Master's thesis

Creative Design management

2022

Marika Valtajärvi

Strategic brand identity building for an ecological brand

– Case 4Fire

TURKU AMK
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES

Master's Thesis | Abstract

Turku University of Applied Sciences

Creative Design Management

2022 | 56

Marika Valtajärvi

Strategic brand identity building for an ecological brand

- Case 4Fire

The purpose of this thesis is to create a strong brand identity for a new ecological brand called 4Fire by utilizing strategic brand building methods and tools.
4Fire wants to be the first truly eco-friendly, innovative, and Finnish product line of fire starter products. The first product to be launched is an ecological fire starter gel which, unlike traditional fossil-fuel-based fire starter products, only releases water vapor in the atmosphere when combusted.
Branding process consists of research, strategy & design stages and results in implementation or execution phase of coherent brand identity (Bilekov 2022). In this thesis the brand building methods are used on research and strategy phases. Competitor analysis and design benchmarking are conducted for better understanding of the competitive environment and positioning of the brand. Implementation of brand visuals & tone of voice are based on those previous stages. The goal of the process is to comprehend the process of branding, learn to utilize different methods, understand what the brand stands for and how to communicate that identity.
The methods aim to provide better understanding of customer segments, brand value or give guidance on the brand building process. The methods used in this thesis are 1) Value proposition canvas, 2) Empathy map canvas, 3) Design Criteria Canvas, and 4) Brand Equity model. All these different tools help to make conscious decisions regarding strategic brand positioning and identity.
Value proposition canvas was chosen to map customer values and needs whereas Empathy map canvas gives insights of customer segments. Design criteria provides a foundation and boundaries along the design journey and helps to define the most crucial elements in the vision (Van Der Pijl et al. 2016, 52, 70). Brand Equity model by marketing professor Kevin Lane Keller is a tool illustrating the brand building blocks needed to follow to build strong brand equity.
This thesis also showcases the final brand identity and its elements: logo, colors, typefaces, character, packaging design, brand tone of voice and brand story. Also, the design process and evaluation of the proposals before the final approved versions are presented. The aim for the brand elements is to communicate the brand story and persona in a compelling and consistent way throughout different channels and touchpoints and separate the brand from its competitors.
Keywords: **Brand, branding, graphic design, packaging design, brand identity, brand equity**

Opinnäytetyö YAMK | Tiivistelmä

Turun Ammattikorkeakoulu

Creative Design Management

2022 | 56

Marika Valtajärvi

Ekologisen brändi-identiteetin strateginen rakentaminen

- 4Fire

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on luoda uskottava ja vahva brändi-identiteetti ekologiselle 4Fire-brändille käyttäen strategisia brändinrakennustyökaluja ja -menetelmiä.

4Firen tavoitteena on olla ensimmäinen suomalainen sytytystuotesarja, joka on aidosti ympäristöystävällinen ja innovatiivinen. Ensimmäinen lanseerattava tuote on sytytysgeeli, joka palaessaan vapauttaa ilmakehään ainoastaan vesihöyryä, toisin kuin osa fossiilisia raaka-aineita käyttävistä kilpailevista tuotteista.

Brändäysprosessi koostuu tutkimus-, strategia- ja suunnitteluvaiheista, joita seuraa yhdenmukaisen brändi-identiteetin toteutus- tai sovellusvaihe (Bilekov 2022). Tässä opinnäytetyössä brändinrakennusmetodeja käytetään tutkimus- ja strategiavaiheissa. Kilpailija-analyysin ja pakkaussuunnittelusta tehdyn vertailuanalyysin on tarkoitus antaa kuva nykyisestä kilpailutilanteesta ja brändin asemoinnista. Brändin visuaaliset elementit ja äänensävy luodaan näiden edellisten vaiheiden tulosten perusteella.

Työn tavoitteena on saada parempi ymmärrys brändin rakennuksen prosessista, oppia hyödyntämään erilaisia menetelmiä ja työkaluja, ymmärtää brändin ydinviesti ja tapa, miten sitä tulisi viestiä parhaiten.

Menetelmien tarkoitus on auttaa ymmärtämään paremmin asiakasryhmiä, brändin arvolupausta ja ohjeistaa brändinrakennusprosessia. Tässä työssä käytetyt metodit ovat 1) Arvolupausmalli, 2) Empatiakartta, 3) Design-kriteerimalli ja 4) Brändin pääoma -malli. Näiden eri työkalujen tarkoitus on auttaa tekemään tietoisia strategisia päätöksiä brändin asemointiin ja identiteettiin liittyen.

Arvolupausmalli on työkalu, joka auttaa asiakkaiden arvojen ja tarpeiden kartoituksessa. Empatiakartta auttaa eläytymään asiakkaan rooliin ja antaa näin näkemyksiä eri asiakasryhmistä. Design-kriteerimalli valaa pohjan ja rajat suunnitteluprosessille ja auttaa määrittämään vision kriittisimmät elementit (Van Der Pijl et al. 2016, 52, 70). Markkinoinnin professori Kevin Lane Kellerin kehittämä Brändin pääoma -malli esittelee brändirakennuksen vaiheittaiset askeleet, joita seuraamalla brändille voi luoda vahvan pääoman.

Opinnäytetyö esittelee lopullisen brändi-identiteetin ja sen elementit, jotka ovat logo, värit, kirjaisimet, brändihahmo, pakkaussuunnittelu, brändin äänensävy ja bränditarina. Näiden lisäksi esitellään myös suunnitteluprosessi versioineen ja luonnoksineen ennen valmiita elementtejä. Prosessin aikana syntyneiden brändielementtien tavoitteena on viestiä bränditarinaa ja -persoonaa uskottavasti ja yhdenmukaisesti eri kanavissa ja kosketuspisteissä sekä erottaa brändi kilpailijoistaan.

Asiasanat: Brändi, brändäys, graafinen suunnittelu, pakkaussuunnittelu, brändi-identiteetti, brändin pääoma

Contents

List of abbreviations (or) symbols **6**

1 Introduction **8**

1.1 Introduction and aim of the thesis 8

1.2 4Fire 8

1.3 Mission, vision, SWOT 9

1.4 Problem statement 10

2 Theory and methods of branding **12**

2.1 The importance of branding 12

2.2 Product versus Brand 12

2.3 Methods of creating and evaluating the brand 13

2.4 The chosen methods for brand evaluation and development 14

2.4.1 Value proposition canvas 15

2.4.2 Empathy map canvas 16

2.4.3 Design criteria canvas 17

2.4.4 Brand equity model 18

3 The competitive environment **23**

3.1 Market signals and trends 23

3.2 Competitor analysis, pricing 23

3.2.1 Design benchmarking 25

3.2.2 How to stand out from competitors: differentiation 27

4 Final brand identity and its elements **29**

4.1 Graphic design as a part of the brand strategy 29

4.2 Brand building vs graphic design 29

4.3 Brand identity elements 29

4.4 Logo 30

4.4.1 Briefing and first ideas 30

4.4.2 Mystical animals 32
4.4.3 The final logo 33
4.5 Colors 36
4.6 The fox character 36
4.7 Typefaces 38
4.8 Packaging design 40
4.8.1 Sustainability in packaging design 40
4.8.2 Packaging design process 41
4.9 Brand tone of voice 44
4.10 4Fire brand story 45
4.10.1 Defining the tone of voice 46

5 Conclusions 49
5.1 Assessment of the project 49
5.2 Future development of the brand 50
5.3 Brand Nurturing 50
5.4 The future of branding 51

Sources 53

List of abbreviations (or) symbols

Abbreviation	Explanation of abbreviation (Source)
Benchmarking	Benchmarking is the process of comparing product, process, or service with their successful competitors. The goal is to identify the best practices used in the competitive field and detect weaknesses of the product or service that is under development. Benchmarking will help to establish strategies for improvement and implementation of the solution. (Erlhoff & Marshal 2007, 45).
Brand & Branding	A brand is a name, design or symbol that differentiates, using added value, the products, or services from competition. The term brand can be applied to products, services and people and it can be shown for example in marketing, advertising, sales, PR, and design. Branding is the process of branding which is purposefully initiated and guided. (Erlhoff & Marshal 2007, 50, 56).
Brand identity	Brand identity is the visual expression of a brand such as the logo(type), symbol and typography (Gronlund 2013, 4).
Brand image	Brand image is the collection of impressions of how the brand is seen in the customers mind (Gronlund 2013, 4).
(Brand) tone of voice	Brand tone of voice is the way of communicating the brand persona with the audience through planned selection of words and writing style (Grammarly Business. 2021).
Fine particle / Particulate matter	Particulate matter is the general term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets in the air. Fine particles are

characterized by their sizes as the health effects vary according to their diameter: PM10: Particulate Matter (particles with diameter of micrometers or less), PM2.5: Particulate Matter (particles with diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less). (Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and parks. 2010).

Sustainability / Environmental design

Sustainability / Environmental design is a framework including the use of nontoxic, renewable materials, recycling of products and preservation of natural resources (Erlhoff & Marshal 2007, 149).

SWOT SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is a framework used to evaluate a company's competitive position and to develop strategic planning. SWOT analysis assesses internal and external factors, as well as current and future potential. (Kenton, W. 2022).

USP Unique Selling Proposition or Unique Selling Point refers to the distinguishable feature of a product or brand differing it from the competition. The feature can be any characteristic of a product relating to form, interface, service, new function, cost etc. (Erlhoff & Marshal 2007, 431).

Value proposition Value proposition is the idea or of a developer/seller how to provide value for their customers (Spencer 2013, 3).

1 Introduction

1.1 Aim of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to create a credible brand identity for a new ecological company by utilizing commonly used brand building methods and tools. In the thesis my aim is, in addition to this customer project, to familiarize myself with the above-mentioned tools and methods so they could also be used for my future brand building projects.

Branding process usually consists of research, strategy & design stages and results in implementation or execution phase of coherent brand identity. It is important to find the right balance between research and design as focusing solely on one will result either lack of substance or innovation. (Bilekov 2022). In this thesis I will mainly utilize the brand building tools on research and strategy phases and create the design basing on those stages. Ideally this process will lead to memorable and meaningful visual brand identity.

In this thesis I introduce the final brand identity and its elements: logo, colors, typefaces, character, brand tone of voice and brand story. I will also present the design process and evaluation of the proposals before the final approved versions.

During the process I will gain a better understanding of various brand building tools and methods, know which ones to use in different kind of projects, and also get better picture of what kind of information is needed from a customer in the very beginning of the project. By testing different tools, I will get understanding which ones are applicable to use in future projects. This will lead to better structured and organized workflow which reduces unnecessary work and makes pricing for me as an entrepreneur more straightforward.

1.2 4Fire

4Fire is a brand name invented by the owners of Promotrade Scandinavia & Balticum company. 4Fire wants to be the first truly eco-friendly, innovative, and Finnish product line of fire starter products. The first launched product is an ecological fire starter gel which releases only water vapor in the atmosphere when combusted. Traditional commercial fire starters are often made of fossil fuels. They might contain kerosene, paraffin or paraffin wax which are derived from petroleum, whereas 4Fire products contain none of those harmful ingredients.

The product is targeted to consumers looking for easy-to-use and ecological fire starter products. Fire starter gel can be used both indoors and outdoors as it is free from odor, smoke, and harmful chemicals.

4Fire also wants to maintain as high Finnish origin as it can, not only when it comes to the ingredients of the product itself but also the packaging materials. The aim is to generate as little waste as possible by using materials that can be recycled or even burned while using the product with the least possible emissions.

Finland is a land of summerhouses and fireplaces. According to careful estimations, there are approximately two million fireplaces in Finland. Residential wood combustion is a major source of black carbon and fine particle emissions in Finland (Savolahti et al. 2016, 1). This issue has been widely on the Finnish news last few years and consumers are therefore more interested in ways of reducing emissions from fireplaces and sauna stoves. 4Fire products are designed to help consumers to follow safest and easiest practices of fireplace operation. In addition to consumers, the fire starter gel can be also used by professionals whenever pyrotechnics are needed.

1.3 Mission, vision, SWOT

4Fire Business plan states that the company's mission is to provide safe, sustainable, easy, and effective ways to start fire in various fireplaces and occasions according to environmentally sustainable standards. In addition to fire starter products, 4Fire also provides education and guidance on correct fireplace operation. 4Fire concept is developed to serve anyone involved in domestic wood combustion, including not only consumers but also professionals such as chimney sweepers. 4Fire pursues to educate people how to avoid harmful emissions caused by impure combustion. The scope is also to cooperate with different domestic operators such as Nuohousalan keskusliitto (Chimney sweeper organization), Tulisijayhdistys (Fireplace association) and Vapaapalokunta (Volunteer fire department). Joint ventures with various operators not only contribute to carbon neutrality and healthiness of people but can also improve the quality of air.

4Fire vision is to inspire change and increase knowledge of society about the dangers of incorrect operation of fireplaces. The goal is within three years to achieve a stable position in the marketplace with the help of 4Fire product line. Ultimately, 4Fire wants to attain a stable position also in international marketplace in addition to Finnish markets.

SWOT

Strengths: 4Fire can have a notable influence on climate protection by offering sustainable fire starter products and education for both consumers and professionals. Company's goal is to help to reduce harmful emissions. Products are superior quality, made in Finland and can be modified to meet the needs of the purchaser (viscosity of the gel, color of the flames and packaging size can be adjusted). Fire starter gel is unique on its category.

Weaknesses: New brand and product require considerable number of resources to gain awareness and sales. These are for example investments in product development, production, distribution, and advertising.

Opportunities: Starter gel is new, interesting, and sustainable innovation which also has potential for international market in multiple customer segments.

Threats: Entering to the established market where consumers may be used to buy certain brands or products can be challenging. Getting visibility as a new brand can be difficult.

Potential customer is anyone operating domestic fireplaces both nationally and internationally. Additionally, fire safety trainers, theatre and movie industries, pyro technique specialists, defense forces and event organizers are potential professional users.

1.4 Problem statement

To create a relevant branding solution, it was important to understand the challenges 4Fire would be facing when entering the market. The first step was to break down the problems and trying to find solutions to underlying challenges.

How to create a credible ecological brand which not only stands out from the competition but also attracts customers and leads to sales? There are a few challenges to tackle, mostly with creating awareness and differentiating from competitors with limited resources. How to communicate sustainability, educate people and at the same time provide truly sustainable product true to company values without increasing the manufacturing costs significantly?

Newly started firms naturally have higher costs than established firms when launching new products. Established companies are able to purchase high quantities of raw materials with lower price, and they also have their processes already in place. That leads to higher cash flow which enables investments to new equipment and technologies. (Porter 2008, 50).

One way for a newly started company to distinguish from their competition is by differentiation rather than competing with the price. This could be done by offering a product that is perceived as unique in the marketplace industry. The differentiation can be done for example by design or brand, technology, features, or customer service. When differentiation is truly achieved, it will help to produce above average returns. (Porter 2008, 86 - 87). The price point for 4Fire products is notably higher than most of its competitors in the category. Therefore, the logical differentiating factor relates to their innovative product and its features. To support the innovativeness 4Fire decided also to invest on packaging design as this will be important marketing channel and differentiating factor for them. The risk with differentiation is that the brand loyalty will not hold when the price difference between the low-cost competitors and differentiated products is too high. The other significant risk is equivalent products launched to the market which narrows the perceived differentiation. (Porter 2008, 100). Fortunately, 4Fire starter gel is at the moment one of its kind and not so prone to copying as products in the mostly counterfeited categories such as footwear, medicine and clothing accessories (Richter, F. 2019).

Sustainable, ecological, green and many claims alike are often seen in products and brands, but it is not always so easy to define what is truly sustainable. Nowadays customers do more value-based purchasing decisions than before, price not being the only driving factor anymore. In growing number, the market has shown signs of a merger in customer purchasing behavior between consumer perception of quality and ecological values. Green is going mainstream: consumers demanding for the best quality are also attracted to the eco-friendly solutions. (Dougherty 2008, 31).

At the same time consumers are getting more educated, so a simple green color or recycling claims are not enough for conscious customers. Credible and successful “green” brand needs

to be built by a designer who is aware of the environmental effects of the decisions they make concerning for example materials, printing methods and type of colors etc. The assessment of sustainability is not a matter of ethics. It is actually fairly straightforward calculation: either we are degrading our natural systems, or we are not. (Dougherty 2008, 35).

In best cases truly ecological companies can affect to broader market areas by shifting the competitive landscape for major industries. (Dougherty 2008, 19). Green design is commonly more challenging than “normal” design due to struggle against status quo. Additionally looking for alternative sustainable options can be time and resource consuming. (Dougherty 2008, 26).

The final decisions are usually made, sustainability being on the one end of the scale and expenses and resources on the other end. In this case 4Fire has limited resources so it is important to find the right balance between ecological solutions and profitability. Fortunately, ecological materials and methods are being developed rapidly, so novel solutions can be implemented as soon as they are achievable.

2 Theory and methods of branding

2.1 The importance of branding

Why do companies need branding? Why it is important? Why branding is worth investing? In our increasingly complex world, consumers face more choices relating to brands with less time to make them than ever before. In the saturated markets the importance of strong brands is getting more vital. A strong brand can simplify decision making, reduce risk and set expectations. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 33)

Brands delivering on their promise are the ones that dominate the market. As researches show, companies with strong brands achieve 1,9 times higher returns than their industry average (Gronlund 2013, 1). Brand is much more than just a product as it usually also has intangible dimensions, differentiating it from other products that aim to satisfy the same need. The differences are not always related to product performance or quality, but they have more to do with symbolic or emotional features of the product. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 34). These differences may make the product more desirable for customers or they might be willing to pay more than for competitors' products. It takes less time and resources from a customer to buy a brand which they know delivers and satisfies their needs in addition to making comparison between multiple options. A customer can assume that the quality and characteristics are on the level they have been with the previous purchases too. This loyalty for the brand provides predictability of demand and therefore makes it harder for the competitors to enter the same market. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 36-39; Salinas 2009, 19).

Strong brands get more visibility than their competitors. Visibility helps to make the brand relevant for consumers. To be relevant, the brand requires awareness and credibility. Both of these assets are driven by visibility. It is common to human nature to like the familiar, as exposure increases liking, although the connection can also happen subconsciously. Consumers assume that a brand they see more often than competitor brands is probably accepted and liked by the marketplace. For unknown brands consumers are more doubtful whether they will deliver on their promise. (Aaker 2018, 37).

2.2 Product versus Brand

A product can be any kind of goods that is being sold to customers in exchange for money. A brand distinguishes from other comparable products by its uniqueness. A brand has a character that is communicated through its visuals and marketing. Whereas products and manufacturing methods are fairly easy to imitate and copy, lasting impressions of the brand consumers have, are not so easily reproduced. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 39).

Not all products are the same though, there are different levels in products too when it comes to meaning. According to Keller and Swaminathan (2020, 32), a product can be defined by five

levels of meaning: Core benefit, Generic product, Expected product, Augmented product and potential product level.

For fire starters these levels could be seen as such:

1. Core benefit level (fundamental need or want): Lighting a fire with using additional aids as well as lighter and matches.
2. Generic product level (a basic version with absolutely necessary functions): A product that makes lighting a fire easier and faster, comes in a package and with affordable price.
3. Expected product level (set of attributes normally customers expect to get): Should be easy to purchase, simple and safe to use and store.
4. Augmented product level (additional features separating the product from its competitors): toxic free, safe to inhale, ecofriendly, package could be also burned after use.
5. Potential product level (the future transformations that the product might undergo in the future): 3 in 1 fire starter product: One product that could be used for starting the fire (like matches) but also making it easier to light a fireplace and maintaining the fire.

2.3 Methods of creating and evaluating the brand

The key to successful brand-building is to understand the process of branding, to know what the brand stands for and how to communicate that identity (Aaker 1996, 66). A great brand is the product of carefully accomplishing a series of logically linked actions or brand building blocks, in connection to consumers. These actions should be seen as goals to achieve so they are taken seriously, and they get the attention they need. To understand the brand uniqueness, the consumer needs some frame of reference of the brand and its competitive environment. Although the starting point or timeframe may differ from project to another, the same brand building blocks must take place to create a truly strong brand and create resonance with consumers. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 126).

So, where the brand building ideas come from? The most important thing is to have lots of ideas to choose from. Great ideas can come from anywhere but there are some common methods that can help discovering them. The most typical way is to find a company or an organization that has been successful in finding solutions to a similar problem you are trying to find solutions for. The search should not be limited only to organizations on the same area of business but should be looked more broadly. (Aaker 2014, 117).

2.4 The chosen methods for brand evaluation and development

There are several different brand / product / service / customer evaluation and development methods available. Methods aim to provide better understanding for example of the competitive market, customer segments, brand value or give guidance to the brand building process.

Altogether, they all aim for the same goal: to build strong brands which will generate awareness and therefore profitability. Customer centricity is in the heart of branding, especially nowadays when product and service information and reviews are more easily available than ever before. Customers, particularly millennials are attracted to brands that share their values, so just having an excellent product is not enough anymore for a brand to be successful.

To differentiate from other brands on the market, it is important to know the competition and identify the target audience to know how to attract them. All these different tools help to make conscious decisions regarding strategic brand positioning and identity. Out from the different options I selected four (4) tools which I believed would give me all-round information and guides for the brand building process. I chose Value proposition canvas to map customer values and needs, Empathy map canvas to give me insights of customer segments, Design criteria canvas to better understand the goals for a successful brand in this particular case, and Brand Equity model to map ways to create value for the brand.

Some components of the tools first felt partially overlapping others, but actually gave a different angle on the same problem. For example, in Empathy map canvas customer thoughts and feelings were similar to product gain creators on Value proposition canvas: the product should be giving solutions to customers wanting to find sustainable, safe product that is easy to use. Ecological values, innovativeness and easiness of use stood out on all methods as an important and differentiating factor.

All of these tools helped me to better understand what kind of information I as a designer need to collect from my customer to succeed in the project. I was familiar with all other tools (Value proposition canvas, Empathy map canvas and Design criteria canvas), except Keller's brand equity model. Likely that was the reason it felt the most laborious to work with. It took some time to understand the method but from all of methods, it seemed the most thorough one.

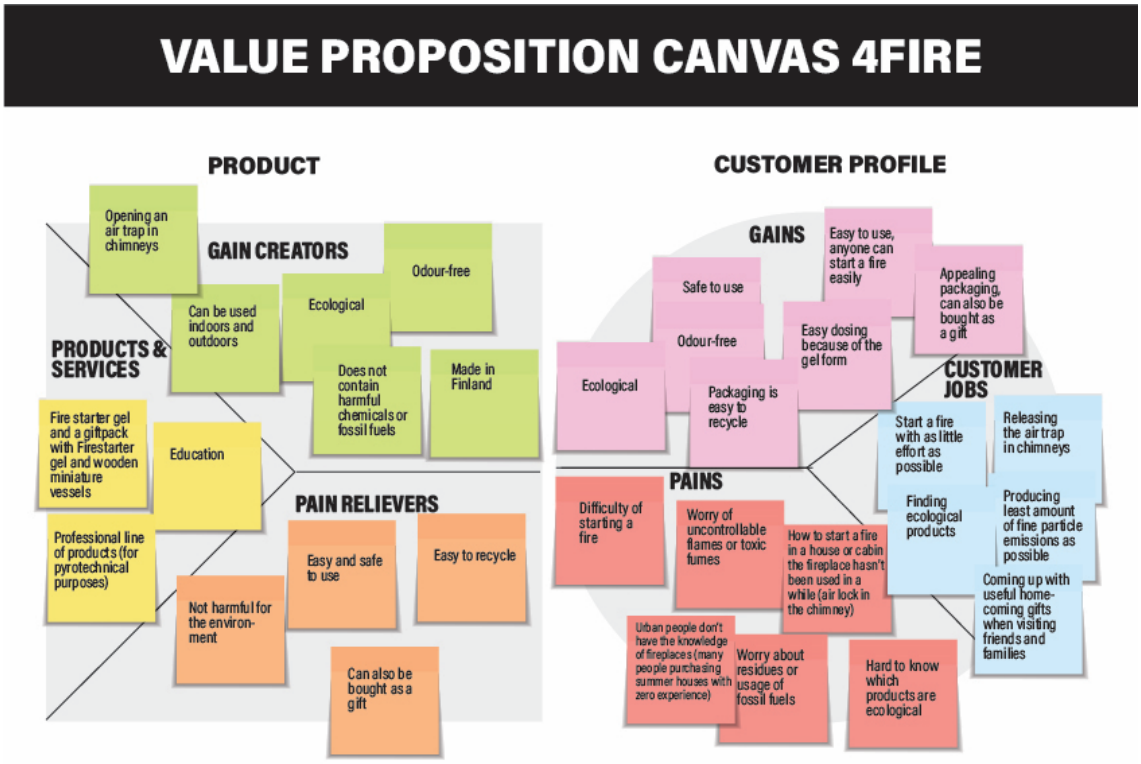
I mostly wanted to explore different methods in action to see which ones I would feel most useful also for future projects, taking in consideration how laborious they were in respect of how much and what kind of insight they gave. For example, for new brands, Design criteria canvas would be good place to start as it gives straightforward boundaries. For established brands I would use Brand equity model to map where the brand stands at the moment and where it should be heading. Empathy map is excellent tool when trying to better understand and empathize with customer thoughts and being able to meet their needs. Value proposition would work perfectly especially for product development projects, whether it is a totally new product or existing one that needs refining.

All tools are visual, which helps to see all the aspects and their relations at the same time. I see myself using all these methods, not likely in same project though, in the future.

2.4.1 Value proposition canvas

Value proposition is the idea (or educated guess) of how to provide value to customers (Spencer 2013, 3). Dr Alexander Osterwalder developed The Value Proposition Canvas as a tool for modelling the relationship between customer segments and value propositions. The Canvas can be used either when refining an existing product or service or creating a new one. (B2B International, 2022). The canvas is divided in two sections: customer profile and product/service that is being developed. The idea of using this canvas is to better understand customer needs (customer jobs, pains, and gains) and uncover a product/service which answers to those needs (Product, gain creators and pain relievers).

I wanted to utilize Value position canvas for defining what kind of gains I could give to the customer with my work, mostly relating to design and packaging design. As seen in the canvas (picture 1), most of the gains and pain relievers are related to easiness of use, safety, ecological values, and appealing appearance.



Picture 1. Value Proposition Canvas.

2.4.2 Empathy map canvas

Empathy map canvas was developed by Dave Gray as a part of a human-centered design toolkit called Gamestorming. The tool's purpose is to help teams develop understanding and empathy towards other people. It can be used for example to improve customer experience and design better work environments. (Gray, 2017).

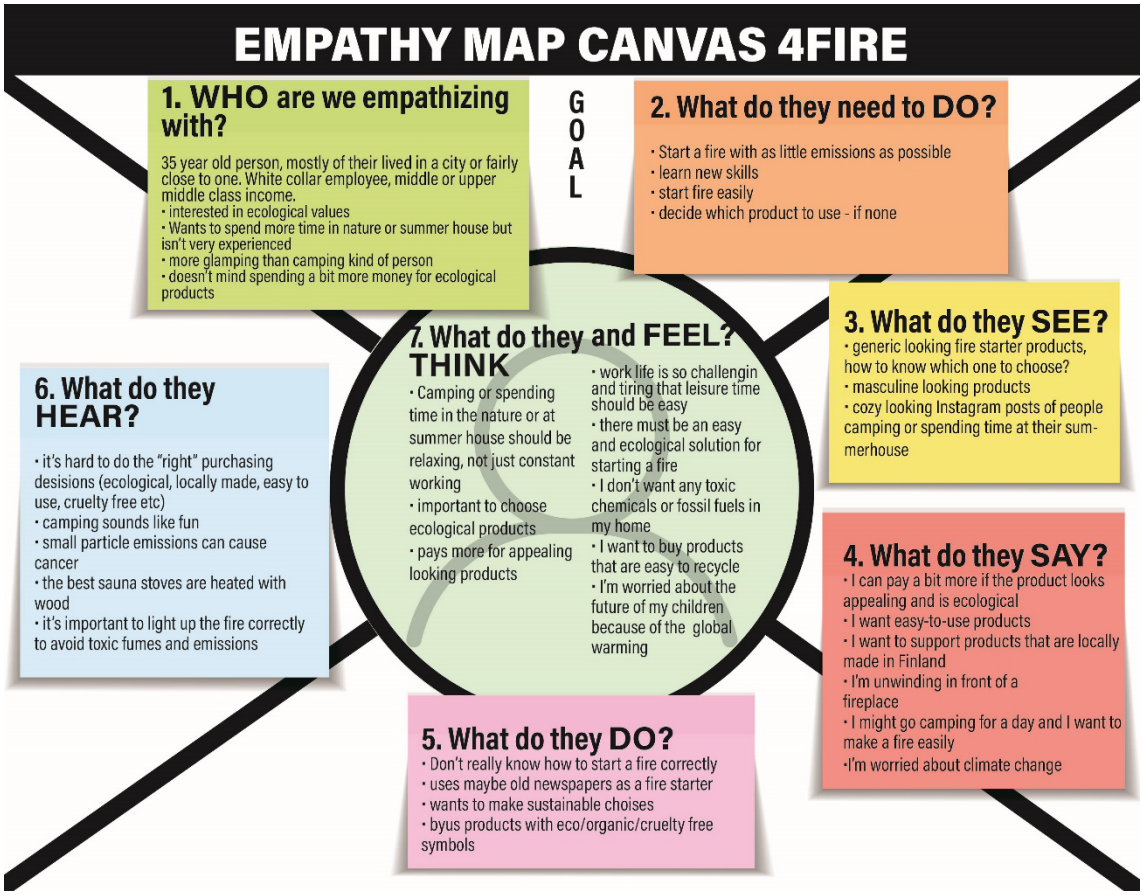
There are several versions of the map available, but I decided to use the latest revised map as Gray (2017) states it is now more usable and delivers better outcomes than previous versions.

When using the empathy map, according to Gray (2017), the first step is to define who will be the subject of empathy. To get the best possible outcome, the canvas should be filled in correct order, starting from

1. Who are we empathizing with and moving from there clockwise to
2. What do they need to do
3. What do they see
4. What do they say
5. What do they do
6. What do they hear
7. And What do they think and feel? (Gray, 2017).

There are some similarities between empathy canvas and value proposition canvas, both aiming for the same result with slightly different angle. Gray (2017) indeed implies that these two could be used in parallel where the Empathy map is a great input for a value proposition design exercise.

When looking at filled Empathy Canvas (picture 2), I found that with this customer I was empathizing with, the most important thing was easiness of use and ecological values of the product. The customer has lived most of his/her life in a city and therefore is not very experienced when it comes to camping or tasks at hand in summer houses. This customer is educated about harmful emissions and wants to do his/her best avoiding them. On the other hand, this customer also wants to buy products that makes his/her life easier.



Picture 2. Empathy Map Canvas.

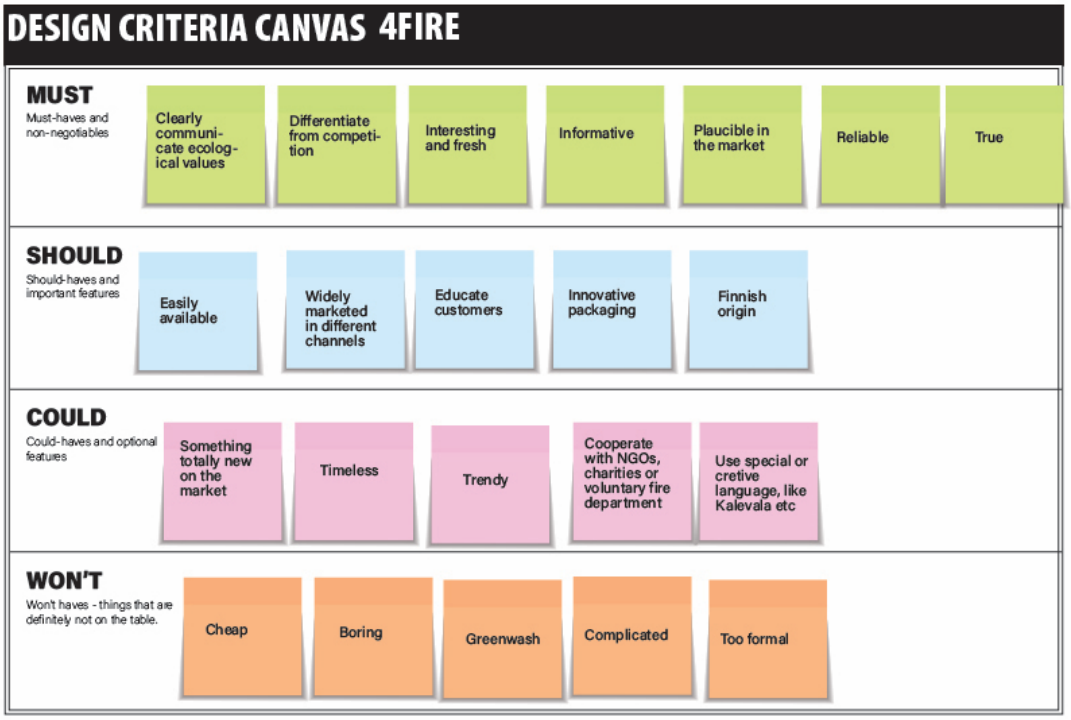
2.4.3 Design criteria canvas

Design criteria provides a foundation and boundaries to help to guide the decisions along the design journey. (Van Der Pijl et al. 2016, 52). The canvas helps to define the most crucial elements in the vision, called the MoSCoW method. MoSCoW method categorizes elements under "Must," "Should," "Could" or "Won't" which helps prioritizing the definitions. "Must" section includes all the nonnegotiable elements, "Should" the ones that are important, "Could" things that would be nice to have and Won't elements that the concept cannot have. It is normal that during the process these elements need to be rearranged to meet up with the vision. (Van Der Pijl et al. 2016, 70).

I found the Design criteria canvas especially useful, clear, and easy to use. I decided to approach the 4Fire desired brand image instead of product, which features I naturally cannot have an influence on (picture 3). "Must" haves are mostly related to values (reliable, honest, informative and reasons why customer should be prepared to pay more or be interested of the brand in the first place (ecological, different, interesting, fresh).

"Should" segment includes things that would be nice to have but might be too resource intensive (wide availability, customer education, innovative packaging or solely Finnish origin on all materials used).

“Could” segment consists of values and elements that would be nice to have (something completely new, trendy, timeless, using creative language or cooperating with NGOs) but might not be needed in order to be successful.



Picture 3. Design Criteria Canvas.

2.4.4 Brand equity model

Brand Equity model (or Customer-Based Brand Equity/CBBE Model) was developed by marketing professor Kevin Lane Keller. The model, shaped as a pyramid, is a tool illustrating the brand building blocks needed to follow to build strong brand equity. Strong brand equity creates more revenue as customer will not only buy more and be loyal to the brand, but they will also recommend the brand to other people. (Mindtools, 2022).

Brand building can be seen as a sequence of steps, where the steps are built from bottom to top, and the next step cannot be stepped on before the previous one is finished. The steps are fundamental questions that customers, often also unconsciously, ask about the brand.

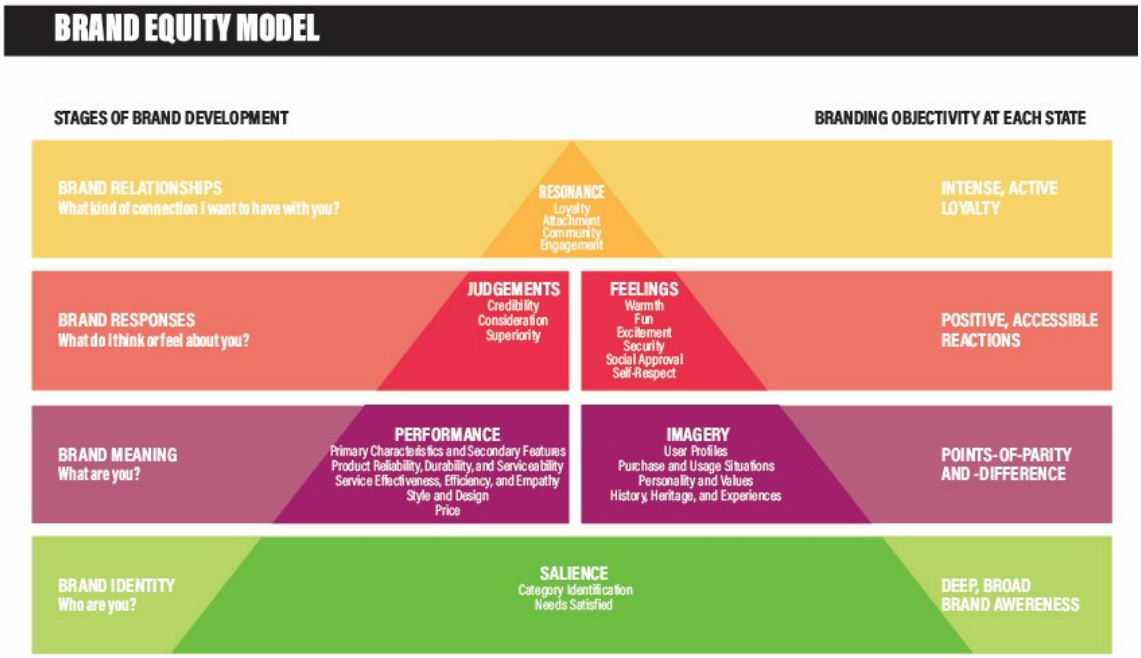
The four levels of the pyramid, as well as the six building blocks they contain, are:

1. Who are you? Brand Identity – salience (bottom of the pyramid).
2. What are you? Brand Meaning – performance and imagery (second level of the pyramid).

3. What do I think or feel about you? Brand Responses – customer feelings and judgments (third level of pyramid).
4. What kind of connection I want to have with you? Brand Relationships – resonance (top of the pyramid). (Keller 2013, 108; Mindtools, 2022).

According to Keller (2013, 108) the brand building pyramid is structured of six brand building blocks: Salience, Performance, Imagery, Judgements, Feelings and Resonance. The blocks on the left side can be seen more rational whereas the blocks on the right side represent more emotional approach. Both sides are important for most of the strong brands.

As 4Fire is a new brand under development, it is impossible to know yet how the customers will actually perceive the brand. Therefore, I used the Brand Equity model to analyze where the brand wants to be and how position itself and what kind of emotions it hopes to arise. These definitions will give guidance for marketing plans and hopefully lead the brand image towards higher brand equity. I first go through the different steps and building bricks of Brand equity model (picture 4), give some real-life examples of them and then use the model for 4Fire brand.



Picture 4. Keller's Brand Equity model.

Brand Identity / Salience

To achieve the right brand identity, the brand needs to have salience with customers. Brand salience measures awareness of the brand, like how easily it is recalled or recognized which then helps to define what types of reminders are necessary. Awareness refers to customers' ability to remember and recognize the brand and connect the brand elements to associations in memory. (Keller 2013, 108 - 112). Ideally the brand is first to come to mind when thinking about the subject. First brands to come to mind (for Finnish consumers) could be for example

Fiskars when thinking about scissors, SINI when thinking about cleaning products and Abloy when thinking about locks. All these were on TOP10 list of most valuated brands by Finnish consumers in 2022 (Taloustutkimus, 2022). All of these brands have both good salience and awareness. However, it might not be so clear with all product categories. What brand comes to mind when thinking of fire starters? Customer might not recall any brands. That may be an advantageous position to start building brand awareness as the market is not yet dominated by strong brands.

4Fire Brand Identity / Salience: 4Fire is a brand developing sustainable fire starter products. 4Fire cares about our environment and wants to educate its customers how they can reduce harmful emissions. Although the mission is serious, the style of communication is positive. 4Fire's different, personal approach, which is something that is not seen in the category before, will get attention which hopefully leads to purchases. When customers actually try the product, they get to know the quality and will make more purchases. *Claims: Reliable, worth the investment, different from competition, easy to recognize.*

Brand Meaning

Performance: The product or service which fully satisfies or even surpass customers' needs is at the heart of brand equity. The product or service defines primarily how the brand is perceived. Brand performance describes how well the customers' functional needs such as quality are met by the product. **Imagery:** Brand imagery depends on the brand attempts to meet customers' psychological or social needs. Imagery is more about the intangible and abstract aspects of the brand which customers from their own experience or indirectly. (Keller 2013, 112 - 115).

Brand performance is like a backbone for the brand as it meets mostly the physical needs of a consumer where imagery relates to emotional needs. These aspects together create the brand meaning and personality: what the brand means and stands for the consumers.

Furniture conglomerate Ikea is a fitting example of a brand that has both brand performance and imagery carefully crafted. Ikea vision "To create a better everyday life for the many people" promises good quality, functional and sustainable home furnishing at affordable price. The brand meaning is well perceived by the customers as Ikea is the world's largest furniture retailer (Ikea, 2022).

4fire Brand Meaning: Judgements: 4Fire is a brand for high quality, sustainable products, using as much domestic raw materials as possible. Products are versatile and can be modified when necessary. 4Fire products are one of a kind in the market. They are sustainable and easy and safe to use. *Claims: Superior, high quality, aiming for credibility.* **Feelings:** Customers can feel guilt-free and relaxed with 4Fire products. Small things can matter. Nice to have visually appealing products in home. *Claims: Positive, youthful, exiting, interesting, modern, green.*

Brand Response

Customer responses, coming from head or heart, should always be positive and accessible and come to mind when consumers think of the brand (Keller 2013, 121).

Judgements: Brand judgements are customer's subjective opinions of the brand. The judgements are formed by putting together brand performance and imagery associations. Positive brand perceptions are important, but it is vital that the customer also considers the brand for purchase or use. Customer needs to find the brand personally relevant for to even consider it. **Feelings:** Customers emotional responses and reactions to the brand are called brand feelings. Brand feelings can be positive or negative and evoke all kind of feelings relating to the brand or customers' feelings about themselves or others. (Keller 2013, 117 - 119).

Fazer is one of the most loved Finnish brands. This year it was the second most valued brand in Finland (Taloustutkimus, 2022). For years Karl Fazer milk chocolate has also been the best seller of the Finnish confection category despite all new products entering the market. Fazer states that consumers have a special and strong, many generations lasting relationship especially with Karl Fazer Milk Chocolate brand (Fazer, 2022). Fazer's strong Brand response therefore leads not only to valuable brand but also market dominance.

4Fire Brand Response: Performance: Delivers promises, primarily efficient and safe product, secondarily sustainable and innovative. Personal and emphatical customer service. *Claims: efficient, safe, easy, reliable, good service, emphatical, fresh design, higher price than most of the competitors due to quality.* **Imagery:** Users are mostly urban young to middle aged people, more women than men, usage in home + summer houses + camping/"glamping", ecological values, new innovative product (short history). *Claims: youthful, relaxed, easy, modern, soft values, cares about nature and animals.*

Brand Relationship / Resonance

Brand resonance is the nature of relationship and level of identification between the brand and the customer. The goal is to reach such a level of resonance that the customers not only buy the products, but they also become free brand ambassadors by recommending them to others. Resonance consumers have with the brands can be defined by its intensity level or activity built by loyalty. The mental attachment and sense of community are measured by the brand intensity level. Activity is measured by consumer behavior when it comes to frequency of purchase or engagement of brand activities, latter not leading to purchase decisions. (Keller 2013, 121 – 123; Mindtools, 2022).

High brand resonance is the ultimate aim - and the most difficult to accomplish of the brand pyramid steps - for any brand. For example, Apple, Harley-Davidson, and Disney are considered as worldwide brands with a remarkably high brand resonance (BA theories, 2022). Their customers have a deep, loyal relationship with the brand. They not only want to buy their products, but also feel that their values and emotions are synchronized with the brand. In the Finnish market, Fiskars is the most valued brand of 2022 (Taloustutkimus, 2022) and it has held its strong position for years. The brand has so high resonance that many Finns talk in their daily lives about Fiskars (the brand) when they actually just mean scissors (a tool). As Fiskars

group webpage states Fiskars orange-handled scissors are an icon of functional design with more than 1 billion sold items.

4Fire Brand Relationship / Resonance: 4Fire products are value for money and they are easy to recognize, recall and tell apart from the competitors. Brand shares same values than customers and it is true to its ideology. Products satisfy needs so well that customers want to recommend them for their peers. *Claims: Reliable, best for me, stylish, speaks my language, same values.*

3 The competitive environment

3.1 Market signals and trends

Market signals are any actions made by competitors that provide valuable information. They provide indication of competitors' intentions, motives, goals, or internal situation. Most of competitors' behavior carries information that is helpful when conducting a competitor analysis or formulating a strategy. Recognizing and reading market signals has a key role when developing competitive strategy. (Porter 2008, 145.).

Consumer purchasing behavior is not always aligned with what they say. For example, studies show that consumers are willing to buy ecological products, but that claim does not often correlate with the sales figures. One purchasing barrier could be a perception that eco-friendly products may be poor in performance. On the other hand, green or socially responsible products are not always known or found by the customers. It is important for ecological brands to find the right balance between ecological end effectiveness claims. (Nielsen, 2015).

According to Nielsen study (2015) the top new product purchase drivers are affordability, convenience, and brand recognition. In addition, the top new product needs/desires are affordability, health & wellness, convenience, novelty and environmentally friendly. From these 4Fire brand is aiming to strike on the convenience, novelty and environmentally friendly trends and purchasing drivers.

Convenience is also a significant driver in the market according to Nielsen study (2015). Consumers are pressured by time and want to buy products that free up time to do valuable things. One-fifth of the respondents said they purchased a new product because it was convenient or made their life easier. Similar to that driver are also innovations that solve poorly performed tasks in consumers' lives. Successful innovations require understanding of the consumer needs and desires. When the innovation is in place, the marketing should be planned accordingly, keeping in mind that the top drivers of awareness are peer recommendations, television ads and active search. All brands, but especially ones with small marketing budgets, should focus closely on packaging design. In-store presence together with appealing packaging design can grow the business significantly. (Nielsen, 2015).

3.2 Competitor analysis, pricing

In the beginning of the branding process, I conducted a competitor analysis hoping to get a better picture what kind of products are available in the category. At the first stage of fire starter gel launch, majority of the markets are in Finland, so the main focus was on domestic competitors.

4Fire products are more expensive than most of the equivalent products on the market. However, direct comparison is not easy to make as there are not any ecological fire starter gels available on the domestic category. Also, 4Fire fire starter is sold in a box with wooden dosage

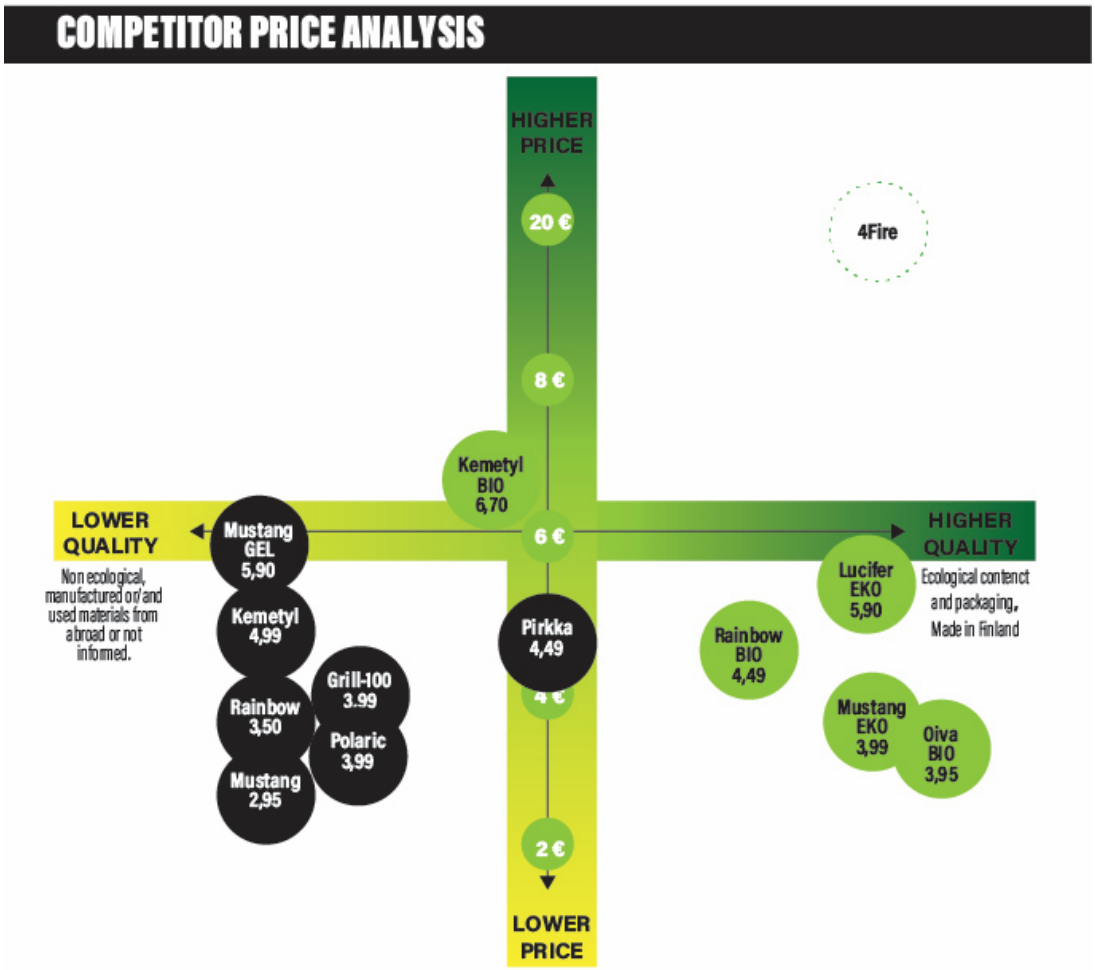
vessels unlike any competitors' products. It is common in product launch cases that the retail price either will be higher towards consumers and/or retailers, or the manufacturer gains smaller profits. That is caused by the lower volumes on raw materials and on the other hand higher cost on manufacturing because of the startup costs.

Most of the fire starter fluids on the market are on the price range of 3-6 euros whereas 4Fire product's planned price point is closer to 20 euros (picture 5).

4Fire product's Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is that it is one of a kind, the only ecological fire starter gel on the market. USP is what sets a brand apart from others by having characters new to the market. USP tells customers why they should choose that brand's product instead of others. Instead of attempting to stand for everything (such as lowest price and highest quality and the widest range of products) it is better to focus on the one core factor that differentiates the product or brand from the competition. Otherwise, there is a risk that while trying to become known for everything, the brand becomes known for nothing. (Patel, N. 2022).

There are many ecological fire starter liquids on the market and few non-ecological fire starter gels. To differentiate from competition, it is important to communicate to customers what do they gain with this product and why they should pay more comparison to equivalent products, already on the market. The disadvantage of being first in the market is the need to spend heavily to overcome existing customer loyalties. This process usually involves start-up losses and takes extended periods of time. (Porter 2008, 45).

Another challenge to overcome is accessing to distribution channels. The retail chains are the biggest sales channel and competition is fierce. New entrants must persuade the retailers to choose their products with measures that usually reduce their profits. These measures could be promotions, exclusive right for sales, advertising allowances or intense selling efforts to the retailer. Quite often competitors already may have ties with channels based on a long relationship. (Porter 2008, 48).



Picture 5. Competitor price analysis.

3.2.1 Design benchmarking

Packaging is this product's most seen and visible marketing channel, so I mostly benchmarked packaging design solutions (picture 6 and 7). I then quickly noticed that most of the domestic competitors resemble each other when it comes to design, colors, and elements. So, for the sake of getting broader spectrum of divergent designs I decided to also analyze the category globally (picture 8).

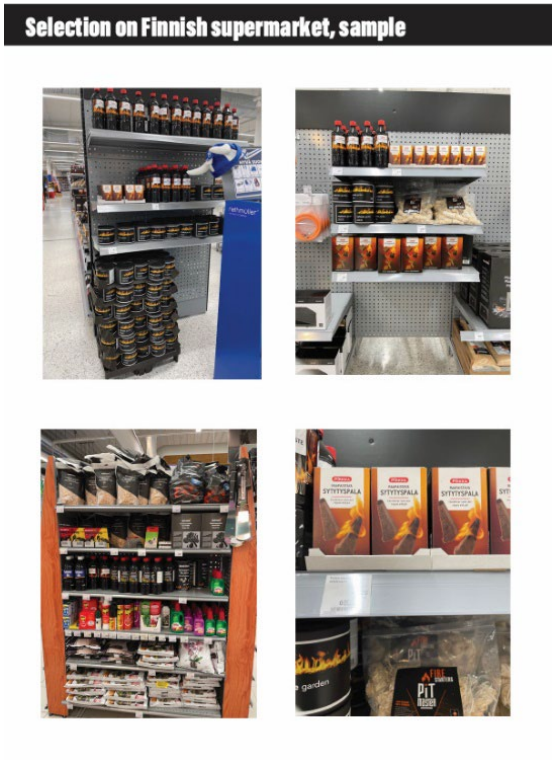
Most of the fire starter products available on the domestic market are dominantly black in color, especially when looking at the fluids. Designs are mostly masculine or only plain informative. This might be also due to selection of many private label or generic supermarket brands which are often very plain when it comes to design elements. The plain look conforms with consumer expectations about pricing. (Erlhoff & Marshal 2007, 289). In other words, affordable brands often want to avoid looking too polished.

The ecological products seem to rely on color green on their appearance. That is quite logical as green has been commonly associated with the nature and ecological values. However, customers are becoming more informed every day so simply a color would not convince them on products' ecological values. In any case, sustainability and ecology are complex factors involving not only the product and the packaging but also consumption of energy and natural resources during the production process. (Cattaneo & Lucibello 2014, 3).

Other than liquid format fire starters, for example wood cubes or bundles are more versatile when it comes to design. They are more colorful, and more images are used than in fire starter fluids packages. This could be also relating to the fact that there is more printable area on these boxes and bags comparison to bottles and their labels.

When examining the packaging design of the international product category, I noticed there is a wider range of color variations than in domestic market. Some producers rely on natural, recycled paper look in addition to natural colors to communicate that the product is environmentally friendly. Illustrations and pictures in the packages are mainly focused on rather obvious subjects such as the product itself or fire related images.

Picture 6. Sample of fire starter products sold in Finland.



Picture 7. Supermarket selection in Finland. Picture 8. Fire starter products on international market.

3.2.2 How to stand out from competitors: differentiation

Differentiation iso one of the most important strategies in competitive brand positioning. Humans are genetically hardwired to spot differences and are therefore drawn into brands that stand out from the crowd. The main strategies for meaningful and lasting differentiation are 1. Being first 2. Owning an attribute 3. Specializing. Strong brands may claim all of these attributes. (Yohn 2014, 156 - 159).

4Fire is first on the market when it comes to the form (gel) of the product and the packaging solution. According to Yohn (2014) being first on the market is a great advantage as then the brand can first create a demand and fill it. It is much harder to compete with brands that already have a strong position in their field, even when the product would be superior comparison to other products. Competitors are then facing a risk they seem outdated, imitative, or even boring.

Yohn (2014) states that it is also important to choose an unique attribute as it is really difficult to differentiate when using very common or vague attributes like “good service” or “quality products”. For 4Fire brand this attribute can not only relate to ecological values, as these are already seen on the market. Instead 4Fire is innovative, approachable and its products are easy and safe to use. 4fire’s unique attribute is innovativeness which is shown throughout the brand. None of the brands on the market has their own memorable character as 4Fire has. The fox character (presented in chapter 4.5.) brings nature closer to customers. It is easy to remember, and it is distinctive way to communicate brand values and product features.

Whereas competition is rather serious and generic, 4Fire wants to stand out as the most personal and memorable fire starter brand on the market. Natural, approachable, cute, and emotionally appealing character gives potential consumers a compelling reason to consider purchasing 4Fire products.

Strong brands – or lighthouse brands – are driven by strong differentiation. Specializing will lead to reputation of becoming known as an expert for that market. Instead of providing everything to everyone and therefore making it exceedingly difficult to differentiate, brands should design a business that appeals to specially to a type of customer. (Yohn 2014, 156 – 159; Aaker 1996). One might say that 4fire is a breeze of fresh air within its category. Being the only playful, innovative, and design-driven brand with a compelling story, it will stand out from its competitors.

4 Final brand identity and its elements

4.1 Graphic design as a part of the brand strategy

It is a general misconception that branding and graphic design are the same thing. Or that brand equals logo. However, although visual cues like logos and colors are vital elements of a brand, branding goes beyond visual elements. Branding consists of the whole customer experience, personal connection with the customer and separates a brand from its competitors.

Graphic design and branding are inseparable parts of a brand strategy. Graphic design communicates the brand story and persona in a compelling and consistent way throughout different channels and touchpoints. A strong brand must have great visuals, but they alone cannot make a successful brand. On the other hand, a brand strategy needs visual elements to be expressed. Visual presentation is highly important, as humans are visual beings. Half of the human brain is devoted to visual information processing. Brains excellent memory for images outdoes the ability to remember words. Images are stored in long-term memory unlike words we hear so they have a longer impact in receiver's mind. (Romih, 2016).

As Chris Ames from brand strategy firm Emotive Brand (2018) states: Graphic design feeds your brand, your brand feeds your business.

4.2 Brand building vs graphic design

All the methods utilized in this brand building case helped me to clarify the targeted brand identity and gave valuable input to the brand on a concept level. However, there is no definite answer of how the brand should realize into visual images and elements. Several various graphic interpretations of the brand identity could be all valid, memorable, and successful. Definite right or wrong answers are impossible to give. In this case the process of using the methods helped me to better understand the core values of the brand which drew boundaries for the graphic design ideation and execution. During the exercise I thoroughly realized that brand building and graphic design are indeed separate actions yet linked closely together. Graphic design process in this chapter is based on my personal knowledge. The design process has been developed by time and experience and unlike the brand building process intuition plays a significant part of it.

4.3 Brand identity elements

Brand elements are trademarkable aspects that identify and differentiate the brand. Main elements, applicable to 4Fire brand, are name, logo, character, and packaging. Brand elements are to enhance brand awareness and create favorable brand associations. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 143). Brand identity defines brand elements which dictate brand's

cohesive look, including the tone of voice how brand communicates, typefaces and colors to be used and so on. The brand elements should be unique, recognizable, adaptable, protectable, likeable, and coherent with the brand personality.

Brand elements are not just individual designs or attributes, but they form a brand unity. All elements should complement each other in order to form a credible brand identity. According to Gestalt theory the whole of design is greater than its parts. That is, the elements of the whole cannot be analyzed in isolation. Human brain will subconsciously attempt to simplify and organize complex visuals into organized system that creates a whole. This helps humans to better comprehend their living environment. (Chapman 2020).

4.4 Logo

Logos and symbols are valuable and versatile way to identify products and companies. Because of logos nonverbal character they are understood well throughout different cultures and withing product categories. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 156). However, a logo must acquire a meaning in the mind of a consumer, otherwise it will be just a mark. A strong logo is unique, it distinct from its competitors, and avoids clichés. As a logo will be likely used on various promotional materials it also needs to be versatile and functional. (Slade-Brooking 2016, 27). A well thought logo design contains versions for all possible scenarios from black and white to negative style and color variations for different printing methods. Symbols like logos evoke different responses in people due to many factors. A logo might represent values consumers like or hope to possess, it can be conscious or subconscious and might even relate to values they got in their upbringing. Despite the customer preferences, if branding is done right, the logo will resonate with consumers beyond the subjective awareness. (Starling 2011, 24). A successfully branded logo can become synonymous with the product to the point where it can be even more important or valuable than the physical product itself (Starling 2011, 76).

4.4.1 Briefing and first ideas

The whole visual part of the brand identity building process started with a logo design as that would set the style and tone for rest of the brand elements. Logo is also the main graphic representation of the brand, forming the first perception in customers' minds (Budelmann et al., 2010). Logo design was also a good pathway to learn what kind of style the customer had in mind for the project.

Briefing was verbally rather light, customer hoped to incorporate nature or ecological values into the design. I also received a visual mind map of images and ideas customer found interesting and appealing. The mind map contained some images where nature and fire were incorporated and some mood related images. I felt quite confident that I understood customer's desires basing on the verbal and visual briefing. In addition to the brief, I had received and collected information about competitors (domestic and abroad) as well as investigated current and predicted trends in the field of logo design.

I suggested to proceed with three presentation rounds: 1st one to see 3-4 different options on idea level, 2nd to further develop from the ones that seemed the most potential ones and the 3rd and final round to present the final version of the logo.

After meetings and brief I started the ideating process by collecting images, logos, fonts, color themes and slogans that were useful for the project. Mapping the brand idea by utilizing brand building methods gave me a valuable insight of the customer and also the marketplace. I also wrote down ideas I got from brainstorming which then led to new ideas. After collecting enough material, I then classified the ideas under different categories, such as nature, fire, figure 4 and related ideas and started to work on them.

1st round (picture 9): I presented 4 different versions that I named

1. Mystical animals
2. Cozy fire
3. Natural flame
4. Fire sprout

Mystical animals: Fox is a character often seen in Finnish folk stories. Foxes are seen as witty, smart, clever, and fast creatures with an initiating force of nature. In Finnish folk stories it is a common belief that a creature “fire fox” ran in the fjelds where its coat sparked and therefore lighted the northern lights. Interestingly enough, northern lights in Finnish language are directly translated to “fox fires”. Basing on my own experience of designing, I often have found that consumers tend to remember and relate to animal figures which are elements quite often used in logos and in packaging design. I have even heard consumers referring to product by the animal “the kangaroo wine”, “the crocodile shirt”, “the rabbit batteries” instead of the brand or product name. According to Aaker (1991, 126) symbols and visual images indeed are easier to learn and recall than a word. There was an also interesting connotation to fire and nature in the fox element, so I immediately knew I wanted to continue working with that idea. I ideated a fox figure that imitated the shape of number 4.

Cozy fire: 4Fire fire starters are developed to help people lighting their fireplaces easily and safely. So, I wanted to incorporate some cozy mood and feeling into the logo. Fire is an element that brings good feelings when thinking about a warm fireplace on a chilly day, bonfire to cook food on a camping trip after long day of hiking, or maybe a delicious smoky aroma of a BBQ on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Basing on these ideas, I draw a suggestion where a grill was incorporated on the logotype. I chose a modern font as I thought its youthful nature would suite perfectly for an innovative product line. I wanted to stylish the fire element by shaping it as a tulip type of flower. By using the color green in the flame, I wanted to emphasize the ecological and sustainable values.

Natural flame was an idea I felt was relevant as the company’s and its brand’s ideology is mostly linked around ecological values. I really wanted to highlight nature and sustainability in this version. The challenge in this variation was to combine strong, warm red fire element to light, airy, green nature element. I created two versions of the same theme: Natural flame and **Fire sprout**. Natural flame version combines an element of fire which then transforms to ecological power, from orange to green. Also, the conformation of the font contains shapes that resemble a flame. Fire sprout version is a combination of a flame and a sprout which refers to new growth, or sprouting, and it is a bit more delicate view of the idea of fire and

nature combination than the version 3, Natural flame. Customer also hoped to see a version where the figure 4 would be linked to letter F as it here.

Of these versions the 1st theme “Mystical animals” was most liked by customer because of the most appealing and meaningful story and background. After short consideration, customer decided to choose the 1st version to developed further.

Picture 9. Logo, first presentation.

4.4.2 Mystical animals

For the 2nd presentation I continued to work with the fox element of the logo (picture 10). The 1st version was liked by the customer, so I left that as it was and made few trials with other figures and typefaces. I made several sketches and try outs of the fox figure, trying to combine flame and fox elements smoothly and not too obviously. I found the symmetrical and centered versions looking balanced (2nd and 3rd versions) and personally preferred them over the 1st version. I was especially pleased with the 3rd version’s logomark as I felt it represented stylishly both fire and fox elements. After seeing all the new versions, customer agreed with me, so I continued then refining the chosen version (3rd) of the logos.

Picture 10. Logo, second presentation.

4.4.3 The final logo

Refining the chosen logo was a very pleasing assignment for me to do as I find that part of the process the most rewarding. I made experiments with few different typefaces, but finally decided to continue with the font, Brandon Grotesque regular, I originally chose for the version. Minimalistic sans serif style, because its simplicity and clean look makes it a perfect fit for an innovative and trustworthy brand. I detached the number 4 from the letter F as customer, after seeing it, did find it a bit hard to read. The font needed rather small adjustments as seen in the figure 11. The first logo is done just typing the font without any adjustments. The image on the center is the original font (gray color) and the adjusted version on top which shows the small tweaks I made. The last one is the final version with adjusted lining of the vertical levels of the font and some spacing adjustments. By aligning the vertical lines, the logotype got more character and edge, became more interesting but at the same time it also got more balanced.

Picture 11. Refining the chosen logotype.

For the logomark I tried few different gradient color versions from orange to green, almost mimicking the colors of the northern lights but finally I was most pleased with the version of shades of oranges and purples as it is seen on the last image on the picture below (picture 12).

Picture 12. Logo color versions.

For the finalized logo (picture 13) I added gradient color to the letter “i” as well. It gives a nice finishing touch and attaches the logomark to the logotype seamlessly. The gradient color also makes the letter “i” look like a charred or burning matchstick which is an interesting and relevant connotation for 4Fire products.

Picture 13. Final logo.

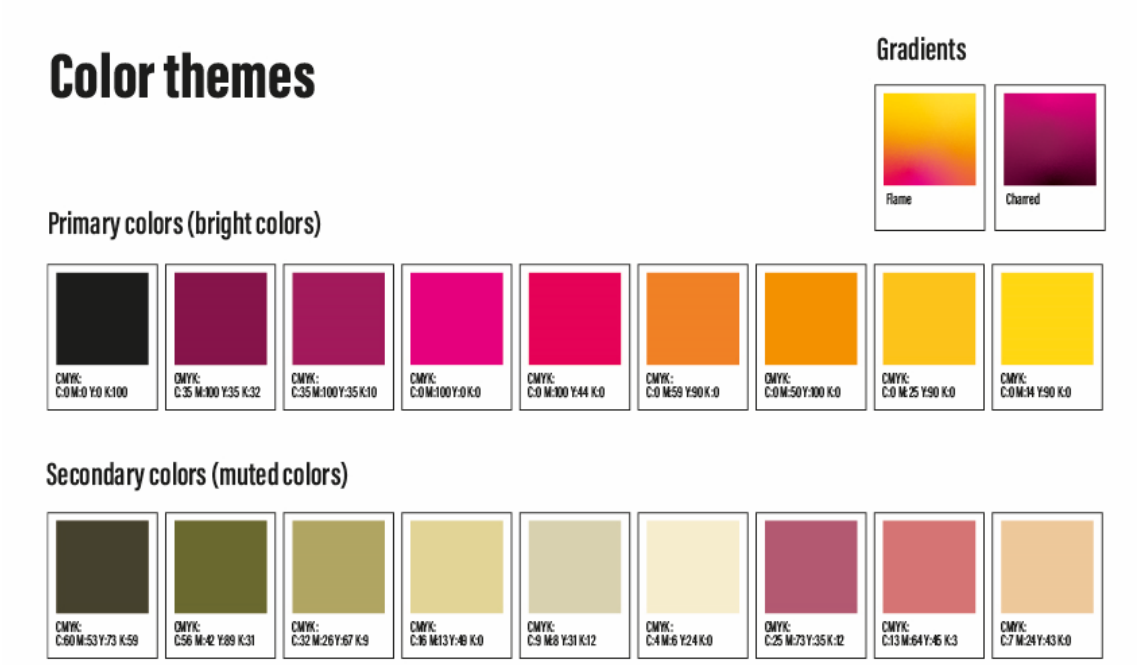
I made some suggestions for how the logo could be presented when gradient color is not technically available and compact color should be used (picture 14). This could be the case for example in silk printing or embroidery of clothes etc. Sometimes it is possible that the logo is used in black and white color only, or in dark background. I did not want to make very strict limitations as I knew that for example the packaging design project, depending on the chosen design, might give totally new environment for the logo to be presented.

Picture 14. Logo variations on light and dark background.

4.5 Colors

The color communicates the essence of the design well before the form is perceived making it the strongest tool a designer has (Best 2017, 243). Colors evoke emotions and emotions drive purchasing decisions. Just like in other brand elements, repetition strengthens brand awareness which is likely to generate more sales. Color design is therefore an essential part of the brand look.

4Fire logo itself contains quite a few colors due to the gradients used in the design. The primary color set is then mainly consisting vivid, bright, and clean colors varying from shades of darker and lighter purple to dark orange and medium yellow. These colors are suitable for corporate purposes and communications. For packaging and marketing purposes I incorporated more earth tones which are more related to nature and ecological values. These colors are mostly muted and desaturated, and they therefore feel more calming and natural. When including both vivid and muted colors, the right ratios and combinations are vital not to make the design unbalanced (picture 15).



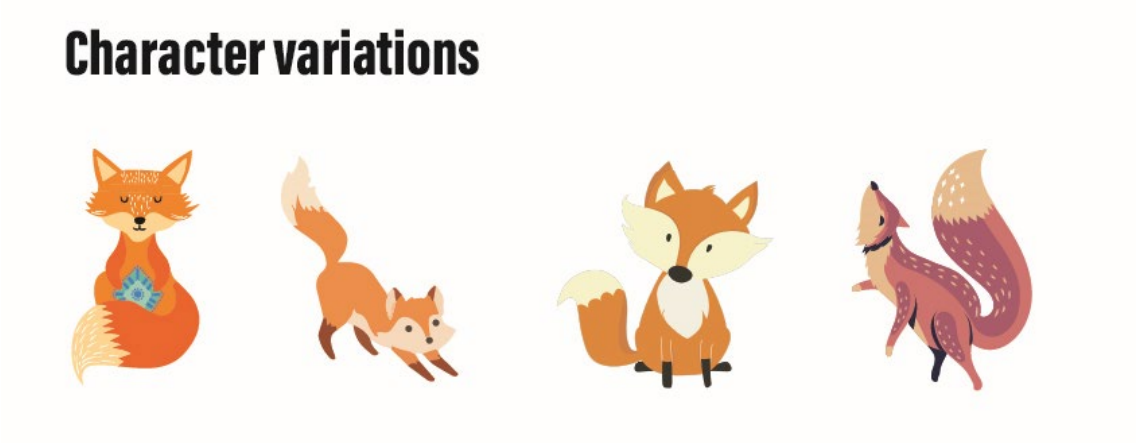
Picture 15. Color themes.

4.6 The fox character

A symbol that is closely linked to a brand can be effective way to create and maintain brand awareness. A visual image is easier to remember than a word or a slogan. A symbol can be also used creatively in advertising campaigns to gain wider exposure and communicate a key

product benefit. It is also easier for the consumer to form a relationship with a brand when there is a human or other character involved. The most popular characters might also become valuable licensing properties providing direct revenue. (Aaker 1991, 126; Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 157). Symbol or a character can help consumers to understand what the product does and why they should care about. Understanding gives a deeper meaning what differentiates this brand from others. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 39).

Besides the logomark featuring a fox and a flame I also wanted to include a character that would be approachable, easy to remember and logically linked to the 4Fire brand. As a fox figure was a natural choice, then it was only a matter of finding the right kind of style for it. Customer found it important to be able to educate customers about correct way of operating fireplaces without sounding too formal, so I thought a friendly common creature from the Finnish nature would be perfect character for that job. An illustrated character would be most versatile and suitable for different environments, so I focused on those. Because of a limited budget I chose to use stock illustrations which are affordable to purchase comparison to customized one. I presented 4 different versions of the fox character varying (from left to right) from hippie to delicate, to cute and to sophisticated (picture 16).



Picture 16. Character Variations.

The customer chose the sophisticated fox figure with muted color tones which then set colors for the whole secondary color palette. The purchased illustration set included the character in four positions and a set of branches which were a nice addition for future use (picture 17).

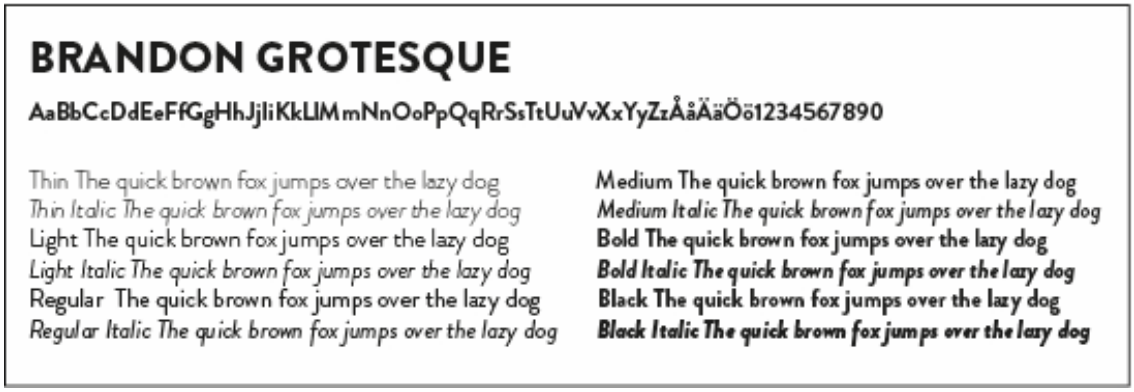
The message of how to light a fireplace correctly is hopefully more personalized when it comes from an animal who lives in the Finnish forests. That is why I decided to utilize speech bubbles with the fox to emphasize who is the one giving out the information.

Picture 17. Final Fox figure and branch elements.

4.7 Typefaces

Typefaces are an essential part of branding as well as logos, colors, and characters. They have their own personas, so it is important to use ones that support the brand message and identity. Even when using typefaces creatively the most important thing is to ensure legibility as that is the most essential factor when working with typography. There is no purpose in beautiful typography if the receiver stops reading because of difficulties or confusion. Usually, the best typography is the one no one really notices as it is functional and stylish at the same time.

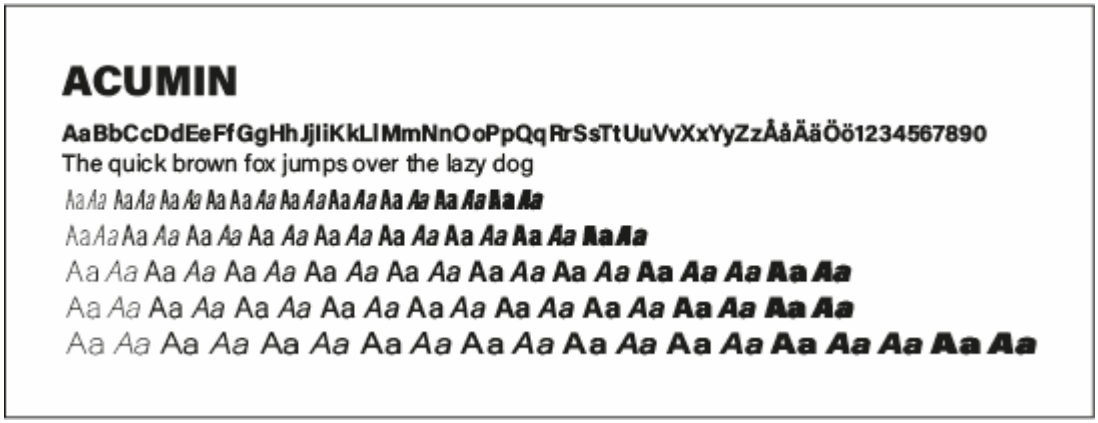
I started the typography design with the logotype. I found Brandon Grotesque typeface to be modern, clear, and interesting. After working further with the branding, I then decided to preserve the typeface only for logo (modified version) and for corporate texts, business cards, forms, marketing etc. The typeface was not suitable for packaging design as it did not have enough variations. Brandon Grotesque is an elegant typeface family, designed by Hannes Von Döhren. These geometric-style sans serif faces were popular during the 1920s and 30s, but some adjustments have been made since for better readability. The typeface is best to use in display sizes and therefore was not the best option for packaging design but worked perfectly with shorter texts.



Picture 18. Brandon Grotesque typeface

For packaging design, I used Acumin typeface family instead, as especially the extra condensed variations were good addition to the set when trying to fit all the mandatory legal texts in the package without taking too much place from the marketing elements.

Acumin typeface family is a designed by Robert Slimbach. It is a versatile sans-serif, neo-grotesque that is neutral and architectural. The family contains a broad range of weight and width variations which makes it suitable for multiple purposes from body text to display sizes. (Adobe systems, 2015).



Picture 19. Acumin typeface

Typographic variety is a valuable tool for creating hierarchy by varying the size, tone, weight, width, spacing and placement of the typeface. If using more than one typeface family, it is important to have big enough contrast between them like using bold sans-serif letterform for headlines and subtle, light, classic serif letterform on body texts. There is not a perfect tool for finding the best font pairing, more fore it is something designers learn by experience. (Tselentis 2012, 224, 232). As Acumin and Brandon Grotesque are not the best match because of their similar qualities, I decided to use contrast withing the typefaces instead. Varying sizes and weight in the composition makes it more interesting, and it is then easier to emphasize the most important messages I want the potential buyer to notice first.

4.8 Packaging design

Often the packaging is one of the strongest connections consumers have with the brand. Packaging can be an important channel for recognition and building or reinforcing brand associations. Nowadays consumers are bombarded with a constant flow of marketing messages and especially millennials are tuning out traditional advertising. Brands can communicate their messages to consumers by incorporating thematic content into packaging design. Therefore, it is a fairly cost-effective way to build brand equity. The average supermarket shopper can be exposed to 20 000 or more products during one 30-minute shopping visit, making appealing and distinguishable packaging design vital. Often the packaging is the first encounter of a new brand when seen on the store shelf. Changes in packaging can have direct impact on customer behavior and sales. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 163 - 166).

4.8.1 Sustainability in packaging design

As in many other design disciplines, sustainability is becoming more important in packaging design as well. Designs are made trying to limit the use of materials as the end product is then easier to recycle. When possible, biodegradable materials, like PLA or PHA are used, and new renewable materials are being introduced to market. Plastic is being replaced from starch or tree-based foils in for example in multilayer packages. (Erlhoff 2007, 290).

Sustainable packaging lasts only as long as necessary but not much longer. It must be sturdy enough to protect its content without breaking but contain as little material as possible. At the same time, to minimize the transport emissions, the packaging should be lightweight. Choosing the most sustainable option requires careful consideration of features of the packaging. The least ecological packaging is one that breaks too easily leading the content to be unusable. In cases like this, the resources of both the content and the packaging would be wasted and natural resources are used for nothing. (Kultanen 2019, 16; Hellström & Olsson 2017, 23).

In the first stage of launching, 4fire decided to use a bottle that is already on the market for their fire starter gel. Personalization may however come into question in the future. The chosen bottle is bioplastic, made from responsibly sourced sugarcanes. Bioplastic materials are derived from renewable sources like plants. The chosen bottle is type of bioplastic that is not biodegradable but can be recycled like oil-based plastic bottles without releasing CO_2 like PE or PET plastics. (Mikkonen 2017). The producer Braskem (2022) claims that in addition being renewable, the material is also helping to reduce CO_2 emissions, as sugarcane captures CO_2 from the atmosphere.

The bottle will be packed in a corrugated cardboard box with a set of small wooden boat shaped vessels, which will be used for dosing the fire starter gel. These miniature boats will naturally burn in the fireplace, together with the firewood. The cardboard box is produced in Finland, using only Finnish raw materials from certified woods, and is recyclable.

4.8.2 Packaging design process

Packaging design has become a more valued and well thought process. In the past the packaging design was not part of the product development and marketing planning process but rather an afterthought and therefore the designs were done somewhat arbitrarily. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 163 - 166).

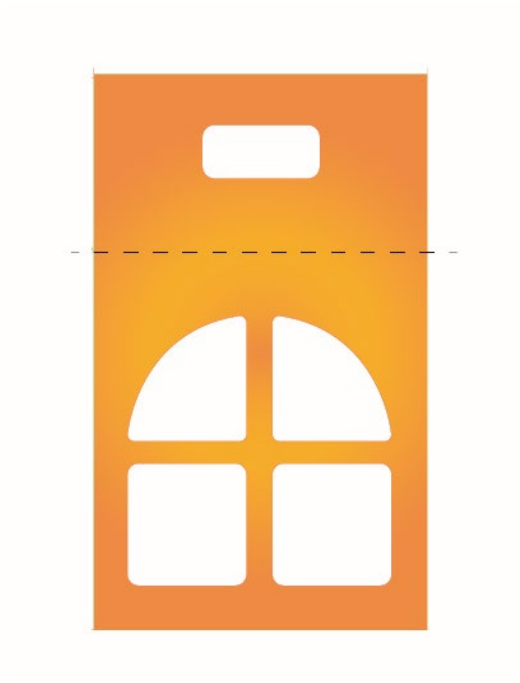
As a new company, 4Fire has limited resources when it comes to marketing. Therefore, well thought packaging design is an essential part of the branding process. Branded packages can play a starring role in advertising according to Keller & Swaminathan (2020, 163 - 166). To differentiate from the competition packaging needs to attract attention, appeal emotions, and communicate clearly what the product is and why consumers should choose it over others. As Keller & Swaminathan (2020, 163 - 166) state, packaging innovations can create a difference that permits higher margin and justify higher selling price.

As shown in chapter 3.2, the current competition resembles each others when it comes to pricing and design. Basically, any packaging design which would not be mainly black in color with minimal number of elements, would differentiate from the supermarket shelves. Keeping that in mind, together with the ecofriendly and innovative approach I started looking for inspiration.

The first challenge to solve was the structure of the packaging, or more precisely the size and position of the window. Fortunately, customer had already requested the supplier not to use the plastic film in the cut-out areas as not only it was unnecessary, but usage of single-use plastic would also be against the message the brand wanted to send to their customers.

That being solved, I noticed that the current structure (picture 20) did not leave much space for design on the primary side, so called “face” of the package. It would have been extremely difficult, maybe even impossible, to fit all the design elements on the area that was left after cutting out the window. Furthermore, the only solid area for design was distracted by a fold (dotted line on picture 20) which then left even less room for design.

Typically, this kind of open structure would be most suitable for products where the content is a design element itself, for example colored pasta, beautifully wrapped candies or handmade candles. Fortunately, it was possible to adjust the window area as needed so I was able to incorporate the shape to fit to the design.



Picture 20. Original structure of the packaging which leaves little space for design elements.

I ideated four different packaging design approaches (picture 2). They all contained a fox character, as that was agreed with the customer to be part of the brand identity.

1. Northern lights
   I wanted to really highlight the northern lights on this variation. The different green tones worked well with the eco-approach but also gave nice complementary color contrast to bright orange fox character and for 4Fire logo. I wanted to give different options for the product claims, so in this version I used “100% recyclable” and “safe, toxic-free, easy to use” texts. I chose modern and clean typeface style and used only fresh and bright colors. For the window I chose simple square form with rounded corners complimenting the overall style, yet still giving enough information what was inside the package.
2. Muted forest
   In this version I used muted color tones to give the design more earthy and recycled paper look. I wanted to create a feeling of an enchanted forest with trees that bend over the center of the image. This design was targeted to attract especially people who enjoy outdoor life and camping. The window in this version is a shape of a flame which quite special form and may work as an eyecatcher.
3. Pattern
   In the 3rd version I wanted to utilize one popular trend which is usage of different patterns as a background. The pattern contains elements of a forest, like mushrooms, berries, and branches and together they form a pattern with modern and fresh color combinations. The fox character in this version is taking influences of indigenous styles. Because there is a quite lot going on with the design, I decided to use simple

square shape for the window. I also placed 4Fire logo on a bubble so it would stand out from the pattern.

4. Eco-fox is a version with a purpose to create as eco-looking design as possible. I used cardboard texture as a background and mimicked the images on top to look like they would have been printed on uncoated, brown material. In reality, that kind of material is quite challenging to print as it absorbs the ink and leaves the color dull so mimicking the material was safer choice. In this version I used a character which was most playful of all the versions. I also used a lot of different ways to present the (ecological) claims and values of the product.

Picture 21. First packaging design versions.

Of these 4 versions, customer preferred the version 2, Muted Forest, so I then started to work on the sketch to finalize it. As there are not any equivalent products on the market, it was important to show how the product is to be used. I preserved one narrow side only for the directions how to use the product and made illustrations to support the message. The other narrow side was dedicated mainly for the legal texts and markings. It was rather challenging to fit all the mandatory warning texts and symbols on the area when trying to remain the same style of design than on the other sides too (picture 22).

The design area on backside of the packaging is quite big so I really wanted to use that efficiently. That was a logical place to explain more about how and where to use the product and even show the benefits and facts about wood combustion.

The face of the packaging was obviously the one I focused on most carefully. The shape of the window took some time and effort when designing it, as it takes quite a lot of space vertically. It was also important to have the logo and name of the product visible from a distance together with the other important or mandatory texts. The flame shaped window is an interesting and special eyecatcher but also an important feature for consumers to see what is inside of the box. Keller & Swaminathan (2022, 163 - 166) call this a “shelf impact” which is the visual effect the package has compared to other packages in the category.

The fox character is present in all sides of the box in various positions, talking, peeking, or holding the elements. The whole packaging is like a forest where all the elements fit naturally into. As the material is standard corrugated cardboard box with coated white liner paper, I used a picture of an uncoated, recycled paper as a base and placed elements on top of that, giving the whole design, together with muted colors, a natural and recycled look. The colors of the packaging can affect the perceptions of the product and therefore are significant to choose carefully so they are consistent with the brand and its marketing (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 163-166). My aim was, by using different shades of green and other natural colors, give the impression, without reading the texts of the package, that the product is environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Picture 22. The final packaging design.

4.9 Brand tone of voice

The difference between brand voice and brand tone is that voice is **what** is said, and the tone is **how** it is said. Brand tone is the mood or emotion conveyed in messages for customers. The tone might vary between situations and audiences, like in product launches or in customer complaints. That is why it is important to identify common scenarios the brand might face and categorize them into different tones. (Grammarly business 2021; Chen 2020.).

In addition to tone and voice, brand might also have their own signature stories. Stories are more powerful than facts, even when the facts are told in creative ways. Stories are significantly more effective than facts in gaining exposure, communicating information, being remembered, creating involvement and more. (Aaker 2018, 14). Even when communicating facts, the best strategy may be to create a story that allows the core message to come out or packs the facts into more interesting context. Content is especially important in the digital era when the media landscape is so crowded. Customers in general are not often interested in brand's strategic message, maybe not even the brand itself. Intriguing stories attract consumers and provide a way to break through distractions and content overload. Signature stories are force to overcome the barrier of missing interest. (Aaker 2018, 15).

To create a strong and an effective brand story, first thing is to define to which strategic message (values, brand vision, customer relationship or business strategy) needs an emotional boost and which one of those to prioritize (Aaker 2018, 69). 4Fire clearly wants to emphasize its ecological values and appeal consumers to take action against toxic emissions caused by domestic wood combustion. I also wanted to include some mystical elements to the story as both I and the customer felt that would be an interesting and not overly used medium in this product segment.

4.10 4Fire brand story

The original brand story is written in Finnish, and it leans strongly on Finnish folktales about northern lights. The story is written in descriptive manner, using rich vocabulary, and aiming to affect reader's emotions. After describing the mystical fire sparkling creature, fire fox, that barely no one has ever seen, the brand story describes 4Fire's core values and mission; sustainable products that are safe and easy to use with the purpose of protecting the climate and nature also for future generations. The story ends on an encouragement to start a fire correctly from the top. The story states facts within a mythical story and it is authentic and emotional. Good signature stories grab attention by being intriguing if not fascinating and support the brand vision (Aaker 2018, 16). Whether the brand story works or not is impossible to say before it is tested. The story might need to be revisited and adjusted or changed completely. However, when the signature story is found it should be valued and used widely as it can be a significant asset (Aaker 2018, 88).

The 4Fire brand story is rather short in details, as for the readers filling in the gaps can be effective way to involve the audience. (Aaker, 2018, 21).

4Fire brand story in Finnish:

> Suomalaisten vehreiden metsien siimeksessä, kuusenkolossa, visusti katseilta piilossa, asuu tulikettu, suomalaisten kansanperinteiden mystinen olento. Pimeän tullen tuliketun turkki säihkyy kirkasta valoa ja sen tuuhea häntä sinkoaa ilmaan kipinöitä. Toisinaan ketun pinkoessa puun oksien alla, kekäleisestä hännästä leimahtaa korkeuksiin mahtava taivaallinen valojen leikki, toiselta nimeltään revontulet, jotka ovat ansaitusti saaneet nimensä tuliketun mukaan.

> Tämän maagisen kansanperinteen innoittamana on syntynyt 4Fire, ekologisia sytytystuotteita kehittävä suomalainen yritys. 4Firen ympäristöystävälliset, helppokäyttöiset ja turvalliset tuotteet sopivat suomalaiseen mielenmaisemaan, kotiin, mökille, retkelle ja tuliaisiksi.
>
> 4Fire haluaa auttaa suomalaisia turvaamaan ilmanlaadun ja metsien puhtauden seuraavillekin sukupolville. Sytytä puhtaasti – sytytä päältä!

4.10.1 Defining the tone of voice

I decided to use “How to define your brand’s tone of voice” - template by Eugenia Verbina on Semrush blog (2022) as a base for defining the tone of voice for 4Fire brand. I used the parts that were applicable to 4Fire, leaving current customer analysis out as that is at this point non-existing. For a new brand, only soon to be launched, there is not really any kind of customer base to analyze.

4Fire core values are thrive and inspire change about climate protection. Most likely the potential customers will share these values. In addition to sustainable values, the brand naturally aims to be profitable in the near future.

Step 1: Define Your Core Values

Core values help to define the best language to communicate a brand’s message.

What are your company goals?	To inspire change, spread knowledge (correct fireplace operation), become profitable
How do you plan to achieve your goals?	Creating an interesting product, marketing, educating, being visible
Who is your target audience?	Consumers who have fireplaces (home or holiday home) or like camping
What do you want your company to be known for?	Driver for a change, innovative, interesting, sustainable

Create a message architecture

A message architecture is a set of communication goals (usually a list of terms, phrases, and statements) used in content produced. Start by compiling a list of 50-100 adjectives and sort these words into three groups, focusing on the section “Who we liked to be” and organizing them in order of priority.

I used a list of adjectives as a starting point from a book Content strategy at work real - world stories to strengthen every interactive project (Bloomstein & Halvorson 2012, 30) and added few relevant ones on the list.

Who we are	Who we would like to be	Who we are not
Proactive, actionable, innovative, customer oriented, friendly, high-quality, welcoming, premium, responsible, flexible, fair	Sustainable, ecological, value-oriented, trusted, the thought leader, approachable, accessible, professional, visionary, authentic, responsive, consistent, current, modern, international, casual, reliable, experienced, friendly, driven, reactive, tried-and-true, smart, focused, pioneering, timely, structured, community building, tactical, empowering, cool	Conservative, aggressive, traditional, sexy, formal, serious, elite, historic, regional,

Step 2: Define Your Brand's Tone of Voice

Map the identified tone of voice dimensions where the brand falls, by highlighting where the voice should land on each row. "The tone of any piece of content can be analyzed along 4 dimensions: humor, formality, respectfulness, and enthusiasm" (Moran, K. 2016).

Funny	Neutral	Serious
Casual	Neutral	Formal
Irreverent	Neutral	Respectful
Enthusiastic	Neutral	Matter of fact

Step 3: Create and Implement Tone of Voice Guidelines

Target audience	Consumer with fireplaces, conscious and interested about sustainability
How your brand should interact with your audience	Social media, traditional marketing. Company character (Fox) can be used as a speaker

Your brand's core values	Ecological, sustainable, carbon neutral
Your mission statement	Inspiring change, helping to achieve the climate protection goals
Your message architecture	Primary: sustainability Secondary: safe and easy to use
Vocabulary to use	Positive, humane, casual, friendly
Vocabulary to avoid	Preaching, blaming, highly technical, serious
Grammar rules	Normal, casual style, grammar and spelling checked, avoid dialects and slang. When writing lists, use 4 bullet points when possible.

At this stage of the brand launching process, 4Fire is mostly communicating in Finnish for domestic consumers. However, to give example of the tone of voice, I made two social media post suggestion as a reference. In first post there is a list of guidelines. I used four bullet points as it repeats the brand number four that is also in the name 4Fire. 4Fire wants to educate and help people positively without being boring or condescending.

The second post is more to encourage people to buy the product. Fireplaces often relate to nice, cozy, and relaxing moments, so the tone of voice utilizes them as a mood setter.

Post 1: *"Hello all nature lovers out there! What a perfect, cold, and rainy day to stay inside and light up a cozy fireplace, right? Remember to start your fire correctly to avoid harmful black carbon and fine particle emissions.*

1. *Ensure that all air vents in the fireplace are open. Use only dry wood and stack them leaving plenty of space between the logs.*
2. *Pour 4fire starter gel on the wooden dosage vessel and place it slightly slanted on top of the pile so the gel can drip onto the logs.*
3. *Light the gel using matches or lighter.*
4. *Close the fireplace door and relax. "*

Post 2*: "Ah, time for summer holidays! What do you think, is it possible to go sauna too often? Neither do we! Remember to pack our Firestarter gel with you when you go to your summer cottage. You never need to refire your sauna stove again. Available now at all Citymarkets around Finland! Follow the fox to find them."*

5 Conclusions

5.1 Assessment of the project

The whole project took altogether almost one year, from the first meetings with the customer to documentation phase. At times, the project was on hold due to difficulties in finding right materials and suppliers for the packaging materials. This gave me plenty of time to do research and ideate. The communication with customer was effortless and smooth and it was quite easy to comprehend customer's goals relating the core values and aim for the brand identity. I tried my best to align the brand identity with the business objectives.

As a designer I found the project interesting and educational. It was eye-opening to utilize and test different tools and compare their findings. The different tools draw quite clear picture of the direction the brand identity was going to be developed. The goal was to develop an interesting, unique, and mystical brand and I truly hope I achieved it. There are not any brands on the market with similar brand story or visuals which gives 4Fire the chance to differentiate from its competitors. Especially the fox character, or animal characters in general, are not seen often is this category so hopefully that will give some extra boost for recognizability and therefore to brand awareness as well.

The tools I used in this process were Brand Equity model, Design Criteria Canvas, Value proposition Canvas and Empathy map and Tone of voice -template. I found all of them useful and meaningful, but Keller's brand equity model was maybe the most comprehensive model of all tools. It was the most time consuming to fill but equally gave most structured answers. Brand equity model I found to be most beneficial when building a brand or marketing strategy. It is also useful to use when existing brand is looking for growth or better resonance towards customers. I see this most useful in branding projects where the company willing to make long term strategical decisions and commitments.

Value proposition Canvas helped me to understand the difference between customer needs and company offerings. Value proposition canvas is to some degree an alternative to Empathy map. I used the canvas to map not only the customer needs but also which ones to prioritize and focus on. Value proposition tool is a great way to help to position the brand and is especially valuable in the early stages of branding or any product/design development process. I see it also as a useful tool especially for product development projects. It is a good fit also for an existing product that is entering new market or is looking to expand on new customer segments.

For me visual tools are most pleasant ones to use so Empathy map offered a visual and clear way to better understand and empathize with the potential customers. Some parts seemed a bit overlapping, it for example took some time and research to understand the difference between "thinks" and "feels". Maybe the most important outcome was to be more in tune with customer needs instead of offering them something I or the customer would find most interesting. Empathy map is to be used especially in projects when user experience is the center of the brand, or the customer segments or user personas are not elaborated. It is a valuable help especially when building business-to-customer brands.

Design criteria canvas is good all-round tool that I can see myself using on all kind of branding and design projects. It is an efficient and straightforward method to map the goals of the brand. This tool would be convenient to use already in briefing phase to support the written formal brief.

Tone of voice -template was partially repeating the same themes as the design and brand related templates and canvases. Since this was my first time creating a brand tone of voice, I found the template useful and will use it in the future projects too. Especially sorting the adjective list was enlightening as that took some time and consideration to analyze the different possibilities and implications following the decisions.

For future purposes I do not think I will again utilize all of these methods simultaneously as it is quite time consuming and laborious, but maybe choose 1-3 that are best fit to the project at hand. These different tools help me as a designer to make more deliberate decisions and I can give guidance my customers basing to my findings. Now, after utilizing all of these tools I have quite clear picture on how to get the best out of them in different projects.

5.2 Future development of the brand

Now when the brand identity is ready and out on the market is time to see how it resonates with consumers and if there are things to be adjusted or changed. 4Fire brand has just launched its first product in Naantali housing fair and is waiting to hear the feedback from the visitors and customers. The feedback will give indication what kind of modifications or changes need to be made mostly relating to product itself. Hopefully, the product will raise interest enough which enables further packaging development such as customized biodegradable bottle for the fire starter gel or launch of a new product type under the same brand. The feedback will also possibly indicate how the brand elements like design, character or tone of voice are received and are they appealing enough to generate sales in the first stage.

The next step will be to generate content for webpage, social media, and leaflets. These materials will be first aimed for consumers and later to B2B purposes and educational materials for associations. The implementation of the visual and verbal brand identity is just at its starting point and may show absence of features or new demands when used.

5.3 Brand Nurturing

Even if the brand would become strong and profitable it still needs nurturing, to hold its position. Brand nurturing is a time-consuming process and may not show results until after few years. Nurturing usually consists of evolving the brand message, developing new products, testing, and adapting marketing strategies and creating deeper relationships with customers.

Brand that is not nurtured and maintained may face deterioration. It is not always easy to demonstrate the value of brand nurturing activities on future performance. The assets that

underlie brand equity needs to be recognized to know which ones to develop, strengthen or maintain. (Aaker 1991, 39). Brands being intangible assets their value may not be found in financial statements which might lead companies to underestimating their importance. In reality, a brand can represent the most valuable asset a company has. (Srivastava & Thomas 2016, 395).

5.4 The future of branding

The future of branding is a combination of flexibility, community, and collaboration (Elisava 2021). Nowadays almost everything can be commodified so there is overload of logos and slogans. What was enough some years ago, is not sufficient anymore. The markets are saturated with creative expression, many of which lack of substance. Brand identity must be linked to a real value-providing behavior as a great design does not equal brand (Vincent 2012, 23). Branding is not a guesswork, it is a strategic discipline that requires purposeful conduct, now more than ever (Vincent 2012, 24).

Brands need to find new ways to express their identity and draw consumers attention. Brand elements and trademarks will become more dynamic and multi-dimensional, and they can be used more flexible ways than traditionally (Keller 2021, 527-540). As the line between design and marketing goes blurrier, designers also need to evolve and broaden their knowledge from solely design to sociology and business. Going beyond the usual disciplines will help to create strong brands that resonate with today's consumers. Also, the systems and platforms will cross over traditional product and service categories. Multichannel strategies will not only be integrated to marketing, but distribution and communication as well. (Keller 2021, 527-540).

Brand experience today is highly personal and heterogeneous. It is a by-product of consumer's thoughts, feelings, experiences, and behavior (Vincent 2012, 188). No matter how consumers are grouped or segmented, they still have meaningful differences (Keller 2021, 527-540). Successful brands create value by meeting or exceeding customer's personal expectations. It would be easy to create imaginary or intriguing brand stories that are trendy at the moment. However, constant repositioning and redefining the brand is confusing and will make consumers question what the brand really stands for. Eventually this kind of trend driven strategy would weaken the credibility and therefore diminish the brand value. (Vincent 2012, 25).

Future's strong brands focus on adding intangible assets on their brand. Value-laden emotions and experiences will make compelling brand stories and narratives. Today's consumers are more than ever drawn into brands that share their values. They expect brands to be transparent and accountable which demands companies to develop well-reasoned corporate policies. (Keller 2021, 527-540).

The fast-paced development of technology affects all aspects of consumer behavior, from how consumer learn, shop, purchase, consume and express satisfaction. The modern technology allows consumers to learn more about brands as well as brand owners to learn more about consumers. However, the numerous amounts of options for marketing, selling and distribution channels has made marketing and brand building more complex than ever before. It is vital to

understand which options to employ and how to implement those options. (Keller 2021, 527-540). Successful brands truly have consumers at the heart of decisions and direction (Elisava 2021). The core principle of marketing and branding has been and will remain in the future to be to satisfy the needs of consumers better than competitors (Keller 2021, 527-540).

The future of 4Fire's brand will be seen later when the products gain wider distribution and are therefore available for bigger audiences. Basing on the first reactions, consumers seem to like the concept, but it is hard yet to say if the interest to buy will overcome the price barrier, 4Fire products being more expensive than its competitors. The success of 4Fire is not easily defined only by looking at sales figures and profit margins but also in the affect it can have on the domestic fire combustion habits.

As acclaimed brand designer Walter Landor stated, "Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind". I hope I have succeeded of creating a cohesive brand identity which achieves all the goals appealing to consumers, leading to sales, and spread knowledge about climate protection. Great brands can make a difference and I believe in this case the difference could be utterly meaningful.

Sources

Aaker, D. 1991. Managing brand equity. Capitalizing on the value of a brand name. New York: The Free Press. A Division of Simon & Schuster Inc.

Aaker, David A. 1996. Building strong brands. New York: The Free Press. A Division of Simon & Schuster Inc.

Aaker, David A. 2014. Aaker on Branding. 20 principles that drive success. New York: Morgan James Publishing.

Aaker, D. 2018. Creating Signature Stories: Strategic Messaging That Persuades, Energizes, and Inspires. New York: Morgan James Publishing.

Adobe systems. 2015. Acumin. Retrieved on 14 th July 2022 from https://acumin.typekit.com

Ames, C. 2018. The Key Difference Between Graphic Design and Branding. Emotive Brand. Retrieved on 21 st October from https://www.emotivebrand.com/graphic-design-branding/#:~:text=Branding%20is%20any%20action%20a,it%20can't%20be%20expressed.

BA theories, 2022. Keller's Brand equity Model (CBBE Model) Retrieved on 20 th October 2022 from https://www.batheories.com/kellers-brand-equity-model/

Best, J., Elsevier Science & Technology. 2017. Colour Design: Theories and Applications, edited by J. Best, Elsevier Science & Technology. 2nd edition. Duxford, England: Woodhead Publishing.

B2B International. N.d. What is the Value Proposition Canvas. Retrieved on 28 th June 2022 from https://www.b2binternational.com/research/methods/faq/what-is-the-value-proposition-canvas/

Bilekov, B. 2022. The branding process explained. Brand Purist. Retrieved on 1 st August 2022 from https://brandpurist.com/branding-advice/branding-process-explained/#:~:text=The%20branding%20process%20is%20a,in%20a%20coherent%20brand%20identity.

Bloomstein, M., Halvorson, K. 2012. Content strategy at work real - world stories to strengthen every interactive project. USA: Appropriate, Inc. Published by Elsevier, Inc.

Braskem. N.d. Retrieved on 15 th June 2022 from https://www.braskem.com.br/home-en

Budelmann, K. et al. 2010. Brand Identity Essentials: 100 Principles for Designing Logos and Building Brands. USA: Quarto Publishing Group.

Cattaneo, F., Lucibello, S. 2014. Ecology and colour – the emerging design perspective. Rome, Italy: Journal of the International Colour Association. Retrieved on 25 th June 2022 from https://aic-color.org/resources/Documents/jaic_v13_05_GdC2013.pdf

Chapman, C. n.d. Exploring the Gestalt Principles of Design. Toptal.com. Retrieved on 25 th June 2022 from https://www.toptal.com/designers/ui/gestalt-principles-of-design#:~:text=In%20the%20simplest%20terms%2C%20gestalt,a%20series%20of%20disparate%20elements

Dougherty, B. 2008. Green Graphic Design. Celery design collaborative. New York: Allworth Press.

Elisava 2021. What is the future of branding? Retrieved on 4 th August 2022 from https://www.elisava.net/en/news/what-future-branding#:~:text=The%20future%20of%20branding%20consists,creativity%20working%20side%20to%20side.

Erlhoff M., Marshal T. 2007. Design Dictionary: Perspectives on Design Terminology. Basel, Swizerland: Walter de Gruyter GmbH.

Fazer, 2022. Finland's most valued brand. Retrieved on 19 th October from https://www.fazer.com/products/our-international-brand-selection/karl-fazer/finlands-most-valued-brand/

Fiskars Group. Fiskars brands. Retrieved on 20 th October from https://fiskarsgroup.com/brands/fiskars/

Grammarly Business. 2021. 7 Brand tone of voice examples to help you pinpoint your brand persona. 2021. Retrieved on 5 th July 2022 from https://www.grammarly.com/business/learn/brand-tone-examples/#:~:text=Brand%20tone%20of%20voice%20is,stood%20out%20more%20than%20others

Gray, D. 2017. Updated Empathy Map Canvas. Retrieved on 30 th July 2022 from https://medium.com/the-xplane-collection/updated-empathy-map-canvas-46df22df3c8a

Gronlund, J. 2013. Basics of Branding. A Practical Guide for Managers. New York: Business Expert Press.

Hellström, D., Olsson A. 2017. Managing Packaging Design for Sustainable Development: A Compass for Strategic Directions, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

HVD Fonts. N.d. Brandon Grotesque. Retrieved on 15 th July 2022 from https://www.hvdfonts.com/fonts/brandon-grotesque

Ikea 2022. The IKEA vision and values. Retrieved on 19 th October from https://www.ikea.com/ie/en/this-is-ikea/about-us/the-ikea-vision-and-values-pub9aa779d0

Keller, K.L. 2013. Strategic Brand Management, 4th Edition. USA: Pearson Education Limited.

Keller, K.L., Swaminathan V. 2020. Strategic Brand Management. Building, Measuring, And Managing Brand Equity. (5th Edition) Hoboken, USA: Libgen.li Pearson Education, Inc.

Keller, K. L. 2021. The Future of Brands and Branding: An Essay on Multiplicity, Heterogeneity, and Integration. Oxford University Press (OUP) in Journal of Consumer Research, Volume 48, pp 527-540. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab063

Kenton, W. 2022. SWOT Analysis: How To With Table and Example. Investopedia. Retrieved on 18 th October 2022 from https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/swot.asp

Kultanen, E. 2019. Pieni pakkausopas. Suomen Pakkausyhdistys, The Finnish Packaging association. Retrieved on 18 th October from https://www.pakkaus.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Pakkausopas_2019.pdf

Mindtools. N.d. Keller's Brand Equity Model - Building a Powerful Brand. Retrieved on 21 st July 2022 from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/keller-brand-equity-model.htm

Mikkonen, K. 2017. Biopohjaiset ja -hajoavat pakkaukset. Pakkaus magazine 2/2017. Pakkausyhdistys Retrieved on 3rd August 2022 from https://www.pakkaus.com/tietoa-pakkauksista/biomuovit/

Moran, K. Nielsen Norman Group. 2016. The Four Dimensions of Tone of Voice. Retrieved on 27 th July 2022 from https://www.nngroup.com/articles/tone-of-voice-dimensions/

Nielsen, 2015. The Nielsen Global New Product Innovation Survey. Looking to achieve new product success? Listen to your consumers. Retrieved on 22 nd July 2022 from www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/04/nielsen-global-new-product-innovation-report-june-2015.pdf

Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and parks. 2010. Fine Particulate Matter. Queen’s Printer for Ontario. Retrieved on 5 th July 2022 from http://www.airqualityontario.com/science/pollutants/particulates.php

Patel, N. n.d. What a Unique Selling Proposition Really Means & Why Your Business MUST Have One. Retrieved on 25 th July 2022 from https://neilpatel.com/blog/unique-selling-proposition/?lang_geo=fi

Porter, E. M. 2008. Competitive Strategy -Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors. New York, USA: Free Press.

Richter, F. 2019. PRODUCT PIRACY – The Industries Most Affected by Counterfeit Products. Statista. Retrieved on 17 th October 2022 from https://www.statista.com/chart/17410/counterfeit-and-pirated-products-by-category/

Romih, T. 2016. Humans Are Visual Creatures. Seyens Ltd. Retrieved on 21 th October from https://www.seyens.com/humans-are-visual-creatures/

Salinas, G. 2009. The International Brand Valuation Manual: A Complete Overview and Analysis of Brand Valuation Techniques, Methodologies and Applications. Chichester, West Sussex, England; Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Savolahti M., Karvosenoja N., Tissari J., Kupiainen K., Sippula O. & Jokiniemi J. 2016. Black carbon and fine particle emissions in Finnish residential wood combustion: Emission projections, reduction measures and the impact of combustion practices, Atmospheric Environment, Volume 140.

Siebor, R. 2018. What is a brand book? Retrieved on 5 th July 2022 from https://invotech.co/blog/brand-book/

Srivastava, R. K., Thomas, G. M. 2016.The Future of Branding. India; SAGE Publications.

Slade-Brooking, C. 2016. Creating a brand identity. A guide for designers. London, England: Laurence King Publishing Ltd.

Spencer, B. 2013. Business Model Design and Learning: A Strategic Guide. New York, USA: Business Expert Press.

Starling, L. 2011. The logo decoded – what logos can do ~~for~~ to you. Bloomington: Balboa Press.

Taloustutkimus, 2022. TOP10 Suomen arvostetuimmat brändit 2022. Retrieved on 19 th October from https://www.taloustutkimus.fi/ajankohtaista/uutisia/top10-suomen-arvostetuimmat-brandit-2022.html

Tselentis, J. 2012. Typography, Referenced: A Comprehensive Visual Guide to the Language, History, and Practice of Typography. USA: Quarto Publishing Group.

Van Der Pijl, P., Lokitz J., and Solomon L.K. 2016. Design a better business: new tools, skills, and mindset for strategy and innovation. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Verbina, E. Semrush blog. 2022. How to Define Your Brand's Tone of Voice. Retrieved on 20 th July 2022 from https://www.semrush.com/blog/how-to-define-your-tone-of-voice/

Vincent, L. 2012. Brand Real: How Smart Companies Live Their Brand Promise and Inspire Fierce Customer Loyalty. New York: AMACOM.

Yohn, D. 2014. What great brands do – the seven brand building principles that separate the best from the rest. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.