



Developing a brand awareness strategy for Kitty's Milkshake Bar through storytelling

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Abstract

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<p>This thesis concentrates on using storytelling as a tool to create brand awareness for Kitty's Milkshake Bar the writer's own company and brand. The company is explained as to why the thesis topic is relevant and how the writer aims to meet his objectives in the first part. The theoretical framework will allow the reader to see how the writer used theories to conclude for his research questions. The theory looks at defining what is a brand and then explains the way that stories are used in business and the positive and the possible negative outcomes of this tool. The reader can then learn about STP methods and customer profiling to target the correct message to the audience.</p> <p>The thesis concludes with a conclusion based on the data gathered from participants in the focus group and then learning outcomes and discussion from the writer.</p>
Keywords Storytelling in business, brand communication, brand message, segmentation.

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Kitty's Milkshake Bar.....	4
1.2 Thesis Structure.....	5
2. Objectives.....	8
2.1 Expected outcomes	8
2.2 Research questions	9
2.3 Scope and limitations.....	10
3. Theoretical framework.....	11
3.1 Defining the term brand and fundamental brand communication elements	11
3.2 The definition of storytelling and how stories can affect	19
3.3 Storytelling in business and its elements	21
3.4 The process of creating a brand story for Kitty's Milkshake bar	25
3.5 Benefits and criticism of storytelling in business.....	30
3.6 Segmentation Targeting Profiling	35
4. Research design and methodology	39
4.1 Methodological approach	39
4.2 Data collection and sample	42
4.3 Questionnaire planning for focus discussion group	44
4.4 Data analysis	45
5. Implementation and outcomes.....	47
5.1 The writers thought process in coming up with the brand story	47
5.2 Outcome for Kitty's Milkshake bar empathy mapping customer segments.....	49
5.3 Outcome for the customer segment selection for the characters in the video project	54
5.4 Implementation of the discussion focus group.....	59
5.5 Random sampling survey for respondents online	61
6. Presenting the findings.....	63
6.1 Describing the data collected	63
6.2 Number of participants in the focus discussion group and process of presenting data.	63
6.2.1 Part 1 – Demographic results from discussion focus group	65
6.2.2 Part 1 – open questions survey analysis. Discussion focus group.....	66
6.2.3 Part 2 – Closed questions survey analysis. Discussion focus group.....	71
6.3 Data analysis from random sample online survey	73
6.4 Data analysis from the founders.....	77
6.5 Theory that supports the data gathered	79

6.6	Research questions answered	81
6.7	Further developments for Kitty's Milkshake Bar	82
7.	Summery and discussion	84
7.1	Discussion of the findings	84
7.2	Recommendations	89
7.3	Limitations of study and recommendations for further research.....	89
7.4	Learning outcomes	90
	Thanks, and appreciation.....	86
	References.....	91
	Appendices	91

1. Introduction

This thesis has been inspired from the writers' own experiences with developing his own business model – Kitty's Milkshake Bar. The writer developed the brand from scratch with the help of his business partner and throughout six years has been able to identify the key customers as well as develop the story of the brand, that he created by himself with the help of Sanna Langi. The story started already during the spring of 2012 and was written about in the writer's bachelors' thesis of 2015 in detail about how the start-up process began for this particular company in question oy samiGo Restaurants ltd – under the Finnish companies' number 2655571-7.

The thesis idea came to the writer as he initially wanted to help the company's marketing strategy and improve on what was becoming a slightly stagnated resource. Little cashflow was being invested in the marketing side and the brand was struggling to lift off the ground. With some success the business has created two units by which from this day is currently still in operation and the writer of the thesis has gained incredible insights and a working knowledge from the entrepreneur's perspective. As the writer of the thesis has a creative design personality the thesis had to be on something that inspired him as well as what he believes would also inspire customers, employees, and shareholders alike. Another direction is much needed to boost the brand awareness and communicate the brand message to the customers of Kitty's Milkshake Bar.

The writer was looking at his website and others like his and was wondering why people seem to have a section that is always 'about us' or 'my story' in it. From the writer's personal view, the story that many are trying to talk about in their companies are generally lacking depth and is highlighted on the webpage, just because it seems everyone else is telling a story. But are they doing it correctly? and why do stories matter? and why do they need to be communicated to customers, employees, and shareholders alike?

In the writer's viewpoint stories go much further than simply creating a timeline of events, the story needs to capture the imagination of the viewer and those stories can allow the person to create their own reference points. The challenge here was to put storytelling before the customer in a way that Kitty's Milkshake Bar has never done before, thus focusing on a case study that brings a very different message across to its customers than they are used to seeing. A storytelling video is being created and showcased with this in mind, the theme of the thesis is storytelling, and this tool or method may or may not have a negative effect as the story being told in the case study is possibly different from the customers perception of the brand that they may already have.

Why could this thesis be important to the reader. The thesis is strongly focusing on brand communication and storytelling as a tool to convey the brand message to its customers. The thesis

could be interesting if the reader is developing their own company and wants to know if storytelling is a concrete or useful method for gaining brand awareness for their own company. However, the reader should understand that each company is different in its character and the story told needs to be considered carefully for each individual company. The reader may also gain insights as to how to write a thesis based on case study and using video footage, which could be an uncommon way of presenting a master's thesis in HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Science. However, in the writer's opinion, knowledge is being created and useful insights into this method, which could be useful for students to develop their own ideas in the future or continue with this study using their own business and report on the findings.

There is a lot of related literature about this storytelling as a subject matter, for instance according to Brown, Denning, Groh and Prusak (2005, 111-116) summarizes that when a story is being told the listeners can choose to come aboard with the main idea of the story and realize that they are living the overall message and idea that the story is telling. I.e., the story somehow relates to them personally in their actual lives. The story resonates an idea that the listener starts to feel in themselves, as if they were a part of the story. They experience a story as a participant and somebody that is living and going through the emotions and imagination of feeling the story being told to them. This is therefore a tool that businesses could use to engage the customers into the product or service.

Many people when starting to listen to a story have a positive attitude and expectation to hearing it at the start. Why? because stories are exciting! Of course, if the story is narrated poorly and doesn't resonate with the listener then likely they will lose interest in it. A story should engage people to listen intently with interest and positivity from the very beginning. Human nature is such that the brain is continuously thoughts thinking all the time. The storyteller can see if the audience is losing interest, because they might start to think about other things such as, how does this relate to them, or how can they change things in their own workplace etc. So as a storyteller it is important to try and relate in some way to the person's thoughts whilst they are hearing the story, although of course it is impossible to know everyone's thoughts, but a good story should answer people's questions, fears, or doubts that they have. Afterwards the listener can make up their own conclusions and even think that they have created their own ideas and assumptions from the generic meaning of the story being told. (Brown & al. 2005, 111-116.)

Therefore, storytelling is more important than ever because companies can use the power of stories to harness the customer into living the product through their lives or create a spark or a memory that will enable the consumer to go from a new customer to an advocate of the company.

The problems as to why this thesis addressed storytelling has been stated earlier to some degree, but to clarify in more detail, Kitty's Milkshake Bar has been evolving since it opened its doors to the public for the 1st time on May 16th, 2016, has struggled from start-up stage to expand rapidly. Even though the idea is brilliant many start-ups struggle with this phenomenon. The purpose of the thesis was to look at brand communication and to develop a customer-driven brand story to develop and create awareness of the growing brand to the public. The problem that the writer had is with any young developing brand, it is always difficult to generate awareness which is one of the reasons that so many startups do not ever lift off the ground and gain real success. A Strong brand helps companies in those efforts and brand story is essential in company development.

Cash flow issues is without doubt one of the biggest obstacles that start-up companies face and fail by, due to the lack of initial investment and also funds running dry. One of the ways in which companies can combat this is by creating a unique product offering, which stands out from the rest and creating great brand awareness keeping repeat customers coming back. Kitty's Milkshake Bar is a company that has problems as the brand is still very unknown to the wide part of the capital area, apart from in certain groups, who are following the social media and the current story of the business or see the brand passing by in Tripla or Iso Omena. Many children have grown up with Kitty's Milkshake Bar and remember their first milkshake they ever had.

Experiences create stories and Kitty's Milkshake Bar has a story to tell. Thus, the writer came up with ideas that would help him to get to the theme of the story, which in relation to current times and most importantly the pandemic crisis of 2020 left many people feeling isolated in the world. With the close customer/business relationship that the company has with its already existing customer group, the writer understood that the story and message that he wanted to convey was one of togetherness, thus being the theme of the story told was '**Nobody feels alone at Kitty's Milkshake Bar**'. Finally, the writer decided to create a 2-to-3-minute video advert as mentioned for Kitty's Milkshake bar, using the storytelling tool, and highlighting togetherness as its main theme.

The video project is found in YouTube which the reader can view here:

<https://youtu.be/cldb5VNp8Ec>

This topic addresses the objective to communicate the brand story, thus aiming to create brand awareness, through storytelling methods, which depending on the results could reflect in more revenue created in the long run and give a clear indication if this precise way of communicating to the customers is correct for the Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand. The writer attempts to answer the research questions that are guiding this thesis as well as the results of the video project created for Kitty's Milkshake Bar customers that would measure if the customers thought that this is the correct brand message being communicated by the company or if there are better tools or methods

to use to create brand awareness. The results will be measured by hosted workshops with random selected customers and posting online the final project to gain insightful information regarding its delivery.

1.1 Kitty's Milkshake Bar

Kitty's Milkshake Bar is an American 1950s style traditional milkshake bar, which concept has not been done in Finland since the creation of Valio Baari in the 1970s. The milkshake bar was the easiest company for the writer to focus the thesis on because he has 100% full control over what happens and can influence change within the company being a major shareholder. This then makes the thesis topic more exciting to the writer as he can develop change. A bit of background history for the reader is important so they know the fundamental feeling that the company embraces, it also sets the scene for the thesis.

The concept came to life and the vision was realized once the brand was invited to its first location in Hietalahti kauppahalli in 2016 and then followed a second location in a large shopping center in Espoo during the summer of 2017, where it has been operating since. The newest unit was opened in 2021 in Helsinki and is slowly gathering momentum. The business is a small yet growing company and can be in time duplicated and copied, so that a turnkey operation, such as a Hesburger or McDonalds etc. is feasible. A Franchiser can buy the company with no previous training experience in the field and start operations with the owner, managers and workers who will be trained by the parent company how to do the work. This is called business franchising.

The idea of franchising came to light when Arto Pelander (initial first subway franchisee in Finland in the 1990s) joined the company in 2018 as a partner and has since been developing the brand alongside with the founders to create a streamlined and contemporary business, whilst maintaining the traditional style and idea of a 1950s milkshake bar, for which the concept was based upon. The franchisee route and its potential are indeed possible, and the founders are aware that the brand during the growth years is something that must be nurtured and developed, by using smart ways of communicating the brand, such as ideas that invoke moments of happiness, indulgences, experiences, and memories to its customers, are one way by which the company has gained momentum. The concept is bright, colorful and lively, with a mix of pink, petrol blue and cream as its brand colors, the color palate was carefully chosen to compliment the fun nature of the brand as well as the thick and soft colorful milkshakes that are served, the house colors are meant to remind the customer of ice cream and also touch base on the retro nature of the vintage milkshake bars in the United States during the golden years of the soda jerks in the 1950s. The brand uses other names to strengthen its image such as Ben and Jerry's and Coca Cola, which creates a level of trust in the brand. To enable to reader to understand what the thesis content is about a short

summery has been added here about how the structure of the thesis reads and what type of content that the reader can expect to be included. The writer has used the general guidelines from HAAGA-HELIA UAS and is following this, however, to make it easier for the reader this is a brief introduction as to what will be learnt in each chapter.

1.2 Thesis Structure

This chapter outlines the research paper's structure, which gives the reader a glance at what is included in this development paper and is helpful for the reader to find the information quickly and guide them, furthermore it also guides the writer by organizing the paper.

Introduction. This will help the reader to understand why the topic has been chosen and why it is important for the writer as well as the reader. It addresses any problems and why the thesis topic could be of use. The reader also from this chapter can realize what the topic is and the general theme that the thesis will take.

Background of the company. This chapter introduces the reader to the company that the thesis is based on and why it was chosen to be developed.

Objectives. This next chapter explains why the writer is trying to answer what he is questioning and what the study of the thesis is trying to achieve.

Expected outcomes. This helps the reader to understand what the writer wants to gain from writing the thesis and any pre-insights to the work before it is undertaken.

Research questions. A main research question is presented to the reader, as well as three sub-questions, which will help the writer to answer the main research question more easily.

The scope and the limitations. The scope is what the focus is on the thesis and why this is important as well as the preliminary limitations that the writer had when he began the project.

Theoretical framework. This frames the thesis and provides the reader with information regarding branding, storytelling, and segmentation targeting profiling. The chapter allows the writer to justify the data gathered using the theoretical insights.

Research design and methodology. This is the methods and steps the writer took to collect the data as well as the research approach he used in his thesis.

Implementations and outcomes. This chapter explains the various thought process based on the theory and how the writer came up with the brand story, the different tools he used to create

empathy maps and customer profiles. This chapter also talks about how the writer conducted the discussion focus group and online survey.

Presenting the findings. The writer will present the data and link it to the theoretical framework. The writer will help to reader to understand what the data means and why it's important for the company.

Summery and discussion. The final chapter will discuss the findings and personal views of the writer based on the empirical part of the thesis and link the discussion to the theoretical framework. The writer will discuss the research questions and learning outcomes as well as further development for study.

will then be drawn and will also include a large amount of text and copies from the chat groups, processes and also from emails etc. to show the process that the writer made in creating the video case study.

The thesis then finishes with a **full bibliography** and note of **appreciation**.

2. Objectives

The objectives part of this thesis attempts to meet the expectations of the reader by introducing the main important aims that the writer is attempting to answer. The primary objective is to focus on answering these fundamental questions and sub-questions that the writer has chosen to deliberate on, these are the prime basis on which this thesis is written.

The objective of this research is to develop the Kitty's Milkshake Brand through storytelling and by such using the methods, theories and tools that are available concerning brand communication.

The over-all objective will be met by introducing relevant theoretical insights that will be used when conducting the empirical research. The benefits of this research will be first and foremost to the company and the development of the writer.

In addition to the primary stakeholders and customers, the thesis could also provide insights to communication to existing and future employees by publishing such content. Furthermore, the shareholders and owners will benefit from the thesis because a stronger brand image means that there are better chances of the brand becoming franchised and better known. Possibly the recruitment process will be improved as more people will hear about the brand.

2

2.1 Expected outcomes

The over-all expected outcome of the thesis is an understanding of brand insights. The tool that is used is storytelling as a method to reach an understanding of these brand insights. A brand video communicating a brand story from Kitty's Milkshake Bar was communicated to the target audience and identified in this thesis along with gathering results may prove that storytelling in brand marketing can aid in creating more awareness of the business through memories and emotions, rather than just clicks on a post, which is soon forgotten.

The previously mentioned video has required a lot of work to make it professional to the target audience, which is considerably hard to do with a small budget of 500€. The video project delivers a two-to-three-minute advert that will be created and broadcasted to the public via certain channels discussed in the thesis as well as a planned discussion focus group taking in customers opinions about it. The discussion focus group however is not a something concrete in which the writer can deliver, however the focus group is a method by which to retain the customers perception of the brand video and a means to getting to the deliverable final solutions of this thesis. The value of the video will not be measured by the number of clicks on a post but on the impressions and

8

perceptions identified from the customers and founders which will give important insight to the writer, if the brand message is the correct one for the brand story and if storytelling is a tool that Kitty's Milkshake Bar can use in future marketing campaigns.

In the long run, the research will give a positive outcome to the company either way as the writer of this thesis oversees marketing development in the company and has a direct impact on the way the company moves forward after the research is completed. Another positive outcome could be that the target audience for the advert will relate to the content and share it, talk about it, and thus could increase more sales and revenue, which could be proved in as little as a few days of the advert being published. A negative response to the research could however harm the business so it was very important that the video project was done with a lot of planning to make sure that the company is not harmed and is also ethical, non-judgmental, and responsible in its endeavors.

2.2 Research questions

This chapter introduces the writers main research question and sub questions that will guide the reader into the methodology and theory used and enable to the writer to find the focus needed to complete the thesis and find the solutions on time. Thus, this chapter is important to the reader so that they can understand the fundamental reason why this thesis is being written and is it relevant to them. In the discussion chapter of the thesis the writer will attempt to conduct a structured and coherent analysis of sub-questions 1 and 3 and explain sub-question 2 as to its importance in the subject matter. The research question in this thesis are as follows:

RQ: How to use storytelling in brand communication to enhance Kitty's Milkshake Bar's brand image.

SQ 1: What kind of story communicates Kitty's brand image?

SQ 2: Who are Kitty's Milkshake bar's customers?

SQ 3: How is the Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand perceived by the customers?

2.3 Scope and limitations

The limitations chapter of this thesis refers to limitations in the research setting. A case study allows the writer to be able to conduct this thesis in a short time frame from within the month of April 2022, however because of this there are limitations.

The scope of the thesis is based on the concept of storytelling organizations, i.e., organizations that communicate their brand through specifically, an element of brand communication, which communicates stories that attaching emotions to the audience through the brand.

The subject matter and the focus here is narrowed down by aiding Kitty's Milkshake Bar and to solve a specific problem. This is further narrowed by using and testing the theory of storytelling in Kitty's Milkshake Bar to try and achieve effective brand communication, which in turn is involving its customers by creating a visual brand message, that incorporates its over-all look by implementing and using different written theories about storytelling. The inclusive reason for this thesis is to hopefully create more awareness of the brand for Kitty's Milkshake Bar.

The locale of the study will take place at HAAGA-HELIA UAS and in the Iso Omena shopping Centre, Espoo as well as filming in various locations around the capital area. The theories will come from a full literature review using library and internet sources and the data gathered, which is a mix of qualitative and quantitative data will form the conclusions to the study. The qualitative and quantitative data will come from the discussion focus group that are being held in Iso Omena with Kitty's Milkshake Bar's customers that volunteered to take part in the workshop. They will answer a short survey and participate in an active discussion based on the video project. Conclusions will be drawn and presented in the Findings chapter number 6 and discussed in chapter 7. The research was undertaken and analyzed during March and April 2022.

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter the writer researches his own research questions about how to use storytelling in brand communication and other topics relevant to it. The writer has aimed to use an extensive enough literature review to gather as much information as possible regarding this topic. The writer will distinguish and construct the method of storytelling and discover if it is a useful for the company based on the theory researched. The writer adds on the back of this, some of his own personal opinions or experiences.

3

3.1 Defining the term brand and fundamental brand communication elements

This sub-chapter talks about what branding or the word 'brands' are defined as. The writer has included this subject because the brand of Kitty's Milkshake Bar is the base of which to improve and start to find answers to his research questions. The brand is the bones of the project and to understand the brand story the writer needed to research what the fundamental aspect of the brand is. He used some of the points of this chapter to help construct the video project for Kitty's Milkshake Bar.

A brand can be defined as "A series of techniques used to increase the perceived value of a product or service. Effective brand management builds loyal customers through positive brand association and has a positive effect on your bottom line. Additionally, strategic brand management can help companies improve brand recognition, boost revenue, and achieve long-term business goals" (MarcomCentral.com 2021.)

Another quote about the definition of the brand that the writer has chosen to include is from the American marketing association (AMA) and in 1960 state that a brand derives from the concept of the brands logo and visual features as a basis for differentiation:

"A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (American Marketing Association 1960.)

This is by far the most accurate quote that the writer has found and covers a myriad of different elements to sum up brands. According to Keller, A.I. (2018) YouTube conference he states that:

"Fundamentally brands are about creating awareness and image, if you will for products and services, so as to identify and differentiate, and that fundamentally is the important role for a brand". (Keller, K, I. 2018.)

Branding is so unique, broad, and different to every company that it would be impossible to write an exact explanation to defining what a brand is, however, to guide the reader 12 steps have been laid out by (Chernatony, Dall'Olmo & Riley 1998, 19-25) and has made this part of the chapter more logical and sensible for the writer, to convey to the reader the most fundamental elements of branding.

Brands as a legal instrument is the 1st step highlighted by (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25) Brands are discussed as an investment from shareholders and look to seek legal documentation that allows them to own the brand name. Some brands are worth billions because of what they have built, to others it may be worth nothing.

The logo is a distinctive and differentiating factor. However, creating the right logo can often be misplaced and may not reflect the companies' values, image or may simply not stand out enough. One of the best logos ever made is McDonald's restaurants worldwide. McDonalds does not even need to advertise its brand name anymore, simply the iconic M sign is enough to show people that this is a McDonald's restaurant. The brand is one of the most powerful in the world. The Kitty's Milkshake Bar logo has received praise and compliments for its unique design and the message that it gives across. Over the years the founders of the company have developed the logo to what it is today. The logo for Kitty's represents a clean streamlined experience, thick creamy ice cream milkshakes, with a 1950s classic retro feel. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.)

Corporate identity is to consider the brand as a company and products that are linked into the brand. By building the portfolio of the brand, this in turn can expand the company and give an important message to its stakeholders, that the company's reputation and quality is tied and dependent on the brand, for example a brand like Harrods of London. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25)

Brand as a shorthand. Brands are a functional and emotional part of consumers life. For many stores, like Prisma for example, where there are hundreds of brands on a shelf, the brand must make an impact to stop the customer and make them buy their product compared to another competitor's brand. This is done by using emotions and certain functions that (Brown,1992) sums up by Chernatony & al. 1998, that the brand name is infused with mental connections. This means that consumers prefer to buy into names that they recognise, or they have a mental connection with. Marketing also has a lot to do with this purchasing power, however strategically the marketer cannot decide what the message is that needs to be developed until the company founders decide that themselves. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.)

Brand as of risk reducer. Chernatony & al. 1998, reference (Assael 1995) that they state that risk must be analysed when marketing the brand to install consumer confidence. In other words, this means that for Kitty's Milkshake Bar, the brand needs to be consistent with its brand values and ethics to gain continued trust in the customer. This also reflects in the brand story video, by maintaining the close relationship of togetherness that Kitty's has with its customers. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.)

Brand as an identity system. Chernatony & al. 1998, suggests that (Kapferer 1992), refers that a brand is not a product, instead it is a holistic identity and not a brand image. The strategy and identity are the most important elements to cover when creating a brand as well as a consistent vision. Kapferer states that it is not about the components of the brand, or the visual aspects, rather the deep and meaningful strategy that is placed upon the brand, upon creation. Kotler 1996, Describes brand identity as six integrated parts of culture, personality, self-projection, physique, reflection, and relationship. Kapferer statement is that the importance of the brand is the concept not the sum of its parts. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.) The writer agrees with these two statements from Kotler and Kapferer, as much of Kitty's brand has thus far been integrated into a set of values that the founders created when they built the company. The values have remained consistent over time, although some of the company's culture has changed and developed, as has the relationship and the personality of the company.

Brand as an image in consumer's mind. Martineau (1956) describes that customers think of brands as functional and psychological attributes, and this is further defined by Newman 1957, that the brand is a consumer's idea of a product. This means that the customers idea of the brand is an image that they either think positively or negatively about, these days opinions can be based on truth or falsities as anyone can publicly review a company. Bad press can often lead the company to have to strengthen their brand develop a carefully planned strategy to reinstall a better image of the brand in the customer's mind. However not all brands can or are able to save themselves once the reputation has been tarnished. However, Kepferer (1992) states that a brand cannot be over reliant on consumers opinions, reviews or input about how it evolves. The writer understands this because, like Kitty's Milkshake Bar there has in the past been many opinions about how the founders should do things, when it comes to the brand its own roots need to grow and not be swayed by too many opinions from people who do not understand business or the fundamental aspects and roots of the business when it was developed. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.)

Customers opinions are always important but should not be taken as word. Therefore, the writer has decided that with the results of the video project, described in chapter 5.1 that the overall

results will not influence or affect his decision to publish more stories as it is ultimately down to the founder's decision.

Brand as a value system. This refers to core values set by the company that influences the customers behaviour to buy. Cultures and values vary from one place to another, however by being able to tap into the customers culture and values that many were raised and brought up from an early age, is the key aspect to remaining successful. Values should also develop itself within time, such as the issue of climate change and green packaging. These are important topics in the headlines and can install trust and respect from consumers. Clark 1987 refers that values provide the important link between consumers and marketeers. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.)

Brand as a personality. The way that something is packaged, the colours, fonts and various slogans used, defines the personality of the brand to the consumer. Many studies have shown that consumers will make up their mind what kind of personality the brand has within 5 seconds. Lambin 1993 From the economist states that brands can sustain their uniqueness through stressing values through means of advertising and packaging and creating a personality through these psychological values. The writer agrees with this statement. Packaging and advertising should be carefully constructed with the brands personality in mind, and it is fundamentally important that for example, Kitty's Milkshake Bar is able to produce a product that looks and represents the clean, bright, fun elements that the brand brings forward in its packaging and personality. The writer realises however that the brand video created for this thesis is polar opposite to its colourful personality. However, upon evaluating the personality of Kitty's brand the writer felt that it could carry one of its values confidently to represent authenticity and humanity. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.)

A human approach was seen throughout in the video project and showed the struggle and somewhat deeper issue of mental health issues, which is an important aspect of life and needs to be addressed. However, the personality of the business is different, and it does not mean that every customer can relate to the issue of mental health, which of course is a risky step for the writer to take.

Brand as a relationship. Duboff & al. 1(986), believes that having a respected personality is a prerequisite for the relationship between consumers and brands. The writer agrees with this statement and understands that without relationships with its consumers there is no bridge to link the customer and the brand. McKenna (1991) suggests that a successful brand is characterised when they have a special relationship between the customer and the company. There are some brands that do not invite everyone into their circle, and often only the extreme wealthy are invited, for example AMEX black card which has no spending limit. This product is only advertised by

AMEX brand as exclusive to a few thus giving the impression of an exclusive relationship between brand and customer. This may however be more of an expression of a relationship between the brand and the product and not necessarily the customer. The product is placed somewhat higher than the customer, and in the writers, opinion makes the brand arrogant, which of course it has every right to be. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.) The brand relationship is different from AMEX of course, for Kitty's brand it is a high-quality product that prices its range for everyone, from the young to the old.

Brand as adding value. This means that the customer is buying into something that gives them value to them. Value is something that means something to someone. In many ways value can be added by even a small thing, for instance finding that moment of indulgence by eating chocolate or ice cream by rewarding or cheering yourself up. Adding value to the brand and telling the value to customers is the reason why they buy what they do, if there were no value in the product that they were buying, they would have no need for it. (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.) In some way the video project reflects added value by combating the idea that you are not alone, and that you can feel better and welcome at Kitty's Milkshake Bar. The image of somebody having a milkshake and feeling instant gratification, is a big part of the brands story, even if it may not have been the story that was told.

Brand as an evolving entity. Goodyear (1994) explain that brands evolve from an unbranded commodity to references. A commodity means that it is a product that is sold through the business that the customer needs. Goodyear then explains that brands develop a personality that pulls on the emotional appeal of the consumer, and finally a brand can get to a stage where the consumer creates an icon brand, that everybody knows. Goodyear is explaining that the brand evolves through time becoming eventually something that everyone thinks they need.

The article in the marketing journal from (Chernatony & al. 1998. 19-25.) has proven useful for the writer. These 12 steps were thought about in generating the idea to the brand story conclusion for Kitty's when he made the video project.

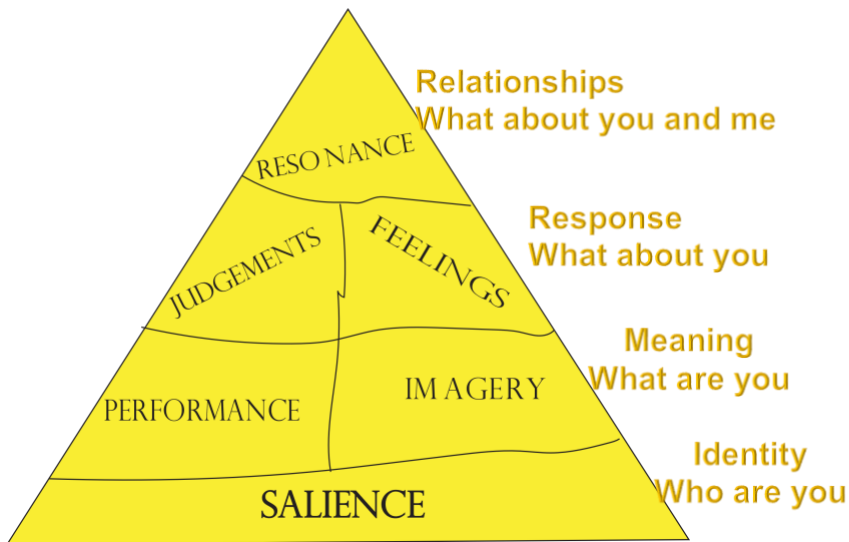


Figure 1. The brand equity model illustrates the four steps that you need to follow to build brand equity. Modified from Keller, K.I. 1993. Strategic Brand Management.

Keller's brand equity pyramid was used by the writer to provide a benchmark for the questions that he would use in his discussion focus group to gather the raw data. Ideas were used from the pyramid and questions were asked that would draw out answers from who are, what they like, how they felt and how it resonated with them.

Figure 1. is explained briefly below giving the reader an insight into Keller's ideas by (Hawker 2019.)

Salience tells how aware people are to the existence of the brand. If the brand is not known, then it is hard for people to create opinions about it. Brand awareness is the foundation of the pyramid as it holds the weight of the other layers.

Performance covers the functions of the product or service. How good it is and what customers think of it, as well as the price, quality etc.

Imagery states what values are added to the customer when they buy the product or service and how human is the brand through the customers eyes.

Judgements refers to the opinions of customers which are made up from the overall quality and perceived quality, the superiority of the brand to competitors, the credibility and the brands reputation, and consideration of the brands relevancy.

Feelings describe 6 emotions or feelings that should captivate the customer. These are Fun, warmth, excitement, security, self-respect, and social approval. These may not touch every

customer all at once, but companies should aim to make their brand focus on one. Positivity is beneficial.

Resonance illustrates the top place that a brand can aim for. It is when customers are attached to the brand, they are loyal, they are advocates and spread the word to others creating new customers. They feel a sense of community and are actively engaged in the brand. (Hawker. K, 2019.)

Keller, K, I. Lessons and building strong brands (2018) featured on YouTube refers to that the brand represents a product or a service and what the brand is makes the company special, the brand is what makes the company distinctive and differentiated. Keller (2018) suggests that brands should not become a commodity where the company is competing on price alone, this shows that there is really nothing special about the product or service, so the idea is to differentiate the brand, whereby the company can collect the benefits of it. Keller (2018) also states that there are a lot of brands out there and even though there are many brands not all of them are strong brands, so this fundamentally comes back to that notion that for a company to create a strong brand then the aim is to creating awareness, differentiation and distinctiveness. (Keller, K, I. 2018.)

The writer agrees with Keller's statement and Kitty's Milkshake Bar has aimed to differentiate itself from others by using the storytelling strategy. The writer's opinion is that not many other brands in the food/restaurant industry, especially in Helsinki region use stories to communicate their brand message. The writer hoped that by creating a story to present to their customers, it would create a stronger awareness of kitty's brand in the long run and will allow the company to create more storytelling videos or scripts in future months.

Brand loyalty is referred to by Keller (2018) as a promise to the customer or supplier. A strong brand reduces risk and sets expectations. If the customer buys into a particular brand they are fundamentally assured that they will receive in return, the same benefits and performance that they know is predictable to them. Keller (2018) indicates that it may be predictably unpredictable but it's still predictable and that's important as it makes consumers lives easier because they do not have to spend time deciding what brand to choose from. In turn by not having a predictable brand then customer loyalty could never be developed. Loyalty is made from a promise that is made non-verbally between the two parties, and for as long as the brand can deliver on a promise and fulfills the expectations of the consumer, then loyalty will remain. (Keller, K, I. 2018.)

The writer felt that the story needed to tap into the decisions that customers make and the emotional pull that they feel when they're buying a product, hence why they all gathered in the video forming a conclusion. Keller (2018) also explains how brands and emotions are at the heart

of the customers buying decision and that there's a rational part to the decisions that consumers make and there's an emotional part also to why they buy. The best brands make sure that they tap into both aspects. People make rational or sometimes irrational decisions using the head whilst at the same time the brand is more at the heart and emotions of the customer. At the heart of a strong brand are great products and services, and a great product or service is the key to having a great brand that creates value for the business and for the customers. Strong branding also has an internal face as it can motivate and engage employees who work there and want to work there. (Keller, K. I. 2018) Kitty's Milkshake Bar has found this statement to be accurate because employees refer new employees and cultures are formed from friendships made, this has been happening within the two bars for some time now.

Brand personality was discussed in the 12 steps of brands and was discussed briefly by the writer that emphasised Kitty's Milkshake Bar is a developing human entity. (Rodriguez 2020, 80) refers to this statement that a brand is a human entity. It is perceived by the customer and the employees as such. When you can look beyond the corporate face of a company and accept it as human driven, then there is more room to accept its imperfections and forgive its mistakes. Stories of failure inspire the most powerful individuals to rise-up and do better. Failure, although being a negative aspect for a brand, can also be positive at the same time. Failure can be an innovative way to reach the audience because it is something that triggers the emotions of every human being, because ultimately it is elaborating on the arduous journey that was taken to reach the point of failure and the hard lessons that were met. Of course, failure is not the main goal of any company when they start out, nobody is starting a company to fail but if the failures are small and manageable then it can show that the brand has a certain resilience and strength to succeed. Kitty's Milkshake Bar has been through its ups and downs in its 6 years history; however, the founders have learnt that every failure is something to be learnt or developed. Furthermore, Rodriguez (2020) states that seeing your brand as human is giving your brand permission to tell the brand story from its most authentic and raw origin. In other words, it is easier to reach out to people when they can relate to the brand and is adapting a human approach, with this the brand is free to tell its story as it wishes. (Rodriguez, M. 2020, 80)

The writer knows that being vulnerable in business is a frightening idea to many people as it leads to so much misinterpretation and can put the business at risk or in a weakened position. There is a risk when a company is being vulnerable that the results could be that the brand is attacked and exposed to negativity and therefore the risk should always be calculated whether to choose to create this vulnerability in the company's business marketing plan. Being vulnerable must be defined from the start and there needs to be a defined set of rules as to what being vulnerable means to the brand as well as the level of vulnerability that the brand is willing to convey to its

audience. Whatever these vulnerability boundaries are, they need to be discussed and researched in the marketing and communications department beforehand and planning needs to be made in case of a crisis occurs. The writer summarizes that the brand story should identify the key messages that needs to be shared and detailing the stories and subjects that the brand may not be comfortable disclosing or acknowledging as part of its story narrative. In addition to this it is very important to set up data monitoring systems that can help you monitor the customer engagement as well as the overall impact once the story is launched to see how popular or unpopular the content may be.

In conclusion to this chapter, the video that the writer created on how to communicate his brand to his potential audience was influenced by the 12 steps that was researched as well as taken into consideration the human approach of the brand and the emotional pull that customers feel when they are purchasing. This chapter has been helpful for the writer to gain deeper insights into brands and the correct methods of how they are portrayed to its audience.

3.2 The definition of storytelling and how stories can affect

This next subchapter is important because it builds on the previous chapter about branding and communicating the brand message to its customers. Storytelling is obviously the main tool that the writer wants to research and furthermore found it to be important to include some definitions of storytelling to help the reader to understand how stories can emotionally tap into customer's psyche. it is fundamentally part of the buying process that the customer goes through, as well as the brand attachment, brand loyalty that they feel during their life cycle with the brand. The Definition of a story has been referred to as:

“A story provides packets of sensory language presented in a particular way that allows the listener to quickly and easily internalise the material, comprehend it and create meaning from its quotation” (Dietz, K. 2014, 13.)

This definition tells that a story can be full of information, but it is good to allow freedom for the listener to make up their own conclusions and ideas what they derive from it. A story has many sides to it, and this means one person will understand the story differently from another and connect different connotations and meanings to it. Thus, the story that the writer has told may not convey or resonate with everyone.

Dietz (2014) continues to explain that stories are experiences. Joseph pine and James Gilmore authors of the book titled the experience economy, explain that every business must change its shift of thinking from the future being customer centric, customer driven, to one that represents experiences being the next major economic output for businesses. (Dietz, K. 2014, 14-15.) McKee

& Gerace (2018, 49) describes stories as ambiguous at its best. A story like art and music is a word you think you understand but you cannot exactly define it into words.

The authors do not believe that a story is a process, they state that a story is not a hierarchy or a chronology, it's also not a journey and it's not a narrative. They define a story as a:

“Dynamic escalation of conflict driven events that cause meaningful change in a character’s life” (McKee & al. 2018, 49).

The quote leads the writer to understand that McKee & al. (2018) is referring that a story is told through the pain, joy, struggles that someone has gone through, however the writer thinks that for a person to resonate with this type of story the listener also needs to have lived through similar experiences. Some people just like listening to stories that interest them, and it doesn't have to be relating to change that happened in someone's life for them to do so. In terms of the quote creating change in a person's life, this could relate to memory building, which the writer thinks are important to harness when telling stories. Dietz (2014, 11) explains that a buyer will perceive greater value when they have an experience lodged in their memory. Stories when crafted well can be transformational. (Dietz, K. 2014. P11) According to Dietz, K. (2014, 14-15) there are ways in which a story can impact a person, and these are explained below in these 3 key physiological impacts.

The physical impact of stories is when a story is so good, people will stop doing what they're doing, stop talking, sit forward and start taking notes. Many people also put down their electronic devices and they listen intently to what the other person is telling them. At the end, if it's been a really good story they will stand up and clap and sometimes even cry. Whatever motion that the audience is going through it shows deeper listening at that exact moment. (Dietz, K. 2014, 14-15.)

The mental impact. Meaning can only be made from when the listener of the story connects with the storyteller and can relate the story to the listeners memories and past experiences. If this is not present, then the listener will likely be distracted and thinking of other things than what the storyteller is trying to say. The mental impact is a deeper impact of listening and connecting memories with the current story being told. (Dietz, K. 2014, 14-15.)

The emotional impact. The left side of the brain is where humans store all the data, language, and logic. The right side of your brain is the creative side, and it is here where the imagination, dreams, and emotions lie. However, when the right side of the brain path is stimulated then the listener can become immediately engaged as this side of the brain is connected to the limbic, the emotional system. (Dietz, K. 2014, 14-15)

These explanations about how a story can influence a person was helpful to the writer because it allowed the writer to understand better the psychology of the listener when they hear a story, thus, the writer was able to create a brand story message that would somehow incorporate the physical, mental, and emotional aspects into the story that was told.

3.3 Storytelling in business and its elements

This next subchapter explains how businesses use storytelling as a tool to communicate their brand to their customers. This is an important chapter as it gives a more in-depth idea as to how companies are using storytelling. The research helped the creative process that the writer went through when he was deciding what route the story would take for the brand. Upon reading the literature the writer decided that the story for Kitty's Milkshake Bar would aim to tap into a deep emotional connection with the audience, using various customer segments whilst maintaining a humanistic approach, which tackles the issue of loneliness and then creates a feeling of safety, customer loyalty and potential togetherness.

The story directed at the audience provides them with a reflective ending that makes the customer ponder. Stories in a business context can help larger brands to connect with customers in a deeper and more meaningful way. Businesses want to connect with customers this way because by making a brand more personal to the customer they are more likely to choose that brand over others. This type of brand communication may explain to the customer why they should choose the brand over their competitors. The story can include many factors that could influence the customer to make the choice of that brand over another, such as; the values of the company, the morals that the business has and how it reflects those, the story and growth, but moreover a story helps the business to connect with the customer on a deeper more emotional level and shows the customers that the business is much more than just a cold entity without personality. Storytelling can make a company seem more human if it is done correctly. (Indeed editorial team. 2021.)

One definition of storytelling in businesses is characterized as; an effective communication tool that allows brands to connect with customers. Storytelling in business is the process of telling a story rather than just giving the audience a list of facts when the brand is trying to communicate with the customer. (Indeed editorial team. 2021.)

“A storytelling organisation is defined as a collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members sensemaking and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory.” (Boje. D, M. 2008, 1-5, 173.)

Boje (2008, 173) suggests that people and organizations make sense of the world via a narrative and a story. Stories are more about the dispersion of events in the present or anticipated which are

to be achievable in the future. From a business point of view, he suggests that the the biggest obvious companies such Nike, Disney, McDonald's, and Walmart are storytelling organisations, but even small local businesses such as a local hardware store all share the same thing, they all live and die by the narratives and the stories that they tell. Boje (2008, 173) summarizes that storytelling is defined as a continuous behavior of getting the story realized. it's about getting others to take roles and parts in either a managed or directed story or one that is emergent or collectively in-acted.

There are many ways in which a story can be told but telling the right story is challenging. Storytelling is a tool that can be used to convey a brand message to a specific target audience and because it's a brand there is at risk from the story being misinterpreted as discussed earlier. Below are a few things to help the reader to understand the main points according to Indeed editorial team (2021) make a good story and these points below could help the reader on their way with the challenge at hand.

Determine your audience. The first step is to determine who the audience is and what their characteristics are. This point is important because by not knowing the customer that is being targeted then the company will be wandering around in the dark with what story they need to tell. Each customer segment group needs to be carefully analyzed as to how they would interpret the story. The bottlenecks of the customer segment should be forecasted in advance that would block the success with that target group. A good way to do this is to make an empathy map. Empathy mapping will determine what the segment sees, thinks, feels, and can help to know the customer segment better. The company also should endeavor to understand why they want to tell a story and what will be the benefits. Are they looking to perhaps expand their audience? in this case the company needs to find out who their customer is or whom their customer could potentially be in the future. The empathy map creates a customer profile and persona by which the company can be guided by. By creating customer segments and then customer profiles there is more knowledge in where to publish the story and in which medias they should use to reach the targeted customers that have profiled. (Indeed editorial team, 2021.)

Fine-tune your message. Once the audience or customer segments are determined the company can then start to draft the message that they want to communicate. The story could be one of morals or ethics, or it could be a problem in the company that has been solved. It might be as discussed earlier a story that wants to try and patch up any negative press that has surrounded it or finally a new company that wishes to showcase its raw creativity. (Indeed editorial team, 2021.) In the case of Kitty's Milkshake Bar which is looking to expand their audience the message chosen was carefully planned for some months and was chosen because of the humanistic element. Once

the message has been fine-tuned then it is important to know how the message is going to connect with the readers emotions.

Choose a hero. A good hero in a story is the person or even the product that everybody can relate to. This is the person that in the story will connect the bridge to the company and the customer. The hero needs to be created in a way that reflects the lives of the customers that the company is targeting. The hero is meant to be something that somebody can connect to and relate to, even when there is conflict and possibly drama in the story this person or product will bring everything together and connect with the customer by solving the problem they have and creating an emotion. The customer will either fall in love with the hero and remember them, or then the hero will be forgotten and will not leave its mark where it was supposed to. (Indeed editorial team, 2021.)

Draft your story. Once all the details have been established in the story it is then time to draft it. It is suggested that with any story it is carefully planned to create the buzz, drama or punch that makes someone emotional in some way or another. Editing here is vital to get the message out correctly. Editing needs to be done and the ideas need to be fine-tuned before presenting. Without careful planning and editing then the wrong message could be conveyed. All emotions should be put aside from the creator of the story, and they should step back and look at it from the viewpoint of the company and the customer. No story should ever be written in a hurry or with prejudice or a feeling of negativity. (Indeed editorial team, 2021.)

A useful article that helped the writer to get the idea for the story that he wanted to showcase, threw some questions at him, which made him think of the angle the story would tell. Telling the brand story is more than just putting a story with a few dates on a timeline on a website. Brand storytelling needs to be a major differentiator that sets apart the competition and compels the customers to come to visit. If a good story is successful investors also may want to partner up. (Durant. J, 2022.)

Revealing your history draws the target audience in and reflects the values of the company. The focus is primarily on the customer and how they have driven the business forward. This is important as it shows the customer that they are at centre of the business. (Durant, 2022.)

Showcasing the founders. Showcasing the founders puts a human face behind a corporate curtain, it simply makes the brand more tangible, something the customers feel is more human. Many companies once they are too big loose this personal touch, so showing who created grew the company more often or not can prove to be an interesting story. (Durant, 2022.)

Building a timeline. Highlight events that the company has been accomplished in is also a way to tell the companies brand story. It is a success or rags to riches story that everyone loves to hear. (Durant, 2022.)

Turn to your customers. By focusing on the customer's needs and providing them with a solution is one of the best ways to highlight the brand story. The writer agrees with this and uses a few points about the values of kitty's milkshake bar, and how they positively impact the customers in his brand story. There have also been some conversations with customers that Kitty's Milkshake Bar is a place that people visit when they want to reward themselves or cheer themselves up, providing them with a small moment of indulgence. The questions that the writer asked himself was what are the problems that need to be solved, what specific cases have impacted customers and what values positively influence the customers. (Durant, 2022.)

Feature your employees. Employees are the cogs of a business. They represent the face and are the first ones to greet the customer and provide them with either a positive experience or not. It is very good to introduce the employees to the customers and many are interested of the atmosphere in which the workers are in, the day in a life of a worker is also quite a relevant story, that also can improve recruitment possibility and create culture. (Durant, 2022.)

Leeman and Zorfas ((2016) refer that emotion needs to be added to make a good story. They argue that emotionally connected customers generate more value to the company and through every interaction that they have they are more and more convinced that the company understands them. Leeman, D. Zorfas, A, 2016.)

HubSpot editorial team (2021) also agree with Leeman and Zorfas and say that emotional marketing creates great first impressions. Furthermore, the article highlights 4 characteristics of emotion, and the writer thought that this was useful to include in this section because it stresses the important element of how the feeling or emotion can affect the audience if used in a story.

Happiness makes people share. HubSpot explains that happiness and sharing leads to increased brand awareness. Good news travels fast on social media than any other content and they believe that when a person is happy people tend to mirror the emotion and want to share what it was that made the other person happy. The writer believes that this could be because the other person is also searching for what that person is looking for, everyone wants to be happy. **Sadness makes people emphasise and connect.** Empathy is a strong word that can lead others to act, it is a motivation to inspire and help people which manifests into giving. **Surprise and fear** will make people feel that they need to cling on to something comfortable. If the customer is loyal to the brand, then this is positive because this will lead to increased brand loyalty. Any amount of fear that is associated with the brand or in this case included in a story, may put people buying in the

opposite direction from what the story intended. **Anger and passion** create stubbornness, which can lead to viral content and loyal followers. Anger and passion can cause people to share content based on their feelings about the subject, there is often a political agenda predominantly when people are sharing content based on anger and passion, however this is risky and could put the company's reputation at risk. (HubSpot editorial team. 2021.)

3.4 The process of creating a brand story for Kitty's Milkshake bar

This next subchapter explains the relevant theory that helped the writer to come to the idea and point of the story for Kitty's Milkshake Bar. It introduces another model called the story arc, which follows a set of questions that prompt the storyteller to think of when developing the brand story.

Hall (2019, 21-27) refers to storytelling processes being highly creative and that when the reader tells the story, the listener takes in the words of the story into their own mind and heart and creates their own narrative attached with their own emotions and images that they have of it. Some stories may not resonate with everyone, and other stories could be so deeply personal that a person can lose themselves in it. When a person loses themselves in a story there is a blurred line between what the message is, and the what the recipient interprets it is. The person who is listening to the story at that point loses themselves in their immediate surroundings which is referred to by Hall (2019, 21-27) as captivation. The more that the story relates to them the more that they can put their own perspectives and adopt the message that is being told. Of course, once a company is successful in doing this, then the influence that the company or brand has on the customer will guarantee that the effects are long lasting. (Hall, K. 2019, 21-27.)

Hall (2019, 8-9) describes that there is a need to bridge gaps. **Bridging gaps** is referred to as when a business is successfully able to deliver value to the people around it. The value of product or service that ends up with the consumer quite often or not isn't being delivered as it should be. The obstacles that come with delivering value to the customer is finding out, will people buy it and how to attract new customers and retain them. Hall (2019, 8-9) states that bridging gaps is the space between what the company wants and where they are. This means it is the void between the customer and the business at that moment. It is the instant where a customer is standing in front of that company's product compared to another competitors, and in that split second the customer makes a choice between them. Successful businesses can bridge the gap better than others and connect, create, sell, and build better than anyone else, so to bridge the gap the company needs to start building the bridge to start with. (Hall, K. 2019, 8-9.)

The best bridge that will successfully link the company to the consumer are the ones that tend to captivate the audience. These are the bridges that let the customer know that the product is there,

however the word captivating here is vital because without drawing the attention of the customer then it's just another product that is available on the market, and if it doesn't stand out or captivate then it will get lost in a sea of similar products. **The second bridge** Hall (2019, 8-9) refers to is that a company can implement their own desires on to the customer and influence them and steer them in a direction that they want them to go in. **The third bridge** is one where consistency is key to building trust. The product or service needs to be the same every time, as Keller (2018) referred to it as unpredictably predictable. This creates lasting memories and leaves the audience in a changed frame of mind that they would not even consider buying another product from a competitor unless the product or the service dramatically changes and does not meet their expectations anymore. (Hall, K. 2019, 8-9.)

Hall (2019, 8-9) states that many businesses are not focusing on the correct things. Many companies are too interested in just talking at people, somewhat like a bad salesman, and not actually connecting with the customer or creating these bridges to find out what they really want. The bridges that they think they've built have no substance and can fall at any time. A company who preaches its missions and ideas to its employees might think that they're being a responsible company, however if what the company is communicating with their employees are not resonating with them then it shows that they are not really understanding what they want. However, the reality is that people are not glued to companies and people are complicated with sets of desires and emotions and loyalty can be taken away in a second. The next best opportunity could be around the corner for someone, a better product may have already been introduced, so at least to retain some loyalty from customers the gaps in bridges need to be closed by the company to the customer which allows the customer to create their own special experiences through the product or service. Creating memories and creating potential long-term loyalty. (Hall. K, 2019, 8-9.)

The writer has so far shown in the theoretical framework that stories in business are important in many various ways to a brand. Stories are not just individual islands on their own and stories can turn into brands. Not all stories need to be told all the time but there is an incredible place for it in advertising marketing. There is still a vast amount of room for improvement. The next part highlights the process of the story and how Hall (2019, 48) refers to as.

Normal. A bad story will often leave people indifferent, not caring and will not make them invest into it. Something that is bad generally spells the message to the company that the audience does not care. It really doesn't matter how big the budget is spent on the story or how expensive the marketing department can make it look, if the audience is not connecting with it then they cannot make the customer invest emotionally. The company can make sure that they create an emotional connection by starting off with the **normal**. This means that a little bit more time is taken, which

includes key components of a story creating a sense of familiarity for the audience. Like a book the story is drawing the reader in to what they may be familiar with. In essence if it's a good story the audience will put themselves into the characters shoes. If this is done correctly then the audience will understand how the person feels that is being portrayed in the story, it is where the audience is given a reason to care about why the company is doing what they are doing and most importantly go and buy the product. (Hall. K, 2019, 48.)

For this example, the writer used 4 customer types, that are living normal daily existences. The writer wanted to highlight the normality of these people and the emotions that they feel as part of everyday life. The theme of loneliness was expressed throughout the Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand story to draw the audience in to the feeling and to get them to care about what the writer was trying to convey in the message.

Explosion. The explosion although somewhat of an aggressive word does not mean this case of violence or sorrow in your story. It is simply the motion of happening. It is the moment in every story that something changes, and the audience sits up and listens. Their heartbeat starts racing a bit. It is the moment that the audience realizes that's something either good or bad will develop into something else. (Hall. K, 2019, 49.) This part was emphasised in the Kitty's brand story when the people came together in the same place.

New normal. The last final phase is called the new normal. This is what the audience sees and hears. This could be like the aftermath of a storm, the change sets in and tells the audience how things have changed and what it will look like in the future. There is often sometimes regret, relief, knowledge gained or a new sense of belief and understanding. Quite often the business message at the end of the story will have a call to action that the customer can follow through, this may be a slogan, the brands name, or the locations to visit. Therefore, from a business point of view, storytelling is essential to convey a point and enhance the strategic message to the audience. (Hall, K, 2019, 49-50.)

This part was conveyed to the audience by the writer in the Kitty's brand story by highlighting the point of togetherness, which all the customers experienced at the same time. After the gloom there is sunshine so to speak. The new normal underlined that there was a sense of belonging in the brand, and that customers were able to enjoy themselves and relax, perhaps forget their worries, and feel better about themselves.

Signorelli (2014, 64-69) refers to the story branding process as analogous, almost like a component line in a factory that assembles the brand story together. These components once rolled off the assembling line is either a success or a failure depending on how well the parts

combine to create the basis for the brand story. He refers that the first step to do in creating a well-engineered story is to collect a back story, Signorelli (2014, 64-69) describes this as a **situation analysis**. The back story should identify problems and opportunities that must be taken into consideration whilst the story is unfolding. The next step is to **characterise the brand**. The author states like others that a hero should be chosen as part of the story. One of the key challenges in this planning process is that the marketers need to understand how the hero should be portrayed to the audience. The story branding process will start by putting the brand and not the prospect, which is referred to as the customer's needs, under a microscope.

Characterising the brand starts by analysing the brands strengths and weaknesses as well as the values and beliefs. At this point customer research also needs to be made as so to match their expectations. Once the brand is fully characterized then the prospects also need to be characterised. This is what he refers to as segmentation targeting profiling. which will be explained later in this chapter. The next step is to connect to the characters. The characters in this case mean the brand and the prospect, this is an important element of the process because they need to be connected, like Hall (2019) explains by creating a bridge between the brand and the customer. Signorelli (2014, 64-69) states that to create a connection a functional need for the customer should be driven through its product features and benefits.

Confront the obstacles tells that the company is analysing the bottlenecks that may occur that as discussed earlier may hinder the stories success in some way. By prioritising the obstacles that are keeping the brand from achieving full potential it can be combated by creating a good **story brief**. The story brief outlines the entire brand story the obstacles that the brand has and how to overcome this with the prospect. Signorelli (2014, 64-69) also describes that the last element of this is to **define the brands unique value proposition**, which goes in line with the values and beliefs that the brand should be associated with and wants the customer to see. (Signorelli, J. 2014, 64-69.)

McKee & al. (2018, 49-54) criticises that a story is not a process, in stark contrast to Signorelli (2014) statement about a story being like a convey about of moving parts. McKee & al. disagree with this, and they state that a story being a process is a horizontal process. They refer that a process has neither a desire nor a conflict or a core character and because of this they state that nobody's life is touched or changed from it. The authors write that a process accumulates whilst a story should progress. A story is not a hierarchy, and the story should reflect how decisions are made and how things get done in the company. It is also not a chronology. The authors reflect that a story should not just recite the company's history as this is just another process. A story is not a journey either as a well told story cannot be a passive passenger struggling dramatically through

time and space to fulfil their desires. Finally, they explain that a story is not a narrative, and all stories are narrative but not all narratives stories. Narratives tend to be flat and repetitive and reflect on events that have happened, and these have no real influence or persuasion over customers. Stories however are value-charged and progressive, they believe that the mind grabs a good story like Dietz (2014) states in the emotional and mental impact that a story has on a person, the story excites and persuades. (McKee, R. 2014, 49-54.)

McKee & al. (2018) explains their eight stages of story design, note that they do not use the word process. Stage one, they refer that the target audience needs to have a **meaningful emotional effect**. Stage 2 is regarding the subject matter, the company's **core values**, the protagonist's life is anchored in the core value that rests in a state of stability. Stage 3 is **upsetting the balance** of the character (the protagonist) and this change of its core value turns either positively or negatively. This could be an unfortunate side effect or some scale of impact that creates conflict within the main character. Stage 4 the **object of desire**. This is when the character wants to set their life back on balance again, and to do so the character creates an object of desire. This could be a group of people that represent something positive, or a product, a service or even a feeling. Stage 5 the **first action**. It is at this point the core character needs to take an action or a tactic that causes a positive reaction. Stage six the **first reaction**. It is at this point that the core character creates a gap between what he thought would happen and what happens, this end knocks him back to steps from where he wants to regain balance. Stage 7 **the crisis choice**. The protagonist stands to lose rather than gain his object of desire, so he learns from what he did wrong in the first reaction and creates a **second action** that could be more difficult and even more risky than the first, but the protagonist is still hoping that it will finally get them what they want. Stage 8 **climatic reaction**. The second action causes a climatic reaction that matches expectations and the object of desire. The climax that is created from this story goes back to the beginning to create harmony and balance in the protagonist. (McKee, R. Gerace, T. 2014, 49-54.)

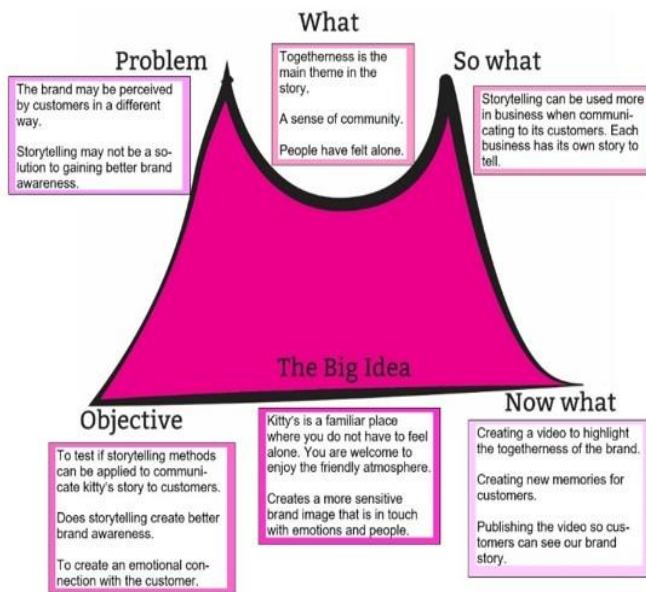


Figure 2: The story arc. Modified from marketing insider group 2019. How to connect with your audience on an emotional level.

The story arc was selected by the writer because he needed a process to put the brand story together. The model points out certain points to influence where and what to think about when trying to compile the story together. The model can be looked at in 2 ways, the 1st way is the points of logic in creating a storyline and the 2nd is like an empathy map by asking questions and relating them to the customers emotions and possible thought process while listening or viewing the story. and most importantly why he is presenting it to the targeted audience of his brand. The first point the **objective** tells what goal needs to be achieved or what question would he like to be answered for his brand. The second point stressed an important point, which is **the problem**, for example, a lack of brand awareness outside of Kitty's Milkshake Bar. Thirdly of **what**, is pointing out the point of the story. It is the key element that the audience will take with them and the main lesson that the story told them. Forth **so what** refers to why this is important for the brand, and what makes this learning so important for the customer. Fifth **now what** guides the storyteller/writer to think how they can use it and harness this learning and what methods they use, or who are they targeting to reach this message. Finally, the next point that sums up the whole arc is **the big idea**. This rounds up all the different points together and will narrowly focus into what is the one thing that the audience should remember from the brand story. (Marketing Insider group. 2019.)

3.5 Benefits and criticism of storytelling in business

This subchapter explains the benefits and some criticism of storytelling. There are many various articles about why storytelling is useful and many of them will repeat the same answers, however

the writer found a trend in these answers and decided to put the most important ones below so that the reader can decide for themselves if it is something that could benefit them or not. The writer believes if storytelling is done correctly then it can be a powerful tool to communicate the brand message across to new and existing customers. The points below however do not reflect on every company, or every customer and depending on how the story is told depends on the outcome and the results that it will generate. (Indeed editorial team. 2021.)

Fryer (2003) refers to one benefit of storytelling being that it **increases persuasion**. Fryer (2003) states that persuasion is the centrepiece of business activity. Customers need to be convinced by the company's products or services and despite this critical importance many companies and brands struggle with this. Quite often or not companies get lost in dry presentation slides or memos that do not seek to inspire or persuade. She refers that a part of a CEO's job is to motivate people to work for the best of their ability to increase company profits and telling a story to engage emotions is one of the best ways to persuade employees and customers. The best way to persuade people is to unite an idea and emotion together to create a compelling story, this will arouse the listener (Fryer, B. 2003.) and as Dietz (2014, 14) states the mental impact will ensue. However, telling a good story is not easy to do, but a well-planned and powerful story can persuade customers to buy into the brand.

As much as this thesis has highlighted the predominant benefits of storytelling thus far, it is fair to provide the reader some criticism that storytelling is not really that effective. Peterson (2016) states that many brands are telling the same stories and many buyers do not really care about those stories, or even about the brand. Peterson (2016) Criticises that buyers are having a hard enough time to understand their options nowadays as there is far more products competing in the market with almost new vendors appearing daily. He believes that the last thing that people want is to be bothered with an uninspiring and boring story. Customers want to know the straight facts about the product rather than the flowery poetic language of a story surrounding it. The customer wants to know the price, how it works and the quality of it. Peterson (2016) also refers that a brand should not highlight its story because the customer does not trust the brand enough to sit around the same campfire and listen to the same stories being told. He believes that all the messages and campaigns that are sent out to the customer is part of a single unified effort and that it should focus on technical details and value proposition. Emotions he agrees are however a positive aspect to impact upon the customer but that **a story are not about things, stories are things** and therefore they do not constitute being in a story. He further argues that a brand story is not a thing, it is however, in agreeance with Fryer (2003) more about persuasion. He believes that there are many false claims of brand storytelling and many dishonest portrayals. These portrayals can mislead customers and turn brands into ego factories. In his article he wants to debunk the statements that

he believes to be false such as: brand storytelling is more noble than regular marketing. For this statement he disagrees that **marketing your brand story is about persuading**, it doesn't make it anymore noble Than anything else, as ultimately it is trying to win the trust of the consumer.

(Peterson, A. 2016.)

Another statement Peterson (2016) disagrees with refers that; brand storytelling makes the product better. He refers to the statement that was remarked by head of content strategy at Pinterest. He believes that good content writing and strategy makes products seem better but at some point, throughout the buyers journey the customer must use or taste the product and decide whether or not it is **good for themselves**. Further statements include that, brand storytelling improves customer service. Peterson (2016) also criticises this as he believes trust and rapport are only apparent when the company **follows through on promises made**. If the company is giving the impression in the story that they have the best customer service, and in reality, they do not, then they are only raising expectations to disappoint. The same as with the product, if the company is selling a commodity which is useless, and they are portraying something amazing through their brand story, it sets the bar too high, and he believes that again it creates disappointment if the customer finds that the commodity is rubbish. The most important criticism for this thesis could be do buyers care about your brand story. Peterson (2016) disagrees in this because he believes that customers are not looking for a product which has the most emotional or fantastic story, they are looking for something that **meets their needs on a more fundamental level**. He also states that if you want to tell a story about the brand then the best way to do it is to tell stories based on the satisfied customers. He believes that the customers opinions matter more than the story itself.

(Peterson, A. 2016.)

Below listed are now the benefits of storytelling that comes from a few authors already mentioned in earlier chapters, which the writer felt were the most important points summarised from all the reading on the benefits of storytelling from his literature review.

Engaging customers and employees. Stories engage in a positive or in a negative way. When a person starts to read a book, within the first few pages the story will either be interesting or not, stories like books will either engage customers on a deeper level but if the person is not interested in the story, then they will quickly forget about it. It is not only the customers that can form a connection with the business through stories, also the employees of the company can do so as well. The employees when seeing the final product of the story like the customer can create a connection deeper and more meaningful than before with the company. The employees already have a certain connection with the company, through their working experience, which of course depending on many different factors will determine whether that connection is positive or negative.

This is too wide for the writer to go into however a good story told will help the employees to understand the softer side of the company, or the ethical moral message that the company is trying to tell, which could in turn help the employee to understand the company better and to feel proud of the company that they work for if the message is well received. (Indeed editorial team. 2021.)

Creating memories. Memories are powerful to the human being. Memories can often bring feelings of joy or feelings of sadness. Humans are complicated creatures and attach many individual emotions to memories, which is why no memory can ever be the same for another. The writer believes because of this that memory is so powerful, that any story told that the business tells could either have a positive, mediocre, or negative response from one individual to another. However, if done right and the story resonates with someone in a positive way then it will plant the seed so that the customer remembers the product, or the brand and they are most likely to become customers because of a single memory. If the potential customer watching does not have a good response and it triggers a negative memory, then the business is likely to never be visited by that person. (Indeed editorial team. 2021.) A good story resonates with people and if the customer creates an emotional connection to the company, then the seed has been planted. This means that like a seed it will grow in their mind the more that they think about it. It may be that they forget the story within minutes, like many do with today's information overload in media, however when the customer sees the product on the shelves or when they are walking by, they might suddenly remember the story that resonated with them and take action to buy. The longer that a person thinks of a product, or brand, the more likely they are to become a customer and then hopefully an advocate. Because stories resonate with people, they are more likely to create memories from their experiences (Indeed editorial team. 2021.)

Triggering emotions and feelings. When the customer feels triggered, they will then act. Emotions are more likely to encourage action. Emotions, like human beings are complicated and individual, emotions can be hard to read especially for companies who do not know the person. One size does not fit all when a company is trying to trigger emotions. The writer feels that this is a difficult tool to find the right emotion and is a task that takes a lot of planning and understanding who the customer is, to make the connection with them on an emotional level. Emotions like experiences can even put someone off to the point that they will never buy from the business again. Therefore, storytelling in business can be risky. However, risk if calculated correctly is something that a company sometimes needs to take to become more successful. The writer has understood that if an emotion or a feeling is triggered that is positive then this can be a new turning point for the customer and the company no matter how big or small the change is. (Indeed editorial team. 2021.)

Creating customer loyalty. Customers can become loyal to businesses that they have an emotional investment with. Stories that are told within businesses can communicate ideas to customers that can relate to the message in their own lives. If the customer can relate to the business or the product, then the customer is very likely to be an advocate to the business, thus in turn will also tell their friends about the company and making a stronger customer base within their circle. The customer can form an attachment to a product that the business sells especially if the product is something that can be brought online that the customer will not experience any unnecessary customer service. Customers can become loyal to products and services but not businesses. Storytelling gives businesses the opportunity to stand out against competitors by connecting with their audience. Stories allow them to leave lasting impressions. (Indeed editorial team, 2021.) The writer believes that customers become loyal to people or brands and not the company itself. This is because people run businesses and the business is a product of people. People are always in the forefront of a business, no matter what the business is.

Increasing website traffic. The writer believes a good story can leave people wanting to find out more from it. There are many great companies such as for example HubSpot, that are excellent examples of getting people to click on their emails. The emails that HubSpot send out are extremely intelligent because they leave a person wanting more and always give a free download or follow up on a call-to-action button. Their search engine optimization is keyword rich, and they make it easier for people to find their website through web searches. They link all stories that they have to other social media sites across the web, meaning that their stories really do increase website traffic.

Generating leads. Every business's main goal is to attract new clients or customers. By sharing stories or experiences often will lead people to have a better understanding about how the products and the service of the organization works, thus creating a need. TripAdvisor is a platform where people can relate their own experiences and stories via a review. There are many of these companies including Facebook and eat.fi that all have and an extensive list of written reviews from customers, giving their own experiences as to how they found the service, product, or the company. Based on these reviews people can decide whether they want to go there. It is always in the business's best interest to generate as many good stories as they can from their customers. (Dietz, K. 2014, 23-27.)

Creating a unique selling proposition. Stories are unique and can put the company at a real competitive advantage against their rivals, if the story is told well then, these stories can provide real world examples of how your organisation differs from its competitors. (Dietz, K. 2014, 23-27.)

Increasing sales. Stories help people to identify with the company and with their own problems which the company can then potentially then turn into a solution. (Dietz, K. 2014, 23-27.)

Generating donations and investments. This is a major opportunity for shareholders who want to increase funding for a project or a startup and who is looking to get their business off the ground. An interesting fact: the writer also used this method to try to fund his first business project, which was originally called Kitty's Diner. This failed mainly because the writer did not have enough experience in business to know that the story of the founders or the business idea was simply not compelling enough for investors to put any money towards it. Sharing stories gives people a reason to believe in, donate or invest in a company vision for the future. (Dietz, K. 2014, 23-27.)

Solidifying staff engagement. Stories about the team who work in the company can also build positive results and shared values. Sharing stories can inspire employees, from where the company has come from to where it's going, or a successful employee who was promoted, or even something bad that happened can create empathy and change between employees. (Dietz, K. 2014, 25)

3.6 Segmentation Targeting Profiling

This next chapter refers to the segmentation targeting profiling process, which has enabled the writer to understand how segmentation can help him to reach specific set of customers and use the correct tone of voice in the brand story. This is an important part of the thesis because it refers to one of the writers' sub-questions, who are Kitty's Milkshake Bars customers and why segmentation is important for companies who want to reach the correct set of customers for a specific reason.

Grigsby (2016, 19) suggests that the segmentation process is often the biggest analytical task that is organisation faces and is one that can potentially give more strategic insights than any other project that the company may have. He defines segmentation as a process of taxonomy, which means that it is a way to divide something into parts and a way to separate a market into sub-markets, which is also referred to as clustering or partitioning. A segment is defined as homogenous within and heterogeneous between. What this means is that a good segmentation will have all the customers or participants within one segment who are very similar to each, grouped for a particular reason, but also very dissimilar to all customers or participants of all other segments. Homogeneous means the same and heterogeneous means to be different. (Grigsby, M. 2016, 26-31.)

Grigsby (2016, 19-20) describe three typical uses of segmentation. 1. finding similar members, 2. making modelling better, 3. using marketing strategy to attack each segment differently. (Grigsby, M. 2016, 19-20.)

The writer wanted to find out in his research question who Kitty's Milkshake Bar's customers are and how do each segment chosen by the writer perceive the brand story of Kitty's Milkshake Bar. To identify customers in each segment the writer created an empathy map, which uses the customer type, demographics, age, style, buying habits, and what they think and feel. The segments in the empathy map are homogeneous but heterogeneous in their characteristics as referred to by Grigsby (2016). From a marketing point of view the reason that companies choose to segment customers into groups is because not everyone is alike and not all customers think or feel the same way as each other. People are unique from each other and there is no same type of person in the whole world, thus, segmentation is necessary as it groups people together easier with chosen similarities in mind. Dahlen, Lange & Smith (2010, 50,81-85) Considerable effort needs to be applied to learn what makes each behavioural segment a segment, and recognising that each customer has different sensitivities, which in turn causes them to behave differently, they are motivated differently. (Dahlen et al. 2010, 50.)

Segments can be explained like so, one segment may prefer convenient online shopping, the other segment may prefer to shop and buy their products in a store, so therefore communication needs to be different to each of these segments. In relation to Kitty's Milkshake Bar, older persons aged 50+ grouped in one segment could feel typical nostalgia when they visit Kitty's Milkshake Bar because it reminds them of the Valio Baari in the 1960s. Another group, for example mothers with children, may just be going there to treat their kids and have no emotional connection to it other than functionality. But it is not so clear cut as on the flip side an older person may be taking their grandchildren there for a treat and they have no nostalgia or feelings regarding the milkshake bar and a mother taking her kids there could be taking them there because she needs to treat herself and take a break for a while. Thus, customer segmentation requires complex and sophisticated solutions to do marketing as customer behaviour is extremely complex in its nature. But this is not to say it cannot be done well, many companies specialise in doing this well, for instant market research companies are pros in creating segments and small businesses can do this to a certain extent. Grouping customers together and creating a customer portfolio and persona can often help businesses to target the correct people in the right way. (Grigsby, M. 2016, 19-20.)

Dahlen. & al. (2010, 81-85) describe segmentation as a way to achieve market potential by using various criteria such as demographics, socio-geographics, psychographics, etc. However, they write that as far as marketing communications is concerned, the state of purchase readiness towards the brand maybe a more appropriate approach to focus on a particular category, so in this context it is best to focus on segments that are likely to buy or buy already from the brand. They define this as brand awareness and brand preference. Rossiter and Bellman (2005), specify that to

communicate with the target audience this needs to be done by segmenting specifically by brand loyalty before anything else. (Dahlen & al. 2010, 81-85.)

The writer however feels that by just targeting and segmenting customers who are loyal to the brand would not be useful for Kitty's Milkshake Bar in this context because a milkshake is not something that people specifically go out of their way to buy, it is more of an afterthought or on a whim, also brand awareness is very low still, so the sample to target and segment would still be very small. However, this was taken into consideration in the discussion focus group to find out how loyal the participants were to the brand, and the reason that the writer decided to include that question was because through loyal customers it is easier to communicate better, therefore communicating the brand story of Kitty's Milkshake Bar would be easier.

To communicate the brand correctly to the precise target groups the writer needed to understand the generational gaps and the differences that these group has between each other. Gobe, M. (2009, 2-27) depicts four major generation categories that or in the retail landscape. As the book Emotional Branding is from 2009 the text has been modified slightly by the writer to show the reader the exact ages of these groups as from 2022. Gobe (2009) refers to these groups as; **Baby boomers** these are now 58 to 76 years old, **Generation X** who are now 42 to 57 years old, **Generation Y (Millennials)** who are now 26 to 41 years old, **Gen Z** who are 10 to 25 and finally the **Alpha generation** who are born within the last few years of 2020-2022. (Gobe, 2009. 2-27)

For the **baby boomers** emotional branding is more than ever about comfort, reassurance and finding the best solutions for this group. This group responds to heroes, comfort, status, and achievements. They are an old school generation that had families younger and often stayed in the same workplace throughout their careers. They invested earlier in property and started families younger. **Generation X**. This group of individuals consider non-traditional approaches to be the best, the author describes them to be creative, earnest, and smart as well as extremely imaginative. This group responds to themselves reflected in images, smart messages, sarcasm, humour, luxury goods and mass market. They were on the edge of new technology development but still had a childhood without internet and computers. **Generation Y**. This is a fast speed generation that has a fast-moving lifestyle and quickly evolves into new things, they are tech savvy as they have been bought up using the internet and saw the beginnings of social media. They highly value new ideas, philosophy's, fun and learning, community feeling, multi-generational messages and multi-sensory experiences.

Generation Z (Millennials). Are interested in brands that can provide them with a set of values that they recognise, such as political alignment and values concerning gender for instance, veganism, environmental matters, war, and peace. They're highly tech savvy and use social media a lot to share their experiences, they are highly under the opinions of influencers and have large fan bases, this group wants to stand out and be heard. They are sociable and fun and love hanging out with friends. (Gobe M, 2009, 2-27.) **The alpha generation.** This group is still too young right now and not purchasing independently, however, this group of people are going to be the wealthiest generation, it's predicted that they will buy more sustainably than any other generation and they will also have an acute knowledge of the cyber and digital world. This group will likely have more money than any other generation due to the opportunities that they are given, and this generation is going to be very political and will be a global fluid generation that does not fit into categories or boxes. (Manderville J, 2022.)

Smith (2012, 108) describes one way that brands can segment customer types better, is to use the Pareto principle. The Pareto principle was developed so that brands can start with the easiest segment model that he believes is around today, this is the Pareto principal model. This model is useful and straight-forward in its simplicity, some companies find it too simple to be effective, but many companies have used this model successfully. What many companies have done is to characterise their potential buyer with a name and a picture of the person that they need to target, they have taken something abstract such as 'high potential shopper', and renamed it for instance 'Sarah', with her picture and her personality. Companies then create narratives to ask what 'Sarah' would think of this? you can then use the Pareto principal model to target Sarah and her personality type. (Smith, P. 2012, 108.) The rule of the Pareto principle states that for example 80% of the company's revenue is generated by 20% of its customers. Therefore, it is in the company's best interest to focus on 20% of the customers that are responsible for 80% of the revenues and market to them directly and specifically. By characterising this 20% customer type chosen with a name and a personality, it makes it easier for the company to target them as they know exactly who they are and what they think. By doing this Tardi (2022) refers that this will then create better customer loyalty retaining buyers and possibly acquire new customer segments with similar characteristics. (Tardi, C. 2022.)

It is also worth pointing out that women and men obviously think in different ways, possibly one of more emotional and the other might be more objective, but these typecasts cannot be written for everyone as of course everyone thinks differently and this day and age where gender is now flexible in modern society. (Gosurvey.2022) This is important to remember when segmenting customer types.

4. Research design and methodology

This chapter introduces the writers' methods that were used to attempt to reach the over-all questions and goals that this thesis embodies. The research methods that the writer has chosen will be discussed and defined what they were, and the reasons why they were suitable. Then the type of data research that will be used will be explained and how the data will be collected and by what means. The writer also considered how the project was carried out and supervised and because the thesis has been commissioned by the writer's own company the development method will be discussed according to the shareholders requirements. Source references will also be used to describe the methodology choices that the writer made throughout.

4

4.1 Methodological approach

The writer addresses what the research strategy is in this subchapter and will explain what approach he used. Dinnen (2020) refers to a research strategy as being a systematic plan of action that gives the writer a clear path to the thought process and effort that was made whilst conducting a thesis. This enables the writer to produce quality research and results that are also reliable and offers a detailed report that is focused and clear in its presentation. It is the fundamental basis for the research and describes the writer's rationale about how he conducted the thesis and tried to achieve the aim of answering the research questions that steers the final work. (Dinen J. 2020.)

The study aims to solve a specific **problem** in Kitty's Milkshake Bar which is a **lack of brand awareness**. The research that was undertaken in this study potentially may help to transform the company into a higher level of awareness using storytelling as a tool in marketing in the future. The customer remains firmly at the center of the research process throughout.

The thesis questions have led the writer to consider the correct approach that would benefit Kitty's Milkshake Bar and would allow a full response to the initial problem of brand awareness. At first the writer was unsure about which method of research strategy that he would adopt as the task did not give a clear direction to him as to what data he needed, but once the research question was formulated and a hypothesis was made in a more tangible way, the choice was made clearer for him. The study of kitty's Milkshake Bar became apparent to the writer that a new way of marketing the brand needed to be done to attract more customers, thus aiding the growth of the business. This study aims to achieve the insight into this new marketing tool that Kitty's Milkshake Bar has not yet developed but has been concentrating on during this study. The questions again for the

reader were, RQ: How to use storytelling in brand communication to enhance Kitty's Milkshake Bar's brand image.

SQ 1: What kind of story communicates Kitty's brand image?

SQ 2: Who are Kitty's Milkshake bar's customers?

SQ 3: How is the Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand perceived by the customers?

The strategy that was chosen is justified by the fact that the other founders in Kitty's Milkshake Bar have allowed the writer to develop a task using a specific method of marketing. The only approach that in this short time frame, with the resources at hand that the writer can use is that of a **case study research strategy**. Case study research strategy is defined by Yin (2018, 4) "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, R. 2018, 4)

Case studies work at their best when there is such a task to understand the organization and its inner workings and potentially solve a problem that it has been unable to work out. A case study pinpoints the problem. However, in other case studies that directs itself at the company it may be that nothing needs to change in a dramatic way, it might just be that additional ideas are needed to boost minor problems or weak signals that could occur later. Weak signals are trends that may or may not develop and possible major bottlenecks for a company, such as a threat of war etc. Therefore, case study analysis was the closest approach to this thesis work and the writer was able to narrow the task that needed to be solved using this strategy.

The characteristics of the case study should also be reflected on for the reader so that they can understand the benefits of using case study approach to this thesis. **Case Studies Characteristics** as stated by Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti (2022, 29-31) is a very typical research strategy for business and administration. They Justify that this research method is working when there is a pinpointed task that needs to develop. The case study method is used in real situations, at the workplace or in a working environment producing a full understanding and knowledge base on the specific issue on ground level that is malleable and can produce and mold change. The case study method begs for the 'how' and the 'why' rather than generic answers given. When used in a thesis a case study supports new knowledge that can potentially develop something further. The case study method allowed the writer to find the answers to the questions that he asked, if storytelling is useful for Kitty's Milkshake Bar or not and yielded further suggestions as to what could be a different comparative solution, if any. The case study brings to light any additional comments that customers have about the current marketing plan and opening potentially new

areas of development to consider. (Ojasalo & al. 2022, 29-31.) The writer was in a unique position as the subject company is one that is incredibly familiar to him, this made it very easy for the writer as he knew where to start looking to begin to solve the problem. Another advantage the writer had was that he created the brand so it is he knew all the customers as well as the brand inside out, so not too much prior research was necessary as it would have been if the writer were starting a case study from scratch and was commissioned to research another company that was unfamiliar to him.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research can be used in case studies. Quantitative data is valued in the forms of numbers or counts, this could for example be used when the video project is published online and will display the number of clicks and likes. Surveys and questionnaires also provide statistical analysis that can be controlled with quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected in the writer's discussion focus group survey and included some multiple-choice questions and some closed ended questions to gather rich raw data. Excel was used to create an online survey that was an easy tool in collecting quantitative data needed. The writer also asked the co-founders of kitty's Milkshake Bar their comments based on the video brand message that was presented to the customers.

Kaukonen (2021, 26) refers that quantitative or qualitative inquiry is opposite methods but should both be complementary together. Distinction between the two is needed and some primary questions will help to select between the two of them. A qualitative study is used when a real-life scenario needs to be analyzed which in the case of Kitty's Milkshake Bar customer feedback and free opinions were imperative to answer the research questions. The aim of using a qualitative study in research work is to be able to gather data rich opinions and expressions from a human voice which then potentially shows patterns that can be analyzed further to create solid conclusions. Kaukonen (2021,26) further suggests that qualitative study uses inductive analysis that can uncover unexpected results as it is analyzed in a holistic fashion. The study is deductive because it uses an existing theoretical framework as the aim to answer the writers research questions. (Kaukonen. L, 2021, 26.) As mentioned, a mix of quantitative and qualitative data was used in the development project. Qualitative data is also referred to by QuestionPro (2022) as a type of data that approximates and characterizes and can be recorded and observed. Focus groups and interviews especially are good examples of how to conduct qualitative research. This categorical data relies on the fluidity of words from others expressing and describing and does not include numeric values as quantitative data does. For the writer this type of data was needed when the video brand message was being viewed and reflected in the questionnaires open ended questions.

The data gains insight and motivation and can answer the research question in more detail than just using quantitative data alone. The case study approach also uses this data often in drawing influences and conclusions to a specific problem.

4.2 Data collection and sample

The timeline and steps of the data collection is presented in figure 4 and shows the reader the process that the writer went through. The literature review helped the writer to comprehend the most important information that could help him to answer the research questions. The term branding was vital to understand so that the writer was able to depict the most important elements of what a brand is, which helped in creating the tested brand message. Models were also used in the study, such as the Keller pyramid (1993) of creating brand equity and the story arc that was referred to by Marketing Insider group (2019) to ask the correct questions to receive the best raw data the writer could obtain. Empathy mapping was done as part of one the steps in the writer's empirical process. This helped the writer to deduce the customer segments that he wanted to use to convey the specific brand message to. The empathy maps were created by using the already existing knowledge that the writer had about his customer base as well as the theoretical framework on chapter 3.6 which explained about the segmentation targeting profiling.

The respondents for the focus discussion group were selected from a post that was advertised on Kitty's Milkshake bars official Facebook page, with a following of over 5000 people in Finland and beyond. The participants were therefore already customers or interested potential customers who had previously liked the page. Everyone who wanted to participate, and no set amount of people were limited to attend. The survey planning, focus group is discussed in chapters 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 and explains the rest of the steps not covered here in figure 4.

Type of Action	Goal	Date and timeline
Literature review	The writer uses this time to familiarize himself on the subject matter that is the focus of the thesis.	Conducted throughout November 2021 to April 2022
Creating the empathy map	The writer decides which customer segment that he will target in the brand message. This is done by creating empathy	Empathy mapping was first performed in Digital marketing Technologies in Haaga-Helia

	maps that steers him in the direction towards who the message will be presented to,	University of Applied Science and continued in January 2022.
Focus group	The writer will collect qualitative and quantitative data from customers.	Conducted on the 7 th of April 2022 at Iso Omena, Espoo.
Short questionnaires	The customers of Kitty's will answer a short survey in relation to the video. This will mostly gather quantitative data as multiple choice will be used.	Conducted during April 2022 for 1 week.
Interview of the founders	The companies' founders will be interviewed to gather their opinions. This form of data is qualitative, conclusion will be drawn to answer the research questions.	During April 2022 after all customer data has been obtained and analyzed.
Publicly published online	This is where the writer can monitor how popular the video project has been in terms of like, comments, and clicks.	Early April 2022, after the initial focus group is made as to keep the secrecy of the video so the participants have no pre perceptions of it. Thus, the data is richer in its nature.

Figure 3. Timeline and steps for the empirical part of the thesis. How the process, collecting and analysing the data was done.

One of the biggest ways in which the writer gathered raw data is through the video project that he wrote, directed, and produced with a team of amateur camera, editors, and actors. This was wholly inspired from the advert based on Juan and Sarah during the literature review – The Extra chewing gum advert, is an example of a successful storytelling advert and was highlighted to the writer by Hall (2019). The advert is a true example of how storytelling should be done and was a major success for Extra. The reason that the advert was such a success was because the advert was an excellent example of setting the story aside and separating it from the company. (Allie, E. 2015) Similarly, the video created the main part of the empirical process for this thesis. The writer believed after researching the theoretical framework that the focus should be more focused on story element and only give slight references to the Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand, as the brand was

not the predominant focus, rather the writer wanted to gather data regarding the opinions about the brand story being told and not too much about the actual brand itself, although of course the two went hand in hand somewhat. With brand communication in mind, the writer had to look at ways by which he could connect with his existing audience through creating bridges and attracting potential new customers.

4.3 Questionnaire planning for focus discussion group

A survey was created to gather mostly qualitative and some quantitative data from participants of the discussion focus group although the quantitative data required no statistical analysis from the writer.

For businesses, surveys are a useful tool because they provide a very fast and somewhat cost-effective way to gather qualitative and quantitative data. The response rate is increased by the respondent's commitment to the subject of the survey topic and to the brand in question. Surveys can produce a high rate of response because the respondents feel that they could be able to influence or suggest things that could make a difference to the company. Also, it is important to realise that people like to be heard and to voice their own opinions. In surveys responses are also high quality because the respondents can take their time which makes the data much richer in content. Another positive aspect about questionnaires is that there are no preconceptions to any answers from the writer or biased opinions, and what is written or answered from the participant is very black and white in its nature. (Spooner A. L, 2018)

The sample frame of the survey was targeted only on Iso Omena customers but the Facebook post advertising the event stretched out to everyone in the entire capital region, so the participants did not just come from Espoo region. One of the problems with collecting data from a survey on a specific business-based topic is that customers who are sampled may not be familiar with the business jargon of branding, so the survey needed to be made very clear as so that they were able to understand it and add their own viewpoints to the subject matter as-well. Another problem with this type of survey is that some customers may not have a keen interest in answering the survey properly or may not understand the concepts fully enough to give a full holistic answer.

The open and closed questions were put together by looking the theoretical framework especially using Keller's brand equity pyramid and the story arc that was featured in the Marketing insider group article. The writers process with this was to look at the models and take the important message and elements that he construed from the models, such as for example, asking an open question based on 'how people feel about the Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand', the writer connected this to the Imagery part of the pyramid from Keller (1992) that represents people's perceptions of

the brand. Other elements from the Story arc model were used in a question asking the respondents 'are there any problems in the marketing with Kitty's currently', which the writer connected to 'the problem part' featured in the story arc.

The survey was conducted quickly due to the writers limited study timeframe that was left, and the results were gathered and analyzed within 1 week of receiving them. The length of the questionnaire needed to be no longer than 30 minutes per person and 3 minutes estimated viewing time of the video. The survey included a part 1, which included open-ended questions that allowed raw qualitative data to be gathered and part 2 of the survey conducted using closed questions that gathered some quantitative data that was not statistically analyzed by the writer. There was no statistical analysis of this data because it was deemed pointless, and opinions were more important to the writer than statistics. Data analysis

The writer used a deductive approach when reviewing the qualitative data. To analyze the raw data properly the writer needed to transcribe the responses that were given in the focus discussion group from the open-ended questions on the survey that were recorded by the participants on their personal cell phones. The data was then analyzed by the writer and trends and patterns were deduced from the participants convergent and divergent thinking. The data was then transcribed to text format. The data was then organized into note form, the writer then proofread all the responses several times to understand the big picture, highlighting was used to formulate key words and these were presented in a cohesive manner.

The data for the online survey is provided by a template that Excel recommends for online surveys. The link and a QR code were shared to the participants who could access the survey on their smart phones. This survey results came from randomized samples that accessed the link from social media platforms, where the writer published it, such as LinkedIn and Facebook. A professor who was teaching a class in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and focusing their students to develop a brand loyalty program during the spring term of 2022 asked her students to fill in the survey online as-well. This however added responses from a class that was working to develop Kitty's Milkshake Bar and already gave them an idea about the brand in question, so this could have been somewhat biased in its nature.

The excel spreadsheet then formulated the results for the writer and presented the data in graphs that were easy to analyze by the writer and deduct conclusions. Keywords and trends were then analyzed by the writer and the results are presented in chapter 6 of findings.

The video project that was the reason the respondents gave the data was analyzed by the founders, the focus group participants, and the random samples of the online survey. The founders

were asked to give feedback based on the video content and message being portrayed to the customers and this is included in the discussion in chapter 7.

5. Implementation and outcomes

This chapter highlights how the writer implemented the ideas and gathered the data that created the overall outcome. This chapter is a conclusion of the theoretical framework gathered; as well as the conclusion of the methodological approach and research that the writer used.

5

5.1 The writers thought process in coming up with the brand story

The idea was to create and direct a video that would represent Kitty's brand story from the theoretical insight highlighted by Hall (2019). There were many ideas in which the direction of the story could take, so to group the ideas together the writer created a mind map below.

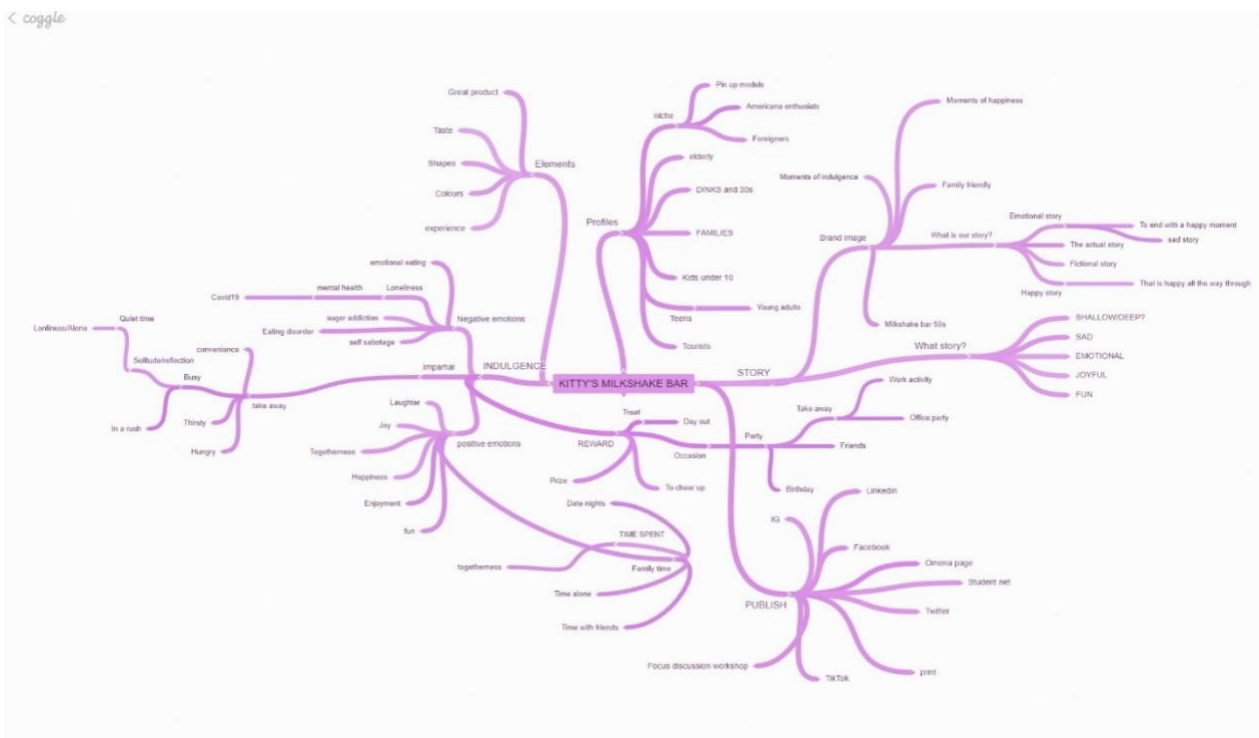


Figure 4. Mind map how the idea for the Kitty's brand story was created.

The mind map helped the writer to depict ideas that could be used in the storytelling video to represent the brand message. The writer met with Elina Tiainen a curator and art/film director to discuss in which angle the video could possibly take. From the theoretical research the writer knew that he had to come up with something that made people remember the story. For example, Indeed editorial team (2021) suggested to create a hero that solves the customers problems and creates an emotion. To reiterate again Lemon & al. (2016) said the emotion needs to be added to make a good story. They argued that emotionally connected customers generated more value to

the company and through every interaction that the customer has they are more and more convinced that the company understands them. In the writer's opinion many of the stories told that he had seen before were powerful in its nature or touched the heart like the Juan and Sarah advert. He took the emotion that he witnessed in the Juan and Sarah advert and applied this to his version of the brand story for Kitty's Milkshake Bar. 100% happiness in a story is unrealistic, even Disney movies for children feature a part where the hero gets in trouble, as life and stories are seldom 100% happy all the time. To reiterate HubSpot (2021) said that sadness makes people emphasise and connect.

The writer wanted the brand message to connect to the audience in a way that inspired a humanistic approach that Durant (2022) specified would be beneficial to add to a business story so that the customers see the company brand as holistic and relatable. Although Durant (2022) used employees as an example, the writer realised that he could use the targeted segments that he chose through research Segmentation Targeting Profiling in chapter 3.6. Empathy as HubSpot (2021) stated is a strong word that can lead others to act, it is a motivation to inspire and help people which manifests into giving. Therefore, based on the theory the writer had to develop something that could take a real element of people's lives and then create a moment of happiness at the end of the story. From the mind map it was clear that the story had to use some emotional storytelling to engage the audience as the milkshake bar in its nature is nostalgic.

The writer then thought back to the last 3 years through his time as an entrepreneur and the word 'loneliness' came up a few times on the mind map. During the covid19 pandemic the feeling was that many have felt isolated and shut off from the world, however the writer did not want to focus on the pandemic, rather on the aftermath and the effects of the pandemic on the customers. Thus, mental health was a strong idea, as the brand is service orientated and has always taken the interests of the customers into major consideration. The writer then realised that a story could come from real elements of daily life and then be a place where loneliness subsides, a happy place where people come together. The writer and Elina Tiainen found this theme to be relevant to today's emotions and has the potential to be powerful and well as touching to the heart.

Durant (2022) was stated earlier that it is important to focusing on the customer's needs and providing them with a solution. The thought process developed, and the writer wanted to embellish the lives of four individual STP characters and highlight the subtle emotion of loneliness. The theme of 'nobody is alone at kitty's Milkshake Bar' was inspired by the slogan that Kitty's Milkshake Bar uses 'a place where everyone knows your name and are always glad you came' which is the tag line from cheers! The TV show from the 80s. The writer realised that Kitty's Milkshake Bar to many is a happy place and somewhere that is familiar to them. The pandemic crisis of 2020 has

also made many people feel isolated and alone and this has been apparent in the lives of many customers, when reading back the Kitty's Facebook posts of 2020-2021. The act of being alone transcends to many individuals who feel a longing to come together. The 2-to-3-minute advert reflected four individual lives and snippet on a scenario of the individuals struggle and the writer hoped that the story could reign the audiences' emotions into how the fictitious characters felt.

Whilst there was an element of risk as Boje (2008) stated for the message to be misinterpreted and touching on such subjects such as mental health, the scenarios are life based, real life and real situations that people can relate to. This is what the writer hoped that the audience would see. The characters are based on our customer types, younger, older, teens etc and used the research from chapter 3.6 to categorise them into generations. The over-all message was not however about loneliness, it was in-fact the opposite. The actual message that the writer hoped to portray through the story was about; **coming together and feeling a sense of togetherness** at Kitty's Milkshake Bar – hence, nobody is alone at Kitty's Milkshake Bar being the main title of the brand message.

As stated, the writer had to characterise the script and use the STP process and target the customer groups that he thought this kind of message might appeal to. The mind map helped him to identify 4 key groups that may be eligible to focus on in the story. Older people, DINKS, Kids and Gen Z as well as Gen X's more younger adults. The groups were chosen because they represent the biggest customer slice that the milkshake bar attracts from the writer's own background knowledge from the brand. A story was then made up for each character and a different way by which they find the milkshake bar. Four people were chosen because the writer wanted to represent these customer groups to gain maximum brand awareness and making sure that each person in the segments had someone that could relate to them specifically.

5.2 Outcome for Kitty's Milkshake bar empathy mapping customer segments

This subchapter includes the implementation of the segmentation targeting profiling chapter, and the customer types that the writer was able to identify, that would answer the second sub-research question, **who are Kitty's Milkshake Bars customers?** The need to create an empathy map came from the need to understand who would benefit from the brand message and the storytelling tool to create brand awareness for the thesis now but more importantly for future projects in storytelling.

Empathy maps are referred to by Gibbons (2018) to establish customers' needs and desires. They are used by many UX designers who want to create a floorless design process for companies, however empathy mapping is also used to capture who the customer or persona is that is buying the products or services. They are a tool to make sense of qualitative research, for example survey

answers and interview transcripts. They are also a quick way to communicate a customer persona to others and create personas. They highlight the behaviours and attitudes and Gibbons (2018) states that they should act as a source of truth throughout projects, which protects against unfounded bias or assumptions. (Gibbons.S, 2018.) Some customer types may have been chosen over others, and some could have been left out entirely, based on the STP chapter and the answers the writer felt he received. Below are the thought processes and steps that the writer took to segment the groups. The reader should know that the writer created the brand, so he had a full background an idea already who the customers were, he just had to go deeper into the segment and create titles for them.

- The writer used his knowledge based on the typical customer types that visit Kitty's Milkshake Bar throughout its 6 years in business. Who are the types of customers that come to Kitty's Milkshake Bar and what do they look like?
- He grouped potential segments via likes and dislikes (a family for example why do they come to Kitty's Milkshake Bar?).
- What generation are they from? Should the segments be based on these?
- What do they need, what are their desires?
- Why do they need to see the brand message? How can they help to expand brand awareness?
- Figure out how the emotion, in this case loneliness and togetherness could affect each segment individually. Have any of them written anything on Kitty's social media about this emotion?
- Present an empathy map with the characteristics and explain how they think, feel the challenges of presenting this type of message to this segment and possible successes.

Some of his earlier empathy maps were included in the thesis and as a template to formulate new empathy maps which the reader can see below. It is important to highlight to the reader that these empathy maps created were **based on the audience that would resonate with the brand message**, and not the characters that were featured into the brand video, these are featured in the next chapter.



Figure 5. Empathy map for families and kids.

This group is very prominent in certain locations, such as a local residential area where a milkshake bar is out of the city center. This customer type is local and loyal and will enjoy coming once a month with their children to enjoy a special treat. The weekends are mostly when they can visit, and they have money to spend. The reason that this customer type was segmented is because they have felt an incredible hardship over the past two years that the Covid19 pandemic has been progressing, this group has mainly been coping with the pressures from working at home with the children who have not attended school, so this has been a difficult time for them all as the activities that they were doing was for a long time restricted. The pandemic may be getting less restricted now, and this group longs for the togetherness feeling with other people and families again. The message being communicated to them about togetherness may strike an emotion within them and bring joy that they are now able to work from the office, the children are going to school now and there is fun to be had in the outside world. This generation (the parents) are on Facebook, as that was fashionable in their time from 2005 to 2015 (when the gen Z were born) and Facebook is one of Kitty's Milkshakes Bars preferred media platforms and it is easy to share content between each other. On the flip side this customer group may not understand the story that was told, as it may not relate to their perception of what Kitty's Milkshake Bar is about.

Trendy★ Dinks and Teenagers aged 15+

Hears

Follows opinions of their friends and word of mouth.
Follows rules are well behaved people.
The next trend on TV or social media.
Music, loves TIKTOK, Snapchat.
Follows celebrities and their social channels.
Loves spending money and having money to dispose of.

Thinks & Feels

Loves going out with boyfriends or girlfriends.
Loves shopping normally, eating out, no kids, double income.
Is addicted to social media!
Loves sharing content! Loves blogging and vlogging!
Loves un-usual and trendy restaurants, local eateries.
Enjoys city life. Likes to be together.
Likes cooking for their girlfriend/boyfriend



Sees

Works in offices around the city.
Friends are online, chatting, video calling each other!
Loves quick YouTube videos, watches Netflix.
Offers and adverts from online shopping.
DINKS like to go out and shop at the weekends.
Teenagers and DINKS are out in the week with friends having lunches or hanging out after school.

Says & Does

They have money to spend, either from parents or high salaries from work.
They love hanging out with friends, enjoys trendy places, bars and clubs.
They are very loyal customers but if you displease them, they will go elsewhere especially teenagers
The teenagers are technology wise and are allowed screen time often.
DINK couples are interested to experiment with cool recipes.

Bottlenecks

People haven't recovered from the covid19 outbreak and still do not tend to go out. Parents who are too protective and want their kids to eat sugar free food. People who are having money issues right now and can't afford luxuries. Order food in at home. They can not relate to the video because they are not feeling lonely or does not need the feeling of togetherness.

Drivers and Successes

Will create a human approach and a face to the company and this group relates to that. They might see this advert as different but they will understand the over-all message being given. it might remind them of the Covid19 time and the time they were in lockdown, this give them energy and thoughts to go out and start doing things randomly now as the pandemic is over.

Figure 6. Empathy mapping for DINKS and Teenagers aged 16+

This group of customers has been linked together because they cover the age group from 15+ to mid late 20s early 30s. They are a strong customer group of Kitty's and contribute to much of the over-all generated sales. They are probably our main group that the company targets because of their savvy skills with social media and technology and that they have disposable income that they spend during weekends. The advantages of showing this group the brand message is that they will appreciate the humanistic approach and may understand the story that is being told, as this group of people are more sensitive with their emotions due to the day and age by which we live in. The message of togetherness is something that they could appreciate as this group is social and somewhat loyal to brands that they like, and they tend to look out for each other's wellbeing. They are also on social media platforms and will have no trouble seeing the media project and brand message, they just need to be on the right platform that they like to share, Facebook for this generation is not as popular as it is for generation X.

Older aged 50+

Thinks & Feels

They like to go out with their friends or partner in the daytime and browse around the stores. they have lunch in a coffee shop and then come to get some ice cream.

They enjoy ice cream its nostalgic to them.

They like to listen to 50s music and sit nearby.

Sometimes they feel lonely. Some are very active.

They enjoy simple but good quality.

Hears

They follow reputation of a business and service level. They are traditional in their loyalty and will not change unless they receive bad service. They follow the recommendations of others. They do not check reviews online unless it is something they need to do.



Sees

They see an opportunity to go out when it is sunny and enjoy a nice walk on their own, they see the local area and families coming out from daycare and school, they are seeing an opportunity to meet with their friends.

Says & Does

They have money to spend or then they are on a tighter budget due to pensions, depending on how their life situation has been. They are loyal customers and do not ask for too much in return except a good product and a warm friendly polite service. They will tell their friends if they like the place.

Bottlenecks

The only disadvantage here is that they can have illness and mobility issues. They are also quite busy with families and grandchildren and often their weekends are busy. They have hobbies also which might get in the way and after then they go home to relax. They do not go out so late in the evening.

Drivers and Successes

The advert may make them feel nostalgic, possibly even a bit sad and will bring back good memories. They watch a lot of TV but not online channels, so getting the message to this group of people will be more difficult unless they are active on social media.

Figure 7. Empathy map for older aged people aged 50+

This group of people are an important segment but frequently visit less than other segmented groups. However, there are many people who simply come for the nostalgic experience of the milkshake bar and often remember Vallio Baari when they were younger, and the video brand message may help them to remember that feeling. This customer group are not media savvy, but some are active on social media but not many. This may be a bottleneck when broadcasting the media project to them as they are unlikely to see it, however, to combat this the writer will enquire with the shopping center if they can play the video on their media channels which might be where this customer group are viewing, this could help to get the message across. The story advert will possibly resonate with them as loneliness is something many older people feel, and this might move them to act.

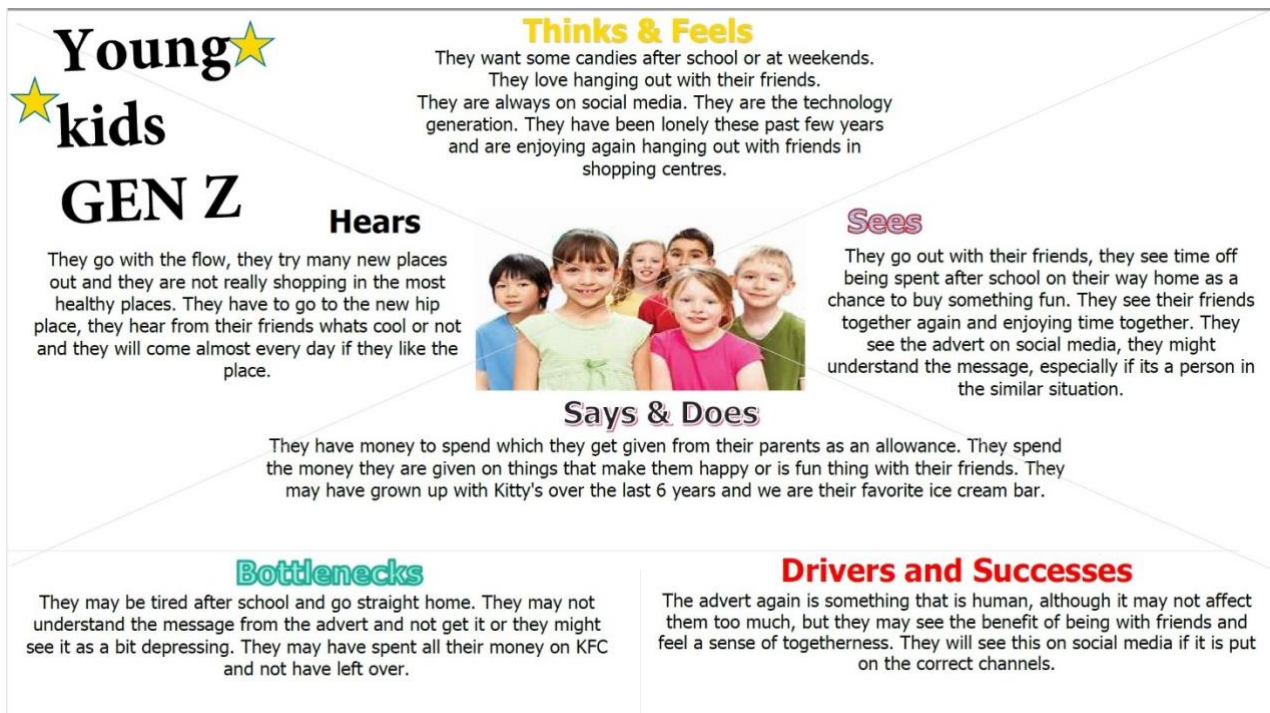


Figure 8. Empathy map for kids and gen Z.

This customer group is really growing with the milkshake bar, especially since the prices became a bit cheaper. This group however uses their money allowance and like to spend it on anything they like or is fun. They are a social segment and like to be with friends after school and then go home to their parents shortly after. They are not health conscious and just enjoy life at its simplest without any worries. The last few years has been hard on this group, and they may feel quite lonely, also many kids at their age are in school and can experience loneliness with other groups of friends or bullying, this is a sad fact but will be addressed in the video project. They will see the video if it is put on young social media platforms and will share it if they enjoy it, however the bottleneck is that it doesn't represent the fun element of Kitty's Milkshake Bar, but the stark reality of an emotional story might mean that they simply might not get it.

5.3 Outcome for the customer segment selection for the characters in the video project

The empathy maps were helpful to answer the question who Kitty's Milkshake Bars customers are but there was still the aspect of who to characterise in the brand message video. This follows the empathy mapping to further create a character from that segment that Smith (2012) suggested to do in the theoretical framework. According to Fraser (2021) a character profile is an extremely detailed outline of the characters life. A character's profile is created using a series of development questions. The questions are thought provoking but once the character has been created then there will be everything you need to know about them mapped out. (Fraser, S. 2021) Although the

writer agrees with Fraser, he did not need to ask many questions to create a character because through the empathy maps, he was able to already create a customer segment, which is as Smith (2012) says is part of the Pareto Principle of 20/80. By focusing into a person who represents 20% of the customer segment then brand awareness could be spread further by 80%.

Character profiling

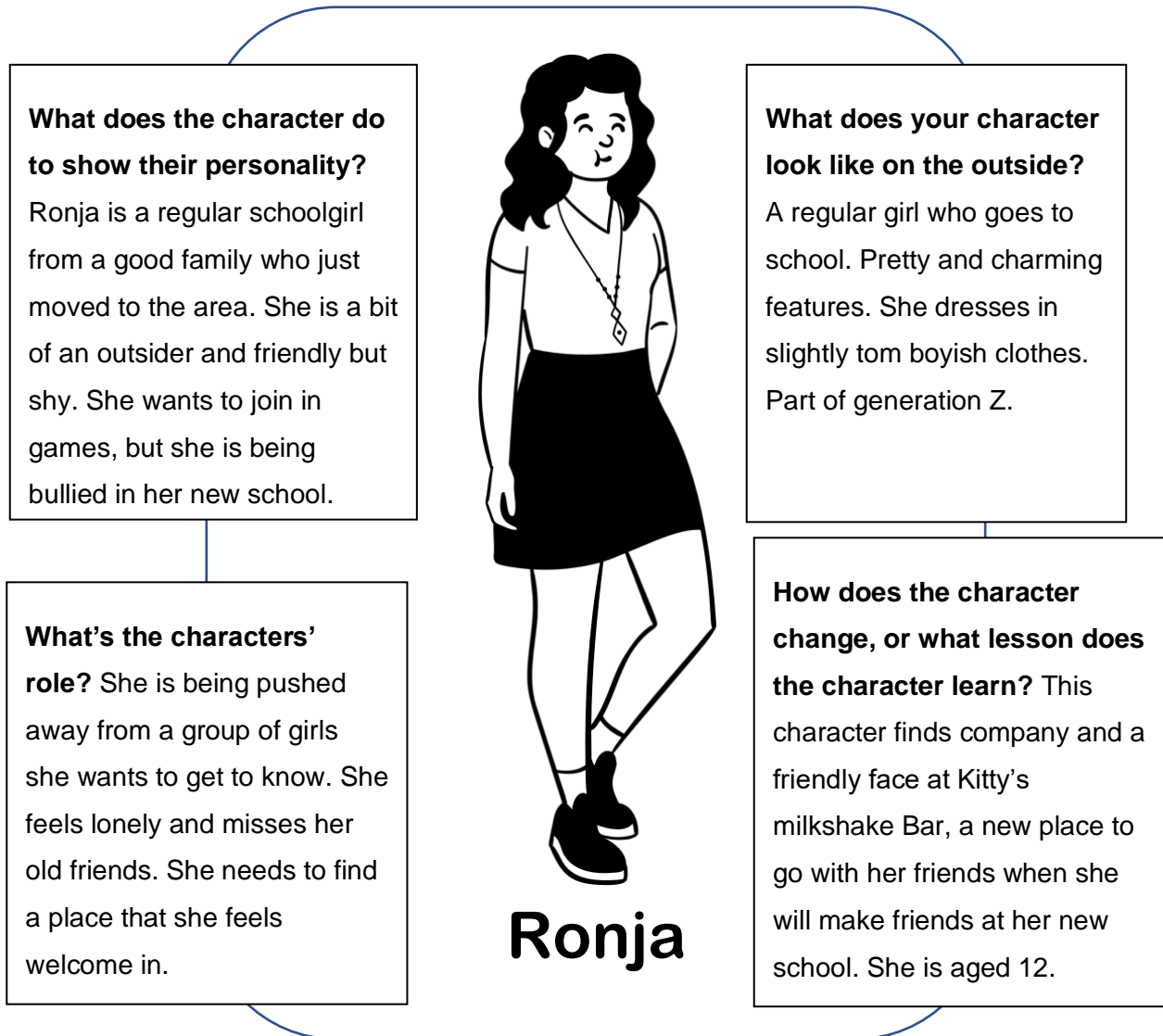


Figure 9. The schoolgirl. Modified from the story character profile by Fraser, S. (2021) Squibler.

Ronja was chosen from the empathy map of Kids and Gen Z. Specifically focusing on the kids who visit Kitty's Milkshake Bar the character was made by using the friends and sociable aspect of their generation (Gobe 2009,2-27.) The character was realised by flipping the social aspect of the personality, so it fits the brand message of loneliness but coming together.

Character profiling

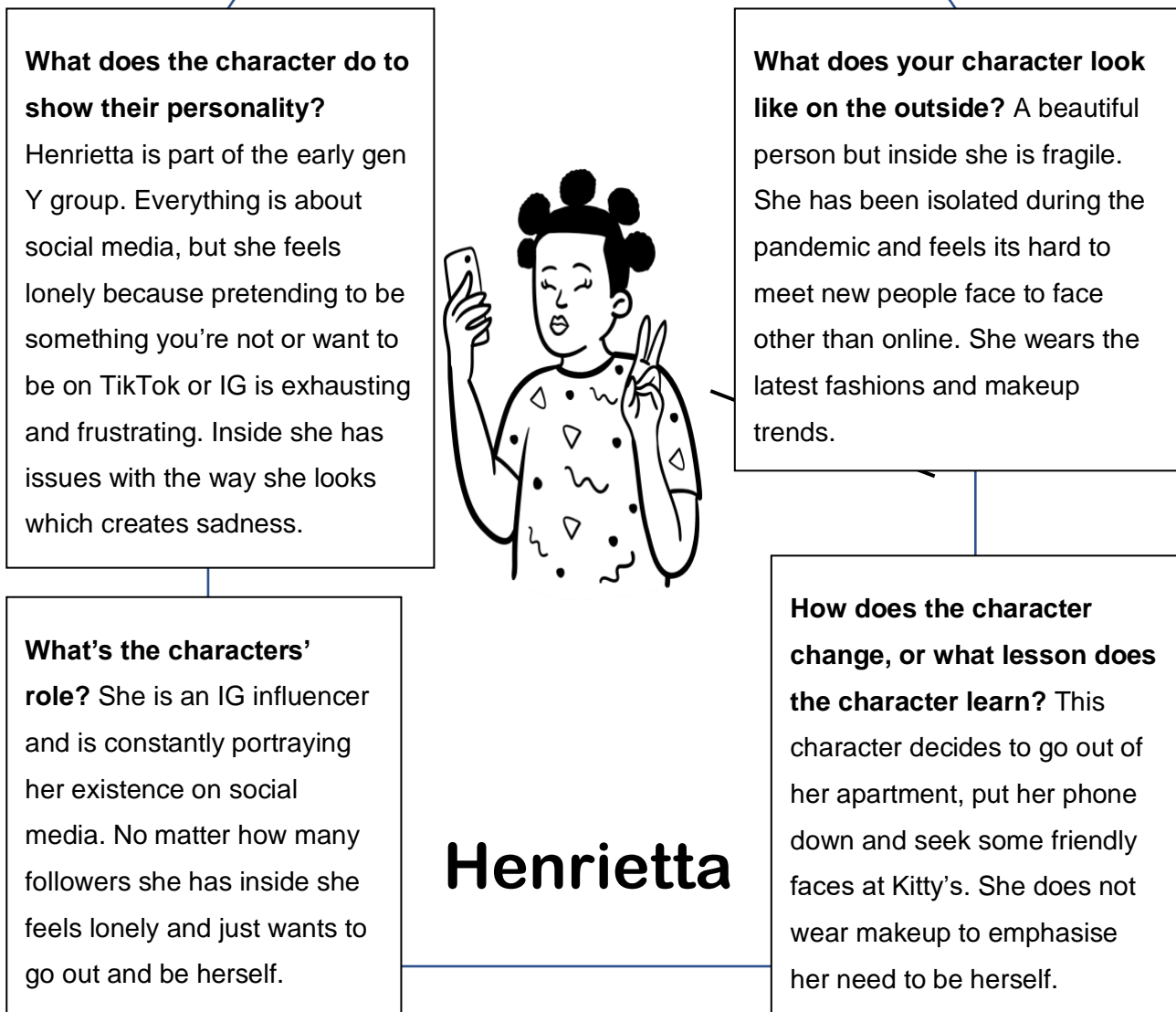


Figure 10. The Instagram girl. Modified from the story character profile by Fraser, S. (2021) Squibler.

The character was created from Trendy DINKS, Double income no kids group, the generation Y group was referred to as the high-speed generation, who are tech savvy and value new ideas and multi-sensory experiences. (Gobe 2009, 2-27.) The character was realised when the need to always be on social media with this generation might be less natural than gen Z and they somehow feel lonely with the constant media lifestyle, life was not like that before when they were young, it was somehow simpler. This character misses that time of her life.

Character profiling

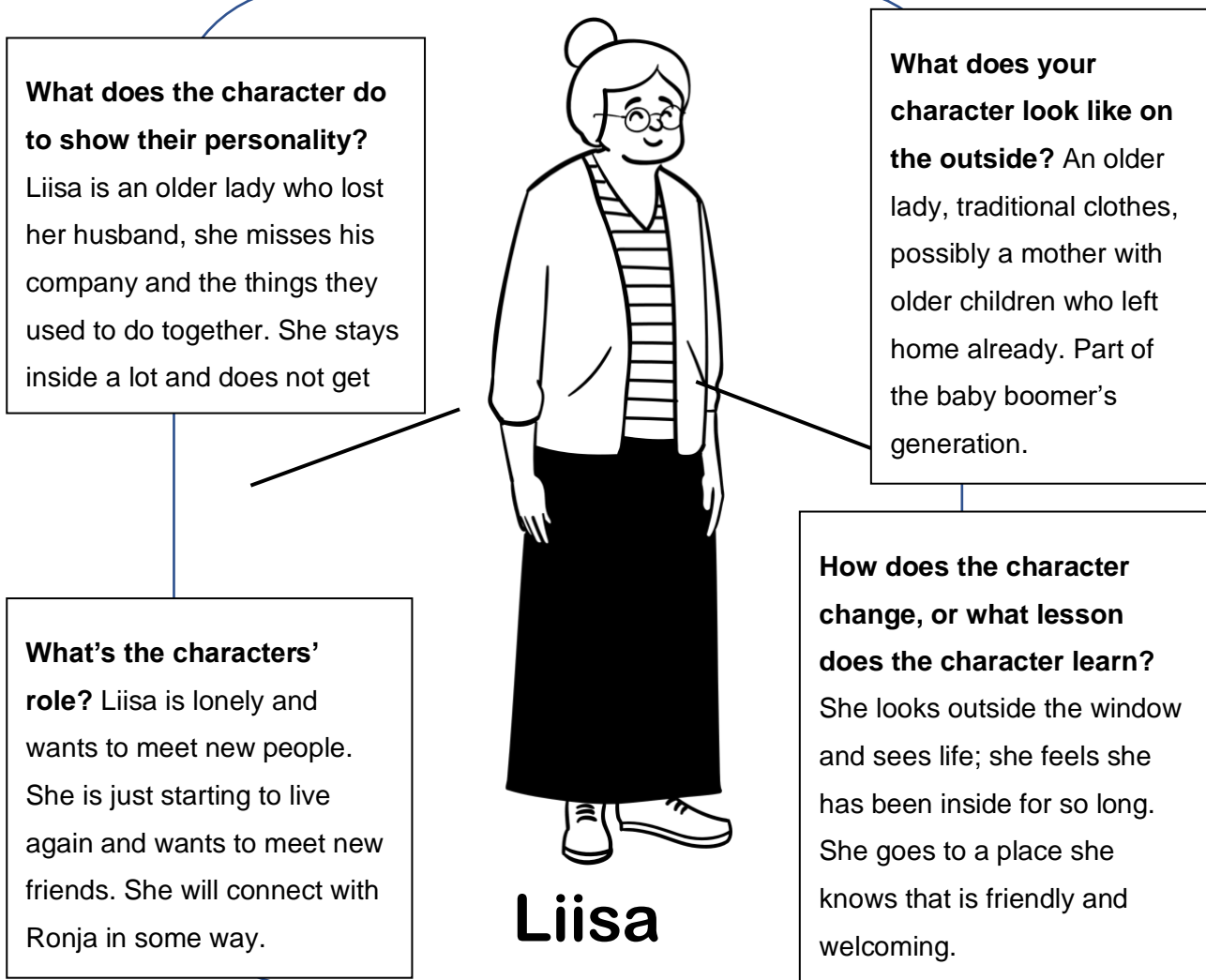


Figure 11. The Widow. Modified from the story character profile by Fraser, S. (2021) Squibler.

This character was taken from the older people aged 50+ empathy map. Gobe (2009, 2-27.) described this group as builders in the workplace, they had long careers or jobs for life and had families young. They like luxury and comforts. The character was realised by the writer because he wanted to portray the older customer in a more isolated fashion. The writer was going to for this part choose a man originally, but it was not easy to connect a man with any of the other characters, where they were all females. Therefore, it was decided to use an older lady to portray the part of Kitty's older customer segment.

Character profiling

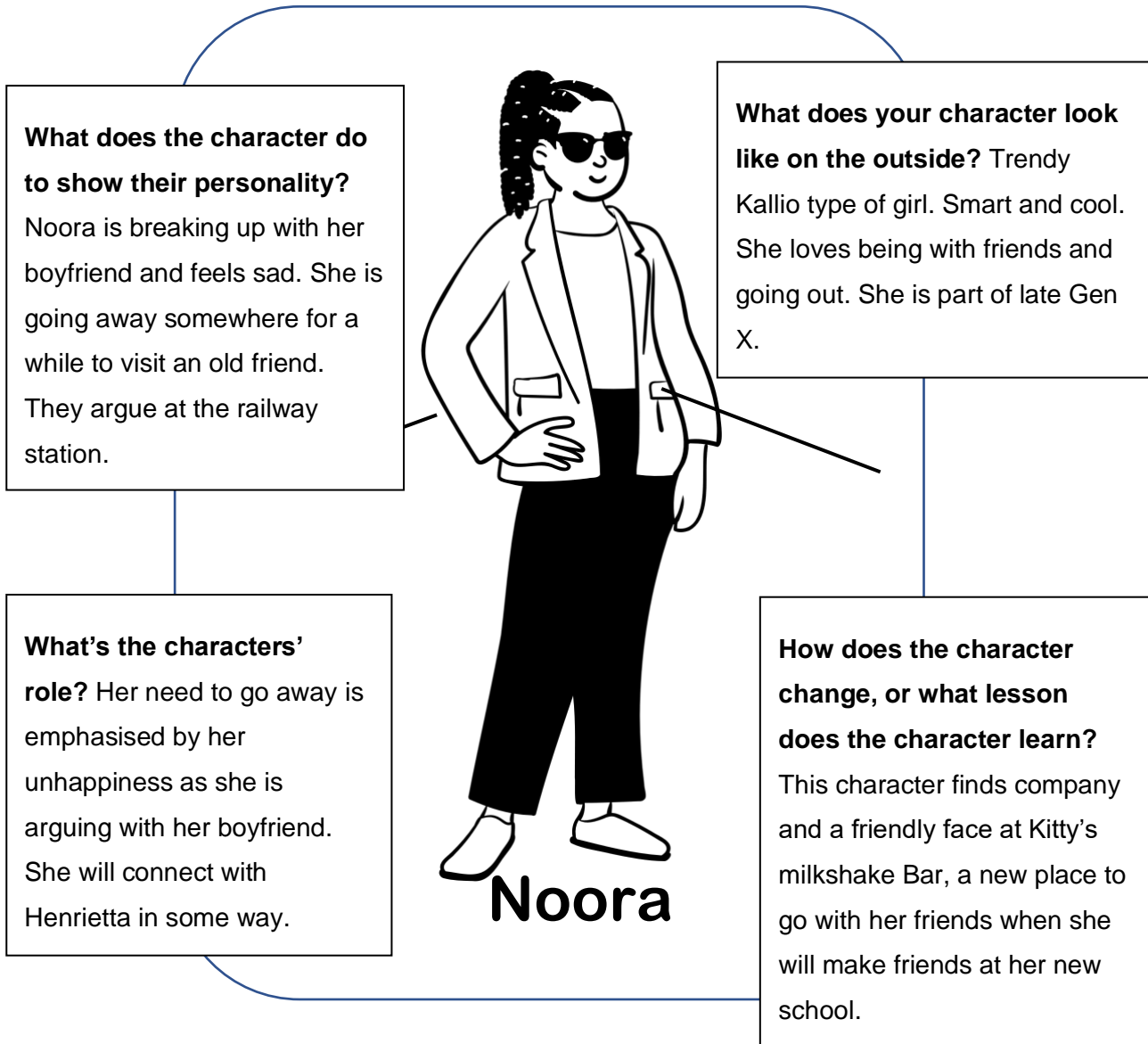


Figure 12. Girl at the railway station. Modified from the story character profile by Fraser, S. (2021) Squibler.

The character Noora was chosen from the trendy DINKS empathy map. The reason the writer decided to use another character from this empathy map is because he felt that the families with young kids did not fit into the brand story profile that he wanted to tell.

As stated, the character profiles were made by pooling together Kitty's Milkshake Bars main 4 customer types chosen in the empathy mapping process, not all empathy maps were chosen. The writer decided that age of the segment was very important, as well as the theory of the different generation types that Gobe (2009) and Manderville (2022) referred to. With this theoretical

background the writer was able to piece together 4 different characters using these generation types, 'the widow' being the baby boomer generation, 'the Instagram girl' who belonged to gen Y or millennials, the girl at the railway station' represented generation X and the young girl in the playground represented the generation Z. These groups would go to form the basis of the chosen segmented customer profiles that were chosen and formulate the script of the brand message for Kitty's Milkshake Bar and the types of characters that would be portrayed in the brand video. The steps to creating the character profiles that the writer took were:

- Research the Segmentation targeting profile theory and apply this to creating the initial character maps.
- Smith (2012) suggested characterising the segments, giving them a name and personality, and looking into their feelings and humanising them.
- Group potential segments by age.
- Group potential segments by generation and how they think and feel.
- Attach an emotion to the story suggested by Gobe (2009)
- Figure out how the emotion, in this case loneliness and togetherness could affect each segment individually.
- Characterize them further into a storyline, creating their own problems. Instead of naming them create a title for them i.e. Using the generation Z insights label her 'The Instagram girl'.
- Present an empathy map with the characteristics and explain how they think, feel the challenges of presenting this type of message to this segment and possible successes.

5.4 Implementation of the discussion focus group

The workshop was conducted on the 7th of April 2022 at Iso Omena library in Espoo from 16:30pm until 19:30pm. The over-all workshop and processes were with mixed success. 23 participants who volunteered and brought their friends or family attended different points throughout the evening.

As the reader has gathered the writers' steps in gathering data was formed in hosting a focus discussion group that lasted 3 hours on the 7th of April 2022 at a meeting room in iso Omena library. The focus group as mentioned was publicly announced on Facebook and willing participants then emailed the writer to take part. Although the sample was random it was possibly biased because

these events tend to attract the most interested customers or the most fanatical fans of the brand. This may have also affected the responses given to some degree.

The process of the focus group is as follows; Participants were invited into the room and were given a questionnaire and cover letter explaining the abstract of the questionnaire and the topic they were discussing and any jargon they did not understand. The participants had almost no idea what the focus group was about other than the knowledge from the email that was sent to them when they applied to attend. They were however aware that the subject matter was to do with a promo-video for Kitty's Milkshake Bar and a short questionnaire. The questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete, and the discussion was voluntary. When they were finished, they could leave. The results and data of the focus group were gathered the next day and evaluated by the writer.

The needed to watch the video first via a link sent to their email, and then answer open ended questions based on that. This was called part 1. The participants were asked to record the data into their phones using a voice application. They were allowed to leave the room if they wanted to record their thoughts away from the other participants. The writer sat in the room the whole time guiding what needed to be done and allowing any discussion that the participants wanted to partake in. If any discussions took place, then they were recorded.

Initial set up problems included first and foremost the recording devices. Upon hiring these from the library, the writer found that they were uncharged, and the battery was not working. The recorder was a prominent part of part 1, the open-ended questions, and was there to record the insights from the participants on a deeper level than writing them down. Because there were quite a few open questions, 13 in total the answers were best in the writer's opinion and in guidance from professors at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Out of 8 recorders borrowed from the library only 3 worked. The writer had to then think of a new way by which the participants could record their ideas and opinions quickly. The solution was to use the participants smart phone to record the data and then to send the MP3 file to the writer's email address that was put on the cover letter. This proved a good solution for the majority but there were a few participants who were not familiar with the voice app on their smartphones, this could be due to the fact they were not tech savvy. Another issue with the recording was that one participant did not wish to use voice recording as they felt that they express themselves better in writing, this was then agreed that instead of writing the participant would record their ideas on an email.

Further problems that occurred was that the initial welcome email was in English, as the writer's thesis is based in English, it seemed more natural for the writer to use this language in the questionnaire. However, 2 participants spoke little English and found it difficult to fill out the questionnaire and understand the language and jargon within the questions. The jargon was

explained on the cover letter, however as the words were unfamiliar the 2 participants had to use their dictionary which was time consuming. This also could have affected the data gathered from them as the questions were not understood properly and therefore the answers would not have come quickly, without too much thought and could have been misconstrued for another meaning. It would have therefore been better that the English language was expressed in the initial welcome email as a vital and significant factor for attendance.

Other issues that occurred was also in relation to some participants not having a smartphone and having to write the answers on the questionnaire sheet. Therefore, some of the data gathered is taken from the written answers and voice recordings as well as in 2 cases the writer had to translate Finnish writing which of course leaves room for error and misinterpretation from the writer's part. The next issue that the writer had during most of the workshop was the problem of noise outside the room. 5 meters away from the door to the booked room was an event on the stage with loudspeakers and a person on microphone with a large audience of 20 people. This created a lot of background noise and distraction, even with the door closed, this was out of the writer's control and was deemed bad luck. Many people did not feel comfortable in recording their ideas in front of the writer, whose project it was, especially if the feedback was of a negative nature. The participants may also have felt a lack of confidence in themselves and felt shy to record in front of strangers. It was stipulated by the writer that the participants could go outside the room to record their thoughts in private, however due to the event taking place in the library the background noise was quite prolific so this also a problem to find a quiet space. This may have also had a direct impact on the data received as the participant was unable to fully concentrate and focus on their responses. The final and last issue was that of the MP3 files being so large that some participants were not able to send the recording to the email. This was worked out quite quickly however with links being shared to the writer's email so that he could access the recording later via Google Drive.

5.5 Random sampling survey for respondents online

The data gathered here was mostly quantitative data using the Likert scale to formulate a non-statistical analysis of the data collected. The survey asked questions that were closed, and this was based on a mix of Keller's pyramid (figure 1) on brand equity and the story arc (figure 2) as well as the research done from the theoretical framework such as a mixture of the branding elements that (Chernatony & al. 1998) referred to. The online survey was published to Kitty's Milkshake Bar's Facebook page and LinkedIn. The survey was also shared with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, who were developing an online loyalty programme with Kitty's and

were helpful to answer the survey. The results from will be discussed in the findings chapter and discussion.

6. Presenting the findings

This chapter refers to what has been discovered from the data that was collected from the surveys and the feedback from the founders. The writer will describe what the data means, and a clear analysis will be given of the data gathered. Theoretical insights that were used will be reflected on and how they supported the data. The thesis questions will be addressed in this part and the writer will discuss each one in turn. There will be an analysis of development measures that the organization should adopt, and these will be justified based on an analysis of the research and development data. To conclude further recommendations will be given by the writer how the tool can be used or developed in the long term for Kitty's Milkshake Bar.

6

6.1 Describing the data collected

The data collected was a mix of qualitative and some quantitative data which did not require statistical analysis. Keywords and trends from the qualitative data were deducted, feedback from the founders were also presented in a table format. There were 21 questionnaires in paper format gathered as well as 11 emails received back with voice recorded data that needed to be transcribed.

6.2 Number of participants in the focus discussion group and process of presenting data.

During the data collection phase of the study, a discussion group was carried out on the 7th of April 2022 and a paper survey was presented to a group of:

21 participants in total. Some people invited many friends late who wanted to take part, but many were too late to take part properly.

30–45-minute survey, which consisted of open-ended questions and closed questions to gather qualitative and some quantitative data. However, only

11 of the participants only sent back the recorded data required in part 1.

10 of the participants arrived too late when the room was closing and were given a questionnaire, told briefly what to do but the writer was unable to stay with them to instruct further.

1 person answered back via email instead of recording their voice in part 1.

The qualitative data was recorded on the participants smartphone and then sent to the writer's email to playback and transcribe. The writer looked for specific trends or patterns that occurred within the responses. There was no statistical evaluation with the quantitative data as the writer was mainly interested in the replies that were communicated verbally to him, however the quantitative data was important as many key insights from the background of the participants answering the survey. **The survey processes** were split into two parts.

Demographics of participants – The 1st 3 questions asked were on paper format asking their age group, location, and gender. The survey then progresses to:

Part 1 – Open-ended questions to gather qualitative data from all participants.

Part 2 – Closed questions and questions regarding the demographics of the participants.

The writer will present these findings in the order that the surveys were written and presented to the participants. To make it easier for the reader to grasp, the writer took all the comments, filtered them into smaller keywords, then put the keywords into:

<p>positive, neutral, feedback. This is where the keyword was either positive in its nature, or mediocre but not negative, and the constructive tips and feedback was added here, so what could be done better.</p>
--

<p>Negative. Keywords that were negative in their nature, or feedback which was not positive.</p>
--

6.2.1 Part 1 – Demographic results from discussion focus group

The first question was asking their age group.

The responses were mixed with a range of age groups. The results were from 23 participants only 18 responded:

<18	0
10 – 20	1
21 – 31	6
32 – 42	5
43 – 50	2
50+	4

The second question asked about their gender. Out of 23 people surveyed only 18 people answered this. The other 2 respondents either missed the question or chose not to answer it.

Surveyed were:

Women **11**

Men **5**

Nonbinary **2**

The third question asked about where they lived. The demographics of the participants were also from mixed areas in the capital region. The area was important to know because it allowed the writer to understand which areas, he might need to reach out to customers more to create better brand awareness. The advertisement for the discussion focusses group was put on Facebook which has around 5,500 followers, that reaches around the entire capital area and beyond depending on if you see the post. The Out of 21 participants only 17 people answered this question.

Helsinki **8**

Espoo **9**

Vantaa 0

Outside areas 0

6.2.2 Part 1 – open questions survey analysis. Discussion focus group.

The open-ended questions then were asked, and the participants were asked to record their answers on the smartphone device. There was no set time that they had to answer, and their answers had no length restrictions.

Part 1 – Question 1. The video that you watched was based on a story, describe what you think the story wanted to tell? 10 people replied.

When asked this question there were a range of replies. Feelings of sadness occurred in the responses and some melancholy. Most of the responses understood the reasoning of the video and the story message that it was conveying of loneliness, going somewhere to feel better, uniting people, groups that didn't fit in to society, struggles and problems.

1 person did not answer.

Key words: loneliness, going somewhere to feel better, coming together.

Part 1. Question 2. Think personally of the brand and identify and describe words or emotions based on what kitty's Milkshake bar represents to you as a customer. What does our brand mean to you? 11 people replied

When asked this question there was a positive answer from almost all the responses:

Key words positive/neutral/feedback: Bright, positive, friendly, happiness, reward, comfort zone, aesthetically pleasing, attracts attention, global brand, sharing, unique, summer, colours, delicious, good vibe, bold, different, joy, reward, pick me up, vegan, retro, excitement, mischievous, divine, tasty, emotions, family brand, easy, fun.

Key words negative: Brand lacks energy.

1 person did not answer.

Part 1. Question 3. Do you feel that there are any problems in the way Kitty's Milkshake Bar currently communicates our brand story to you? What could we do differently or better to acquire increased brand awareness? 10 people replied.

When asked this question some people referred to the video whilst others commented on the brand. The point of the question was that comments came from the past communication, not the brand video. 1 person did not answer.

Key words positive/neutral/feedback: no problems, updates often, different advertising such as short videos, more employee videos, emphasise retro feeling more, concentrate on 1 message more to help people remember, pin-up posts, more americana themed posts, great mouth-watering milkshakes.

Key words negative: Storytelling is emotional whereas Kitty's brand is fun and that's conflicting. 1 person commented the video was depressing and not relating to brand image.

Question 4. Were you able to relate to any of the characters in the video or connect your emotions to any of them? Explain why. If you did not connect to any of them, explain why also. 11 people replied

Many of the participants were able to relate to the overall brand message, and the characters that were profiled. Some did not however resonate with them in any way.

Key words positive/neutral/feedback: Some people like to be quiet and even lonely as they are introverts, searching for loneliness sometimes, going to Kitty's to make yourself feel better, not ever gone to Kitty's because they are sad, relate to loneliness because of childhood loneliness they felt, moved by the video and made me think of home, milkshakes remind me of my home country, I could relate to the characters in the video, most of us feel lonely at some point, feeling of being left out I can understand, going with daughter to enjoy a milkshake, I feel empathetic for the people in the video,

Key words negative: I couldn't relate to any of the characters, I do not connect milkshakes with sadness, it's dangerous to create a message that shows people must eat sugar to cheer themselves up, it's hard to feel empathy as the characters were not deep enough in my life, if it was a happier feeling, I could relate to it more, I could not relate as parts of the video were illogical,

the breakup was the strongest point, the breakup seemed weird that people would do that in a railway station, I cannot focus on the negatives of the characters when I go to the milkshake to be positive with my kids, I could not relate to this but I understood and appreciated the feelings they had in the video.

Part 1. Question 5. Imagine if you were able to write or direct your own story for Kitty's milkshake Bar, describe what would your story preference be and who would be the main characters for your story?

Key words positive/ neutral /feedback: Stories based on accomplishing something, going on a date with a girl, Christmas parties with milkshakes, company meetings, more stories based on the happier side of the business, focus on the employees, day to day life in Kitty's, family moments, an animated figure everyone can relate to like an animal not humans, American 50s style waitress, somewhere sunny, like California making it more retro, keep it shorter, focus on the employees.

Key words negative: None

2 people did not respond to the question.

Part 1. Question 6. What was the most significant or important moment in the video for you and how did it make you feel?

Key words positive/ neutral /feedback: The end when people came together, there were more colours and friendly feelings, the ending when they were together, it made me feel like I'm not alone in Finland, people trying to find something to make themselves feel better, the happy ending when they found each other, when the people connected with each other, the Instagram girl was the most meaningful to me as this made me feel emotional, the smile the IG girl had on her face at the end, the happy ending, the end spoken voice, the old lady with the photo frame touched me, the video started strong and I knew the message it was trying to convey.

Key words negative I didn't understand. Am I watching the right brand story? woman looks like she is in eldercare home, no one kicks flowers unrealistic,

1 person did not answer.

Part 1. Question 7. What did you think about the story being told in the video? Bored? Excited? Impartial? 11 people replied.

Key words positive/ neutral /feedback: the message was emotional, I feel that Kitty's is a big part of my life, I liked the video, the video gave depth to the meaning, it was nice, the story is not portrayed enough, I think it's an important topic,

Key words negative too slow paced, could have been happier, music was depressing, interested what would happen but not excited, the focus was wrong loneliness is a bad topic, it could be shorter, it was a bit cliché, it was a bit cliché to begin, there are no visual clues as to what your brand is, video is depressing, it doesn't make me want to visit the brand, too long, more colours and light needed, needs to be more to the point, it was alright but no big emotions came from it, music was bad, video was too long, video was too negative, needs more happiness, too long, more clue what the product is needed.

Part 1. Question 8. Do you think this type of marketing tool (storytelling) could be useful or not useful in your opinion for Kitty's Milkshake Bar to adopt this method to communicate to customers in the future and why? 10 people replied.

Key words positive/ neutral /feedback: Storytelling is useful its sells products, keep the objective to the brand, in Finland if you want a good milkshake you go to Kitty's, more content on telling the story of Kitty's, storytelling is effective depending on the brand, Kitty's should do more storytelling, show people Kitty's is a comfortable place to be, it would be useful but make it happier, people celebrating is needed, storytelling is useful to highlight smaller local businesses, stories from smaller companies make me buy from those, more connection from smaller companies, yes on Instagram, posts on Facebook like family moments, portray something real, make it more dynamic then yes it would be,

Key words negative it is far too traditional, people want to see quick fun videos like on TikTok, you missed an opportunity it was not written well, I felt confused through the whole thing, storytelling is useful for reaching out to specific customer groups.

1 person did not answer.

Part 1. Question 9. Do you feel that over-all brands apart from Kitty's Milkshake Bar convey their stories successfully? Or is there room for improvement? 9 people replied.

Key words positive/ neutral /feedback: big brands can do this very well as they have money to invest, millennials are value conscious so directing messages to them is good, highlight more values and ethics, yes in websites, TV commercials, you need to improve, storytelling does not come naturally to brands.

Key words negative Two people did not know or was confused by the question.

2 did not answer

Part 1. Question 10. Can you think of any brands or companies that has a good story and why? 9 people replied.

Key words positive/ neutral /feedback: Finnish confectionery brand, recycled steel watch, I haven't seen any, Finnish ice cream company 3 friends, lima store in Finland, vocals in Finland, commercials of cars, Lidl.

Key words negative two people did not answer or was confused by the question.

Part 1. Question 11. The writer decided not to include this question as it is not relevant to this thesis.

Part 1. Question 12. Do you feel that the video you watched by Kitty's Milkshake Bar fits to your own perception of the brand and why or why not? 11 people replied.

Key words positive/ neutral /feedback: it shows Kitty's is a comfort zone, it did fit my perception, the video fitted my perception as people came together, it reminds me when I meet with friends, yes as you can have a joyful experience and friendly service, you are in a better mood than before you arrived, yes, I do as it shows kitty's cares about people, bringing people together,

Key words negative No it did not there is too much sadness, the music did not fit the brand image, the video could have been better, more happiness is needed, the video was shot badly – dialog or better camera angles, it felt too depressing, it did not work for me, I did not like it, I

couldn't connect any emotions, showed too much of other people's problems, concentrated too much on the negative, story was interesting but too sad.

Part 1. Question 13. The writer decided to not include this question as it is not relevant to the thesis.

6.2.3 Part 2 – Closed questions survey analysis. Discussion focus group

Part 2 of the survey (closed question) will now be presented. This includes closed questions that will be presented to the reader the same way as part 1 (open questions) was but will not include keywords.

Good brand communication methods from companies influence what I buy. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the group were influenced. Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ were not.

I tend to buy services and products without being influenced by brand communications methods. A little less than $\frac{3}{4}$ said that they are influenced a little over a $\frac{1}{4}$ disagreed that they tend to buy services and products without being influenced by brand communication methods.

Good stories encourage me to buy services or products. Over $\frac{1}{2}$ agreed that good stories encourage them to buy services or products whilst a little over a $\frac{1}{4}$ strongly agree and only 1 person disagreed or strongly disagreed.

I enjoy listening to stories. The participants strongly agreed by over $\frac{1}{2}$ enjoyed listening to stories however what type of stories are irrelevant in this thesis. $\frac{1}{2}$ didn't understand the question or didn't answer.

The Kitty's brand stands out amongst the rest. The majority over $\frac{3}{4}$ thought the brand was strong, and 1 person thought that the brand image was weak.

I connected with the video and enjoyed it. A little over a $\frac{1}{4}$ of the participants had a negative reaction towards the video and brand message, whilst most of the participants $\frac{3}{4}$ enjoyed the video and had a positive reaction towards it but felt the message was wrong.

I was confused by the over-all message of how the video relates to Kitty's brand. Over $\frac{1}{2}$ got the message of the video in a positive way, a few people clearly understood what the message was and 1 strongly disagreed with this statement. A bit less than $\frac{1}{4}$ was confused with the message that the story was trying to convey.

The brand should make more of these story videos. Just under $\frac{1}{2}$ of people agreed that kitty's milkshake bar should make some more stories in the future to convey their brand message. A little

over a $\frac{1}{4}$ strongly agreed on this, and a little less than a $\frac{1}{4}$ combined of strongly disagree and disagree think that kitty's milkshake bar should not make more stories.

Kitty's needs to focus their marketing methods elsewhere. Storytelling is not for them. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement, whilst less than a $\frac{1}{4}$ agree that kitty's milkshake bar should leave storytelling alone and perhaps try something else.

Kitty's Milkshake Bar represents quality. The majority over $\frac{3}{4}$ agreed that Kitty's represents quality, whilst 1 person disagreed.

Kitty's is a likable brand that attracts attention. The majority over $\frac{3}{4}$ agreed that Kitty's represents quality, whilst 1 person disagreed.

Kitty's fulfils my needs and desires through their brand or services. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ strongly agreed that their needs are met. 1 person felt that their needs were not met through the brand.

I am loyal to the Kitty's brand. An overwhelming $\frac{3}{4}$ agree that they are loyal to kitty's milkshake bar, whilst $\frac{1}{4}$ did not agree that they were loyal.

I feel a sense of community or togetherness through Kitty's brand. Over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the participants strongly agreed that there is a sense of community and a feeling of togetherness that represents kitty's milkshake bars brand. $\frac{1}{2}$ did not feel the sense of community spirit.

I actively engage with Kitty's brand marketing communications often. A little less than $\frac{1}{2}$ strongly disagree or agree to this statement, whilst a little over $\frac{1}{2}$ in total agree or strongly agree to the statement.

The video was in line with my own perception of Kitty's brand image. Around $\frac{3}{4}$ in total agree or strongly agree with this statement, whilst a $\frac{1}{4}$ of people strongly disagree or disagree replied that they did not feel that the message that was conveyed met their perceived perception of kitty's milkshake bars brand story or image.

6.3 Data analysis from random sample online survey

The random sample was much shorter than the discussion focus group survey and 19 respondents answered an online survey which took around 5 minutes plus 3 minutes to watch the video. The data here was mostly quantitative but was not statistically analysed. The answers are presented as in the previous sub-chapters to the reader.

Question 1. What is your gender?

Woman 11

Man 6

Non-binary 1

Prefer not to say 1

Question 2. How old are you?

< 18 0

18 - 25 1

26 - 35 8

36 - 45 6

46 - 55 3

> 55 1

Question 3. Where do you live?

Helsinki 9

Espoo 3

Vantaa 2

Other 5

Question 4. Have you heard of Kitty's Milkshake brand before now?

Yes 14

No 5

Question 5. Have you ever visited and bought a milkshake from Kitty's Milkshake Bar?

Yes 8

No 11

Question 6. Closed question about the brand.

Kitty's milkshake bar brand represents quality. A little over $\frac{1}{2}$ agreed and around a $\frac{1}{4}$ didn't.

Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand is likeable. A $\frac{1}{4}$ disagree, $\frac{1}{2}$ agree and a $\frac{1}{4}$ strongly agree.

Good stories encourage me to buy services or products. The majority $\frac{3}{4}$ agree and $\frac{1}{4}$ disagree.

I enjoy reading about brand's stories. Just under $\frac{3}{4}$ agree and under $\frac{1}{2}$ disagree.

Question 7. About the video.

The brand message matched my perceptions of Kitty's brand. $\frac{1}{2}$ agreed or strongly agreed with the statement and half disagreed or strongly disagreed with it.

I enjoyed the video and understood the brand message. More people didn't enjoy the video that enjoyed. It was $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ but more in favour of those that didn't enjoy it.

I was confused by the brand message. More people were confused by the brand message than not. $\frac{3}{4}$ agreed with the statement, $\frac{1}{4}$ understood the message.

The video was boring and uninteresting. More people thought the video was boring than those who did not. Less than $\frac{3}{4}$ agreed with the statement and around a $\frac{1}{4}$ thought it was interesting.

I felt some emotion after watching the video. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ agreed with this statement while $\frac{1}{4}$ didn't find it emotional.

The video made me want to go and experience Kitty's. A little more than $\frac{1}{2}$ agreed with this statement and $\frac{1}{2}$ did not think the video would make them visit Kitty's.

Question 8. Briefly what was the key brand message that the video was trying to deliver?

Keywords: A place where you forget your troubles, Fight loneliness with milkshakes - you'll meet new people as well, Kitty is for everyone. For the comfort and small self-treatments. Milkshakes are uplifting. Friendship, hope. Nobody feels alone at Kitty's. No one is alone at Kitty's. At Kitty's you are not alone. At Kitty's you won't feel alone, and the products ease your pain. Nobody's alone. Togetherness. Fighting against loneliness. Place where everyone can come. In Kitty's you never need to be alone. Nobody's alone at Kitty's. Kitty's spreads good vibes and brings people together: Nobody's lonely at Kitty's. Why only use women on the video. Not being alone when you buy milkshakes. Syöminen lohduttaa.

9. What words or expressions would you use to describe the Kitty's Milkshake Bar brand?

Keywords: Fun, quirky, vintage, retro, cool, America, 50s, Tasty, delicious, Rich flavours, nostalgia, best for hangover. fun, indulgent, spending time with friends. warm, welcoming, for all. confusing. quality. A unifier. pink, sweet, fresh, comfort. everybody's welcome, approachable, sweet, quick, and easy. something different, place to get together, cheerful, more quality than normal milkshake bars. milkshake-bar. fun, warm, real. comforting, delicious, friendly, kind, Epämääräinen.

10. Do you have any additional comments or feedback based on the brand or the video you just watched?

Key words positive/neutral/feedback: milkshakes should bring joy, Sometimes the simpler is better, focus more on the fun, an animation movie was suggested, the video was great, and it made me very emotional, let people know about the menu selection more easily, it is more different than anywhere else nearby, the video stood out and felt real and honest,

Key words negative: video was very long, a similar message could have been presented in a much shorter time, the storytelling didn't match the brand image that they thought about Kitty's, building brands through sadness it not recommended, the acting and camera angles were poor,

The scenes did not fit together very well, It could have been happier or more impactful in the final scene, it was too serious for the brand, a bit over the top for a milkshake bar, It could have been presented better, milkshakes looked very delicious and they wanted to try them but they didn't understand the point of the video, sad and downbeat video for a bright coloured milkshake brand was confusing.

Question 11. How would you star rate the video?

2.95 out of **5**. Average.

6.4 Data analysis from the founders

The founders, Sanna Langi and Arto Pelander are also included in the data analysis, and their opinion on the brand story that was told. The founders sent their feedback after watching the video through email.

The results are presented in a table outlining the most important points of the feedback.

Name	Positive aspects	Negative aspects	Development advice
Arto Pelander CFO and Shareholder	1. Stories come together well. 2. The actors are ok. 3. The video is timed well but it is still too long.	1. The main idea that you are sad and come to Kitty's doesn't make sense. The theme is not good for the brand. 2. The story irritates after seeing it again. The old ladies' character and the dead husband rubbing the photo. 3. Picking up a loyalty card off the floor doesn't ever happen. 4. The camera angles were bad with IG girl. 5. The girls playing football show they don't know how to play football, are too clumsy. 6. People might recognise Tripla and	1. talk about fun not loneliness. 2. Remember good times, nostalgia etc. 3. The older woman could have some flashback with her husband in a 50s diner and smile nostalgically. 4. The couple arguing could instead be calmer and when he gives her flowers, he also presents her with a milkshake, and she feels happier. 5. Love blossoms with the IG girl in the milkshake bar. 6. The young girl is in the milkshake bar and a boy who has a

		put together that it makes no sense the girl has a milkshake coming off the tram and then gets off outside the shopping centre again.	crush on her in school smiles at her.
Sanna Langi CEO and founder	<p>1.very different stories, different backgrounds, gives a broad view of customer base.</p> <p>2. short clips, not too much going on</p> <p>3. No voice, only music</p> <p>4. easy to focus, not too quick frame changes</p>	<p>1. Song was maybe a little too depressing for my personal taste</p> <p>2. Amateur actors</p>	NONE

6.5 Theory that supports the data gathered

The survey questions were put together by using Keller's brand pyramid (1992) model and the story arc model (2019.) The brand equity pyramid was useful to the writer and guided him as to which questions in part 1, the open-ended questions, would be appropriate. Starting with Keller's brand pyramid (2009.) The model is introduced again to this chapter for the readers convenience. A survey was performed because (Spooner, A.L.2018.) referred to creating surveys is a good way to get high quality answers and results.

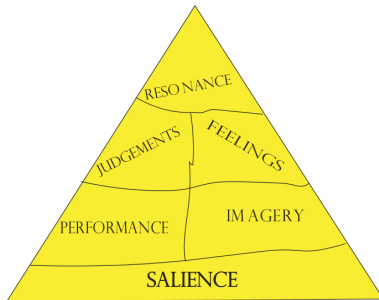


Figure 12. Modified from Keller's brand equity pyramid.

From the research taken by (Hawker 2019.) the writer was able to understand the equity brand model pyramid better. The writer knows from his business experience that to create equity in a business means to grow it further and develop it internally and externally, it creates value for shareholders, investors, and customers. Hawker (2019.) referred to earlier that:

Salience is on the base of the pyramid, which meant brand awareness. The questions regarding the personality of the brand reflected this element, this also reflects **imagery**, how customers see and talk about the brand. Questions 2 on the survey created for the focus group.

Performance suggests how well something is doing and how reliable is it. The writer asked what the participants thought of the current marketing strategy at Kitty's and question 3 on the survey created for the focus group highlighted this.

Feelings relate to how the customers perceive the brand; this was used for question 6 asking the participants the most important moment in the brand message video.

Judgements How do people judge the brand and what do they feel about the brand. Question 7 asked what people thought of the video and brand message being told. Question 12 also asked does the brand message fit their perceptions of the brand.

On the closed questions in part 2 of the survey for the discussion focus group the writer used (Dietz 2014.) and (Fryer 2003.) (Chernatony & al.1998.) to help him put together these questions,

such as from Fryer (2003.) talks about persuasion to market the brand, hence why the writer wanted to find out if people are influenced by brand communication methods to buy or if they buy on their own merit, without being influenced or persuaded by marketing. Dietz (2014.) helped the writer to put together question 3 - good stories encourage me to buy, as is referred to that good stories make people buy into the brand. The writer also used the theory of the mental impact that Dietz (2014.) refers to and used this to ask the question 4 if people enjoy listening to stories. Dietz (2014.) also talks about creating a unique selling point, which helped the writer to form question 4 of the closed questions – Kitty's stands out amongst the rest. The emotional impact by Dietz (2014.) helped him to formulate question 5 asking if they connected with the video, and Chernatony & al. (1998.) referred to corporate identity, brands adding value and brands being as an image in consumers' minds.

Resonance was featured in the questionnaire asking customers how loyal they are to Kitty's and if they felt a sense of community or togetherness with the brand. (Hawker 2019.)

In part 1 question 7, Hall (2019) refers to creating bridges with the customer, it was clear that the brand story did not create a bridge between the customer and the story, because many felt that it did not resonate with them. Even more so in the online survey the writer was unable to connect the bridge to the customer to get them to feel the emotions that he had carefully planned. Some participants who answered did not even know Kitty's and they felt that after watching the video it would not inspire them to go there. Hall (2019.) stated that bridging gaps is the space between what the company wants and where they are. This means it is the void between the customer and the business at that moment. However, the writer was unable to bridge the gap.

When it comes to creating the brand video the writer used a lot of the theoretical insights to create a video that he thought would captivate the audience. Rodriguez (2020.) referred to the human entity and human approach that companies should take, the writer wanted to use this theory to apply in his brand story video. The empathy mapping helped the writer to target specific the specific customer types and allowed him to profile the segments further suggested by Smith (2012.) and Grigsby (2016.) This impacted the way that the survey results as it helped the writer to create the storyline and characters, which ultimately the participants of the survey either resonated with or not.

Other references as to how the data refers to the theory about how to create a story and the benefits are also suggested in the implementation chapter 5.1 and how much of the theory influenced his decision to create what he did.

6.6 Research questions answered

It is now at this point in the thesis that the writer can answer the research questions that the writer attempted to answer at the beginning of the research project. The research questions are highlighted again for the reader.

RQ: How to use storytelling in brand communication to enhance Kitty's Milkshake Bars brand image

SQ 1: What kind of story communicates Kitty's brand image?

SQ 2: Who are Kitty's Milkshake bar's customers?

SQ 3: How is the brand perceived by the customers

R.1 Question. The writer has endeavoured to answer how to use storytelling in brand communication to enhance Kitty's Milkshakes Bars brand image, this has been fully researched in the theoretical framework and has been proven in the video brand message that he directed, produced, and wrote, which he has communicated to his customers. The writer now understands that storytelling can be used in many ways other than just through video brand messaging, and the most importantly use storytelling as it has been proven to the writer that people like stories, but it just must be the correct story. Stories creates powerful emotions in people, the human element of the company is also vital to create a bridge to the customer and the company. Targeting the right customers and getting the right message across is how you can use storytelling in brand communication to enhance brand awareness.

SQ2. Who are kitty's milkshake bars customers? has been answered by the writer by using empathy mapping and customer profiling. The writer understands however that he did not carefully consider the message might not relate or resonate to every customer type, indeed one size does not fit all. This takes experience in this subject but what he did understand is that customer loyalty is a powerful thing to harness in a business. Possibly what should have happened would have been that the writer would target one of these customer groups using the pareto principle mentioned in the theoretical review, by focusing on 20% and receiving back 80%, thus meaning that he could have focused on one individual customer type and made a suitable story, which was shorter in length that would relate to them more. This would have given perhaps more data or would have been more successful, but the point that the writer still believes is that he was right to include all four customer segment types in the brand message, because if he had not have done

so, then the learning perhaps may not have been so great, and he would not have been challenged. He now realises that less is more. However, Kitty's milkshake Bars customers are looking for the fun, light, fluffy aspect of Kitty's Milkshake bar. Many customers come to Kitty's to reward themselves, not cheer themselves up. Many customers appreciate the service that is given and the friendliness of the brand. They see joy and divinity in the brand. They are kitty's Customers.

Sub question 3 has been answered by various keywords that was used in the questionnaires by customers. Many customers believe that kitty's milkshake bar is a place where they can go to reward themselves after they've had a successful day, sometimes customers' needs to also be cheered up. The customers perceive kitty's brand story as a fun and vibrant entity, which brings them joy and happiness when they visit it. Overall, many of the participants, who are Kitty's Milkshake bars customers or potential customers did understand the brand story message that was being told. Some people really enjoyed it, but the writer believes that that is because of brand loyalty that they saw through the sad story and used their own memories and experiences to reason that it is just the wrong story, it does not reflect the actual brand. Kitty's customer value the humanistic face of the brand, but as the participants stated the story needs to be more colourful as that is how they perceive the brand to be. The writer accepts this and can build on this to create better stories for the future. Rodriguez (2020.) referred to the human entity and human approach that all companies should take. and the writer agrees with this statement.

The writer feels that he has answered these questions in detail and hopes that the reader has benefited and has built their own opinion on whether storytelling could be useful for the business that they own or work in. There was still much to be developed on this subject and researched and the writer hopes that another student will be able to research this further and develop it more extensively.

6.7 Further developments for Kitty's Milkshake Bar

Kitty's milkshake bar is now at a new stage in its development. Because of the work that was put into this thesis, there is still much to do and develop in milkshake bars marketing department but now at least the writer can put together a proposal for the company. The writer now has learnt about storytelling in detail and what his customers think of storytelling as a tool in general. The writer proposes that a short break is needed during the busiest months of service (May to September) and then after that the founders will come together to discuss the future of Kitty's Milkshake Bar. If the founders decide to readily expand the business into a full running franchise, then the writer/founder will be suggesting some new ideas to present the brand, loaded with all the information that he has learnt. The videos in the future will be shorter and lighter in its nature,

however, until the budget increases then the founders will need to find ways to convey their brand story using social media posts or actions rather than videos. This has been a wake-up call for the company to radically make more time for marketing and has renewed the founders love for creating.

7. Summery and discussion

The final chapter of the thesis will present to the reader the main results and draw a discussion based on the results that have been concluded from the findings and reflect on the theoretical framework that he used. The writer suggests recommendations for further research and the potential of this for Kitty's Milkshake Bar. The writer will also highlight his learnings throughout the thesis process and the main points that were realised.

7.1 Discussion of the findings.

The main results of the thesis are as follows:

Main result topic
The storyline/brand perception
The surveys/focus group
The customer types

What were the objectives with the work and were they achieved?

The objectives were to create a video to relay the companies brand story, this was the writer chose the best way to highlight the story. He chose this method as he was inspired by the Juan and Sarah story that Hall (2019.) mentions in Stories that stick. The objectives were achieved, and the video was completed in time. Also, this was further researched by (Allie 2015.) in her article that analysed the Juan and Sarah storyline.

What were the main results or key outcomes?

The storyline was incorrect but with the story arc that was referred to by marketing insider group (2019.) helped to build the storyline by prompting the writer and reminded him of the **objective** that tells what goal needs to be achieved or what question would he like to be answered for his brand. **the problem** and what needed to be solved, **what** was the point the writer was trying to convey in the brand story, **so what** why was this important for the writer's brand and **now what** who the brand needs to target, which the writer did through the STP process. **The big idea**. Rounded up all the different points to create the bigger picture, which was a brand message through an audio video, used to test the tool of storytelling. Signorelli (2014, 64-69) referred that the process to story branding process is analogous almost like a component line, the writer did not agree with this because even though there are certain elements of a story that fits together, it is not so simple as

that. Humans are complex creatures that have emotions, Women may think differently to men as (Gosurvey.2022) points out but no story is ever as simple because of the emotions of others who view it.

What conclusions can be made based on the results?

Hall (2019, 21-27) referred to storytelling processes being highly creative, and the customer takes the story into their own minds, she also stated that some stories may not resonate with everyone, and other stories could be so deeply personal that a person can lose themselves in it. The writer was able to come up with the conclusion that the customers do not perceive Kitty's Milkshake Bar in a way that relates to sadness, which is where the writer missed the mark. Boje (2008, 173) summarized that storytelling is defined as a continuous behavior of getting the story realized. It's about getting others to take roles and parts in either a managed or directed story or one that is emergent or collectively in-acted. The writer agrees on this statement as it refers to HubSpots (2021.) statements, happiness creates people to share things and Fryer (2003.) says that engaging emotions is one of the best ways to persuade employees and customers. Using happiness and emotions might have been a better and more realistic goal for the Kitty's brand when using storytelling to create brand awareness. (Peterson, A. 2016.) however said that stories do not make any difference to how the customer sees the brand and persuading them to buy is ultimately about winning trust. The writer doesn't agree with this statement as the results showed that people like listening to stories. By not telling stories the writer feels could put the company in a competitive disadvantage.

How can the results be utilized or applied in practise?

These results will change the way that the company uses storytelling in the future by engaging customers and employee in an easier way using a better storyline. (Indeed editorial team 2021.) suggested that stories engage in a positive or in a negative way. The writer agrees with this, and no matter how respected or loved your company might be the story if created incorrectly can come across as a negative, which many of the participants used the words 'boring, uninteresting, dull, too long'. This is not how the writer, or the customers see Kitty's Milkshake Bar, so in future the writer will utilize the happiness side of the company and use less cliches but make it more fun. The writer also reflected on McKee & al. (2018) eight stages of story design; this is something that the writer may develop next time when he is creating a storyline with his board members as the eight steps was also in the writer's opinion a good guide for creating the right story.

What should have been done differently?

(HubSpot 2021.) referred that happiness makes people share, which leads to increased brand awareness. Sadness makes people emphasise and connect. This is something that the writer now looks back on and feels that he should have done, it would have of course then created more brand awareness although he cannot possibly know that. But many of the participants of the surveys (online and in the discussion focus group) said they would have liked the message to be happier, this could have then persuaded people to share the content more. Leeman and Zorfas ((2016) referred that emotion needs to be added to make a good story. They argued that emotionally connected customers generate more value to the company, so next time the writer will make sure to not take this expression to the wrong place, emotion can also be used to express love rather than sadness.

Main result topic
The storyline/brand perception
The surveys/focus group
The customer types

What were the objectives with the work and were they achieved?

The objectives were to create a survey that found out enough qualitative data from the participants and answer the research questions based on the data obtained. The objectives were met, and the research questions were answered as well as the survey produced and focus group initiated.

What were the main results or key outcomes?

The main results of the survey and focus groups were discussed in chapter 5.4 and the problems and issues were highlighted. However, adding to this after analysing the survey questions the writer was unable to use some of the questions in his analysis because they did not place any relevance on the research questions that needed to be answered. There were also some questions that confused people and were not explained as well as they could have been. The writer met with 2 professors to gain help and advice creating the survey but now believes that he should have optimised it better before meeting with them and asked them better questions to create a much more holistic survey that people would find easier to answer. The main outcome was that the writer felt the survey was a bit rushed.

What conclusions can be made based on the results?

That the theoretical part of the theory should include more research about how to construct surveys, and there should have been a part of this in the writers own theoretical framework.

How can the results be utilized or applied in practise?

The results have helped the writer to know to ask better questions next time to draw out richer data from participants. The writer does not think the results were bad, in fact there were many useful outcomes, but it just could have been done better and maybe next time the writer will use more closed questions to gather quantitative data that can be statistically analysed this might produce different results.

What should have been done differently?

More planning and more research into designing smart questionnaires. For businesses, surveys are a useful tool because they provide a very fast and somewhat cost-effective way to gather qualitative and quantitative data. (Spooner A. L, 2018) referred that surveys can help people to voice their opinions, the writer agrees with this statement but as some of the questions were incorrectly made, he feels that the participants may not have voiced their opinions to the correct objective, for example some participants talking about the video when the writer wanted to ask them about the Kitty’s brand and not the video. The writer can only conclude that the questions should have been worded differently.

Main result topic
The storyline/brand perception
The surveys/focus group
The customer types

What were the objectives with the work and were they achieved?

The objectives were to successfully target the right customers to portray the brand message, through STP and empathy mapping, and then focusing in on the Pareto principle of 20/80, which the writer understood as creating a sharp focus on one particular customer and renaming them with a face and a personality. The writer followed this direction and creating empathy maps and customer profiles and chose from here the characters he would use in the brand message video. Gobe, M. (2009, 2-27) further inspired the writer to base his empathy maps choices and customer profiles by differentiating them via the generation gaps, using baby boomers, X, Y, Z to create a character based on their individual likes and dislikes. The writer feels that the objectives were met.

What were the main results or key outcomes?

(Durant, 2022.) stated that a brand needs to turn to their customers and focusing on the customer's needs and look at providing them with a solution, which is one of the best ways to highlight the brand story. The writer agrees with this statement and ultimately tried to put the customers first by addressing the loneliness story and coming together, which after the pandemic of 2020 was apparent to him, However, the writer still feels that even though the brand message was wrong, the message of mental health is very important and runs alongside the company ethics and morals by looking after their employees very well. Grigsby (2016, 19-20) suggested the typical uses of segmentation 1. finding similar members, 2. making modelling better, 3. using marketing strategy to attack each segment differently. The writer followed this in his creative process to target the customers he believed was correct, but he only used point number 1, to segment customers differently, unfortunately the writer did not come up with a marketing strategy to generate more brand awareness with the message, instead he just published it on Facebook and LinkedIn which did not receive many clicks or impressions. It may have been useful if the writer had created a marketing strategy in this thesis which would have potentially increased brand awareness from making the video more popular. Unfortunately, though the effort may have been wasted anyway as the brand story message was not popular so it may have anyway of been the same result, even with a good strategy in place.

What conclusions can be made based on the results?

The conclusions that the writer feels comes from using these segments is that possibly less is more, and that the writer could have focused on only 2 of the segments to target rather than the whole arena. It may have been more focused in its nature.

How can the results be utilized or applied in practise?

The next time that the writer creates segments to target an audience he will make sure that he targets less people in the process. Perhaps creating a story based on one individual segment may be more successful and less work than creating a story on 4 different customer types to segment.

What should have been done differently?

The pareto principal model could have been used as a major part of the theoretical framework and used to gather the writer's data instead of Keller's (1992) pyramid. The result may have been

different if he had not used 4 customer types as many referred in the focus group that 4 people were maybe too many, which made the content perhaps go on too long. The founders however liked the fact that there were many characters in there, especially Sanna Langi who said that the story was easy to follow. Smith (2012, 108) described one way that brands can segment customer types better, is to use the pareto principle. Possibly if the writer would have used that model, then the result would have been a shorter, more to the point brand message.

7.2 Recommendations

The subject matter should be researched further by other students who wish to communicate their company or workplaces brand story through this tool. The recommendation from the writer is that the researcher would target the customers or clients thoroughly before coming up with the brand message and then target them accordingly with the right message. The writer suggests further researchers would take time to evaluate their own company's situation as to where they are now and use the brand equity pyramid by Keller to have a complete breakdown of your brand, customers, products, services, employees and how popular they are with your customers. This would make a subject to further research and if it affects your companies brand awareness to become more positive.

7.3 Limitations of study and recommendations for further research

The writer is unable expert conclusions to whether or not storytelling as a tool for brand communication can create better brand awareness because the sample time was so short, being only four weeks that the video project and brand message was developed, shot and broadcasted, that it did not leave enough time for the writer to fully analyse the results, especially with increased revenue from sales, this would take many months of the same marketing video being broadcasted as well as other content also to be made that would create more interest in the brand. the writer simply did not have the resource is or the cash to create anymore brand story videos within this short time. However, he believes that storytelling is indeed a useful tool.

Another limitation that the writer had during this thesis was that he thought he would get more responses than he did in the random customer selection method of data collection, unfortunately people do not have the time to fill out online surveys, especially if they get nothing in return.

The pandemic has had some influence on this thesis, because the writer has not been able to sometimes access libraries due you to them being closed, also a classroom environment is a richer learning experience rather than online schooling and self-study which may have put back the writer a few months in actually coming up with an initial idea, and not being able to discuss and articulate

the idea online as you would in a discussion with the teachers in a classroom and also a group of peers opinions.

Another factor also was that the writers study time was limited and ending by summer 2022. Although he graduated on time the writer was not able to have put as much effort into the thesis over the three years as he would have liked, simply because he did not have an idea off the thesis until the summer of 2021. This thesis has roughly taken him six months to write and complete.

7.4 Learning outcomes

The thesis idea was based on assumptions that kitty's milkshake bar brand would perhaps develop and increase its brand awareness by introducing brand storytelling. The writer has understood that most people enjoy listening to stories, but it takes a careful and focused approach to convey the correct story to the customer. Whilst the brand story that was told was an important factor for the writer, in addressing various topics such as mental health, loneliness and the joy of coming together, he understands that perhaps the story that needed to be told next time should be more carefully considered by all the founders at the board table. The writer believes that the video project and the brand story was a success overall, even if it had mixed reactions, many people understood the real reason behind the story and the message which was the main point for the writer.

When the writer was looking for references about the subject of storytelling, he realised that there is much more that can be written about stories and businesses in the future. This is indeed a growing subject, that is relatively new in the marketing world and there was still a lot to be explored and done with this topic. The writer has learned that the most important thing is to be transparent and a humanistic brand for as long as the company is in business. The brand story told may not have had any actual effect on sales and revenue and did not even increase brand awareness that much that can be measured, however, what the writer does now realise is that there is room for stories and storytelling in Kitty's Milkshake Bar and it will be well received.

During this development project the writer has learnt many skills that has potentially helped the company to develop and grow, such as media directing and editing, collaborating with media professionals, problem solving and undergoing difficult and stressful times that has taken additional energy to put right. The writer is also able to evaluate his own work and understand and review his shortcomings and successes throughout this research-based work.

The best learning outcome for the writer is that he learnt how to conduct a master's degree study project, which has given him so many skills and tools in the future and inspired him to be a better entrepreneur and aim for success. **End of thesis.**

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