

CREATING A SELLING BRAND IDENTITY

Case Mëtsa Glasses / Christian Anttonen



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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the thesis is to contemplate how brand management tools and theories can be used when creating a brand identity for a startup company, thus it is written from the startup company's point of view.

This thesis is a combination of theory and practice and it is made in collaboration with a French startup company called Mëtsa Glasses. The first part focuses on a theoretical aspect of branding and it gives insights, brand management tools and analysis methods providing four theoretical concepts for brand management on which the thesis' practical part is based on.

The first three chapters introduces the thesis' theoretical

framework and basic knowledge of brands and branding using real brands as examples. The theoretical framework consists of a wide range of books, online sources and studies. The last chapter will introduce the startup company to whom the practical part is made for. It also explains the process of creating a brand identity and its phases.

The thesis is topical as the number of startup companies are constantly growing. Branding will give additional values for a company which helps the startup not only to lure investors to invest but also stand out from competitors. The thesis will introduce how to create a brand identity for a startup company and how to manage the process.

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PREFACE

The thesis is a combination of two parts, theoretical and production. The first part focuses on a theoretical aspect of branding and it gives insights, brand management tools and analysis methods providing four theoretical concepts for brand management. The main focus in this thesis is to provide an answer to **“how to use brand management tools and theories for creating a strong brand identity for a startup company?”**. To verify the thesis statement hypothesis, the second part the study explores a real life brand management project for a French

startup company, based on the insights and brand management tools that are presented in the first part of the thesis. The bridge between these two entities is the contextual coherence - the practical part is based on the same framework that is built during chapters two and three and the theoretical angle of incidence is based also on that framework.

The second part of the thesis introduces more precisely the startup company on which the thesis' practical work is built on. The ultimate goal was to create a strong and distinguishable brand

identity for Mëtsa Glasses (Mëtsa) so the startup could attract more investors to invest and thus help them to expand and growth. This is the reason for the title of this study: *Creating a Selling Brand Identity – Case Mëtsa Glasses*. A well defined brand identity will also offer to Mëtsa a better chance to grow awareness and get the correct association when the communication is consistent with the brand identity.

The statement of the thesis is relevant especially now because in the world of startups brand management is often brushed aside. This might be because it is not always clear how brand management will affect on a company's revenues and financial value - brand management does not necessarily provide any measurable data or revenues in the near future. This study will introduce some insights and real life examples on how an effectively

done brand management will help to increase brand awareness and get a position in the market. However, the brands that are used as examples are not introduced further, because all of them are globally known. Using real brands as examples not only support the content but also will give texture and deeper understanding of the conception for the reader.

However, the thesis does not include any communication, advertising, marketing or semiotic aspects or theories. It focuses on the creation part - not brand maintaining. Still, in some cases those aspects might still occur, because they are all very closely tied to brand management.

The thesis work is based on literature and the author's work experience in advertising and branding. External sources are cited. Otherwise, the statements are based on the author's own insights and opinions around the topic.



IMAGE 1

According to Brand Finance, LEGO was the world's most powerful brand in 2015. Its key message has continually been uprising the imagination.

CHAPTER 2

BUILDING A POWERFUL BRAND

This chapter introduces the fascinating world of branding. The chapter introduces three basic concepts around the topic and how to manage building a brand image.

Because the word “brand” is an unlimited concept, it can be viewed from many different angles. The chapter introduces the word from three different angles: brand as an identity, brand as an image and brand as a personality. It is important to understand that the term brand is an ambiguous word and thus can not be explained exhaustively.

The chapter also gives a brief understanding of the history of branding. It is important to know the basic facts of brand history because it helps us to understand why some companies and brands have such a big impact even today (like LEGO in IMAGE 1) even if the company behind the brand does not exist anymore or if the brand is brought back after years. After this chapter, the reader will internalize the basics of branding and get insights on how multi-dimensional project is a brand management process.

2.1

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF MODERN BRANDING

The word “brand” comes from the Old Norse “*brandr*” which means “to burn”. In those days and later on, man stamped his “mark of the ownership” on his livestock. That way others could distinguish between the cattle of one farmer and another. Thus, the utility of brands as a guide to choice was established.¹ Even today the basic meaning of brand is the same; to show ownership, help purchasing decisions and stand out among the competitors. It was, unfortunately, not only livestock that got branded. Alas, also humans were marked. Slaves were indelibly

branded to mark ownerships and during World War II the victims of Nazi persecution were marked with numbers in concentration camps.² As Wally Olins states: “*Visual identity is a part of the deeper identity of the group, the outward sign of inward commitment, serving to remind it of its real purpose.*”³ Even though in this case the visual identification was not an optional choice, it was still a sign of being a part of a specific group.

The earliest visual form of brands were symbols, what were used in mass production of clay pots around the Mediterranean

region, especially in the ancient civilizations of Etruria, Greece, and Rome. For identifying one’s own pots, the potter put his own mark (thumbprint or mark like a fish or star) on the bottom of the pot.⁴

Before the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865) goods were sold by weight from barrels and open containers. These products were unlabeled so the consumers did not know the “brand” they were buying. Little by little, the people started buying from packages, which were labeled, in other words, branded. The success of selling goods from a package was also influenced by advertising its “name”. This established identification of a name as a “*brand name*”.⁵ Branding was also “invented” in China, where branding was used similarly as it is used now. Their high knowledge and interest in paintings (known as printing technology) allowed the Chinese to create these early forms of brand identification and advertising asset.⁶

During the late 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century, branding became a modern phenomenon as USA prospered and industrial growth was great. It allowed mass production and mass communication to consumers. Many strongest brands, such as Coca-Cola, Kodak, American Express and Heinz were created during this period. Trademark legislation, which allowed companies to protect their brands by law was introduced at that time. The first registered trademark was Bass’ “Red Triangle” in the United Kingdom in 1876.⁷ However, in 1950’s the number of brands grew fast when consumers had more money to spend and there was a wide selection of different brands in the same product category to choose from. A growing amount of entrepreneurs and the power of Madison Avenue, the “Mad Men” era was born. During that period

of time, most of the current iconic brands were born, such as Dunkin' Donuts, Denny's, Pizza Hut and Holiday Inn.⁸ The 50's and 60's were a golden age for branding and advertising. The quality between similar products by different companies was becoming more standardized, and because of that the products needed to get branding done more efficiently for standing out among the competitors.

Digital technology started a revolution in branding and marketing. As television changes the way of communications in the 1950's, the internet introduced a completely new playground providing an infinitely different communications channels for brands and advertisers for competing about a consumer's attention. In the old days, the perceiver was a passive receiver of advertisement. The main mediums were television, radio,

and print, which all contain their own limitations. The internet is changing all the time offering limitless possibilities. The relationship between the brands and consumers has, therefore, changed. Now all the brands and their products are just a click away. The brands are once again content creators, as they were back in the early days of broadcasting when for example, General Foods created "The Jack Benny Show" to sell Jell-O (a gelatin based dessert).

The main difference is that in the old days brands' messages were conveyed through third party networks, but today brands can become their own distribution network for consumer content and, thus, communicate dynamically with their consumers.⁹ A good example is a Grand Prix awarded online and television campaign by Wieden+Kennedy, "Man Your Man Could Smell Like" (see IMAGE 2) for Procter & Gamble's (also



IMAGE 2

"Smell Like a Man, Man" or better known as "Man Your Man Could Smell Like" campaign was a viral hit, become the #1 most viewed sponsored YouTube channel.

known as P&G) male body wash and deodorant brand Old Spice.¹⁰ They branded Old Spice as a "real men's" product which does not want to smell like a lady-scented brand and thus stands out from its product class where a body wash by Unilever's Dove Men+Care was their biggest rival. Old Spice

created content for the social media and because the campaign talked back with its audience via the social media networks, it ended up as a marketing phenomenon that wedged the character of Old Spice passing 35 million views in one week and increasing Old Spice's brand awareness globally.¹¹

2.2

DEFINITION OF BRAND

As it was stated in the previous chapter, the brands have been among us for decades even though they have developed and grown into a more versatile notion. From the beginning, brands were separating similar products from different producers as American Marketing Association (AMA) defines “A brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.”¹² Brands without any kind of awareness are usually not considered as a brand by practicing

managers even though AMA’s view is that everything “made” is a brand/product. Brand is an essential immaterial and therefore, without awareness, there is no knowledge among the consumers and consequently the brand does not contain any financial value. **From an economic perspective, a well-known brand sells more because the consumer does not need to use as much effort to create a purchase decision.**¹³

Brand is not the same thing as a corporation. Therefore, when we are talking about brands, we are

Brand. 1. n. Piece of burning or smouldering wood, torch, (literary); sword (poet.); iron stamp used red-hot to leave an indelible mark, mark left by it, stigma, trade-mark, particular kind of goods (all of the best bb.). 2. v.t. Stamp (mark, object, skin), with b., impress indelibly (is branded on my memory)

The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1934)

Brand (noun): a trade mark, goods of a particular make: a mark of identification made with a hot iron, the iron used for this: a piece of burning or charred wood, (verb): to mark with a hot iron, or to label with a trade mark.

The Oxford American Dictionary (1980)

not talking about the companies behind them. **The brand in its purest form is a concrete idea of the marketing man's imagination - a figment of what represents the whole vision.** The consumers may react and interact with the brand, but the brand does not interact by itself: it is manipulated by its company. Theoretically, the line between those two things is that brand is concocted only for selling purposes whereas a corporation is the actual company owning it. Brands are characters played by the companies and they are aimed directly at consumers. Corporate identity is a multidimensional concept and acts as a guideline on how the company reflects its values in communication for both internal and external mediums.¹⁴

Usually, startups do not have a separate corporate identity and brand identity because the company is often carrying the same name as its product. For example,

Mëtsa's eyewear are all branded as "Mëtsa", even though the products are named also individually. The consumers will learn the brand via its products, not the other way around as it is in Freedom of Animals case which is introduced later on this chapter.

According to Jean-Noël Kapferer, the term "brand" can be divided into two schisms, brand as a customer-based relationship and brand as a conditional asset, even though they are still affecting each other. Without emotional bond, the brand does not have financial value. He describes the term citing Keller "*a brand is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service*". He also states, that these associations should be unique, strong and positive.¹⁵ Kapferer provides some valuable insights and concepts for brand management, which this thesis' practical part is used when

creating a brand identity for thesis' case startup company. Kapferer's visions are giving some texture and deeper meanings for Mëtsa's brand identity.

An interesting substitute or more likely a continuation for a brand is a concept called, "lovemark". It was first introduced by Kevin Roberts, CEO of the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, in his book "*Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands*". The theory behind the lovemarks is based on a simple presumption: human beings are powered by emotion, not by reason.¹⁶ The brand needs to be not only respected but also build a loving relationship with its consumers.¹⁷

In this thesis, the term "brand" is a combination of "*brand identity*", "*brand image*" and "*brand personality*" and, therefore, the term is not used often as such. Brand is a complex concept and it used as such it might not

provide an unambiguous idea of the context. In order to avoid misunderstanding, this thesis uses terms brand identity when describing a content around building an identity, brand personality when describing the themes around personalities and brand image, when speaking of the assets that are affecting on how the consumers associate with the meaning of brand.

As stated before, because brand is an unlimited concept, this thesis will not process and introduce all the concepts and aspects. It will introduce only those notions and concepts that are used during the thesis' practical part and which are often used in a brand design process. Because brand is a perceived immaterial thing, the brand creating process during the thesis' practical part will focus both on visual and theoretical part which, when combined, will create a brand for Mëtsa.

BUILDING A BRAND IDENTITY

Brand identity is literally a personal identity of the brand. It is how the brand is projecting itself to its audience and relieving its values. Each brand should have its own personal identity, even though they are represented by the same company. Identity should be a meaningful and valuable resource and, therefore, also as truthful and transparent as possible. The audience will always, sooner or later, discover a fraud as it did back in 2001 when Enron Corporation (a former energy corporation from Houston, Texas) got caught from lying about its financial background

and thus got its infamous title of “biggest audit failure”.¹⁸

It is important to see the difference between brand identity and brand image. We can assume, that the ultimate goal for brand managers would be to make the two entities, namely image and identity, as one. **When the image represents the same values as the identity does, then the marketing team knows that branding is done efficiently and correctly.** However, good communication strategy do not work if the acts does not support its main messages. When everything is just a click away,

the consumers are now more than ever before aware of what is happening around them and not be easily fooled by a misleading advertisement.

For creating a truly unique brand identity, the marketing team should focus on unique selling points, something that only a specific company can offer to its targeted audience (if it is even possible in the first place). According to Jean-Marie Floch, the identity should have three main components for standing out among the competitors: *configuration*, *taxic* and *functional components*.¹⁹ Configuration component is the product itself. How the product is manufactured and what kind of material is used. Taxic component helps the product to stand out among other similar products - what are the traits that make this product truly unique? Functional component describes how the product is used, what

is its functionality and what the consumer might do with it. In Mëtsa case, the configuration component is the handmade wooden frames, which are made of specific types of wood. Taxic component is especially crucial because Mëtsa is not the only startup company who does wooden eyewear. So what makes their products unique? It is their background story, French fashion world meets the Nordic atmosphere. It is a different and unordinary approach and helps them to sell their products in France where Scandinavian design is glorified for its modernity and minimalistic design lines. Taxic component is partly the design process itself, there are only a couple of persons who actually design Mëtsa’s collections, and partly because Mëtsa is using also acetate in their prescription glasses. Functional component is simple in this case - to protect the wearer’s eyes from the sunlight

and correct the eyesight. It is also a fashion statement and is worn as an accessory.

It takes not only strategic but also a tactical point of view for building a strong brand. In branding, history books will not help much, because nowadays the same tricks might not work like they did once. It is not only creating a brand identity; it is also living according to it. And as with all living things, it should change and grow up as time passes without losing its core personality. If the brand identity is not fully planned and written out at the beginning, it will not guide communication successfully and coherently via different mediums.²⁰

For a meaningful brand identity, David Aaker suggests that the companies should consider brand as a product, an organization, a person and as a symbol. These four perspectives will help to clarify the identity. However, not all of the perspectives should be

used if it is not necessary or there is no additional value. More details mean more clarity and it might be a great help making brand-related decisions in the future. That is why brands should be aware of all the undefined perspectives even though they are not fully relative. It is still a helpful resource for creating a desired association for consumers.²¹ This theory is explained more in chapter 3.2.

Usually, companies have a brand book which is a well-described document of giving guidelines for a company. **A brand book is a valuable asset for a company because by following the guidance what is provided in it, the company can manage their brand identity precisely and uniformly regardless of used medium.** The thesis does not provide Mëtsa's brand book, but it will be introducing the main content of it and the reasons behind the design choices.



CREATING A BRAND PERSONALITY

Brand personality is fully comparable to person's personality. Perceived personality affects association directly and how the person is known. A well-known and strong personality helps to explain choices, point of views and acts using human-centered attributes and adjectives.

Brand personalities can also be defined as the set of human characteristics with a given brand.²² For example, some brands might have more feminine images than other ones (Coca-Cola light vs. Coca-Cola Zero). Consumers

purchase brands because it is a way to express their personalities and values. Some brands also stir up emotions, for example, nostalgic feelings, which are related to the product (Kodak and Polaroid). Those feelings and associations from the past can be a part of self-expression and a strong brand personality may even change the usage habits.²³ Brand can also be a (fashion) statement. Especially clothes are usually selected carefully because they express the wearer's own social identity that other people constantly evaluate.



Metsa's consumers will more likely purchase their products if they could relate to Metsa's personality, what it is delivering through its advertising, visual identity, and products.

Brand personality has two aspects, sender's and receiver's. Sender's aspect is the brand personality what is perceived within the company and its employees. Sender has also an ideal image of desired brand personality, in which they want to be associated with. The other aspect, the receiver's, is perceived by external parties (like consumers) and also what is the desired brand personality by the consumers. Usually consumers see the brand personality differently than it was designed, because the perception of brand personality is a subjective process – everyone experiences it differently and thus has their own personal point of view.²⁴ For example, Metsa has its own concept of its ideal brand

personality, but the consumer may not recognize it as it was designed.

David Aaker introduces in his book *Building Strong Brands* the Brand Personality Scale (BPS) (see FIGURE 1) which is a set of traits designed to both measure and structure brand personality. The BPS is a result of a study with a conclusion that “Big Five” (termed from five personality factors) can explain almost all of the observable differences between brands. Those five personalities are *sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness*.²⁵ Brand personality is not to be confused with brand values, such as the brand meanings in memory that consumers consider valuable and that play an important role in the choice of between different brands in the same product category.²⁶

So how to build a personality for a brand? There are many product attributes that are often affecting a brand's personality,

BRAND PERSONALITY SCALE

The Big Five

SINCERITY

Down-To-Earth *family oriented, small-town, conventional, blue-collar, all-American*

Honest *sincere, real, ethical, thoughtful, caring*

Wholesome *original, genuine, ageless, classic, old-fashioned*

Cheerful *sentimental, friendly, warm, happy*

EXCITEMENT

Daring *trendy, exciting, off-beat, flashy, provocative*

Spirited *cool, young, lively, outgoing, adventurous*

Imaginative *unique, humorous, surprising, artistic, fun*

Up-To-Date *independent, contemporary, innovative, aggressive*

COMPETENCE

Reliable *hardworking, secure, efficient, trustworthy, careful*

Intelligent *technical, corporate, serious*

Successful *leader, confident, influential*

SOPHISTICATION

Upper Class *glamorous, good-looking, pretentious, sophisticated*

Charming *feminine, smooth, sexy, gentle*

RUGGEDNESS

Outdoorsy *masculine, Western, active, athletic*

Tough *rugged, strong, no-nonsense*

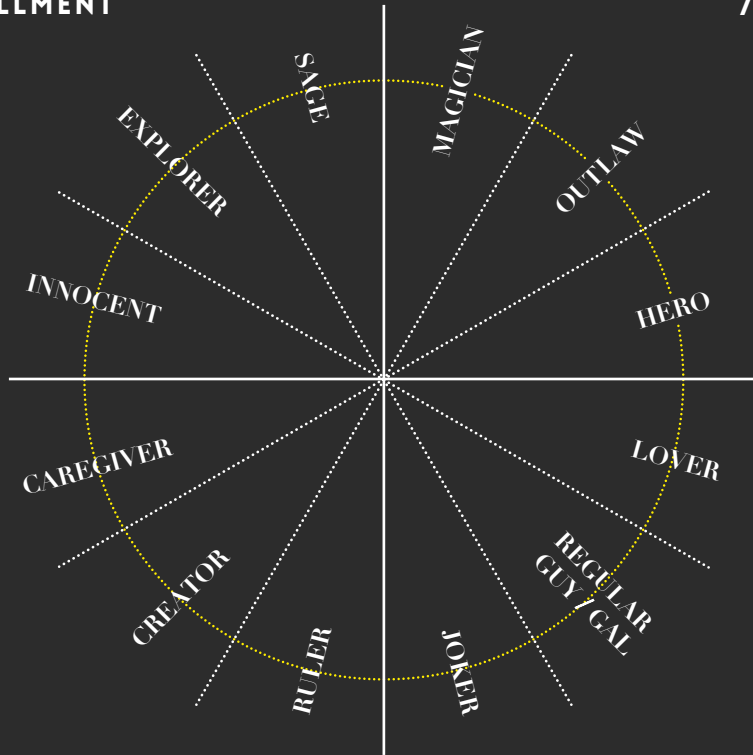
FIGURE 1

Brand Personality Scale, also known as “the Big Five” by David Aaker

BRAND ARCHETYPES

INDEPENDENCE AND
FULFILLMENT

MASTERY
/ RISK



CONTROL /
STABILITY

BELONGING AND
ENJOYMENT

FIGURE 2

Brand archetypes are widely usable, since all of them are presented more or less similarly in every culture around the world.

some of them are product related and some are not. Product-related characteristics as price (Rolex) and product category (jewelry) define brand image without further knowledge of the brand. For example, British mobile phone manufacturer Vertu is a high-priced brand when compared with other mobile phone manufacturers and it is then easily associated as a luxury, sophisticated and even as an elitist brand. Non-product-related characteristics as brand's age (Coca-Cola), its CEO (Steve Jobs of Apple) and advertisement style (Dove) might affect strictly how the brand and its products are associated. User imagery is affecting also how others see the brand. There are two types of users: the typical users (the ones who use the product) and idealized users (the ones used on advertising). Especially the first user group is an effective way to build brand awareness and perceptions,

because the brand has then a physical appearance that the user can be combined with.²⁷ That is why Mëtsa's advertising approach is to use typical users as idealized users – people who actually might wear and purchase their products.

One way to inspect the brand personality is through brand archetypes. Margaret Mark and Carol Pearson developed a brand archetypes system which consists of twelve different types: *creator, caregiver, ruler, jester, regular guy/gal, lover, hero, outlaw, magician, innocent, explorer and sage* (see FIGURE 2).²⁸ Mëtsa's archetype is a creator, because the startup is trying to express their own vision and create a new culture by combining French and Nordic worlds. Mëtsa is innovative, curious and focusing to produce quality eyewear using available fine raw materials. With these values, Mëtsa can express their visions according to their core brand identity.

DEVELOPING A BRAND IMAGE

Image means personality. Products have personalities which branding can make (or break) in the market place. There are many individual details which make the overall image for the audience. That image is called as a brand image. Those affecting substances can, for example, be the name of the product, its packaging, price group, advertising style and above all, the nature of the product itself. As David Ogilvy stated in his book *Ogilvy on Advertising*: “The brand image is 90 per cent of what the distiller has to sell”.²⁹ By that he

means that the audience does not buy a bottle of whiskey because of its taste – it is the image, the product’s personality, that is behind the purchasing decision. This is especially important for a startup company like Mētsa. Positive brand image is necessary and it helps to establish brand awareness among the audience. Using the social media as a main communication medium, it is not only a cost-effective advertising channel, but it also helps the company to reach international markets and audience without a



IMAGE 3

Campari is known by its vibrant red colour and their brand's pleasurable and passionate image.

physical presence like resellers or own flagship stores, which would need high investments.

Brand image is built mostly with associations, which are based through repeated exposure for brand recognitions or recalls.³⁰ To create opportunities for being exposed to, a brand should be available and seen. Mëtsa has collaborated with local resellers in France creating happenings and casual easy-going events where their products were easily seen, but not in the spotlights to avoid over marketing. This way Mëtsa's brand got positive associations and a great brand experience for the attendees.

For developing a brand image, it is necessary to keep a clear coherence between the advertising and its brand's image. The advertisements should always help to build a desired brand image.³¹ Delivering the same key message (based on its brand identity), over and over again through the

mediums, the perceiver might catch and understand the message and achieve deeper acknowledgment of the brand. There are no clear solutions how a brand image should be built because there are no studies to give an answer for that question, the strategy should be based on one's own judgment instead.³² Also, the audience might get confused if the communication is always different and there is a lack of coherence with the brands core identity. For example, Mëtsa uses the same imagery, atmosphere, color palette, typography and alignment in their brand assets. That way the perceiver will get a similar visual imagery no matter how many different ads the perceiver has been exposed to. Because a brand image is not shaped overnight, the results are not available or measurable easily. It is shaped via advertising (see the IMAGE 3), word of mouth and one's own relationship with the brand.³³

CHAPTER 3

BRAND MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND ANALYSIS METHODS

This chapter outlines four theoretical brand management tools and methods for analyzing brands. These concepts are widely used in brand designing process and thus introduced in this thesis. All the introduced methods are used also in this thesis' practical part when creating a brand identity for Mëtsa.

Even though branding is not a new marketing area, it is still more or less based on same methods and theories what were introduced for the first-time decades ago such Kapferer's brand identity prism.

This is why this thesis is using source material from each decade: the content is not outdated even though if it was introduced ages ago. Usually, the theories get new perspectives during the time, keeping the core as same.

With these tools and methods anyone can start working with a new brand identity. Especially for a technically oriented startup company is good to think values and core message even though the selling product or service does not have a physical form such as application for smartphones.

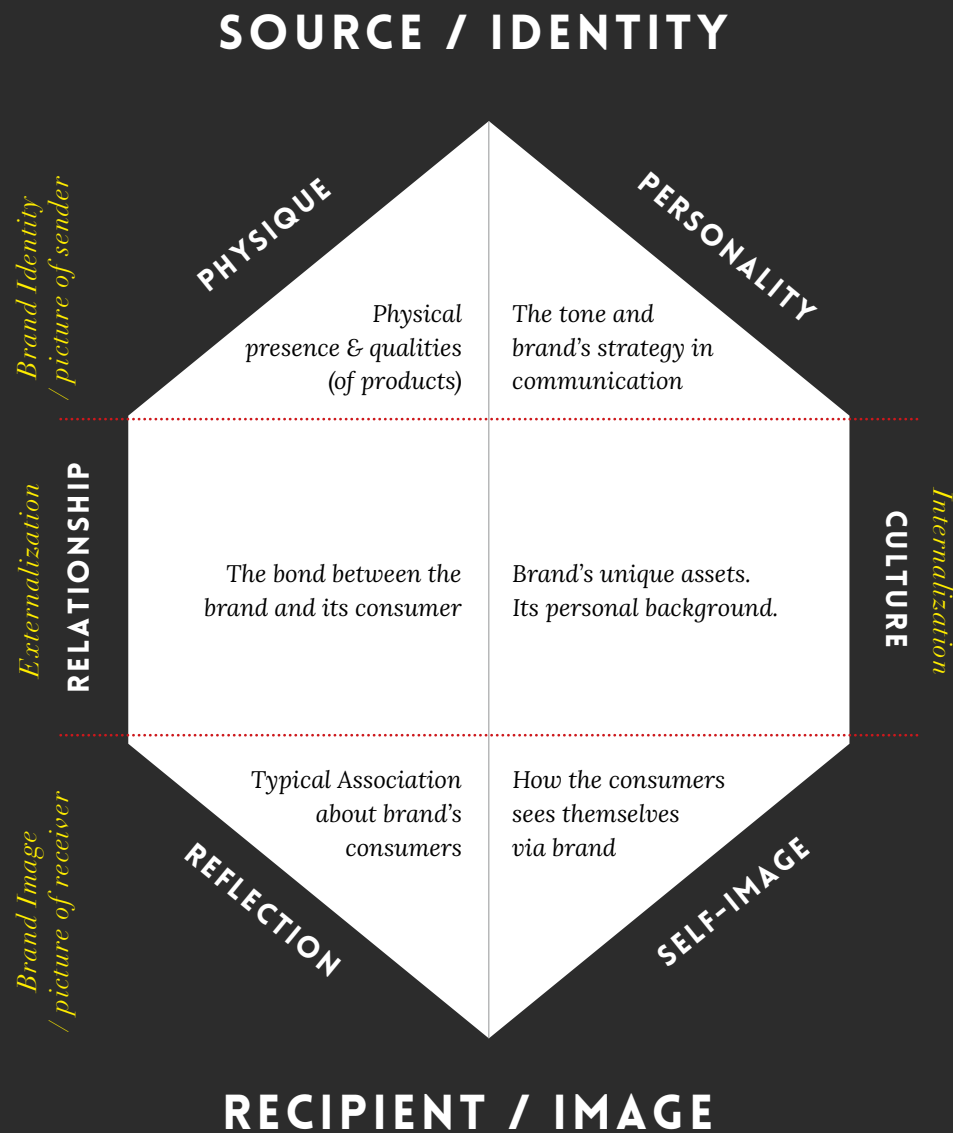


FIGURE 3

Kapferer's brand identity prism model.

3.1

THE BRAND IDENTITY PRISM OF KAPFERER

Joel-Noël Kapferer identifies six “facets” of brand identity in his brand identity prism model, which is based on a communication theory. The brands are not only representing their products but also communicating through them. Brands are perceived as sources of products, services, and satisfactions. These six facets are *physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection* and *self-image* which are divided into two entities; the picture of the sender (brand identity) against the picture of the recipient (brand image) and externalization against

internalization (see the FIGURE 3).³⁴ The brand identity prism is a great brand management tool for a startup, because it helps brand managers to view their brands interdimensionally by using these six facets. It helps, for example, creating a texture and deeper meaning for Mëtsa when all the facets and aspects are considered during the brand design process.

First entity, the picture of sender (constructed source), is based on a brand's physical and personality facets and the latter one (constructed receiver) is based on a brand's reflection and self-image

facets. Defining a brand's physique and personality, the brand can be characterized. The opposite of the picture of the sender is the picture of recipient, which is a combination of brand's externalization (physique, relationship and reflection facets) and internalization (personality, culture and self-image facets). A brand has social aspects that define its external expression and aspects that are incorporated into the brand itself. The brand identity is strong, clear and appealing when all the facets are communicating with the consumer.³⁵

The first facet, physique, tells what the brand does concretely, what its presence is like and what qualities it has. In other words, what the consumers will associate first when the name of the brand is mentioned. According to Kapferer, is important a brand's physique is the first step to take when developing a brand identity.³⁶ Mëtsa has a clear definition of its

physical facet and thus can be easily associated as a manufacturer and a designer of a wooden eyewear if the consumer has been exposed with the brand before. The personality facet tells how the characterized version of the brand is communicating and behaving with its audience. By using a certain way of speaking, writing and by always using the same specific design features (like color themes and jingles), a brand can literally set its characters alive. Unique selling personalities have a great value in advertising. The advertisement of Cate Blanchett for Giorgio Armani's fragrance Si or Charlize Theron for Christian Dior's fragrance J'adore (see IMAGE 4) are good examples. In these advertisements, the fragrance represents its brand's physique and personality facets, creating a powerful brand identity for the product. However, the character can be also unreal, like Tony the Tiger in Kellogg's Frosted



IMAGE 4

Charlize Theron for Dior's J'adore fragrance.

Flakes or “the Man in the Hathaway”.

Brand culture is a set of values, which are represented via its products and way of communication.³⁷ Culture separates similar brands from one another (G-Star RAW vs. Diesel). A brand can, for example, be the country of origin like Armani represents Italian fashion world, Bang & Olufsen introduces innovative and functionalistic design of Denmark and Mini Cooper express London’s urban heritage. Mëtsa’s culture is interesting since the brand itself is a French, but the design values that it represents are based on Nordic principles. Both aspects contain strong associations. France as a country of high-end fashion and Nordic design represents simplicity and minimalistic design approach. Mëtsa’s culture is unique and thus it should be shown and preserved in their brand’s future development.

The relationship facet represents direct communication

between the brand and its consumers. Especially services from human to human interactions are based on relationships with the consumers.³⁸ Who would not use the same hairdresser again if the previous appointment went perfectly? The reflection facet on the other hand is how people associate the relationship between the brand and its consumer. It can often be a stereotype, an assumption of a brand’s typical user such as BMW drivers behaving rudely in traffic or a man who is wearing Hugo Boss suit has succeeded in his career. The Brand needs to know the real customer reflection or otherwise it might affect negatively to brand image.³⁹ A good example of controlling customer reflection was in 2011 when a teen apparel retailer Abercrombie & Fitch Co. offered to pay Michael Sorrentino not wear their label in MTV reality show called Jersey Shore.⁴⁰ Simply, the

brand did not want to be associated as a “choice of a jerk” when Sorrentino, also well-known by his infamous character name from the Jersey Shore, “The Situation”, used their brand widely in public while behaving inappropriately.

The last facet is the self-image. It represents how the consumers see themselves through the brand. Kapferer is using Lacoste as an example. He states that according to studies, Lacoste consumers inwardly see themselves as a member of a sports club – even if they do not actively attend to any sports activity.⁴¹ For example, the consumers may buy a sweater by Ralph Lauren only because they want to be shown as wealthy and successful.

All of these segments contain one common factor: communication, a dynamic interaction between people and the brand. Because brand is communicating with the audience,

it can be thus being analyzed by communication theories and concepts. That is why Kapferer’s prism identity is a meaningful resource when analyzing a brand’s essence. This concept is used when defining Mëtsa’s core values on which the company and thus the brand itself stands for. The results from these concepts can be used in company’s advertising, marketing and communication. It is important that the message has some brand’s own perspective in it and that it follows the brand’s identity coherently. For example, brand’s verbal identity could be based on its personality: what words to use and more importantly what words not to use via different mediums.

Giving a thought or two for this concept, the startup can get valuable insights on which to build their brand. Without a clear concept, it is much harder to create a selling brand identity for standing out in the world of startups.

3.2

THE BRAND IDENTITY SYSTEM OF AAKER

According to David Aaker (see IMAGE 4), the brand identity is divisible into four perspectives: *product, organization, person* and *symbol*. He also argues, that not every brand should employ all those perspectives – only one perspective is needed in some cases because the relevancy is more important.⁴² For example in Mëtsa's case the product and personality perspectives are more important than the organizational perspective. The consumer might not know their organizational attributes (such as originality and environmental responsibility),

but the message is still delivered through their products. Consumers might not know the startup company behind the product, but they might still purchase the product according to its looks, functionality and what kind of emotions it delivers.

On the other hand, sometimes the organizational perspective is the most important perspective like it is for Freedom of Animals, a startup company founded in 2012, whose brand is based on eco-friendly and “cruelty-free” approach.⁴³ They sell luxury accessories like handbags

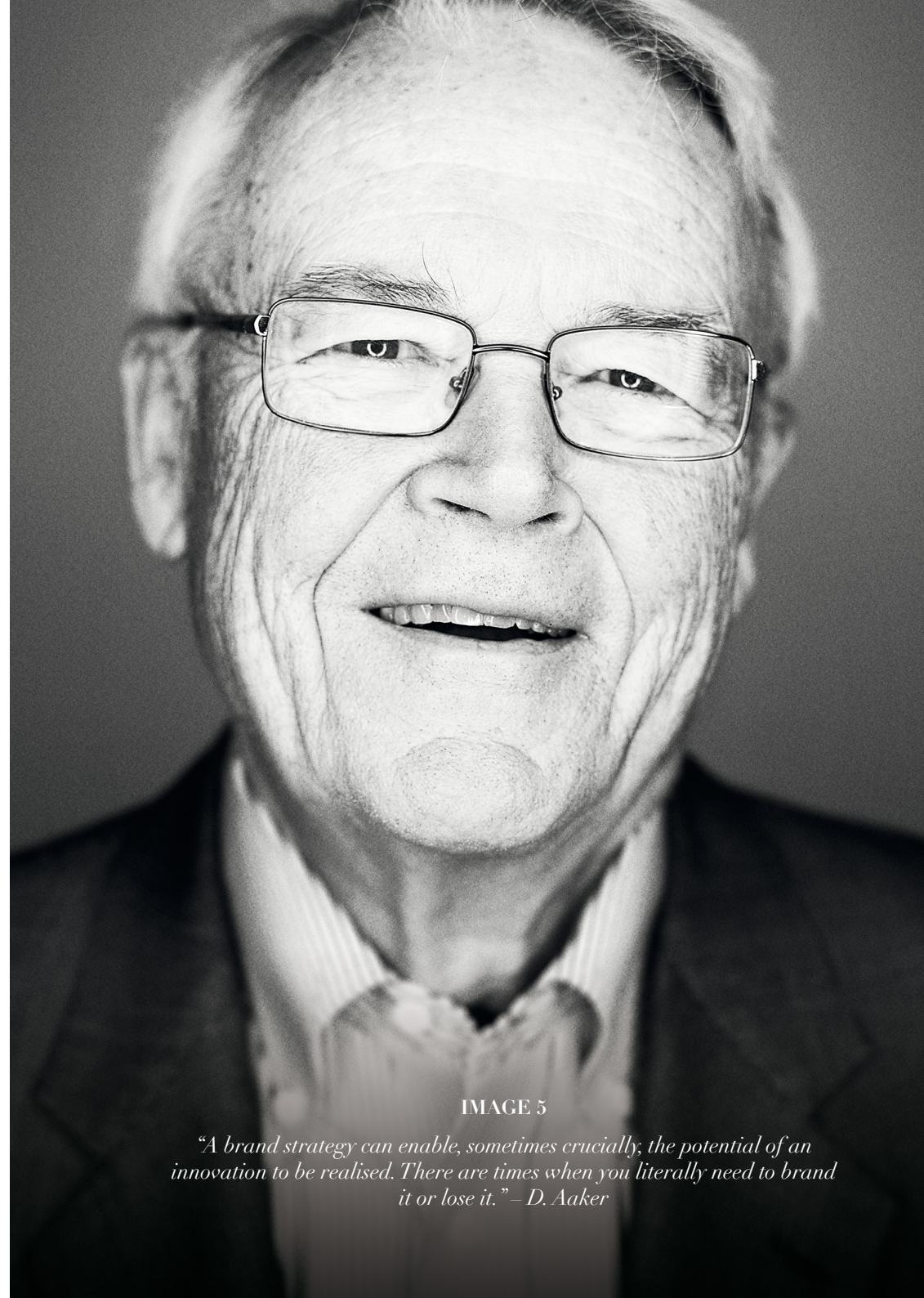


IMAGE 5

“A brand strategy can enable, sometimes crucially, the potential of an innovation to be realised. There are times when you literally need to brand it or lose it.” – D. Aaker

that are made in the US and their consumers are well-known of that brand's values.

From a product perspective, the brand has a fully product-related aspect. The associations related to brand's product are always crucial ones, because it is a direct link between the consumers and consumers' choice of brand and its use experiences.⁴⁴ A strong link means that a consumer will recall the brand correctly in its product class. It is even more powerful if the product class is associated with the brand e.g. laptop = MacBook vs MacBook = laptop.⁴⁵

Products' attributes are important especially when making a purchase decision, because the functionality is a key element to stand out among the competitors. The quality is even a more crucial element in product-related associations, because perceived quality will explicate the price tag. Mëtsa's products are not

competitive with the price tag because their products are not cheap compared to similar products that are made in mass production for mass audience. Also, the consumer may not associate the product as a high standard one if it comes with a low price tag. Cashmere wool is always more expensive than cotton as a raw material because its production costs much more. Usually handmade products are not the cheapest ones and offering handmade wooden eyewear for the same price as cheap plastic eyewear, the consumer might get some doubts about the product's quality.

The brand as an organizational perspective focuses on a company instead of its products or services. Usually these attributes are created by people. For example, "eco-friendly company" has a concern for the environment and the consumers are aware

that the products made by this company have only eco-friendly products. It is also context related, some aspects can be both product related and organization related or a combination of these two. Organizational aspects are more stable, because they are harder to be copied by competitors.⁴⁶ Especially in the world of startups, the most valuable assets, beside of the brand and product or service itself, are the employees without whom the startup does not have anything. The investors might invest in a startup even without the launched product or service, if they believe in its chance of success in the future. This is why a strong brand identity is a good selling point for Mëtsa. It shows that they have a story, a culture behind their decisions. With a strong brand identity, they will probably have more coherence between their eyewear collections through different communication mediums.

A brand as a person's perspective is a human centered perspective. Like a real person, also brands can be perceived as personalized as it was also stated in the Kapferer's prism identity model. These brand personality attributes were explained in chapter two.

The fourth and last aspect looking at a brand from a symbol perspective, where brand's symbol is seen as an influential element. These visual images are memorable and powerful assets and they are often built over the time like the Christian cross and the Star of David. For example, Iconbrands (explained further in chapter 3.4) can be viewed as such, since the brand's logo is powerful and it evolves emotions and strong connections between the logo and its perceiver. However, designing a brand from this perspective is nearly impossible since in the beginning it is hard for a startup to know how well the company will manage and be perceived.

3.3

THE BRAND ASSETS VALUATOR BY YOUNG & RUBICAM

In the early beginning of 1990's branding experienced an interesting period of time when the brand's value was under a scope and generic products took a market share from the branded products.⁴⁷ Young & Rubicam (Y&R) is a marketing and communication company, whose specialty lies on advertising and branding. Y&R is well-known from their world's largest database and model on brands, BrandAsset® Valuator (BAV®), the first and still running quantitative study of brands, which had been running since 1990's. It provides an

empirical and historically validated demonstration of how brands grow and decline, and its metrics has been linked to both current and future financial performance. The model itself enables to evaluate and diagnose brands on equity, loyalty and imagery dimensions, offering a framework to achieve a better marketplace.⁴⁸

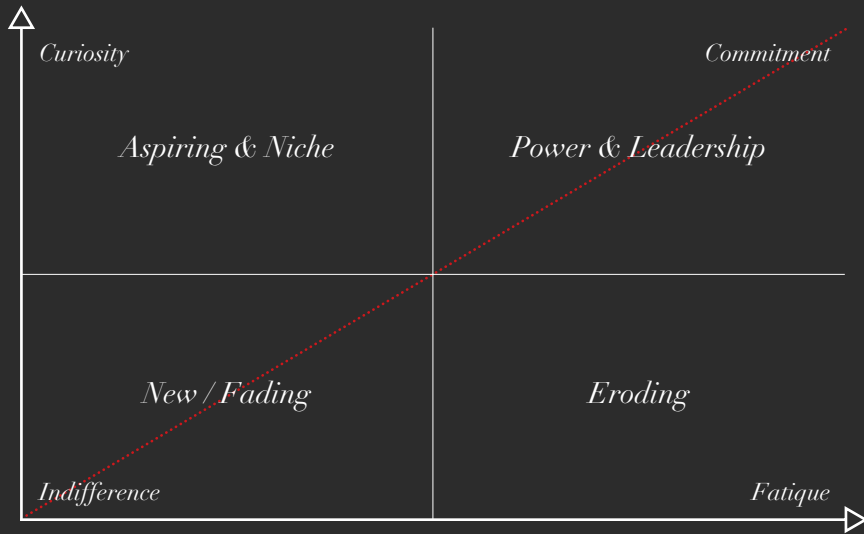
The BAV® offers a brand-centered approach to analyze and evaluate the attributes of the brand and measure its state of health. It is made from four different pillars: *differentiation*, *relevance*, *esteem*,

and *knowledge*. Differentiation is the diversity that is the main reason for a brand to be born and exist in the first place. It is a reason why the brand has the ability to stand out among its product class and thus allows it to remain strong. The pillar relates to margins, loyalty, and cultural currency. The second pillar is the relevance, the flexibility of the brand to satisfy its consumers' needs and its connection to market penetration. The combination of these two pillars represent the vitality of the brand and thus its future potential for growth, in other words the brand strength.

The third pillar is the esteem, which tells how the brand is regarded by consumers and it relates to the perception of quality and respect. The last, fourth pillar is knowledge, which does not only mean how well the brand is known but also how the brand is understood and considered as part of consumer's environment.

It is highly related to consumers' experiences. **The combination of knowledge and esteem represents the involvement with a brand, which properly managed will be the key to successful brand building and to the maintenance the brand value (brand stature).**⁴⁹ BrandAsset® is a combination of brand strength and brand stature. For creating a stable and successful brand, those factors should be properly managed - after all, the relationships between brands and their consumers are what counts.⁵⁰

If the brand is located in the northwest (see the FIGURE 4), then it has a huge potential for growth. In this case, the brand has usually a niche that is expressed, but only in terms of quality and not quantity. Without quantity, the brand can not get a leadership position on the market. In the northeast there are the leaderships, the strongest brands that have already reached high levels in all dimensions. They



BRAND STATURE

Esteem & Knowledge

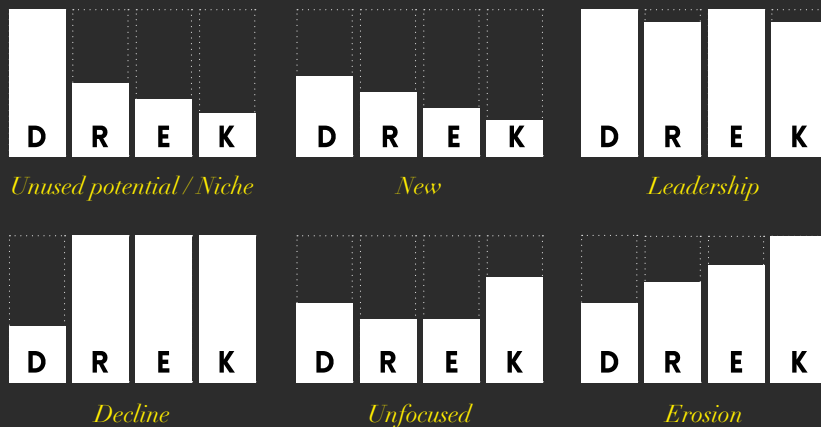


FIGURE 4

With the BAV grid a brand manager can see brand's position and follow up its growth. Bottom part tells the usual brand positions if the pillars are similarly:

are established brands on the market and globally well-known. The opposite quarter of the northeast contains brands who are seeking their own personal identities - usually startups companies or companies whose visions are unfocused. Brands in the southeast represent those brands whose brand value is eroding (decreasing potential in the market), but once got their positions in the market. The crossing line from lower left corner to upper right presents brands with a high growth potential and, therefore, brands that are slowly getting their positions in the market.

The six combinations of BAV pillars are representing brand's situation on the grid. For example, a new brand does not usually have a huge brand awareness because it may not be known or heard of. The pillars are decreasing because the first pillar is easier to achieve than the last pillar because it needs time

for the consumer to perceive the brand's message and be exposed to it.

Erosion pillar on the other hand represents a brand which has already achieved great brand awareness among the consumers, but which for some reason is losing their differentiation. One reason could be that the brand's core message and reality do not meet anymore in real life.

When creating a brand identity for a startup company, it is wise to benchmark one's own company against the competitor in the same product class and see how and why they have reached a certain position on the BAV grid. Brand assets valuator is a free online brand analysis tool, which is available via BAV Consulting's website.⁵¹ However, the analysis tool is not giving any reasons why the searched brand has got their position on the BAV grid, only the results are shown.

THE CONNOTATIVE CODES OF A BRAND

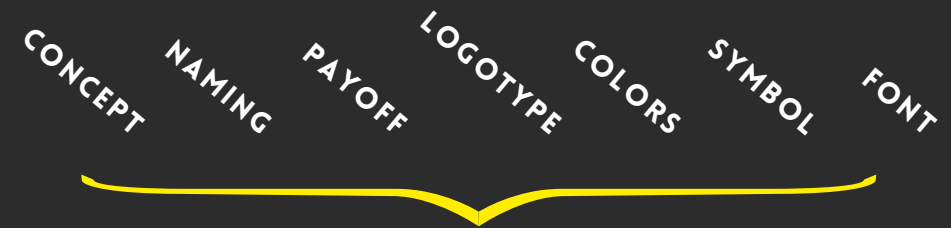
Like Young & Rubicam introduced their BAV model, Italian consultancy firm Univisual (founded in Milan in 1988) introduced their own brand management tool called “Ikonium”.⁵² Unlike the previous three concepts, the connotative codes of a brand (also known as brand marks) are mainly visual and textual elements for conveying the desired brand identity for the consumers.

Ikonium is a brand management tool and analysis

method to analyze conceptual, textual and visual elements of a brand mark. It is a set of seven elements that will create a brand identity for the company when combined together. These seven elements are *values, naming, payoff, logotype, colors, symbol and legal*.⁵³

For giving a deeper understanding and an another perspective, the thesis will introduce and compare Ikonium to another derivative of that concept which is focusing more into creating

THE CONNOTATIVE CODES OF A BRAND



BRAND MARK

1. CONCEPT

The basic idea behind the brand mark

2. NAMING

A chosen name for a brand

3. PAYOFF

Verbal identity, brand's statement and extension to its name.

4. LOGOTYPE

Typographic layout of the brand name

5. COLORS

Helps to build the correct perception of a brand

6. SYMBOL

A figurative or abstract element of the brand mark

7. FONT

A typeface for representing brand's visual identity

FIGURE 5

The brand mark is a combination of seven key elements which should be defined individually so the end result would be easily managed.

a visual identity for a brand rather than creating a brand identity. The second concept is also based on seven key elements, which are almost the same except the values element is replaced by a concept element and the legal element is replaced by a font element.⁵⁴

In both cases, the seven key elements should be designed individually and seen as complimentary to one another. In the Mëtsa case, those seven elements are designed this way, providing a strong and holistic brand mark for the company. Also, this way every component can be changed or/and analyzed separately in the future. However, the thesis will focus on the second concept, because the previous three concepts were about creating and analyzing the core of a brand identity where this concept will focus more on visual aspects of a brand identity or more likely the design process of a brand mark,

commonly known as a logo. The main source for this chapter is coming from Univisual's website and Giovanni Murgia's presentation called "*Brandevolution. Dal Marchio alla Marca*" if not specifically referenced. In figure number 5, these key elements are numbered, because in that specific order the creation process of a brand mark is logical – first the concept of a brand mark is introduced and lastly the font selection is chosen.

Let's start from the first key element – concept. Before starting a design process for a brand mark, it is wise to think of the whole concept beforehand and the values on which the brand mark is based on. It is the basic idea behind the object's values on which it pins its visual identity. For example, IBM's (which stands for "International Business Machines") logo which is a combination of three Egyptian letters "I", "B" and "M" was first solid, but it got the stripes later on

by its original creator, Paul Rand. The concept was, according to Jean-Maria Floch, to increase logo's impact by adding expressions of speed and efficiency.⁵⁵

The second element, naming, is the name of the brand, company or product. It defines the brand mark's patronymic, meaning the name derived from another names, when it corresponds a name what is a combination of one or more persons/words like the advertising agency TBWA's name is coming from its founders, William G. Tragos, Claude Bonnange, Uli Wiesendanger and Paolo Ajroldi.⁵⁶ Usually, logos that are combinations of a few letters are not memorable as such. That is why the rest five elements will create a form, which gives more personality for the brand mark. Payoff is a text, slogan accompanying the brand identity. It is a brand's unique statement, a promise and the essence of the brand which behaves as an

extension for the name of the brand.

The first truly visual element is a logotype. It represents a brand mark's graphical conformation, such as font type, color, kerning (space between letters) and white space (empty space around the object). Basically, it is a typographic layout for the naming. The fifth element, colors, gives personality for the brand mark and thus helps to build a correct perception of a brand. Colors catch the attention and they influence the consumer and constitutes a distinguishing between similar brand marks. Different colors have their own meanings and physical associations. For example, a research states that red color increases the perception and identification of anger even though people are unaware of the color's intensifying abilities.⁵⁷

The sixth element, symbol, is the figurative element which gives an additional distinctive character

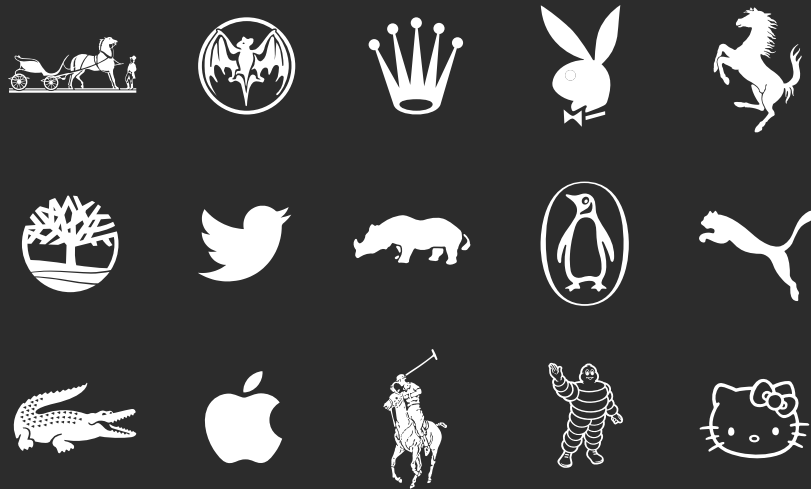


IMAGE 6

A combination of different symbols that are used by well-known brands.

for a brand mark. The symbol can be divided into three categories: *figurative symbol*, *abstract symbol* or so-called “super logos”, *Iconbrands*, which is achieved if the brand mark gets emotional contents (see IMAGE 5). Of course during the design process, it is impossible to know for sure if the brand mark will ever get the title of “Iconbrand”. However, all brand marks do not have symbols. For example, Coca-Cola has its own specific script font just like Walt Disney.

The last element, font, is more like an extension for a brand mark. It is the basic font to be used in different mediums such as print media and Internet. In Mëtsa case, their logotype is handmade so there is no default font to use based on logotype. Therefore, there is a specific font family that is complementing and accompanying Mëtsa’s logotype and symbol.

The creation process of the brand mark should be done in

a logical order. Without a clear concept, it is much harder to get a desired and expedient result. Also, it is much easier to change the font than to create a meaningful symbol to an accompanying brand mark’s core concept. When these key elements are thought of and created separately, it is also easier to keep the focus on the right issues and avoid unnecessary mistakes.

Before a startup company can create its own brand mark, the brand identity and personality should be managed first. In Mëtsa case, the logotype and symbols are based on its brand identity and values. The choice of the typeface and simple abstract symbol will create in the end a coherent whole that represents their brand identity and personality.

More about Mëtsa’s brand mark is told in the next chapter, where Mëtsa’s visual identity is created and explained further.



CHAPTER 4

CREATING A SELLING BRAND IDENTITY

The second part of the thesis is focusing on creating a strong brand identity for a young French startup company. This practical part of the thesis has been designed strictly in collaboration with the startup company, where the end result helps them to achieve “the next level” and create a clear vision for the brand. The startup company had already a strong vision how they wanted to be associated and which values their brand identity is based on. However, usually deep and exhaustive brand management work related to brand strategy and identity development is not done efficiently among the

startup companies. This affects their brand image as incoherence and mixed messages in communication and marketing.

The second aim of the company was get more funding in the form of new investors. With a highly finished brand book and a clear view of the company’s visions and values, Mëtsa is more likely to give a sophisticated and reliable impression not only for investors, but also for its international and growing consumer base. The end product was a brand book and its creative process is explained in this chapter.

4.1

INTRODUCING MËTSA GLASSES

Mëtsa Glasses (Mëtsa), established in 2012, is a young French startup company whose specialties lie on designing all natural, handmade fashionable wooden eyewear. It is an environmentally conscious brand, hence its simple motto: “*Il y a du design dans la nature*” or “*designed by nature*” in English.

The story began when two French friends, Pierre Lecuyer and Clement Goude (see IMAGE 7), travelled around Finland and were inspired by the typical trends and fashion of the country. Inspired by Nordic culture, they designed a new trendy concept: handmade wooden eyewear. Their design is innovative,

uncluttered and most of all, it is directly inspired by Scandinavian heritage and atmosphere. The design principles represent the Nordic pure and authentic lifestyle, which is very much linked to nature and emphasizes the authenticity of wood.

According to that concept, Mëtsa offers a range of different type of eyewear. The sunglasses are entirely handcrafted using only exotic, layered wood such as rosewood, ebony and pear wood. The optical frames on the other hand, combine wood and acetate providing a flexibility which is not otherwise possible to achieve. This



IMAGE 7

*Mëtsa's founding members:
Clement Goude (left) and Pierre Lecuyer (right).*

combination is not only favorable for the consumer but also for the opticians since its handling ability has been proven for the opticians. Indeed, wood - as a truly timeless material - brings out the authenticity and the innovation behind Mëtsa's design approach. According to Mëtsa's brand values, the wood what is used to produce the glasses respects the FSC© standards (Forest Stewardship Council), which guarantees responsible and sustainable management of forests.⁵⁸ The interaction between these two elements highlights the avant-gardist trend which is embodied deeply into Mëtsa's brand identity.

Because Mëtsa is powered by two individuals only, founders have a huge impact on how the brand is developing further. Since the products are designed by them in-house (without using external parties in a design process), the products are based

exactly on Mëtsa's brand values. Even if there are mostly only two people who are involved in this startup company, they are trying to publish two collections in a year, spring/summer and autumn/winter collections. Even though they design their collections mostly by themselves, they have also extended their brand in another dimension - they did a collaboration with another brand in 2015. They did a brand extension with a French artistic brand called Phenüm that creates limited edition clothing and accessories.⁵⁹ Especially in the world of fashion it is not unusual that two brands create a design line together even though it is much more common that the brands are not from the same product class. For example, a French manufacturer of fine silver flatware and home accessories Christofle did an external hard drive in collaboration with a French

computer hardware company LaCie and an Italian luxury fashion house Prada created smartphones in collaboration with a Korean LG Electronics.

Because Mëtsa is still a growing startup company and their products are mostly sold out from their stocks, they need more investors for getting the needed founding so they could grow their business and sales. They needed a clear and strong brand identity for achieving the interests of those investors who can help them during that journey. Brand book is, for example, a great way to prove that they are doing business seriously and that they have a clear vision of the brand and company. After all, sometimes just a good concept is the only thing needed for getting a funding to expand and develop a business idea further. That is one thing common among the startup companies: when a startup becomes highly profitable,

it is moving away from startuphood to become an "adult" company instead.

During these three years that Mëtsa has existed, they have already got quit good media attention from fashion magazines to individual's blog posts. They have achieved a strong appearance in social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr even though their brand visual identity was not always coherent with the other channels. That is a clear message: their products are wanted and, thus, there is a good and realistic opportunity for growth for them.

After this brand development project, Mëtsa got an upgraded version of their brand identity and completely new visual assets to use. Now, when the message is planned and coherent via different mediums, they can lure more consumers, get even more "followers" and most of all, get more resellers and hype around their brand and company.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF MËTSA

Mëtsa Glasses is not just an ordinary fashion brand that makes wooden sunglasses. Mëtsa's design philosophy is more sophisticated - it has a reason and principles behind its choices and goals. The choice of using wood as the main element was not made because it is an unlike choice of material for sunglasses from the sales point of view, but because wood and nature represent the Nordic landscape, lifestyle and atmosphere - especially in Finland where forests

are the main element of the country's landscape. This startup company was not established for selling a wooden eyewear, it was established for delivering Nordic heritage in a form of a wooden eyewear. This is important to notice because it is one of the key components which separates Mëtsa and some other companies that make wooden frames.

The name of the company, Mëtsa Glasses, is a clever and unique combination of French,

Finnish and English. "Metsä" means forest in Finnish to which the letter "ë" brings a nice and playful touch of French. Instead of using a French word for eyewear, *lunettes*, Mëtsa is keeping an English version. Not because it is not only easier to sell outside of France, but it is also easier to recall and more achievable when searched by a customer or investor. The name of the startup company is not the only thing that comes from Finland. Also the product names are based more or less on Finnish language or places in Finland. With this conscious choice, Mëtsa will be more likely to be associated as a Nordic brand. A similar brand concept is used on Napapijri brand. Even though it is fully an Italian brand owned by VF Corporation, it is using also a Finnish word "*napapiiri*" (Arctic Circle in English), and even the Norwegian flag in their brand mark and as a part of their brand identity (see IMAGE 8). In this way Napapijri

is associated as a Norwegian company that provides wearables, accessories and products for extreme outdoor conditions. In this case Italy does not deliver desired associations as well as Norway does even though the country is well-known by its fashion heritage. This is because the weather is not even close as cold and extreme as it is in Norway and, thus, it would not help to represent the brand image that Napapijri wants consumers to get.

Mëtsa is taking the naming process even further than Napapijri and other similar brands. All Mëtsa's products are named in a similar way - using only Finnish words and locations, often with a French twist. The main idea of this naming concept is to accentuate the story and the origin of Mëtsa in their design and products. It helps them to create a unique, characteristic brand with a clear coherence between the name of



IMAGE 8

Napapiiri is using the Norwegian flag and a Finnish word “napapiiri” in their brand identity:

the company and its products. It is also something truly unique, no one else has the same ideology behind the product naming and no one could make another startup company with a similar brand culture without being a fraud. The story of the Mëtsa brand is unique because it is based on founder members’ personal experiences and insights.

So how do we develop Mëtsa’s brand identity further? First we went back to basics. Who is Mëtsa and what does it do? We can not say that Mëtsa did not have a brand identity before just because they have not defined it before – all brands have a base level identity even if it is not clearly stated. Because Mëtsa had already achieved some kind of brand identity, we started the brand development process from the assets what were already there. It is important to know where are we now before going any further

in the brand development process. Mëtsa’s old advertisements, look books and other brand assets were a good source to start working from.

Kapferer’s brand identity prism model was a good tool for defining Mëtsa’s core brand identity and values on which its stands for (see FIGURE 6). Even though it is a more powerful tool for analyzing already existing and powerful brand identities, it works also in a brand creation process. Those six facets were defined individually for getting deeper understanding of the brand and for achieving more texture and levels in their brand identity. The creation process proceeded clockwise and it started from physique facet.

Mëtsa’s physique facet was easy to define since their current products are only wooden eyewear, both sunglasses and frames for optical eyeglasses. However, there are still details which distinguish

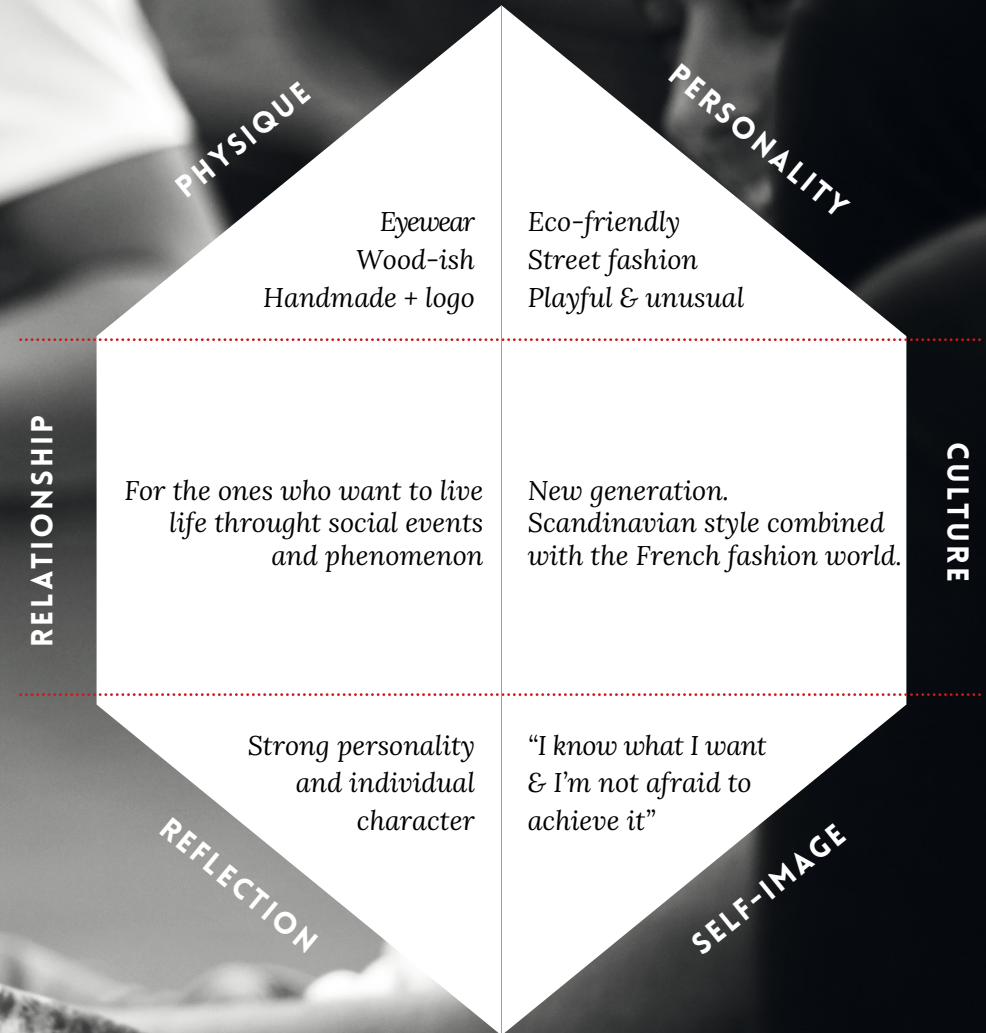


FIGURE 6
*Mëtsa's brand identity according to
Kapferer's prism identity model.*

their products from other similar products in the same product class. For example, Mëtsa's brand mark is always laser engraved in the right side of clevises and there is always a mention that the product is handmade in the inner side of the eyewear's arms. Next facet, personality, was built on respecting previous advertisement material and especially people from their look books (see IMAGE 9). Mëtsa wants to be associated as a playful, eco-friendly brand whose products are still more street fashion and credible than "save the earth" products. That is why a decision was made, highlight personality as a fashion statement instead being just an eco-friendly accessory. Based on a result of a benchmark process, many of similar companies from the same product class and from the same price group did not have any clear brand personality. Most of them have only generic imagery and 3D rendered product images.

Mëtsa's culture is based on Nordic design heritage with a French twist. Their brand culture represents the new generation. This is also a brand statement; they want their products to be for people who are not hidebound to try new things without prejudices. Buying Mëtsa's product instead of Ray-Ban's is a clear statement that the purchase decision was not an impulse but a well thought result. That is defining for example, the marketing strategy. Because Mëtsa's brand identity is unique, Mëtsa is not using prices in their marketing materials. Only a link to a web store or/and an information where one could seek for more information and where to find these products in France. Availability is not yet the best possible.

The fourth facet, self-image, is based on how Mëtsa's consumers see themselves via the brand. Mëtsa's eyewear are not made for mass fashion followers, it is made

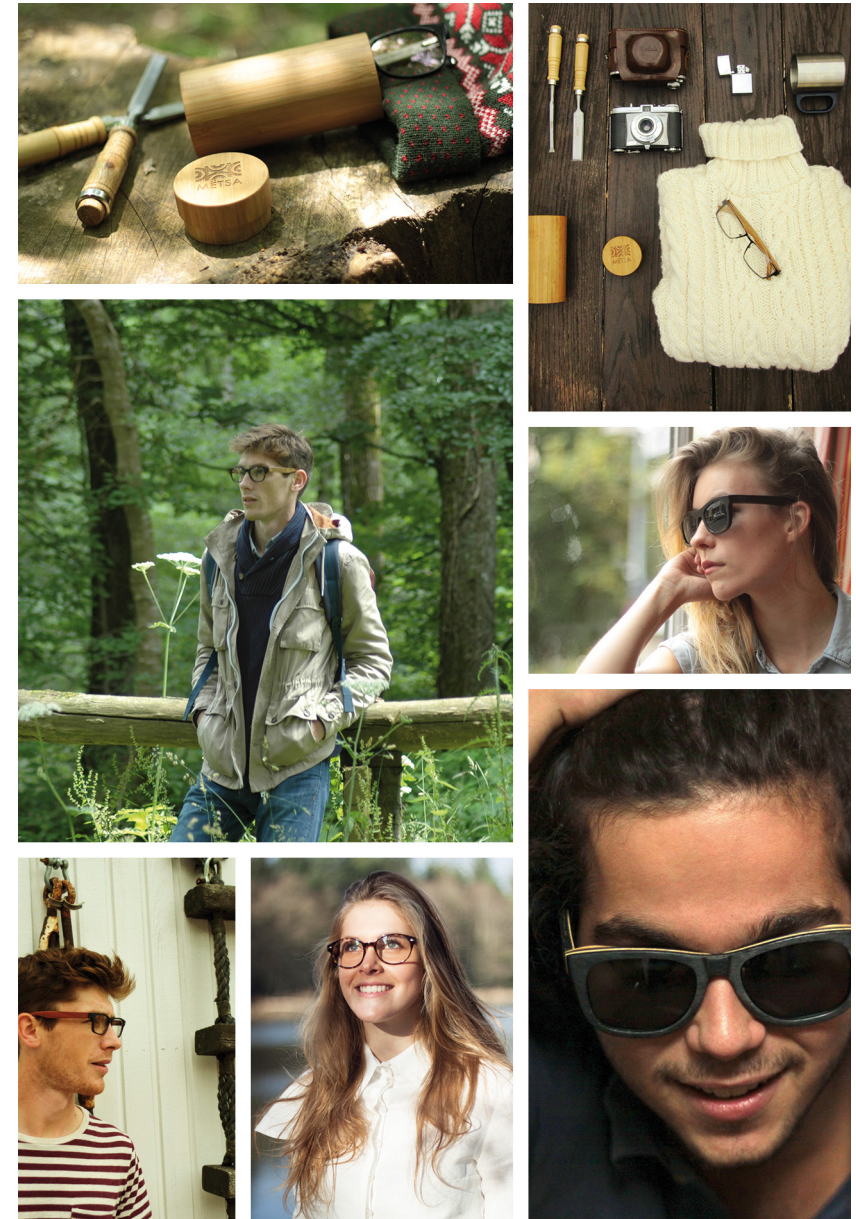


IMAGE 9

Mëtsa's old imagery used in advertising and brand assets

for people who can stand out with their own strong personality expressed through the choice of products. It is for those who want their eyewear to be unique and different. However, since the brand is yet a startup, they do not have much raw data or research results how to analyze consumers' experiences of their brand. When more data is available, Mëtsa is able to get insight and clues how to develop the brand further. The same thing affects the fifth facet, reflection. Both reflection and self-image are subjective concepts and, thus, getting exhaustive answers is almost impossible to obtain. The desired reflection is that people would see Mëtsa's customers as strong personalities who are individual characters, those who do not follow slavishly the leading fashion trends or use products only by big and well-known fashion houses. Fortunately for them, big fashion houses have not, at least

yet, focused on creating wooden frames. That means also that there is a clear niche for such products.

When brand's core brand identity is defined, it is much easier to focus on creating a consistent content for it. According to its brand identity, Mëtsa will use specific kind of imagery in marketing and people to represent them for example, on their website or their look books. The models are those, who could actually wear Mëtsa's products proudly.

Creating a brand identity for Mëtsa is a process of defining their desired brand image: what kind of brand identity will deliver the desired message for the consumers so they could perceive the brand correctly and as planned? In any case, it is much easier to achieve a desired brand image among the consumers when brand communication is consistent and coherent through all mediums.

4.3

VISUAL IDENTITY

Mëtsa's visual identity represents the same values on which its brand identity is based. It is a set of visual assets which is crucial on how the consumers perceive the brand itself. Therefore, Mëtsa's visual identity contains a Scandinavian, modern alignment and other graphical design trends.

For creating a visual brand identity, it is important that the visual assets represent the brand's other assets. Because the products do not contain mainly any candy-like colors, the brand does not use

those kind of colors either in its visual assets.

The assets are optimized for web usage. Open source solutions were used always whenever it was possible, since they are usually free to use commercially and thus an ideal solution. Still, it is very important to not use only readymade assets which are easily downloadable from the Internet. Using a Google Font for example as a brand mark is not only a proof of lacking uniqueness but also a risk since the brand mark can not get a copyright protection.

4.3.1

MËTSA'S BRAND MARK AND ITS USAGE

The original brand mark (see IMAGE 10) for Mëtsa was created by a group of French design students from LISAA Rennes (L'institut Supérieur des Arts Appliqués) as a result of Mëtsa's logo design competition. The original concept of the brand mark was to combine an abstract element and a typed text together creating a timeless and adaptable logo for extensive use.

During this brand development project, the original brand mark got a small facelift. The new brand mark (see IMAGE 11) was created using the concept introduced in chapter 3.4. The

creation process was done in that specific order that was recommended, first the concept and lastly the selection of a font. It was a clear and coherent way to start the brand mark update process since all seven key elements are represented in Mëtsa's new brand mark (see FIGURE 7).

The project started with defining a concept for the brand mark. The original concept was well designed already and since the brand mark is already in use, changing it completely might cause some misconceptions. The original concept was to combine

an element, a logotype and a payoff (slogan) as a one brand mark. The basic idea behind the concept is to create a minimalistic and timeless brand mark using only geometrical shapes. The second element, naming, is also the same as it was in the original version. Even though the name of the company is Mëtsa Glasses, it is not used in brand mark as such. Instead a more simplified and approachable version, Mëtsa, is used.

The main difference between the original and the new version is the logotype (see IMAGE 12). The original version was based on Futura (LT medium) typeface, which is not an ideal solution for a brand mark since it is heavily overused and does not add any value to the brand. New logotype is based on a geometric sans serif typeface called Lovelo (Black) which was originally designed by Hanz Renzler.⁶⁰ However, instead of using font as such, it is a modified

version so the logotype is not writable using that font. Usually fonts are not highly usable without modification because they are made for typing. For example, kerning (white space between the characters) is usually wider than needed and leading (also known as line height) too tall when font size is big.

The brand mark does not have any color definition. If the background is dark, the brand mark is on white and vice versa. However, if a fulfill color in some cases needed, then it is a solid one. The original brand mark was also black and white. Brand mark's symbol is an abstract one. It represents logs, which are the main source of the materials used in Mëtsa's products. The symbol is a combination of four logs that are only half shown. It was originally created by LISAA students and now only facelifted slightly by the author. The only difference is in outer logs; their

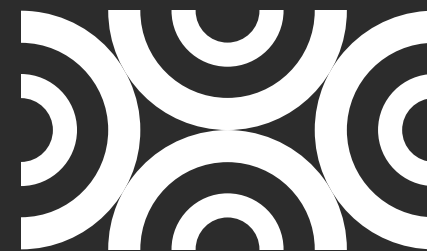


MËTSA
-DESIGN BY NATURE-

Original logo

IMAGE 10

*Mëtsa's original brand mark by
students of LISAA Rennes.*



MËTSA
DESIGN BY NATURE

New logo

IMAGE 11

*Slightly updated brand mark
for Mëtsa by the author.*



FIGURE 7

The connotative codes of Mëtsa's brand mark.

Concept

The brand mark is a combination of an abstract symbol, brand's name and its slogan

Color

The brand mark does not have a specific color.

Naming

Instead of using company's real name, Mëtsa Glasses, in their brand mark is used only a shortened version.

Font

A sans-serif font is used in the logotype.



IMAGE 12

The differences between Futura typeface (black) and Lovelo Black typeface (yellow).

circles are narrower than the outer one. This one done only for creating a small texture for the brand mark. Using only identical geometrical lines, the symbol might be a bit boring as such.

The logo has varieties for different kind of usage, both horizontal and vertical versions (see IMAGE 13). The horizontal version is used on the products whereas the vertical ones are used mostly in print materials and when there is enough white space around the logo. Vertical version

is more often used since it is a more versatile option for most of the end products. Mëtsa has not used their payoff often. It has been used mostly exclusively in print materials (such as look books and business cards) where they wanted to present their brand mark as a whole.

As it was stated before in this chapter, the new brand mark was not created from a scratch. The brand mark was slightly updated to be more geometrical and bolder than the original one.

4.3.2

TYPOGRAPHY

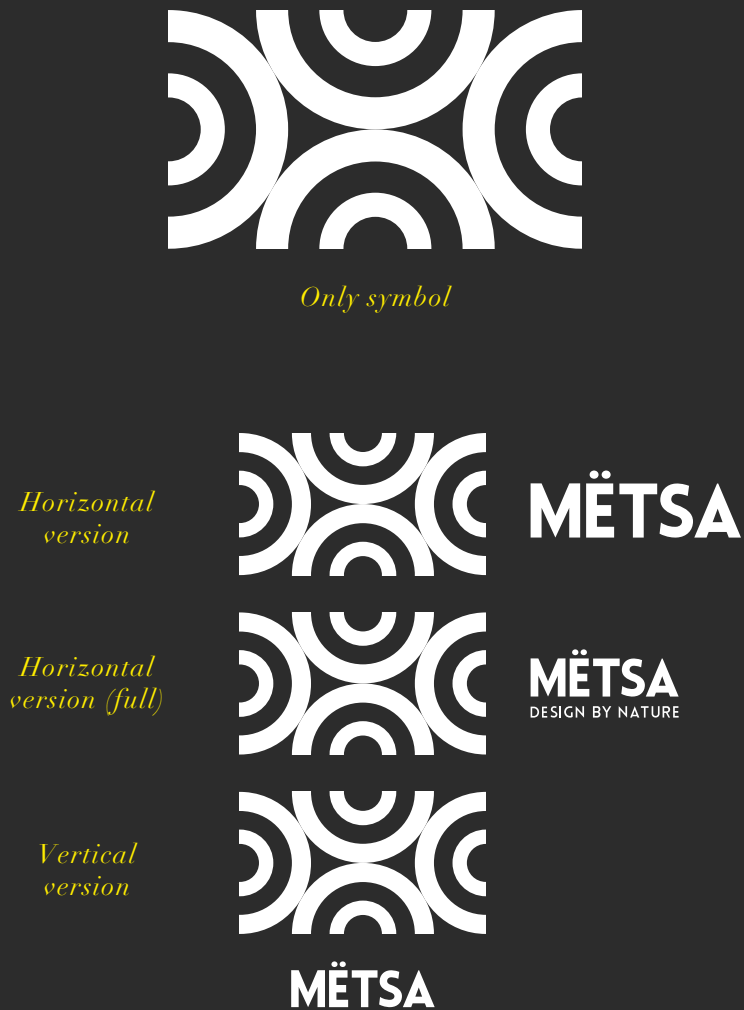


IMAGE 13

Variations of the brand mark for different usage.

Typography has an impressive role of how the brand's visual identity is presented. Since changing it afterwards might cause some confusion it should be designed carefully. Because nowadays the Internet has a dominant role and a company's web presence is really important, the selected typeface(s) should be web optimized and also, in a perspective of a startup company, free to use via different mediums. This in mind, the selection process of the typography combination could be started.

Mëtsa's earlier font was a grotesque sans typeface, a classic

mid-century font called "Century Gothic" from Monotype foundry.⁶¹ This typeface is a classic choice since it is widely used and its geometrical lines are timeless but can appear cold and clinical as well. However, since Mëtsa's brand is more focused on new generation, a font from the mid-century does not represents them well enough. The typeface is also quite wide which might be a problem if titles are long. Also a thin typeface does not stand out clearly enough if the contrast between the background and the color of the font is not high enough.

The new typefaces are based on Mëtsa's brand culture: Nordic clear and minimal design combined with a twist of French heritage. The selection process started by choosing a typeface for titles. Because Mëtsa's brand mark is already using a bold sans serif typeface, it was a clear and coherent decision to use a sans serif typeface also as a title font. The search started from the Internet where all of the open source typefaces are available to download from different sources like Google Fonts⁶² and The League of Moveable Type⁶³, where the final typeface for a paragraph text was actually selected.

The title font was selected among the three main options (see IMAGE 14), where a transitional typeface called "Playfair Display", originally designed by Claus Eggers Sørensen in 2011, was selected.⁶⁴ The font has a wide variety of characters, so it supports well all

European languages. This is really important when using characters "ä" and "ë". The same typeface was selected to be as a paragraph font (the usual typeface to use in a normal text). This typeface supports Mëtsa's brand culture as well because it is the French twist among the Nordic overall appearance of Mëtsa. This typeface is used as a highlight typeface in cases where the content should stand out, for example, ingresses and product name extensions.

For creating some contrast between titles and paragraph font, the second typeface was selected. The typeface is often a different typeface style than the one used in titles. In this case it was an easy decision to select a style: sans serif font that represents Nordic design. Also, among the four main options (see IMAGE 15) the Junction typeface was selected. The font was originally created by The League of Moveable Type in 2009, but it got

MODE *de* L'AUTOMNE
/ HIVER 2015 – 2016

Playfair Display (regular)

MODE de L'AUTOMNE
/ HIVER 2015 – 2016

Didot (regular)

MODE *de* L'AUTOMNE
/ HIVER 2015 – 2016

Bodoni 72 (book)

IMAGE 14

Typefaces for titles and highlights.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vestibulum in nunc non nibh ultricies cursus.

Donec mattis tellus vel turpis commodo, ac congue turpis congue. Donec nec eros nunc. Vivamus scelerisque laoreet congue. Nam sit amet metus sit amet.

Junction (bold and light)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vestibulum in nunc non nibh ultricies cursus.

Donec mattis tellus vel turpis commodo, ac congue turpis congue. Donec nec eros nunc. Vivamus scelerisque laoreet congue. Nam sit amet metus sit amet.

Montserrat (regular and light)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vestibulum in nunc non nibh ultricies cursus.

Donec mattis tellus vel turpis commodo, ac congue turpis congue. Donec nec eros nunc. Vivamus scelerisque laoreet congue. Nam sit amet metus sit amet.

Arvo (bold and regular)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vestibulum in nunc non nibh ultricies cursus.

Donec mattis tellus vel turpis commodo, ac congue turpis congue. Donec nec eros nunc. Vivamus scelerisque laoreet congue. Nam sit amet metus sit amet.

Lato (medium and regular)

IMAGE 15

Typefaces for paragraphs.

more font variations in an update 2014 where the medium and bold font weight versions were included into this font family.⁶⁵ The font supports also very well European languages, which was a key issue when seeking a typeface to use. When title and paragraph typefaces are from different typeface styles, the typographical layout is often esthetically balanced. Junction gives a needed contrast for overall look and feel since it is a completely different typeface than Playfair Display.

For creating more texture and variations for titles, in some situations the typefaces are used differently. For example, titles are always written with Playfair Display (regular weight) in all caps except the words like “of”, “di” and “de” which are always written with small caps and using Playfair Display’s italicized version (regular weight as well). This gives some contrast and also makes the typography more

sophisticated and playful. Ingresses are, on the other hand, always written using Junction typeface (bold weight) and with a bigger font size than the paragraph text. Also the name of the product is written using Junction (bold weight) in all caps. The product’s name extension (like light and green) is written with italicized Playfair Display typeface and with a smaller size than the actual product name. The vertical white space between the title and ingress is higher than the white space between the ingress and first line of the paragraph text (see FIGURE 8). The content will be clearly separated from its title by using the white space.

Mëtsa’s new typographical layout is more playful and unique than it was before. There is a clear hierarchy in content so all of the needed information is categorized and thus more easily to be spotted. Also, the content is more alive, when it has some variations.

Title

MODE *de* L'AUTOMNE
/ HIVER 2015 – 2016

Ingress

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vestibulum in nunc non nibh ultricies cursus. Curabitur volutpat elit ac justo semper.

Paragraph

Donec mattis tellus vel turpis commodo, ac congue turpis congue. Donec nec eros nunc. **Vivamus scelerisque** laoreet congue. Nam sit amet metus sit amet sem pellentesque fermentum. Nam et dictum quam. Duis quis nisi in nibh pellentesque pellentesque a et lorem. In eu justo facilisis orci mattis fermentum ut eu tortor. Cras aliquam convallis neque, id luctus leo finibus id.

Product name

SOMËRO *light*, **VALÒ** *turquoise*

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstu
vwxyz 0123456789

Junction

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstu
vwxyz 0123456789

Playfair Display

FIGURE 8

Mëtsa’s new typography:

4.3.3

BRAND PERSONALITY

Metsa's brand personality is explained little by little during this thesis. Metsa's brand identity according to Kapferer's brand identity prism model explained it lightly: they wanted to be characterized as a playful, eco-friendly brand whose products are closer to street fashion than "save the earth" products.

According to David Aaker's Brand Personality Scale model, Metsa has an exciting personality. It is daring since its products are trendy and exciting, something that many people do not have and imaginative because their products

are unique (compared to eyewear made in mass production) and artistic. The consumer is able to see the structure and real wood in their products. To encourage this personality, Metsa will base its marketing and advertising on it.

Instead of writing down exhaustively what Metsa's brand personality is, it is explained through the images used and which will be used in Metsa's advertisement and other brand assets. As the proverb goes, "one picture is worth a thousand words". The images are collected as one reference (see IMAGE 16).

IMAGE 16

Metsa's brand personality represented by people.





4.3.4

BRAND IMAGERY

Just as it is important to develop a brand personality, it is equally important to focus on brand's imagery. Mëtsa's imagery will be connecting consumers with the brand using specific kind of packages and images, for example, in marketing and advertising. Because Mëtsa wants to be a different than other companies in the same product class, they are offering a unique experience. For example, the selling box is not just a boring cardboard box with brand mark on the top of it: their selling box is usually entirely made from wood (see IMAGE 17 and IMAGE 19) and it is branded

as well. When the consumers see the wooden selling box in a fashion store, they may recall it as a product from Mëtsa even though the product itself is not.

Creating is not the correct term to use when designing brand imagery since it has many definitions: which way could we deliver our brand identity and how is the brand image built with these available brand assets? This will be more like a guideline when having for example, new photo shoots for coming collections or designing new wooden selling package for their eyewear.



IMAGE 17

Products from Mëtsa's and Phënum's collection.



IMAGE 18

Natural images represents Mëtsa's brand identity.



IMAGE 19

Mëtsa's selling package is made entirely from wood. It is also clearly branded so the consumers know the content without opening the selling package.

Other imagery, such as images used on their website or social media channels must also be defined. The benchmark was not needed, since the imagery is coming from Mëtsa's brand identity. Having a similar brand imagery Mëtsa is able to deliver a similar atmosphere as they do via their products. All the images not referenced by a number

in this thesis represent Mëtsa's imagery.

Background and other images that are based on Mëtsa's visual identity needed to be coherent as well. After benchmarking Mëtsa's social media appearance it was quickly clear, that down-to-earth like images (see IMAGE 18) represent them the best and the audience seems to like these as well.

VERBAL IDENTITY

Brand's verbal identity means the way the brand is communicating with its audience. It is a tone of voice that the recipient is able to sense from a message. Verbal identity is important because through brand's communication the recipients will also build their own image of the brand. What kind of words is the brand using when it sends a newsletter or announces a new product or service? Still, as David Ogilvy once said: "What you say in advertising is more important than how you say it."⁶⁶ The word usage will deliver the message, not to change the content itself.

In best case scenario, brand's vocabulary will help to create a stronger relationship with its consumers. Having a friendly tone in a message will deliver different kind of atmosphere as formal jargon which could be even hard to understand. For example, the official forms may be frustrating or even impossible to fill because the choice of words might be far from the language that people are actually using.

When defining Mëtsa's own vocabulary and tone of voice, it was important to realize that the consumers are not only in France

and, thus, the messages need to be translated to English as well. Some words may not translate sensibly but the overall feeling in messages should be still the same.

After Mëtsa's brand identity was and defined in chapter 4.2: *The Curious Case of Mëtsa*, the definition process for Mëtsa's verbal identity could be started. Brand's tone in its communication should always be based on its brand identity, otherwise the consumer may perceive the brand incorrectly. For example, term "eco-friendly" does not represent their brand identity as well as the term "natural" does. This is important because Mëtsa's consumers do not necessarily give any additional value in the purchasing situation if the product is described as eco-friendly since it is made from wood, which is, eco-friendly material as such. It is good to tell it somewhere else, like on their website, that they are using their raw materials only from the

forests what are certified by FCS.

Mëtsa's tone of voice is informal, friendly and down-to-earth. The chosen words (see FIGURE 9) are used constantly in their communication so their messages will be communicated coherently via different mediums. Also, because this startup company wants to succeed in achieving a bigger user base, the main language should be English. This means for example, that their different channels in social media are written in English or if the content (such as advertisement or publications from third parties) is written in French, then it is described in English in a published post.

As it was previously stated, defining is a better term than creating when talking about the process of settling a tone of voice for a brand. It is always based on the brand identity, created before the process.

Discover

new

~~Find out our latest collection~~

"DISCOVER"

This implies that there is something new and unknown to the customer. For example, "discover our new collection"

"PREMIUM"

Instead of using "high quality", premium is a better word to describe Mëtsa's products.

premium quality

Our raw materials are ~~only the finest~~

"SEASONAL SALE"

Always better than clearance or just sale. Will tell to customer that they do not want to get rid of the products.

"YOU / YOUR"

More personalized touch than "dear customer". Showing that Mëtsa is really thinking about their customers.

Thank you

~~Thanks for subscribing!~~

Discover

seasonal sales

~~Check out our clearance selection!~~

"NEW"

"Check out our latest collection" phrase is telling that a new collection is coming out

"PURE"

When describing, for example, the design of the eyewear. Really Nordic adjective to use.

pure

Nordic ~~clean~~ and minimalist design

FIGURE 9

Mëtsa's tone of voice and vocabulary.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Nowadays modern marketing is relying on the establishment of brands. When products are more or less similar to each other, strong brand identity is a key for differentiation. The idea for this thesis came from my personal experiences. I have been working for big brands like Silvan Heach, Ritva Falla and Jolla among with many local brands in Italy, France and Finland. I have noticed that when creating a content for a brand, for example websites, concepts or print materials, it is important to know the brand deeply. Because

a brand is not only a set of visual assets such as typefaces and its brand mark, it takes a moment or two to clearly understand what kind of advertisement or another creative production will help to deliver the brand's identity. Without a clear consistent line, the end product does not necessarily promote the client's brand and its message at all. There is a reason why some decisions work in one case but not with another case. The big ideas are related to context, brand's vision and what it is trying to achieve with the end product.

The thesis has a clear continuity. First it explains what a brand is so the reader will understand the thesis' content and main message even if the one has no experience or knowledge previously from branding. After the basics, the thesis introduces brand management tools what are often used and in the end the thesis uses these tools for creating a brand identity for a startup company. Using also a lot of real life examples, the reader not only gets his or her own insights but also understands the content more deeply.

This thesis starts from the definitions of a concept of a brand. Brand, as love, is a multi-dimensional concept where there is no clear answer to what it is and what it is not. In chapter two: *Building a Powerful Brand*, I introduced the curious world of branding and explained that brand could be divided in three main sub concepts: brand identity, brand

personality and brand image on which the whole brand is built on. Especially the difference between brand identity and image is important, since all brand communication is either trying to build a desired brand image or trying to keep it as it is. In my source material I paraphrased mostly authors who have a big influence in modern branding such David Aaker, Jean-Marie Floch and Jean-Noël Kapferer. These authors have created many modern concepts that are still used on brand management such as the brand identity prism model by Kapferer introduced in chapter 3.1: *The Brand Identity Prism* by Kapferer.

The second reason for this thesis work came from my personal insight: a startup company does not have usually a unique brand or the branding work has ended when the brand mark is done and some colors chosen to use. For

example, when looking at new mobile apps, it is hard to see a clear difference between the apps from the same category. Usually only the service fee or the app's price is different. I have worked with many startup companies and usually the problem is, quite obviously, the budget. Using open source solutions as I did in this thesis, the final price is not a surprise. As I stated at the beginning of the thesis, it is not always clear how brand management will affect on a company's revenues and financial value – brand management would not necessarily provide any measurable data or revenues in the near future. And according to my insight, life in a startup company is all about “living in the moment”, seeking fast financial growth and obtaining bigger user base. Where is the time for creative thinking? Branding is not necessarily expensive, all that it basically needs is a creative professional or two

who are able to create the needed assets and concepts. As William “Bill” Bernbach once said: **“An idea can turn to dust or magic, depending on the talent that rubs against it”**.⁶⁷

The thesis' theoretical background is based on four brand management concepts: Kapferer's brand identity prism, Aaker's Brand Identity System, Young & Rubicam's Brand Assets Valuator and the connotative codes of a brand mark, based on Univisual's insights of technical-perspective appraisal of a brand mark. I think that these four concepts together with the thesis' practical part gave a clear vision about brand management work and I hope that it sparked some personal insights and thoughts for the reader of this thesis. I am sure, that these four concepts completed each other. Where Kapferer's prism model and Aaker's brand identity systems are focusing more on brand's core identity, the brand mark concept is focusing mostly on

how to create a meaningful logo for a brand. BAV online brand analyze tool on the another hand is a great tool for benchmarking brands for getting insight to one's own brand management project. The end result can not be inconsistent even if only these four concepts are used when creating a new brand identity for a startup company.

For creating a truly real life branding project I decided to do my thesis work in collaboration with a French startup company. Branding process is at its best when it is done in team because then it will be a combination of visions, insights and professionalism. Also, creating a brand identity without a real company is like creating a marketing strategy for a product that will never exist: perhaps it can be educational, but ultimately futile. I have received a deeper expertise of the brand identity's creation process and working in international environment is

exactly the right place, at least for me, to learn more about branding across the borders.

If I would do this project again, I would also be focusing a little bit on the brand maintaining part. If a brand already has a powerful brand identity, how to use it when creating content for it? In most of my work cases I am not creating brand identity, I am maintaining it. For example, working as an in-house designer it is all about maintaining the brand, especially when working together with another brand, creating creative briefs for external advertising agencies or when creating a brand extension.

However, the same basic knowledge is still needed to be achieved when maintaining a brand. When working with brands, you are able to see the smallest details which are usually those same details that separate brands from one another.



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