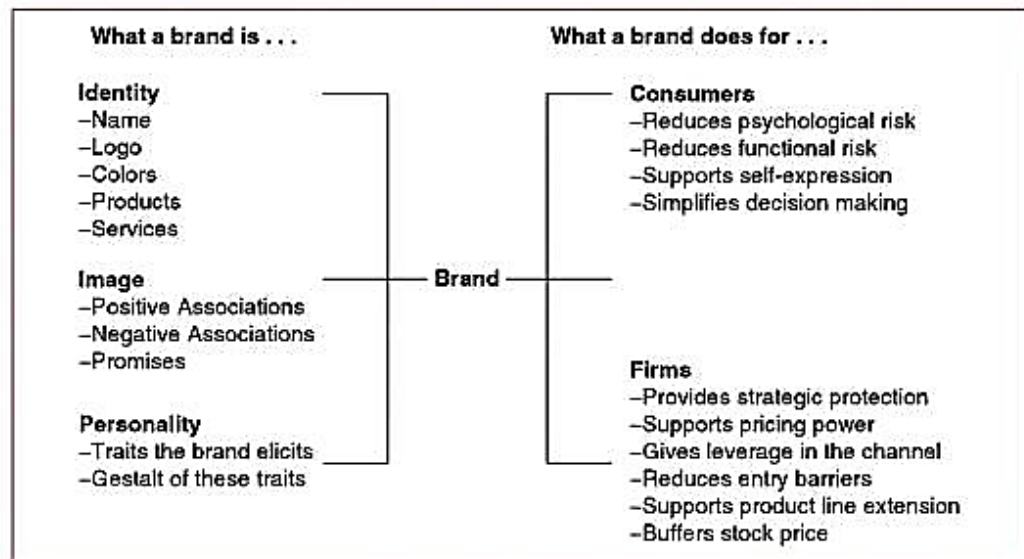
FIGURE 6. How brands work (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

The brand benefits for consumers and firms will be discussed in the following section but now the focus is in describing the essence of a brand.

A brand can be seen like a person that when born is small and then a name is given, followed by growing period when it becomes a well-known name. Those are the brand identity, image and personality, the three core brand concepts as seen in the figure 6. They also provide the bases for a strong brand and strategical leverage over other brands. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

Because of the extended networks of multiple stakeholder, branding in B2B is more complex than in B2C (Sheth&Sinha, 2015). In B2B branding is all about creating positive image and reputation for the whole organization, as it is seen to bring better selling opportunities and relationships that are more profitable (Keller, 2008). Instead of product or service brand, in the B2B context, the brand usually refers to corporate industrial brand (Herbst&Merz, 2011).

2.2   Benefits of brand and branding

Brand benefits according to McEwen represent "the features or characteristics that consumers feel are directly and discernibly related to the performance and attractiveness of the product or the product-use experience". Benefits are not the values that the company has advertised but in fact what the consumers' value. (McEwen, 2005, 21)

Brands represent many different valuable functions to both consumers and firms. Keller (2008) has divided the roles the brand represents to customers and firms, see below figure 7.

Customers

- Identification of source of product
- Assignment of responsibility to product maker
- Risk reduction
- Search cost reduction
- Promise, bond, or pact with maker of product
- Symbolic device
- Signal of quality

Firms

- Means of identification to simplify handling or tracking
- Means of legal protecting unique features
- Signal of quality level to satisfied customers
- Means of endowing products with unique associations
- Source of competitive advantages
- Source of financial returns

FIGURE 7. Role the brands play (Keller, 2008)

The brand benefits can be also divided into four categories as Johansson and Carlson (2015) has done, those categories are pricing advantages, channel advantages, entry barrier, and stock market.

PRICING ADVANTAGES
- Reduce customer price sensitivity, yields a price premium

CHANNEL ADVANTAGES
- Incresed channel leverage, facilitate entry into distribution

ENTRY BARRIERS
- Increases customer loyalty, improves customer retention, lower customer acquisition costs

STOCK MARKET
- Brand equity is a major intangible asset, raises share value

FIGURE 8. What a strong brand does for firms (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

A strong brand has pricing advantages which allows them to collect a price premium from customers and they can avoid temporary discounts. Customers are not soly focused in the product or service price. Strong brands are favored among retailers as known brands are popular among consumers. As customers are loyal to a brand it builds up an entry barrier for other brands entering the market, it is expensive to establish a strong brand. On the other hand entering new markets with a strong brand lowers the entry barrier for the organization. In the stock markets strong brands can reach higher share prices because of good brand recognition. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

2.3   Brand identity and brand image

Earlier in figure 6, the brand identity was identified as having certain characteristics that can be seen now again in the figure 9.
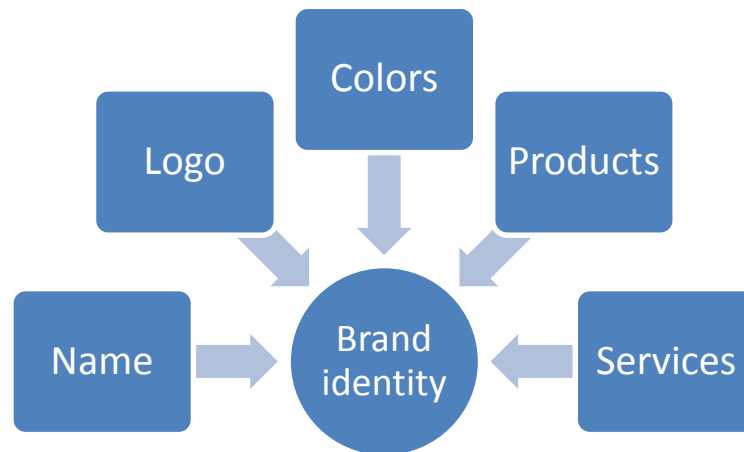
FIGURE 9. Brand identity, taken from figure 6 (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

Brand identity consists of name, logo, color, products and services. A unique and distinctive brand identity is essential for a strong brand. That is the only way a consumer is able to know what the brand promises as well as what the company behind it stands for. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015) The brand identity delivers direction, purpose and meaning for the brand (Aaker, 2010).

Aaker has defined that "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, 2010, 68). The definition according to Riezebos, Kist and Kootstra is that "a brand image is a subjective mental picture of a brand shared by a group of consumers" (Riezebos, Kist&Kootstra, 2003, 63). The task for marketers is the positive brand image creation and through that linking strong, favorable and unique associations to the brand (Keller, 2008).

It is important to distinguish the difference between brand identity and brand image. As mentioned earlier, brand identity is what the brand is but brand image on the other hand is how others like customers perceive the brand. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015) Table 1 below, will give a more detailed list of the differences between brand identity and brand image.

TABLE 1. Differences between brand identity and brand image (MSG, 2013)

	Brand Identity	Brand Image
1	Brand identity develops from the source or the company.	Brand images is perceived by the receiver or the consumer.
2	Brand message is tied together in terms of brand identity.	Brand message is untied by the consumer in the form of brand image.
3	The general meaning of brand identity is "who you really are?"	The general meaning of brand image is "How market perceives you?"
4	It's nature is that it is substance oriented or strategic.	It''s nature is that it is appearance oriented or tactical.
5	Brand identity symbolizes firms' reality.	Brand image symbolizes perception of consumer.
6	Brand identity represents "your desire".	Brand image represents "others view"
7	It is enduring.	It is superficial.
8	Identity is looking ahead.	Image is looking back.
9	Identity is active.	Image is passive.
10	It signifies "where you want to be".	It signifies "what you have got".
11	It is total promise that a company makes to consumers.	It is total consumers' perception about the brand.

At the end of the table, there is a summary "focus on shaping your brand identity, brand image will follow", clarifying the meaning of the table for the reader (MSG, 2013). From the consumer point of view brands deliver

meaning in different levels- "about a company's, product's, or service's features, benefits, values, culture, and personality, and about the type of person who buys or uses the product" (Novak&Lyman, 1998).

2.3.1 Brand personality

Brand personality is the extension of brand identity and brand image, as Johansson and Carlson sees it, see figure 10 below.
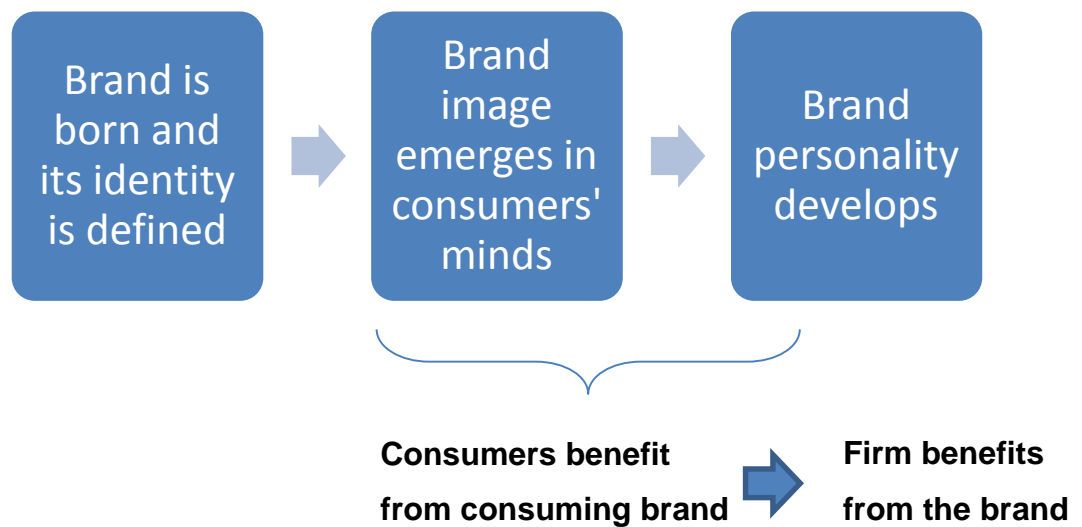
FIGURE 10. Evolution of a strong brand (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

Brand identity answers the question of "what is?", brand image focuses on answering "what comes to mind?" but brand personality focus answering "what kinda?" (Johansson&Carlson, 2015).

The concept of brand personality originates from associating brand characteristics to the human characteristics. According to Aaker brand can be described by demographics, lifystyle or human personality traits. Human personality traits are for example extroversion, agreeableness and dependability. (Aaker, 2010) As consumers have more and more interactions with brands from constantly seeing brands in stores, being exposed to brand advertising, observing brand usage by others around, and identification of typical users, the brand personality is developed (Johansson&Carlson, 2015).

The Big Five

1. Sincerity

2. Excitement

3. Competence

4. Sophistication

5. Ruggedness
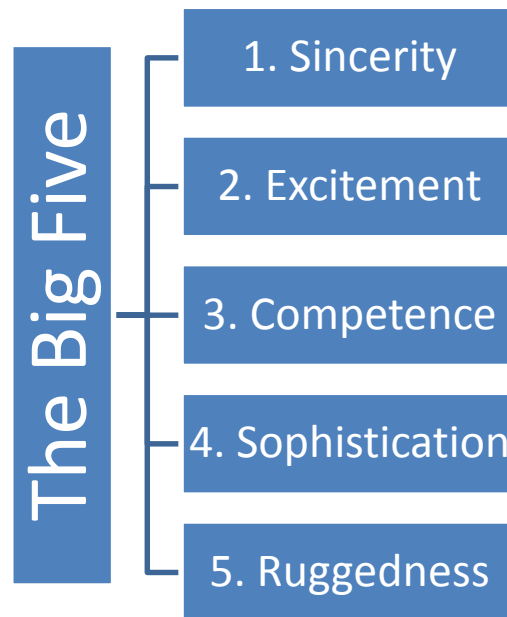
FIGURE 11. The big five (Aaker, 2010)

A study in the US found that there are five basic traits that illustrated brand
personalities – the Big Five, figure 11 (Aaker, 201). Especially in building
strong B2B brand in the industrial sector, brand personality shows
importance in both functional and emotional associations (Herbst&Merz,
2011)

2.3.2 Brand positioning

Brand positioning is the implementation of brand identity. Aaker's definition
goes as follows, "brand position is the part of the brand identity and value
proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience and
that demonstrates an advantage over the competing brands". (Aaker,
2010, 176) Brand positioning aims to present the company's offers and
images in a unique manner in order to achieve a valued place in the
consumers mind (Kotler&Keller, 2012).

According to Keller "positioning requires determining a frame of reference
(by identifying the target market and the nature of competition) and the
ideal point of parity and points of difference brand associations". Gaining

knowledge on the following, includes the following steps presented in figure 12. (Keller, 2008, 98)

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1. Target consumer
      2. Main competitors
            3. Brand similarity to competitors
                  4. Brand difference to competitor
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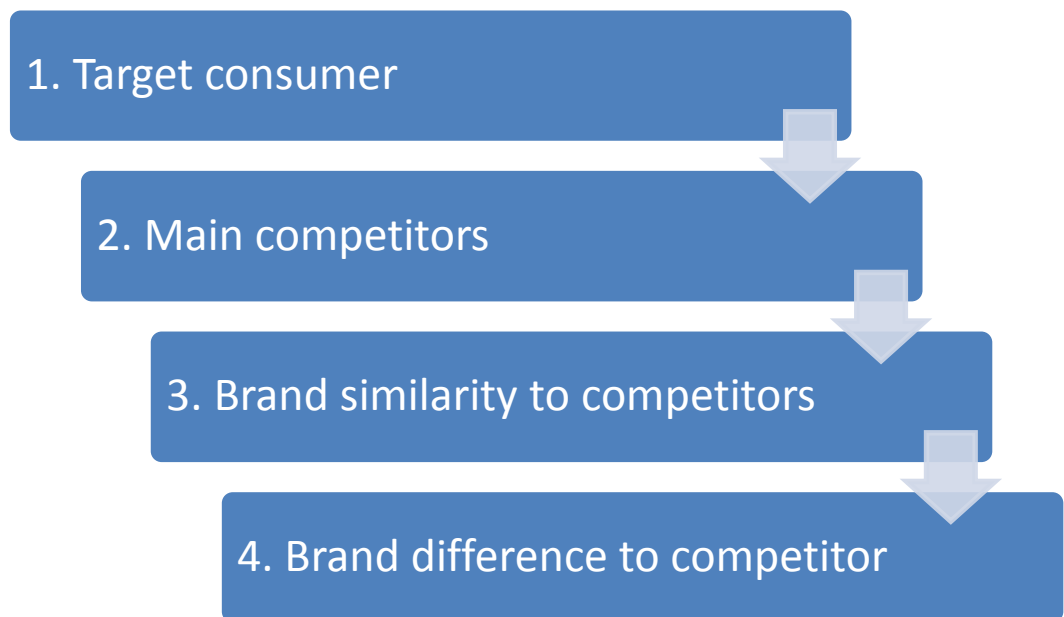
FIGURE 12. Brand positioning steps (Keller, 2008)

When looking at the target consumer needs to be established the target market and from that market, the distinct market segment needs to be chosen. There are different types of segmentation bases that can be utilized such as behavioral segmentation, model segmentation, and geographical segmentation. From the chosen market a competitor analysis needs to be made to understand the threats and opportunities the competitors present. (Keller, 2008) After that the focus is in the actual positioning, how to create the major attributes for the brand. This means finding the points of parity (POP) and points of difference (POD). (Johansson&Carlson, 2015) Some attributes can be divided with other brands but also brands need unique selling proposition and something to create competitive advantage compared to the other brands (Keller, 2008). It is all about finding the right balance between the POP and POD as we can see from below, figure 13. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)
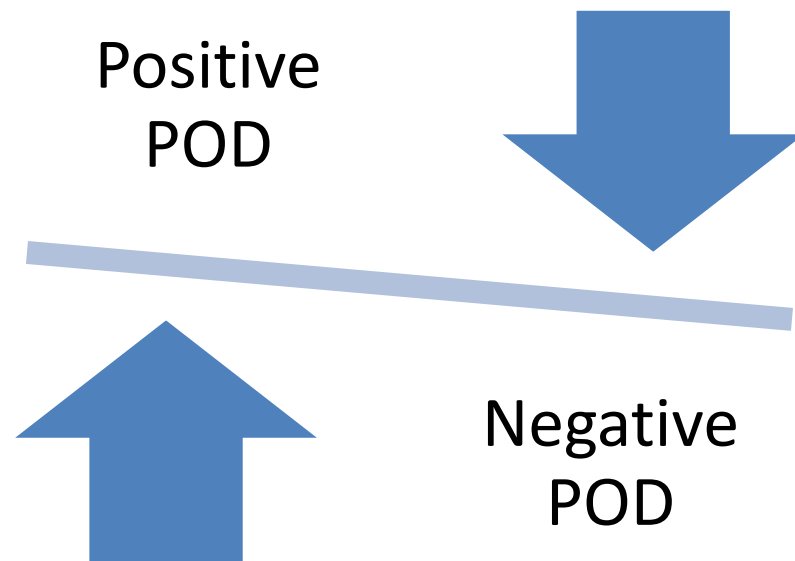
FIGURE 13. Making positive attributes more salient (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

Positive POD raises the brand awareness which means that the positive POD should stress the brand message. This can be done by using advertising and other tools of brand communication in creating a positive image and using a slogan to capture a position. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015) Finding the desired position for the brand is not easy and the success relies on the brand association and difference mix (Punj&Moon, 2002).

Because, all discussed concerning positioning is viewed from the point of traditional means of communication we also have to take into consideration the usage of digital media and especially the social media. Johansson and Carlson have combined some "do's and dont's" to navigate the social media jungle, figure 14. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

```
┌──────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│                  │    │     Create       │ ──── │                  │
│   SOCIAL MEDIA   │    │  communication   │      │    Add value     │
│                  │    │                  │      │                  │
└────────┬─────────┘    └────────┬─────────┘      └──────────────────┘
         │                       │
┌────────┴─────────┐    ┌────────┴─────────┐
│    Facts and     │    │                  │
│     rumors       │    │    Don't sell!   │
│                  │    │                  │
└────────┬─────────┘    └────────┬─────────┘
         │                       │
┌────────┴─────────┐    ┌────────┴─────────┐
│                  │ ── │                  │
│    No control    │    │ Privacy infusion │
│                  │    │                  │
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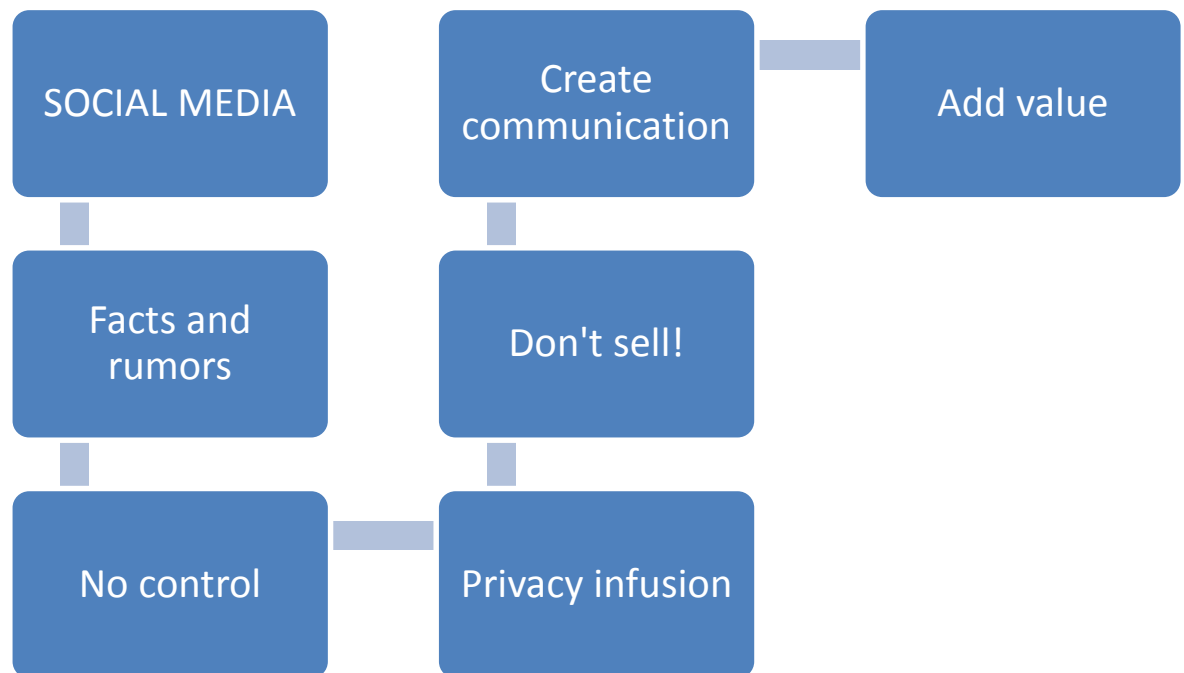
FIGURE 14. Social media do's and don't's (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

Social media is full of various channels but the main thing to keep in mind is the lack of control. Building personalized content for the company and the brand is great, only there is no control after it is published - no returning back. That can be either a good or a bad thing but just to be noted the company has no affect on that. (Johansson&Carlson, 2015)

2.4 What is brand equity?

Brand equity has not been around no more than three decades or at least understanding of the meaning. Marketers have known that the brand name adds value to a product or service but it was never thought as an actual asset. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy&Pervan, 2011)

Aaker has defined brand equity as "a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers. The major asset categories are: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand association". These assets are displayed in the below figure 15. (Aaker, 1991)
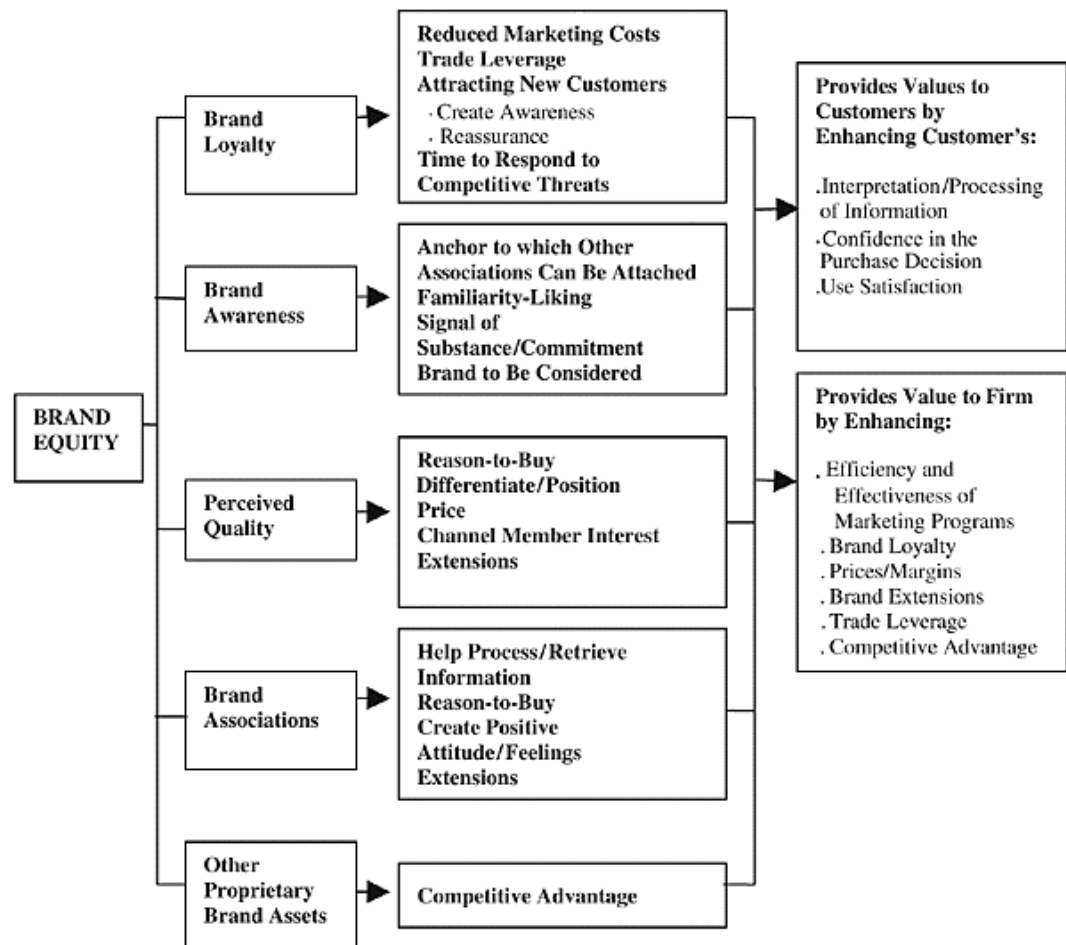
FIGURE 15. How brand equity generates value (Aaker, 1991, 9)

The main dimensions of brand equity are brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations. By investing to create and enhance these assets can be brand equity managed. Each asset generates value in different ways and when building a brand those need to be taken into account. (Aaker, 2010)

In the core of brand equity is brand loyalty, as future sales and profit streams can be predicted based on highly loyal customers of a brand (Aaker, 2010). Brand loyalty means that a consumer is reluctant to switch brands. In some cases brand loyalty might be the result of habit or the cost of switch would be high, but only when brand preference comes from genuine liking it contributes to the brand equity. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy&Pervan, 2011) We can see from below, figure 16, how even satisfied customers can be vulnerable to switch brands (Percy&Elliot, 2009).

Satisfaction

	Low	High
High	**Frustrated**	**Loyal**
Low	**Switchable**	**Vulnerable**

Perceived risk in switching (High / Low)
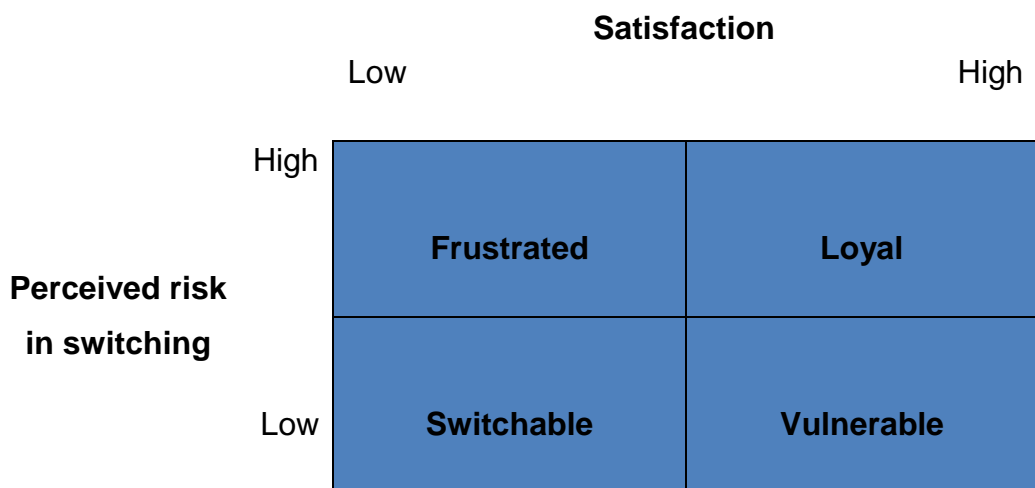
FIGURE 16. Brand loyalty model (Percy&Elliot, 2009)

Especially promotions effect on brand switches as the cost of switch is low, which is very common when new brands enter the market. Only in cases where the consumer is very satisfied with a product or service and the perceived risk of switching is high can brand loyalty be assured. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy&Pervan, 2011) According to Aaker the strategical assets of brand loyalty are: (Aaker, 1991)

- Reduced marketing costs
- Trade leverage
- Attracting new customers
- Time to respond to competitive threats

Brand awareness represents how strong the brand's presence is in consumer's mind, and it consists brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition reflects to the previous brand exposure, it simply means that a consumer remembers the brand from an earlier encounter. (Keller, 2008) When a need for product is recognized and a brand name is needed to remember from memory, it is brand recall (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy&Pervan, 2011). Brand awareness generates the following values: (Aaker, 1991).

- Anchor to which other associations can be attached
- Familiarity-liking
- Signal of substance / commitment
- Brand to be considered

Customer's perception defines what perceived quality of a product or service is, it is the overall quality or superiority of a product or service in comparison to alternatives and the intended purpose (Keller, 2008). As perceived quality is a customers perception, the perceived quality can be very different from actual quality. That is why creating significant quality is difficult as it requires knowledge on what quality means for customers. It is also seen that perceived quality influences brand loyalty and purchase decision. (Aaker, 2010) It can become the only reason-to-buy, make premium prices possible or create new differentiation and positioning, as well as generate interest from distributors and introduce brand extensions (Aaker, 1991)

A brand association can be any memory that links to a brand. The brand association in memory needs to be strong, positive and unique to create brand attitude that leads to brand equity. All associations that consumers have are the result of any and all communication related to the brand. (Aaker, 2010) Brand associations result in helping customers process or retrieve information, being reason-to-buy, positive attitude and feeling creation, or building new brand extensions (Aaker, 1991). Brand associations come from brand identity as that is how organizations want their brands to be in customer's minds. The development and

implementation of brand identity is the key in building strong brands. (Aaker, 2010)

Often brands that enjoy strong positive brand equity are brands that have highly loyal customers, which results in high market share. From the below, figure 17, can be seen how financial profitability strives from strong brands. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy&Pervan, 2011)

| High loyalty | STRONG BRANDS | •Trade acceptance
•Higher price points
•Higher margins
•Low price elasticy | GREATER PROFITABILITY |
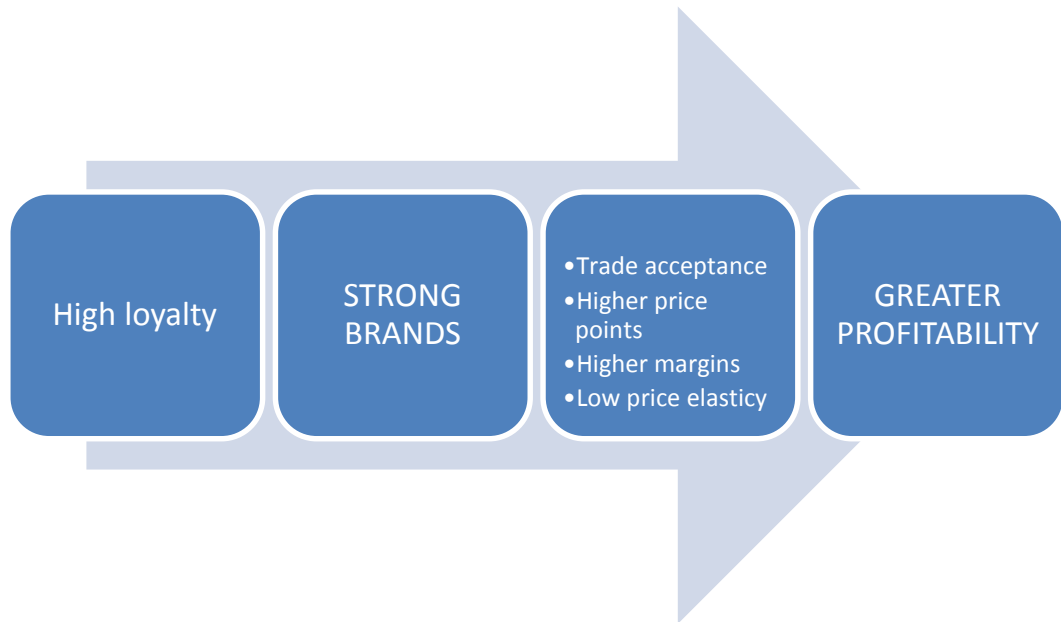
FIGURE 17. How strong brands generate greater profitability (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy&Pervan, 2011)

Brand with loyal customers are able to charge price premiums for their products and services, having higher margins create competitive advantage to competitors. But as discussed earlier brand equity can also be viewed from another perspective than financial, providing value to company through marketing programs, brand loyalty, price and margins, and trade leverage, and base for building brand extensions. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy&Pervan, 2011)

2.5 How to build a brand?

Building strong brands demand careful planning, a deep long-term commitment, and creatively designed and executed marketing

(Kotler&Keller, 2014). But building brands is easier said than done in the real world. The task of brand building is difficult and there are number of barriers that contribute to it. Aaker has identified the main factors that makes it difficult to build brands, figure 18. (Aaker, 2010)

FIGURE 18. Why is it hard to build brands? (Aaker, 2010)

The fierce price competition has direct influence to brand building motivations, as low cost has become the key to "success". When low cost is demanded the brand equity will suffer as the investment for it comes from the precious profit margins. Fast growing number of competitors reduces the available options of brand positioning and in consequence lowers the effectiveness of implementation. Brand building and

maintenance demand consistency, which is difficult as the number of marketing and media options today is unlimited. This issue also contributes to the brand complexity, brand building has become expensive and requires special knowledge in understanding branding with all it nuances. (Aaker, 2010)

The remaining barriers concern internal pressures of brand building. Especially change of branding strategy is the management equilevant of shooting yourself in the foot, even though change is the word of the day. Changes can result in cutting brand equity or preventing the establishment of it. The bias of innovation and pressure to invest are special problems that strong brands face. When you have a strong brand you either (a) get so pleased on the past and current success of the brand that you ignore the need for change or (b) too ready to invest elsewhere with the cost of reductions in brand support that can cause damage to the brand. As mentioned earlier branding is a long-term investment but often company focus is in quick profits (short-term) over long-term investment. (Aaker, 2010)

As difficult as brand building might be perceived it most certainly is doable (Aaker, 2010). Next two models for brand building are introduced to illustrate how brand building is done.

2.5.1   Aaker's brand identity planning model

Aaker's (2010) Brand Identity Planning Model consists three parts:

1. Strategic brand analysis
2. Brand identity system
3. Brand identity implementation system

These three parts are presented in the below figure 19. (Aaker, 2010)
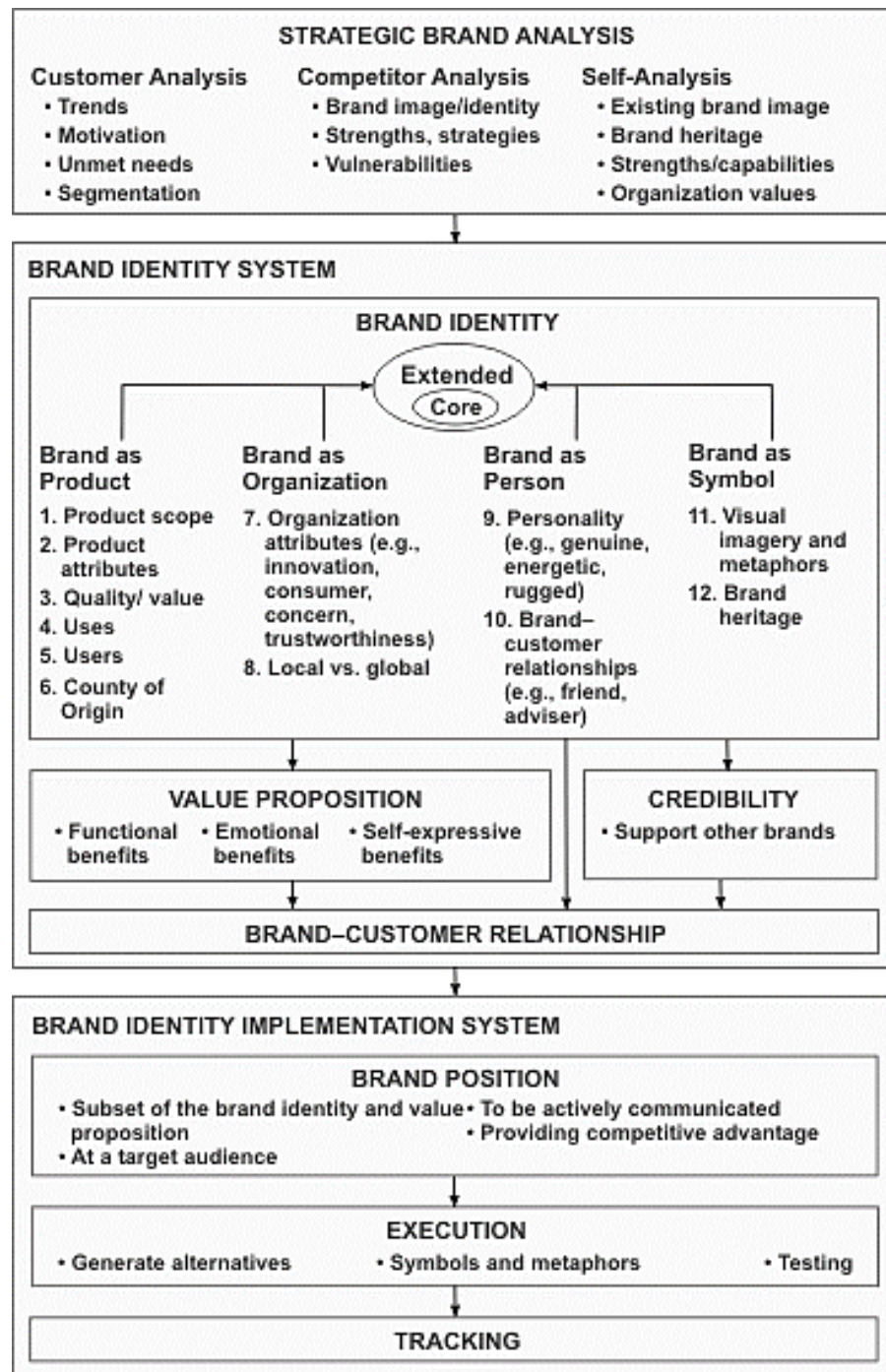
FIGURE 19. Brand identity planning model (Aaker, 2010)

The model starts from the strategical brand analysis that is the base for developing brand identity. The strategic brand analysis consists customer analysis, competitor analysis and self-analysis. The knowledge generated from these three aspect helps to understand what is needed and what the conditions for the brand are. Customer analysis involves the customer trends, motivations, segmentation structure, and unmet needs analysis.

Competitor analysis views the brand image and position, and the strengths and vulnerabilities of major competitors. The assessment does not only look at the current situation but also the future trajectory. Self-analysis is important part of developing the brand and the organization through careful self-assessment. The areas of interest are current brand image, brand heritage, brand's strengths and weaknesses, "soul" of the brand, and links to other brands. The strategic brand analysis can be seen as three phase continuum, where first internal information is used in analyzing the brand, in second phase the gathered information is used to fill information gaps and explore different branding options, and finally the target brand identity, value proposition, brand-customer relationships, and brand position are specified. (Aaker, 2010)

Brand identity system is the next part of the model where brand identity is divided into four perspectives that consist in total twelve dimensions. The four perspectives are brand as a products, brand as organization, brand as a person and brand as a symbol. Brand as a product is the associations related to the product class, product related attributes, quality, use occasions, users, and country of region. Brand as organization concentrates on organizational attributes as innovation, consumer concern, trustworthiness, and a local or global perspective. Brand as a person suggests that a brand can be perceived similar to a person, upscale, competent, impressive, fun, active, humorous, casual, formal, youthful, trustworthy, or intellectual. Brand personality can enable a relationship between the brand and the consumer that serves as the ground for the relationship. Brand as a symbol provides cohesion and structure for the brand identity, that way generating recognition and recall becomes easier. These types of symbols are visual imagery, metaphors and brand heritage. (Aaker, 2010)

As for the brand identity structure, it consists of both a core identity and an extended identity. Core identity is something that will remain the same even though the markets and products would change over time. It provides the meaning and success for the brand, with associations that most likely remains the same. Extended identity elements provide texture and

completeness by adding details that help to understand everything the brand stands for. (Aaker, 2010)

When the brand's role is to support other brands it is by providing credibility, in addition brand identity is to provide a value proposition that consists functional, emotional, and self-expressed benefits that the brand delivers. Brand-customer relationship can be enabled if and when the value proposition is effective, and that way drive the purchasing decision. (Aaker, 2010)

Brand identity implementation system is the final part of the Brand Building Planning Model, which consists brand position, execution, and tracking. As discussed earlier brand position is about actively communicating to the target audience about the brand identity and value proposition, which demonstrates the advantages over other brands. Execution is about generating different alternatives for brand communication. It can vary from traditional media ways to something unconventional such as event sponsorships, public stunts and public relations efforts. Execution is also about finding the best symbols and metaphors for the brand that will leverage the brand communication. The final implementation part is tracking, that is about monitoring the brand position. Methods used for tracking can be for example surveys and researches. (Aaker, 2010)

2.5.2 Keller's brand resonance model

The Brand Resonance Model is a four step brand building model created by Keller (2013), found in the below figure 20. The model sees brand building as a sequence of steps where the success of each step depends on successfully achieving the objectives of the previous one. Those steps are as follows. (1) Establishing brand identity by deep and broad brand awareness, (2) establishing brand meaning from unique brand associations, (3) eliciting customer responses for the brand identity and meaning; and (4) converting brand response for creating a relationship between the brand and the consumers that is intensive and loyal. (Keller, 2013)

FIGURE 20. Brand resonance pyramid (Keller, 2013)

These four steps represent the fundamental questions that the customers' subconsciously will ask about the brand: (Keller, 2013)

1. Who are you? (brand identity)
2. What are you? (meaning)
3. What about you? (response)
4. What about you and me? (relationships)

The pyramid provides much needed structure to the model by providing six building blocks where the brand building process moves from the bottom-to-top. It also assumes that significant brand equity can be achieved only if the top of the pyramid is reached. (Keller, 2013) Next we will discuss in more depth what each step stands for and how they contribute to the brand building.

In the bottom of the pyramid is brand salience that measures the brand awareness, and as mentioned earlier, brand awareness is about brand recall and recognition. Brand awareness allows consumers to place product or service into a certain category in which the brand competes, and to ensure knowledge on what needs the brand was designed to

satisfy. In the above two blocks are performance and imagery, that are the two main types of brand meaning. Performance relates to the functional aspects of how the product or service meets the needs of the customers'. There are five types of important attributes and benefits that can be found from brand awareness, those are as follows: (Keller, 2013)

1. Primary ingredients and supplementary features
2. Product reliability, durability, and serviceability
3. Service effectiveness, efficiency and empathy
4. Style and design
5. Price

Brand imagery represents the extrinsic associations of the product or service, how the brand attempts to meet the psychological and social needs. The four main intangible associations are: (Keller, 2013)

1. User profiles
2. Purchase and usage situations
3. Personality and values
4. History, heritage and experiences

The next two block consists brand judgment and brand feeling. Brand judgements are the personal opinions and evaluations of the customer of a brand, those comes from the brand performance and imagery associations. The most common judgements made by the customer concerns brand quality, brand credibility, brand consideration and brand superiority. But then brand feelings are the emotional reaction that the customer has to the brand. Different types of emotions are such as, warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval, and self-respect.

The final block on top of the pyramid is resonance. Brand resonance is about the highest possible relationship and level of identification that the customer has with the brand. Brand resonance can be divided into four categories that represent the intensity and activity of customer engagement to the brand. Those four categories are: (Keller, 2013)

1. Behavioral loyalty
2. Attitudinal attachment
3. Sense of community
4. Active engagement

Intensity measures the first two categories and then activity tells the frequency of purchases and other non-purchase related activities of the customer.

2.6   B2B branding

The significance of B2C branding has long been acknowledged by the marketers, now that e-commerce and global competition is growing also B2B marketers are seeking to find a solution from branding (Mudambi, 2002). In the past the belief concerning B2B markets have been that providing service, availability, pricing, and quality are the means of differentiation (Clay, Crawford, Lehman& Meyer, 2013). In the industrial markets products have nearly identical features which makes the differentiation ever more difficult. On the other hand the market consists at least one product with high market share and price premium. (Mudambi, Doyle&Wong, 1997)

Studies related to organizational buying behavior have discovered that in B2B purchases intangible attributes are also important. Usually the appreciation of intangible attributes have been related to consumer purchases. Organizational buyers are thought to value the physical (tangible) attributes of a product over the intangible attributes. The role of brand is to communicate those intangible attributes such as image and reputation. (Mudambi, 2002) There are three significant brand functions that are the most important and relevant in the B2B markets. Those functions are: (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

1. Increased information efficiency
2. Risk reduction
3. Value added / image benefit creation

Branding increases information efficiency as customers have easy access to product information which can be processed in peace. Information concerning the manufacturer and the product origin are gathered together under a brand. This helps customers to navigate in the product jungle of both new and old product environments. In addition finding the trusted brand is made quick and easy because of the brand recognition. Especially in complex high-profile product purchases risk reduction is important for the buying process. (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

Customer's risk of making a wrong purchasing decision is significantly lower when a branded product is chosen over products from unknow brands. Brands create the feeling of trust when the product performance and benefits are considered. (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006) Choosing a branded product based on seller's reputation is also used as a way to cut corners by professional buyers due to the risk reduction (Clay, Crawford, Lehman& Meyer, 2013).

The value added and image benefit creation is the self-expressive value which brands can provide to consumers, even though it does not always relate to purely self-expressive values. It is still to be noted that value added and image benefit is more significant in B2C with products and services that are visible to public. (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

As the B2B markets are complex it is crucial to think outside the box when building brands. The increased competition builds up price pressures which is why premium prices can not be based soly on functional advantages. Brands can be the tool to differentiate the offerings, make associations easier and most importantly the source of additional value which can communicate the tangible and intangible factors. When branding is done correctly it is timeless and unique, and the brand will stand overtime while products and services change. (Kotler&Pfoertsch, 2006)

3   CASE STUDY: DAMMEGA OY

This chapter will provide a detailed introduction of the case company Dammega Oy and the current state of their branding, followed by a market analysis.

3.1   Company overview

Dammega is a service provider in the field of asbestos and other hazardous material demolition. In this field the main focus is in providing dust-free demolition in avoiding the spread of dangerous substances into respirable air. The company was founded in 2012 and is located in Vantaa, Finland. At the moment the company employees 35 people, including the top management of the company. The turnover from year 2014 was 3,4 million euros. Most construction sides are located around the Helsinki Metropolitan Area but all services are provided through out Finland and in other Nordic countries. (Dammega, 2015) The operating model is arranged in a manner where long-term sub-contractors are used under the company name to execute the manual work in each construction site. Each site are overlooked by one of Dammega's foremans to ensure quality and flow of work. From the start Dammega has been undergoing a rapid growth period which is ongoing and for this year the expected operating profit will be approximately 450,000 euros. (CEO, 2015) Dammega also prides in being hundred percent Finnish company that is privately owned and entrepreneur-driven (Dammega, 2015).

3.1.1   Company objectives

The objectives of Dammega are shown in the below figure 21, where mission represents the current values and vision the future insight.

Mission		
To provide the best service in the field of asbestos and hazardous material demoltion	Vision	
	Become the market leader through high quality, reliability and customer-orientation	Objectives
		Seek constant growth by custromer retention and attracting new customers
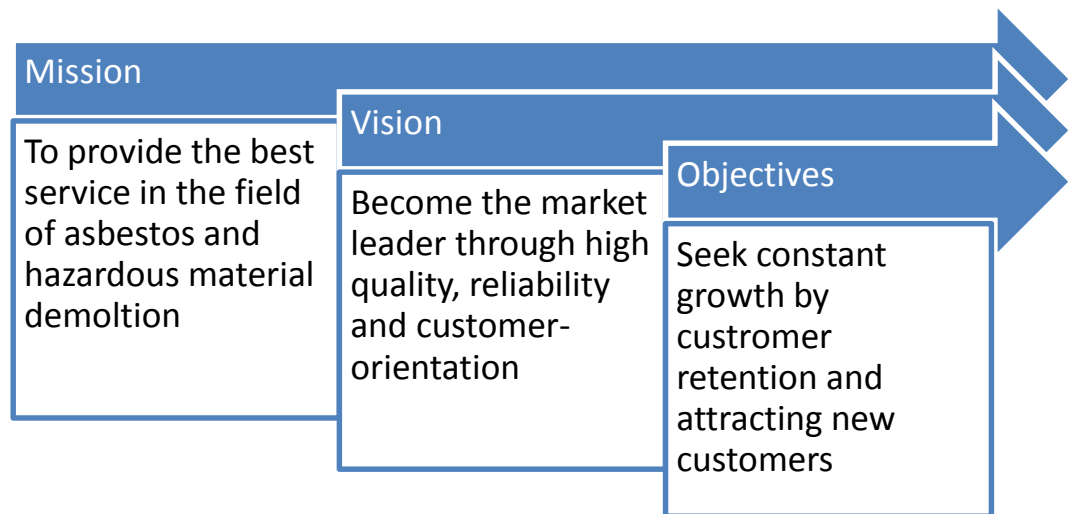
FIGURE 21. Company objectives

In the core of mission are the company values that are as follows:

- Reliability
- Co-operation
- Quality
- Flexibility

Reliability from the legislation perspective refers to all work being executed under all necessary permits, legislations and provisions. From the customer perspective reliability refers to following the agreed contract and adherence to schedules. Co-operation with customers, providing customer-oriented solutions where individual site plans are drawn based on best working methods and customer needs. Quality excellence, years of experience and trained personnel ensures the highest possible quality delivered to the customer. Flexibility is about being able to react quickly to problematic situations which is key in providing reliable schedules. (Dammega site, 2015)

3.1.2 Current state of branding

The CEO is very happy with the overall situation of the company as there is a clear growth. On the other hand when we look at the company brand and branding the CEO clearly sees that the lack of time has been the main reason for neglected brand building. And that there is definitely room for improvement in brand building, especially in brand awareness. At the moment the channels of communication are search engine optimization (Google AdWords), company webpage, social media and a advertising campaign in the city of Vantaa. In addition there is a hidden agenda in the efforts to build a strong brand for the company, selling the company within the next five years.

3.2 Market environment

This chapter analysis Dammega's market environment by using Porter's Five Forces and SWOT analysis.

3.2.1 Porter's Five Forces

Porter's Five Forces model is used to analyze the competitive situation on the market where Dammega operates. The model has been assembled in co-operation with the CEO as the market is currently facing great legislative changes which are affecting the market situation.

The different industrial forces in the case of Dammega are illustrated in the figure 22 below.
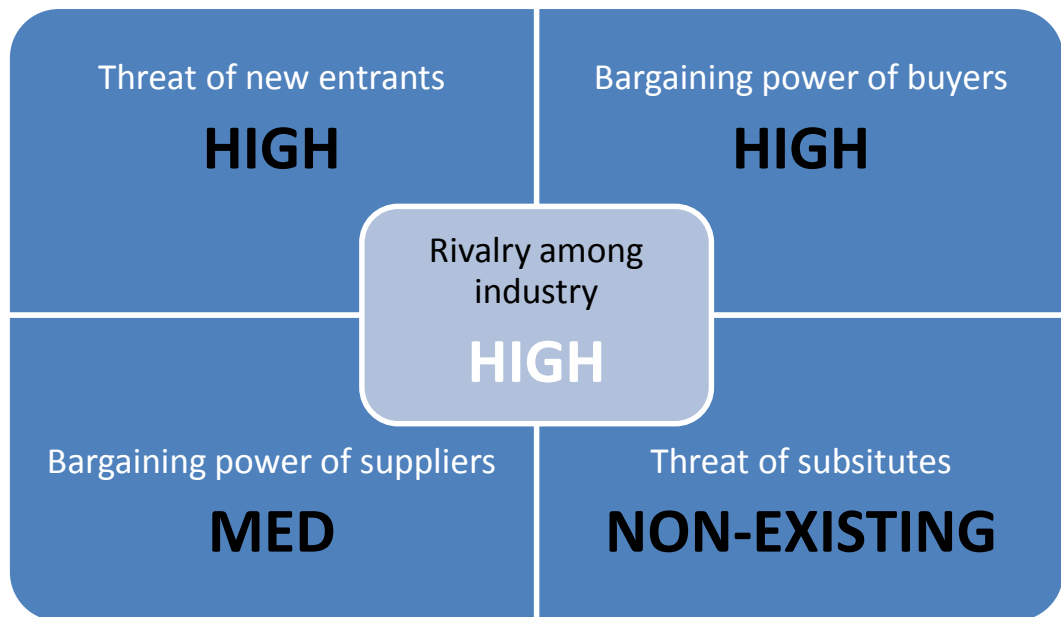
FIGURE 22. Porter's Five Forces for Dammega

Threat of new entrants is high as one of the changes in the legislation is about making the access to permits required for hazardous material demolition work is easier. When permit granting is easier it is possible that many companies currently working in traditional demolition field could be applying for the permit. New companies entering the market with strong existing customer bases is a serious threat, as most sites where asbestos or hazardous material demolition is done also traditional demolition is carried out. In the future this could lead into buyers favoring companies that have the ability to do execute all work, instead of different parts being carried out separate companies that have their own specialized field.

Rivalry inside the industry is high as there are many companies that have been working in the industry for several years but in addition there are a number of smaller companies. The main threat for Dammega comes from the bigger companies that possess high capacity for taking larger projects. With greater capacity and company size also price becomes a major factor, larger companies have the ability to push down prices. It is to be noted that in the industry company is chosen based on tendering, which can mean that in some cases even long-term customers are lost to competitors due to the compulsory tendering.

The high bargaining power of buyers comes exactly from what was noted above. When the standard is to use tendering has the buyer the power to push prices down as companies know that they are competing against multiple companies. In some cases this results in companies having to lower profits in order to have a competitive price compared to others. From Dammega's perspective the issues is in tendering of larger sites that demand capacity which raises the price. The current economical situation also contributes to this issues as everyone is seeking low costs and when price is the only factor it is harder for companies that have higher prices due to high quality.

The threat of substitutes is non-existing as we are talking about a service that demands permits, and trained and licensed workers to conduct the manual work on site.

The power of suppliers is medium, the power of suppliers could be divided into two categories. First being the sub-contracted suppliers who does the manual work on sites under the company name. Second being other suppliers such as material and machine suppliers. The base for the execution of work stays the same and that is why the suppliers are in continuous use. Most supplier relationships have existed from the start of the business and those strong supplier relationships keeps the power in control. The strong dependence on the sub-contracted suppliers raises the power of suppliers the most.

3.2.2 SWOT analysis of Dammega

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Dammega are presented in the below figure 23.

S

☐ Extensive know-how

☐ Wide service selection, due to new equipment

☐ Close proximity to the market

☐ Ability to make quick decisions

☐ Quality & Reliability

☐ Cost structure management

W

☐ Ability to find skilled workers

☐ Marketing & visibility

☐ Adaptability

☐ Personel motivation and work wellbeing

☐ The market segment is small in Finland

O

☐ Networking among operators

☐ New permanent customers through tendering

☐ Special expertise

☐ Growing the business in new locations around Finland

☐ Better work atmosphere

☐ Higher work ethics

T

☐ New legistlation that makes the permit obtaining easier

☐ Increase in competitors

☐ Weakened economical situation

☐ Increased competition

FIGURE 23. SWOT analysis of Dammega

In the strengths are pointed out many similar values that have been discussed earlier in this chapter. When thinking from the external point of view Dammega provides customers high quality services which comes from excellence in all business areas. Years of knowledge and experience of doing hazardous material demolition provides many advantages. Those advantages are the ability to make decisions quickly, operational reliability, and to have well managed cost structure from which both the company and customer benefits. Having modern equipment provides wide selection of services for different customer needs. From the internal perspective,

extensive know-how helps to generate profit in different ways without compromising the benefit for customers. The major part of the market is found in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area so the location in Vantaa is valuable in being close to the operated market.

Weaknesses are found both internally and externally. The major weakness internally concerns the manual labor, as it is difficult to find skilled workers and their motivation is low. The work consists of work that is done under dangerous conditions where multiple protection gears are worn to avoid the spread of dangerous substances. This possesess an issue as some of the workers do not follow the given guidelines concerning the use and switch of pretective gear. Another internal weakness is the ability adapt which refers to finding different markets where the business could be applied. This would be key as the market segment in Finland is small. Both an internal and external weakness is the marketing and visibility. Not having a strong brand plays a key role behind both of those issues.

There are different kinda opportunities that all should be taken into consideration when enhancing the business. One of the main things that should be presented and advertised better to customers is special expertise. Dammega has been able to develop methods of work that only they use which ensures high quality in all projects. As mentioned earlier tendering plays a key role in the business and new customers that have come from tendering should be turned into permanent customers. The market in Helsinki Metropolitan Area is limited and for that reason new more permanent business locations should be found. Networking among operators can also provide valuable advantage as the industry also relies very much on personal relations. In addition there is possibilities in finding ways for better work atmosphere which could also result into higher work ethics. Higher work ethics can play significant role in effiency, possibly leading to higher profits.

Threats for Dammega are the same factors that was discussed in Porter's five forces. The legislation change that makes the permit obtaining easier compared to previous years. It is sure that there will be new competitors

entering the market which makes the already high competition and number of competitors higher. The weak economic situation also creates enormous pressure on the market and the businesses.

4 EMPIRICAL STUDY AND ANALYSIS

This chapter aims to provide information on the data collection process. The results of the interviews will be presented and analyzed in order to gain information on the relevant matter to the company brand.

4.1 Interview formulation

In the beginning of a study a researcher needs to define the approach in which the phenomena is studied, by observing or communicating. The communication approach includes interviews which are recorded and analyzed. (Cooper&Schindler, 2014) In this thesis the communication method was used.

The interviews within the company, CEO, sales manager and another salesman were conducted face-to-face at the office, and they were also recorded. In interviews the quality of information and security of information is higher as any supporting questions can be asked if needed (Cooper&Schindler, 2014). Same set of questions were used as a base for all three interviews but in addition the CEO was asked additional questions.The interview questions can be found from the appendix, appendix 1.

In addition to the interviews done within the company also customers were interviewed using electronical interview method. Email interview is a sequel of emails where first the topic is presented, followed by the actual questions (Saunders, Lewis&Tornhill, 2012). Same set of questions was sent to all customers to easily identify the similarities and differences between the customers. The questions were construsted to answer specific brand related questions and aspects. This allows to better evaluate what the brand delivers to the customers and then reflect those results to company vision. Customer interview questions will be found from the appendix, appendix 2. Besides all the interviews done with the company members and customers, the author has made many observations by herself in addition.

The aim of the interviews was to understand how the company brand is viewed from two different aspect, within the company and outside the company. The information collected in the interviews helps to see how those two aspects differ and are alike from each other, and that way the brands strongest and weakest points can be identified. That way more specific brand building can be drawn for the company.

4.2   Data collection

In this chapter can be found details on how the data collection was performed for this study can be found. In the figure 24 the timeline of data collection process can be seen.

Researching & gaining knowledge on the topic

Company & customer interviews

Final analysis & detailed plan
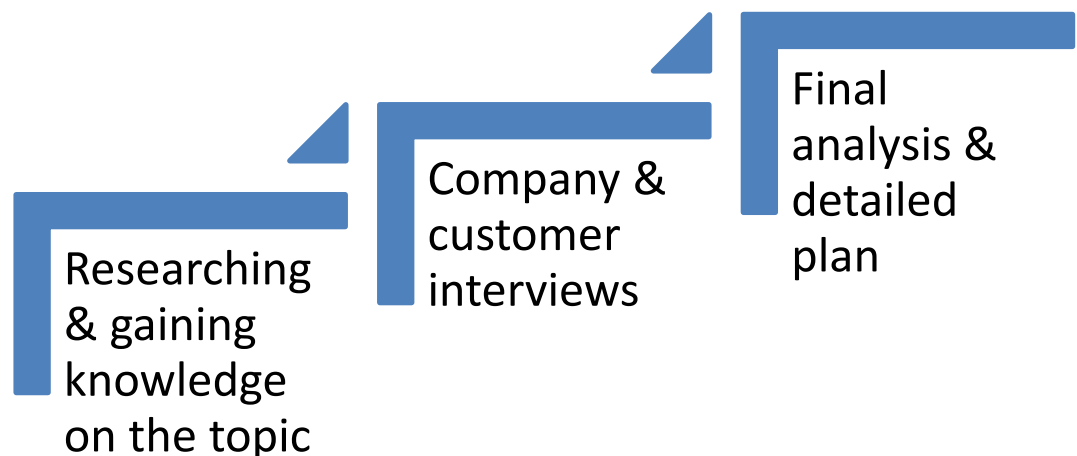
FIGURE 24. Data collection process

As mentioned earlier, the author has a close relationship with the case company and the idea for wanting to focus on building the company brand was developed through discussions with the company CEO. After the specific topic for this thesis was formed the author started to research existing literature to better understand the phenomena of branding. From the literature review a bigger picture of branding was discovered and based on the findings the interview questions were assembled to support the aim of the study.

First the company interviews were conducted to create a base for the current branding situation and a starting point to changes the company is seeking to achieve through the study. Next a set of customers were contacted via email, customer contact list was provided by the CEO. As the interview was done via email, first all customers from the list was contacted to provide them information on the study and the purpose of it. All did not reply to the informative email but the questionnaire was sent to all in the list. Also a reminder email was sent out few days before the reply to the questionnaire was due.

The total number of responses was five which was less than the author would have wanted to receive. On the other hand all of those responses came from the company's biggest customers that enhances the quality of the responses.

4.3 Data analysis

In this chapter all the findings will be analyzed, first the company interviews and then the customer interview. Also a comparative analysis is added to identify the main issues for the branding plan.

4.3.1 Company interview analysis

As mentioned earlier, the company interview was conducted with three members of the company. It is clear that the CEO has a much clearer and broader view on the company branding, than the sales department. The CEO is only handling the administrative tasks and is not directly involved with the customers or the ongoing construction sites, unlike the sales department. To be noted that the sales department also manages all their individual ongoing construction sites in addition to their role in sales.

The first question concerns the reasons why Dammega is a strong competitor. The three main factors for it are shown in figure 25.
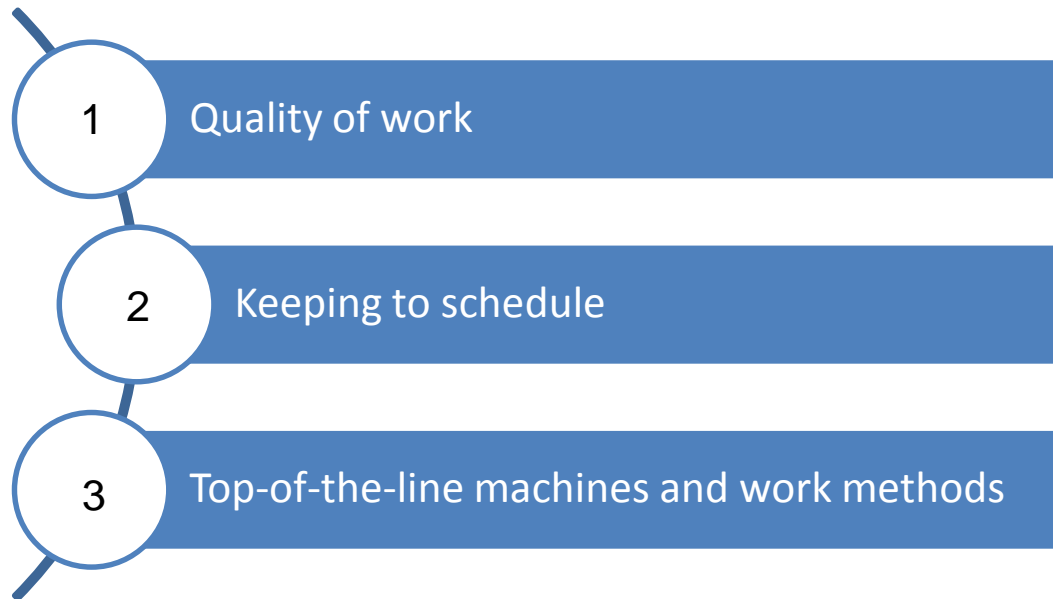

FIGURE 25. Competitive advantage factors

In addition to the factors mentioned above, also reliability, ability to react quickly according to each situation and wide customer base. It is good that the overall view is very much the same among the company members, that way same values are transmitted across the business to all stakeholders.

The second question was about why customers choose to use Dammega over other brands. The answer resonates exactly the company values mentioned earlier, reliability, co-operation, quality, and flexibility. Offering across the business service excellence which includes working from the needs of the customer and keeping the promises made to the customer. That way customers receive on-time results, operational reliability and being able to contact when ever needed. It is important to provide work excellence from the beginning to the end of each project.

The third question asks to reflect on the current situation of Dammega brand. In the top level it is clearly seen that the brand is not strong and the brand awareness is low when looked outside Helsinki Metropolitan Area. There is good brand awareness inside the industry but the brand is highly

personified to specific persons. The personification comes from the sales department as those members have over ten years experience from the industry and that way close social relations have been built, which play a significant role in the business. The key issues are also identified in the below figure 26.
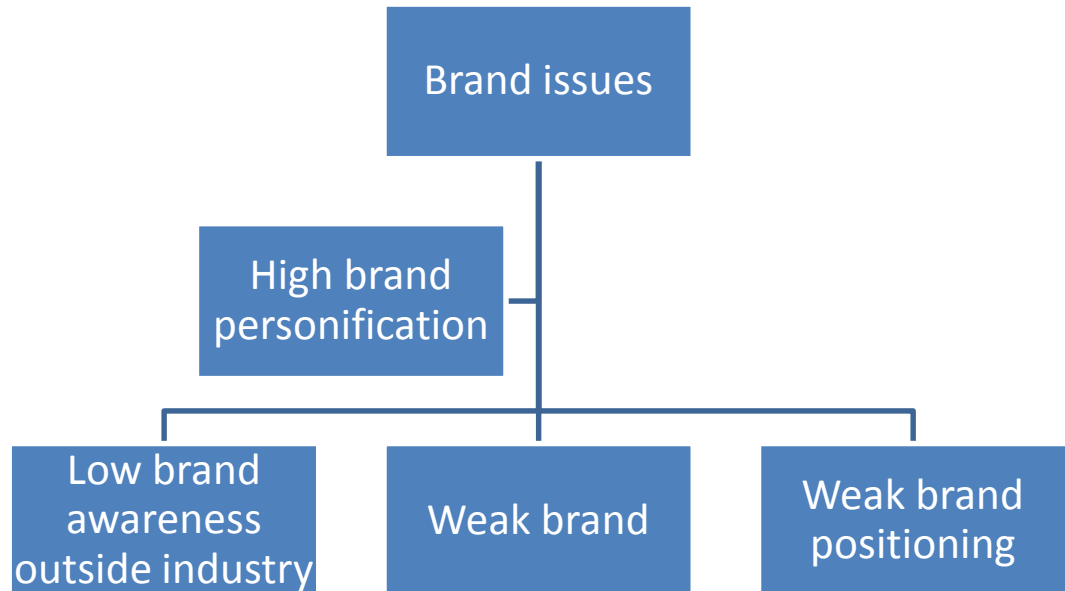
FIGURE 26. Brand issues

The fourth question was about brand satisfaction of current situation and reasons for it. When looked only at the business the satisfaction level is high though the satisfaction level for the company brand and branding is very low. It is seen that the building of brand awareness and positioning has been neglected due to lack of time from the management.

The fifth question asks on ways to change the brand strategy to develop competitiveness. In the core is developing a specific strategy for long-term and a plan to improve brand awareness. That way the advertising could be more targeted which would strengthen the brand, increase brand awareness and company competitiveness. In more detail it is noted that through advertising the quality of services and the industry's best expertise would be communicated to customers. Ways to succeed in these goals could be the use of target marketing and use of social media.

The sixth and final question was to give any other comments that should be noted. Future goal was mentioned by the CEO that in the next five years they are looking to sell the company. And when that time comes it is extremely valuable to have a strong brand.

4.3.2   Customer interview analysis

In the first question the name, company and identity of the position of responding person was asked. The second question asked about the how long they have been working with Dammega. The companies have been working either from the start which is almost four years or around three years. Long relationship with Dammega makes the answers more reliable and qualitative.

The third question was about how they have learned about Dammega. Three of the respondences identified the head of the sales department as their way of learning about Dammega. This supports what was earlier stated how the brand is highly personified. It also shows how personal relations are significant in the industry. In addition one other answer was "through a colleaque" which also supports the significance of personal relations. Through internet information about Dammega was learned and that is why it is valuable to invest on such as company web page, search engine optimization, social media, and online marketing.

The fourth questions was about what makes Dammega's services unique and what are the strengths and weaknesses of it. The strengths are presented in figure 27 below.

FIGURE 27. Dammega strengths

The strengths are presented as an answer to what is unique about Dammega. Adherence to schedule was found in multiple answers which was identified as one the main advantages in the company interviews. Quality was also mentioned in two answers. Good customer service, ability to contact at any time and customer relationship management shows a high valuation of customer service in various areas. Competitive prices, well prepared offers and professional personnel was also acknowledged as strengths for Dammega. Answer to weaknesses was from all respondences "none" which shows overall excellence in Dammega's services.

The fifth question asks about general thoughts about the Dammega brand. All respondences recognized quality as the single most important thing concerning the brand. These answers are surprising as you would have expected this to be raised as a strength in the previous question. The general view is that they are satisfied with the brand. Even though one of the respondances can not recall the company logo and states that "not memorable" and "weak brand communication" was also mentioned.

The sixth question was about reasons why they use Dammega's services. In the figure 28 the asnwers recorded are presented.

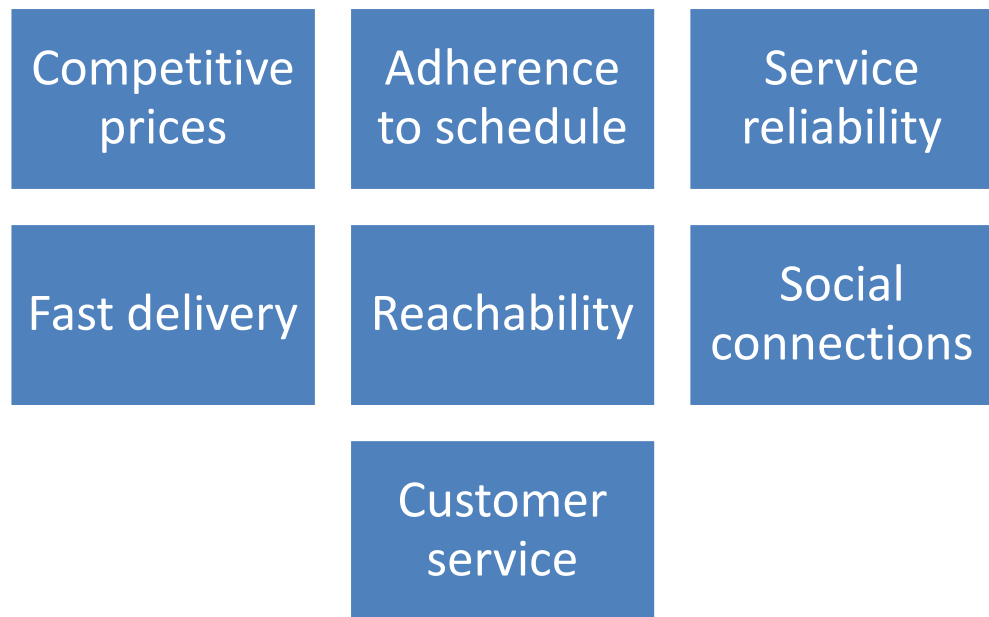|		
Competitive prices	Adherence to schedule	Service reliability
Fast delivery	Reachability	Social connections
	Customer service	

FIGURE 28. Reasons for using Dammega's services

Mainly all answers were found in the fourth question – customer service, competitive prices, reachability, and adherence to schedule. Other reasons pointed out were service reliability, fast delivery and social connections. The social connections refers to the connections the head of the sales department has, connections from years of work in the industry that are valuable in the most challenging projects.

The seventh question asks about main competitors, would they consider using their services. In most cases in the past other competitors have been used but not since they have started working with Dammega. The use of competitors occasionally comes from the necessity of tendering. Companies using tendering as a means of finding a service provider still prefer to use Dammega over the other competitors.

The eighth question was about the benefits of using Dammega's services. The benefits resonate the same answers as found from questions four and six - competitive prices, reliability and adherence to schedule. Additionally "easy to use" was pointed, as years of co-operation has created a close relationship and the flow of work is high.

The ninth question was about having any other associations to the brand. Associations to the brand was about the industry and the other sales persons.

The tenth question asks about what have the past experiences been with Dammega. The work together has lasted for several years and through numerous construction sites. All experience in the past have been good and they are very satisfied in working together with Dammega.

The eleventh question was to add any other comments or notions. Additional comments commented that they see that Dammega's brand is good or okay.

4.3.3 Discussion

When we look at the views on Dammega's brand from the company and the customer point of view, there are many similarities but also some differences. It is good to see that the company values are being communicated to customers and valued among customers. Especially quality, adherence to schedule, reachability and customer service were pointed out many times among the customers. In an industry where everything is highly time sensitive the value of keeping to schedule that was originally agreed is rated high when talked about Dammega. This also reflects to the aspect of reliability, adherence to schedule naturally is only one part of it but in the customers mind it seems to be one of the main factors. One other aspect is the reachability, customers know that any issues can be solved fast as the site managers can be contacted when needed. More over high quality creates a feeling of trust for customers which is why producing high quality work is key. The years of experience and work in the industry was also seen as a strength by customers and an advantage by the company. On the other hand the years of experience is tied down to an individual. The crucial issues of high personification of Dammega was clearly supported by the customer interview. It can be seen that the head of the sales department is a key person in both generating business and managing sites. When the future plan of selling is

considered in relation to the high personification which can raise a major issue later on, unless the high brand reliance of an individual can be solved. In the company interviews it was made clear that one of the issues with the brand is the low brand awarenss, the brand needs more communication and exposure outside the industry.

The company values seem to be well presented and acknowledged by the customers in relation to the company brand. There are still aspects of the service provided that the customers do not either value or simply recognize as important. Customer-orientation, modern equipment and methods of working seem to be left unrecognized by the customers. Within the company those are a major part of the quality excellence that they offer to all of their customers. As the company invests in new equipment and quality methods of work they also want recognition from those areas. This indicates that the brand personality needs to be improved in the future so that high investments in providing customers something special is not left unnoticed. Providing clear and on-time offers and competitive prices were pointed out by the customers, those were not acknowledge in the company interviews.

5   BUILDING THE DAMMEGA BRAND

Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model is used as a base to create this detailed branding plan for Dammega.

5.1   Brand analysis

The previous chapter provided a base for the analysis of customers, competitors as well as the company itself. Now each sub-chapter will present the main findings and present the objectives that need to be considered in the brand building.

5.1.1   Customer analysis

It is clear that customers that choose to use Dammega's services are more than satisfied with the overall service and have and will prefer to continue the existing customer relationship. The difficulty for Dammega is in attracting new customers that have not been using their services or have eliminated the use based on the results of tendering. In addition it takes time for customers to believe in the services offered. These issues possesses a challenge with the brand image considering the lack of marketing and branding. There is information available for customers which needs to be made easier to access and more attractive. That is where specified actions done in marketing and branding can help the brand image perceived by potential customers, and raising the brand awareness among possible customers.

The main motivations for starting to use Dammega's services for the customer was from knowing the head of the sales department or other knowledge gained from within the industry. Even though the reason for starting might have been the result of an individual, over time other reasons have appeared for using Dammega's services. The current

motivations for customers to use Dammega's services are:

- Adherence to schedule
- Quality
- Excellent customer service

The customer segmentation is the B2B market that consists customers that vary from micro to small and medium enterprises and all the way to the public sector. The different customer segments for Dammega are HVAC companies, construction companies, property management and property service companies, manufacturing companies, and the public sector. The services offered by Dammega are asbestos and other hazardous material demolition, evaluation of asbestos, post-damege repair, technical construction demolition, floor grinding, high-performance vacuuming, and dust control systems. The focus in offereing each service is the ability provide solutions and services that meet the customers needs.

Even though all the segments are under the B2B market, a marketing message for each segment should be created, through targeting strong business relations can be built as a part of long-term strategy. In addition the message should be defined based on the services that the segment mainly uses.

5.1.2 Competitor analysis

In the company introduction, it was established that the rivalry in the industry is high. Even though Dammega is second in their market, there are still major competitors that have been in the industry for decades and have build good brands that people know and recognize. The market leader Delete Oy is Dammega's biggest competitor. Delete has a strong brand and they operate in both B2B and B2C markets with a wide service range. As the main services offered in the demolition of asbestos and other hazardous material is almost identical for each company, it is hard to differentiate from competitors. As it was discovered in the customer interviews the excellent quality of work, adherence to schedule and

customer service by Dammega was highly valued by the customers which creates a possibility for Dammega to overcome Delete.

To conclude, the competitors' position in the market is good and they have already proven their validity and reliability for customers. We still have seen that customers are willing to switch from the market leader to Dammega which proves that the competitors are vulnerable. With Dammega the bottom line is that even though they possesses many strengths and advantages which can be used to diminish the market leader, and the fact is that still only few even knows about them, especially outside the industry. The services to sell might be the same for all but the competitors have already learned how to sell theirs, unlike Dammega which is still learning and developing theit brand image.

5.1.3 Self-analysis

The customers see the brand as fairly good but also recognize that there is work to be done in strengthening the brand, especially in raising brand awareness through marketing. The brand image in the eyes of existing customers is good and has developed into brand personality. With long-term customers the brand equity can also be measured as the brand loyalty is high and the creation of strong brand is possible from that perspective.

Dammega is a small and young compay with very little own brand heritage, instead the heritage comes from a single individual who has been working in the industry several years. Over the years the actual work has not changed very much, unlike the methods of doing the work. That is where Dammega's brand heritage lies, in the creation of new and better ways of working to provide even better services to customers. It is still to be noted that in a vey short operation time of four years Dammega has been able to clear out competitors and rise to the second place in the market. When looking at the reasons for this exponential growth it is clear

that the growth has not come from a strong brand but from the social connections that over power the industry.

Dammegas strengths and weaknesses were identified in the SWOT analysis earlier. There were many strengths that need to be better added to the brand identity and communicated to customers to create strong brand image that in the future will lead to high brand equity. The main weakness that needs to be tackled is the weak marketing that has a direct input to the brand building. When there is very little marketing it is hard to create a strong brand that will resonate with customers.

The "soul" of the brand is the company mission which is to provide the best service in the asbestos and hazardous material demolition. The mission is to be achieved through high quality, reliability and customer-orientation.

5.2   Brand identity

Now that we have the strategic brand analysis, we can define the brand identity for Dammega.

Brand as a product

The selection of services for Dammega can be divided into six different categories:

1. Asbestos and other hazardous material demolition
2. Evaluation of asbestos, post-damage repair
3. Technical construction demolition
4. Floor grinding
5. High-performance vacuuming
6. Dust control systems

The services are either provided as an individual service or as combination of multiple services depending on the project and customer needs.

The core of brand identity is quality which is the standard in all service provided by Dammega. Around quality is set the product attributes that are adherence to schedule and excellence in customer service. Creating methods of work that raises the perceived quality of customers.Those are the means to offer customers something better in comparison to competitors.

Brand as a organization

As an organization Dammega is a combination of business intelligence and special expertise of the industry. The main work is done in the sales department and management of multiple sites at once where efficiency is a virtue in every sense of the word. The objective of the company is to attract new customer that are like-minded in demanding quality excellence. For Dammege the image of good business partner is important as the industry is tight and social networks can make a difference. All service development starts from the customer, ability to provide excellence in areas where competitors have not seen potential.

Brand as a person

Idea behind the brand personality is to make a brand more interesting and richer by utilizing human qualities in creating customer relationships. Dammega's brand personality reflects the following qualities:

- Trustworthy
- Reliable as a long-term business partner
- Ability adapt
- Pleasure to do business with
- Competent

Brand as symbol

The Dammega logo is the most visual symbol of the brand. For most customers the logo should be something they can recall first when thinking about certain company. In the interview it was discovered that even though

a customer has been working with Dammega for more than three years, they could not recall the company logo.

The company logo, see figure 29, uses different shades of blue as a main color and it also includes a company slogan below the actual logo.

FIGURE 29. Dammega Oy logo (Dammega, 2015)

The slogan "Parempaa palvelua" translates to "Better service" in English. The slogan is there to better represent the company as it is a company providing services. The company logo is used widely in company papers, employee outfits, company cars and sides of equipment.

Value proposition

The value proposition is a combination of functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits that the brand delivers.

Functional benefits:

- High quality work
- Excellent customer service
- Adherence to schedule
- Unique working methods

Emotional benefits:

- Easy to work with
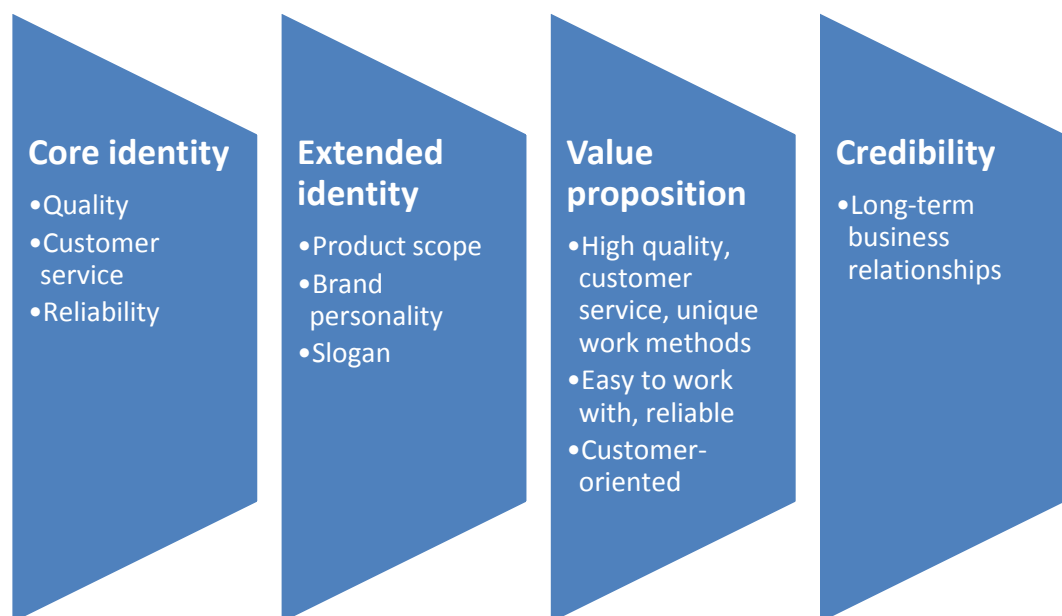
- Reliable

Self-expressive benefits:

- Customer-oriented solutions

Credibility

Credibility in B2B is essential as in the core of business is creation of long-term business relationships that work both ways. Credibility is a bout providing co-operation and support for other companies in their business as well. Achieving credibility is a process that is built over time which requires openness, transparency and honesty. One other aspect of credibility is the validity and reliability, in the case of Dammega they have been able to show through their services that they are reliable and valid. The high quality of customer service and work provided directly contributes to generating credibility in the eyes of the customers.

Brand identity summary

Before moving to the brand identity implementation, the brand identity and the different aspects – core identity, extended identity, value proposition, and credibility, are summarized in the figure 30 below.

Core identity
- Quality
- Customer service
- Reliability

Extended identity
- Product scope
- Brand personality
- Slogan

Value proposition
- High quality, customer service, unique work methods
- Easy to work with, reliable
- Customer-oriented

Credibility
- Long-term business relationships

FIGURE 30. Dammege brand identity

Based on the brand identity the implementation of brand identity is developed in the next chapter.

5.3   Implementing brand identity

Now the brand identity and value proposition is used to develop brand identity implementation which consist brand position, execution, and tracking.

5.3.1   Brand position

Developing a strong brand position is about resonating the elements of brand identity and value proposition with a targeted audience through active communication of offered advantages over the competitors. When this view is implemented for Dammega, the following brand position statement was developed: "Dammega's unique methods of working provides all business partners the highest quality of work and customer service which allows them to achieve excellence in their own business."

5.3.2   Brand execution

No matter how good the brand identity or position is, the single most important part of execution is the communications. Only through well executed communication strategy is the target audience reached and a strong brand build. Below ideas on how Dammega could succeeded in such difficult task are presented.

Marketing activities

An issue pointed out in both company and customer interviews was the insufficiency of marketing communication in Dammega as a company and the services provided. The lack of a clear vision on what to communicate,

in what ways and to whom is the main reason for this. In the past, all marketing communication was dependent on the left over time from the CEO but clearly a dedicated person responsible for all marketing communication is needed. In the below ideas and suggestions on implementation is presented:

- Creating marketing message that is clear and is based on the brand identity, value proposition, and brand position.
- Better presenting of brand identity, making hidden advantages such as unique methods of working and use of modern equipment visible to customers.
- Investing in advertising through channels that are relevant to the brand position.
    - Refining the main customer segments and target audience for maximal efficiency.
    - Creating marketing messages based on the segment or target audience.
- Utilizing different digital marketing channels and enhancing the content of existing channels.
    - Quality and information of homepage should be reviewed and constantly managed to generate meaning full content.
    - Management of company Facebook page to also continuously providing meaningful content.
    - Refining the search engine optimization of Google AdWords in order to attract more visitors to company webpage and utilizing it as a tracking method.
    - Possibly launching a marketing campaign to create more visibility to the company.
    - Creation of Youtube channel to test the power of video – optimal way to present the services in a more understandable way.

5.3.3 Brand tracking

Once the brand execution is in place, it is recommended to invest in measuring the effectiveness of those actions. In the beginning, the main focus is on monitoring the brand position. Tracking should be done rather frequently to have a clear understanding of the successes and failures of different marketing actions. Data gathered in the tracking needs to be analyzed and then necessary actions should be done to accordingly. When tracking is considered as a long-term strategy it is good to add others factors to the measuring, especially measuring brand equity is import.

6 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter summarizes all the findings and results of the research. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the study is discussed, and recommendations for further research and development of the Dammega brand are given.

6.1 Answering research questions

The main objective of this thesis was to assist Dammega Oy in their brand building so that in the future they could build a strong brand for the company. In order to reach that goal six research questions were formed including one main research issue supported by five sub-questions. A summary of answers is presented in the below table 2.

TABLE 2. Summary of answers to research questions

RESEARCH QUESTION	ANSWER
How to build Dammega Oy a strong brand?	By executing multiple marketing activities to reach wider brand awareness.
What does brand and branding mean?	Brand consists of three dimensions, brand identity, brand image and brand personality. Branding is the creation of the three dimensions and then actively communicating those to the customers.
What is brand equity?	Brand equity is a set of assets through which value of a product or service is provided to the firm and customers. Those assets are brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand association.
How to build a brand?	Brand building is a three step process of strategical brand analysis, brand identity system and brand implementation system

How does branding work in B2B context?	B2B branding offers increased information efficiency, risk reduction and value added / image benefit creation to organizational buyers.
How to implement brand building for Dammega Oy?	Through a strategical brand analysis the brand identity of Dammega is developed and based on that the brand position and methods of execution are determined.

The first sub-question is to build a theoretical frame around what brand and branding actually means. It was discovered that branding has many dimensions that it represents, those are brand identity, brand image, and brand personality. Brand identity presents the more visual and tangible elements such as the name, logo, products and services of a company. The identity of brand is developed inside the company and is the sum of all promises it makes to consumers. The role of brand image is to create positive associations to the brand and deliver on the promises made to customers. But brand image is the consumers' perception of the brand and it represent the meanings that the brand delivers to the consumer. The brand personality was the extension of brand identity and brand image, answering the question "what kinda?" Constant brand exposure develops a relationship between the consumer and the brand which results in creation of brand personality. This way humanlike traits are developed, and those functional and emotional associations are seen especially important in the industrial sector. In a larger concept we talk about branding where all the different brand dimensions are active and the brand is actively been commucated to the consumers.

The second sub-question was to understand brand equity. The value and asset of brand is called brand equity. It was a set of assets that products and services provide to consumers. Those assets were brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand associations. At the core, it is to have loyal customers as high loyalty contributes significantly to having a strong

brand. Loyal customers allow premium prices to be charged which will result in high margins that will create a ledge between the brand and other brands.

The third sub-question is to identify the actual actions that need to be done when building a brand. Brand building is a three step process which starts from doing a strategical brand analysis where the consumers, competitors are analyzed, followed by a self-assesment of the company. From the strategical brand analysis the brand identity system is developed with the core and extended brand identity. In addition the value proposition is created and credibility is evaluated. Finally the brand identity is implemented by defining the brand position, a plan for execution and tracking of the effectiveness of the implementation.

The fourth sub-question helps is to understand what the meaning of branding in the B2B context is. In the B2B market, branding seems to have three core functions, which are increase information efficiency, risk reduction and value added / image benefit creation. In the professional buying process products and services are almost identical so it was valuable to communicate intangible factors which allow to differentiate from other brands.

The fifth sub-question was to see how the brand building could be implemented for the case company, Dammega. The brand building process that was established in the third sub-question was used as a frame to create the plan for Dammega. The execution of part consists different suggestions how the brand could gain better brand awareness among existing and potential new customers.

The main reaserch question of this thesis is "How to build Dammega Oy a strong brand?" Porter's Five Force model and SWOT analysis in chapter three were used to analyze the current situation of the brand, and the interviews with the company and customers were used for the brand building plan provided in the previous chapter. When all the data collected is used it is clear to see that the main branding issue is in the poor

execution of marketing. Different marketing channels and methods need to be used in creating better brand awareness. In addition, the message communicated to consumers needs to be better refined according to the customer segments and target audience. With a strong marketing message, a multi channeled marketing operation can be conducted to increase brand awareness among existing customers, most importantly among new potential customers. The existing customer relationships reaching high brand loyalty is as important as it is to achieving new customers. As it has been stated brand building is complex and requires long-term investments, also brand management overtime is key in building a strong brand. For Dammega, it is vital to find required financial and personnel resources for the brand building process.

6.2 Validity and reliability

The theoretical part of this study was obtained from topic related books, journals and trusted internet sites. The empirical part of the study was based on the interviews conducted with company employees and valued customers in order to asses and analyze the case company, Dammega Oy. Accordaning to these facts, it can be stated that the study is valid.

6.3 Suggestions on further research

This study has focused on the basics of brand building which is only a small part of branding. It is suggested that future research should focus on evaluating and measuring the implemented brand building actions. That way, also future actions concerning the brand building could be identified. Also, a study that would take into consideration the financial investments could provide a more realistic plan. Furthermore, it would be interesting to study how the brand is perceived by different customer segments and other stakeholder groups.

7 SUMMARY

Dammega Oy is in the process of building their brand to reach the market leader position. This thesis was conducted to build a frame around the process of brand building. Branding in the industrial markets is still developing and faces many difficulties in the real world. Dammega wants to reach the top and wants to have, strong brand that will take them there. The goal of this thesis was to have a plan how a strong can be reached amond existing and new customers.

The theoretical frame of the study introduces the different concepts around brand and branding, and the brand building models are presented to gain knowledge on the actual brand implementation. Furthermore, the introduction to the case company, Dammega provided valuable information on the company objectives andmarket environment analysis.

This study was conducted by using deductive method which was supported by qualitative approach. The primary data was collected through interviews with members of the company and company customers. The secondary data was gathered from topic related academic books, journals and trusted internet sources.

The data analysis was a combination of interviews conducted within the company and to its valued customers. The interviews were planned to asses the current situation of the Dammega brand and to identify the strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, Porter's Five Forces model and SWOT analysis was used to provide support for the interviews.

Brand building for Dammega was developed to strengthen existing customer relationships and to attract new customers. Strategical brand analysis was used as a groundwork to create the brand identity, value proposition and credibility for the brand, Different suggestions are presented on how the brand identity and value proposition should be communicated by using multiple marketing channels and methods.

In conclusion the author was able to answer all the research questions and reached the goal set for this thesis. The validity of the research can be considered high. However, the reliability of the study can be questioned as the number of customers interviewed response was low. The study has lmitations due to not taking financial aspects into consideration. The future research should focus on measuring the brand building process set in this study. A larger sample from different customer segments and other stakeholders could provide interesting results regarding the customer perception of the brand.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Company interview

1. Why Dammega is a strong competitor?
2. Why customers choose Dammega over other brands?
3. What is your view on the current state of Dammega's brand?
4. Are you happy with the current situation? If not, why?
5. How would you like to change the brand strategy in order to develop competitiveness?
6. Any other comments and notions?

APPENDIX 2. Customer interview

1. Name, title and company.
2. How long have you known or been working with Dammega?
3. How did you find out about Dammega?
4. What is unique about Dammega's services? Strengths & weaknesses?
5. General thoughts about the Dammega brand?
6. Main competitors, would you consider using?
7. Benefits of using Dammega's services?
8. Any associations to the brand…
9. Past experience with Dammega?
10. Any other comment and notions?