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Siina Hietajärvi 2012

BRANDING PEOPLE



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Thesis

BRANDING PEOPLE

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The aim of this thesis is to research how personal brands are created and how these brands could be measured. The entities of personal brands are created and their assets and attributes are clarified. The purpose of this study is to clarify how a personal brand is built and how it attributes in personal success.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part will introduce David A. Aaker's brand building theories and how product brands are being measured. The second part will adapt Aaker's theories to personal branding and will discuss whether personal brands are measurable. Research methods included a thorough study of bibliographical sources of David A. Aaker's books and some sources specialising in personal branding by Katleena Korteso and Lisa Sounio. Theories in personal branding were adapted and researched by the thesis author using David Aaker's branding theories.

The thesis research showed that personal brands can be established with the help of traditional product branding tools. Some brand attributes can be directly applied to personal branding but some need to be adapted. Personal brands are difficult to measure by traditional product branding tools, but some similarities between successful personal brands can be detected.

In conclusion, personal brands are fairly easily created but their success measure depends on the personal branding goal. The process of creating a personal brand is a personal process that should be conducted by every private person and public person

Key words: Personal brand, product brand, David Aaker brand theories

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Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on tutkia, kuinka henkilöbrändejä luodaan ja voidaanko niiden menestystä mitata. Opinnäytetyössä luodaan henkilöbrändi ja sen peruspiirteet ja voimavarat tuodaan esiin. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää kuinka henkilöbrändi rakentuu ja voidaanko sen menestystä mitata.

Opinnäytetyö on jaettu kahteen osaan. Ensimmäisessä osassa esitellään David A. Aakerin brändin rakennusteorioita ja se, kuinka perinteisten tuotebrändien suosiota mitataan. Toinen osio keskittyy henkilöbrändien luomiseen Aakerin teorioiden perusteella, ja osiossa pyritään selvittämään voiko henkilöbrändien menestystä mitata. Lähteinä on käytetty David A. Aakerin kirjoja brändien rakentamisesta ja henkilöbrändäyksen tueksi on otettu Katleena Kortesuon ja Lisa Sounion kirjat.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että perinteisiä tuotebrändien rakennusteorioita voidaan soveltaa henkilöbrändien rakentamiseen. Tutkimuksen pohjana käytetään David Aakerin tuotebrändien rakentamisessa käytettyä teoriaa. Joitain brändin rakennuksessa käytettäviä työkaluja pystytään käyttämään suoraan henkilöbrändien rakennuksessa, joitain täytyy muokata tarkoitukseen sopivaksi. Tuotebrändien menestyksen mittareita ei pystytä kokonaisuudessaan käyttämään henkilöbrändien suosiota mitattaessa mutta jotain yhteisiä piirteitä on löydettävissä menestyksekkäiden henkilöbrändien kohdalla.

Opinnäytetyöstä voidaan päätellä, että henkilöbrändi on helppoa rakentaa, mutta sen menestystä voidaan mitata ainoastaan henkilökohtaisten tavoitteiden perusteella. Henkilöbrändi on tärkeä voimavara, ja sellaisen voi luoda niin yksityinen kuin julkinen henkilökin.

Avainsanat: henkilöbrändi, tuotebrändi, David A. Aaker

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis will take a look at branding and especially branding a person. Branding is a concept that is a necessary part of creating a successful business venture, be it an organisation, a product or even a service. Traditional branding has for long concentrated on branding products and creating methods to support it. Branding people is a rising subject of interest and is just now gaining leverage among other popular branding methods. Since branding a tangible product with touchable attributes is fairly simple (though regarding that it is much more than just naming a touchable object), there is a definite need to explore possibilities of branding a living, breathing object, a person. This thesis will open up the subject of personal branding and how it is done.

Branding a person requires a lot more than just graphs and surveys. One is branding a living, breathing and fickle person that might in the middle of the process change his/her mind. In traditional product branding, people have gotten used to applying traditional branding tools. Theories such as Aaker's Brand Identity Planning System (Appendix 1) have helped establish strong brands. These theories have concentrated on giving value to a product or service. These theories are created and researched, to give value to the product and therefore give financial benefit to company who created the brand. But what would happen if these traditional theories were to be applied to a human being?

The thesis is divided into two major parts: the first part will take a look at the conventional branding of a product or service; the second part will be a deeper insight into how to brand a person. In the product based branding section branding guru David A Aaker's theories of creating a successful brand will be discussed and essential parts of a brand will be researched. Basic concepts are researched and explained for further use. Brand measures will be discussed and most importantly, the fact of what makes a successful brand. The research in the thesis is based on Aaker's theory of product branding.

This thesis topic arose originally from the topic of product based branding. Since branding has been a popular subject of research in the last few years in the field of business, the focus is slowly shifting towards people branding. Media has played part in exposing and making personal brands more visible and it is just natural to start shifting towards researching how personal brands are made and measured. Since personal branding is still a new subject in Finland, there are just a few resources to refer to in this thesis. This is also the reason why the commissioner of this thesis is Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences.

2 PRODUCT-BASED BRANDING

2.1 What Is Branding

American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies on seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. (American Marketing Association, 2012.) To put it in simple terms, a brand is something a company uses to distinguish their product or service from the similar ones. A brand can consist of a single product, a product family or even dissimilar products that, though, are under the same seller. (American Marketing Association, 2012.) A business can decide to brand either a product they portray, a service they give or even themselves as an organisation. Branding has been a fundamental principle in designing new products or developing new services and is a substantial force in gaining success in a market environment.

Branding is much more than just establishing a name for a product. Branding is setting up a ground for a product and then maintaining it for the brand to flourish. Branding concepts such as brand equity, brand identity and brand strategy will help give a product or a service a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) among other potential gains as a formidable player in the field of business. It will give leverage to a company if done right. The process takes into careful consideration and figuration all the components that could either harm or benefit the company itself. A strong company brand will have financial benefits, giving a business chance to evaluate possible future expansion of a brand family. (Aaker 1996, 274.)

In the next chapters, this thesis will discuss the principles of conventional product/service-based branding and what is needed to establish a brand. It will take a closer look at the concepts of branding, how a brand is made and how a successful product/service brand is measured.

2.2 Brand Equity

Brand equity is a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers. (Aaker 1996, 7-8.) According to Aaker, these assets and liabilities are more so intangible rather than tangible, touchable assets (Appendix 1). These assets and liabilities are values that add to brand's image and add to the customer perception of a particular brand. Aaker lists five overall aspects of equity:

1. Brand (name) awareness
2. Brand loyalty
3. Perceived quality
4. Brand associations
5. Other brand assets

(Aaker 1996, 8).

Brand equity basis lies within these five qualities. These are measurable values (although intangible) and are easily perceived when examining a brand of certain reputation. When building a brand, brand equity is one of the first things a firm should consider. A poorly set brand will, at worst, damage the brands reputation and especially for upcoming brands this might also mean the end of the journey. (Aaker 1996, 26-28.)

Brand (name) awareness is a key criterion when determining brand's value in customers' minds. Brand awareness is both the customer's knowledge and the potency of the brand in customer's mind-set. (Aaker 1996, 330.) This means that the more prestige and visibility the brand has had, the more often the customer will choose the brand in the future. Recognition is the first aspect of brand awareness; what the brand is and if people know it. A brand with high recognition is also very likely to be bought, whether it is soap or car tires. People with knowledge of the brand will also be more likely to come back to a brand they have heard about or used before. This is called recalling a brand. According to Aaker brand recognition and recall are both crucial to include when talking about brand awareness (Aaker 1996, 27). These measures could be intangible but measurable aspects and help determine

whether one's brand is heading towards success or failure. The most successful brands are not only managed to create general awareness but aim for strategic awareness that will not only help them to be seen but to be seen in a certain way to potential customers.

Brand loyalty is often overlooked by companies but is nevertheless one of the most important aspects of brand equity. Loyal customers tend to be more receptive to the brand's products as opposed to products of another brand. Repeat buying is more predictable and generates more stable profit than new sales. (Aaker 1996, 21.) Brand's loyalty is created by both acquiring new customers and retaining the existing customer base. Both are vital, though it costs more to attract new customers than to keep the existing coming back. (Aaker 1996, 21.) Aaker segments customers into five different segments:

1. Committed customers who keep coming back to the brand and are not affected by changing attributes (like price)
2. Price switchers who fluctuate according to price
3. Passively loyal customers who go back to a brand out of habit
4. Fence sitters who switch between brands
5. Noncustomers who are either competitor's customers or do not use a certain product class.

(Aaker 1996, 22-23.)

When brand loyalty is concerned, the hardest customer group to attract is the noncustomers due to their loyalty to another brand (or in case of product, have not used the product group). Price switchers, passively loyal and fence sitters are virtually on the brink of becoming loyal and this could be corrected by offering them incentives. A company is generally interested in attracting new customers but often neglect existing ones, although as said before, the loyal customers are the most stable buyers. Loyalty could be enhanced by creating frequent-buyer programmes (such as airlines with mileage clubs) or customer clubs (such as department store's and their monthly newsletters and discounts vouchers).

Perceived quality of a brand differs from general quality: it is what the consumer expects of the brand and/or whether it fills their expectations.

(BusinessDictionary.com 2012.) It is by far one of the most influential factors in suggesting customers to prefer a certain brand over another. It is a strategic thrust to generate profit and attract loyal customer base. Perceived quality is especially important when talking about brands that either have multiple sub-brands or range from one product class to another. A familiar brand usually has a prestige they need to preserve and this is where quality comes handy: If a product is labelled under a quality brand, it must retain the same qualified value as its mother brand. (Aaker 1996, 17-19.) Perceived quality has also been linked to increase in total financial income and managerial programs such as Total Quality Management aid in creating a perceived quality for a brand.

Brand associations cover all aspects ranging from attitude towards the brand to symbols to known endorsers such as celebrity spokesperson. (Aaker 1996, 25.) It is all the qualities linked to a particular brand. A brand with a healthy-identity might benefit from having an athlete as a spokesperson but not as such if the chosen spokesperson happens to be known for his/her partying lifestyle. As mentioned before quality and loyalty are a driven force of a brand but if associated with poor working conditions or disease inducing ingredients, brand's perceived quality will most likely to be tarnished and loyal customers might stray towards competitors.

The fifth aspect of brand equity covers attributes such as competitive advantage and other associated entities that will in the end support a brand's true nature, the brand Identity.

2.3 Brand Identity

Brand identity is a set of features and attributes associated with the brand. These associations represent what the brand is, what it portrays and how it wants to be seen in customers' eyes. David Aaker's Brand identity planning model has become a universal tool to build brand identities throughout the world (Appendix 2). According to Aaker the brand identity consists of a brand essence or core identity: What are the brand's core values, the vision of the brand, what are the competencies driving the brand and what does the

organisation behind the brand stand for. (Aaker 1996, 85-87.) The extended identity therefore, includes all the associated features that complete the core such as the product or service itself, slogans, symbols and attributes such as marketing strategies, pricing and service. The extended identity completes the core and gives it the actual meaning. (Aaker 1996, 88.)

The brand's core and extended identity are formed with the help of brand scoping aspects. Brands are looked from four perspectives: Brand as a product, brand as an organisation, brand as a person and brand as a symbol. Brand-as-a-product defines what the brand is and who will use it. It contains the product attributes such as what is the product, what does it do and what functional and emotional attributes does the product contain; Quality and value of the product, use and user purposes and the origin of the brand. Brand-as-an-organisation gives insight on what organisational attributes are linked to the brand, such as innovations, sustainable practises, and trustworthiness and employee well-being. It also suggests whether the brand is local or global. Brand-as-a-person gives a brand more humane qualities: What the personality of the brand is and how that personality is viewed by consumers. (Aaker 1996, 78-84.) The relationship between the consumers and the brand is vital considering that the aim of a brand is to generate profit, and this is where the brand-as-a-person is useful: Be it a "friendly adviser", "informative authority" or "just a friend". Last, brand-as-a-symbol contains all the symbolic references (such as the brand imagery, symbols or visuals) and references to the brand's heritage. Symbols and heritage is something relevant to consider due to people's tendency to remember products from their strong imagery. (Aaker 1996, 84-85.) Most notable examples are the McDonald's big yellow "M" symbol or Hennes&Mauritz bold, red "H&M" logo. These symbols also strongly refer to the brand's heritage.

These four perspectives paint a picture as a whole for a brand. It is not necessary use all the perspectives when describing a brand nor is it productive to get stuck in only one. Often, for example, organisations get stuck in creating their brand identity for their target group. Reflecting just what the public wants of the brand will lead to fluctuating brand image that might confuse not only the public, but the investors as well. A brand's identity

should both represent the brand and reflect customer's needs. (Aaker 1996, 69-76.)

Brand identity should be looked at from three different angles: One should analyse the competitors, the customers and the brand itself. Self-analysis is the first thing a brand should do and with that, the best help are the aforementioned brand perspectives. A brand should represent itself for itself, not for others, but analysing the customers and the competitors will broaden the view the brand is seen in. Focusing just on analysing one aspect will provide a limited view on the brand. (Aaker - Joachimstahler 2000, 50-54, 56-60.) If looking just at what competitors are doing, a brand will easily be built on a floating base meaning that it will change irregularly and irrationally leaving the target market confused. The brand identity base will need to be on a stable in order to make sense.

2.4 Strategic Branding

As a brand identity has been created and brand equity established, a brand is ready to function. The choice of brand strategy depends on what and how the brand wants to present itself to the public. When a brand is established it needs to position itself. David Aaker sees positioning as part of implementing the brand. Positioning is not part of the branding strategy but the core part of how a brand strategy is formed. A brand's position depends on the brand identity and the value proposed to the brand: "Brand position is the part of the brand identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience and that demonstrates an advantage over competing brands." (Aaker 1996, 176.) This means that the position that the brand chooses is partly chosen to add value to the target audience and at the same time will differentiate itself from the competition. To position itself, the brand needs to refer to its core identity: to the values and visions, the essence of the brand. The core serves a unique view of that particular brand and will represent the core essence of the brand. From that point on, the brand also has to resonate itself against the target audience and add leverage that will override the competing brands. (Aaker 1996, 178-179.) An active part of positioning is also choosing and communicating with the target audience. A

known cosmetics brand manufactures a popular range of anti-wrinkle creams. The target audience to these creams is usually a mature woman that wants to restore her youth, from the point of view of cosmetics. There is no point of targeting the anti-wrinkle creams for young teens just because they will most likely not have aging components such as wrinkles on their face. For this cosmetics brand, it is important to specify their target audience in such a way that their product will provide financial benefit for them. A brand needs to resonate themselves with the customer: what they want and what their needs are. (Aaker 2000, 58.) A brand should always, though, keep in mind that when listening to the target audience needs, it should always keep in mind their essence and mirror that to the needs of the customers.

Keeping mind the competition is always useful when positioning a brand. The matrix of business is filled with fierce competition and the possibility is that someone has either already created a brand like yours, or is looking at establishing a similar brand. The key is to add a differentiating factor to your brand. (Aaker 2000, 59.) This means looking at brand attributes and core visions to search for something that will be either different or augment your vision from the competitors vision. Ben & Jerry's ice cream is just ice cream when put in a simple context. But when adding their colourful packaging, so-simple-that-a-child-would-understand marketing and outlook and their socially responsible activism (for example Ben & Jerry's foundation supporting organisations that work towards diminishing social and environmental problems) (Ben& Jerry's, 2012.) they have become one of the most recognised ice-cream companies around the world. They associated fun with ice-cream and that made them different from the companies that market ice-cream as an ultimate decadent indulgence. A brand needs to find ways to differentiate themselves from their competitors. (Aaker 2000, 59-61.)

2.5 Measuring Brand Success

A product (or service) is as strong as its equity. As previously mentioned, a brand needs to have an active communication with its competition and the

target audience to maintain a position in the market. The essence of the brand will establish a strong base in which the position will be enhanced. But what indicates that the brand is successful in its position? A brand's strong presence is measured from the brand's equity. The two strongest efforts to measure brand's equity have been suggested by Young & Rubicam, Brand asset valuator (Young & Rubicam 2012.) and Harris Interactive, EquiTrend (Harris Interactive 2012). These two measuring systems will be presented below.

Brand asset valuator, developed by an advertising agency Young & Rubicam, measures brand equity with the help of four equity aspects:

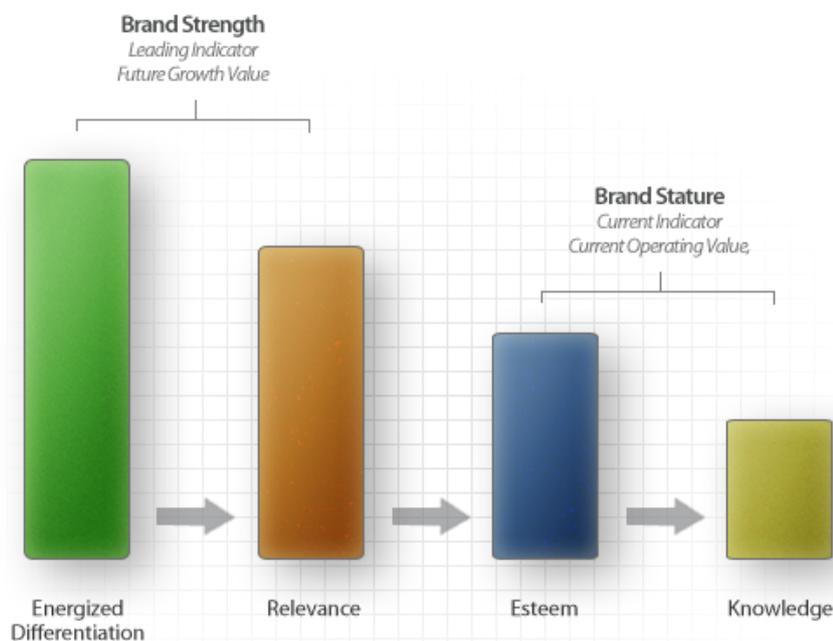


Figure 1. Brand Asset Valuator (Young&Rubicam 2012)

Brand's value is measured by an extensive questionnaire that measures the brand's vitality, sometimes also referred as brand's strength (differentiation and relevance) and brand's stature (esteem and knowledge). Brand's vitality will be measured by

- Differentiation – Whether a brand has a clear distinction within its target market. On the average, the clearer the brand's differentiating advantage is, the higher it will be on the measure scales.

- Relevance – A more personal approach. This measures whether the respondents have high or low regard towards a brand: Is it meaningful or personally touching.

Brand's Stature is constructed with measuring the brand's

- Esteem – Does the respondent value the brand and how high does he/she classify the brand. This is closely connected to the perceived quality of the brand
- Knowledge – Does the respondent know what the brand stands for.

(Aaker 1996, 306-308).

These four aspects will then be analysed and gathered into a high/low based chart, dubbed the power grid.

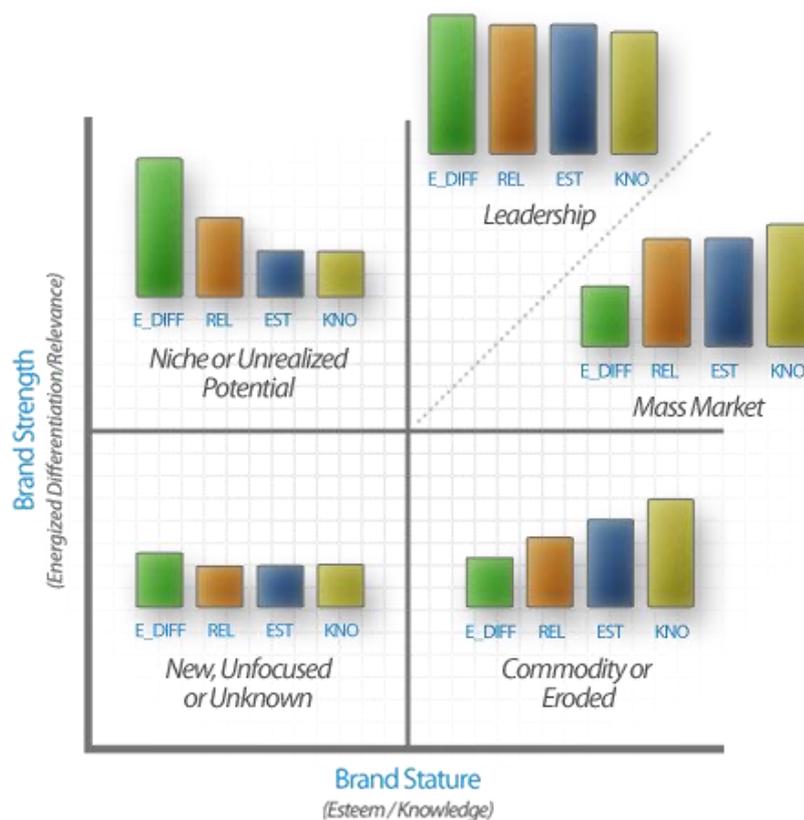


Figure 2. The Power Grid (Young&Rubicam 2012)

For example a brand with both high vitality and high stature, for example Disney, which is known and valued worldwide), is a strong brand, but also has the most to lose if equity is compromised (Aaker 1996, 304-309).

The EquiTrend model developed by Brand and Communications Consulting Practice by Harris Interactive (previously known as Total Research) is a more

in-depth, more precise method of measuring brand equity. The research is based on a smaller set of question, yet more precise and the release of the method results is a yearly practice for the Harris Company. EquiTrend model measures three equity assets.

- Salience – The respondents are asked to give their opinion on the brand.
- Perceived quality – The respondents are asked to rate the brand based on a scale of eleven quality measures (from outstanding to unacceptable)
- User satisfaction – This is where the respondents are asked to whether they use the product and how would they rate the product (as in average quality)

(Aaker 1996, 310).

These three measures are then calculated and gathered into a general score, which will then rate the brands general, overall equity. The annual results are usually published and the poll usually gives a general out view on whether a brand is declining or rising in the chart. A few generalisations can be usually made by looking at the poll: Mostly the trends with the most history and highest scores in quality are usually well known brands such as Levi's and Kodak. (Aaker 1996, 309-312.)

A strong brand has a strong legacy. Legacy in this case means the brand's strong, cohesive image and a plan on how to implement it. The key to measuring whether a brand is successful is its continuum. If a brand, such as a known beverage company has been able to keep their brand alive, not to mention successful, the people behind the beverage have had to create a thorough brand legacy (A cohesive collection of brand image, brand equity, strategy and its implementation). When a brand is easily recalled, it means that the brand has made itself visible, and by making itself visible it has established a brand basis that can be easily recalled.

3 BRANDING PEOPLE

3.1 People Brands

Branding people is a quite new, not many researches have been done about the subject. Still, signs of intrigue have been seen since the rise of self-help books and the rising of social media. The United States of America has acted as the ground-breaking nation to standardize personal branding. So called personal growth books such as *Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey (Covey, 1989.) and *Finnish Tee Itsestäsi Brändi (Brand Yourself)* by Katleena Korteso (Korteso 2011.) suggest means to help personal growth and aim for success in business life mostly. Many of the books giving branding-like advice aim at helping people who work or intend to work in business. As branding people in business has become a more known subject, the branding of ordinary people is a rising subject of research. Social mediums such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and even MySpace have people brand themselves as a certain persona, whether they are aware of it or not.

Strong personality brands are often seen in media often. On the other end there are successful business people that have created their empire and have become known on the side. Steve Jobs has become known as the creative mind behind the Apple and as a strong personality, the face of the company. Hjalles Harkimo is a successful businessman with a long career especially within the sports industry (as a manager among others) but nowadays is associated best with his Finnish version of the U.S. show *The Apprentice (Diili)*. The other end, there are stars who have become known for being themselves. Paris Hilton has become a multimillionaire heiress who has created an empire of successful business ventures all relying on her name and persona (perfumes, as well as accessories lines including shoes and hair extensions) In Finland celebrities such as *Big Brother* contestants and so called mistresses who have become known as a mistresses of known people such as politicians and now are regular gossip outlet favourites. These personalities are perhaps even more known to the public for their

personalities than their ventures on other aspects of life. How have these people managed to build their personas so that people recognise their names? And more importantly, have they created a successful brand by doing so?

Branding people, or rather branding yourself is more complex than branding products or services but strikingly simple at the same time. As been said, people are already branding themselves, aware of it or not. In this section of the thesis, the focus is on branding a person, a regular person aiming to work within business but not working in it yet. This personality is closely connected with social media and has been studying business administration in a University of applied sciences for four years. She works as a sales assistant and has just been upgraded to work within visual merchandising. In this section, a brand personality will be established with the help of David Aaker's branding tools and attributes as well as other personal growth tools. Social media's part in creating this personality will be discovered. By the end, the thesis will take a look at how a successful brand is measured.

3.2 Brand Identity

The basic facts:

- Name: Siina
- Sex: Female
- Age: 24
- Nationality: Finnish
- Family background: Single. Mother, Father, three younger brothers, two younger sisters
- Education: Primary school, Secondary school, currently studying International Business in Rovaniemi School of Applied Sciences, fifth year
- Work background: Summer jobs at an ice-cream parlour (three summers at the age of 15-17, one summer as a trainer for new workers), trainee at an English speaking day-care (at the age of 19-20 10 months), private health clinic cleaner (substitute, at the age of 20, three-four months), eye wear specialist at an opticians' (two and a

half years at the age of 20-23), sales assistant at a clothing store (on-going, at the age of 23-24, beginning of the on-going year also as a visual merchandiser/in-store decorator)

- Future aim: To work within fashion, either on the business side or in the creative side as a stylist/designer
- Special traits: active in social media, enjoys creative arts such as music, art and design; owner of a dog, loves to travel, has a background as a musician.

The subject of branding is a young female, currently studying at a university aiming to graduate this year. Her 24 years of age have been active: she has been working from a young age, first just summers then, as studies led her to move to Rovaniemi by herself, either part-time or full-time. She has been living in Rovaniemi now for almost for four years and aims at graduating later than expected due to working. Her family lives currently in Oulu, parents have been separated since she was young, so they base in two different municipalities. Siina has lived in Oulu before coming to Rovaniemi but has lived in Rovaniemi, Kemijärvi and briefly in Jyväskylä before. She has been single for the most part of her stay in Rovaniemi but has had an active social life. She has many friends, but just a few close ones. Since Siina's studies are coming to an end, she is currently in the process of thinking about her future as a young adult in business life and as a milestone of 25 years is approaching in just a few short months; she is beginning to establish herself as an adult and leaving her young adult status in the past.

3.2.1 Establishing Brand Identity

David A. Aaker suggested that a brand should be looked at from the point of view of four brand scoping aspects: Brand as a product, brand as an organisation, brand as a person and brand as a symbol. (Aaker 1996, 79.) These aspects apply to traditional product branding, partially because they were developed for product branding but also because these products are tangible objects that can be looked at objectively. A personal brand is always an ever-changing intangible human who changes according to preference. Aaker's aspects can be quite easily applied to a human being. Attached here

is a graph of the four scopes, their key ingredients in product branding and personal branding.

Table 1. Branding Attributes (Aaker 1996, 79). Personal branding attributes were modified from Aaker's material by the author.

Brand as a product	Brand as a person	Brand as a symbol	Brand as an organisation
Product Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it is • Who uses it • Emotional Benefits • Quality • Value 	Product Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality • How the personality is viewed by consumers 	Product Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic references such as symbols, imagery, slogans • Heritage 	Product Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational attributes such as innovation, practises etc. • Local vs, Global
Personal Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to brand as a person. 	Personal Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who it is • Who are interested • Perceived quality • Value of performance • Target audience 	Personal Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic reference such as brand name, brand imagery (promotional pictures etc.) 	Personal Brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be added after a brand has joined an organisation

As most of these attributes were indeed applied to a product, some of them need to be modified to fit a person. A Brand as a product and a brand as a person are, in the case of personal branding, initially the same thing. But because we are talking about a person, a brand as a product attributes can be directly applied under brand as a person. Basically when looking at a person the brand consists of who the brand is, who the brand's target audience is, what is the personal brand's perceived quality values and values in general. This is where the brand's target audience (such as in Siina's case potential employers) can be referred to. The feedback of target audience would also help develop the brand in such a way that it will benefit the brand itself. The symbolism of a human brand is more concerned with the brand's name and the imagery, when using marketing activities. A Product brand's

external identity could include the symbol and the logo of the brand as well as the colours and other visual imagery that are identified with the brand. Because personal brands are usually symbol-less, the imagery of a human brand can mostly be concerned with the name of the person and photos that are used to promote the person (e.g. social media, more on that later). In personal branding the organisational aspect would apply after the brand itself identifies her with an organisation. In product branding, the product is usually created by an organisation. Since a person brand would usually lack this organisation, the organisational aspect does not affect until the person joins an organisation it wants to be identified with. Usually this would happen after a potential employee is hired.

Establishing a brand identity, Aaker's brand identity scopes should be a great way to analyse brand potential and to start building up a complete brand identity. A brand identity is an insight on a personal brand's essence and it will act as the base for the brand's equity. Brand Identity consists of a core identity (core values, vision and competences) and the extended identity (the supporting attributes such as the brand itself, symbols and strategies). The brand identity scopes will give a perspective on how to develop one's core- and extended identity.

3.2.2 Core Identity

So what is needed to brand a person? Branding a person, as said before, is completely different but surprisingly similar as branding a product or a service. In the case of branding Siina (conceptually not physically as branding was known in the history), the basis of the brand will be in her wanting to establish herself as an adult and wanting to present herself as a potential business professional. Branding concepts will be based on this assumption. Her brand will be established as a personal point of view.

As mentioned before, the brand identity consists of the extended and the core identity. The core identity is the essence of the brand and contains all of the brand's core values and visions; the competencies and what the organisation behind the brand stands for. In the case of branding a person

the three first attributes should be taken into account. The organisational attribute in this case is unnecessary

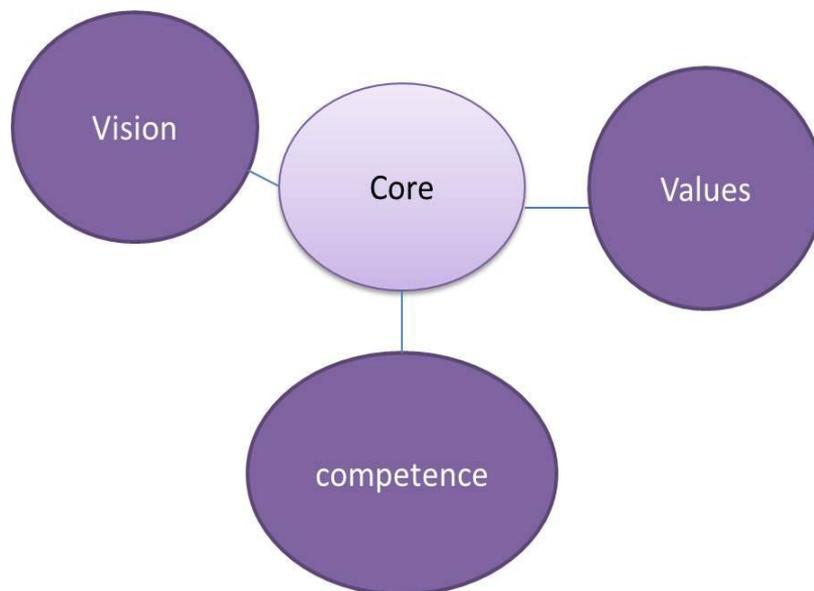


Figure 3 Core Identity (Aaker 1996.)

In this case branding Siina, her core vision is the foremost important to be looked at. As she has hoped, this branding process will help her establish herself as a young business professional. This is almost straight comparative to her core vision. She wants to offer herself as a capable business professional to future employees. This vision is supported by her previous record of having started working early in life and not to mention her almost-finished studies. The choices a human being makes as a young person are the shapers of his/her vision. Katleena Kortesus, the author of *Tee Itsestäsi Brändi – Asiantuntijaviestintä Livenä ja Verkossa* (Kortesus 2011.) has stated that the branding process is recommended to start early. One's studies make a great starting point. (Kortesus 2011, 23-24.) Siina's main target since finishing upper secondary school was to become a clothing designer. She had her eyes set in the entrance exams but in the end failed to get in. Her first choice and especially the failing of it, made Siina decide to have a gap year (to train at a day-care) and think about her future. In the end she ended up studying business in English as her second alternative. This decision led her to decide to start thinking herself as a business professional in the field of

fashion or design. Her core vision therefore has morphed into establishing her brand as a young professional.

As her vision now established, it's time to look at her core values. It is basic humanity to have personal values that guide one through life. Values such as honesty, the difference between right and wrong and reliability are something that every man decides themselves. Core values of brand identity are similar to these, especially when branding a person. In product branding the core values include such as: sustainable work practices, ethical treatment of workforce, satisfying customer's needs in every way etc. These go very much hand-in-hand with the organisation behind the brand. With a human being these are not applicable. So, to establish the core values of Siina, we need to look behind the person at her beliefs, values and the essence of her personality. Siina is the oldest child of six children. The oldest child is usually described as a driven child that takes responsibility early on life. She stands for her own rights but takes good care of her younger siblings. The oldest children are often independent children with leader qualities. Siina has early on taken care of her responsibilities as the oldest and was often put in charge of the kids. This has led her to be a loyal and trustworthy person. Therefore she values loyalty and trustworthiness. She has also always been very driven about her career and has always made sure she is seen as a person who does the deeds she is assigned to. Therefore she thinks herself as a driven and reliable. Loyalty, trustworthiness, driven and reliable, these are all personal attributes that a future employer would appreciate in any prospective employee. Therefore, these are also the relevant values that Siina's brand should include.

The core of the brand always includes core competencies. In product branding these competencies are attributes that drive the brand forward. For example, in the case of world-renowned skin-care brand Dr. Hauschka, the brand prides itself on their ethics and sustainable approach to their brand. The company has established a factory (called WALA Heilmittel) that uses environmentally friendly production practices and even grows the ingredients bio-dynamically in their own garden. (Dr. Hauschka/Wala Heilmittel 2012.) Their core competence is therefore their "eco-friendly" and bio-dynamic

manufacturing of their products. In the case of branding a person, the core competencies lay in their core abilities and beliefs. In Siina's case these competencies are found when looking back at her history: her upbringing, hobbies and more recently her abilities as an employee. Siina's background as a musician contributes greatly to her competences. Musicians are almost always people who like to be in the spotlight and have good communication skills. These are people who train their performance skills to engage people and their performance presence is usually either moderately good to excellent. As a background in being part of a choir, Siina has had to learn how to work as a team as well as by herself. She has had to train her stage presence and with her vocal skills to engage people to live in that moment. This has also shown outside her musical hobby. Siina likes to speak publicly and has always found, for example, school presentations pleasurable. Therefore one of her core competences is her ability to perform publicly. As the oldest child she also has found taking the leadership role easy. She likes to be in charge and, through good and the bad; she likes to assume a role in charge. Because of her background, having hobbies that engage her in creative thinking, one of Siina's competence lies also within creative thinking.

The essence of Siina's brand lies within the core identity. These visions, values and her competences will act as the base for her brand and it will be the essence on what the rest of her brand will be built on. Since Siina does want to be seen as a potential business contender, it is vital that the values and competences that support this ideal will be played up. Not just because they are part of her brand but because these attributes are what potential employers are looking for. Siina's brand will be built to support her, but also to act as an advantage when she is looking for a suitable job in the field of business.

3.2.3 Extended Identity

Extended identity includes the product attributes that complete core identity. These attributes include the product or service itself, the slogans and symbols associated with the brand, the marketing/advertising strategies, pricing and the service the brand offers. The extended identity enhances the core of the brand and the attributes associated with the brand act as the fencing around the core.

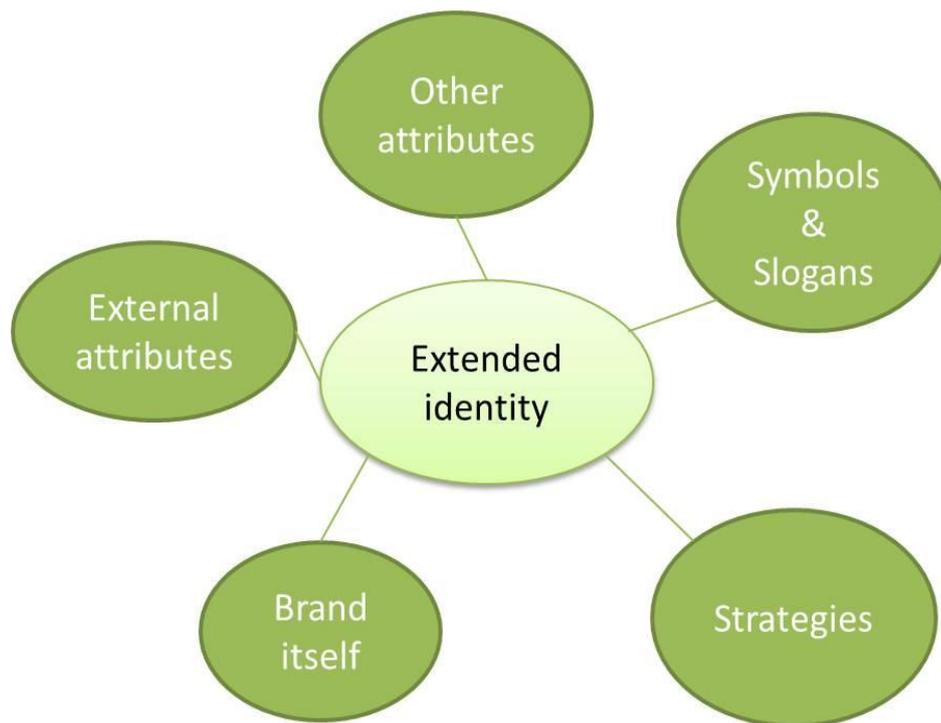


Figure 4. Extended Identity (Aaker, 1996.)

The extended identity of a person is trickier to establish. The extended identity, of course, includes brand attributes such as the appearance of a person, and the personality (partially since most of the personality attributes belong to the core identity). The personal brand itself is also part of the extended identity but that can be included only after the person has indeed established her brand. Symbols and slogans are hard to include to a person, since, in the case of product branding, these are usually attributes that are either trademarked or even owned. The most famous example of owning a slogan, though, has to be Paris Hilton who is rumoured to have trademarked her famous saying "That's Hot". (FoxNews 2007.) It is not therefore unheard of to trademark a slogan or symbol (such as the artist Prince who famously, but briefly, changed his artist name into a symbol), but it does not really apply to a private person, such as Siina. Her external attributes include her appearance, her demeanour and her personality.

Person's appearance has a big part in building her personal brand. Appearance is something people base their first impression on. A well-established personal brand includes a strong outlook of a person, meaning she presents herself well and gives a unified, uncomplicated first impression. This will initially provoke trust and trustworthiness is something people are looking for in a strong brand. A fashion stylist is conceived as professional is when she appears fashionable through her clothing, as well as a respectable business guru is seen as trustworthy in a dapper suit. Katleena Kortesus suggests every personal brand to look at his/her brand personality to create a differentiating factor that will both set one apart from the crowd and fit one in in the crowd. (Kortesus 2011, 17.) Siina wants to establish herself as a respectable business professional. The key criterion to her appearance as a brand is the field of business she wants to enter. Siina's initial interest in the field of business is design. Her past hobbies and interest in arts in general tell that she would suit design business well. Design oriented business people have generally been conceived as eccentric and their sense of aesthetics is at the same time very design oriented and simple. Appearance is key in this field of design. Therefore, Siina needs to adapt her sense in style to adapt in this field of business. Siina has always been interested in style and she has finely tuned her sense of personal style according to her interests. Siina is a

big fan of casual clothing and laid-back styling. This can be either a great differentiating point or just a poor lack of judgment. The essence of Siina's style should reflect her core identity and reflect her core values but it shouldn't overrun the goal of her personal branding. Laid-back style is a great differentiation point but finely tuned, it can also be applied to her goal of working within design business.

Personal communication and demeanour are also associated with extended identity: How you present yourself to the public is crucially important. A strong personal brand (a person) communicates well and takes into account both the verbal- and the nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is a silent deal breaker of good communication. A public speaker with crossed arms, nervous fidgeting, and no eye contact is not as believable as a speaker with strong stance, controlled gestures and great stage presence. Charisma is often mentioned when talking about strong personal brands. Charisma is a collection of the person's physical and mental attributes. These attributes are also associated with the word "strong": A charismatic person is usually clear and strong in his/her verbal- and nonverbal communication. Confidence is also something associated with strong personal brands. A confident person usually knows how to control his/her nonverbal communication gestures: A confident person appears to public as controlled but mesmerizing. Confidence and charisma are attributes that are to be strived for Siina. Generally Siina considers herself to be fairly confident person, but charisma is what she strives for. Siina has knowingly developed her communication skills to develop her charisma. The strong points of her communication are her fluent and engaging articulation (she has a habit of colouring her speech with adjectives and using pausing and toning her voice to create interest), her habit of using her hands and body to put emphasis on her speech and her strong presence. The communicational attributes she would like to be linked in her external identity but need to be developed are her eye contact (bouncy, not enough), her posture (usually slouchy) and her lack of cohesive and structured communicational output.

Siina's personality plays a big part in how her brand will be perceived. Her personality will be strongly reflected when marketing her brand. To build a strong personal brand base, all aspects of her personality will be under scrutiny: Strong positive qualities will be played up, when not-so-favourable qualities will be toned down. These qualities, such as sense of humour, independence, strong opinions and voicing them, should be carefully inspected, even listed, in what to keep, what to toss and what to develop. Positive traits such as good social skills, independence, universally appealing sense of humour and empathy should be kept as a part of an identity because they add the humane qualities to the personal brand (this is what differentiates the personal brand from the product brand). Qualities such as pushiness, too strong opinions and arrogance are traits that can push people away from someone and add negative aura to a person. A personal brand should always be approachable not unattainable. Some qualities though are qualities with positive image but can turn negative if overtly exaggerated. These can and should be developed in order to enhance a personal brand. Siina will benefit from her good qualities such as independence, good social skills, openness and her sense of humour, but should tone down her "bossy" nature (as mentioned before in her core identity) to not appear pushy. She should definitely build her external identity around her good social skills because they will help her in her quest to become a young professional in the field of business.

3.3 Brand Equity

Brand equity represents the attributes that are linked to a brand to generate value. The attributes are not the building blocks of the brand but the beams that add (or in cases might even subtract) the brand's building. Attributes such as awareness, perceived value and loyalty are formed with the help of the surroundings. In Siina's brand's case these attributes are formed with her reputation and the marketing of her brand: Her brand awareness is formed with her networking and the mediums (such as social media sites) she is presented in. The equity attributes in traditional product branding form a beneficial background that a brand can create value that is based on silent

knowledge on the brand. In personal branding the attributes create the background that the person can base his/her value on. For example a renowned motivational speaker can base their financial value (the speaker fee) on how known his/her brand is. In Siina's case the attributes create her brand's reputation and how she is perceived by the potential employers. In this chapter Siina's brand equity attributes will be established.

The basic brand equity assets are created for traditional product branding and require a slight alteration to apply to human being.

1. Brand (name) awareness – Personal brand awareness
2. Brand loyalty - Brand reputation and loyal recommendations
3. Perceived quality – Perceived value and quality of work
4. Brand associations
5. Other brand assets – Personal competitive advantage

(Aaker 1996,8.) Personal Branding material was modified from Aaker's material by the author

3.3.1 Brand Awareness

For a personal brand to get the full potential on brand equity, the assets belonging to the equity basis need to be altered. Since brand name awareness in product branding is concerned with the recognition and recall, it is the easiest to apply to a person. In traditional product branding the brand name awareness asset tell, whether a brand is known or unknown for the public. A known brand is easier recognised (or recalled) and therefore also easier bought. In personal branding, a known personal brand is easier employed the more people are familiar with the name of the person. When it comes down to creating that known factor, it all concludes to advertising and marketing. Today marketing is mainly focused on web outlets such as social media sites (Facebook and Twitter for personal use and LinkedIn for professional use), weblogs and commenting and of course more direct approach such as sending emails to specific companies and people one wants to make oneself known to. Especially social media does play an important part in making a brand more visible to public. Sure, Facebook does

offer visibility to just you friends but with a few simple clicks one can alter the visibility factor and therefore add more possibilities to new friends. For a fairly young brand, social media outlets offer a mass of possibilities to make one's brand known. Most of the sites are fully adaptable, and therefore people can present themselves in however way they see suitable. Here is where a young brand needs to be very careful in what to put into their personal sites. A young brand such as Siina needs to alter the page according to her aforementioned goal. This means that pictures showing heavy partying, questionable action and so-called self-pictures (pictures that one has taken themselves, au contraire to popular belief, do not show how this and that you are. Most people see them just as vain) should be taken down or just hidden from eyes of those one wants to impress. Showing past work experience, pictures that have been tastefully taken, and those of one's favourable hobbies and actions, shows potential collaborators that one is professional but down-to-earth at the same time.

Personal or professional blogs are also a good way to reach potential target audience. These go even a little bit further than just having a micro blogging Twitter site or personal bulletin board Facebook. These blogs are a way of expressing opinions and views and have great potential to turn a hobby into a job. Today blogs are everywhere. The past few years especially professional blogs, be it business or fashion (a huge trend from 2010 until today and on) , have been on the rise. Umbrella sites (sites that gather many related blogs under one roof) even employ their bloggers and give them a monthly pay check (confidential amount). These umbrella sites are on the rise and make possible for even some bloggers full-time jobs. Katleena Kortesuso herself has a blog where she frequently writes and has kept it as part of her brand. (Kortesuso 2011, 79-80.) As said these blogs are a great way to promote a personal brand, but they need upkeep. Blogs should be written frequently, setting a good steady rhythm for the posts will help reader figure out when new posts arrive. The outlook of the blog should be kept simple and presentable, to cluttered and infested with ads will distract the reader from reading the posts. The posts themselves should be kept neat and short to keep the reader interested in one's texts. A well-established blog will act as an advantage for a personal brand but the amount of subscribers depends on

the blog activity of the writer, not the reader. For example a good way to gain more readers is to read and comment on other blogs. These comments should include the URL of one's own blog in order to subtly suggest a visit. Blogs and blogging are becoming more and more a handy way to promote and establish personal brands.

Creating recognition and recall for a personal brand needs personal input. This is where networking comes in handy. Katleena Kortesus suggests attending networking events such as fairs to create visibility and to make valuable connections. (Kortesus 2011, 29.) Whereas social media concentrates creating visibility for your brand, networking makes a name known. In business networking is encouraged to tie new collaborations and find new contacts that might be useful in the future. From a personal branding point of view the purpose could be reversed: The purpose for networking could be used to make a personal brand known to possible new contacts. Therefore one wouldn't be going to a networking event to get as many phone numbers as possible but to give as many phone numbers as possible. Networking events such as fairs, brunches and even extracurricular activities such as golfing have become more and more common these days. As business insiders say, the best deals are made outside the conference room today. These events are a terrific way to make one's name known in such circles as it is wished for. The important thing to remember when wanting to make a name for themselves in networking fairs, is that it is necessary to be prepared for these events. As mentioned before, one needs to make a good first impression in order to be remembered and to make a good impression, is to be well prepared. An up-to-date business card is necessary, as is one's 30-second pitch (Name, current location, what you do and if one wants to be direct, why you're here). Good manners and neat appearance is also one big, though often forgotten advantage.

From a Siina's point of view her personal brand's awareness is still slightly low. Siina does have a Facebook account with a range of friends from work related background and from personal related background. The account site is, from main point of view, pretty much as it should be, though her status updates could involve more business and design related subjects. Siina does

not have a Twitter account or LinkedIn account, the latter is recommendable to be more available for business purposes. She could also start a blog, considering her main focus area in business is design and especially fashion. A site where she could involve her passion for fashion as well as showing her ability to write and discuss about current events in design could offer her great business potential. During Siina's time studying in her university, she was also accepted as part of a Young Entrepreneurs Seminar week EMAX Nordic (Emax Nordic 2006.) in Örebro Sweden. The Seminar week included 200 kids from the Nordic countries that were all either young entrepreneurs or promising business professionals. Siina took part in 2009 and through the event, met interesting people with collaboration potential. Though only a few participants were there because they were interested in working in design, she still made friends with potential to become business contacts. Through school Siina has also gained recognition through projects and of course through friendships. All of these acquaintances are very important when considering through business point of view: These people will mostly likely refer (recall) to Siina when opportunity arises that would suit her. To gain more recognition for her brand, Siina should consider attending design specific networking events and add the LinkedIn account to boost the recognition of her brand

3.3.2 Brand Loyalty

A brand loyalty asset in product based branding means when a customer is loyal to a product: In what degree will he/she return and buy a certain product. This will apply to personal branding slightly altered: Brand loyalty in personal branding constitutes as brand reputation. A brand reputation, as in what do people expect of the brand, is closely related to brand awareness. The first question in the case of a personal brand is whether people can recognize or recall a certain person; secondly they will usually ask whether he/she is any good. Either they have an idea whether the person is good in what he does or they are acquiring whether they are. If a person brand will prove out to be good in what they do, the customers will most likely use the brand's services again. A reputation of a person is usually something that sticks. A terrible deed done in the younger years will stay with person unless

he/she attempts to clear it. This deed will eventually prove out to be a problem if it has qualities that will prevent work or any other action.

Loyalty is achieved by having a good reputation. And good reputation is achieved by having good backers and referees. A personal brand is very much dependant on where people are willing to put their loyalty. Tom Peters, a self-proclaimed personal brand, a writer and an author who states that loyalty is very crucial to brands. (Peters 1997.) He suggests that a person creating his/her brand should ask for feedback on one's own chosen review group, such as friends, co-workers and others alike. (Peters 1997.) These people will eventually be backers of one's brand. Because Siina is going to be fairly new in the field of design business and she does not have actual design related experience from previous work places (excluding her stay as a Visual Merchandiser in a clothing store), she will have to create a solid first impression. As they say, nobody trusts a newbie. In especially brutal business of fashion and design one will have to perform well and even better than expected to gain trust, which is essential when talking about loyalty. Siina's loyalty asset will be fully created and utilised after she enters the field of design business. At this point though she could utilize her backers listed in her CV. Usually a potential employer does see whether the list of backers exists in the end of the CV and refer back to a few of them to see whether the potential employee is trustworthy. A reputation is built on these connections. People refer to one another and if the reputation is good, this is where people create loyalty; an easily trusted individual with good reputation is often more referred than one with a poor reputation.

3.3.3 Perceived Quality

The overall perceived quality of a brand is usually concerned with the overall quality factor and whether the brand is of a good quality as the image promises. With people, the quality lies within her work and image. A person's value is estimated by the quality of his/her work. Managing personal work quality should be one's priority if the target is to make a sustainable and lasting personal brand. This means assessing the quality level of what one

does and a plan on how to maintain that level of quality. Supposing that a well-known public speaker is known for his charismatic and dynamic performance, there's a level of quality he has established for himself. What he needs to do is recognise that level of quality, assess what it is that makes that kind of performance and how to keep the level steady. The reputation the public speaker will require him of the same kind of charismatic performance every time he gets on that stage. If he fails to perform up to the standards he has set, his reputation will decline and the quality of his work will be questioned by his employers. This will spread and before the performer knows, his speaker jobs have diminished. At the same time the value of his work has taken a downturn since nobody wants to pay for a mediocre performance. The key of keeping the perceived quality level high for a personal brand could be to assess it and plan accordingly.

Siina has a potential to achieve a good level of quality if she keeps up a good reputation. She has been performing well at her jobs and has maintained that level of quality in her work. That is visible in her work certificates. To keep up that level of quality and even improve it, Siina needs to assess the basic values of her work. She could refer to her core identity and look for her personal assets (such as trustworthiness) that contribute and illuminate quality. Siina does have a high morale in her work and that is one definite trait to keep in mind when assessing her quality. To determine the basic quality level of Siina's performance, she might need help from someone who has seen her perform. David Aaker states that perceived quality is usually the main reason customers buy a certain product. (Aaker 1996, 19.) This can be applied to personal brands as well. In Siina's case, she needs to carefully assess her quality from her reputation point of view. Siina needs to think about her value and what people expect from her. Expectations exist even when one is not aware of them. As mentioned before, a public speaker that has met high standards (or expectations) before and next time fails to meet them, his/her perceived quality will certainly diminish. Siina should in her case, assess what people are expecting of her, to say in a job interview, and plan her actions accordingly. As quality is a great differentiation point, (Aaker 1996, 17.) the quality of Siina's brand should be considered and evaluated through carefully.

3.3.4 Brand associations and other proprietary assets

Brand assets such as symbols, slogans and endorsers and competitive advantage (SCA), are assets to a brand that are linked to brand equity. In Aaker's opinion these are assets that support the brand. (Aaker 1996, 25). These assets are added to brand equity because they either help the brand in a marketing point of view or they add value otherwise. For example sustainable competitive advantage for a brand is a lasting asset that will help the brand to differentiate itself from competitors. For a prestigious brand this could be quality. For a family oriented brand this could be heritage. For a personal brand this could be everything from excellent communication skills to eccentric performance. Associated features for a personal brand could be added if the equity assets might not include a trait that is still wanted to add to the equity.

One of the biggest associated assets to a brand is sustainable competitive advantage. In traditional product brand sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is a differentiation point which separates them from their competition. (Business Dictionary 2012.) A competitive advantage will give brand leverage and a starting point in which to base their strategic endeavours. Often, SCA is the root of all marketing. In personal branding sustainable competitive advantage has a close relationship with the rest of the equity assets: Usually it involves the quality of one's work, reputation that he/she keeps or even loyalty (in rare cases). To establish a sustainable competitive advantage point for a product is to look at what differentiates their brand from others alike and what is special about it. In personal branding case, a person should look at his/her personality, competences and special traits that make him/her unique. For example for Siina, her biggest competitive advantage will be her persona and personality. Someone with excellent negotiating skills should hold that as his SCA. As well as someone with charismatic speaking skills should absolutely state that as his sustainable competitive advantage. These assets may not be directly infusing financial benefit but they benefit the brand equity which drives the brand to financial success.

3.3.5 Defining Equity

As mentioned before in equity introduction, equity assets are assets that can be linked to a brand even though most of the assets are intangible. Equity assets create value for both the company that owns the brand and for the customer. (Aaker 1996, 8.) For a personal brand point of view, equity assets are indeed intangible. A person's asset basis lies within their personality and their reputation. Equity assets such as quality of one's work, reputation that one holds and style heritage are attributes that might not yield financial gain but do aid success (or loss if not defined correctly). Along with brand identity, which is initially added as part of equity, brand equity should be established structurally and clearly. Defining intangible assets will give a clear base to refer to when change occurs or renewal of brand is necessary.

Equity assets are also changeable in themselves. Once a brand faces a inevitable decline, necessary actions should be taken. This means usually that equity assets are referred and assessed whether they still apply. In a case of a change usually it's the assets that need to be altered. For example, when a public speaker sees that his amount of seminars is decreasing, he should first define the problem and then see whether there's a need to change the definition of his intangible equity assets. If the reason is his quality of work, he should see if it's possible to promise premium quality of work if he's by best, mediocre. Maybe his reputation needs to be changed or if nobody seems to know his services exist, he should refer to his brand awareness factor. The point is that if there's a time of change, these equity assets are changeable and should be altered.

Brand equity is an important part of a brand and therefore an inevitable part of personal branding as well. Siina's equity assets will most likely be closely linked to her core vision because they support her brand's goal of becoming a notable business professional. Assets (and sometimes liabilities) are definitely an inevitable part of branding and even in personal branding; they give extra value for a person.

3.4 Measuring Personal Brands

In product branding context, brands and their success can be measured. In previous chapter, “measuring brands”, two brand success measure systems were mentioned: Young and Rubicam’s Brand Asset Valuator (Aaker 1996, 304-308.) and Harris Interactive’s EquiTrend. (Aaker 1996, 309-312.) Young and Rubicam’s Trend Asset Valuator assesses brand’s equity by dividing it in two main categories, brand’s vitality and stature. Vitality contains the brand’s relevance and differentiation points, stature esteem and knowledge. These points will be assessed by a questionnaire. (Aaker 1996, 306-307.) Results are gathered into a power grid, a figure showing how successful and known a brand is. (Aaker 1996, 309.) EquiTrend is a simpler and precise measuring system that assesses brand equity with specified questionnaire. Brands’ salience, perceived quality and user satisfaction will be evaluated. (Aaker 1996, 310.) The measurement system gives points with what the different brands will put into top to bottom order. (Aaker 1996, 310-311.) These measuring systems both have the same agenda; they rate brands according to their equity and define the top of brands. These measuring systems were created to serve product branding but the question raised here is whether there could be a similar system like this to serve personal branding.

Because people are by obvious reasons different from products, it is difficult to apply product brand measuring systems to people. For one, people are prone to change their minds. This means that the equity defined in the beginning of the branding process might change due to humane behaviour. It’s the basic humane quality of a person to change their minds. A person brand is a living, breathing object that can change its brand in a heartbeat. This makes it difficult to set exact measures that would define exactly the means of success. Some assets such as quality and awareness can be added as part of a human brand but to measure whether they are fulfilling their purpose, is basically the same as trying to define whether blue is a better colour than red.

Fame is by human standards considered as being successful. Musicians that have top chart hits are considered to “have made it”. Business icons, such as

Steve Jobs and Donald Trump have made millions with their ideas and have been covered in numerous of publications, both business publications and the so called yellow press. Socialites (such as heiresses that are known for their appearance in social events) are seen in media on a constant basis and have even made a name for them by creating franchise emporiums. These people have made a name for themselves, quite literally. So is it successful branding to get financial gain? Or could it be just the constant media exposure that guarantees a successful brand.

Normal people do not necessary measure their brand's success based on universal, cohesive set of guidelines. Product brand measuring systems such as EquiTrend are tried and tested measuring systems that have been researched thoroughly to create those universally applicable guidelines. As mentioned before, people are too fickle for these guidelines. What people are prone to do, is to set goals. Based on these goals a human being usually assesses whether he/she has been successful. These goals are mainly personal, although third parties such as organisations, families or outside help may have influence on these goals. For someone the goal may be to success at landing a record deal. He needs to build and expand his awareness factor and create a solid, differentiated core and extended identity so he can have a sustainable competitive advantage point. His ultimate success measure is therefore standing out from all competitors and landing that record deal. For a public speaker the goal may be to be known as a legendary pioneer in his field of business. He therefore needs to create a strong brand, expand awareness, and make sure his quality is at all times at a premium. He needs to create visibility and make sure people recognise and recall his services. His ultimate success measure is more long-term; differentiate him and create something that will he will be known for.

Although most personal branding measures are indeed personal, some similarities can be detected in whether a brand is successful or not. Generally, personal brands' strive for visibility. Tom Peters suggests all personal brands to start thinking about their visibility. "It all matters. When you're promoting brand You, everything you do - - and everything you choose not to do - - communicates choose the value and character of the brand."

(Peters 1997.) Whether it is Siina's brand that needs to be seen by potential employers, or a public speaker's who needs to reach potential target market, it's visibility that defines which brands flourish and which fade. For a personal brand to stay visible through time is a merit in itself. In a where fifteen minutes of fame is fairly common, staying visible needs a lot of effort. Outlasting even those fifteen minutes is an excellent start for a personal brand. Lasting years, decades even, is indeed truly respectable for a personal brand.

Another similar factor in successful personal branding is the brand's continuum. Mentioned in the last chapter, was that when a brand has continuous visibility, it is a good sign of successful branding. But visibility does not exist without the continuum factor. In the beginning of any type of branding, the people behind the brand plan the brand's lifetime. A brand is a living object which is prone to fluctuations especially when talking about popularity. The difference between a brand that lasts and a brand that doesn't is plan and action. A successful personal brand knows what to do and when. Lisa Sounio, the author of *Brändikäs*, a book discussing personal branding and design, describes successful personal brands as having some "Obama" in them. She exclaims that personal brands with continuous success have both clever planning and acting, such as Michelle Obama, who set herself on the same level with the common American people (by gardening on the White House lawn, very publicly) to help create hope and in that way save the American economy. (Sounio 2010, 44.) Supposing Siina would have done a great deal of networking and gotten useful contacts. She's been through a few job interviews but no-one has hired her yet. Here is where Siina should take action. Her brand's continuum is jeopardised by lack of, say, awareness. To ensure that her brand keeps up the stride she should assess the situation and plan recovery actions. When there is a risk at hand, a strong brand will ensure continuing success by acting good and acting fast. Fading success is easier to recover than lost success. A personal brand's continuum goes hand in hand with success.

A successful personal brand is also adaptable. Continuum and visibility are important factors when deciding whether a personal brand is successful or

not but it's the ability to adapt that will ensure that the brand will enjoy the continuum and visibility. A brand should never be set in stone; there should always be a possibility to adapt somewhere within the brand. Whether it's changing marketing, equity assets, attributes or the brand approach, there should be always room to change because a brand which faces a fading success has very little chance of surviving if the flexibility isn't there. Katleena Korteso, the author of *Brändää Itsesi*, another Finnish ground-breaking personal branding guidebook, states that a brand should never be set in stone. (Korteso 2011, 31.) Korteso claims that the important thing in adapting a personal brand is to realize the difference between changing and adapting. Adapting is when a personal brand changes appearance, shapes his/her interests or opinions or when his/her know-how develops. (Korteso 2011, 31.) Changing, which according to the author rarely happens, is when a personal brand changes careers or ideology. (Korteso 2011, 32.) Sometimes change is justified but most of the time, when a brand sees decline, it's adaptation that is needed and adapting is what will keep the brand succeeding.

Measuring personal brand success is not like measuring product brands. One could give personal brands points based on questions and put in top to bottom order, but the validity of that list would be compromised. It is basic humanity that makes creating definite branding measures impossible. But when creating a lasting, successful personal brand, one should think about how to make the brand visible, how to make it last and whether at some point there's a need for adaptation. A personal brand that succeeds in these three qualities will have a great success story in his hands.

3.5 Defining Siina's Brand



Figure 5 Siina's brand Entity

Siina's brand entity consists of her brand identity (both extended and core identity) her brand equity assets and her brand as whole. Her brand has been discussed throughout this thesis and this chapter will define her brand as a whole.

Her brand identity consists of her core identity and her extended identity. Siina's core identity includes her core vision to become a young business professional. This is the basis on which her brand will be built around. Her core values are reflections of her beliefs: she values reliability, loyalty, trustworthiness and she believes that part of being a young business professional is to be driven. These are also attributes that support her core vision because these are qualities that future employers often respect. Siina's core competences are her performance skills and her ability to be present in situations that need it. She also possesses leadership skills that are required when moving up in her career. Her strength is also her creativeness that comes from her interest in arts.

Siina's external identity consists of her appearance, her personality, her communication style (including both verbal and non-verbal) and her so called marketing means. Siina wants to be seen as a young professional so her appearance should reflect her goal: Looking the part will create respect. Her personality will be a big, visible part of her brand and her better qualities (confidence, openness, positive attitude etc.) will be displayed and her not-so-good qualities will be corrected or minimized. Her good communication skills, such as clear communication, her non-verbal communication (to enhance her verbal output) and her presence are assets need to be added as part of her extended identity. Siina's brand as a whole will also be a part of her external identity. Siina's marketing means, such as social media presence will be discussed more in her brand equity.

Siina's brand equity assets include her brand awareness, her brand loyalty, quality of her work and her competitive advantage. Siina's brand awareness will be created using social media outlet such as Facebook and LinkedIn which will be modified to suit her pursuit of being a young professional. A big part of awareness will also be her network, which she could enlarge by frequently visiting networking events. Her reputation will influence her perceived quality and her brand loyalty: Siina's network and her backers (referees) will contribute on how her work is seen by for example her future employers. Siina needs to create good reputation for herself and she needs to make sure that the quality of her work is excellent because that will be a determining factor on whether people will be loyal to her work. Siina's personal competitive advantage has a lot to do with her brand identity: Her persona will be her best advantage and will differentiate her from her competitors.

Siina's brand as a whole is still in its developing stages. Because she is just finishing school and starting her life as a young professional she has just begun working on her personal brand. Her basic attributes and assets are pretty much set but with a person, these adapt all the time. When she has been working for a while and fully established her professional status and her brand, only then will her brand be completely set. Because her brand is still

fairly new, it is still hard to measure whether it's successful or not. The success of her brand will come in time.

3.6 Who Owns a Personal Brand

A personal brand can mean different things to different people. The branding process varies very much according to the branded person: for someone it might be to gain fame, for some it could be just to clarify what he/she wants out of life. Differences are created when the branding process takes place and the party establishing the brand changes. Who owns a personal brand?

Take a man working in a renowned company. He's been working for them for years and has gained a reputable reputation as a decent employee. Over the years his brand has developed around his personal qualities as well as his status in his work. One day he quits his job and moves on with his life. Does he take his brand with him? Or was his personal brand so connected to his work that one might say it was not his to begin with? People in working life might face a brand stigma that is left even after they quit their jobs. Their personal brand was either created purposefully or by itself in the process when this person began working in his current placement. The brand framework basis was build around the job placement and it is fair to assume that this personal brand belongs to the company. These personal brands would measure their success according to organisational attributes such as financial gain or their networking portfolio. Their visions and values are closely connected to the organisation. These organisational personal brands are very common, when examining people with long history as an employee. Their personal brands are so closely connected to the organisation that no absolute truth can be stated about the ownership of their personal brands.

Regular people like Siina who are just normal, working people have no fame expectations. These people don't take on branding themselves to gain fame or to make money. Money though may be an objective but most likely normal people brand themselves towards a goal they have set. In Siina's case, her goal is to establish herself as a future business professional. So

what will happen when she establishes her brand and launches herself in business? She will most likely continue working in a pretty average position first, and then slowly move up on the corporate ladder once trust and effectiveness have been proven. She will eventually have saved the amount of average down payment on a house, bought one and settled down. She continues working, possible in different organisations and positions until she can retire. It does not sound rather exiting or ambitious but this cycle of life is daily life for millions of people. These people have created successful personal brands, not because they have an above average money flow but they are successful because they have most likely made right branding choices for themselves. They might have not done it knowingly (or perhaps they have), but they have in some point of their life made right personal branding decisions. Their brands belong to themselves and an assumption that they own their brands can safely be made.

Both private and public people can establish their own brand but a brand has to have a content to be wholesome. A brand should always be established on a firm ground in order to be successful. The basis needs to be based on truths for the person him-/herself to be able to believe in it. A personal brand based on a lie or on empty ground will have a very short lifespan. Take a politician whose values are based on traditional family values. He publicly supports family values, attends church every Sunday and appears to be a very wholesome and loving husband and father. Later it is revealed that he has been having an affair. In this sort of a case the brand was based on a shallow ground, a lie, and the person whose brand this was did not have the faith to keep it up. This person lacked belief in his brand and tried to lead a secret life in order to live the life he should have been living. The same applies for a brand that is not based on a lie, but is based on a shallow ground. There is no content behind the brand assumption. To have a brand with no value or a vision is the same as having a house with no groundwork: it will collapse.

False and shallow brands do not work; therefore a personal brand should always have a truthful base. One should believe what they are portraying in order for the brand to live. Strong and successful personal brands have a solid base in which they base their actions against. In a case of a private

person the ownership of his/her brand is seemingly clear, the brand belongs to its maker, but if this assumption is true, then the professional brand would belong to the organisation. A personal brand, as opposed to a product brand, is a product of its surroundings. The surrounding people and environment always adapt a person's mind-set and therefore also adapt their brand. Therefore, one can assume that a personal brand is created both by the owner and the environment.

4 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The thesis' research question rose from a very basic discovery: How can I be the best I can be. This led to another very simple discovery of how people could be constructed to be brands, just like products or services. Since the topic is fairly new, considering that branding products has been a big trend for a while now, there is a limited amount of knowledge about personal branding available. Branding people is just beginning to rise as a trend and signs of its development have been visible since the last few years. Branding people is believed to be the next "it" in the area of branding research.

Creating a personal brand is like building a house: The base needs to be stable in order to build walls and place a roof. The branding process will begin with setting up the basic values of the personal brand. These visions and values create the core brand and this is the basis which will guide the branding process. Siina's brand portfolio included also the extended identity which includes attributes such as her appearance, her brand attributes such as awareness, perceived quality and her competitive advantage. The brand should be based around her core vision. David Aaker's material was used as an important tool to establish personal branding basis. Siina's brand was established with the help of very traditional product branding tools because they have been well researched already. The modification of product branding tools to personal branding tools was conducted by the thesis author.

The brand of Siina was established with the assumption that it would serve its purpose of helping her to become a business professional. The assumption contains the fact that Siina might either succeed or fail. Measuring product brands can be done using success measuring systems such as EquiTrend, but for personal brands, that sort of measuring system has not been established yet. Most of the time, success is measured with the brand's vision in mind. Measuring personal brands though, is trickier because the success means different to different people. Some people measure their success according to fame they receive; some prefer to measure theirs by the financial gain they receive. The threshold differs according to the answer.

Even though the absolute measure isn't the same with everybody, some similarities can be detected in lasting successful personal brands. These brands are continuous, adaptable and visible.

David Aaker's theories were an essential part of creating personal brand framework. These theories have, in their own way, pioneered in the field of branding. They are slightly dated, since the first books were published late eighties to nineties, but they are still very cohesive in their way of presenting branding theories. David Aaker's books have also been used as school study material, which is in a way, is a sign of reliability. These product branding theories served a vital background for the personal branding process. Aaker's theories are mostly serving product branding but the thesis discovered ways to implement it also to personal branding, which proved to be fruitful in the context of personal branding research. Adapting product branding tools to personal branding demands precision and imagination, but is completely possible.

All in all, the branding of a person can be as similar as branding a product. Using the intangible material such as personality, skills and charisma will build up a cohesive brand base which will help. This thesis main research questions were how to create personal brands and can they be measured. No absolute truth was found about whether personal brands can be measured but a personal branding basic framework was illustrated. Measuring personal brands is more complex than traditional product brands but some similarities were found. Successful personal brands don't necessary rely on points and graphs; their success is measured by resonating against the core vision of the brand. Success comes through the brand not through guidelines.

5 DISCUSSION

The subject of the thesis, branding people, is an interesting subject to research. Product branding has been a clear trend in business for some years now; therefore switching the focus from products to people has been evident. People branding could be cast in the same category with product branding but the basic assumption is different. When branding a product, one is always looking after financial profit whereas with people, the aim is usually intangible. This assumption makes people branding slightly more challenging than traditional product branding. The associations of a personal brand, the ownership of it and what a personal brand really is, are the topics of relentless discussion.

The thesis was conducted using David A. Aaker's material that is widely used in both private and public use. The material, including books *Brand Leadership* and *Building Strong Brands*, is known within marketing people and are also used in schools. Aaker has become known as some sort of pioneer when it comes to branding and therefore this thesis was based on his material. The only problem that rises with the use of this material is that it is slightly dated. The book *Building Strong Brands* was written in 1996 and some may argue that it is too old to be used in such thesis. There is indeed newer researches done by relevant branding focused authors, but because this thesis wanted to build a profound basis for personal branding, Aaker's books were used.

This thesis was conducted as a research that used mainly written material as a basis for the establishment a brand base. The material, Aaker's books, was used as a base for the modification process of personal branding framework. The branding subject, who was the thesis author herself, was used merely to make the thesis as accurate as possible. The basic idea of the thesis was to establish a brand base and Siina's case was used to go as deep as possible into the process. To use the author herself allowed the branding process to actually help the author as well as getting the information necessary to really establish her brand. Because this research was so close, the validity could

be compromised though. The next step could be to conduct interviews of other people to test the brand framework's validity.

A personal brand concept itself creates an array of questions. What is a personal brand? Is it your persona or just your knowhow? How is the brand created? Who owns it? To answer all these questions, one should refer to as far as philosophy. In the thesis process these questions were contemplated but the evident solution was that these questions have no definite answer. Because one is branding a human-being, with humane qualities, the answers to these questions would be as many as there are people answering them.

A personal branding process is always very personal and this is why the subject was very intriguing. No additional interviews or assisting methods of research was used because as well as being a thesis project, this was a project of self-discovery. The thesis schedule was very tight, due to the author also working full-time and as usual, life got on the way most of the time. But this thesis' idea is something that could also be developed further. The process of branding oneself is something that everyone should do. Especially important it was to the author, because this thesis is what made her decide on what she wants to do with her brand in the future. The thesis might not be the "best of the best", but with the process it gave a good starting point for a blossoming career.

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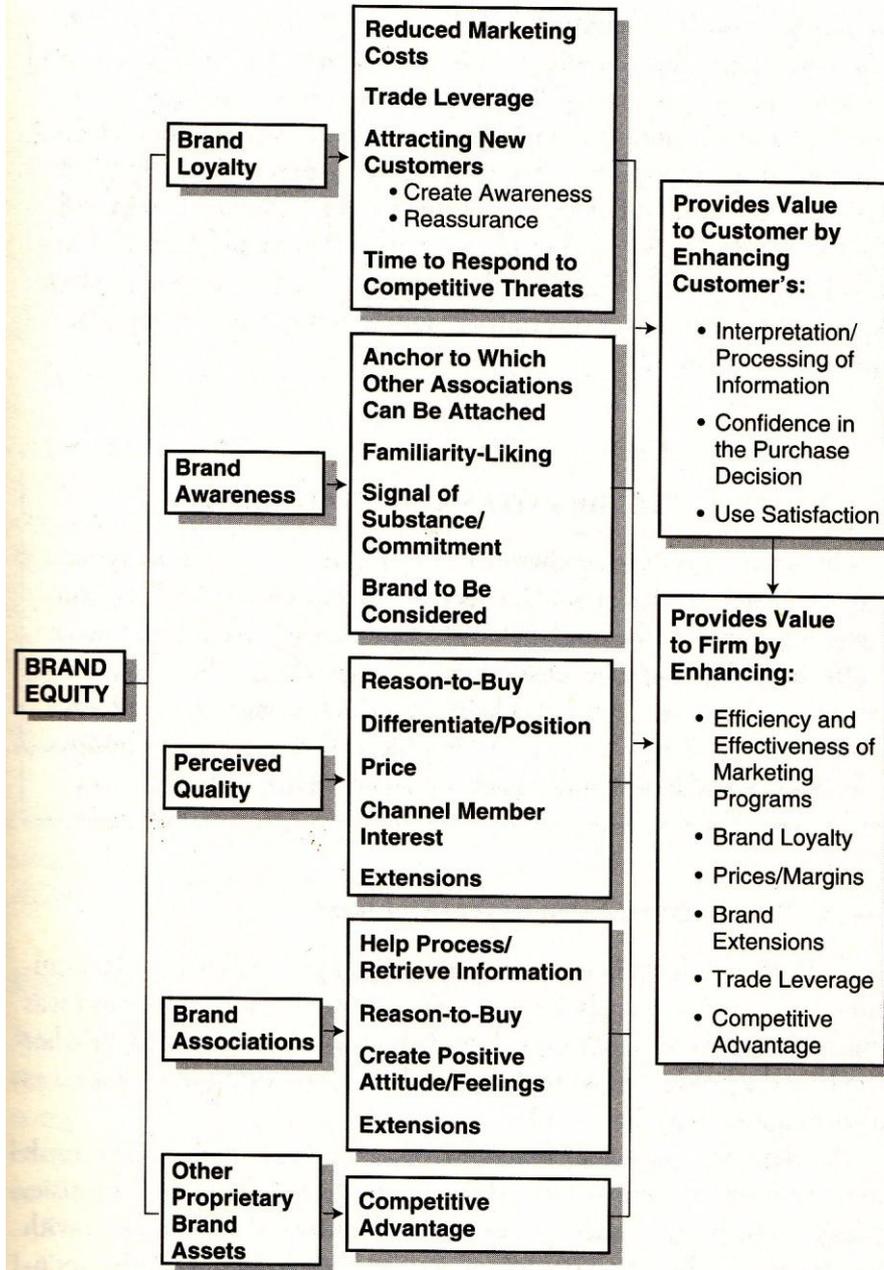
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APPENDICES

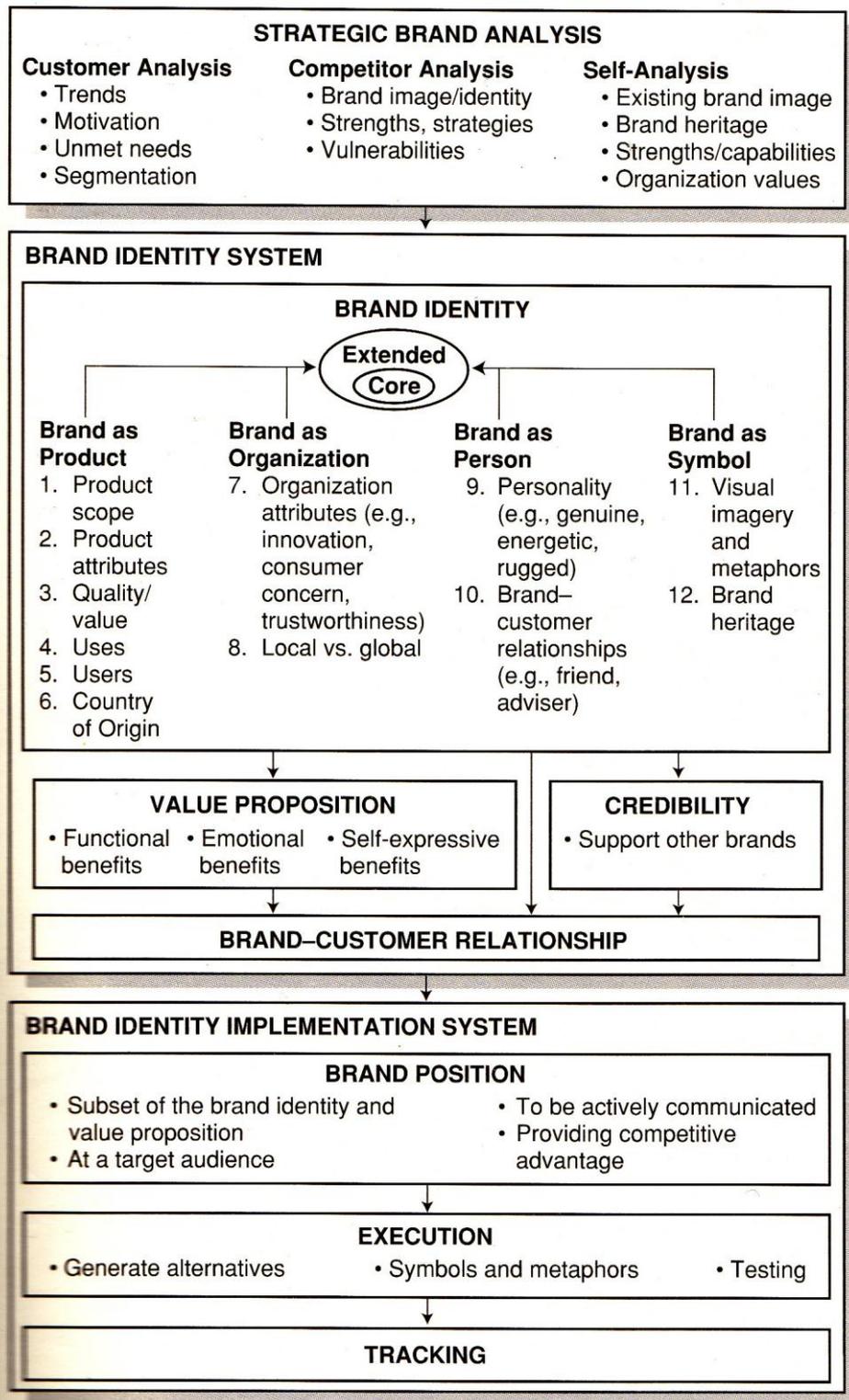
Appendix 1 “How brand Equity Generates Value”

FIGURE 1-3
How Brand Equity Generates Value



(Aaker 1996, 9)

Appendix 2 “Brand Identity Planning Model”



(Aaker 1996, 79)