

Nea Jaakkola

Brand development for a small business

Brand development plan for Sphynx Vehicle Repairs

Brand development for a small business

Brand development plan for Sphynx Vehicle Repairs

Nea Jaakkola
Final project, Thesis
Spring 2024
International Business (BBA)
Oulu University of Applied Sciences

ABSTRACT

Oulu University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in International Business

Author: Nea Jaakkola
Title of thesis: Brand development for a small business
Supervisor: Sari Alatalo
Term and year when the thesis was submitted: Spring 2024
Number of pages: 33 + 7 appendices

The bachelor's thesis commissioned by Sphynx Vehicle Repairs aims to enhance the company's understanding of brand development and communication processes with a focus on acquiring new customers and creating a brand image that resonates with the desired customer base.

The on-hands aspects will be explored through an in-depth interview with the owner of Sphynx Vehicle Repairs. This interview will delve into the theoretical underpinnings of brand development, communication strategies, and customer engagement. The insights gained from this interview will form a foundational understanding of the company's current branding practices and aspirations.

On the practical side, the perspectives of existing customers will be collected through a comprehensive survey. This survey will serve as a crucial tool to gather firsthand feedback and opinions from the customer base. Analysing these perspectives will enable the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the current brand perception, as well as areas for improvement.

The synthesis of insights obtained from both the theoretical interview and the customer survey were used to construct a comprehensive brand development plan. This plan was tailored from the customer's viewpoint, ensuring that it aligns with their preferences, expectations, and values. The emphasis on customer-centricity is intended to create a brand image that not only attracts new customers but also resonates with the existing ones.

The overarching goal of the thesis is to present practical and actionable recommendations for Sphynx Vehicle Repairs. These recommendations are aimed at enhancing the brand, improving communication practices, and fostering sustained growth in the context of a competitive market. By actively engaging with both new and existing customers, the thesis seeks to provide the company with tangible and effective recommendations that can be implemented to strengthen its position in the market and cultivate lasting relationships with its customer base.

Keywords: Branding, Brand Identity, Development, Small Company, Personal Branding, Digital Branding

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1	Understanding branding.....	8
2.2	Brand identity.....	9
2.3	Varieties of branding	10
2.3.1	Personal branding.....	11
2.3.2	Digital branding.....	11
2.3.3	Personal- and digital branding working together.....	12
2.4	Brand strategy.....	13
2.5	Branding process	15
2.6	Brand touchpoints relating to process	17
2.7	Different branding approaches.....	18
2.8	Comparing branding approaches.....	20
3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	21
3.1	Methods of research	21
3.2	Research ethics	22
4	FINDINGS	24
4.1	Interview.....	24
4.2	Survey.....	25
4.2.1	Impressions, satisfaction rates, brand recommending and areas of improvement.....	25
4.2.2	Resonance with brand values, message, and communication preferences	26
4.2.3	Visual appeal, identity concerns, brand personality and associations	27
4.2.4	Consideration of switching brands, comparison to competitors	28
5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	29
5.1	Interview conclusions	29
5.2	Survey conclusions	31
5.3	Recommendations for the business	32
6	DISCUSSION	35
	REFERENCES	37

APPENDICES.....	39
-----------------	----

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis, titled "Brand Development for a Small Business," is a collaborative effort with Sphynx Vehicle Repairs. The purpose of this thesis is to provide guidance to Sphynx Vehicle Repairs on the effective development of their brand. The goal is to help them attract more customers and create a strong brand image that aligns with their desired customer base.

Sphynx Vehicle Repairs stands as a testament to the unwavering passion and dedication of its singular owner, a man deeply committed to the artistry of vehicle repairs. This independent workshop is a haven for meticulous vehicle maintenance and swift recovery services, catering to a diverse array of vehicles. With an impressive 28 years of hands-on experience in the motor industry, the owner brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to every project undertaken. Having successfully steered the helm of this thriving business for the past 15 years, the owner's commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction is not just a motto but a way of life at Sphynx Vehicle Repairs.

The choice of this topic stems from the author's deep interest in branding, and it aligns perfectly with Sphynx Vehicle Repairs' ambition to craft a brand that resonates both with their business identity and their customers' expectations.

Beyond its immediate application, this thesis holds personal significance for the author's career development. As someone enthusiastic about branding, this real-world project promises valuable experience. The knowledge and insights gained are expected to benefit the author's future career prospects, offering a practical understanding of branding in action.

The main objective of this thesis is to equip Sphynx Vehicle Repairs with a roadmap for comprehensive brand development. These recommendations encompass various facets, including strategy, creativity, and operations, aimed at refreshing the brand, ensuring customer satisfaction, and supporting business growth. To achieve this, the thesis will employ a variety of research methods, including a survey and an interview, to evaluate the company's existing branding, pinpoint areas for improvement, and propose effective solutions.

In the upcoming chapters, this thesis will delve into the core concepts of brand development, illuminate the chosen theoretical foundations, describe the research methods, and analyse the brand development process. Furthermore, it will provide recommendations tailored specifically for Sphynx Vehicle Repairs.

In summary, this thesis embarks on a journey to explore how a small business can successfully develop its brand. It sheds light on the path to creating a compelling and resonant brand. This work aims to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical application in the realm of branding and business development.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the upcoming chapters, we delve into the complexities of branding, exploring its fundamental principles, diverse varieties, and the intersection of personal and digital branding. From understanding brand strategy to dissecting the branding process, we will uncover the significance of brand touchpoints and compare various branding approaches. This journey aims to provide a concise yet comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of branding in both traditional and digital realms.

2.1 Understanding branding

Branding, in its essence, is a process that is undertaken to build awareness and foster customer loyalty. It is something that requires commitment from the top management and a willingness to invest in the future. The main goal of branding is to express why people should choose one brand over another. Companies leverage branding with a desire to lead, outpace the competition, and provide employees with the best tools to reach customers effectively. (Wheeler 2012, 6)

Fundamentally, branding raises a series of essential questions. First, the individuals or companies should ask themselves who they are. The identity of a brand must be clearly defined, reflecting the company's values, culture, and personality. This clarity ensures consistent messaging and provides a solid foundation for the brand. Second, they need to determine who needs to know about them. Identifying the target audience is crucial. Understanding potential customers, their demographics, interests, and pain points helps in crafting messages that resonate with them. Third, they need to figure out how their audience will find them. The choice of communication channels and strategies is critical to effectively reach the audience. Whether through traditional advertising, social media, or other means, the message should be delivered where the audience is most receptive. Finally, they need to know why people should care. It is vital to convey the value the brand provides. Customers must understand how the brand can meet their needs, solve their problems, or fulfil their desires. This connection with the brand creates a sense of purpose and emotional resonance (Davis & Piven 2014, 1)

Brands serve several primary functions such as navigation, reassurance, and engagement. Looking into each function separately, navigation in a world filled with products and services, customers are often overwhelmed by choices. Brands serve as guides, helping consumers navigate through

the chaos. They create familiarity, making it easier for people to make decisions. The logo, colours, and packaging become beacons of recognition that simplify choices. Reassurance is when a strong brand communicates the intrinsic quality of a product or service. When customers encounter a familiar brand, they feel a sense of reassurance, as if they are in the hands of a trusted friend. This reassurance stems from consistent experiences with the brand that have built trust over time. Engaging with the desired audience is the heart of branding. Brands employ distinctive imagery, language, and associations to encourage customers to identify with them. When customers feel an emotional connection to a brand, they become loyal advocates, not just consumers. It is this emotional bond that turns casual shoppers into lifelong brand enthusiasts. (Wheeler 2012, 2)

2.2 Brand identity

Brand identity is a concept that holds significant importance in the world of business and marketing. It refers to the unique set of characteristics, values, and visual elements that distinguish a brand from its competitors. A well-defined brand identity not only helps a company stand out in the market but also fosters a connection with its target audience. (Slade-Brooking 2016, 18)

One key element of brand identity is the brand's logo. This distinctive symbol serves as a visual representation of the company and is often the first thing that comes to mind when people think about a brand. A memorable and well-designed logo can leave a lasting impression and contribute to the overall recognition of the brand. (Budelmann 2012, 12)

In addition to the logo, brand colours play a crucial role in creating a recognisable identity. Consistent use of specific colours in marketing materials, packaging, and communication helps establish a visual consistency that becomes synonymous with the brand. This colour palette becomes part of the brand's personality, influencing how consumers perceive and remember the brand. (Budelmann 2012, 14)

The tone of voice is another aspect of brand identity that extends beyond the visual realm. It refers to the style and manner in which a brand communicates with its audience. Whether it is through written content, advertisements, or social media, maintaining a consistent tone helps build a cohesive brand image. For instance, a brand targeting a young and vibrant audience may adopt a more informal and energetic tone, while a brand catering to a professional audience might choose a more formal and authoritative approach. (Wheeler 2012, 26)

Brand identity is not only about aesthetics but also about the values and principles a brand represents. The mission, vision, and core values of a company contribute to shaping its identity. These elements guide decision-making processes within the organisation and influence the way the brand

is perceived externally. A brand that consistently aligns its actions with its stated values is likely to build trust and credibility with its audience. (Wheeler 2012, 12)

Consistency is a key principle in maintaining a strong brand identity. Whether it is the logo, colours, messaging, or overall brand experience, ensuring uniformity across all touchpoints reinforces the brand's identity in the minds of consumers. This cohesiveness helps create a sense of reliability and familiarity, fostering stronger brand recall. (Wheeler 2012, 26)

In conclusion, brand identity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses visual elements, communication style, and underlying values. It is a strategic tool that allows a brand to differentiate itself in a competitive market and connect with its target audience on a deeper level. By carefully crafting and consistently implementing a brand identity, companies can build strong relationships with consumers and establish a lasting presence in the marketplace.

2.3 Varieties of branding

There are numerous varieties of branding, each providing a special means of interaction and communication with the intended audience. Co-branding, digital branding, cause branding, personal branding, and nation branding are some examples of these kinds. (Wheeler 2012, 6.) Speaking of each kind, co-branding is collaborating with another company to increase one's exposure and reach a wider audience. (Chang 2009, 77.) The goal of digital branding is to create a powerful online presence via social media, websites, SEO (search engine optimization), and other web-related techniques. Driving online commerce and establishing an online connection with customers require strong digital branding. (Davis and Piven 2014, 11-24) What personal branding is all about is how people establish their reputations. It applies to individuals as well as public personalities who work to establish a distinctive image and personality, not only corporations. Coordinating a brand with a charity cause or taking part in social activities are examples of cause branding. It enables businesses to demonstrate their dedication to improving society. (Davis and Piven 2014, 59-67) In the context of nation-states, country branding refers to an initiative to attract travellers and enterprises by highlighting the distinctive features and products of a particular nation. (Kilduff and Tabales 2017, 85) Personal branding and digital branding will be investigated further in the following sub-chapter since these types will be used in the following chapters going onward with the thesis.

2.3.1 Personal branding

Personal branding is a crucial aspect of reputation management and professional presentation, it involves the development of a distinct and unique identity that can effectively be conveyed to the public. It is common to ask why personal branding is so important, Wheeler (2012, 90) states that jobs no longer last forever. The number of self-employed individuals has increased dramatically over the last decade, third of our workforce is now self-employed and we are all connected 24/7. That is why personal branding is believed to be an essential tool for career advancement in today's competitive environment. The significance of personal branding cannot be denied by any means. When executed correctly, it offers several advantages, granting individuals the ability to manage how they are perceived by potential employers, co-workers, and even clients. Moreover, it enables the building of a reputation and trust, thereby increasing the likelihood of being chosen by those seeking their expertise or services. (Wheeler 2012, 90)

In a world filled with choices, a strong personal brand can set an individual apart from their competitors. It goes beyond displaying one's skills and knowledge; it involves crafting a persona that appeals to the target audience (Rangarajan, D. Gelb, Vandaveer 2017, 657.)

The impact of one's personal brand on others is substantial. Effective personal branding management can lead to numerous benefits, including career advancement and personal growth. By actively upholding their image and consistently living up to the promises made by their personal brand, individuals can position themselves for success in the workplace. Continuous self-improvement and adaptability are considered crucial within the realm of personal branding. Maintaining a polished appearance is important, but it is equally important to ensure that the messages associated with one's personal brand are upheld. Consequently, personal branding should be regarded as a long-term strategy for success. (Davis and Piven 2014, 59-67)

2.3.2 Digital branding

Conversely, digital branding is a strategy employed by businesses to establish their online presence. It is distinguished using digital platforms and tools to create an online identity for a brand. Several elements, such as messaging, colours, and logos, are carefully crafted and utilized to resonate with the target audience. The content produced and shared online conveys the brand's story. To ensure that the brand's voice is recognizable and memorable, a consistent tone is maintained in the messaging across websites, social media platforms, and other digital channels. (Davis and Piven 2014, 11-24)

Online interaction is employed to foster customer engagement, and products and services are presented in a manner that encourages customer involvement. Online communities are formed where user input and opinions are valued and integrated into the offerings of the business. (Wheeler 2012, 71.)

The goal of search engine optimization is to enhance the online visibility of a brand. Strategies are implemented to ensure that the brand's website appears higher in search engine results, thereby increasing the likelihood of prospective buyers encountering it. To keep digital branding current in the ever-evolving online landscape, it is continually reviewed and adjusted. The effectiveness of the brand's digital initiatives is assessed using metrics and analytics, and necessary modifications are made. (Wheeler 2012, 166-167)

2.3.3 Personal- and digital branding working together

The fusion of digital and personal branding encapsulates a dynamic interplay, wherein individuals strategically harness digital platforms to elevate their personal brand, crafting an online presence that harmonizes seamlessly with their professional identity. This intricate integration empowers individuals not only to curate their image within the vast expanse of the digital realm but also to wield influence in more traditional, offline contexts. (Kleppinger and Cain 2015, 79)

At its core, digital branding within the framework of personal branding is an evolving concept, shaped by the ongoing commitment to self-improvement and adaptability. These foundational tenets, inherent in personal branding, lay the groundwork for a digital persona that resonates authentically with an individual's values, skills, and aspirations. This, in turn, becomes a pivotal conduit through which individuals can effectively communicate their unique value proposition to diverse audiences. (Davis and Piven 2014, 49-50)

Ensuring a congruence between one's personal brand promises and the representation in the digital sphere becomes paramount. Individuals are tasked with meticulous attention to detail, strategically curating their online narrative to align with the principles and qualities central to their personal brand. This alignment is not merely an exercise in self-presentation; it is a deliberate effort to foster a digital persona that reinforces the core values and promises articulated by the individual's personal brand. (Davis and Piven 2014, 50-51)

Collaboration emerges as a linchpin in this process. Individuals embark on a collaborative journey with digital platforms, utilizing the tools and features offered to construct a brand that stands out amidst the digital noise. It is a collaborative dance where each post, interaction, and engagement

contribute to the ongoing narrative, weaving a tapestry that encapsulates the essence of the personal brand. (Rangarajan, Gelb and Vandaveer 2017)

Distinctiveness is a hallmark of this collaborative effort. Through strategic engagement and consistent communication, individuals can carve out a niche in the digital landscape, establishing a recognizable brand that transcends the virtual realm. This distinctiveness, carefully cultivated through a marriage of personal and digital branding, serves as a beacon, attracting like-minded individuals and resonating with the intended audience. (Davis and Piven 2014, 59-61)

Connecting with the preferred audience becomes not just a possibility but a natural outcome of this concerted effort. The alignment between personal and digital branding enables individuals to resonate with those who share similar values, interests, and professional aspirations. This connection is not solely transactional; it is the foundation for meaningful relationships that extend beyond the confines of the digital space. (Davis and Piven 2014, 61-63)

In the face of the ever-changing digital landscape, individuals find solace and direction in the principles of personal branding. Armed with a clear understanding of their professional identity and guided by the promises articulated in their personal brand, individuals navigate the digital landscape with purpose and confidence. The fluidity of the digital sphere becomes a canvas for expression rather than a source of uncertainty, as individuals leverage their personal brand as a compass in this dynamic journey. (Kleppinger and Cain 2015, 79)

In summation, the symbiotic relationship between digital and personal branding transcends a mere convergence of strategies. It is an intricate dance where the individual, armed with self-awareness and a commitment to growth, collaborates with digital platforms to shape a brand that is not only distinctive and recognizable but also authentic and resonant. This collaborative journey, unfolding across the digital landscape, empowers individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern professional world with a sense of purpose, creating a lasting impact in both virtual and real-life spheres.

2.4 Brand strategy

Any successful brand starts with a carefully thought-out brand strategy. It offers a single, overarching concept that unites all acts, behaviours, and messages over time and successfully deters rivalry. A strong brand strategy is founded on a vision, flows from the company's values and culture, complements the business plan, and demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the needs and

perceptions of the target market. It explains distinct value proposition, competitive advantage, positioning, and differentiation. This plan acts as a road map, offering direction, motivation, and clarity for marketing and sales initiatives. Although it is feasible to do individually with vision and creativity, possibly with an outside perspective for a novel viewpoint, brand strategy development typically needs a team. (Wheeler 2012, 12-13)

Customers have a lot of options in today's market, so it is essential for businesses to offer a unique customer experience that sets them apart from their competitors. Remarkable encounters are essential since they generate goodwill and draw in new clients. The foundation of creating a powerful brand experience is realising that consumers are no longer as receptive to conventional marketing messaging. The key is to design experiences that draw clients in, produce enduring memories, and strengthen bonds. In the real world as well as the virtual one, ordinary interactions can be elevated to extraordinary encounters. Essentially, the encounter turns into a kind of advertisement. These following guidelines are employed in the creation of a potent brand experience such as making the brand accessible every day through the proper channels at the relevant times. In a world rich in data, giving customers the proper information and by recognising the context of the consumer, make links to the actual world. Simplifying complexity and engaging with customers in the most natural way possible. (Horn 2021, 55-56)

In terms of functional criteria, a strong brand should be bold, memorable, appropriate, immediately recognizable, provide a consistent image of the company, clearly communicate the company's persona, be legally protectable, have enduring value, work well across media and scale, and be effective in both black and white and colour. A strong brand is a combination of vision, meaning, authenticity, differentiation, sustainability, coherence, flexibility, commitment, and value. A compelling vision, led by a passionate leader, serves as the foundation for a brand. Meaning is a big idea, strategic position, defined values, or unique voice. Authenticity is rooted in understanding the market, positioning, value proposition, and competitive difference. Differentiation is a competitive advantage within a business category. Sustainability reflects a brand's ability to maintain longevity in a constantly evolving world. Coherence ensures a familiar experience without rigidity. Flexibility supports change and growth. Commitment involves active management of brand assets. Value is achieved through building awareness, increasing recognition, communicating uniqueness, and expressing a competitive difference. (Wheeler 2012, 26)

2.5 Branding process

The branding process is a challenging journey that plays a pivotal role in shaping the identity and image of a business or organization. It is a complex project that requires a unique blend of skills and expertise. This intricate process is characterised by a combination of investigation, strategic thinking, design ability, and effective project management.

One of the key characteristics of the branding process is patience, as it entails the meticulous and methodical development of a brand's identity. This process is not to be hurried; rather, it is marked by a solid commitment to getting every detail right. Each element, whether it is the brand's visual identity, messaging, or strategy, is carefully crafted to achieve the desired outcome (Wheeler 2012, 102.)

An essential attribute of the branding process is its ability to combine vast amounts of information. In today's information age, businesses are flooded with data from various sources. The branding process involves distilling this wealth of information into a coherent and effective brand identity. This information may contain market research, customer insights, competitive analysis, legal considerations, and complexities in language. (Gronlund 2013, 107)

The branding process is, by its nature, a dynamic and adaptable framework that can be applied to a diverse range of clients and projects. Whether working with a small startup or a multinational corporation, the fundamental stages of the branding process remain consistent. However, the depth of engagement in each phase, the allocation of time and resources, and the size of the teams involved can vary significantly depending on the scope and scale of the project.

One defining feature of the branding process is its structured and phased approach. This process is designed with clear and logical starting and ending points for each phase. This structuring serves a vital purpose in facilitating decision-making at critical occasions. It ensures that all aspects of the brand identity are thoroughly considered, from initial research and strategy development to design and implementation. (Gronlund 2013, 103-107)

Although there might be a temptation to speed up the branding process by eliminating steps or reorganizing its components, this approach can carry substantial risks. Each phase of the process contributes to the overall success of the brand's identity, and skipping or abbreviating any step may compromise the outcome. When the branding process is executed with the proper time and attention, it can produce outstanding and enduring results (Wheeler 2012, 106.)

In addition to its structured phases, the branding process can be categorized into several key activities such as:

Conducting research, in this phase, it is marked by the collection of data and insights. It involves clarifying the brand's vision, strategies, goals, and values, as well as performing in-depth audits to understand the market, competition, technology, legal landscape, and complexities in language. This phase also involves interviewing key management figures and evaluating the existing brand and its architecture. (Wheeler 2012, 116.)

Once the research phase is complete, it is important to clarify strategy. The next step is to synthesize the findings into a coherent brand strategy. This includes defining the brand's core values, positioning in the market, and target audience. A brand brief is created to serve as a guiding document, and key messages are crafted to convey the brand's essence effectively. (Wheeler 2012, 132.)

With a well-defined strategy, the creative process can begin by designing identity. Designers and brand experts work to visualize the brand's future, brainstorm the central concept, or theme, and develop the visual elements that constitute the brand identity. This may include logo design, colour schemes, typography, and various brand assets. (Wheeler 2012, 144.)

Once the brand identity is designed, it needs to be applied across various touchpoints and contexts which is done by creating said touchpoints. This phase involves finalizing the identity's design, developing the brand's look and feel, and prioritizing and designing applications across diverse platforms and media. The goal is to ensure that the brand presents a consistent and compelling image to its audience. (Wheeler 2012, 164.)

A successful brand identity is not just about design; it is about managing and nurturing the brand over time. This phase involves building a sense of unity and enthusiasm around the new brand, crafting a launch strategy, and introducing the brand first within the organization before unveiling it externally. Standards and guidelines are established to maintain brand consistency, and brand champions are identified and cultivated to ensure that the brand's integrity is upheld. (Wheeler 2012, 192.)

Lastly, effective project management is an essential element in the successful execution of a brand identity project. It necessitates a diverse set of skills, both on the client and identity firm sides. Leadership and creativity must work together by planning, coordination, analysis, and the efficient allocation of time, resources, and finances. This process also demands organizational discipline, unwavering patience, enthusiasm, and solid focus on the goal. (Wheeler 2012, 102)

The duration of a brand identity project can vary considerably based on several factors, including the size and complexity of the organization, the number of markets served, the scope of the brand's reach (global, national, regional, or local), the nature of the problem being addressed, the extent of

research required, and any legal obligations like mergers or public offerings. Additionally, the decision-making process, the number of decision-makers involved, and the number of platforms and applications to be developed can influence the project's timeline. (Gronlund 2013, 129-130)

Measuring the success of a brand identity system is a long-term endeavour that goes beyond immediate returns. Each positive interaction a customer has with the brand contributes to building brand equity. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of repeat purchases and long-lasting customer relationships. A return on investment is achieved through making it easier for customers to buy, simplifying the sales process, and maintaining a consistent and positive customer experience. Achieving clarity about the brand, following a structured process, and employing the right tools and resources for employees are key drivers of success. (Gronlund 2013, 145-148)

While it can be challenging to directly attribute the impact of a new logo, improved brand architecture, or an integrated marketing communications system, businesses are encouraged to develop their own metrics for measuring success. Companies that embrace a long-term perspective and understand the value of incremental change and consistent focus tend to reap the benefits of effective branding and its enduring impact. (Wheeler 2012, 106)

2.6 Brand touchpoints relating to process

Every interaction between a customer and a brand, whether through advertising, customer service, product packaging, or user experience, represents a brand touchpoint. Each touchpoint is an opportunity to enhance awareness and cultivate customer loyalty. These interactions collectively shape the customer's perception of the brand and their overall experience. These touchpoints can be things such as emails, blogs, services, sales promotions, word of mouth, mobile, video, products, publications, business cards, billboards, company vehicles, and the list goes on (see *figure 1*). Everything how the company represents itself can be considered as a touchpoint. Brand identity is also important in the context of the touchpoints since the tangible and sensory aspects of a brand, such as its visual elements (logos, colours, design) and other sensory components (scent, sound, touch) add to these said touchpoints. A well-crafted brand identity fuels recognition and amplifies differentiation from competitors and simplifies the communication of big ideas and values. It serves as the face of the brand and provides a sensory connection with the audience. (Wheeler 2012, 164-165)



Figure 1. (Wheeler, 2012)

2.7 Different branding approaches

Published in 2020 in the Revista Brasileira de Marketing, "The challenge of brand building: proposal of a model" by Oliveira and Abreu delves into the complex realm of brand building and the hurdles organizations face. In the business world, a company's brand is a crucial factor for success. Oliveira and Abreu discuss how changes in customer behaviour and market dynamics have influenced the way brands are built.

They stress the importance of companies recognizing these changes and adjusting their strategies accordingly. One notable feature of this article is the brand-building model put forth by the authors. This model provides a structured approach for planning brand building in organizations. It simplifies the process by outlining the various stages and components involved in creating a robust brand strategy. This methodology can be of great benefit to businesses aiming to establish a strong brand in today's highly competitive market.

Furthermore, the authors emphasize the high value consumers place on brands. They argue that it is not just about what a company does, but also about how customers perceive and experience the brand. This underscores the necessity for businesses to maintain a positive brand image. The article also underscores the importance of aligning a brand with a company's mission, values, and culture. A brand that resonates with the core principles of the organization is more likely to be embraced by customers and foster their loyalty.

Consistency in branding across all customer touchpoints is another point emphasized by the authors. Maintaining a unified and recognizable brand identity helps businesses establish trust and credibility with their target audience. Moreover, aligning the brand with the company's values fosters a strong emotional connection with customers, promoting long-term loyalty and advocacy.

Additionally, to add another view of a brand-building strategy, the authors of "The five phases of SME brand-building" (Centeno, Hart, and Dinnie, 2013) look at how small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) build their brands. They outline five important steps that SMEs usually go through when they create and improve their brand. They use examples to show these steps and aim to provide a practical guide for SMEs.

The first step in the article is called brand foundation. This step stresses the importance of defining the brand's mission and core values. SMEs are advised to express their brand's identity and mission clearly. This sets the foundation for building the brand.

The second step, brand clarity, talks about the need for SMEs to create a clear and consistent brand message. This means coming up with a unique value proposition and making sure all branding efforts match this message. A clear brand helps SMEs stand out.

The third step, brand visibility, highlights the importance of making the brand seen by the target audience. To reach potential customers effectively, this includes choosing the right marketing channels like social media, advertising, and public relations.

The fourth step, brand engagement, discusses the importance of interacting with the audience. This involves directly engaging with customers, getting their feedback, and building relationships. Engaging with customers can turn them into loyal brand supporters.

The final step, brand sustainability, deals with the long-term aspects of building a brand. SMEs are encouraged to regularly assess and adjust their brand strategies in response to changes in customer preferences and market conditions.

The article provides helpful advice for SMEs looking to build and grow their brands. The five steps can assist SMEs in creating a unique and long-lasting brand identity. It is important to remember that building a strong brand is an ongoing process that requires adaptability and a deep understanding of the target audience.

2.8 Comparing branding approaches

Oliveira and Abreu's work presents a paradigm for the development of brands, offering a significant contribution to the field of brand management. This model they propose consists of four fundamental components: brand loyalty, brand image, brand awareness, and brand knowledge. The emphasis is placed on the detailed interaction between these components, with brand knowledge assuming a significant role in shaping the brand's identity.

On the other hand, Centeno, Hart, and Dinnie approach the subject from a unique perspective. They have crafted a model tailored specifically for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities that these enterprises encounter in the ever-evolving landscape of brand building. Their research introduces a structured five-phase procedure, which commences with meticulous brand planning and culminates in a comprehensive brand evaluation, highlighting their commitment to offering practical guidance to SMEs.

Unlike the study by Oliveira and Abreu, Centeno, Hart, and Dinnie do not confine their focus to a particular type or size of the organization. They place a spotlight on SMEs, contributing to a richer understanding of how these businesses can effectively construct and nurture their brand identities. This focused approach not only aids SMEs but also advances collective comprehension of brand management principles.

Oliveira and Abreu's work abstains from specifying the detailed stages or processes required for brand formation, preferring instead to underscore the interconnectedness of different brand attributes. This holistic perspective has its merits as it emphasizes the unity of brand elements, which can be crucial for creating a cohesive brand image.

In contrast, the model introduced by Centeno, Hart, and Dinnie offers SMEs a more hands-on, practical approach by laying out a clear, step-by-step process. This approach is commendable for its accessibility and ability to guide small businesses systematically.

In summary, the practicality and focus of these two research approaches diverge. Centeno, Hart, and Dinnie present a pragmatic, step-by-step method tailored to SMEs, while Oliveira and Abreu offer a solid theoretical foundation for brand construction. Ultimately, the choice between these models should hinge on the specific requirements and contextual nuances of the company or organization endeavouring to support its brand identity. The distinctions between these models, as highlighted in this text, provide a valuable point of reference for navigating the complex subject of brand development for small businesses.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the pursuit of comprehending the branding strategies implemented by Sphynx Vehicle Repairs, this research employs a dual-method approach. The strategies are scrutinized through a structured interview with the company's owner and an anonymous survey disseminated among the brand's clientele. The overarching aim is to glean insights from both internal and external perspectives.

3.1 Methods of research

The interview with the owner adopts a semi-structured format, fostering an informal setting conducive to extracting authentic and nuanced responses. This method employs written questions to delve into the owner's subjective insights, unravelling how the company perceives and formulates its branding strategies. Concurrently, an anonymous survey is dispersed to a cohort of 46 participants, comprising the customer base of the company.

The interview was meticulously orchestrated, encompassing countless of inquiries spanning the domains of the brand's identity, strategy, operational processes, and its present standing. This insightful dialogue transpired through a telephonic medium, owing to the geographical separation between the author and the company's owner. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) had been meticulously crafted in advance, yet the conversational trajectory was afforded the liberty to meander organically, unrestricted by predefined paths. Against the backdrop of disparate locales, the author and interviewee engaged in an amicable discourse, delving into the current and prospective trajectories of the company. The interaction unfolded in a relaxed ambiance, affording the interviewee the liberty to expound upon various facets of the business. The author diligently transcribed the entirety of the dialogue, capturing the essence of each articulated thought. In a harmonious culmination, expressions of gratitude and courteous farewells punctuated the interview, marking a conclusion to the exchange of insights and perspectives.

The survey (see Appendices 2 to 7), a pivotal component of this research, was meticulously designed to solicit valuable customer opinions encompassing multiple facets of the brand. Key areas of exploration included visuals, messaging, and the overall perception of the brand. It is noteworthy that the survey, crafted with a deliberate approach, embraced a dual methodology. This included the incorporation of Likert scale options for structured quantitative responses and open-ended

questions, granting participants the opportunity to express insights in a more unrestricted, qualitative manner. This multifaceted approach aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of participants' perspectives.

Webropol, a web-based survey tool, was utilized for the creation and execution of the survey. The platform provided features such as customizable survey design, real-time data tracking, and a user-friendly interface, ensuring a seamless and effective survey process. The participants' responses were also collected through the Webropol survey, they were analysed to derive valuable insights into customer satisfaction, preferences, and potential areas for improvement for the brand under consideration.

The survey responses, characterized by a blend of Likert scale ratings and free-form answers, constitute a robust dataset primed for in-depth analysis. For the analytical phase, a two-fold approach was employed. Qualitative data stemming from the structured interview with the owner underwent a meticulous thematic analysis. This method involved identifying recurring themes and patterns within the responses, uncovering internal dynamics, and revealing nuanced perspectives regarding the company's branding strategies.

On the quantitative front, survey responses were subjected to rigorous statistical analysis. Measures such as mean scores and standard deviations were employed to distil quantitative insights, offering a numerical lens through which to interpret external stakeholders' perceptions. The incorporation of free-form answers in this analysis added a layer of depth, providing a comprehensive panorama of sentiments toward company's brand.

3.2 Research ethics

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations took precedence. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, with a deliberate decision to abstain from collecting personal data.

Ethical considerations were prioritized, emphasizing the protection of participants' rights and well-being. Anonymity assurance was extended to create a secure environment for candid responses. The intentional omission of personal data collection aligned with the principle of data minimization, addressing privacy concerns.

In obtaining informed consent, transparency was maintained regarding the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. The commitment to ethical guidelines, set by institutional review boards, ensured the research's integrity and transparency.

4 FINDINGS

In the forthcoming chapters, a comprehensive examination of the interview and survey data will be conducted. The process will commence by discussing the obtained results, followed by a detailed analysis of the findings, and ultimately concluding with a summarization of the outcomes. The objective is to ensure a meticulous exploration of the gathered information, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

4.1 Interview

In the interview, the company's branding is explored through a series of questions covering different aspects. The interviewee discusses their perception of the current state of the company's branding, including its simplicity and the choice of a text anagram instead of a logo. They delve into the brand's positioning in the market, emphasizing the strength derived from owning response vehicles in distinctive company colours.

Key messages and values associated with the branding are highlighted, such as a commitment to high quality, top-notch customer service, and honesty. The interviewee also sheds light on what sets their brand apart from competitors, citing attention to detail, personalized customer service, and high customer satisfaction. The discussion extends to brand identity, covering core elements like a friendly attitude and a visual aesthetic characterized by clean and sharp lines in the logo. The choice of colours (blue and orange) is explained, emphasizing personal preferences.

The interview transitions to the consistency of conveying the brand identity across various channels and touchpoints, detailing the use of set templates in merchandising to maintain a unified brand image. Brand strategy is then explored, outlining overarching goals such as increasing the customer database and fostering loyalty.

The interviewee discusses alignment with evolving customer needs, emphasizing the importance of updating knowledge and equipment in the rapidly changing automotive industry. The interview concludes with insights into the branding process, challenges faced, and adjustments made to overcome them, highlighting a particular issue related to online searches due to a similar name to a cat breed.

Overall, the interview provides a comprehensive overview of the company's branding, encompassing perception, positioning, key messages, differentiation, identity, strategy, and the branding process.

4.2 Survey

A survey involving 46 participants was conducted to explore various aspects of their experience with a particular brand. Fifteen questions, along with additional side questions related to the main inquiries, were answered by the respondents. The survey, executed through the Webropol platform, aimed to gather insights into different facets of the participants' interactions with the brand.

4.2.1 Impressions, satisfaction rates, brand recommending and areas of improvement

The survey commenced with participants providing ratings on a scale of 0 to 10 to express their initial impressions of Sphynx. The average rating was 9.7, indicating an overall positive sentiment. The lowest recorded rating was 7, while the highest reached an impressive 10 (see figure 2). These results set the stage for further exploration of participants' experiences with the brand, revealing varying degrees of positive perceptions among them.

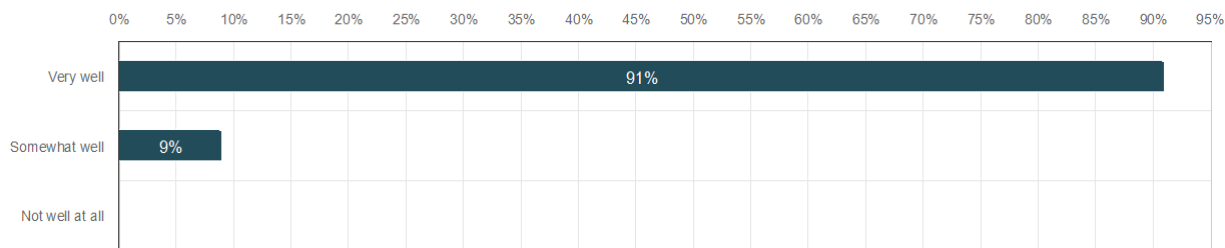


Figure 2. Percentages of impressions.

The assessment of the likelihood of recommending the brand to others was conducted using a Likert scale. The average response was 9.5, with a range from 7 to 10. This range indicates a high level of satisfaction and advocacy among participants, offering valuable insights into their willingness to recommend the brand to others.

Overall satisfaction with the brand was notably high, as reflected by an average Likert scale rating of 9.6. Respondents offered valuable insights into areas for improvement, which included suggestions for enhanced public visibility through advertising and social media. Additionally, participants highlighted the need for a dedicated website and improvements to facilities to enhance customer comfort. These findings provide a comprehensive overview of the positive sentiment regarding the brand while offering specific suggestions for refining and enhancing certain aspects based on participant feedback.

4.2.2 Resonance with brand values, message, and communication preferences

The survey delved into the alignment of the brand with respondents' values, and the findings were positively perceived. A significant 42 (91%) of respondents indicated a strong alignment, with only 4 (9%) expressing a somewhat positive alignment. These results provide insights into the perceived resonance between the brand and the values held by the surveyed participants.

The survey delved into the resonance of the brand's message, revealing that a majority of 38 participants stated that it resonated "very well." Feedback exhibited some variation, with 5 respondents indicating that it resonated "somewhat well," while 3 respondents expressed uncertainty (see figure 3 for percentages). Notably, some respondents admitted to not knowing the brand's message. These results offer insights into the effectiveness of the brand's messaging, showcasing a predominant positive reception among the surveyed participants, along with nuances in perceptions and awareness.

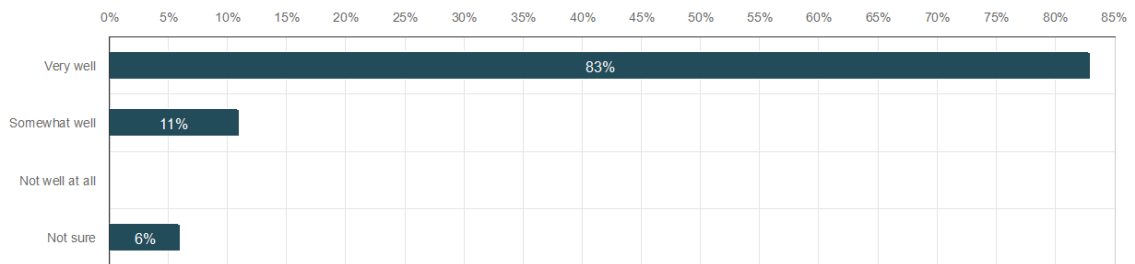


Figure 3. Percentage of brand message resonance.

Concerning communication preferences, 29 of participants favoured email and text messages, 4 chose social media, 6 preferred the website, and 8 opted for apps (see figure 4 for percentages).

In the final section, where participants had the opportunity to share additional comments, the responses were uniformly positive. There was unanimous praise for the owner's work, and expressions of gratitude were conveyed by all participants. These results provide insights into the preferred communication channels among participants and highlight a consistent positive sentiment towards the owner's efforts.

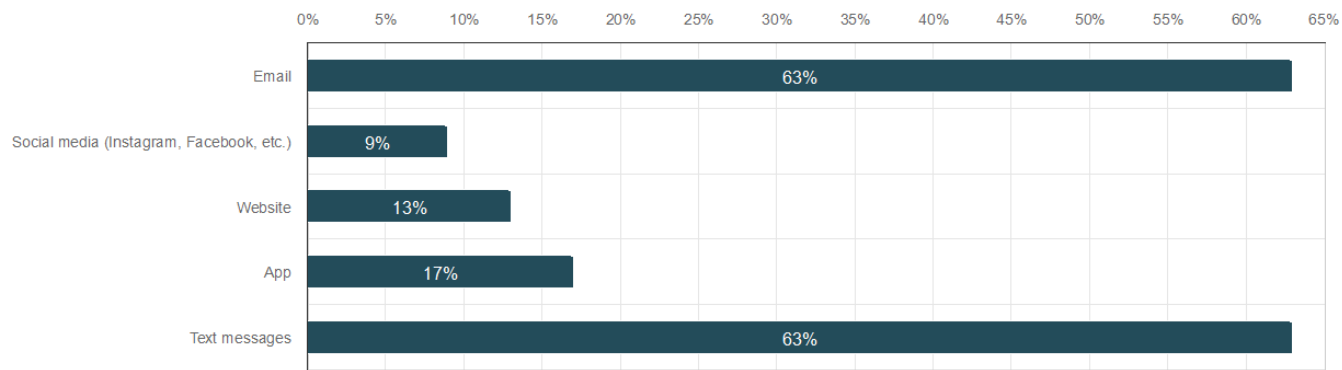


Figure 4. Percentages of preferred media.

4.2.3 Visual appeal, identity concerns, brand personality and associations

Visual appeal, as measured through the brand's logo and design, received positive feedback from participants, garnering an average rating of 8.1 on a Likert scale. While generally positive, concerns regarding the brand's visual identity were raised. These concerns included the absence of a company card, confusion about the services offered, and suggestions for simplifying the visual identity. The feedback provides valuable insights into the perceived strengths of the brand's visual elements, as well as specific areas where participants see room for improvement or clarification.

Respondents provided positive descriptions of the brand's personality, using attributes such as helpful, insightful, hardworking, friendly, efficient, trustworthy, professional, welcoming, and personal. Negative associations with the brand were minimal, with 45 (98%) responding positively, and one respondent choosing not to elaborate. These insights convey a favourable perception of the brand's personality among the majority of participants, highlighting positive qualities while indicating a low incidence of negative associations.

4.2.4 Consideration of switching brands, comparison to competitors

Participants were surveyed about their willingness to switch to another brand. The majority, comprising 42 respondents, declared they would not consider changing, while the remaining 4 contemplating a change cited reasons such as comparing services, relocation, work requirements, and occasional delays attributed to the one-person structure of the company (see figure 5 for percentages). These findings shed light on the prevailing loyalty among the majority of participants and provide insights into the factors influencing the minority considering a brand switch.

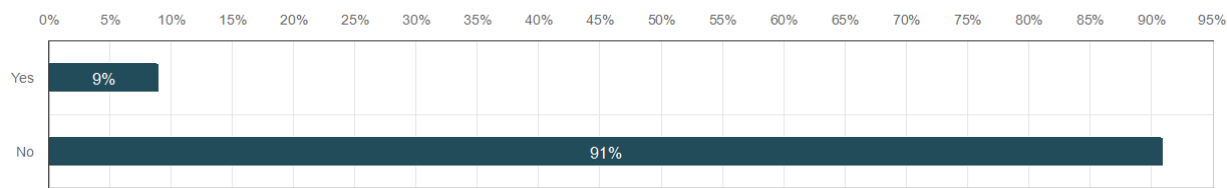


Figure 5. Percentage of willingness to change to another brand.

Comparisons with competitors unveiled that 30 (65%) of respondents perceived the brand as superior, while 16 (35%) respondents considered it comparable. Identified areas where competitors were deemed to outperform the brand included operational hours, quality, advertising, parts availability, staffing, website functionality, service plans, reminders, booking systems, price listings, and offers. These findings offer insights into the perceived strengths of the brand in relation to competitors, as well as specific aspects where improvements or adjustments may be considered based on participant feedback.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the ensuing chapters, an analysis of both the interview and survey will be presented. The interview and survey procedures will be thoroughly scrutinized, followed by the conclusive remarks on each. Subsequently, the recommendations put forth by the authors will be meticulously examined and discussed.

5.1 Interview conclusions

The current state of the company's branding is perceived as suitable for business requirements. The branding is characterized by simplicity and directness, utilizing a straightforward text anagram instead of a logo for ease of customer recall. The choice of the name "sphinx" aims to convey a sense of longevity, reliability, and high-quality service, suggesting that the business has endured the test of time.

The brand positioning in the market is described as strong, supported by the ownership of response vehicles in company colours (orange and blue) with visible decals of the logo and business name. Despite acknowledging the importance of service over a flashy brand, the company emphasizes its commitment to providing timely and cost-effective solutions to customer issues.

The key messages and values conveyed by the current branding include a commitment to high-quality standards, top-notch customer service, and honesty. The inspiration drawn from the ancient Egyptian sphinx symbolizes royalty, craftsmanship, and dedication, reflecting values deemed significant to the business owner.

The factors setting the brand apart from competitors include meticulous attention to detail, a focus on customer service, and high customer satisfaction. The company distinguishes itself by avoiding outsourcing and investing in acquiring diverse skills, such as programming car keys and providing high-quality repairs at a fraction of the cost charged by manufacturers.

Regarding brand identity, the core elements encompass a friendly attitude and a desire to appear efficient and sleek. Visual aesthetics are characterized by clean, sharp lines and a three-letter logo. The colour scheme of blue and orange is chosen for visual appeal and personal preference, contributing to injecting the owner's personality into the brand.

Consistency in conveying the brand's identity across various channels and touchpoints is ensured through the use of set templates across all merchandising, maintaining uniformity in social media and advertising.

In terms of brand strategy, the overarching goals include expanding the customer database and fostering customer loyalty for repeated custom. Alignment with evolving customer needs involves continuous learning and updating of knowledge and equipment within the rapidly evolving car industry.

Recent adjustments to the brand strategy have not been made, as the existing strategy has proven effective. The primary focus is on refining services rather than altering the overall brand strategy. The brand strategy supports business goals by aiming to be memorable to customers, leading to regular new customers through recommendations and building lasting relationships.

The branding process involves research to keep the logo eye-catching and memorable, drawing inspiration from similar brands in the business area. Challenges faced in the recent past include brand name confusion with a cat breed, addressed by enhancing online presence through review sites and Google tools.

Overall, the company's branding strategy appears to be rooted in simplicity, efficiency, and a commitment to providing high-quality services, with a keen awareness of market trends and customer preferences. In the theoretical underpinnings discussed earlier, the paramount significance of personality in branding was underscored, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions. Indeed, the company, by definition, has triumphed in this regard, skilfully ingraining a distinctive brand within the market landscape. However, upon closer scrutiny, the brand's identity appears somewhat nebulous, warranting a more meticulous definition in alignment with conventional paradigms.

To fortify and perpetuate this unique brand identity across diverse channels, a strategic approach becomes imperative. Crafting a cohesive strategy will serve as a blueprint for maintaining the distinctiveness that sets the brand apart. This strategic initiative should encompass a comprehensive analysis of the brand's core values, messaging, and visual elements, ensuring a harmonious and traditional alignment that resonates consistently through all conceivable communication channels. Through methodical planning and execution, the brand can achieve a more refined and enduring identity, thereby enhancing its resonance in the market.

5.2 Survey conclusions

The survey conducted among 46 participants provides a comprehensive overview of their perceptions and experiences with the brand. The findings reveal a highly positive initial impression, with respondents generally rating their first encounters with the brand favourably.

The brand's alignment with respondents' values emerged as a strong point, with an overwhelming 42 of the respondents (91%) expressing a significant resonance. Additionally, the likelihood of recommending the brand to others was notably high, as indicated by the majority of respondents.

While the vast majority of participants exhibited strong loyalty to the brand, a small percentage considered the possibility of switching, citing practical reasons such as service comparison, relocation, and occasional delays due to the unique structure of the one-person company.

Overall satisfaction with the brand was remarkably positive, with respondents consistently awarding high scores. Areas for improvement, highlighted by participants, encompassed suggestions for enhanced visibility through advertising and social media, the establishment of a website, and improvements to facilities for enhanced customer comfort.

The brand's message was well-received by the majority, with a notable 38 of the respondents (82%) expressing a strong resonance. Visual appeal, measured through the brand's logo and design, received positive feedback, although some respondents offered valuable insights into potential areas for refinement.

Comparisons with competitors indicated a generally positive perception, with the majority considering the brand as superior. However, respondents identified specific areas where competitors were perceived to outperform, providing valuable insights for potential enhancement.

The brand's personality, as described by respondents, was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting attributes such as helpfulness, insightfulness, friendliness, and professionalism.

Negative associations with the brand were minimal, with an overwhelming 98% expressing no negative sentiments. Communication preferences leaned towards traditional methods, with a notable preference for emails and text messages.

In the final section, participants took the opportunity to express unanimous praise for the owner's work and extend their gratitude. Overall, the survey portrays a highly favourable image of the brand,

coupled with constructive feedback that can serve as a foundation for continuous improvement and growth.

5.3 Recommendations for the business

Considering the drawn conclusions and the established theoretical framework, a set of recommendations has been compiled by the author for the company's contemplation. These recommendations serve as a guide for the organization to consider and deliberate upon, with the ultimate objective of enhancing their branding initiatives.

First the business could focus on the enhancement of online presence. To fortify the digital footprint, it is recommended that a professional website be meticulously developed and consistently maintained to ensure facile access to pertinent information. Simultaneously, the augmentation of engagement on various social media platforms is advised, achieved through the dissemination of timely updates and active interaction with customers. This proactive approach to digital outreach is anticipated to yield favourable results in fostering a robust online presence.

Elevation of customer experience, the amelioration of customer experience is recommended through the enhancement of physical facilities, including the establishment of a comfortable waiting area and provision of amenities such as coffee. Furthermore, contemplation of staff expansion to accommodate additional services and the issuance of timely customer reminders is advocated. It is envisaged that these measures will contribute to the augmentation of overall customer satisfaction.

Strategies for marketing and advertising, it is advisable to allocate resources towards advertising endeavours to bolster local visibility. Additionally, the utilization of promotions and sales is recommended as an effective means to attract and retain customers. The implementation of these marketing and advertising strategies is anticipated to yield positive outcomes in augmenting the business's market presence and customer base.

Streamlining brand identity, a comprehensive evaluation of the brand's visual identity is suggested to enhance recognition. It is imperative to ensure clarity in the communication of services to alleviate concerns regarding potential confusion stemming from the brand's name and logo. Additionally,

there is an emphasis on the clear and concise articulation of the brand's message. By undertaking these measures, it is anticipated that the brand's identity will be simplified, fostering a more measurable and comprehensible representation.

Emphasis of the unique value proposition, the emphasis on the unique value proposition is recommended through the highlighting of attention to detail, provision of personalized services, and attainment of high customer satisfaction. Integral to this approach is the incorporation of key differentiators into promotional materials, the website, and various social media channels. This strategic alignment is envisaged to underscore the distinctive qualities of the business, thereby fortifying its competitive edge, and reinforcing the appeal of its offerings.

Visual aesthetics and brand personality, consistent reflection of efficiency and sleekness in all visual elements is advised to imbue a cohesive and polished brand personality. There is a suggestion to contemplate the refinement of the logo to achieve a contemporary and professional aesthetic. This meticulous attention to visual aspects is anticipated to contribute to the cultivation of a modern and sophisticated brand image, aligning with the overarching objective of fostering a favourable perception among the target audience.

Customer engagement and loyalty, the leveraging of a steadfast commitment to high-quality service is recommended in crafting marketing messages. Concurrently, the exploration of loyalty programs and the organization of customer appreciation events are suggested strategies to incentivize repeat business. By incorporating these initiatives, it is anticipated that customer engagement will be fortified, fostering a sense of loyalty and satisfaction among the clientele.

Exploration of online and offline marketing opportunities, the expansion of online presence is advised through the implementation of targeted digital marketing campaigns. Simultaneously, the exploration of offline opportunities, such as participation in local events or forming strategic partnerships, is recommended. By considering both online and offline avenues, a comprehensive marketing approach is envisaged, poised to maximize visibility and engagement across diverse platforms and channels.

Lastly focusing on the refinement of brand messaging. It is suggested to strengthen the communication of core values in brand messaging. Integral to this approach is the incorporation of values such as craftsmanship, dedication, and honesty into various marketing materials. By infusing the

brand messaging with these foundational principles, a more resonant and authentic connection with the target audience is anticipated, fostering a heightened understanding and appreciation of the brand's principles.

6 DISCUSSION

In the initiation of this scholarly endeavour, the author embarked on a path guided by a series of probing questions, marking the genesis of a comprehensive exploration. The foundational phase involved an exhaustive examination of existing literature, strategically employed to establish a robust theoretical framework. This deliberate approach served as the base upon which subsequent chapters were meticulously constructed.

As the theoretical landscape was systematically surveyed, research questions underwent a transformative process, evolving from initial vagueness to crystallized specificity. The ensuing process of composing the thesis unfolded as a dynamic dialogue with the literature, each finding contributing substantively to the refinement of the inquiry.

The manuscript, once conceived, underwent a rigorous cycle of writing and rewriting, emblematic of the author's unwavering commitment to clarity and coherence. Feedback from thesis instructor and peers played a pivotal role in sculpting the work, ensuring that the exposition not only adhered to established academic standards but also struck an understanding of formal intellectualism.

The journey seamlessly transitioned into the realm of research methodology, where the author assumed the role of a discerning investigator. A systematic exploration of various research methods ensued, each subjected to a meticulous evaluation of its pertinence to the thesis objectives. The selected methods were subsequently expounded upon in the methodology chapter, thereby furnishing a cogent roadmap for the empirical exploration that followed.

The active phase of research unfolded seamlessly between the theoretical and methodological chapters. Survey and interview, served as conduits through which the voices of participants seamlessly merged with the theoretical foundation. The formerly passive observer in the author transformed into an engaged facilitator of conversations and a discerning collector of narratives, thereby enriching the study with invaluable firsthand perspectives.

The synthesis of findings within the discussion section represented the apex of this immersive process. The data, meticulously gathered through interviews and surveys, seamlessly interwove with the theoretical framework, culminating in a nuanced and comprehensive analytical analysis. The

passive tone, consistently maintained throughout, lent objectivity to the narrative, thereby affording readers an unfiltered view of the emergent patterns.

In contemplating the operational dynamics of this establishment as a single-owner business, it becomes evident that certain recommendations may require the enlistment of additional personnel for their successful implementation. Realistically, the proprietor faces the formidable challenge of navigating these proposed actions when faced with the constraint of limited time availability.

In the context of a sole proprietorship, the owner is not only the driving force behind the company but also shoulders the responsibilities across various facets of the business. Juggling administrative tasks, decision-making, and day-to-day operations can leave little room for the execution of supplementary initiatives. This predicament underscores the inherent difficulty in adopting and enacting the suggested measures without an augmentation of human resources.

The intricate demands of managing a single-owner business necessitate a delicate balance, and the limitations of time can serve as a hindrance to the pursuit of growth and optimization. The prospect of expanding the workforce to share the workload is not merely a matter of convenience; it becomes an imperative strategy for sustainable development.

In conclusion, this analytical exploration of the thesis journey underscores not only the provision of answers to the initial inquiries but also highlights the iterative and dynamic nature of the scholarly process. From foundational theoretical groundwork to methodological intricacies, each phase of the journey contributed substantively to the intellectual evolution encapsulated within these pages. The author's transition from a passive observer to an active contributor stands as a testament to the transformative power inherent in rigorous inquiry and the enduring pursuit of knowledge.

REFERENCES

Budelmann, Kevin, et al. Brand Identity Essentials: 100 Principles for Designing Logos and Building Brands, Quarto Publishing Group USA, 2010. ProQuest eBook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.oamk.fi:2047/lib/oamk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3399704>.

Centeno, E., Hart, S & Dinnie, K. 2013. The five phases of SME brand-building. The journal of brand management, 20(6), pp. 445-457. Search date 16.10.2023.

Chang, W. L. (2009). Roadmap of co-branding positions and strategies. The Journal of American Academy of Business, 15, 77-84. Search date 21.10.2023. <https://mail.tku.edu.tw/wlchang/JAABC-09.pdf>.

Chiaravalle, Bill, ja Barbara Schenck. Branding for Dummies. Second edition. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015. https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/branding-for-dummies/9781118958094/xhtmll/05_9781118958087-ch01.xhtml#a3

Courtney A. Kleppinger and Jeff Cain. Personal digital branding as a professional asset in the digital age. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education August 2015, 79. Search date 21.10.2023. [https://www.ajpe.org/article/S0002-9459\(23\)02083-1/fulltext](https://www.ajpe.org/article/S0002-9459(23)02083-1/fulltext)

Davis, Robert, and Inna Piven. Social Media Branding for Small Business : The 5-Sources Model, Business Expert Press, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.oamk.fi:2047/lib/oamk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1901828>.

Deva Rangarajan, Betsy D, Gelb, and Amy Vandaveer, 2017. Strategic personal branding – And how it pays off. Business Horizons, volume 60, issue 5. Pages 657-666. Search date 20.10.2023. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0007681317300678?casa_token=c02dnhKXu-4AAAAA:TIwOncAOwmDwcOWXEDMpf2H2iRQ9Qs1f0vQT3B6JZ3-mRmTnnOO1ykDf-nlthr05Bq3CJ2e8s5Q4

Gronlund, Jay. Basics of Branding: A Practical Guide for Managers, Business Expert Press, 2013. ProQuest eBook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.oamk.fi:2047/lib/oamk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1097920>.

Horn, Sabrina. Make It, Don't Fake It : Leading with Authenticity for Real Business Success, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Incorporated, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.oamk.fi:2047/lib/oamk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6606520>.

Kilduff, K., & Tabales, J. M. N. (2017). Country Branding and its effect on the consumer in the global market. Cuadernos de Gestión, 17, 83-104. Searched 21.10.2023. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/2743/274349307004.pdf>.

Oliveira, E. R. & Abreu, N. R. 2020. The challenge of brand building: Proposal of a model. Revista brasileira de marketing, 19(2), 470 – 493. Search date 16.10.2023.

Slade-Brooking Catharine. Creating a Brand Identity: A Guide for Designers, Laurance King Publishers, 2016. Search date 16.12.2023. https://books.google.fi/books?hl=fi&lr=&id=KfYgE-AAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT9&dq=brand+identity&ots=XwtfQSu5GD&sig=IkIMgUHnfYaEW-mwcJyp4bt1o17Y&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=brand%20identity&f=false

Wheeler, Alina. Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide for the Whole Branding Team, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp.oamk.fi:2047/lib/oamk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=918218>.

APPENDICES

The appendices section of the document includes a visual representation of interview questions and six survey images. The interview questions are presented in a picture format, and the survey images showcase the design and structure of the created survey. These appendices provide additional insight into the research methodology and tools employed in the study, offering readers a more comprehensive understanding of the data collection process.

Interview questions

Owner of company

Understanding their current branding:

1. Can you provide an overview of how you perceive the current state of your company's branding?
2. How would you describe your company's brand positioning in the market right now?
3. What key messages or values do you believe your current branding conveys to your target audience?
4. In your opinion, what sets your brand apart from competitors in the industry?

Brand identity

1. How would you define the core elements of your brand identity, including your brand's personality and visual aesthetics?
2. Can you share any specific symbols or imagery that you associate with your brand, and why they are significant?
3. How do you ensure consistency in conveying your brand's identity across various channels and touch points?

Brand strategy


1. What overarching goals or objectives does your current brand strategy aim to achieve?
2. How do you align your brand strategy with the evolving needs and preferences of your target audience?
3. Can you discuss any recent adjustments or refinements to your brand strategy and the reasoning behind them?
4. How does your brand strategy support your overall business goals and growth plans?

Branding process

1. Could you walk me through the typical process your company follows when developing or updating its branding?
2. Can you share any challenges or successes your company has faced in the recent past related to branding initiatives?

Interview questions, appendix 1

Thesis questionnaire: Sphynx Vehicle Repairs

 Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Hello and welcome to a questionnaire about Sphynx Vehicle Repairs!

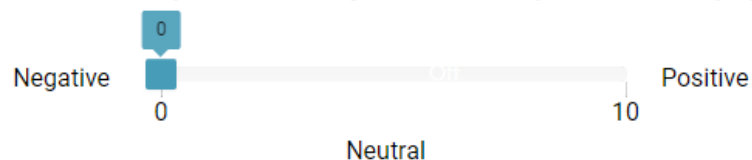
This questionnaire will be conducted in cooperation with Sphynx Vehicle Repairs about the company's current branding and how YOU as the customer view the company. The questionnaire will have 12 questions which can be multi-choice or open-ended, more questions might be asked based on your answers.

The data collected will be anonymous and only used for the purposes of writing a thesis relating to Sphynx Vehicle Repairs by a student of Oulu University of Applied Sciences.

Thank you so much for participating! :)

————— [+ Add question](#) [+ Add free text/media](#) [📄 Add page break](#) —————

1. On a scale of 0-10 how positive was your initial impression of Sphynx? *



————— [+ Add question](#) [+ Add free text/media](#) [📄 Add page break](#) —————

2. If answered "negative" to the question above, could you explain why?

Option

Intro of survey and first questions, appendix 2

3. How well do you think the brand aligns with your values? *

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Not well at all

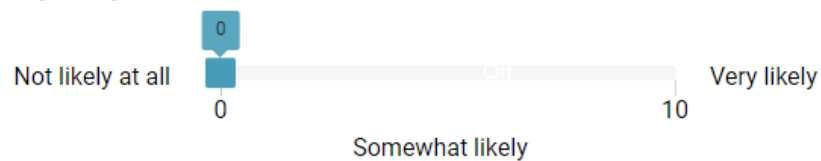
_____ + Add question + Add free text/media + Add page break _____

4. If answered "not well at all" to the question above, could you explain why?

Option

_____ + Add question + Add free text/media + Add page break _____

5. How likely are you to recommend the brand to others? *



_____ + Add question + Add free text/media + Add page break _____


6. If answered "not likely at all" to the question above, could you explain why?

Option

Survey questions 3-6, appendix 3


7. Have you ever thought of switching to another brand? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————

8. If answered "yes" to the question above, could you explain why?


Option

————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————


Next

Add optional text here

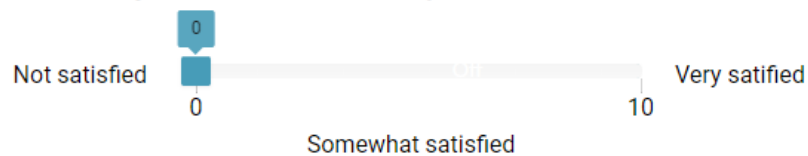
GE 2


 Merge pages

Thesis questionnaire: Sphynx Vehicle Repairs

 Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

9. How satisfied are you with the overall experience with the brand? *



————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————


10. If answered "not satisfied" to the question above, could you explain why?

Option

Survey questions 7-10, appendix 4


11. What areas do you think the brand could improve upon to enhance customer experience? *

*

————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————


12. How well do you think the brand's message resonates with you? *

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Not well at all
- ☐ Not sure

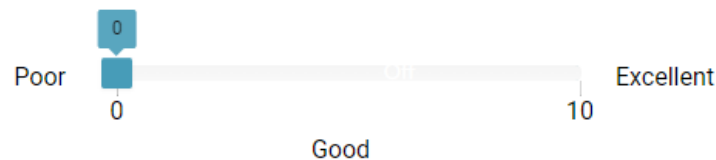
————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————

13. If answered "not well at all" or "not sure" to the question above, could you explain why?

Option


————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————

14. How would you rate the visual appeal of the brand's logo and design? *



Survey questions 11-14, appendix 5

15. Are there any specific elements of the brand's visual identity that you find confusing or unappealing?


————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————

Previous


Next

Add optional text here

Page 3

 Merge pages


Thesis questionnaire: Sphynx Vehicle Repairs

 Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

16. How do you think the brand compares to other similar services in terms of quality?

*


- ☐ Superior
- ☐ Comparable
- ☐ Inferior

————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————

17. Are there any specific areas where you think the brand's competitors outperform the brand in question?


Survey questions 15-17, appendix 6

18. How would you describe the personality of the brand? *

————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————


19. Are there any negative associations with the brand that you are aware of? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————

20. How would you prefer to receive communication from the brand? *

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Social media (Instagram, Facebook, etc.)
- ☐ Website
- ☐ App
- ☐ Text messages

————— + Add question + Add free text/media  Add page break —————

21. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Survey questions 18-21, appendix 7