



The Importance of Positioning and Networking in the Globalization Process of a Small-Sized Brand

Case: SabrinaTach

Auranen, Sofia

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Otaniemi

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Sofia Auranen
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The power of brands and branding in the current marketing environment is enormous. Brands' ability to create emotional impact and build long-term customer relationships seems to add value to company performance and benefit both the customer and the business. Brands are used to symbolize people, products, services and countries to upgrade their potency and reflect their unique impression in the living standards of the consumers and populations.

The focus of this thesis is on the importance of brand communication and on how far a small-sized company can progress without a brand management strategy. The study is carried out through a careful process of analyzing the relevant theory on the various elements of brand equity, personality and value perception. Small-sized Uruguayan brand SabrinaTach is associated as the client company for the thesis. Sabrina Tachdjian, the entrepreneur of the client company, was interviewed through Skype to obtain realistic information about the brand.

The inspirational story of the case brand is presented in the thesis because of its innovative personality and success based on the strength of will. The vitality of brand integrity management and positioning becomes obvious when building a brand with extensive and dynamic networks. Consistent differentiation is what raises the brand to great reputation and extended awareness while enhancing its possibilities of global success. Concrete development ideas are provided to SabrinaTach based on the researched theoretical data.

The reliability of the results is affected by the impact of the author's own opinions and experiences from the brand integrity management of the business world. The theoretical data supports the information obtained from the interviews. All the collected perceptions are aggregated and the thesis is based on those conclusions.

Keywords

Positioning, Brands; branding, Business networking, Brand management, Brand building, Brand globalization, Brand image and identity, Luxury branding

Sofia Auranen

Pienikokoisen brändin positioinnin ja verkostoitumisen tärkeys globalisaatiossa - Case: SabrinaTach

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Brändien ja brändäamisen voima tämänpäivän markkinoinnissa on valtava. Brändien kyky luoda tunteisiin vetoavaa vaikutusta ja rakentaa pitkäaikaisia asiakassuhteita lisää yritystoiminnan arvoa ja hyödyttää sekä asiakasta että liiketoimintaa. Symboloimalla ihmisiä, tuotteita, palveluja ja maita brändays voi parantaa niiden tehoa ja kuvastaa niiden ainutlaatuista vaikutusta kuluttajien ja koko väestön elämäntasoon.

Opinnäytetyö keskittyy brändi viestintään ja pienen yrityksen kykyyn edistää toimintaansa kauaskantoisesti ilman brändi johtamisstrategiaa. Tutkimus perustuu erilaisten brändi elementtien; pääoman, persoonallisuuden ja arvokäsityksen huolelliseen teoreettiseen analysointiin. Opinnäytetyön asiakasyrityksena ja tutkimuskohteena toimii pienikokoinen Uru-guaylainen brändi SabrinaTach. Realistinen kuva bränditoiminnasta saatiin haastattelemalla liiketoiminnan perustajaa ja yrittäjää Sabrina Tachdjiania.

SabrinaTach valikoitui tutkimuksen kohteeksi, koska tahdonvoimaan ja innovatiiviseen identiteettiin perustuva brändi inspiroi tutkimuksen tekijää. Yhtenäisen brändijohtamisen ja positioinnin vaikutus huomataan verkostoja laajentaessa ja kehitettäessä. Johdonmukainen erottautuminen kilpailijoista kasvattaa brändin mainetta ja tunnettuutta parantaen brändin mahdollisuuksia kehittää kansainvälisiä toimintoja. Opinnäytetyö tarjoaa konkreettisia kehitysehdotuksia SabrinaTachille, tutkitun ja analysoidun teoreettisen tiedon pohjalta.

Opinnäytetyön laatijan henkilökohtaiset mielipiteet ja liike-elämän kokemukset vaikuttavat tutkimuksen tuloksien uskottavuuteen. Teoreettinen tieto tukee haastattelusta saatua materiaalia ja eri lähteistä koottu tieto on yhdistetty opinnäytetyön johtopäätösten perustaksi.

Avainsanat

Positointi, Brändi; brändäys, Verkostoituminen, Brändijohtaminen, Brändirakentaminen, Brändi globalisaatio, Brändi-imago ja identiteetti, Luxusbrändit

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1 Introduction

The brand is what differentiates you and your company from the competitors. Your brand is what connects you emotionally with your clients, turning your products or services irreplaceable in their lives. Your brand is there to reach and capture the targeted market from the brain to the heart. How to accomplish this and generate a local brand to global awareness is where brand management acknowledgement, strategies and practical experience are required. (Arciniegas 2013).

Brand presence might be attained easily but there is still a long way to gain brand advantage and only a few brands discover themselves actually bonding with the client. To survive in the rapidly changing market trend environment, the small and medium sized companies may struggle with economic assets, which is why a thorough and definite strategic analysis is essential. Target market and its buyer behaviour analysis are required when a brand is duplicated to another market. By only extending product and brand portfolios with no change in brand positioning and marketing methods will probably lead the company to problems, if not to failure. (Bastin 2013, 10).

Building local and global networks is the best way to create immediate awareness of the brand. Social networks must be built and caressed carefully with the desired goal in mind. Business relations as well as brand-customer relationships require constant maintenance. Everything a brand does or does not is reflected in its public relations image and possibly derives to the brand value perceptions. Different networking tools have been created during the last decade but it is always a challenge for the brand to discover the best communication model to itself.

Small Latin American companies with niche brands are ought to succeed inside their own markets but global sensation and success can hardly ever be predicted. The studied case brand SabrinaTach has gone a different way. The brand has entered the North American markets through viral networking and developed its operations from there on. A story not many small-sized Latin American companies can proclaim. Struggles with the purchasing power of local markets have not encouraged brands to divert to global production and distribution. The continent of Latin America has potential in the global markets but the external support has been offered particularly and mostly to companies operating in the agricultural and industrial field. The infrastructure, bureaucracy and social conditions of the Latin American countries generate challenges but the continent's great potential is what raised the interest to explore its capacity. The emergence of a small brand like SabrinaTach is still somewhat lucky but it demonstrates how the strength of will and faith in the company's products or services can create success. (Found 2013).

1.1 Client company overview

When the author of this thesis was first introduced to Sabrina Tachdjian and discovered the brand SabrinaTach in 2010 she was enjoying her life in the great nature of Uruguay. The product attracted and curiosity entered in; where to get one? What brand is it? Who is it made by? How much does it cost? Are there different models as well? After learning the story behind the company the amazement was guaranteed. One designer behind this great selection of products and more to be expected. Following the innovative creator through social media has been inspiring. The recent achievements and globalized image was the reason to conduct more research and actually explore and reveal the secrets of Sabrina Tachdjian's brand success.

Emerging from Latin America to global markets, the client company is aiming high within the design and fashion industry on its own, personalized terms. Sabrina Tachdjian, the founder and entrepreneur of the Uruguayan brand SabrinaTach, has established a brand that reflects and exhales herself and the quality of her products. The intention of the thesis is to uncover and rationalize the secrets behind the client company's success and discuss about the next consequent steps to raise the brand value and profitability.

1.2 The objectives of the thesis

The objective of the thesis is to identify the key questions that a small-sized Latin American company has to consider to grow and obtain market share, what are the brand networking and positioning options that can possibly derive to global success. What differentiates this Uruguayan brand from its foreign competitors? The main objective is to examine the existence of the client company's brand management strategy and how variable processes and successful positioning can lead to survival in the global markets. To cover the mentioned processes the sub objectives of this thesis include the analysis of the existing brand equity, identity and value proposition.

The road to gain global brand awareness is rocky but results can be achieved with perseverance and great strategic planning. How SabrinaTach has affiliated the different elements of brand management? Has the brand strategy process been pre-planned or is the brand success based on a happy accident? What are the following strategic decisions and how to execute them in the future? Brand development and globalization is under constant change and processed strategies are required to keep the brand alive. New elements are discovered and created for the company's advantage and the brand's future grow. Theoretical research on global brand-customer relationships is carried out and a guideline for building SabrinaTach brand awareness engendered. Similar businesses with goals of brand value perception aug-

mentation are able to operate their brand management strategies based on the results of the thesis. The results are disclosed as development ideas and recommendations that are supposed to encourage the client company to concrete brand strategies and to disperse more globally.

1.3 The key concepts of the thesis

Brands are symbols, signs and a story created by the entrepreneur or the brand management team of a company to get the consumer attention desired within the target market and to increase market share. Well-defined brands with an original story behind them are usually highly valued because their ability to influence in the target audience emotions and buying behaviour. (Millman 2012, 6).

Brand positioning statement presents the brand's business definition, brand differentiation and its special features while demonstrating the benefits the brand delivers to its customers? The first step to brand positioning and publication is graphic design in its various aspects. The name and logo familiarize the company to the customers and give ground to emotional consumer involvement. Positioning is primarily used to reflect brand's core beliefs, its voice and its purpose in life. (Borja de Mozota 2003, 100-101.)

Business networking is the best low cost marketing method where new connections are established and existing relationships maintained. Whether positioned in domestic or foreign markets the customer wants to interact with the brand to be able to build a trust relationship with the brand. The potential target group is engaged through active communication with diverse networks where the benefits are reciprocal and concrete.

Integrity is one of the key words when describing the term brand management. From the management to employee level, the commitment in the marketed company and broad understanding of its core perspectives transforms the brand from good to great and valuable. Trust inside the company reflects externally to the customers. Brand management process is about maintaining the attained market place while improving sales and customer satisfaction. Successful brand management is the result of continuous and accurate competition and market-place monitoring, substantial risk management and contingency planning. Brand management units are aggregated to promote the brand associations that build a genuine and positive brand image. (Penn & Penn 2008, 213-214; Brand Management Definition 2013.)

Coordination, integrity, concentration and passion are the core things required to build a strong and ever-enduring brand. Brand building starts from the creation of a brand and its

identity. Constantly building and developing the well-defined core beliefs of a brand allows the enhancement of brand-customer relationships. (Aaker 2002, 340-341.)

Like local brand value, global brand value is measured from its brand-customer relationship status. It is not obvious even for a strong local brand to become globally successful just by entering the voluminous global markets. The effort and concentration in the selected brand strategy model must be multiplied in comparison to what it has been in the home or local markets of the brand. When a brand is expanded to various countries and markets there becomes more room for errors. Consistency constitutes one of the strongest elements of the globalization process. Company name, logo and colour scheme build a tangible ground and default for a stabilized brand but the positioning and communications demand precise and continuous adjusting to support the market-specific strategy. (Hollis 2008, 7-9, 23-25.)

People need a purpose; they need to belong somewhere and to be valued as they are. There is a place for brands to convince their vitality to potential customers. Brand image and identity consist of the company's core values and of the reflected story the brand has to offer for consumers. Giving a face for the consumer's needs and presenting the brand differently from the competitors by disclosing one great thing about the company will turn the brand interesting if not addictive to the consumers. The image and identity creates a dream, a dream where the consumer wants to belong and desires to learn more about. (Ind 2007, 27-38; Kapferer & Bastien 2012, 267-268.)

The word luxury is commonly used to describe different occasions, services and products. What used to be luxurious can nowadays be a daily commodity or facility. Its value depends on who is there to judge and its power on the markets and how well it manages to influence its target group. Luxury brand distinguishes itself from the mass consumption brands by inspiring people to include themselves in the club of dreams that a particular company has created. A great brand can engender a sense of belonging whether it competes on the luxury or lifestyle market. (Kapferer, Bastien 2012, 39-41.)

1.4 The delimitations of the thesis

The generalization of the study is limited to one small-sized designer company, so the results of the thesis can only be used in a certain area of company brand management. The thesis study refers to small or medium sized companies operating inside Latin America and providing goods or services to local and global markets. Larger companies and companies operating within different industry sectors may have to work with wider investigations to gain more specific knowledge of their industry's global appearance. Start-up companies and companies

with hardly any economic assets are ought to face problems with resourcing the implementation of these brand and marketing strategies.

SabrinaTach is a Uruguayan based lifestyle niche brand, which is seen as a delimitating factor, as it excludes companies from different industries from these results. The theoretical framework behind the thesis is comprehensive within this certain sector of entrepreneurial brand management. More specific information and theory is supposed to be searched when a brand management strategy or a detailed research on one particular area is conducted.

There are market differences that cause credibility problems and delimit the results of the thesis. Local market demand vary between countries and the amount of companies and brands rising from Uruguay diverges a lot compared to the amount of brands rising from Brazil or from another highly populated countries in Latin America. The market size and purchase power need to be considered and crosschecked with these results before any implementation strategies are initiated.

1.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis focuses on the core and extended identity and positioning of a small-sized but globally acknowledged brand. Networking, brand-customer relationship and value proposition are described and analysed accurately as their reference to the main objective is obvious. This thesis refers to the general and analytical theory enabling the use of practical implementation strategies applying various brand management tools. Sources with extended brand building and evolution with emphasis on brand vision and its influence on customers where perceived.

Brand personality influences in every brand action and is therefore analysed thoroughly. Theoretical books about brand building and branding create the base for the study. Research on current articles, videos and publications was done to incorporate the results in the present business interests. These theoretic sources also provided the ground for the production of the interview questions presented in the appendix of the thesis.

1.6 Research methods and analysis

The data for the thesis is gathered by interviewing the client company entrepreneur through a recorded Skype conversation. No interpreter was used and the questions were presented to the interviewee Sabrina Tachdjian in her native language, Spanish. The qualitative results of the interview are analysed thoroughly using variable theoretical and online sources available. The interview process is considered as a reliable and important source of information and

therefore all the obtained data is carefully analysed and interpreted. Several articles about the company were searched and explored during the research process.

The information and development strategies delimit and relate to one company, which is why a complete risk analysis on the collected material is required if another similar brand is searching directions to enter the global markets.

The interview process consists of qualitative questions that are accurately analysed using the interpretive technique. Results are shown as examples and references within each relevant section of theory in the thesis. Because qualitative research methods provide precise information about the selected area or cases, generalization of the results does not apply. (Qualitative Data Analysis 2010.)

The qualitative questionnaire was generated based on the relevant theory and shown to the client company entrepreneur Sabrina Tachdjian before the actual interview was followed through and recorded. Specifying questions were added during the interview to attain the searched information. Obtaining insights and information about the client company's attitude, value system, lifestyle and concerns assisted in the delivering of improvement ideas for the future business decisions. Questioning the reasons and the "why's" behind SabrinaTach brand operations and strategies demonstrates the quality of the business actions and enables the complementation and accretion of the brand. Issues raised by the structured questionnaire are ought to support and underpin the opinions presented by the author about the assessed subject. The results of the interview and theoretical research are presented in conjunction below each chapter of thesis. Questions, both in English and in Spanish, appealed in the interview are included in the appendices (Auranen 2013, 44-46) of the thesis to provide full comprehension of the subject and results.

2 Company introduction - SabrinaTach

The company information provided in this thesis has been obtained through two recorded Skype-interviews with the entrepreneur Sabrina Tachdjian. All the relevant information has been auditioned and analysed before included in the thesis. The reliability of the results may have been affected due to individual perceptions of the verbal information obtained.

After employed and fascinated by the fashion industry for years, Sabrina Tachdjian established her own company and brand SabrinaTach in 2008. She commenced to design and manufacture Uruguayan leather-made bags after noticing the amount of quality leather her home country produces daily. The last 5 years have been successful, the founder and entrepreneur Sabrina Tachdjian has developed her intuition and reflected that to be the identity and face

of SabrinaTach. At the moment she is running the company with her husband and has created another category of products; leather-made shoes. The entrepreneur definitely trusts in her own vision and builds her products solely based on that. (Tachdjian 2013). In one of the few articles made based on an interview with Sabrina Tachdjian the designer tells that she gets her inspirations from the streets of Bilbao, Spain and loves to follow the changes in fashion through different websites, magazines and designers like Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen (Vazquez 2011.)

How can a brand started from scratch and with no real capital or brand management strategy survive? "Passion, beliefs, talent and real willpower" Sabrina Tachdjian (Tachdjian 2013) said with satisfaction when she was questioned about her brand building strategy in the thesis related interview. She has followed her intuition and built the brand progressively while reinforcing brand awareness and recognition through social media. Integrity in design is its artisan and bohemian touch that differs the brand from its competitors and positions it in the unique and luxurious side of the lifestyle market section. Tachdjian vision does not come from attending the organized fashion campaigns. Her imagination is the only limit to the collections she creates, which provides the brand an interesting story behind it.

When it comes to building the brand image and increasing brand awareness, Sabrina Tachdjian has put herself on the line. Where the brand stands at the moment can only be acknowledged as the entrepreneur's credit and achievement. Comprehending the right target group and contacting the appropriate retailers and wholesalers while managing the brand with passion and integrity can lead to success. The current operating environment for SabrinaTach is stable as the brand products have great competitive advantage over the direct and indirect competitors with their handmade and unique touch. Working in the Uruguayan fashion industry has provided Tachdjian to bond with some of the best leather seamstresses who's workshops now create her designs at the expected rate and quality. To financially support yourself as a young entrepreneur and businesswoman in Uruguay can be hard but Sabrina Tachdjian has found the perfect partner from her husband and with four hands the push for the brand is stronger.

Being considered as a developing country and market Uruguay faces its obstacles in supporting the young entrepreneurs and small-sized companies. The market environment where SabrinaTach operates is not listed with high purchasing power population, which reflects in the entrepreneurial decision to market the brand beyond the continent borders. Applied raw materials are collected from Uruguay, which creates the environmentally friendly and quality aspect to the products and therefore upgrades the brand among its competitors. The suppliers are small-sized farms and cow stays that provide SabrinaTach with the leather of free-range and non-suffered nor affected animals. Sabrina Tachdjian proposes her brand to be one

of the few Uruguayan companies working and designing fashion from the native leather. As a result of that she does not consider to have direct competitors inside the domestic market.

The discussion of the thesis encloses the importance of positioning and emphasizes networking in the brand management process. The model through which SabrinaTach, a one-woman brand, has passed to the global markets is neither the fastest nor the simplest, but to discover a small-sized company that can penetrate the laws of brand management strategies is fascinating. Determination and resilience in direct contacts will make distributors believe in your product as much as you do. But how is that done?

3 From luxury to unique lifestyle brand strategy

Each market has a space for a little bit of luxury. Luxury is a certain type of niche market with its own competitors and market share. A brand to define itself as luxurious has to be strong and have a detailed and well-considered strategic plan behind it. A product, service, organization, person or symbol scouted out as a luxurious brand reflects luxury in everything they do. The same applies in every field of brand management. All the strategic implementations the brand does are linked to its present and future grow. Current and potential customers search new options constantly and value proposition is continuously measured with user experience and brand's emotional connection to its core and subsidiary target groups. (Aaker 2002, 78.)

Like luxury brands build their non-comparability with brand content, are lifestyle brands obliged to do the same. Customers are attracted with the personality of the brand content and then engaged by the demonstration and the depth of the brand attributes. Products and services are divided into luxury, upper-range and mass-consumption genres that define the brand management strategies and implemented marketing models. Some brands add sub brands to increase their product portfolios and some companies reduce the amount of different genres to enhance the brand image and equity. Where the premium lifestyle brand positions itself on the markets and mass-consumption brand provides everything for everybody, the luxury brand only creates an identity with empiric, elitist and expertise capacity. These identity aspects differentiate SabrinaTach from the luxury brand markets. The brand development requires careful positioning and target group definitions to attract customers and gain more market share. The vitality in the definition process is to integrate each of the attributes to share and support the common core of the brand. (Kapferer & Bastien 2012, 42-45).

When trading within a certain product saturates the home market and service range the company should not become too greedy. Avidity can turn a successful plan into failure when upgrading or downwarding the product and service portfolios to excess. In the globalization pro-

cess positioning is a great option as it provides the ability to localize a product or service to adapt to the market demand. Maintaining the luxury image or moving a brand or its sub brands upwards into luxury approach requires specific strategies which are not related to only pricing policies. The brand content and performance play the key role when differentiating a lifestyle brand from a luxurious one. Branding a lifestyle brand is about positioning and communicating the products or services to the customer reach. Creating a luxury brand is about systematical generation of glamour and public relation merits around the brand before even presenting the actual products or services to the audience. (Kapferer & Bastien 2012, 87-88; 268-269.)

Sabrina Tachdjian has created a successful brand by generating an interesting story that reflects the brand quality, personality and creativity. A brand that has engaged its audience to want it so profoundly that a need has arisen. Like luxurious products, SabrinaTach products are non-comparable in their uniqueness. Still the brand is bohemian enough to elude the glamour of luxury that the entrepreneur considers to be improper for her brand. The intangible aspects benefit the brand by allowing it to set a more powerful pricing position in the market (Kapferer & Bastien 2012, 268).

3.1 Creating brand equity

Various elements remark on how a brand is presented, valued and perceived internally and externally. Marketing is only a tool to express the brand legacy, beliefs and ethics to its consumers. Brand equity is engaged to brand expression which goal is to deliver consumer experiences. This is executed by fulfilling the promises presented through the communication channels defined in the brand management strategy. Targeting the right audience and receiving the desired position and recognition is vital when creating and building a solid brand image and increasing brand equity. Emphasis on the internal brand reinforcement and maintaining the sought emotional loyalty with employees and customers should be included in the long-term brand management strategy. The added value, called as brand equity is reflected from the consumer opinion, beliefs and actions. (Van Gelder 2005, 30-43; Cantu 2010, 7-9).

Growing and generating brand equity means creating a dream and image desired and associated by the brand's target audience. The brand image will develop itself but to direct and match it to the organization's eligible guidelines and perceived personality requires strategies and an updated and regularly reformed brand management plan. The Figure 1 demonstrates how to keep generating brand value for the customer and for the company through the basic brand equity elements. (Aaker 2002, 7-10).

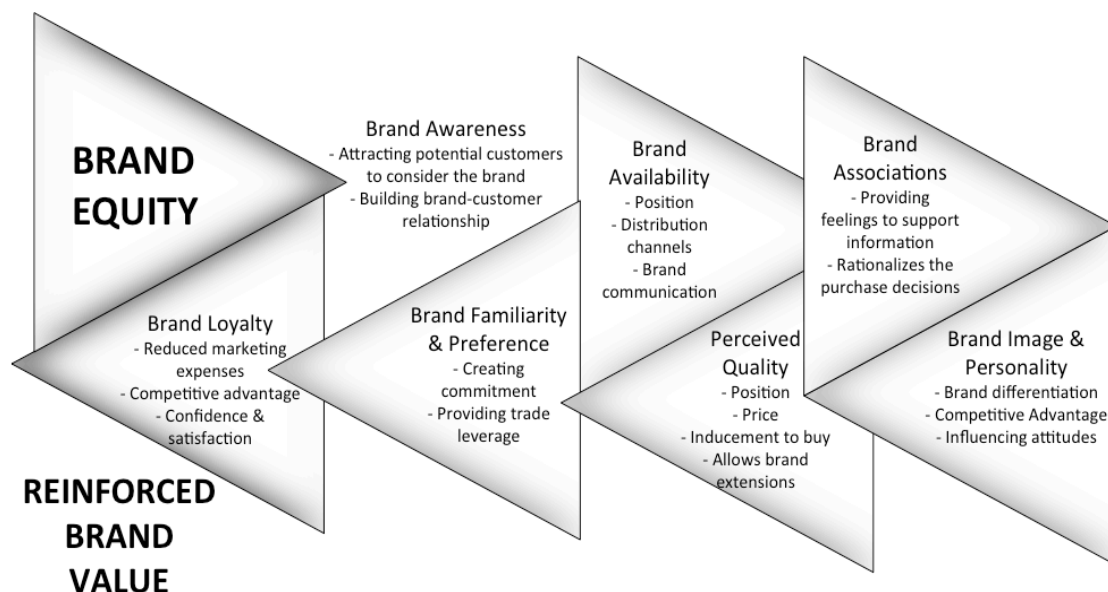


Figure 1. How brand equity generates brand value (Aaker 2002, 8).

The Figure 1 demonstrates the core steps to unlock the secrets of reinforced brand value. Brand awareness is the result of active customer attraction and well-designed engaging process. The first step initiates the brand-customer relationship building, which provides the great opportunity to position and distribute the brand as required. When the product or service becomes available the marketer should pay attention in the brand communication. Demonstrating the customer a combination of emotional-based and rationalized benefits of the brand and its products or services will influence purchase decisions. Brand image constructs over the integrity of the presented benefits and creates competitive advantage through differentiation. The perceived quality is reflected in the price and when positioned appropriately can enable brand extensions and the achievement of more market share. Trade leverage is gained if the company manages to keep the customers and place itself as the preferred brand. Besides the fact that brand loyalty reduces the expenses of various operations, it also reinforces brand value and increases brand equity.

3.1.1 Understand your brand identity

A brand stands for something tangible but visionary. Consumers are surrounded by millions of propositions daily, which makes it difficult for a company to catch the ones with potential purchasing power. If a company wants to obtain even a slight share of the consumers' attention and contribute in their behaviour and choices, differentiation must be created. Brand name and logo are the tangible parts that indicate and create either positive associations like expertise and admiration or vice versa. The perceived brand image is convertible and dependant only on the emphasis brand managers confer to influence in its forming. (Aaker 2002, 68-78).

According to Aaker (2002, 68), brand identity consists of four different perspectives that together with brand-customer relationship construction generates functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits. When a company is emphasizing on the aspirational side of how its brand is desired to be perceived the four elements of brand identity must be clear in mind. Considering the brand as a product, organization, person and symbol creates brand value appreciation. Strategic analysis of the brand itself, as well as the customers and the competitors assists in the differentiation process that is examined through the previous attributes. The four attributes define the core and extended identity of a brand, which are applied to define the appropriate communication channels and to build valuable brand-customer relationships. Brand identity creation should therefore follow through a consistent strategic planning process that leads the brand towards its optimal positioning choices. (Aaker 2002, 78-84.)

The core brand identity incorporates the soul of the brand that stays consistent while it travels through various markets and product associations. The soul of the brand; meaning the quality and integrity of the brand and its customer relationships should remain untouchable while the extended identity resonates brand personality and completes the company's internal and external commitment processes. (Aaker 2002, 85-88.) A SWOT analysis on the brand identity can be created to reflect the positive core elements of a brand and to expose the weaknesses and threats worth paying attention to. The SWOT map will represent the issues of brand personality and review the quality and integrity matters affecting the brand success.

The interview with SabrinaTach entrepreneur revealed enough to generate a SWOT map based on the brand. (Figure 2, 17) The elements gathered to the SWOT table presented below are to be taken into consideration and analysed as the personality factors of the brand. The physical and emotional characters of the brand are its core values, behavioural style and raw material choices. Initiating the brand management strategy functions SabrinaTach is required to review and precede according to the listed issues. The brand reflects these attributes in its daily performance, which establishes more brand communication and value presentation while enduring the brand-customer relationships. (Kapferer 2013).

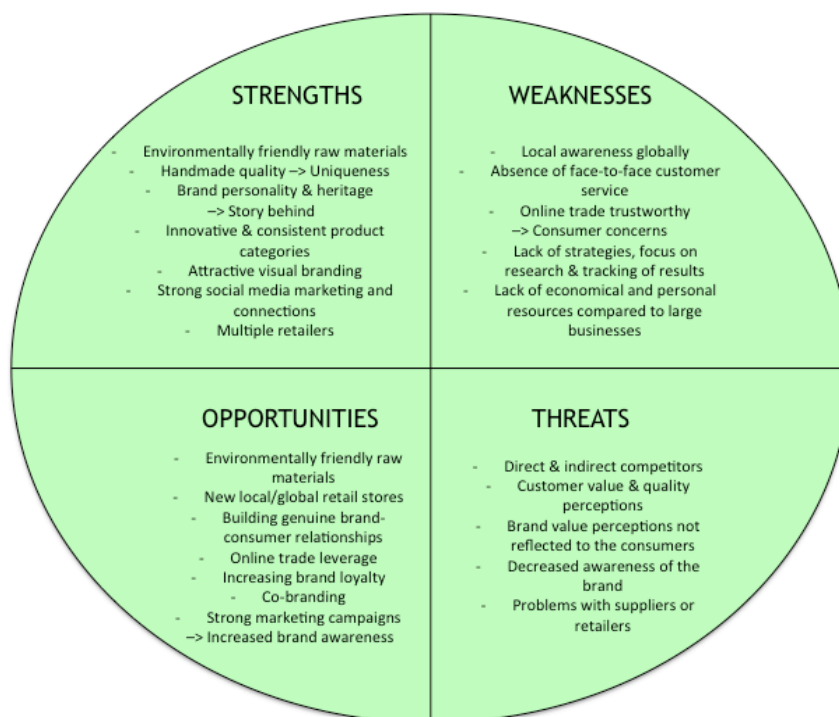


Figure 2. Brand identity SWOT; SabrinaTach

3.1.2 Generate a powerful brand

Brand building and the creation of a top brand in today's market environment is challenging. Failure is seen more convenient than success when examined several aspects of brand management. Still new brands arise, overcome barriers and grow into famous - strong brands. Brainstorming, definition and the creation of distinguishing strategies and their constant development encourage the brand to track and progress. The main tasks a brand has to go through during its life cycle do not differ much of those of a human being. Clear brand identity is created through intense learning process and used as the key to successful brand positioning and performance. Introducing the brand desirably and growing the awareness and brand-relations efficiently are results of well-planned brand identity strategy. Inviting brand image, name and logo create physical and visual picture of the brand and with accurate planning long-term personal affection from the consumer is gained. (Kapferer 2013; Aaker 2002, 26-27.)

The brand strategy objectives deform during the brand building process. Competitive pressures on price, image and proliferation of competitors influence on the positioning decisions and therefore on the entire brand-consumer relationship emergence. The consistency in the internal brand management strategies and desire to create long-term success rather than focusing only on short-term cash income is essential. The basis for strong brand is created within the company by motivating the employees to genuinely believe in the brand and its prod-

ucts or services. Knowing the operating environment and the competitors assists in the brand improvement strategies of awareness and quality. Comprehensive competitor analysis gives competitive advantage and encourages the brand to develop certain areas of its brand enhancement programs like growing the loyalty rate. (Aaker 2002, 27-36).

The brand name SabrinaTach comes from the owners name and family name and describes the products with its uniqueness and meaning of design. Tach refers to the palpable part of actual product manufactured and Sabrina provides the personality for the brand. With the describing name the brand is left with the visualization part that is upgraded with not only the actual products but with the sophisticated and simple logo inside them. The promise of the brand, which in this case stands for the personalized touch, is seen throughout the product collections and of the handcraft effort put in them. Whilst a small business struggling to conquer the fashion-oriented people around the world SabrinaTach has created strong social media face for itself. Producing collections, catalogues and other brand related marketing to the website at regular intervals maintains the brand actively interactive with its customers. SabrinaTach provides the customers with the opportunity of self-expression that the brand's bohemian and artisanal accessories reflect.

3.2 Distribution as the face of communication

Perseverance and commitment to the brand are the tools to build the social driver of consumer desire. Advertising has outmoded and the best marketing is done through reflective communication and by using the right distribution channels. When building a trust-relationship with the targeted customers it is vital for the brand to identify its target group and distribute the products and services at their terms and conditions. Reciprocated respect is created through communication, which is why the selected distribution channels should be carefully examined before any binding agreements are signed. (Kapferer & Bastien 2012, 263.)

Brand communication reflects the brand story, its roots. The distribution channel is only used as the face for the brand communication and approach medium between the consumer and the brand. The advertisements and publicity should be disclosed as careful messages to the customers. Brand-customer relationship should be based on a dialogue where the customer constitutes a feeling of power and influence in the brand activities. Active monitoring of the customer responsiveness can create long-term brand loyalty. Avoiding any misunderstandings unofficial or false information should never be delivered to the customer. Moreover should the brand underestimate the consumer's buying behaviour or abilities in finding information about the brand. An execution strategy for brand communication is required in the process of building interactive brand-customer relationships. Brands should also actively present and

promote the selected information about the brand story, products and services. (Kapferer & Bastien 2012, 264-265.)

When choosing the appropriate distribution channels the company should operate a circumstantial analysis on the delivery process. Exploring the eligibility of the selected distribution channels prevents the company from failures and positions it correctly in the market place. All the existing and potential distributors must comply with the requirements of the brand especially when related to the brand promise and personality. The brand has to fulfill the customer experience to every detail even when the products are sold and marketed through a retailer. The product elements like design and packaging will not provide enough value if the customer is not satisfied with the customer service received through in store communications or sales representatives. Direct contact is what remains in the customer's mind after the purchase situation. To maintain great and up to standards the communication with every distribution channel has to be consistent and appealing. Comprehensive research on the target market trends and responsiveness is the key to create positively different and effective marketing campaigns that express the brand promise. (Hollis 2008, 177-183).

SabrinaTach has chosen the distribution channels based on the entrepreneur judgement and the reflectiveness of the brand personality. The distribution channels are the most visible part of the brand networks and therefore the most valuable brand processing tools. SabrinaTach has selected website retailers with similar target groups which provides the product placement to be natural and discernible. Although the products and brands presented on the retailer websites do compete against each other, the site reaches the target audience, as the consumer knows where to search. Transportation plays a key role in the global distribution and might turn out as a problem when delivering products outside Uruguay. The carriers might mislay the shipment or be late for the transport, which is reflected in the brand actions even though the brand itself might not have anything to do with the possible delays. A sense of occasional frustration with the carriers was observed in the interview with Sabrina Tachdjian. Company should always have contingency plans and financial resources reference to setback situations.

4 Brand positioning from Latin America to the global markets

The chapters four and five extract the collected data from the interview unwrapping the intuitional and strategic information behind SabrinaTach company and brand. Like mentioned earlier in the thesis, the established brand identity and communication channels control the brand movements continuously. The real navigation begins when the brand's core and lateral identities are proposed to the targeted audience and positioned on the markets. Products and services are refined and designed to function as promised and the company's credibility de-

depends on the redemption of those needs the marketing department has created. Company's ability to adapt and match the production with the local and global demand requires monitored transformation and complete understanding of the particular target audience. Competitive advantage is built through product and service differentiation. Significant deterioration of competitiveness will occur if the verbal and visual marketing and positioning operations fail. Therefore a company should position itself to the customers as the ultimate best choice by producing an interesting and desirable image. Developing the surrounding networks to endorse its position will provide competitive advantage on the markets. By what other means would you erect a globally successful and solid brand?

"Positioning is crucial" comments Mike Bastin (2013, 10) in the China Daily newspaper when he is questioned about how a company can reach the targeted and potential demographic clients. The company needs to be in a clear state of mind when it comes to defining a certain target group or market. A complete and accurate behaviour analysis on customer consumption as well as a brand management strategy are required to contemplate and structure the potential alternatives for positioning. After this the company can define the brand name and identity strategies, depending on the brand size and the products or services it offers. The brand architecture is divided into several key levels, and the company has to determine which of the defined sub brands are going to be the most supportive to the core brand and therefore the most valuable ones to grow. (Bastin 2013, 9-15.)

Increased brand awareness does not immediately reflect to brand viability and profitability. Motivation, passion and diligence build the required foundation for the brand. Brands create experiences and promises to get consumer attention. Integrity in the strategic implementations will lead to great brand performance if the brand is goal-oriented. Long-lasting brand-customer relationships are obtained when the appreciable promises are delivered to the consumer. Companies are ought to elaborate outstanding features to deliver promises. Because the more technical and emotional features the brand can deliver the more it differentiates and stands out from the competition. Differentiation of competitors is vital in terms of seeking customer loyalty and enhancing brand value. (Van Gelder 2005, 30-43).

Value proposition in brand positioning relays on the price strategies the company applies to its products or services. The functional, emotional and self-expressive elements of a brand are seen as consumer benefits that justify price policies and generate a certain approach to the brand quality promise in the customer's mind. The price in contrast with quality and other brand promises is related to the law of supply and demand where attraction must be created to engender a compulsive need. Positioning and especially price policy reflects the core beliefs of the brand, its voice and purpose in life. As a result, a brand should demonstrate a humble sense of proud about itself and not to provide everything for everyone. Do not be

afraid of reactions, negative feedback means becoming noticed and presents an opportunity for development. (Aaker 2002, 101-102).

SabrinaTach has positioned itself consistently and considered retailers profoundly before contacting them. The pricing policy is clear; the unique lifestyle products are handmade of real leather and the quality is reflected in the price. The prices are still kept in reasonable amounts for normal people to afford to purchase them. The entrepreneur positions the products like she considers best and is not inclined to take individual orders or tailor products based on someone else's opinion or design. The brand authenticity comes from the integrity of the product lines and the passion for market them as required. (Tachdjian 2013).

4.1 Brand credibility

Brand credibility is what evokes the consumers' trust, desire and need for the product or service. Creating strong brand identity and image facilitates the establishment of quality performance and credibility. The consumer wants to belong somewhere, where the searched quality standards meet the delivered promises. Brand creativity is where the usefulness of brand is measured. Consumers have learned to appreciate the brand's respect towards them. Not only behind the brand but behind its every product and service is a promise, a story, maybe a person but at least the best raw materials to guarantee the brand quality and to create credibility. To reach the potential consumers and to build a trust and loyalty relationship with them can be complicated on the combat field of market share division. The emerging question is how to differentiate your brand from the competitors? (Aaker 2002, 103).

Brand creativity displays the brand in an innovative way where the customer is the product or service operator instead of the brand or the company. Admiration comes and goes but triggering positive or negative feelings in the customer can upgrade the level of brand credibility and loyalty significantly. Thinking outside of a box will open new opportunities of brand extension without compromising the core beliefs and values of the company. Strong brands are committed in the challenging process of enduring the brand promise. Creating experiences and delivering the promise through those moments will eventually increase brand credibility (Perlis, 2012.)

4.2 Local and global brand transformation

The tool to manage operations in both local and global markets is a coherent strategy with set goals. Like assigning clear responsibilities for each team member to target certain consumer groups, definite objectives assist the brand in reaching more market share and tracking the execution success. Brand localization furthers the creation of common language between

the brand and the targeted audience. The brand management process requires careful planning and constant team encouragement to contribute results from the operated marketing practises. To raise global brand awareness and long-lasting brand-customer relationships the brand's commitment to its employees is essential. Internal understanding of the brand transformation process is required to reach global thrive. (Ind 2007, 170-179).

Cultural and socioeconomic differences tend to affect the market transformation process of a brand. Specific research on the targeted country increases business intelligence and is therefore in conjunction with the market effectiveness. The more the company is aware of the differences between its domestic market and the targeted country market, the more it understands the procedures of positioning it has to be prepared to make. In the case of SabrinaTach the differences between the local and global markets is enormous. The economic situation of the brand's domestic market is still described as developing and unstable. Small Latin American countries still suffer from a certain economical crisis when talking about the purchase power versus poverty rate. Uruguay has a small and easily penetrated market where lifestyle products have not yet reached the market demand desired. Still, SabrinaTach has been able to grow its operations and land nicely on the North American markets. To maintain the market stability and increase the profitability of the marketing implementations is the next step. While focusing on this massive market entry the brand has been offered the opportunity to take over a small percentage of Asian and Australian markets. This opportunity of a lifetime requires fundamental research on the demographic, cultural and attitude differences of the certain market segment and area. SabrinaTach should operate actively but with discretion to increase the brand consistently towards global success.

4.3 Functionality and design

Design and functionality of the product or service is what generates its value. Depending on the consumer, it is generally either the design or the functionality factor that creates the need. All the attributes of a product affect in the brand process of producing a utility object with emotional components. The point where the brand marketing unit is required to act is when the customer's need has arisen. The brand can exchange its power through customer interaction where both parties receive valuable information about the product or service. The functionality and design management team should constantly monitor the sales of the products and generate post-marketing operations to receive essential feedback for development. The brand differentiation is about its functions and how well the marketing and public relations are done to ensure the customers' awareness of the product and service attributes. The ability to demonstrate a product or service as unique and build interactive network functions with promise is going to increase the brand value. (Borja De Mozota 2003, 81; 98).

The brand should integrate each member of the organization to understand the vision, identity and value perception of the brand. As the functionalities of the product will demonstrate immediately if it has any competitive advantage on the markets, the brand should experiment the product within the internal community before launching it. Personalized visuality and strong reflection of the brand image should be utilized as the foundation of the product design and functions. It is important for a company to create awareness and obtain loyal customers who directly connect the product with the brand. Like Meg Whitman, the Chief Executive Officer of Hewlett Packard has expressed "When people use your brand as a verb, that is remarkable" (Travers, 2011). The important message, which is the brand name, will be repeated through the best marketing channel, from the customer to other consumers.

Product and service integration as well as the use of environmentally friendly raw materials influence in the marketing operations of SabrinaTach. The brand reflects its environmental values by creating sustainable products that are build to last. The entrepreneur believes that the manufactured raw materials tell a story about each product. The used materials also reflect the story of the brand and therefore give a consistent and strong image of the brand design equity. Every product is handcrafted and the designer-entrepreneur selects and hand-cuts each piece of the chosen leather herself. The result of innovation and experienced craftsmanship is what SabrinaTach stands for. Environmentally friendly, exclusive and elegant products represent both design and functionality that with consistent marketing will succeed in the global markets.

4.4 Refreshed marketing mix

Does your company still lean only on the product-based marketing and traditional advertisement tools or have you started creating a personalized hybrid marketing model? Incorporating social media in to the brand marketing strategy signifies inviting the people into the marketing intercourse. The future of marketing mix is about the product, price, placement and promotion strategies and how their actions are reflected through people. The brand-customer relationships are not built around product or price, the influenced people is what creates opportunities and market the brand free of charge. The majority of consumers, 90 per cent as presented in the Nielsen Global Consumer Survey (Tsai, 2009) have a strong trust in the friend or acquaintance reference, which proofs the effectiveness of word-of-mouth marketing. As disclosed in the same survey the reliance on online recommendations and brand website content is at 70 per cent, which refers to the importance of brand networking and quality information communication (Tsai, 2009.)

In the receptive end of every marketing action there is always a prospect. A prospect who's commitment to a brand depends on the amount and quality of trust he or she has in the

brand. Customer acquisition is about communicating the effective information to the right people through the appropriate channel. Engagement and loyalty strategies should use trust as the tool to build long-term brand-customer relationships while increasing the brand value perception. Interactive communication creates the opportunity to influence in the targeted people. Delivering intellectual property to the consumer will provide the brand with priceless resources of influencing in the decision making process and reinforcing the loyalty rate. Positioning every Four P-related marketing action appropriately and demonstrating authentic transparency of the brand is the key to improvement that allows constructive feedback. (Tsai, 2009).

4.4.1 Marketing model selection

Combining the different marketing models will not automatically provide market thrive. The brand is required to plan the operated marketing strategy based on the core tactical components of its business' intellectual property. A personalized marketing model creates possibilities of expansion and growth as it demonstrates the brand managers' full understanding of the brand's core elements. The key to successful marketing is to have a fluid customer approach through the different marketing channels. By surrounding the used traditional and digital media with interactive social media tools will allow the company to apply whichever marketing model considered relevant. Marketing implementations will endorse the business if the content reflects the brand personality and benefit the customer by producing and increasing their intellectual property value.

Various matrices are created to increase the sales and support the company's growth strategies. The previously discussed Four P's or the alternative Seven P's marketing mix will help the brand managers to identify the successful and problematic elements of its operations. After that the company can choose a marketing method between the Unique Selling Proposition, Boston Consulting Group Matrix, PESTLE or Porter's Five Forces among others. A small-sized company like SabrinaTach can plan and carry out different models considering different situations or product lines. The market penetration, market development, product development and diversification are present and potential aspects in the current situation of SabrinaTach brand marketing. Ansoff's growth strategy matrix analysing SabrinaTach identifies the above-mentioned matters that provides a relevant reason to include the matrix in the thesis.

The matrix describes the growth strategies for the new and existing products and markets. It visualizes the present and future operations of the brand penetration and diversification. As SabrinaTach is currently marketing through Internet and social media the Ansoff's matrix has been created based on that aspect of product and market development. Development of market strategies will lead to global awareness and reaching new demographic markets and cus-

tomer segments. Adding value to the existing products and improving the product range will increase the purchase quantities for both individual and retail customers and start growing market share. Interactive communication assists in the process of converting penetrated markets to loyalty programs. Cooperation with related and unrelated businesses that reflect the brand personality can have positive influence in the brand image and value perception. (Curtis, 2011).



Figure 3. Ansoff's matrix relevant to SabrinaTach marketing.

4.4.2 Digital Marketing

The digitalization of marketing is definitely not eliminating the sales personnel. Personal contact between the brand and the customer is still vital for the brand success. Digitalization only expands possibilities of reaching the potential consumer. The brands that are able to solidly combine their traditional and digital marketing strategies will survive and probably increase their market share. The internal communication plays an important role in these marketing integration processes. Assigning the digital marketing department to support the traditional marketing operations or vice versa depends on the company and its market environment. Brand presentation in social media is no longer rare and its content should be updated regularly. Active connection to social media reflects brand liability but when the con-

tent becomes interactive with the customer, the brand can begin to manage its customer relationships.

Social media's importance in the growth of brand awareness is overwhelming. If the word-of-mouth marketing model is transmitted apace, the social media marketing disseminates by the speed of light. Every marketing production and output should pass through a precise audit before publication. The accidental mistakes can deliver attention but a negative reminder will stick in the customer's mind longer than a positive one. Although social media interaction should be consistent and active, no one wants an information overload. The customer requires information and is excited to learn in-depth details about the brand. To keep the brand interesting, the organization or company has to limit the social media and traditional media releases to a certain extent. Some mystery around the brand, its products and soul are the intriguing trigger for consumer attention.

E-commerce is the new era of digital marketing and Sabrina Tach realized that well in advance to get in the game. The convenience of searching and purchasing from the Internet has become highly valued, as the majority of the world's population is now more familiar with technology than before. Digital marketing and Internet-based communication presents the company to the unlimited global markets and opens completely new distribution channels for small brands. If carried out correctly, e-commerce enables effective and up-to-date marketing methods and communicational tools that are the foundation of a long-term brand-customer relationship built upon personalized trust and emotion. (Bastin 2013, 10).

4.4.3 Brand promotion in social media

Today, public relations, marketing and advertising can all be carried out through Internet and social media. Single messages and advertisements have transformed into interactive communication with the potential customers. Social media's importance in the brand growth is essential. Regular updates on the company website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other interactive channels create immediate awareness of a product, company or organization. Brands gain active presence in the consumers' daily lives without them even noticing. Advertising has changed and should be turned entirely into brand-customer communication rather than individual messages displayed on television or magazines. Public relations and networking are now in the key role of building long-lasting customer-relationships and the emphasis on who you know rather than what you know has increased.

Social marketing should be integrated to the organization's marketing team as a cross-functional unit whose task is to create supportive marketing methods to the existing and developed traditional marketing strategy. The published content of both teams should be solid

and consistent. The excess of information may turn as a weakness if the customer feels over-powered with the amount of data they receive. Brands should manage the conversations and act as the invisible influencers in the customer interaction. Allowing the customer with the feeling of power will build a trust relationship that furthers the creation of loyalty programs. The customer relationship management (CRM) systems are business strategies supported by technology platforms and developed and maintained differently in each company. The social customer relationship management (SCRM) includes everything of the CRM, but it should also provide mutual benefits and value for both the brand and the customer through interactive conversation. (Metz 2012, 34-35; 62-64).

SabrinaTach has done all the brand marketing operations through Internet and social media. Although the products have been in the bible of fashion, The Vogue magazine, the brand has gained the major part of its reputation thanks to social media. The Vogue displayed content was published in the Facebook page of SabrinaTach where it aroused the interest of the social media users. Everything the brand does is released in the website and the pictures of the products are uploaded to the social media regularly to keep the content actualized. SabrinaTach inspirational products provide the opportunity to contact various design and fashion bloggers that are globally followed. Cooperation with bloggers will increase the brand awareness and product visibility in the social media networks. Proper research and monitoring of the blogs will ensure their suitability for the brand image. Competitions and other social media related presentation will bring new audience amongst the right target group.

5 Building brand networks

Various elements of brand identity are merged to plan a brand network. Reliability and service are reflected in the pattern of building strong and long-term brand-customer relationships. Linking together the different brand relationships is called constructing brand networks. The network collaboration will add strength to the brand by providing invaluable feedback and encouraging the brand to differentiate. Seeking and connecting with relevant people and organizations can be used as a reference in certain occasions if the contacts are mentioned in appropriate business situations. Brands are required to implement each commitment and promise to have positive approach and influence with the business professionals as well as customers. Passion, enthusiasm and integrity are essential when building successful brand networks. Through those three elements the brand is prepared when it is time to choose the most trusted associates or cooperatives. (Aaker 2002, 93.)

The impact from the qualitative and theoretical research on SabrinaTach suggests that networking is the most important tool of building strong brands with long-term brand-customer relationships. Sabrina Tachdjian has carried the company with dignity and consistency to-

wards her beliefs. Her determination to build a well-known Uruguayan fashion brand has created opportunities to proceed as desired. Comprehensive research and analysis on the re-sellers generates trust and provides a secure feeling of growth and globalization. Direct contacts with the potential traders demonstrate confidence and reinforce brand credibility. Building personal and personalized connections with the retailers and wholesalers guarantees that the business deals and cooperation reflect SabrinaTach image and increases its brand value. The Figure 4 introduces the networking model Sabrina Tachdjian applies in the brand management operations. Actual memos or contracts are not presented, as they are confidential and were not disclosed in the interview. The figure visualizes the different distribution channels and can therefore provide a tangible networking map for brand managers to brainstorm when developing various aspects of the organization structure. (Tachdjian, 2013).



Figure 4. SabrinaTach networking model. (Tachdjian 2013).

5.1 Brand-customer relationship

Unwanted or redundant marketing is and will be even simpler to preclude as the consumers become more aware of the content of promotional messages. The marketing requires individual research on the target customer. Companies that observe the customer's behavioural changes, recent purchases and create an inspirational environment around their brand are the

ones to succeed in the future. The consumers' needs are more demanding, which places the brand in a challenging point. The quality of different network circles becomes vital to the brand. Identifying the developed needs and wants of the customer will create personal recognition between the brand and the customer. To strengthen the brand-customer relationships the company is enforced to tailor the digital and direct marketing campaigns to match the needs of the individual customer. (Huttunen, 2013).

Stepping out from the comfort zone and questioning every action is the only way to develop the brand and reinforce its value perception. The company should network with the best and most reflective communication channels through which it interacts with the customers. Respecting the customer the brand demonstrates credibility and is supposed to increase the loyalty rates. Constantly exploring new ways of appealing to new segments of societies will keep the demand steady and the brand management team in business. The brand-customer relationship objective is to create long-lasting brand value and expand the brand networks. Effective customer-relationships provide the company with constructive feedback that can be used as an advantage in the business progress.

5.2 Competetitive differentiation and brand consistency

Differentiation from the potential and existing competitors is essential. Consistency and integrity play a key role in the fabrication of a commercial story to support the brand's soul. The soul is what the brand has to offer and like Post and Post (2008, 213) write in their book about brand integrity management; "we behave as we believe", designates to the internal operations of a company as well as to the external relationships of the brand. Personal goals and interest in the business operations are seen as a source of motivation to build and develop brand credibility as the source of brand consistency and competitive advantage. Competitive differentiation of the brand is about passion and enthusiasm for creative product and service development and their reflection in every brand management implementation.

Consumers normally initiate a trend of something, and creative brands are the first ones to follow behind. Consistent marketing of the various product features and customer innovation are factors that differentiate the brand from its competitors. Inconsistencies are noticed quickly, which is why a brand should have resources to focus on the style and quality of messages submitted through the chosen marketing channels. Consistent brands reflect their personality in every brand action, which facilitates the customer approach by influencing in their attitudes. Standardizing the brand processes will ensure that the marketing messages and visual branding are consistent and clearly presented to all the related partners.

SabrinaTach manages to suppress the surrounding competition by being different. The brand exhales its distinctive personality through its communication channels. As promised in the marketing approaches, SabrinaTach delivers the customers' expectations with the bohemian and consistent style. Maintaining the brand consistency in the changing market is going to be the key for the brand success in the future. SabrinaTach has to decide whether it desires to appear as a dominant brand with a representative and personalized symbol or to be recalled from other related issues regarding to fashion industry for example. Regular changes to contingency plans are to be carried out to stay alive on the competitive fashion markets. The brand system should allow brand extensions and exploiting to a certain limit. Through the creation of sub brands the different features and service updates of the products are clarified and their image on the customers' minds reinforced. The consistency in sub branding will demonstrate synergistic benefits that can be seen as a long-term investment in the company and the brand.

5.3 Social and operational responsibilities of a brand

Brand positioning and the determined operational environment appoint the directions of brand responsibilities. Majority of today's companies mention the social and environmental responsibilities in their vision and mission reports to indicate their commitment to the prevention of the global greenhouse effect. The ecological materials and behaviour are seen as competitive advantage, which is why it is essential to reflect their impact in every operational brand action. Large-scale companies have specific teams to coordinate the execution of brand responsibilities over organizational units, media and markets. The social and operational engagements should be built to support a small-sized company's identity as well. The effort used in the strategic planning of controlling brand associations will be recognized.

Organizations and companies apply social responsibility in their everyday functions of brand welfare. The level of social interest the brand has towards the society is measured through its impact in the operating environment. Competitors, suppliers and retailers in the operating country influence in the brand image and by reflecting the environmental values, the brand actions can benefit the society and increase the level of brand credibility and respect. Social and environmental responsibility reports including the issues related to employees, human rights, community and environment should be released at regular intervals. The commitments imply the brand to plan its operational strategies according to the missions relayed in the report.

Uruguay as the operational country provides SabrinaTach with environmentally friendly raw materials and perfect surroundings of inspiration and craftsmanship. The innovation of the products differentiates the brand from the competitors and not many of them can match the

strict environmental responsibility regarding to the product materials and manufacturing process of SabrinaTach. Based on the vision of the brand the directions of globalization should include cooperation with companies of similar values. The existing retailers have been chosen by their reflectiveness of the brand personality and the ability to express the social and environmental responsibilities important to the brand. SabrinaTach should not consider replacing or transferring the current raw material providers and suppliers even if the company succeeds in the global markets and the entrepreneur is obliged to migrate from country to country. Although the company does not have any future plans of restructuring its operations the brand can improve its position on the markets by expressing the environmental and social values more visibly.

6 Development ideas for brand construction

Maintaining the brand value and increasing brand equity is not the simplest part of brand management. Receiving feedback and reacting to it is the way to preserve the level of integrity and the passionate touch in the brand operations. Brand and the workforce behind it are under constant improvement process. The ability of openly handle criticism presents the opportunity to grow and will enhance the trust relationships with the customers. SabrinaTach has increased sales profits and revenue during the last couple of years. The specific sales figures are confidential but to visualize the upturn in profit Sabrina Tachdjian provided the average numbers of items sold. The sales per product of the fiscal year 2011 were at about 600-700 hundred bags which was doubled by the year 2012 on to 1500 bags. The current years sales will reach about 30 per cent increase, which demonstrates the brand upswing. The critical point for Tachdjian was the first large order of 100 units, which clarified the brand potential, and the possibility of success. Now she sells about 20 times as many bags as during the first fiscal year and the revenues seem to be growing. The next step for the brand is to enhance its production from 6 bags a day to a minimum of 10 bags a day. Production plays a key role in the global grow and success because the brand should be able to respond to the demand. (Tachdjian, 2013).

When a clear goal of how to deliver the brand vision and products to global markets is determined the company is ready to switch to the implementation operations. After the objectives are set and the appropriate networks assembled, SabrinaTach can start co-operation with other brands. Creation of joint campaigns and other marketing material requires another strong brand with similar values to express the endorsements with their genuine identities. (Von Kaufmann 2013).

6.1 The current potential of the brand

Latin American countries provide a rising market to the global business universe. The continent is full of country specific local craftsmanship, which has not yet been commercialized anywhere but to the tourism markets. Low cost and quality products have market potential due to the current trends and ecological responsiveness of the consumers. SabrinaTach is one of the craftsmanship pioneers for the Uruguayan fashion industry. The constantly changing and high competition in the global markets reinforces the brand to increase its brand equity and awareness by strengthening the addictiveness of the communicated messages. The ecological aspect of the used raw materials enforces the brand value while it differentiates the brand from its competitors. The products manufactured by the SabrinaTach fashion workshops reflect the bohemian brand image and provide the competitive advantage so difficult to achieve. The brand's current potential consists of various aspects but is mainly based on the brand personality and the essence of sincerity and integrity it displays.

The advantage of a small-sized company as the thesis regarding SabrinaTach is to create the brand image around the personality of the entrepreneur. Sabrina Tachdjian exhales passion and inspiration for the products and fashion items and knows how to increase the market value and how to create dialogues with her customers. Customer intercourse will encourage the potential consumer to believe in herself as a person by demonstrating the intrinsic values with no dissimulation. Credibility of the brand increases and strengthens the brand's potential on the markets. The image can be built and positioned correctly but how to find the loyal customers and maintain a productive relationship with them is done by means of internal and external communication. The brand potential can be exploited by developing one of more sustainable strategies of authentic brand communications through fundamental market research. (Borja de Mozota 2003, 101-108.)

6.1.1 Internal and external brand communication

Internal brand communication can bring additional advantages to the brand. Because what is inside will be demonstrated outside, right? The internal brand building is about integrating each member of the company to enhance the brand success. Internal understanding the values and the core beliefs of the brand is fundamental. Diversity inside the company gives the advantage of understanding the brand from several aspects and developing various strategies for the acceleration of brand value perception. Internal organization will support the brand's market intelligence by focusing on the primary product categories and combining all the departments to reach common goals. Great companies have solid and active internal communication systems that assist the sales and competition monitoring. The atmosphere inside a company is vital as it reflects to the potential consumers and their emotions. (Post & Post 2008, 55).

In a small-sized company a prefix or work style by itself can influence in the employee's or colleagues view about the company. The differences between a leader and manager for example affect the effectiveness of the brand's internal communication. A brand with great external communication and brand-customer relationships has built an enduring and interactive internal public relations behind it. A great leader has management skills but is seen as a genuine motivator who gives constructive feedback, allows the employees to participate and gives credit and recognition when appropriate (Pozin, 2013.) The internal communication should inspire creativity and build trust in the employees like the external communication does with the customers and vice versa.

Everything a brand does, its name, logo, public relations and chosen distribution channels are part of the brands external communication and therefore marketing. In the process of brand development the management team's performance is under constant observation. To demonstrate the brand's soul the management has to behave and lead in an honest and authentic way. Trusting the marketed products or services reveals the fact that the brand is aware of its imperfections and is disposed to create change in strategies of implementation. The openness of management actions coaches and encourages the team to question and acknowledge which is reflected in all the business actions and relayed information.

The logo for SabrinaTach, featuring the name 'SABRINA TACH' in a bold, sans-serif, uppercase font. The letters are a light gray color and are slightly shadowed, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

Illustration 1. SabrinaTach logo (SabrinaTach website)

6.1.2 Building global networks

An active company is creative in reaching different professional contacts from the business industry and outside it. Connections are done face-to-face, attending organised events and clicking on to business and social networking websites. Building a global strategy in networking is essential. The company should target the relevant groups and contacts to suit the brands aims and capabilities. Network that reflects the brand's personal integrity and differentiates the brand as the best of the business will increase the brand reputation. Great contacts will provide positive influence around the brand's target audience and potential consumer markets. Delivering the promised descriptions concisely and impressively will build a trust relationship with both the business contacts and the consumers. Planning the networking

well the company can build a trusting community around it, which will balance and give assurance when required. If the brand is perceived greatly among its networks and is seen as an assisting and socially active company the values can easily be reflected to the consumer attraction.

Figure 2 presented earlier in chapter 3 of the thesis (17) demonstrates the SabrinaTach networking model that can be developed and shaped in the future to suit the brand's strategies. The basis of the model can also be duplicated and designed to correspond other brand building processes and their implementations. After the conclusion of the figure SabrinaTach has increased its visibility in the online social networks like Tumblr and Twitter and gotten extended reception in the retailers' online stores. Printed media is more likely to be used in local marketing but for the fashion industry, the global "bible" Vogue reaches SabrinaTach target groups around the globe. The owner Sabrina Tachdjian is proud of her company and her products and is not hiding to show it in the brand's social networks. She is ready to grow her brand to global fashion brand and has a great desire to see the brand users proud when wearing the SabrinaTach products (Tachdjian, 2013). To acclaim the enthusiasm and passion for the brand and its products or services is something most brand managers should consider. If the owner does not think the brand is great, who will?

Getting through and connecting to the relevant business networks can be simple and fast but it depends on whom you know. The cultural and economic differences between the businesses and countries can be major and therefore a concrete strategy from a foreign brand is required when entered into a market. Observation and research on domestic and foreign market divergences should be carried out prior to any kind of market entry even on the network level. The values the brand stands for should match to those of the targeted country and market. Cooperation with other companies, organisations or brands requires profound consideration and value confrontation. To support and promote the brand image the visible liaisons should tolerate public reviews and underpin the brand's equity.

As Uruguay does not have a well-known fashion industry reputation, the global expectations of customer value and quality of products or services is not high. Even though Latin American economy has recently emerged and been noted in the global scale, some countries remain unfamiliar to the vast majority of the world's population. SabrinaTach might have problems in conquering the global medias. Although the products are handmade of quality raw materials their appearance is bohemian targeting different consumers than the mass market.

6.2 Failures and success of brand leverage

To keep a brand alive and understood amongst the defined target group, the brand or its sub brands should not be stretched to more than a certain threshold. Brand's consistency and credibility are vulnerable components of the brand's wellbeing and if they are affected in a negative way the brand will confront problems or even setbacks in its business. Every action and extension a brand performs should be connected to the brand's core identity. The value proposition and brand-customer relationship management will not alone submit the ground for the fulfillment of user expectations. The brand's core identity is what provides the foundation for brand leverages and the chance of creating sub brands.

Sabrina Tachdjian interview (Tachdjian 2013) demonstrated that with certain determination a small-sized company can survive and succeed on the markets. A great company can breed from a passionate owner with exact reliance on her intuition and taste. Integrity in the product lining sprouts from the unwillingness of performing to meet someone else's expectations. The brand's target group could be delimited into bohemian and artistic girls and women who live a certain craftsmanship-loving lifestyle, but new consumers are well appreciated. SabrinaTach has no proper brand management strategy, which might become a problem if the company grows bigger in the future. Despite that fact the company has emerged in the potential top company league with its own strong style and leadership.

Limiting the brand extensions to only bohemian and handcrafted products can be seen as a barrier for the company's success. Reflecting the brand personality is remarkable and the most interesting way of differentiating the brand from its competitors and therefore seen as a positive aspect of the brand orientation. The brand that focuses on win-win outcomes and focuses on the operative networks, retailers, suppliers, employees and customers to gain a social status around itself. (Metz 2012, 30-31).

Success with the North American retailers has been a major step forward in creating brand equity and global awareness. Sabrina Tachdjian's interest in the fashion industry has given her determination to connect with the appropriate retailers and wholesalers for the brand. The globalization of the brand has begun and through the relevant contacts the brand is able to expand its leverage around the world. The process of obtaining reliable retailers can be risky as the agreements are usually carried out through Internet. Shipments to different countries are expensive and delays or other circumstantial problems might arise. Contracts require specific reviewing and strict rules with contractual penalty should be included to avoid any misunderstandings or breaches of contract. Brand value can be increased with a high quality and respected retailer. If the customer expectations towards the retailer are low in terms of value, quality or price will the brand create a barrier to itself on the markets.

Obtaining local market share is clearly a challenge to SabrinaTach at the moment. Uruguay's low-income rate affects the expectations of quality and shapes the demand for unique life-style products. Although the amount of social media users has risen from the past, still only four of every ten Uruguayans use computers (El País, 2013.) The Facebook statistics website of Socialbakers (2013) represents that the three most visited pages are of brand types like the telecom operators, shopping centres and large international beverage brands. The demand of domestically produced products is minimal. The quality expectations of local products are still distinguished as of lower standards. Sabrina Tachdjian realizes that whilst the Uruguayan leather provides the aspect of diversity in the global markets the situation is not similar to that in the domestic market (Tachdjian, 2013.)

6.3 Brand monitoring and risk management

A company has to ask itself, what resources does it have and how to use them effectively to enforce the brand value? Constant monitoring of the various brand processes like marketing for example is essential in discovering the points of success and the reasons for failures and problems. Risk management strategy should be presented on a chart to visualize and make concrete the preventive and contingency tasks. In this century brands are obliged to understand the emerging digital markets in addition to the existing markets. Duplicating the brand image and presenting it through every pertinent channel may affect the consistency and credibility of the brand. Accurate reviewing on all the published content is the first step to avoid unfavourable exposure. The brand monitoring begins afterwards and proceeds like a continuum that supports the brand actions and receives constructive feedback. Tracking and measuring brand leverage and equity is the key to brand development and expansion.

The company and brand SabrinaTach is constantly controlled by the owner, which reduces the possibility of risks. Still the lack of risk management strategy and contingency plans is a potential risk as itself. SabrinaTach is a small-sized company but globalization process generates risks, which is why precise analysis of practical future inconveniences and threats is essential. The fixed costs stay in minimum because the company operates in the online world from Uruguay and has no fixed retail shops anywhere. Shipment and service transactions are the only risky costs for the company as the parcels may disappear and refund policy promises kept. Other unmanageable situations might appear during the expansion process. SabrinaTach has to realize that digitalization does not replace the personal contact and personalized service. This lays emphasis on the retailers and their customer service. A brand solely operating in the Internet should realize that to increase its market share it has to construct tangible and intangible marketing that reflect the brand value constantly.

6.4 Managing brand integrity and brand loyalty

Like you and me, every consumer in the world wants to be part of something. The desire of belonging and influencing in a dialogue provides the consumer with the feeling of power and involvement in the brand actions. With a marketing strategy based on brand-customer conversation the company can ensure the brand story is understood and modified responsively. Great and authentic brand stories excite and inform by triggering the consumer's communication skills. Social media and different networks allow the company to involve the customer and encourage them to pertain with the brand. (Sharp 2011.)

Brand awareness does not guarantee that the perceived quality is seen as high as the business desires. If one of the products or services lacks even a slight part of the promised quality, the entire brand becomes vulnerable. Customers have an inconceivable skill of distinguishing the deficiencies in the purchased products. That is why new sub brands or products require close examination of quality and integrity before launching them into the markets. The brand integrity covers the product or service section, brand reputation and image, secure information, financial margins and market share⁹ as well as the ability to protect your brand's intellectual property. (Post & Post 2008, 13-20).

When replicating the brand legacy to different countries it is important to make sure the brand image is suitable for the market and its presence corresponds the demand. It is essential to define who is responsible for the brand management and the achievement of the market objectives. The customer integration and loyalty programs become essential when the local market is saturated and the renewal of demand slows down. Sufficient and steady demand in the market provides a secure position for the company to do research and act on new segment and market acquisition. Enlargement of geographic markets should be done progressively and through integrated processes. How do the brand's most valuable, intangible assets match with the demand of the host market?

Constant appealing to new segments and tracking the observable brand associations will keep the brand active and self-conscious. The brand associations can be tracked through social media tools and based on the obtained data SabrinaTach is able to elaborate new strategies and add value to the brand. Like external perceptions reflect to the brand actions, the internal perceptions and understanding can be turned as a valuable source of brand strength on the markets. Global loyalty programs are a challenge as it is quite impossible to organize personal events for the customers. Interactive website and social media content demonstrate the personality of the brand and attract the customer to be part of brand movements.

7 Conclusions

The brands do not market a product, they market a promise. Like Apple markets creativity and Coca-Cola happiness, a brand has to find its own way of expressing the promise. To be alive the brand is required to analyse the present and predict the future, create the form and design the spirit of the brand. Defining the personality and valuing the consumer perception from a social and an ecological point of view assists in the creation and evolution of the strategies to disclose and position the brand optimally. Using the tools at the disposition and interacting with consumers as strategically planned will exceed the promises given. (Arciniegas 2011).

The foundation of a great brand is the powerful story behind it. Roots and soul that create brand equity with qualifications will almost force customers to want the brand and its products or services. Internal passion for the brand is demonstrated externally as inspirational brand innovation. Regularly disclosing a benefit the brand provides to its customers will inspire and hook the consumers to learn more about the brand story. The brand can increase its demand and brand equity by appearing as the voice and the face of the customer wants and needs. Reaching for emotional loyalty will establish long-term brand-customer relationships and contribute in the customers buying behaviour. Brand story is reflected in the brand personality through which the management should apply every brand promise. Building the brand identity and presenting it as the brand lifestyle will increase credibility among the customers.

Brand success is about positioning which is carried out through appropriate networking. New partners and collaborations may be found in the most improbable places, brands and people. Diversity and consistency of these networks can turn to competitive advantage in the market field. Consistent creation of behind-the-scene products and brand stories add credibility and underpin the given promises. Understanding the brand personality assist in the positioning strategies. A lifestyle brand like SabrinaTach is dependent on the quality of personal contacts and business networks it is able to obtain and maintain. A small-sized brand without clear management strategies can promote its business through low-cost marketing and reach high in the global markets if it has the courage and the passion to believe in its creations and productions. Generating an internally and externally understood brand with powerful personality should be distributed, as it deserves to transform it as one of the best globally operating lifestyle companies. Sabrina Tachdjian has the talent and her brand SabrinaTach the capacity to achieve the aforementioned title.

Identifying the current potential of the brand and its direct and indirect competitors is the first step in brand differentiation process. Constantly questioning the brand strategies and all the related people and issues of the business will encourage the entrepreneur or management

team to trust in the intellectual property of the existing brand products or services. Copying from the competitors is the worst mistake a brand can conduct. Exceeding the customers' expectations is delivering the promise with personalized manners and contacting them afterwards to demonstrate the appreciation. Giving a face for the business will present the brand differently from the competitors and give the customer the opportunity to get acquainted with the company. Consistent differentiation is the key to increase brand awareness and obtain market share.

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Appendix 1: Interview questionnaire in English.

SABRINATACH



1.

How did you start?

2.

What were your expectations and did everything work as planned?

3.

Have you been building SabrinaTach brand consciously or is the success accidental?

4.

Where do you get your inspiration?

5.

What is your perceived brand image?

SABRINATACH



6.

What problems have you faced during your career as an entrepreneur?

7.

Who do you consider your direct and indirect competitors?

8.

How do you differentiate your brand from the competitors?

9.

Into what direction will you be heading in the future; luxury or mass brand?

10.

The social and environmental responsibilities of SabrinaTach?

SABRINATACH



11.

What is your current status/business model in Uruguay?

12.

Tell me about your distribution process?

13.

How are you seen as a boss?

14.

Can you provide me with any general statistics like revenues or margins?

15.

Your goal for the future, where do you want to be?

Appendix 2: Interview questionnaire in Spanish.

SABRINATACH



1.

Como empezaste con SabrinaTach?

2.

Tus expectativas? Funciono todo según lo previsto?

3.

Has estado construyendo tu marca SabrinaTach conscientemente o fue todo el éxito accidental?

4.

De dónde te llega la inspiración?

5.

Cuál es tu imagen de marca percibida?

SABRINATACH



6.

Qué problemas has enfrentado durante tu carrera como empresaria?

7.

A quiénes te consideras como tus directos e indirectos competidores?

8.

Cómo diferencias tu marca de los competidores?

9.

En qué dirección vas a estar dirigiendo en el futuro, una marca de lujo o de masa? Como te posicionas tu marca?

10.

Las responsabilidades sociales y ambientales de SabrinaTach?

SABRINATACH



11.

Cuál es tu modelo de estado / negocio actual en Uruguay?

La cantidad de empleados o co-propietarios...

12.

Cómo funciona tu sistema de distribución?

SabrinaTach proveedores, minoristas y posibles cambios en la futura distribución...

13.

Cómo te ven como una jefa?

Cómo te llaman internamente; gerente o líder...?

14.

Si es posible, proporcioname con algunas estadísticas y números generales?

Quién es el líder del mercado en Uruguay? Cuál fue tu ingreso del último año fiscal? Etc..

15.

Dónde quieres estar en el futuro?

Objetivos, expectativas, sueños, cambios en la competencia...