IDENTIFYING BRAND IMAGE

Case Revo Design

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to study Revo Design's brand image. This thesis investigates what images and associations Revo Design's products and appearance communicate to the customers and whether they are congruent with the company's brand identity.

The content of the theoretical framework includes an introduction to branding, myths related to branding, brand equity, brand image, brand identity and how to build a strong brand identity. Kapferer's brand identity prism theory is introduced and the brand identity prism is used to explain Revo Design's current brand identity and to compare its contents with the images and associations that the study participants have.

The study was conducted using the focus group discussion method. Focus group was used to acquire data concerning the participants' perception of Revo Design and the images and associations related to it, thus understanding the image it communicates.

The study revealed that the brand image and associations were congruent with most of the brand identity's facets. The products and material introduced in the discussion were communicating the desired image to the participants. The company uses the results to define and improve its branding and product development strategy.

Further studies will be suggested, after the company will have been operating long enough and acquired more recognition and awareness.

Keywords brand, brand image, brand identity, building strong brand identity, Kapferer's brand identity, focus group discussion

Miscellaneous

Appendices: Design's Identity prism, SWOT Analysis, Revo Design Perceptual map, association forms of the focus group, catalogue. Appendixes are confidential until 01.01.2015.

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Tiivistelmä

Opinnäytetyö tutkii Revo Design-yrityksen brändi-imagoa. Tuktimus pyrkii selvittämään viestiikö brändi-identiteetti asiakkaille haluttuja viestejä ja minkälaisia assosiaatioita yrityksen tuotteisiin ja yleisulkoasuun liitetään.

Teoreettinen viitekehys sisältää teoriaa brändäyksestä, brändipääomasta, brändi-imagosta, brändi-identiteetistä ja sen rakentamisesta. Teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä käydään myös läpi brändäykseen liittyviä myyttejä sekä esitellään Kapfererin brändi-identiteettiprismateoria, jonka pohjalta havainnollisestaan Revo Designin brändi-identiteetti johon assosiaatioita sekä imagoa verrataan.

Tutkimuksessa käytetään focusryhmäkeskustelua, jolla selvitetään osallistujien havaintoja ja assosiaatiota Revo Designista ja pyritään näin saamaan käsitystä yrityksen brändi-imagosta.

Tutkimus paljasti, että brändi-imago ja assosiaatiot olivat yhteneväisiä useimpien brändi-identiteettiprisman fasettien kanssa ja tuotteet ja materiaali jota tutkimuksessa esitettiin osallistujille, viestivät haluttua brändi-imagoa. Yritys tulee käyttämään tutkimuksesta saatuja tuloksia kehittääkseen sen brändäys- sekä tuotekehittelystrategiaa.

Jatkotutkimuksena brändin imagoa voisi tutkia uudestaan kun yritys on toiminut markkinoilla ja tullut suuremman yleisön tietoisuuteen tätä kautta.

Avainsanat (asiasanat) Brändi, brändi-imago, brändi-identiteetti, vahvan brändi-identiteetin rakentaminen, Kapfererin brändi-identiteetti, focusryhmäkeskustelu

Muut tiedot

Liitteenä Revo Designin brändi-identiteettiprisma, SWOT-analyysi, "Perceptual map" – asemointi kartta, vapaa-assosiaatiolomakkeet, katalogi. Liitteet ovat luottamuksellisia 01.01.2015 saakka.

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1   INTRODUCTION

The sole purpose of building a brand is to identify and differentiate the goods and services provided by a seller. Brands are built using symbols, designs and names. The combination of these, then builds an image in the customer's mindset. Effective branding leads the customer to associate the brand with quality and value (Kotler 2005, 549).

The design and clothing industry has numerous competitors. This thesis will investigate how a starting design company is able to use its products and advertising as a tool of branding to portray its desired image and create brand equity. Brand equity brings out the real value of branding which is its capability to build customer loyalty (Kotler 2005, 555). The positioning of a product should give a clear and distinctive place among the mindsets of the target group. In order to avoid consumer disbelief and confusion, it is important to narrow down the positioning factors (Kotler 2005, 31).

The purpose of this thesis is to research Revo Design's brand identity and brand image. Revo Design's brand prism is shown in the form of Kapferer's brand identity prism, and it is used as a supporting tool when studying the reactions the products of Revo Design create in the target group determined by Revo Design. By studying the messages the brand identity reflects to the customers, the brand image will be clarified and a brand platform can be established in the future by using the brand identity prism and the brand positioning questions. Aaker (1996, 69) explains that;

"Knowledge of the brand image (how customers and others perceive the brand) provides useful and even necessary background information when developing a brand identity"

Case company Revo design

Revo Design is a Jyväskylä based clothing company specializing in men's clothing. The company has planned to start its commercial operations in the first quarter of 2014. Revo Design tries to build a strong and attractive brand from the very beginning. Revo Design seeks to appeal and stand out from the competitive set with its controversial designs and provocative marketing. One of Revo Design's core functions is to create a *community* within the brand customers, the "***Revo Crew***". This will be shown in the products, internet communities and in different events organized by Revo Design. Revo Design wants to be perceived not only as an attractive brand, but also as a fellowship between the brand and all of its customers.

As the company is just starting its operations, no studies have been conducted concerning its brand identity or the brand image perceived by the consumers. Since the current brand identity has not been tested in the markets, the study will provide concrete data for the company for their product development and branding strategy. This will be used to gain the desired positioning in the customer's mindset against the competitive set, and to identify the messages that the company reflects to the customers. Revo Design's current brand identity is presented using Kapferers identity prism model which will be introduced in chapter 2.4.

2   RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem identification stage is a vital stage in any research. It states a general problem and then identifies the more detailed components of the problem afterwards. A research design is then created and the research can be conducted (Malhotra, Birks & Wills 2013, 13).

When defining a problem, the researcher must narrow down the problem to the point that he or she is able to construct clear steps and guidelines to the research. By stating a clear broad problem and then providing the more specified components, the researcher can avoid errors when defining the problem (Malhotra et al. 2013, 13).

The broad research problem in this research is closely related to the *brand* of Revo Design. It is broken down into more detailed and specific *research questions* concerning the brand identity and brand image. The research questions are introduced in chapter 1.3.

Brand identity consists of the associations created and projected by the company behind the brand. Brand identity reflects the values, meaning and direction of the brand and is a tool for building a relationship with the customer segment. The identity of a brand is the way that a company wants to be seen, and *brand image* is the current perception of the brand (Aaker 1996, 68-71).

2.1 Research methods and research design

Kothari (2004, 7) defines the term *research methods* as the following;

> *"Research methods* may be understood as all those methods/techniques that are used for conduction of research. *Research methods or techniques**, *thus, refer to the methods the*

> *researchers use in performing research operations*. In other words, all those methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying his research problem are termed as research methods."

Research methods should not be confused with research *methodology.* Research methodology can be defined as a scientific approach to the research in general, and it studies research problem solving from a systematic perspective (Kothari 2004, 8).

Quantitative research is a type of research that seeks answers to such questions as how many, how much, how often, and gains a measurable and quantitative scan of the sample's behavior, experiences and attitudes. Quantitative research is based on larger samples that are valid enough to be generalized among the selected population. Quantitative research can be conducted in the form of a survey or telephone interviews for example. (Solatie 2001, 15-16). Due to the topics studied in this thesis, quantitative research was not suitable for the research conducted.

Qualitative research by its nature investigates the reasons why particular attitudes and behavior occur and the research seeks to provide a wider understanding of these phenomena. In this case, the phenomena can be defined as the associations and images the brand products bring up in the heads of potential customers. The samples used in qualitative research are relatively small compared to quantitative research, and the results are not generalized in the same manner as in quantitative research. The techniques used in qualitative research are focus groups, in-depth interviews and observation (Solatie 2001, 15-16).

The research design is the structure of a research and how it is conducted. It involves the data collection process, as well as measuring and analyzing the data. The design outlines the researcher's hypothesis, implication of

operations and the final stage of data analysis (Kothari 2004, 31). Kothari (2004, 31) implicates that the design has to reflect the following aspects:

- What is the study about?
- Why is the study being made?
- Where will the study be carried out?
- What type of data is required?
- Where is the required data found from?
- What periods of time will the study include?
- What will the sample design be?
- What techniques of data collection will be used?
- How will the data be analysed?
- In what style will the report be prepared?

The research design is needed in order to determine the most efficient way to gain relevant information concerning the research and minimizing the usage of time and money. An efficient research design helps the researcher to avoid misleading conclusions and to organize his/her ideas as well as avoid any flaws within the study before actually conducting the research (Kothari 2004, 32). The main features of a good design can be described as maximization of reliable data collection and minimizing the bias (Kothari 2004, 33).

Research designs can be categorized into categories in three different study types:

- Exploratory research studies
- Descriptive and diagnostic research studies
- Hypothesis-testing research studies

Exploratory research, also known as formulative research, is a research design that formulates a problem, which is investigated carefully and precisely.

Developing a working hypothesis can also be part of exploratory research (Kothari 2004, 35). The objective of the design is to find understandings and insights of the researched phenomena, and thus, exploratory design study subjects are not measurable by quantities. The design seeks to understand the phenomena and provide the researcher with the variables that affect and create it (Malhotra et al. 2013, 44-45).

The focus group technique is explained in detail in the following section as it was selected as the primary research technique for this research. Focus groups are group discussion sessions with 6-8 participants. The sessions are constantly observed and controlled by the researcher. During the sessions the participants are interact and share their opinions, attitudes and feelings. The discussions are held by a preset structure, and the researcher as a moderator is also responsible for creating and maintaining a relaxed atmosphere among the participants in order to gain the most sufficient data for the study. Focus groups can be held among consumers or business associates, and the groups can be gathered based on the participant's values, attitudes, consumption behavior or demographic variables, for example (Solatie 2001, 10).

The creative nature of focus group discussions is considered to be one of its main advantages. It enables the participants to reflect their feelings and opinions towards the given stimulation. In order to create such circumstances, it is important for the moderator to keep group members relaxed, and to avoid feeling questioned (Malhotra et al. 2013, 93-94). It is important to create a sufficient group dynamic by obtaining the right number of participants for the discussion. Too small groups might not create a dynamic discussion situation, and too big groups often create subgroups that tend to compete with each other's differentiating opinions of the subject discussed. (Malhotra et al. 2013, 92).

Focus groups are often conducted when studying advertising, image and new product development (Malhotra et al. 2013, 92). Focus groups can study the

participant's perception of brand values and other messages that the company pursues to signal by its advertising. It studies whether the advertising is effective, and if not, what can be improved in order to gain the desired result (Solatie 2001, 13). Focus groups can reveal the reasons behind a purchasing decision, and thus also give marketers tools that can be used to influence customers in the buying process (Solatie 2001, 11). A focus group discussion is the best research method to acquire the data needed for this research, and thus was selected to be the technique for primary data collection in this study.

> *Although we are surrounded by data, in fact, bombarded with them every day from the TV, posters, radio, newspapers, magazines and books, it is not so straightforward to collect the correct data for your purposes (Walliman 2011, 92).*

Data collection is the phase that follows the research problem definition stage and handles the selection of an appropriate research design. (Kothari 2004, 95). The data collection process needs to identify the type of data that is needed how to obtain it, and to point out the most efficient and suitable methods to do so (Walliman 2011, 92).

The researcher needs to make a decision concerning the data type he or she will be using in the research. When selecting the data for the research, the data types can be identified as *primary* and *secondary data*. (Kothari 2004, 95). In this research, the data was solely primary data collected using a focus group discussion group.

Primary data is the data that is obtained by the researcher specifically for the research and is by its character original data (Kothari, 2004, 95). Primary data is originated in such a way that it specifically addresses the defined research

problem (Malhotra et al. 2013, 61). Below are the most common ways to collect primary data (Walliman 2011, 92):

- Asking questions
- Conducting interviews
- Observing without getting involved
- Immersing oneself in a situation
- Conducting experiments
- Manipulating models

Secondary data is a data type that has already been collected and interpreted (Walliman 2011, 70). Secondary data is thus not relevant for this study. Secondary data seldom answers the research problem, and can be used as a supporting tool in diagnosing the research problem, answering some of the research questions or construing the primary data (Malhotra et al. 2013, 61-62).

2.2 Research objectives and research questions

The objective of this research is to investigate attitudes, values, feelings and the overall brand image Revo Design communicates to its target group as well as whether its brand identity is communicated properly to the target group. The research also tries to point out deficiencies and to collect development proposals from the target group concerning the brand and its products.

Maholtra defines *research questions* as

> "- - refined statements of the components of the
> problem". The questions are used to determine what

specific information is needed with the components of the problem (Malhotra et al. 2013, 38).

'The research questions in this study are:

- How is the Revo Design brand currently perceived by its target customers? (The Brand image)
- Does the brand image reflect the values and attitudes of Revo Design's brand identity?
- Are the Revo Design products designed to meet the brand identity appealing to the target group?
- What are the weaknesses of Revo Design's brand from customer perspective?
- Do potential customers perceive *Revo Design as a brand?*

2.3   Justification of the research method and research design

When selecting the appropriate method for the research, Kothari (2004, 112) implies that the researcher should take the following factors into account:

- The nature, scope and object of study
- Availability of funds
- Time factor
- Precision required for valid data collection

The brand research in this case aims to find the opinions and feelings that Revo Design communicates to the potential customers, and to determine what the factors are that create these feelings. People might be able to determine

what brands they prefer, but not necessarily explain why (Malhotra et al. 2013, 92). In Owen's (2002) words:

> *"Qualitative research attempts to address the problem of 'the unconscious' by probing beneath the surface in both the way it interviews and the techniques it uses."*

In Revo Design's case, the research design was selected to be *exploratory research.* This research will study the phenomena of feelings and opinions, and the variables that affect and ultimately create them.

The focus group technique was chosen to be the *research technique* in this study as focus groups are highly efficient when the research studies a completely new subject and the target group's reactions towards it. The reactions created by the material shown to the target group members can be captured and further studied, and they can answer the relevant questions which in this case are; how is the brand perceived and what does it communicate? Focus groups are recommended when the research topic concerns the attitudes and values of customers (Solatie 2001, 13-14).

3   THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A BRAND

In Keller's article (1993, 2) he refers to Kotler and defines a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the good and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors". The individual segments of a brand mentioned in the definition can be referred to as *brand identities* and as a whole, make up *the brand (*Keller 1993, 2).

Branding has become a top priority for companies due to the realization that brands are one of the most valuable intangible assets a company can have (Keller & Lehmann 2004, 2). At a basic level, a brand is a marker for the offerings of a company. From the customer's point of view, a brand represents the quality level of a product and can thus simplify their choice and build trust towards the company and its products (Keller et al. 2004, 4). A brand is built by the product itself, the marketing activities and the experiences of the customers and other users of the product (Keller et al. 2004, 4). Brands can also serve as a meter of the effectiveness of the marketing activities within a company (Keller et al. 2004, 4).

A good brand will create brand loyalty. Brands with a highly loyal customer base have great value as they will generally have a constant and predictable sales and profit stream (Aaker 1996, 21). Loyal customers also have a great impact on marketing costs because retaining customers is substantially cheaper than attracting new ones.

Building brands is not easy nowadays due to internal and external pressure and barriers such as fragmenting markets and media, pressure to compete on prices and a rapid increase of competitors (Aaker 1996, 28). Although building a brand is difficult, by developing a brand identity which clearly portrays what the brand stands for and successfully being able to express it, building a strong brand is very possible (Aaker 1996, 35). Brands are often seen from various perspectives. In general brands can be approached as organized and systematical tools, and then as the opposite, more as a transformable concept combining emotions and images (Owen 2002, 8). When talking about brands from different perspectives, there are generally common factors that can be seen;

- Subjectivity; The brand deals with the customers' subjective side. Brand provides feelings, associations and emotions to the customer and these variables are a matter of subjectivity (Owen, 2002, 8)

- Complexity; Brands do not provide just a single image or other subjective matter. They consist of a set combined from different subjective sensations and cognitive causes thus being complex concepts (Owen, 2002, 8)

- Associational; Brands create different meanings and feelings that consumers associate to the brand. These are all entwined to not only the products, but also to the advertising and other promotional activities and to everything that revolves around the brand itself (Owen, 2002, 8)

- Unspoken; Brands are not objective and completely consciously recognizable concepts. The brands are tied to the mindsets of the consumers, and the emotions they provide can be deeply rooted to the subconscious level of consumer's minds (Owen, 2002, 8)

3.1 Myths of branding

This chapter explains the myths often linked to the branding in SME companies introduced in the "Brändätään pikkaisen" (2010) (Let's do a little branding) by Jenny Sandbacka. Revo Design, as an SME, has taken the following myths and the truth behind them into consideration in their brand developing actions.

Branding can be a challenging process in an SME, and the challenges therein often occur from the attitudes towards branding in the company. By breaking the myths related to branding, the company can avoid the obstacles that can have a negative influence on the company's branding (Sandbacka 2010, 7).

Sandbacka (2010, 7) points out 5 different myths and explains the reality behind the them;

*"**Myth 1**. Brand equals the logo and name of company. **Truth:** The logo and name of company are barely a scratch of surface of the brand. EVERYTHING that company does communicates its brand.*

***Myth 2.** The marketing department is responsible of the Brand. Without that, the SME does not have anyone developing brand. **Truth:** Branding is a mission of the whole company. The management is responsible for brand, but all employees implement it.*

***Myth 3.** SME's can't afford branding since the means of branding are limited to wide marketing campaigns. **Truth:** The branding is first and foremost about building and maintaining relationships. When branding is integrated to the company's actions, there is no need to reserve particular financial funds for it.*

***Myth 4.** Brand doesn't matter in the B2B business. **Truth:** The risks are high in the B2B actions, and the meaning of the warranty that brand provides increases.*

***Myth 5.** A good product/service will sell itself, and the company providing it won't need brand. **Truth:** Good product needs a strong message behind it so that it can separate from the competing options. Furthermore, customers may not be for example technological experts. Can they evaluate the technological sophistication compared to competing options? This is where the trust provided by brand stands out."*

3.2 Brand equity

David Aaker (1995, 10) explains brand equity as: "A set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers."

These assets can be divided into four categories which **are brand name awareness**, **brand loyalty**, **perceived quality** and **brand associations** (Aaker 1995, 10). The first category, brand awareness, refers to how strongly a brand is present in the consumer's mind. Various recognition tests can be used in order to measure how strongly a customer remembers a particular brand.

Brand loyalty refers to the relationship a customer has with a certain brand. A loyal customer base will ensure steady sales and drastically reduce marketing costs as it is much cheaper to retain old customers than to attract new ones (Aaker 1995, 21).

The perceived quality asset is able to enhance financial performance and is one of the biggest strategic thrusts of a business. The perception of a brand is greatly founded in the perceived quality of the product (Aaker 1995, 17). The perceived quality also defines whether a brand is categorized as a price, prestige or premium brand (Aaker 1995, 19). Brand equity is supported by associations customers have towards a brand. Associations can range from certain product attributes to particular symbols or celebrity spokespersons (Aaker 1995, 25). The brand identity has a big part in what kinds of associations customers have towards a brand, and thus, a strong brand must have a clearly defined brand identity (Aaker 1995, 25).

Figure (Aaker 1995, 9) displays how brand equity generates value for a brand.

Reduced Marketing Costs

Trade Leverage

Attracting New Customers
• Create Awareness
• Reassurance

Time to Respond to Competitive Threats

Brand Loyalty

Anchor to Which Other Associations Can Be Attached

Familiarity-Liking

Signal of Substance/ Commitment

Brand to Be Considered

Brand Awareness

Reason-to-Buy

Differentiate/Position

Price

Channel Member Interest

Extensions

Perceived Quality

Help Process/ Retrieve Information

Reason-to-Buy

Create Positive Attitude/Feelings

Extensions

Brand Associations

Competitive Advantage

Other Proprietary Brand Assets

BRAND EQUITY

Provides Value to Customer by Enhancing Customer's:
• Interpretation/ Processing of Information
• Confidence in the Purchase Decision
• Use Satisfaction

Provides Value to Firm by Enhancing:
• Efficiency and Effectiveness of Marketing Programs
• Brand Loyalty
• Prices/Margins
• Brand Extensions
• Trade Leverage
• Competitive Advantage

Figure 1 - How brand equity generates value (Aaker 1995, 9)

The brand association assets as described by Keller (1993, 3) as:

"- - other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory
and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers."

The level of abstraction differentiates the brand associations into more specific types. The association type division is defined by the quantity the information contains. Below the abstraction classification, brand associations are divided into three types: Attributes, benefits and attitudes (Keller 1993, 3-4).

Attributes are the associations that consumers link to the products and services, which are the distinguished characteristics of them and the associations related to the consumption of the products or services. The attributes can be product or non-product related, and the product related attributes refer to the necessary elements of the product and services that the consumers value and seek from the products or service. The non-product related attributes consist of the price information, the appearance of a product, the image of the typical consumer of a product and the image of a typical situation where the product is used (Keller 1993, 4).

The values and expectations of products performance that consumers connect to a service or product are the brand association *benefits*. The consumers perceive this association as a benefit the product or service can provide them. The benefits are categorized into more specific types:

1. Functional benefits. These benefits offer a solution and satisfaction to the inherent and fundamental needs of consumers via the products and services.
2. Experimental benefits. The experimental benefits come from the sensations and feelings of the consumption of products or services provided for consumers and fulfill the experimental needs.
3. Symbolic benefits. These benefits come from satisfying more subjective and underlying needs such as being approved and noticed by social surroundings (Keller 1993, 4).

Brand attitudes are the general opinion and assessment of the brand by consumers. Brand attitudes can generate the foundation of the consumer's behavior towards the brand and its consumption.

FIGURE 1
Dimensions of Brand Knowledge
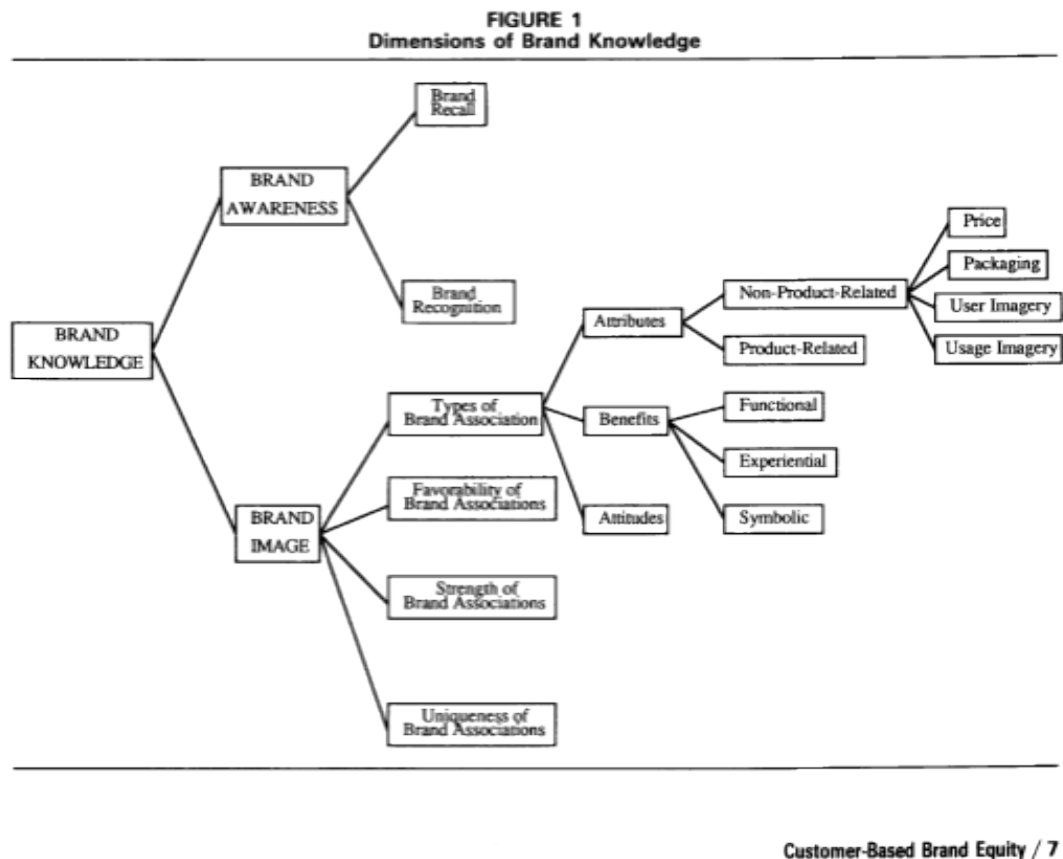
Figure 2 - Dimensions of Brand Knowledge (Keller 1993, 7)

Brand awareness is a dimension of the wider concept of *brand knowledge.* While Aaker relates brand awareness to the concept of brand equity, Keller (1993, 3) has a slightly different approach and defines the concept of brand knowledge as

"- - consisting of a brand node in memory to which a variety of associations are linked."

The awareness relies on the brand nodes strength or the trace in memory, and how consumers can identify the brand in various conditions. This will demonstrate how efficient the brand identities are and how well they communicate (Keller 1993, 3).

The two dimensions that brand awareness comprises of are brand recognition and brand recall performance. Brand recognition refers to the consumers' ability to link associations to the brand when given suggestions related to the brand, and can occur only when the consumers have previous insights of experiences from the brand they can relate to. Brand recall refers to the consumer's ability to associate memories to the brand itself when given products or services act as a stimulus (Keller 1993, 3).

The function and benefit of brand awareness are related to the consumer's buying behavior. They can link the product category straight to the brand and thus concern purchasing the brands products. Brand awareness can also interfere with consumers' decisions concerning the other brands within the competitive set, and they can base their decisions on the brand awareness whether they do not actually care about the service or product in general or are have a limited knowledge of the brands. Brand awareness has the ability to interfere with the development of the consumers' brand image by improving and creating brand associations (Keller 1993, 3).

3.3   Brand image

The brand image is how customers and others perceive a brand. Kapferer (2008, 174) says that:

> "Brand image is on the receiver's side. Image research focuses on the way in which certain groups perceive a product, a brand, a politician, a company or a country. The image refers to the way in which these groups decode all of the signals emanating from the products, services and communication covered by the brand."

Keller (1993, 3) suggests that the brand image can be determined as the perception of the brand that communicates with the consumer by the brand associations in consumer's mind. When projecting an image to the customers, the brands should be well aware of what should be reflected to the customers. The reflection to the public is done by different messages. Kapferer (174, 2008) indicates that the image is a results *"from decoding a message, extracting meaning, interpreting signs."*
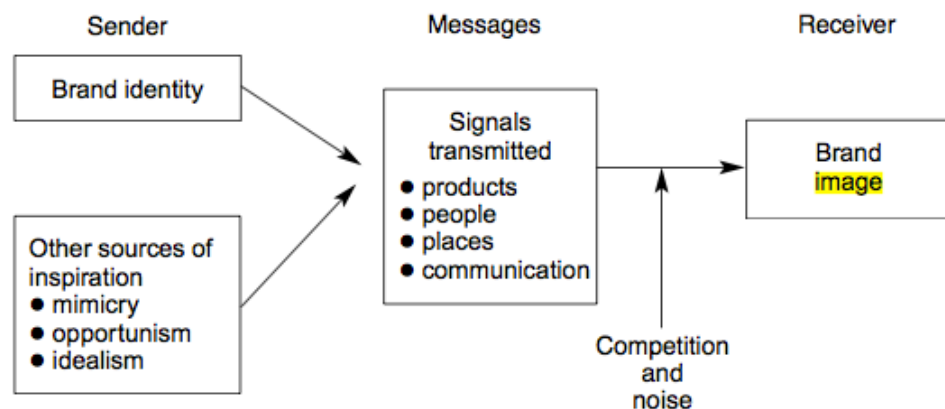
Figure 3 - Identity & Image (Kapferer, 174, 2008)

3.4 Brand identity

While the brand image is how the brand is perceived, brand identity is how the brand owner wants the brand to be perceived. Brand identity specifies the brand's meaning, aim and self-image (Kapferer 2008, 174). The brand identity is built from a set of brand associations that the brand owner creates and maintains. These associations serve to represent what the brand stands for and should help build relationships between the brand and customers. Such relationships are built when the brand is able to offer functional, emotional or

self-expressive benefits for the customers (Aaker 1996, 40). Maximum brand identity strength is achieved by using a broad brand identity scope focusing on strategically pushing it forward with both an internal and external focus to the brand creation (Aaker 1996, 40).

Brand identity is organized around four perspectives which are brand-as-product, brand-as-organization, brand-as-person and brand-as-symbol. The figure below shows what each perspective represents.

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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │  Brand Identity  │
                        └──────────────────┘

   ┌────────────┐   ┌────────────┐   ┌────────────┐   ┌────────────┐
   │ Brand-as-  │   │ Brand-as-  │   │ Brand-as-  │   │ Brand-as-  │
   │  product   │   │organization│   │   person   │   │   symbol   │
   └────────────┘   └────────────┘   └────────────┘   └────────────┘

   ┌────────────┐   ┌────────────┐   ┌────────────┐   ┌────────────┐
   │Product     │   │            │   │Brand       │   │            │
   │scope,      │   │Organiza-   │   │personality,│   │Visual      │
   │product     │   │tional      │   │brand-      │   │imagery/    │
   │attributes, │   │attributes, │   │customer    │   │metaphors,  │
   │quality/    │   │local       │   │relation-   │   │brand       │
   │value, uses,│   │versus      │   │ships       │   │heritage    │
   │users,      │   │global      │   │            │   │            │
   │country of  │   │            │   │            │   │            │
   │origin      │   │            │   │            │   │            │
   └────────────┘   └────────────┘   └────────────┘   └────────────┘
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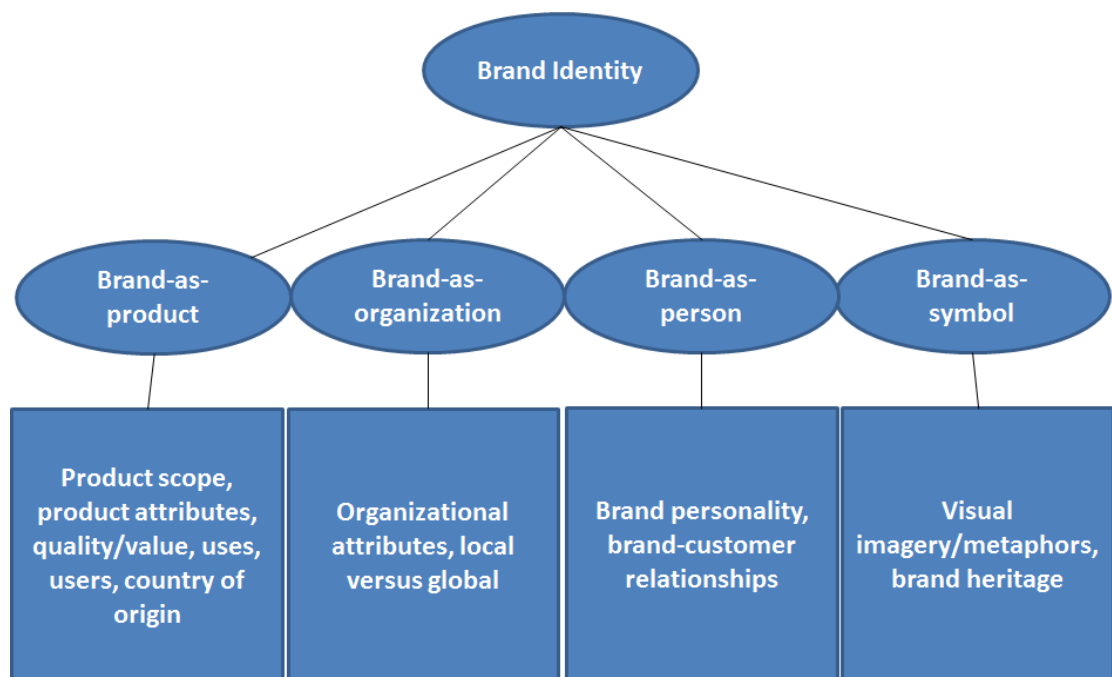
Figure 4 - Four perspectives of Brand identity (Aaker 1996, 40)

The structure of brand identity has a core and extended identity. The core identity is basically the core processes the business runs and generally remains the same throughout the lifetime of the brand. The extended identity organizes the elements of the brand into a cohesive package providing texture and completeness to the brand (Aaker 1996, 40).

The term *brand charter* is defined by Kapferer (2008, 211) as the following: "tasks which expression guides (also called brand charters) are meant to

facilitate." They should include not only the minor details of brands visual looks, but the whole concept of the brands language it communicates to the customers. The points that should be recognized by the brand charters according to Kapferer (2008 211) are

- Dominant features of style;
- The audio-visual characteristics such as a gesture, a close-up of a customer's face, a jingle;
- The graphic layout or narrative structure codes, and the brand's color codes;
- The principles determining if and how the brand – and its signature, if it has one – can be used in some circumstances.

The brand charters serve as tools for the people working with the brand to understand the brands true nature and identity, and to recognize the factors that make the brand special (Kapferer 2008, 211).

When creating a brand identity, there are four common pitfalls that must be looked out for. These are the four brand identity traps which are summarized in the image below. Creating a brand identity which is excessively limiting will lead to falling into one of these traps which in turn will lead to ineffective and dysfunctional brand strategies (Aaker 1996, 40).
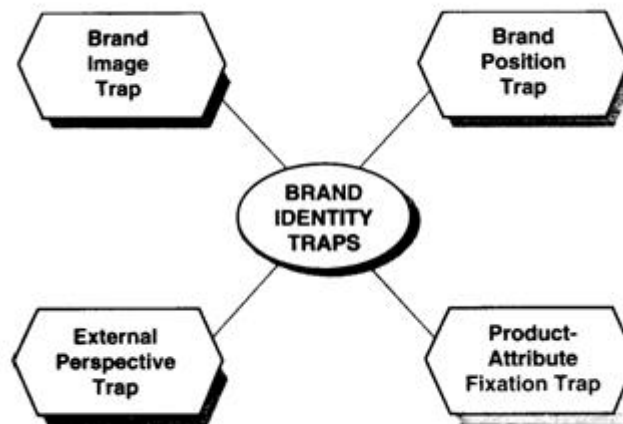
Figure 5 - The four common brand identity traps (Aaker 1996, 40)

The brand image trap is when the customer's perception of the brand (brand image) becomes the brand identity rather than just a piece of the whole picture. This happens when resources and expertise cannot go beyond building a brand image and will result in the brand identity just being what the customer's perceive in other words allowing them to dictate what the brand is (Aaker 1996, 40).

Aaker (1996, 40) defines brand positioning as "the part of the brand identity and value proposition to be actively communicated to a target audience". If the search for a brand identity ends up as a search for a brand position due to focusing on providing objectives to those in charge of communication programs, the brand position trap will come into play. This will shift the focus from creating a brand identity into merely creating an advertisement for the target audience (Aaker 1996, 40).

Brand identity can help internally clarify the values and purpose of an organization. Failing to acknowledge this will lead to the external perspective trap, which in turn can lead to employees not understanding the vision of the organization and weaker branding strategies (Aaker 1996, 40).

Focusing solely on the attributes of a product will lead to the product-attribute fixation trap. When this occurs, management will have the perception that these attributes are the main bases for customer decisions and differentiation. As branding relies on having a much wider scope than focusing on product properties, this will lead to ineffective strategies and sometimes even damaging mistakes (Aaker 1996, 40).

3.5 Kapferer's Identity Prism

A brand must have a deep inner inspiration as well as character and own beliefs in order to help consumers in their lives and even in finding their own identity (Kapferer 2008, 182). Brands speak about the product and are perceived by customers as sources of products, services and the satisfaction provided by them. Thus, the communication theory plays a big part in branding (Kapferer 2008, 182). A brand identity has six facets which are represented in the "brand identity prism" (Kapferer 2008, 182).

The three facets on the left, which are physique, relationship and reflection, are all visible and give the brand its outward expression. The three facets on the right, which are personality, culture and self-image, are not physically visible but rather lie inside within the "spirit" of the brand (Kapferer 2008, 182).
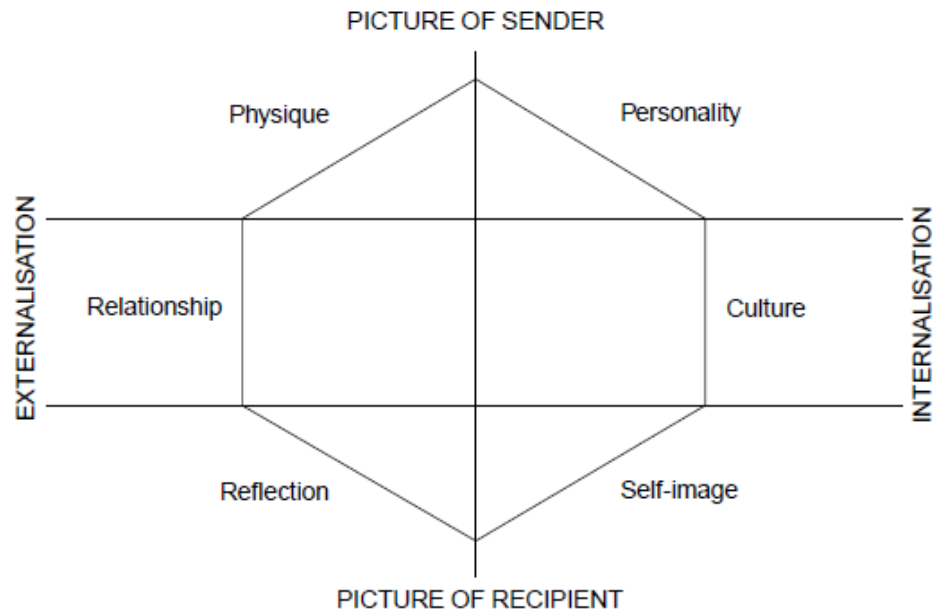
Figure 6 - Kapferer's six facet brand identity prism (Kapferer 2008, 182)

The **physical** qualities of a brand are it's "physique". It is both the backbone of the brand as well as the tangible added value it gives (Kapferer 2008, 182). Traditionally, a brand will focus on know-how and positioning and will rely on certain brand attributes and benefits to develop its identity. Though this physical appearance is important, it is not everything. However, when developing a brand, the first step is to define its physical aspect (Kapferer 2008, 183). In other words, what it is concretely, what it does and what it looks like (Kapferer 2008, 183). A brand will have a problem if the functional added value is weak. Thus, it is especially important for image-based brands to deliver noticeable material benefits (Kapferer 2008, 183).

A brand has a **personality** that gradually builds up character through communication (Kapferer 2008, 183). The way it communicates its products and services portrays what kind of a person the brand would be if it were human (Kapferer 2008, 183). Brand personality can be created by giving the brand a spokesperson, which can either be a real character or a fictional one (Kapferer 2008, 183). Pepsi, for example, has used several celebrities as spokespersons for their brand. In the context of the prism, the brand identity

facet is the personality of the source and not the customer reflected image (Kapferer 2008, 183).

Figure 7 - Beyonce - one of Pepsi's celebrity spokesperson's (https://www.pepsi.co.uk/beyonce/)

The **cultural** facet refers to the set of values that inspire the brand (Kapferer 2008, 184). A brand is a culture and no cult brands exist without brand cultures of their own. Products do not only represent the culture but are used as means to communicate it (Kapferer 2008, 184). The culture of a brand plays a big role in differentiating brands as it portrays the values which are embodied within the products of the brand. (Kapferer 2008, 185). The **relationship** facet reflects the way a brand acts, delivers its services and relates to its customers (Kapferer 2008, 185). "A brand is a customer reflection" (Kapferer 2008, 186). The **reflection** facet refers to the reflection or image that a brand will build up of the buyers and users of the product (Kapferer 2008, 185). It is easy to find confusion between reflection and target. The difference is that the target portrays potential users of the product while the reflection describes how the user of the brand wishes to be seen after using the product (Kapferer 2008, 186).

The **self-image** facet refers to the way the target feels internally and how the brand develops an internal relationship within the user (Kapferer 2008, 186). For example, people who buy Porches might just simply want to prove to themselves that they can, and make the purchasing decision based on that rather than thinking of the benefits, if any, that such a car will bring them (Kapferer 2008, 186). While reflection describes a target's outward mirror, the self-image is the target's internal mirror, answering internal questions such as "How do I feel?" and "What am I?" (Kapferer 2008, 186).

When creating a brand identity prism, it is important to keep in mind that the identity communicates the brand's long-term singularity and attractiveness facets and thus must be compact and striking. Kapferer (2008, 187) suggests that the characteristics a good identity prism should possess are:

- Having only a few words attached to each facet
- Having different words for different facets
- All words should have strength and should not be lukewarm: identity is what makes a brand stand out.

The factors that can have a negative influence on the brand identity prism are often seen in different brand identity prisms. The facets can be filled with the brand image qualities that are derived from previous studies and thus might be outdated. The identity prism should be restricted to brand *identity,* not brand *image.* Often the facets can share the same words. The function of the facets is to address the uniqueness of the brand. Also the terms used in the facets are important. Consumers are not attracted to brand strategies etc, but to experiences provided by the brand (Kapferer 2008, 187-188). Revo Design's identity prism is shown in the appendices.

3.6 Developing a Strong Brand Identity

This chapter goes through the process of creating a strong brand identity according to article "The Marketer's Guide to Developing a Strong Brand Identity" by Steve Hall (2013). Brand identity is a tool, which reflects and represents the reputation of the company via strengths, passion, purpose, value and attributes. A good brand is recognizable by its clear mission and it possesses the highly valued customer loyalty. The brand can be seen as a valued asset for the business and must therefore be carefully created (Hall 2013).

Determination of the current place of the brand in the market is an important step before building and developing the actual identity. SWOT analysis can be a helpful tool to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the brand. SWOT analysis consists of

- Strengths. What are the strengths and competitive advantages of the brand?
- Weaknesses. What are the weaknesses within the brand compared to its competitive set?
- Opportunities. What are the opportunities the brand could build value with?
- Threats. What factors are threatening the brand and its success? Revo Design's SWOT analysis can be found from the appendices.

The process of developing a brand identity for a company consists of five steps. Its purpose is to determine the brands personality, the brand image that the company wants to communicate to customers (Hall 2013).

First step is to create *Vision statement.* The vision statement reflects what the company wants to be in the future. Hall (2013) suggests that the statement

should be *"one sentence in length* and *should not explain how the vision will be met."* Revo Design's determines its vision statement to be *making controversy desirable.*

Hall (2013) states the second step to be *Mission statement.* It is a statement that qualifies the company's core purpose. Mission statement should be considered as a motivational tool for the consumers and inside the company. Revo Design's mission statement is "*Revo Design is built by men for men. With our brand and products, we want to offer men a new way to differentiate, represent themselves and to belong in a community that shares the same values and attitudes."*

Third step of developing the brand identity is the creating *Essence.* By essence we mean the emotions that the brand arouses in the consumers. Hall (2013) describes the essence to be " - - the representation of the company's heart, soul, and spirit, and is best described with one word." Revo Designs essence is "rude".

The *Personality* is the next phase of the process. The brands personality is a subject of translating personification to the business, recognition of the personality characteristics of the brand such as how the brand acts, behaves, talks and thinks (Hall 2013). Revo Design as a person is "Young, self-aware and rude."

The last step is the *Position.* This statement should compress the value, uniqueness and benefits of the company to few sentences. Who is the brand for and where does the brand stand should be determined with the position, and also to set the brand away from the competitive set and convince that the brand can deliver its promises (Hall 2013). "*Be noted, admired and hated."* Revo Design's positioning statement.

Kapferer (2008, 178) indicates that brand positioning as a concept relies on the principle that "all choices are comparative". Positioning a brand can be defined as putting emphasis to the main characteristics of the brand and what it wants to communicate in order to differentiate the brand from its competitors in the markets. The process behind brand positioning is based on the questions

- Why?
- For Whom?
- When?
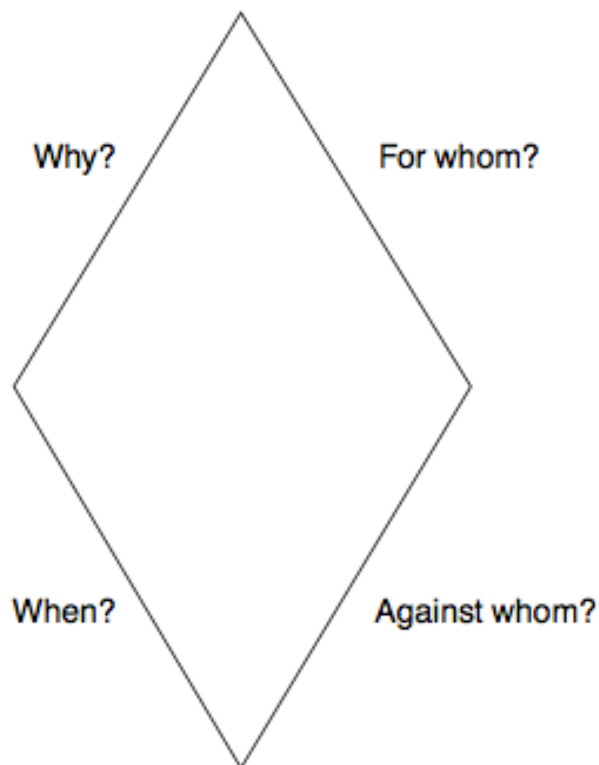- Against whom? (Kapferer 2008, 175-176)

Figure 8 - Positioning a brand (Kapferer 2008, 176)

The positioning process builds from two steps. The first step is to recognize the *competitive set*. By competitive set we talk about the set of competitors in the market that the brand is willing to be compared and associated with. The

second step includes the indication of the difference that the brand seeks to provide when compared to the competitive set selected (Kapferer 2008, 176).

Where the *brand identity* determinates that what makes the brand unique and determinates the key elements that the brand consists of, the brand positioning by is nature is competitive. It investigates the comparison that consumers make between the brand and its competitors. By setting itself to the comparison with competitors, the brand needs to find the factor that influences to the key-decision making of customers (Kapferer 2008, 178). Kapferer (2008, 178) defines the aim of positioning as follows;

> "The aim of positioning is to identify, and take possession of, a strong purchasing rationale that gives us a real or perceived advantage. It implies a desire to take up a long-term position and defend it"

The positioning can be addressed as a formula that contains four points;

- – For
- – Frame reference
- – Promise
- – Reason to believe

By the **"for"** is meant the specific target individuals and groups profiles. Who is the brand trying and willing to influence and reach. Revo Design's general target individual can be portrayed as a 15-35 year old male.

The **"frame reference"** narrows down the competition that is competing in the same market field against the brand. The competitive set of Revo Design is

relatively wide, but company has selected the most relevant competing brands to be **Volcom, CTRL-clothing, Makia clothing** and **Anchor Sand**.

The **"promise"** is what the brand actually a promises to the customer or a benefit that the brand offers. This can be seen as a competitive advantage of brand in customer's mindset. For an example; Mercedes benz can promise that they are the most driver oriented and comfortable driving experience, and the benefit of MB is the luxury and comfort. Revo Design promises to be high quality European produced clothing line with the benefit of outstanding and controversial design and great value for money.

The **"reason to believe"** indicates the concrete reason why the brand and its products are what they promise to be. In Revo Design clothes the concrete reason to believe the quality are the well-known producers of the materials (Kapferer 2008, 178-179).

4   CONDUCTING THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

Careful planning and distinguished objectives are extremely important in conducting a successful focus group interview. The structure of the interview must be comprehensive and planned based on the objectives of the research. The material used in the focus group must be carefully selected in order to ensure reliable data (Solatie 2001, 18).

4.1 Participants and materials

The sample of the focus group should comprise of individuals belonging to the target group relevant to the research. The research problem determines the

size of the sample. A small group is most effective when the objective of the research is to acquire data on personal insight and sensations (Solatie 2001, 22).

Seven people participated in the focus group session. They were randomly selected from our university and had the characteristics of the predetermined target group of the company. The participants weren't briefed in advance about the topic of the focus group in order to ensure them having an open mind in the interview itself. Solatie (2001, 24) states that in order to ensure that the participants are ordinary, non-subjective members of the target group, they should not have participated in any other focus groups for the past six months. Thus, the participants were asked if any of them had attended any focus groups in the past six months. All the participants replied that they had not. In order to avoid conflicts with non-relevant issues amongst the group members, commonality in socio-economic and demographic characteristics is important when selecting participants for the group (Malhotra et al. 2013, 92). This was also taken into account then selecting the participants. The company determined the main characteristics of the group members. The members were 15-35 year-old male individuals.

For the research, a preface questionnaire was composed in order to determine relevant information concerning the participants and their purchasing habits in the context of clothing. A catalog that included the up-coming products by the company was also developed for the focus group. The catalog layout was created according to the brand identity of the company, and the products displayed were both up-coming designs as well as products that did not entirely meet the brand identity. These products were placed in the catalog alongside the final products to see if the participants would notice and point out the differences. By placing different styled designs alongside the final products, it was possible to determine if the final products were the most attractive and most closely associated with the actual brand image given by the catalog.

A free association form was also composed for the research. This form allowed the participants to freely reflect on the images and feelings brought up by the material and discussion.

4.2 Data analysis

When analyzing qualitative data, it is important to pick out the opinions and comments most relevant to the research, and leave out the non-relevant ones from the report (Solatie 2001, 51). The researcher must be able to categorize the opinions gathered and determine whether the participant is truly expressing his/her honest opinion (Solatie 2001, 51).

The data acquired from the focus group discussion was assembled and then analyzed. The irrelevant data was reduced during the data assembly process. The data used for the analysis were the interviewer's notes, the participant's notes and filled in forms as well as the audio and video recordings. The audio recording was transcribed to ease the analysis process.

4.3 Implementation

The interviewer had similar characteristics to the participants. Solatie (2001, 35) states that in focus groups that comprise of young participants, it is better for the interviewer to be of the same age group as them. The interviewer did not have any ties to the company, which ensured a non-subjective attitude towards the research.

The entire interview lasted 41 minutes and was videotaped as well as recorded with a tape recorder. The interview took place in a classroom in our university that was reserved the day before. The interview began with the whole group eating pastries and drinking soft drinks offered by the interviewer. This was done in order to relieve the mood and create a relaxed atmosphere. After this, the participants were briefed and told that they should express their honest opinions in the discussion and not feel obligated to act in any other way than how they normally would. The participants were also told that their responses would remain anonymous in reports of the data collected in the interview.

After the initial briefing, the participants were asked to fill in the preface questionnaire. After this was done, the interviewer asked the participants what factors mattered most when buying a t-shirt from a shop. This opened up a discussion amongst the participants, which lasted roughly five minutes. After this, the interviewer asked the participants whether the print on t-shirts had any influence on their buying decision. The interviewer then explained to the participants that some t-shirt brands put messages on their prints, and then asked whether such a message is relevant to their buying decision.

After the first discussion was over, the interviewer handed out a Revo Design catalog to each of the participants and told them to take five minutes to go through each of the designs. The participants were then asked what kind of feelings arose when looking at the material and what things caught their attention. After that, each of the participants received an empty piece of paper and were asked to write about what attitudes they felt the material signaled to them, what kind of a person they pictured based on the designs and three words that came to their mind when looking through the catalog. This was the free association part of the interview.

Next, the participants were asked to choose their favorite and least favorite shirt from the catalog and then justify their choices. After this, they were asked whether they could see Revo Design as a brand and whether they would buy

the products or not. The interviewer then asked the group what they felt would be a suitable price for the t-shirts. The interviewer then thanked the participants and the interview was over.

5 STUDY RESULTS

5.1 Participants and their consuming behavior

In the beginning of the focus group the participants were asked to fill out a briefing form giving their age, gender, occupation and the size of their household. There were a total of six participants in the group. The participants are portrayed with I (= Interviewee) in the charts. All the participants were male by gender.
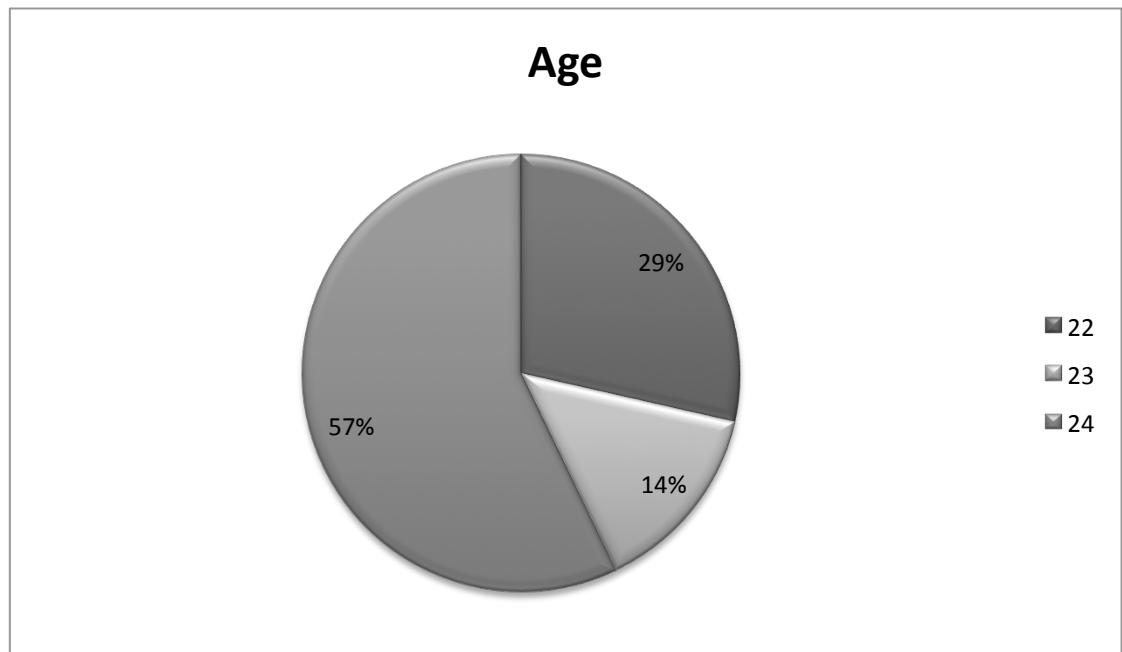

Figure 9 - Age distribution of the participants

The participants were all from the desired age distribution set by Revo Design. The occupation of the participants is presented in the following chart.
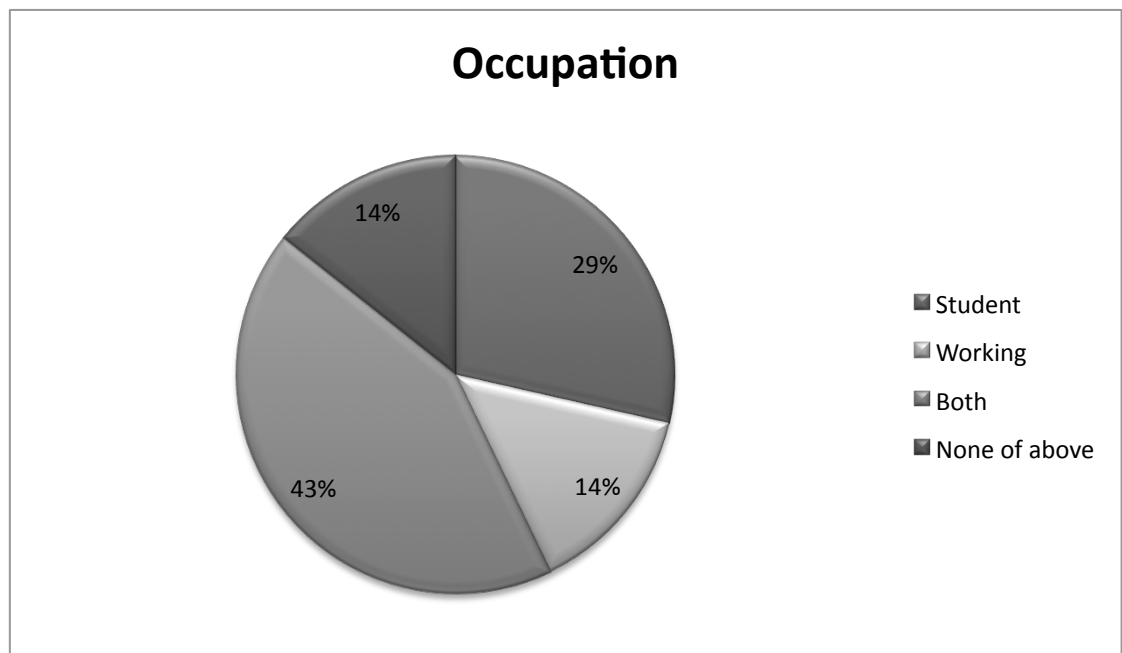
Figure 10 - Occupation of the participants

The distribution in the size of the households was relatively small. Three of the participants were living in a household of 1 people, three in a household of 2 people and only one in a household of 3 people.

The form given to the participants included a part where their consuming habits concerning the products relevant to the Revo design were asked. They were asked how often they buy clothing, how much they are willing to pay for a t-shirt, if the brand is an essential part of their decision and what brands they favor. The majority of the group, five participants, purchase clothes either once or twice a month, and the other two participants reported to purchase clothes once in a two-month period.

The amount the participants were willing to pay for a t-shirt varied from 15 to 50 Euros. The calculated average was 29.28 Euros. This average is a bit above the Revo Design pricing strategy. The importance of the brand in the buying decision was notably inessential among the participants. Four of the participants answered that it was not relevant at all whereas one found it important. Other answers were "sometimes" and "it depends on what purpose

the clothing is for, sometimes yes." The clothing brands that the participants favored were divided into three subgroups of sport clothing and brands, band shirts and urban culture brands. Nike, band shirts and Vailent were mentioned more than once.

The focus group session revealed that the most important factor in the buying decision making among the group was the appearance of the product. The quality of a product was also rated as an important factor. When the participants were asked about the shirts with a certain message the discussion revealed that it was important that the participants could identify themselves with the message. As an example relevant to Revo Design, the moderator mentioned a highly controversial shirt and asked the members of the conversation whether they would ever wear such a piece of clothing. The participants were not willing to wear such a shirt but recognized the message as provocative and ironic.

Finally, when the participants were asked whether they would buy a Revo Design product, only two group members answered positively. Many of the participants explained that they do not feel themselves to be part of the target segment, but said that they believe that there is a target group for the products and saw products to be sold in shops such as Beyond JKL. This is due to the decision of Revo Design to use a sample consisting of 15-35 year old males.

5.2 Products of Revo Design

The catalog presented to the focus group included the actual designs of the Revo Design but also designs with minor differences. This was done to investigate if the actual products portrayed the desired image and if the identity was reflected from the products or if the other designs were found more attractive. The differences of the products were kept as imperceptible as

possible for the sake of reliability. The participants were not aware that the designs were differentiated for a particular reason.

The discussion pointed out at the very beginning that Revo Design's actual designs were positively received by others. It was suggested that the company should concentrate on the photo-prints found in the catalog, and this is what the company is actually emphasizing in the design.

When the participants were asked to select their most favorite and least favorite designs, six out of seven participants selected an actual Revo Design product to be their favorite. Only two participants selected an authentic design to be their least favorite. One of the participants implied that the reason was in the message that provoked a mental image of cancer in him:

> *"I don't personally smoke cigarettes, so the first thing that comes to my mind is cancer.. it is again quite fine as a shirt, but somehow I get too strong thoughts of it..".*

The shirt included an old bottle used as an astray and had a text "Lung distilled". Another argument for selecting a design to be his favorite was told to be the simplicity of the shirt and that the shirt was associated to one well-known brand by the participant. The simplicity was mentioned with another design as well to be a positive factor, and also the roughness of the print. The participant did not associate the print with any message whereas one participant mentioned the design with a reference to cancer mentioned above.

5.3 The brand image of Revo Design

The catalog specially produced for the focus group was compiled in order to present the actual color scheme (dark) of the Revo Design's brand and the layout of the catalog (simplistic, "raw") was also used to imply the brand identity of Revo Design.

The free association forms asked the participants to write down their first impressions of the three questions after they had viewed the catalog and discussed the designs in the group. The questions asked were

1. What attitudes do the material communicate to you?
2. What kind of a persondoyou associate with the material?
3. What are the three words that come to your mind when looking at the material?

The following table was compiled by using all the answers acquired from the free association part of the focus group. The answers to the three questions are illustrated in a graphic. There was repetition of certain terms among the participants.

TABLE 1 - Free association - Attitudes & Person

Attitudes	Person
Rebel, Rock 'n' Roll, Desire to stand out from the mass, live fast & die young	**A bit rebel. Desire to communicate a message. Dares to stand out and be different**
"In the swim", Youthful, Fashion-conscious, Rebel, Lonely Rider.	**Takes care of himself and his appearance, Fashion conscious, Visits nightlife, Young, Man, Visual/Artistic**

"Coolness", "Freshness" (the meaning of the inverted commas was highlighted)	**20-30 year old, Still looking for his "own thing", Uses clothes designed by friends as a supporting act**
Rock 'n' Roll attitude, Counter-culture, Fashion conscious	**Young adult, Urban individual, Skater or rocker**
Gimmicking with text and pictures. Base-color is neutral. Designs are used in order to try to bring some added value	**20-30 year old man, maybe also 30+ who wants his youth back. Youthful in general, Wants to stand out from the mass.**
Rugged, Rough, Rebel	**Brave, Profound, Avid, Provocative**
Urban, artistry, gloom ("in some odd way?")	**20-30 year old man, Likes heavy music, Can also appear to hipsters (some models)**

The associated attitudes were in the line with the Revo Design's brand identity and with the brand image that company wants to communicate. One of the focus group participant's answers indicated that the attitudes he thought of when asked were a bit pretentious. The term *rebel* was repeated often, and the attitudes were also associated with "rock 'n' roll" lifestyle. Few terms that Revo Design uses in its brand identity prism were mentioned with different expression, such as *gloom – Dark* and *Rugged, Rough – Raw.*

The *person* part of the association task revealed also good results. Equates to the Revo Design's brand identity terms were found in almost in every participant's answers. The urban subcultures were mentioned straight forward in the forms of *skater, rocker, urban individual* and there was also references to other urban culture groups, *hipsters* and *heavy metal* fans. The self-image

correlating with Revo Design's identity was reflected in the forms of "*Dares to stand out and be different",* "wants to stand out from the mass."

The third part where the participants were asked to associate freely just three words that first came to their mind produced very encouraging data. The mental images that the participants reported were mostly all reflecting the images that the company wants to communicate to the customers. The words *darkness, grim* and modern was repeated more than once, and term *rebel* that was repeated often in the first associating tasks was also mentioned.

Figure 11 - Revo Design's free word association cloud

The overall brand image related to Revo Design by the participants turned out to be positive based on the premises set to the research and correlated with the message that brand identity is intended to communicate.

5.4 Revo Design as a brand

The last part of the focus group was to determine whether the participants perceive Revo Design as a brand after the discussion and reviewing the materials. First answer indicated that there was a clear identity and recognizable style within the products. It was also mentioned that there was

too much different styles within the catalog and by compressing the styles and models into a separate catalogs each representing the style that dominates there would be a brand recognized. The biggest issue concerning the recognition of the brand in Revo Design was the lack of repeating and well-established logo. And as Kapferer (2008, 195) states:

> "*What is important about these symbols and logos is not so much that they help indentify the brand but that the brand indentifies with them*"

One participant suggested that by unifying the style to be similar to the ones with the element of *roughness* would make the Revo Design be recognizable as a brand. The table below presents the findings of the focus group session and the judgments that can be made from the findings.

TABLE 2. Presenting results from the data

What did the data collected from focus group reveal?	What judgements can be drawn from the data?
The Revo Design products were recognized from the other designs.	The products that were in line with Revo Design's brand identity were most valued
Participants associated the products with the images that Revo Design wanted to communicate	The brand image of Revo Design is reflecting the brand identity of Revo Design effectively

Many participants suggested that there was no clear logo for the brand, and it had an effect to the brand recognition	Logo is very important to the brand recognition.
Only two participants were willing to purchase Revo Design product if they were in sale	The target group was not met precisely

6   CONCLUSIONS

The focus group was found to be a very efficient tool to analyze the brand image, the brand itself and the associations the products aroused within the target group. The research questions set to the research were mostly answered and the answers are valuable to the company's next phase of production. In the near future for the company, the research can support some decisions concerning the branding, marketing and pricing strategies. The study also gives a good and valuable base for further research of the company's brand and its development.

The focus group answered the research question concerning the products of Revo Design generally quite positively. The products that were built to communicate the brand identity to the target group were most valued and recognized to be the most appealing designs.

The images and associations of the Revo Design products, and the layout and the color scheme of the catalog aroused interest in the focus group and participants conformed the facets of the current identity prism of the company.

The focus group brought associations to the company's attention that weren't thought of previously, and were seen as elements that strengthened the brand identity. The designs were able to communicate strong messages and themes such as cancer and strong feelings such as disgust. One member of the group also discovered the controversial aspect which the company seeks to reach with their designs and in their brand image.

The research question *"Is there a Revo Design brand"* brought up clear issues and suggestions for improvements for the brand. The biggest issue concerning the brand recognition of the company was the complete lack of an ongoing and sustained logo. It is important for the company to select and design a constant logo, which helps the customers identify the brand. As well as this, the research question couldn't have been answered thoroughly due to the fact that the participants did not have previous insights of the company or the brand, and thus we cannot use the term of brand recognition in its scientific and studied concept, but rather as a general concept of recognizing and perceiving the elements of the brand.

The finding that two out of five participants wanted to buy products was useful in the means of narrowing down the target group into a more specific segment for the next focus group research that can be conducted with a more precisely selected sample group. The objective of the research was not to study the buying decision of the products shown, and although most of the participants didn't feel themselves to be part of the Revo Design's target segment, they still perceived the images and association that were intended and desired. Thus, it can be interpreted that the brand identity is relatively strong and communicates its message not only to the target customers, but to those beyond it as well.

Validity, reliability and suggestions for future research

Kothari (2004, 74) explains the term of *validity* as "Validity is the most critical criterion and indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure". As the focus group discussion revealed the elements of brand image to the company and the results met the objectives of the research, the research can be considered valid in that sense. However, when researching brand and brand image the sample often has a certain images and associations of the brand before the conduction of the study, but in the fact that the Revo Design's products are not yet available in markets and also that there has been no marketing of Revo Design made the research a bit challenging task. However the results revealed that the focus group participants with no previous information or associations to Revo design discovered the brand image that was desired. The results from focus group discussions can't always be generalized and might be even misleading due the usage of specific target groups (Maholtra et al. 2013, 95), however the target group in this discussion was not narrowed into a too specific sample, and thus might be generalized in some extent.

Reliability relates on the trustworthiness of the measurement in the research. It is gained if the results are consequent and repeatable (Kothari 2004, 74). Only one focus group session was initiated, and this limited the amount of data gathered and eliminated the opportunity to compare the possibly differentiating brand images that could've occur in other focus group sessions.

When the company has released its first products and acquired a reputation and awareness in general among the consumers the brand image study could possibly provide more developed and strong insights and opinions from the brand and how they receive it. The focus group turned out to be a productive research technique in the brand image study and in the future the amount of focus group sessions should be increased in order to acquire more detailed and valid data. Also the reliability of the research can be verified more distinctively if the aspect of repetitiveness and consequential behavior can be detected from the acquired data in the following studies.

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