

participatory
BRANDING

Involving startups in the design process of their brand.

Lucia Ciranova & Flaminia Zannotti
Master Thesis
Master Program in Business & Design, MSc

University of Gothenburg - School of Business, Economics and Law
& HDK - School of Design and Crafts

Supervisor: Lena Hansson
June 5, 2015

ABSTRACT

Despite brands being strategic assets central to company's long term success, little or no attention to branding can be seen in the business literature and resources for startups. If so, it is usually by adapting the branding approaches for large organisations into the context of smaller ones. However, startups are not just smaller versions of big organisations; they are living organisms of their own with specific characteristics and culture affecting their business operations. Thanks to the size of startup and close proximity to the founder, the startup's brand is often the founder himself/herself.

Therefore, instead of creating the brand from scratch, there is a need to find a new branding approach that would help founder to uncover, express and frame the brand essence of the startup and, consequently, turn it into a competitive brand strategy.

For us, as Business Designers, this was an interesting possibility to explore whether there is an opportunity for application of the strengths and competencies of Business & Design.

Through secondary and primary research within the areas of

branding, startups, and design, the opportunity for intervention of Business & Design into branding for startups was identified. This became the departure argument for brainstorming & ideation leading to the framing of the central concept of this thesis: Participatory Branding.

To prove its validity and feasibility, the Participatory Branding was further tested with six startups in Gothenburg to provide practical implications for practitioners in both branding as well as Business & Design field.

Keywords: Branding; Startup; Participatory Design; Business & Design

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, we would like to thank everyone who inspired, challenged, supported and enriched us during the process of our thesis. In particular, our academic support from Lena Hansson, Oriana Haselwanter, Ramsin Yacob, Ulises Navarro as well as Rune Toldam and Nicolas Arroyo.

Furthermore, we would like to thank everyone who took part in the research process of this thesis. Mainly, the amazing startup community of G-Lab 21 for their believe and support in making this thesis a real thing. In particular to Jens Östgaard and Peter Kurzwelly as well as all the great startups who believed in the process and decided to take part in this project.

In addition, we would like to thank all the people who took part in our interviews and shared their valuable knowledge and experience with us. A special thank you goes to the CEO's of Paradigm, Brandclub & Mockup for their time and willingness to share their branding process with us.

This thesis would not happen without the great support of the B&D people through our endless conversations on a meta level during our lunch/coffee/after-work breaks. Thank you guys.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our families (both core and extended, just like the brand) for their on-going support during the whole duration of our studies and believing that even though what we do is very fluffy to explain, it has a great potential for the future.

“Where absolute superiority is not attainable, you must produce a relative one at the decisive point by making skillful use of what you have.”

Carl von Clausewitz, 1832

Dear Reader,

What are you about to experience is a Business & Design journey of using creativity and design to solve the greater business problems of today’s world. Business & Design is a new, emerging field bringing the creative process and methods of design into the business context. Mainly, Business & Design is a mindset and our main asset, that we bring along to everything we do. Even though all the effort was put in to ensure academic excellence of this thesis, it is taking rather unusual approach that mirrors the way we, Business Designers, work (more detailed description is provided in Chapter 4).

The term ‘Business Designers’ is going to be used a lot during this thesis. So, just so we are all on the same page, this is what we mean by it: *by a ‘Business Designers’ we are referring to a new type of practitioners that comes from an interdisciplinary background combining design thinking with business strategy; they think like a designer and speak the language of business.*

All in all, we hope you will enjoy your read, learn something new and leave with a feeling that this project was 6 months well spent. And if you happen to want more, you can follow our process here: www.participatorybranding.com

Thank you,
Flaminia & Lucia

PREFACE

*“Branding is like music;
it becomes better if you do it with experts.”*

Mia Hesselgren, BVD

Branding has always been our passion.

We both approached branding during our studies, Lucia from a Marketing perspective and Flaminia from a Communication Design perspective. After graduating from our bachelor studies, we both pursued this passion by working with branding for startups: Lucia as the Head of Branding and Design at Nutkase Accessories in UK and Flaminia as a freelance Brand Designer for various clients in Italy. Even though we approached branding from different perspectives (marketing and design) at different places in the world, we both met in the agreement that there was a need for a new approach specifically designed for startups. After starting the Business & Design Master and learning about the strengths and competences of this field, we saw possible opportunities for intervention in order to solve this issue which became the leading thought of this thesis.

Having approached branding from different viewpoints and coming from different background was a strength for us. We felt that in the meeting of our diverse backgrounds and experiences, the interdisciplinary nature of the Business & Design programme was made real.

Index

1.0 Setting the Scene: Introduction	1
1.1 What is out there: New Perspectives on Branding	2
1.2 Problematism	3
1.3 Purpose	6
1.4 Research Questions	6
2.0 Methodology & Methods	7
2.1 Approach	8
2.2 Research Process	9
2.3 Analysis	13
2.3.1 Research Phase Analysis	13
2.3.2 Testing Phase Analysis	13
2.4 Validity & Limitations	13
2.5 Ethics	14
2.6 Structure of the Thesis	14

PART 1: RESEARCH

3.0 IMMERSE: Secondary Desk Research	16
3.1 Branding	17
3.2 Startup	18
3.3 Business & Design	19
3.4 Summary	20
4.0 DISCOVER: Interview Findings	21
4.1 Interviewee Profiles	22
4.2 Findings Discussion	24
4.2.1 Branding	24
4.2.2 Startups	26
4.2.3 Business & Design	27

5.0 IDEATE: Discussion	29
5.1 Discussion of the previous findings	30
5.2 Ideation	31
6.0 CONCEPTUALISE: Participatory Branding	33
6.1 Concept Development	34
6.1.1 Setting Brand Objectives	34
6.1.2 Finding the Approach: Participatory Design	34
6.1.3 Development of the design methods	35
6.2 Participatory Branding Concept	36

PART 2: TESTING

7.0 TEST	40
7.1 Concept Testing	42
7.1.1 Case studies	42
7.1.2 Testing Workshops & Observations	42
7.2 Findings Summary	48
8.0 CONCLUSION	50
8.1 Reflections	52
8.2 Implications	52
8.2.1 Implications for practitioners of Participatory Branding	53
8.3 Contributions	54
8.4 Further Research	54
9.0 REFERENCES	55
10.0 APPENDICES	61

List of Figures

Figure 1.0: Thesis Problematisation	5
Figure 2.0: Research Process	10
Figure 2.1: Structure of the Thesis	15
Figure 4.0: Finding Summary	28
Figure 6.0: Participatory Design Process	35
Figure 6.1: Conceptualisation of Participatory Branding	36
Figure 6.2: Participatory Branding Concept	37
Figure 7.0: Participatory Branding Workshops	43

*1. Setting the scene:
introduction*

1.0 SETTING THE SCENE: INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest assets of Business Designers lies in their ability to see issues from different perspective and obtain a holistic viewpoint on the subject (Jones, 2015)¹. Thus, the pre-step of our thesis was to submerge ourselves in the topic of branding in order to obtain an overall comprehensive perspective. By connecting it with the topics of startups and design, the *Problematization* of this thesis was formulated.

1.1 WHAT IS OUT THERE: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON BRANDING

Gerzema & Lebar (2008) affirmed that the *“traditional business models and strategies marketers have used for generations no longer work”* (p.2). Their failure is not only due to the fact that we live in a highly technological world, but also that consumer behaviours have changed profoundly, requiring a new vision of brand management (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008).

There are many trends supporting this shift: the ongoing alterations in the economy, shifts in the patterns of how people consume, the fast pace at which markets are changing, obliging companies to steer through turbulent oceans to stay flexible, competitive and attractive

to their customers (Wheeler, 2006). In addition, the phenomenon of globalisation has drastically shortened the product life cycle, forcing companies to look for more competitive and sustainable tools - such as brands (Gromark et al, 2005).

The value and perception of branding in business has shifted significantly as well: brands are no longer seen as tangible assets nor signs of ownership or recognition of status. Instead, they have gained a strategic key role (Gromark et al, 2005; Simões and Dibb, 2001; Wong and Merrilees, 2008), and have become the representation of values, culture and knowledge of companies (Abbing & van Gessel, 2008).

This shift in perception of brand as a strategic asset has also increased its value as an intangible asset of a company and a true differentiator in the marketplace (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008). In today's ideas-driven economy, the measure of a firm's worth is less about its hard assets and more focused around its inventiveness and intellectual capabilities, such as brands (Ibid.). Following the current trends, we can see that 62% of the value of world's business now lies in intangible assets (Accenture, 2014). According to Gerzema & Lebar (2008), the total worth of 250 most valuable global brands is \$2.197 trillion (exceeding the GDP of France). As one of the world's leading brands (Interbrand, 2014), Coca Cola's brand is valued to \$77.8 billions, representing 45% of the company's market capital. (Coca-Cola- HBC, Annual Financial Report, 2013).

With the increasing importance of brands as business assets, rises their position in the business development. Instead of being the last step of the process, we see more brand oriented business models built around the brand, inspiring both ideation and further actions (Abbing & van Gessel, 2008).

¹ Interview. See in Chapter 4.

On the other hand, consumers' desire for brands has diminished widely in the last years. One of the main reasons is the brand oversaturation of the market and lack of differentiation. According to Ernst & Young, nowadays 80% of brand failures are caused by the lack of differentiation (Ernst & Young cited in Tait, 2004). According to Schwartz's *Paradox of choice* (2005), conversely to what could be expected, too many options produce paralysis, instead of liberation. The excess capacity in media and possibilities to personalize content has resulted in less differentiation among the brands on the market (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008). "*Brands have blurred into a sea of sameness*" (Ibid, p. 21), resulting in unsatisfied consumers who are overwhelmed with excessive but undifferentiated choice.

Another reason for the decrease in desirability for brands can be identified in the lack of creativity. In a cluttered market, brands that cannot differentiate themselves by being better, need to be more creative in order to penetrate the above-mentioned market. By not being creative enough, brands will observe a decline in brand awareness and differentiation (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008).

In addition, new trends suggest consumers' refusal to be commoditized. Therefore, brand strategists need to find new ways to evolve their brands, adapting to consumers' needs (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008). Brands that want to be successful need to permanently lead, adapt, surprise, innovate, evolve, and respond (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008). Branding has therefore become the tool to keep brands alive and adaptive (Brbaklic & Kent, 2014).

Technology, and social media in particular, has greatly influence brand's relationship with consumers as well: in our society, people's commune around social media is now seen as the '*new normal*' (Strauss, 2014). Past generations were socializing around

things they believed in (i.e. institutions, corporations, religions or nations). However, in the age of overwhelming and disruptive media economy, we are experiencing a shift: people gather around social media, questioning everything and having nothing to believe in and emotionally engage with. According to Strauss (2014), brands can take on this opportunity and assume an important role: fill in the void by creating something that consumers can build emotional equity with. In order to do so, companies need to be authentic, empathise with consumers and engage in conversations with them, instead of focusing only on increasing the sales. By filling in the void and creating a belief ecosystem for the consumers, brands can build a lasting and profitable relationship with their customers.

Furthermore, according to the research published by Hyper Island University (Hyper Island, 2015) a new era in business is dawning, following this trend. Through social media and digital platforms, users and consumers are learning to engage in conversations and give feedback as they have never done before. They clearly expect brands to express clear sets of values and purposes. Consumers are more likely to buy when they feel that brand or business is driven by a purpose that resonates with them (Ibid.). Companies are starting to understand that a strong sense of purpose will be a competitive advantage as consumers are no longer buying what companies do, but why they do it. In the near future, companies will become purpose-driven instead of being only growth-driven.

1.2 PROBLEMATISATION

According to Gerzema & Lebar (2008), we live in a society gripped by an existential anxiety and through the continuous research for meaning, creativity has also become an '*economic force*' that is

changing and driving the work industry. Since design is understood as a creative work itself, it directly implies a change within its field as well: design should no longer be seen as a matter of a '*professional priesthood*' (Brown, 2008) and creativity and creative works are no longer only under the domain of creative people (Kelley & Kelley, 2013). Designers should no longer disappear into their studios to do the creative work and then present it to the clients as the outcome of a secret process (Armstrong & Ferracina, 2013). Thus, the design process needs to respond by moving from consumption to participation (Brown, 2009), involving people in the process to solve problems with them instead of for them (Sanders & Stappers, 2014). According to Brown (2008), another important shift has occurred: design has shifted from being one of the last steps in the development process focusing primarily on aesthetic to a valuable competitive asset for companies. This could be seen in the new trend of hiring designers in a more strategic positions by big corporations (i.e. GE, P&G) (Wong & Merrilees, 2008).

In this new mindset, design takes on a strategic role. By understanding the users' needs and wants, design is able to create new forms of value, both for the company and the users. This new value is often created together with the users, through the practice of co-creation and participation (Sanders & Stappers, 2014).

Furthermore, nowadays, the economies of every country are greatly hit by the forces of globalisation and regulation (Blank, 2013). There is a clear disruption in the job market, even in the established industries where many positions are diminishing. Thus, the growth of employment in the 21st century will have to come from new ventures. Therefore, it is crucial to contribute to creation of an environment that fosters their success and growth, leading to a positive impact on employment and GDP: "*The creation of an innovation economy that is driven by the rapid expansion of startups has never*

been more imperative" (Blank, 2013, p.4).

Fortunately, the advances in technology and easier access to information creates a favorable conditions for new venture development. In particular, easier access to web services, cheaper technology that is easier to deploy, availability of new data enabling for new business models (Zwilling, 2013). The rising amount of venture capital invested in startups also highlights their importance as a new type of company for the future (i.e. New York 13.3 % rise in investment in last 10 years; PWC, 2013).

What startups need, however, are new tools and practices suited for their culture of learning and discovery (Dorf & Blank, 2012). This is further supported by the fact that the MBA programmes around the globe are changing their curriculum as well in order to be more responsive to the needs and issues of new venture (Blank, 2013). Thus, a new form of management approaches designed for specific needs of startups is required.

The '*Lean Startup*' (Ries, 2011) is currently the most widely accepted approach for startups, suggesting iterative and incremental business development. Due to its success amongst new ventures, it is becoming a new strategy for the 21st century organisation (Blank, 2013), adopted by companies such as GE or Intuit to trigger innovation. Whilst the '*Lean Startup*' approach tends to be seen as a new form of strategy, it puts very little focus on branding, and the "*contemporary management literature on entrepreneurship neglects corporate communication to a great extent*" (Geissler & Will, cited in Bresciani & Eppler, 2010, p. 357).

In addition, other existing branding literature covers topic not yet highly relevant for startups, "*such as brand architecture, revitalizing,*

associations, detentions, globalization” (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010, p.357). However, startups have specific branding needs caused by their lack of resources and internal structures as well as the fundamental need to build a reputation and find clients (Ibid.). In addition, *“if startups or new ventures are not able to establish their corporate brand in the market within a relatively short time frame, they disappear from the market”* (Timmons, cited in Bresciani & Eppler 2010, p.357).

Thus, there is an opportunity in the branding practice for a new brand building approach designed for the specific character of startups as an organisation of its own (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010), not just a smaller version of large organisations. Supported by the shifting role of design as a strategic tool for business, it uncovers a possible opportunity for Business & Design to contribute to the practice of branding for startups.



Figure 1.0: Thesis problematisation

1.3 PURPOSE

As Business Designers, we have the ability to bring design practice into business in order to create innovative and novelty approaches to solve complex problems. Often, this is achieved by using design's ability to empathise with humans in order to involve people in the design process; to move from consumption to participation. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to find out how could the participatory approach in design be connected and turned into an opportunity for branding for startups.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Ultimately, we aim to answer the research questions defined as follows:

- 1. Can we use the competences of Business & Design in order to create a new branding approach for startups? If so, how?*
- 2. What would be the role of Business Designer in this context?*

2. Methodology & Methods

2.0 METHODOLOGY & METHODS

The Business & Design mindset led the whole research process of this thesis. Therefore, the following chapter explains the design process that shaped the structure of this thesis as well as the research process and methods undertaken.

2.1 APPROACH

As stated by Cross (2006) in the book *'Designerly ways of knowing'*: *"The underlying axiom of [the design] discipline is that there are forms of knowledge peculiar to the awareness and ability of a designer, independent of the different professional domains of design practice"* (p.100). With particular focus on the Business & Design discipline, we can conclude that our value lies in our ability to apply design process, our peculiar knowledge, into different (business) contexts. Design process affects the way we think and work: the context changes, however, the process remains the same. Therefore, as a Master Thesis in Business & Design, our research process and approach followed the design process and the way how designers work. By doing so, one can see this thesis as the final 'design' and the research process as the 'process of designing'.

As suggested by Cross (2006), designers have their own specific ways of knowing and doing research, defined as the *"'designerly' ways of knowing, thinking and acting"* (p.22). Following the design process, designers possess a problem frame and explores the problem's

implications while investigating possible solutions (Schön, 1983). This allows for *'learning by doing'* and meaning making through direct experiences and hands-on learning (Kolb, 1984). Through learning by doing, designers engage in a *"reflective conversation with the situation"* (Schön, cited in Cross 2006, p.19) allowing for a continuous process of learning where designers are able to reframe and reflect upon their work throughout the whole process (Schön, 1991).

This circular approach reflects the iterative character of the design process and distinguish it from the linear problem-solving approach where the researcher states and defines the problem (Schön, 1991). Instead of specifically studying the problem as scientists do, designers investigate the given problem by trying out different solutions (Lawson, cited in Cross 2006, p.6). Designers *"define, redefine and change the problem-as-given in the light of the solution that emerges from their minds and hands"* (Cross, 2006, p. 7), highlighting again the iterative character of the design process as well as the *'co-evolution'* of the problem and solution as defined by Cross (2011).

Design process is characterised by three strategic aspects coming from the field of design thinking: it takes a broad approach to the problem; it refuses to accept narrow problem criteria; it let designers to frame the problem in a somehow personal way (Cross, 2011). In this iterative and partially personal process, designers follow a structured process plan. However, often, the direction of the process plan is shaped by the possible solution that arose during the process and caught their attention (Cross, 2011). Designers tend to nimbly try out several solutions to identify the one that solves the given problem the best (Schön, 1991) as *"what is needed to know about the problem will only become clear when designers try to solve it"* (MacCormac, cited in Cross 2006, p.32).

As implied from the discussion above, there is no universal pre-defined version of the design process as it is always somehow personalised depending on the designers and the context they are working in. However, it always possesses the characteristics discussed above of being iterative and open-ended.

The design approach followed in this thesis can be described as an iterative design process, characterised by uncertainty, where we engage in a '*reflective conversation with the situation*' (Schön, 1983). Often, we followed "*parallel processes*" (Lawson, cited in Cross 2011, p.35) of apprehension to solve the same design problem at the same time in order to obtain a broader approach and avoid being restricted by the problem criteria (Cross, 2011).

By roving for knowledge in different fields, our research can be defined "*as an exploration, rather than a search*" (Cross, 2006, p.44). Due to the designerly nature of our work, the direction of our process was shaped by the research objectives as well as the experiences and insights that we have discovered along the way. Our directions were changed several times; thus, based on Cross (2006), we followed an ad-hoc rather than systematic approach.

Based on the nature of our study and our way of working, we conducted qualitative research. Qualitative research is defined as any kind of research that does not produce findings through statistical procedures or means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) but through an interpretative approach of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Furthermore, it is conducted in the phenomena's natural setting (Ibid.) and can be seen as '*naturalistic*', '*ethnographic*', and '*participatory*' kind of research (Kirk & Miller, 1986). The researcher focuses on discovering the experiences and perspectives of the participants, using means of interviews and observations techniques

and then conducting an interpretative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

2.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process of this thesis followed the characteristics of the design process discussed above. The design process used in this thesis (see Figure 2.0) was based on the model of '*Creative problem-solving*' by Wallas (1926) consisting of four stages: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. As a result of our empirical process, these phases were then modified to: *Immerse*, *Discover*, *Ideate*, *Conceptualize* and *Test*, where both, *Ideate* and *Conceptualise*, correspond to the illumination step of Wallas.

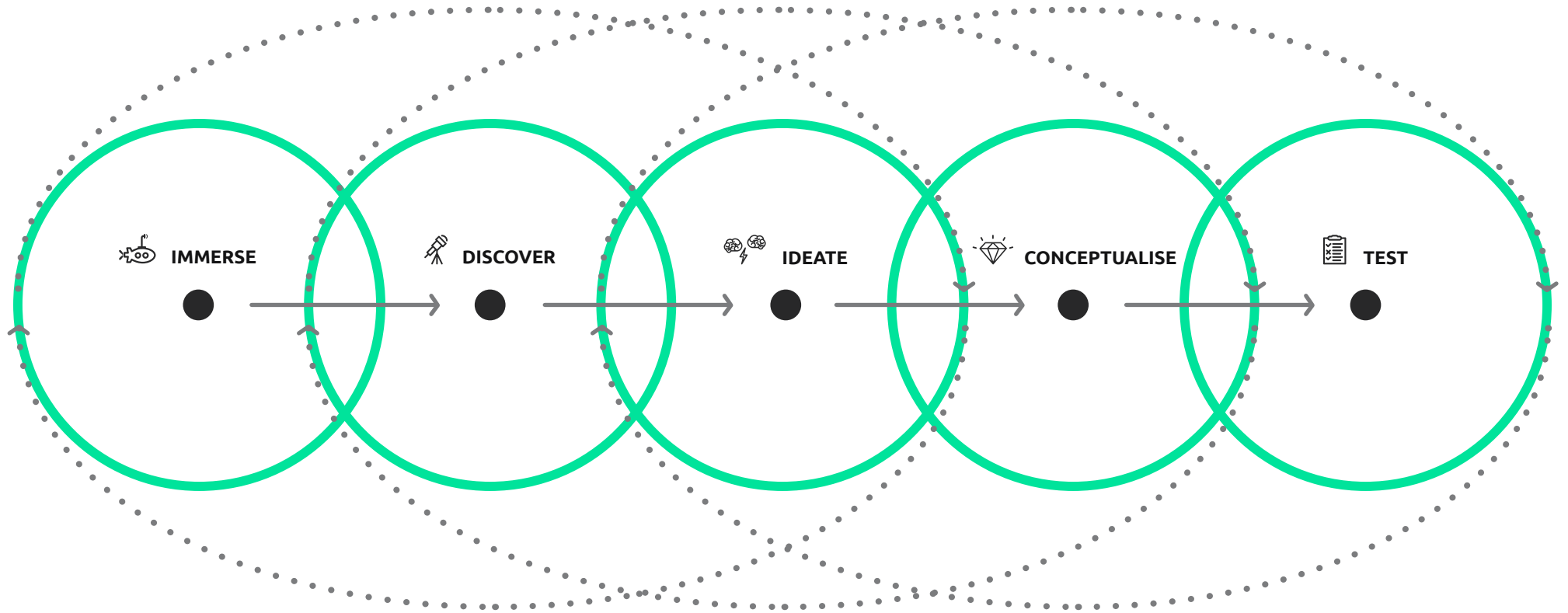


Figure 2.0: Research Process

IMMERSE

We began our research by fully immersing ourselves into the topic through secondary desk research. This included analysis of already existing data which had been previously collected by another researcher for different purposes (Devine, 2003). The data analysed came from a variety of sources from academics and practitioners in the field studied as well as related trends and hot topics in the industry. We aimed to explore different viewpoints in order to obtain a full picture of the topic that we were dealing with. Findings from this stage were then used as a source for our Problematisation as well as to further shape our research.

DISCOVER

Interviews were chosen as, according to King (2004), they are generally perceived as the most common method of qualitative data gathering. In qualitative research, the purpose of an interview is to “gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 1983, p.174). In this phase, we interviewed variety of experts and practitioners. As suggested by King (2004), this allowed us to see the research topic from their perspective and to understand how and why they come to have this particular perspective.

We conducted 15 interviews in total: 9 face-to-face interviews and 6 Skype interviews. Since branding is the main field of investigation, majority of the interviewees came from this field or from intersection of branding and design.

The character of the conversation followed the typical characteristics of a qualitative research interview defined by Kvale (1983): a low degree of structure imposed by the interviewer; a preponderance of open questions; a focus on specific situations and action sequences

in the world of the interviewee rather than abstractions and general opinions (For guiding questions see Appendix 1.2).

According to King (2004) no interview is ‘relationship-free’. Therefore, our interviewees were seen as active participants of our research, actively shaping the course of the interview (Ibid.).

Sampling

Convenience sampling was used as the main method for recruiting participants for the qualitative interviews. It is defined as a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled because they are convenient source of data (Lavrakas, 2008) that is readily available and easy to contact (Higginbottom, 2004).

Geographical proximity was crucial due to the budget restrictions that did not permit for travel. Where this was not possible, the interview was conducted via Skype (internet video conference service).

Sample profile

The research part of our thesis was focusing on three areas: branding, startups and Business & Design. Therefore, our sample consisted of 15 participants, a mix of researchers, academics, practitioners and experts representing each of the fields studied. The more detailed profiles of each interviewees can be found in Chapter 4.

IDEATE

Findings from Immerse and Discover phase were then brought together and used as a basis for ideation and brainstorming during the Ideation phase. This phase is described as the “creative process of generating, developing and communicating new ideas, where an idea is understood

as a basic element of thought that can be either visual, concrete, or abstract” (Jonson, 2005, p.613).

During this phase, we conducted a synthesis of all our notes and findings from the secondary desk research and expert interviews. These were then used as a basis and inspiration for our ideation session. Through discussion and brainstorming, we generated a number of ideas for possible concepts, linking together our findings about branding, startups and their relevance for Business & Design. As a result, the preliminary concept of Participatory Branding was born.

CONCEPTUALISE

“Identifying and refining important concepts is a key part of the iterative process of qualitative research” (Schutt, 2011, p.328). Thus, in this phase, the Participatory Branding concept from the previous phase was discussed with fellow Business Designers and experts from the industry through a series of brainstorming sessions. Through iterative loop of feedback and refinement, the preliminary concept of Participatory Branding was developed and framed.

TEST

Testing is an inevitable part of the design process, allowing designer to validate the idea and refine it by reducing the idea itself to an exact form (Wallas, 1926). As we aimed to keep our thesis as industry relevant as possible, we decided to test our concept of Participatory Branding with its users (in our case, the startups). This was done by an iterative cycle of prototyping, testing and refinement, as suggested for this purpose by Brown (2008).

For our testing, we probed for the multi-case study approach and

collaborated with 6 startups in Gothenburg. Based on Curedale (2013), this allowed us to treat these 6 startups as a collection of case studies representing the startup community. Case study can be defined as an organisation, or groups and individuals operating within or around an organisation (Hartley, 2004). Thus, rather than a research method, case study was perceived as a research strategy (Hartley, 2004) in order to *“understand the context and user as well as to frame insights”* (Curedale, 2013, p.59).

Testing was done through both, individual and group workshops (mainly due to organisation and practical issues) in order to observe and obtain in-depth feedback about the concept. Thanks to the startup character of the case studies, we were able to test directly with the CEO’s and usually the rest of the company as well. Often, other investors and stakeholders were invited too.

All the workshops were done face-to-face and took place in the meeting rooms in HDK or in the workshop space of the startup arena G-Lab 21 in Gothenburg.

Sampling method

Snowball sampling was used as the main method for finding suitable companies for testing. This technique gathers research subjects by identification of an initial subject who then provides names of other actors (Lewis-Beck et al, 2004). In our case, the initial subject was a managing partner in Gothenburg’s startup arena G-Lab 21 who got us in touch with 6 of the startups who were interested in taking part in our project.

Sampling profile

The sample consisted of 6 startup companies located in Gothenburg, Sweden. They represented a diverse sample of B2B/B2C companies providing both, product and service. The sample was predominantly

male, coming from various backgrounds: 4 companies were Swedish, 2 had more international character. More detailed profiles of each startup company can be found in Chapter 7.

2.3 ANALYSIS

The analysis of our findings was an ongoing, iterative process that followed the designerly way of thinking. As suggested by Schutt (2011) analytic insights were constantly tested against new findings, initial problems and concepts were refined, more data was collected, we interacted with the data again, and so the process continued in a loop.

Space played an important role in this process where we displayed, stored and constantly re-analyse all the emerging finding. We set up our *'Thesis office space'* in HDK with 4 empty walls. As the time progressed, these walls quickly became filled with our findings and insights. Each new finding, idea or insight was framed and organised on the walls according to our research topics and used for regular iterative ideation session.

2.3.1 RESEARCH PHASE ANALYSIS

From our desk research, interesting findings, trends and theory were mapped out and organised using the *'Scan Cards'* (developed by bespoke, see Appendix 1.1). These were then clustered together by topic, yielding the first insights and shaping the direction of our further research.

With regards to the interviews, all of them were recorded and analysed using the analysis framework we developed (see Appendix 1.3). We used the *'on the fly'* approach (proposed by Schutt, 2011) where data were scanned through and analysed based on their importance for our research purpose.

2.3.2 TESTING PHASE ANALYSIS

At the end of each workshop of our Testing phase, we held a feedback session with the participants where we obtained their feedback about the process and facilitation of the workshop. These were then critically discussed, compared with the insights observed during the workshop and analysed between us to see what we can do better next time. As a result, we modified the workshop for the next case company and repeated the feedback process until we were satisfied with the results (having little or none negative feedback from the participants).

2.4 LIMITATIONS

First and foremost, as researchers we were both fully involved in the research process and according to Maxfield (1930), researchers are always biased, being subjective only to a certain degree. We tried to keep our objectivity by seeking for feedback from people external to the study but familiar with the fields of Business & Design and branding. During our analysis process, we have discussed our findings both with our supervisor and mentors. This process helped us to understand what data was truly relevant to our work and what could have been neglected. Furthermore, prior to testing of our concept through case studies, we have presented it to practitioners from the branding industry as well as tested it with fellow students from the Business & Design programme. All these meetings helped us to critically reflect upon our work and refine it.

Secondly, further limitations could have been caused by the fact that the full study was conducted during a limited period of 16 weeks and the case companies were all based in Gothenburg, Sweden. Lastly, all the case studies were conducted in English; since none of the

participants or researchers were English native speakers this might have hindered our communication to a certain degree.

2.5 ETHICS

By conducting empirical research involving participants, the ethical code of conduct was on a high priority of our research. This was ensured by following *'The Research Ethics Guidebook'* (2015) principles:

- We ensured quality and integrity of our research by being honest and transparent about our process and the data gathered.
- We sought informed consent from all the participants by signing an agreement and code of conduct.
- We respected the confidentiality and anonymity of our research respondents if asked to do so by not disclosing their name and business idea.
- We made sure that our participants participated in our study voluntarily, without being forced by third parties.
- Our research was independent and impartial by staying true to our aims and not getting influenced by interests of third parties.

Source: Economic and Social Research Council (2015) *'The Research Ethics Guidebook'*.

2.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the flow of the thesis follows the design process. Overall, this thesis is structured in two main phases where the Phase 1 is seen as more of an academic investigation whereas Phase 2 is focused more on practice-based testing.

Phase 1 includes the secondary & primary research and aims to answer the first research question: *Can we use the competences of Business & Design in order to create a new branding approach for startups? If so, how?*

The aim of the Phase 2 is to test and prototype the concept in order to fully frame it and validate it with the final users. In addition, it seeks to answer the second research question: *What would be the role of a Business Designer in this context (Branding for Startups)?*

**PHASE 1:
RESEARCH**

Secondary Desk
Research

Interviews with
Branding
Practitioners

Interviews with
Startup Experts

Interviews with
Business
Designers

Participatory
Branding
Concept

**PHASE 2:
TESTING**

Testing with
fellow students

Feedback from
Branding
Practitioners

15 workshops
with 6 startups

Participatory
Branding
Concept refined

Figure 2.1: Structure of the Thesis

3. Immerse: *secondary desk research*

3.0 IMMERSE:

SECONDARY DESK RESEARCH

This thesis is based on three main topics of branding, startups and Business & Design. Thus, in order to answer the research questions, secondary desk research combining a variety of sources was conducted to obtain an overall understanding and definition of these fields. Rather than building a theoretical framework, the aim of this phase was to create a supportive academic background for our concept. Findings from this phase relevant to the context of this thesis are summarised below, organised by the three main topics of this thesis.

3.1 BRANDING

There is no single, unified definition of what a brand is. The viewpoints vary from seeing brand as a specific promise of value (Dolak, 2004); a concept shared by society to identify a specific class of things (Neumeier, 2006); a more opportunistic way to see our world that reinforces our identity and self-worth (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008). The most general and simple description can summarise brand as a set of associations that a person has with a company, product, service, individual or organisation (Design Council, 2013).

According to Aaker (1996), these associations can be intentionally crafted by a company (brand identity - how the brand managers want the brand to be perceived) or be outside company's control

(brand image - how the brand is actually perceived by consumers).

If a brand results from a set of associations and perceptions in people's minds, then branding can be described as "*an attempt to harness, generate, influence and control these associations to help the business to perform better*" (Design Council, 2013, p.1). In other words, it is "*the process by which a company, a product name, or an image becomes synonymous with a set of values, aspirations, or states*" (Vaid, 2003, p.12). Branding is perceived as the tool that makes the organisational strategy visible (Olins, 2008); it is considered a marketing resource, a design resource, a communication resource and a behavioral resource (Ibid.).

Even though the practices and aspects of branding may differ depending on the industry sector, the basic principle of being clear about what you stand for always applies (Design Council, 2013). Thus, defining and building a distinctive brand identity should be the key focus point in branding (Aaker, 1996). Aaker further defines brand identity as a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organisation's members (Ibid.).

Brand identity consist of a core and an extended identity (Ghodeswar, 2008). The core identity is the main essence of the brand; it consist of a set of associations that are considered timeless and shall remain constant as the brand moves across new markets and products. The core identity includes elements that make the brand both unique and valuable and it is central to the meaning and success of a brand (Aaker, 1996). The core identity is build upon the answers to following questions (Ibid.):

- What is the soul of the brand?
- What are the fundamental beliefs and values that drive the brand?
- What does the organisation behind the brand stand for?

The extended identity is build upon the core and it includes *“brand identity elements organised into cohesive and meaningful groupings that provide texture and completeness”* (Aaker, 1996, p.88); thus, it adds details that help to portray what the brand stands for (Ibid.).

Framing brand’s core values, mission and vision lies in the heart of brand identity development (De Chernatony & Dall’Olmo Riley, 1998). Values describe brand’s culture and what it stands for (Kenny, 2014), they are the shared values through which a customer creates an emotional bond with the brand (Urde, 2003). In addition, they are the underlying principles that should determine the appearance of tangible brand symbolism visible to customers (Kapferer, 1997). Brand’s vision portraits what the organisation ultimately strives for - it drives brand positioning, personality and subsequent relationships (De Chernatony, 1999). Brand’s mission describes organisation’s core business activity, both now and projecting into the future (Kenny, 2014).

Having a clear and defined brand identity is crucial for success of a brand; it aids to maintain coherence in brand communication and improves brand performance (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2013). It connects the firm to its customers by offering them a base on which they can start building a relationship with the brand (Aaker, 1996). In addition, it guides employees behaviour and creates focus for the organisation (Ibid.). A strong brand offers several advantages such as entry barriers to competitors, opportunity for brand extensions, price premiums, greater market share, sales and profits (Hirvonen

& Laukkanen, 2013). Additionally, a well defined advantage in the mind of a customer suggests an increase of a firm’s market share (Aaker, 1996). Ultimately, brands are considered as one of the most important sources of competitive advantage a firm can have (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

3.2 STARTUPS

Term *‘startup’* has become a widely used buzzword, characteristic for newly established companies that are in the phase of development and research for potential markets (Blank, 2013). Startup is defined as a form of company, a partnership or a temporary organisation searching for a repeatable and scalable business model (Ibid.). It is seen as *“a human institution designed to create a new product or service under conditions of extreme uncertainty”* (Ries, 2011, p.54).

Uncertainty is a dominant characteristic of the startup culture: to open up a business that is an exact clone of another one diminishes this risk and thus, this organisation cannot be seen as a startup, regardless of the size or business model (Ries, 2011).

Startups tend to have a survival mentality of operating with limited resources in terms of capital (Abimbola, 2001), know-how (Rode and Vallaster cited in Bresciani & Eppler, 2010), and time (Wong and Merrilees, 2008). This has a direct impact on startups’ perception of branding: the fight for survival pushes them to stress immediate sales over investment in branding. The lack of know how and adequate information causes that startups fail to recognise that branding greatly influences both business survival and growth, putting branding far away from a high priority issue (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2013).

Furthermore, this is often caused by the fact that startups believe that branding is only for big businesses, not small ones (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2013). However, in case of startups, the branding function starts even before the company is established since the corporate brand values are similar to entrepreneur's own values (Juntunen et al., 2010). They tend to emerge on their own rather than being consciously planned and then developed (Laukkanen, 2011). The character of entrepreneur is crucial in building and acquiring recognition for startup's brand; in fact, the entrepreneur is often the brand himself/herself (Krake, 2005).

3.3 BUSINESS & DESIGN

To begin with, since Business & Design is a newly born field, no literature has been written to this date that would explain what exactly Business & Design is. In this thesis, the perception of Business & Design is derived from the concept of Design Thinking, defined by Brown (2008) as *"a methodology that imbues the full spectrum of innovation activities with a human-centered design ethos"* (p.86). Thus, focus on direct observation of what users need and want, like and dislike is central to Design Thinking. In Business & Design, the same methodology is applied: design methods are used both to understand users' needs and perspectives as well as to actively involve users in the process of meaning making.

This is further supported by the argument that design is the creation and re-creation of meaning (Jahnke, Krippendorff & Verganti, cited in Sköldbberg and Woodilla, 2013). Often, the act of meaning creation is performed by inviting people that *"we serve through design to participate with us in the actual designing"* (Sanders, 2005, p.4). Users, the *"non-designers"* (Sanders & Stappers, 2014, p.1), are seen as co-creators and participants in the design process as they possess *"unique*

and relevant expertise" (Sanders, 2005, p.4). By actively involving all stakeholders in the design process, design becomes a participatory practice, where designers design together with the users, and not for the users. (Sanders & Stappers, 2014).

Participatory design encompasses a broad range of creative activities conducted with the end users. The original aim of this approach was to ensure that the final outcome meets the final user needs and its usable (Muller, 2007). The role of designer in the participatory design process is then to act as a facilitator or visual translator of users' ideas (Kolko, 2012).

As suggested by Muller (2007), in order to bring users' knowledge and perspective into the process, one has to do more than just *"add users and stir"* (p.3). According to Sanders & Stappers (2014), tools need to be used in order to help the non-designers to express the tacit and latent levels of their knowledge. These levels of knowledge are defined by Polanyi (1958) as the kind of knowledge that is not captured by language and can only be seen in action. Thus, a set of visual and semantic tools are used for this purpose: *"Another way of moving end-users into unfamiliar and hence reflective experiences is to ask them to use 'projective' or artistic methods to report on their experiences and needs. In one sense, these methods produce another kind of language of expression"* (Muller, 2007, p.39).

Furthermore, these methods help participants to bring their tacit knowledge into the design process - *"not just their formal and explicit competencies, but those practical and diverse skills that are fundamental to the making of things as objects or artifacts"* (Bjögvinsson, 2012, p.103).

3.4 SUMMARY

To summarise, with an increasing importance of brand as a strategic and financial asset for a company, there is a need for a new approach that would address the specific branding needs of startups instead of just treating them as smaller versions of large organisation. By observing the Participatory Design approach in the design practice, there is an opportunity arising for intervention of Business & Design into the branding for startups problematic.

*4. Discover:
interview findings*

4.0 DISCOVER: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Following the Immersion phase, primary empirical research was undertaken in order to obtain a variety of viewpoints from professionals in the topics studied (branding, startups, Business & Design) as well as enhance the real-life application of this thesis. This was done through 15 qualitative interviews with focus on branding and their experience with startups as the main field of investigation. The following chapter introduces all the experts interviewed, followed by a summary of the findings, organised by the topics studied (branding, startups, Business & Design). These findings were then combined with the findings from the previous phase *Immerse* and formed the basis for the next *Ideation* phase.



Michael Eichelberger
Brand Strategist at Diiifferent, Munich
15th February 2015
Skype interview
Referred to as “I. 2, Diiifferent”



Daniel Erixson
Brand Strategist, Brandclub, Gothenburg
17th February 2015
Face to face interview
Referred to as “I. 3, Brandclub”

4.1 INTERVIEWEE PROFILES

BRANDING



Darryl de Necker
Online Communication Strategist at Zooma,
& Partner at Beerbliotek, Gothenburg
14th February 2015
Face to face interview
Referred to as “I. 1, Zooma”



Jonas Gromark
Project Leader for Brand Orientation at
Label, Gothenburg
19th February 2015
Face to face
Referred to as “I. 4, Label”



Eric Sanderoth & Rosita Johnson
Partner & Project Manager, Art Director at
Mockup at Gothenburg
23rd February 2015
Face to face interview
Referred to as “I. 5, Mockup” & “I. 6,
Mockup”



Jenny Wikman
CEO & Project Leader at Mockup,
Gothenburg
18th March 2015
Face to face
Referred to as “I. 10, Mockup”

BUSINESS & DESIGN



Mia Hesselgren
Brand Strategist at BVD, Stockholm
3rd March 2015
Skype interview
Referred to as “I. 7, BVD”



Brian Jones
Creative Director at Supersonic, San
Francisco
26th February 2015
Face to face interview
Referred to as “I. 11, Supersonic”



**Thomas von Krusenstjerna & Harald
Hellichius**
CEO & Creative Director at Paradigm
Strategic Communication AB, Gothenburg
12th March 2015
Face-to-face interview
Referred to as “I. 8, Paradigm” & “I. 9,
Paradigm”



Heléne Koole
Junior Brand Strategist at Design Bridge,
Amsterdam
26th February 2015
Skype interview
Referred to as “I. 12, Design Bridge”

DESIGN



Bruno Velloso
Interaction Design Lead at Gravity, Munich
17th February 2015
Skype interview
Referred to as “I. 13, Gravity”

STARTUP EXPERT



Christof Kiefer
Business Development & startup expert
at Junique/ FAB, Berlin
16th February 2015
Skype interview
Referred to as “I. 14, Junique/ FAB”



Piotr Motyka
Founder Cogmo Media & Marketing and
startup specialist, Lancaster
27th February 2015
Skype interview
Referred to as “I. 15, Cogmo”

4.2 FINDINGS DISCUSSION

The main findings are summarised below, organised under the headings of the three fields of investigation: branding, startups and Business & Design.

4.2.1 BRANDING

Branding is about people

There was a general consensus amongst all the branding agencies interviewed confirming the evolvement of branding further away from marketing and forming its own distinctive practice: *“Branding is not about marketing, segmenting and those different concepts anymore. Branding has everything to do with people”* (I.8, Paradigm).

Additionally, with the decreasing power of advertising, well-defined brand was seen as the best way to attract and communicate with the desired target group. According to Hesselgren, building relationship with people is the key activity and challenge of branding in order to create brand loyalty, get people involved in the brand and bring it alive (I.7, BVD). In this context, brand was defined as *“a shared belief between company and consumer”* (I.8, Paradigm).

Furthermore, there was a noticeable increase in the importance of involving people (both employees and customers) in the brand building process (I.3, Brandclub & I.10, Mockup). This is done mainly through workshops aimed to obtain a common understanding of the core of the company. Brand Strategist of Brandclub further highlighted the importance of involving employees. By doing so, the employees, as the brand ambassadors, accept the brand before it comes out in a ‘packaged way’ and are more likely to align their behaviour and live the values accordingly (I.3, Brandclub).

The importance of well defined Brand Essence

Having clear mission, vision and brand values was generally seen as the prerequisite step for strategy development: *“Brand strategy has to match the expectations between mission, vision, goals & budget”* (I.1, Zooma).

Brand core essence was understood as the brand’s *raison d’être* that is build upon social aspects and symbolic dimensions that are timeless; it is the shared ‘belief why’ that goes beyond the product and must be shared with both consumers and producers. (I.8, Paradigm). Brand essence creates the identity frame for the brand allowing company to be flexible when responding to the market whilst still reflecting what the brand originally stood for. This is inevitable: unless the company is the market leader (i.e. Apple, IKEA), it will need to adapt its strategy with regards to its customers and the changes in the marketplace where it operates (I.8, Paradigm).

The role of visual identity

The role of logo and the visual identity was described by the Creative Director of Paradigm as *“the visual fragment that helps the decoder to understand what the brand is doing and what sort of motives is the brand doing it for”* (I.9, Paradigm). Thus, a well-defined brand essence is a prerequisite for the visual identity development.

Thanks to human’s ability to decode and associate stories from colours and patterns, design has the ability to communicate brand’s core through its visual identity: *“All people or humans are already brand experts to begin with: our biology is already prepared. And that capability of human beings of being able to decode things that are around us is something that makes us all prepared to decode and associate different colours, patterns and actually build a story based on a fragment of your brand”* (I.8, Paradigm).

The value of a strong brand from a company perspective

Overall, having a well defined brand essence, both internally and externally, has a positive effect on the overall business performance: *“The companies that see branding as their underlying philosophy are generally more successful, they understand their real values”* (I.4, Label). It enhances long term thinking and acting, competitiveness and the ability to sustain market change (Ibid.). As suggested by Kiefer: *“Having a defined brand helps startups to better understand the business issues early on, properly define themselves and take better strategic decisions, define a clear target, get in touch with the customers early on and understand their pains”* (I.14, Junique/FAB).

According to Paradigm, well defined and perceived brand gives company the ability to charge the premium price. Paradigm defines brand as a *“product’s or company’s perceived reputation”*. This is the key objective on which brand can capitalise on in terms of charging the right amount of money (I.8, Paradigm).

Having employees that are part of and stand behind your brand was identified as highly important during our research. Thus, having a clear vision and culture can also help to attract the right talent and hire the right people that will fit into the company (I.14, Junique/FAB). In addition, it also aids to attract the right kind of clients enhancing company’s portfolio (I.15, Cogmo).

Challenges of Branding today

Gromark identified a strong brand essence that can endure market and organisational changes as one of the biggest challenges for branding agencies nowadays (I.4, Label).

It includes the challenging creative process behind the coming up with ideas that are relevant and authentic for a company and can be used as a unique selling proposition (I.2, Diiferent). In addition, due

to the brand oversaturation of the market (caused by globalisation, digitalisation, so much available so easily), it is more and more challenging to find the specific and authentic shared belief to build strong relationships upon (I.8, Paradigm).

This is followed by a new type of consumer who represents another challenge: thanks to the easy access to information, the modern consumer is more educated than ever (I.1, Zooma) as well as more averse towards advertising with a shorter attention span (I.5, Mockup). In addition, modern consumer no longer shows its status through its consumption choices (I.7, BVD). Combining all these factors, gaining loyalty and building long-term sustainable customer relationship is now harder than ever.

4.2.2 STARTUPS

Challenges of branding for startups

According to Kiefer, due to the fast pace and lean approach of startups, time and money are usually the biggest challenge for them (I.14, Junique/FAB). The financial issue affects a lot of startups' business, mainly as there is a lot of pressure from investors in the early stages. Investors represent an inevitable support but at the same time, they can push startup towards profitability and mainstream (Ibid.). Branding, however, often becomes forgotten as it is not perceived as the core business activity: "*Branding often comes after setting the core business together however it is necessary and needs to be designed at the beginning of the process*" (I. 14, Junique/FAB).

In addition, by interviewing Kiefer, we found out that if startups turn out to be successful, they can grow very quickly in a very short period of time (50 - 100 people in a year) (I.14, Junique/FAB). Furthermore, as they heavily rely on interns, they face high fluctuation of people.

Thus, strong defined brand core and culture is inevitable at this stage (Ibid.).

Often, the main challenges for branding agencies is to explain the importance of well-defined brand essence and make startups understand that branding goes beyond visuals: "*Visuals are actually the last step of the branding process*" (I.2, Diiifferent). Framing brand essence is an inevitable step that should be done as early as possible. According to de Necker: "*Startups need to get the foundation right: mission and vision statements need to be 100% right, so you know where you want to go, and you know what you want to do in order to get there. Even if you are two people, you should be sure that everyone knows what you are talking about. Vision & mission statements need to be written down*" (I.1, Zooma).

As further supported by the Creative Director of Paradigm, "*when startups grow bigger, they tend to forget why they've burned, why they've started: they forget their own, true story. They are doing what they are doing because they have no time to think about it. Those startups really need to think about it and write it down because they need to go back to it: need to find their drivers*" (I.9, Paradigm).

Recommendations for branding for startups

When asked about recommendations for branding approach for startups, Wikman suggested to turn the business model around branding in order to make it a core part of the business activities whilst preserving the role of a branding agency (I.10, Mockup).

Brand Strategist of Brandclub stressed the importance of the implementation step in order to show startups how to use their brand in their everyday life in business (I.3, Brandclub). This is needed to make sure that all the activities that startup does are the right activities that are benefiting and living up the values & vision. He further suggested a practical and hands on approach that will

really involve startup in making of its own brand (Ibid.).

4.2.3 BUSINESS & DESIGN

The value of Business designer

According to Koole, by being able to empathise with people through the use of design, Business Designers can better understand consumers and users (I.12, Design Bridge). Another core value of Business Designer was seen in their ability to ask the right questions (I.11, Supersonic & I.12, Design Bridge). Combining these two core competences, Business Designers can always bring an outsider perspective and investigate topics and interrogate people through the use of empathy and design methods (I.11, Supersonic).

Jones also highlighted how Business Designers do not solve clients' problems by giving them a ready-made solution (I.11, Supersonic). Instead, by facilitating the process, they help their clients to frame the solution themselves. Using this technique, clients feel like they solved the problem by themselves, increasing the feeling of ownership (Ibid.).

The strategic approach of Business & Design

In recent years, the domain of application of design has changed. In general, design was understood as a strategic tool that is present during the whole branding process and gives face to the strategy (I.3, Brandclub and I.6, Mockup).

According to de Necker, design has a strategic role: it implies process and strategy, and not only execution (I.1, Zooma). The execution work follows the strategic one: according to de Necker & Eichelberger, content dictates design (I.1, Zooma; I.2, Diiifferent). De Necker also adds that from his designer perspective, before starting to design anything, he wants to know what the brand aims

to communicate and what the brand stands for. He also states that *"Production is not where the value is anymore"* (I.1, Zooma). Designers (and Business Designers) that are able to develop strategic and intellectual work can directly affect the client's business and his/her decisions on where to invest money (Ibid.).

Furthermore, according to Eichelberger, the brand strategist needs to be somehow a designer that uses design as a strategic tool in the branding process (I.2, Diiifferent). By using user-centered design methods, strategist is able to understand the user's perspective and develop brands that are relevant to people (Ibid.).

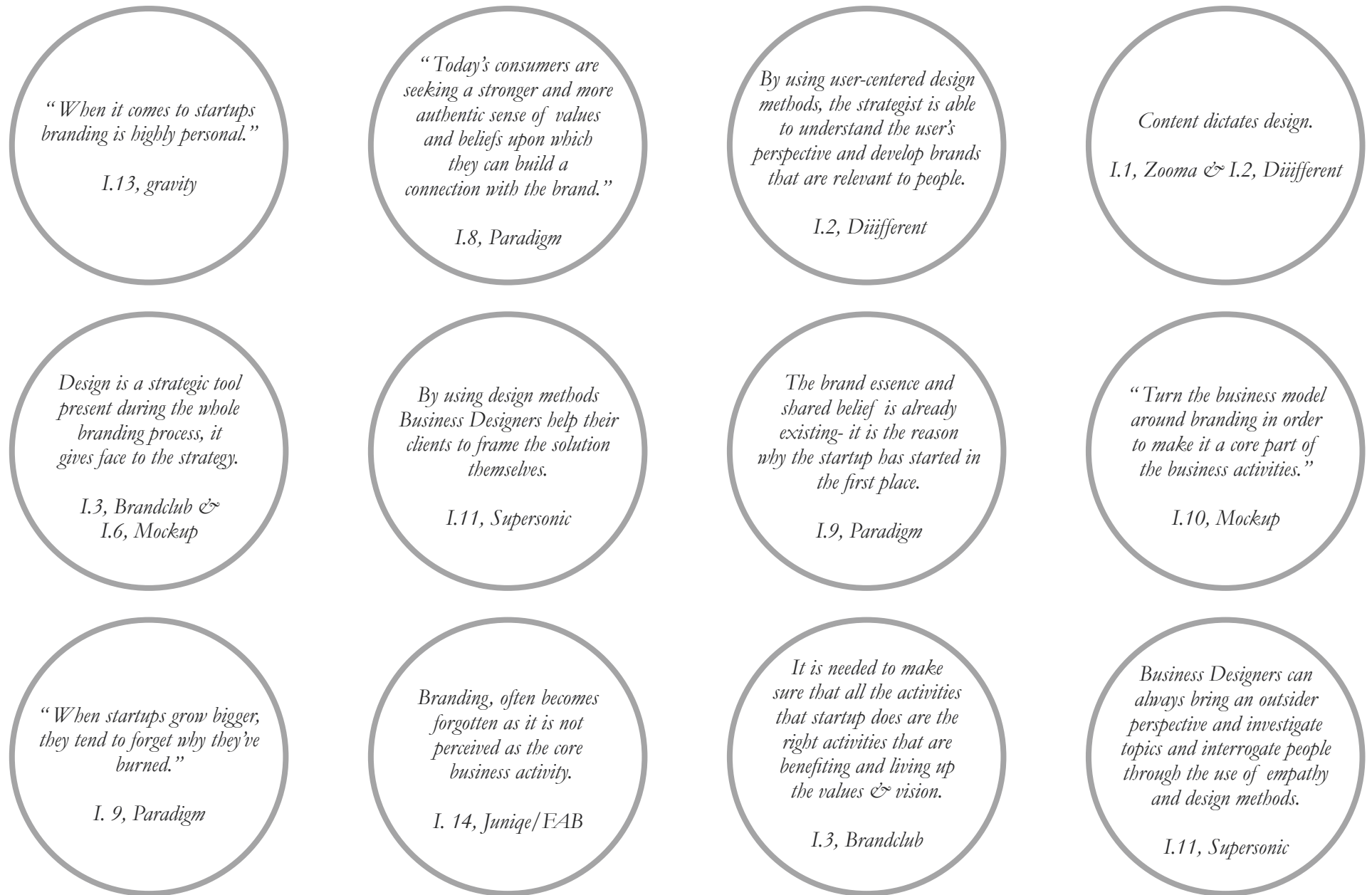


Figure 4.0: Finding Summary

*5. Ideate:
discussion*

5.0 IDEATE: DISCUSSION

In this phase, both secondary and primary findings from the previous two phases were brought together and used as a starting point for our ideation. Through discussion and brainstorming, various ideas and concepts were generated by linking the findings about branding and startups to the context of Business & Design. As a result, the central concept of this thesis was born.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF THE PREVIOUS FINDINGS

By mapping out the recent trends in branding, a clear shift in the way brands are seen and valued within a company was identified: brands have gained more strategic role directly affecting the success of a company. They are being perceived as the competitive and sustainable tool (Gerzema & Lebar, 2008); an intangible asset and a true differentiator in the marketplace (Ibid.); the representation of values, culture and knowledge of companies (Abbing & van Gessel, 2008). Having a strategic approach to branding was proven to improve company's ability to deal with market forces (Simões and Dibb, 2001). It helps company to accurately assess how well its brand is doing in relation to competitors, enabling effective responses to emerging competitive threats and ensuring that potential market openings are noticed and properly gauged (Wong and Merrilees, 2008).

Furthermore, brands have become the main mean of building

relationship with consumers which was often named as the biggest challenge for branding (I.7, BVD). Nowadays, companies are challenged with a new type of market savvy consumer (I. 1, Zooma) who is more averse towards advertising and traditional forms of marketing (I.5, Mockup). Today's consumers are seeking a stronger and more authentic sense of values and beliefs upon which they can build a connection with the brand (I.8, Paradigm). This '*shared belief why*' is the brand's raison d'être that lies in the heart of all branding practices (I.8, Paradigm, I.5, Mockup, I.3, Brandclub). It is the essence of the brand that goes beyond the product, build upon social aspects and symbolic dimensions that are timeless (I.8, Paradigm). It creates the identity frame for the brand allowing company to be flexible when responding to the market whilst still reflecting what the brand originally stood for. If executed well, this belief is shared with customers resulting in a long term customer relationship and loyalty (I.8, Paradigm). Therefore, a well-defined and authentic brand essence driven by a higher societal purpose is a prerequisite for any further branding activity, regardless of the size of a company (I.2, Diiiferent).

While the importance of well defined brand for the success of a company is evident, most of what is empirically known comes from the context of large multinational companies that have built their brands over decades (Juntunen, 2010), causing many small firms to believe that branding is only for big businesses (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2013). However, this is a very inadequate representation of the market reality since small and medium-sized enterprises represent 99, 8% of all companies in Europe (European Commission, 2008). With such a high number, they represent a significant contribution to employment and national economies and thus, their particular needs cannot be neglected.

This is especially important in the context of ever-increasing number of startups that are being established everyday all over the world (The Economist, 2014). However, little or no attention to branding has been found in the startup literature and resources to this date. If so, it is usually just a simplified process of the same branding practices that were designed for large organisations (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010). However, startups are not just a smaller or simpler versions of large organisation (Ibid.); they are living organisms of their own with distinctive culture, needs and characteristics. In addition, due to the lack of resources of large companies, the same approach is simply not feasible. Thus, there is a clear need for a new, unconventional approach for branding for entrepreneurs (Boyle, 2003).

Interestingly, in the case of startups, the most crucial part - the brand essence - is already existing. In majority of the cases, branding is highly personal (I.13, Gravity) and, in fact, the entrepreneur is the brand (Krake, 2005). Thus, the brand essence and shared belief is already there, it is the reason why the startup has started in a first place (I.9, Paradigm). In addition, according to Juntunen et al. (2010) corporate identities are often emanated from the daily operations conducted by the internal personnel, rather than being something that was consciously planned and then developed. Therefore, rather than creating the brand from scratch, there is a need to articulate it and frame it by inviting users to participate in the brand building process.

This is where the role of Business & Design comes into the play. As suggested by Eichelberger (I.2, Different), branding does not work without design: *“I believe that a brand strategist needs to be somehow a designer and know how to use design strategically as a tool.”* Furthermore, Business Designers, in particular, have the ability to ask the right questions and use design methods in order to uncover the unique

elements of a company (I.11, Supersonic). Rather than giving a pre-made solution, Business Designers help their clients to solve their problems by themselves - they act as a facilitator and consultant in the process (I.11, Supersonic).

Furthermore, involvement of users in the design process is very present in the design practice thanks to design’s ability to empathise and connect with the user (I.12, Design Bridge). Designers are beginning to see people they serve through design as participants in the design process instead of just the consumers of the final product (Sanders, 2014). It was proven that by inviting final users to participate in the design process from early on, the outcome tends to be better and more feasible (Ibid).

Similar trend can be seen within the branding practice as well where the branding agencies are starting to involve companies more and more in the brand building process (I.3, Brandclub & I.10, Mockup). Involving management board is crucial especially in the first steps of the branding process when the brand essence is defined (I.2, Different) This is done mainly through hands-on workshops with management and employees in order to discuss the core of a company, create a common understanding, loosen up and initiate the creative process (I.10, Mockup). Ultimately, they aim to increase the feeling of ownership and adoption of the brand (I.3, Brandclub).

5.2 IDEATION

As implied from the discussion above, branding has become the new strategic tool crucial for a long term survival of a company. However, most of what is known is based on large multinational organisation with a budget and capabilities that are not reachable

by small enterprises. This is true in particular for startups that are operating under conditions of extreme uncertainty affecting their culture and business operations. Considering the exploding number of startups established everyday, there is clearly a need for new, innovative branding approach that corresponds to the particular needs and challenges of startups. Thanks to the small size and close proximity to the entrepreneur, the character of startups is highly personal. In fact, often the entrepreneurs are the brand themselves. Thus, rather than developing the brand essence from scratch, what is really needed is to find ways how to enable startups to articulate and frame their brand essence that is already existing inside them.

Thanks to design's ability to empathise with people, Business Designers are equipped with design methods that help to facilitate this process of articulation. Combined with their rigour and understanding of business, they are able to further translate them into the branding language. As suggested, the involvement of employees in the branding process is crucial; by taking the designerly point of view, one can understand startup's owner and employees as the users of the brand as they will use it as a guide in their everyday business behaviour. Thus, by following the Participatory Design approach, Business Designer can use design methods in order to involve startups (as the final users of their brand) in the design and development process of their own brand.

This argument has become the base stone for the concept that is central to this thesis. Resulting from its character and origins, this concept was named Participatory Branding. It is defined as a new approach to branding that uses design methods in order to involve startups in the branding process of their own brand. This, in turn, increases the sense of ownership of the brand (Kolko, 2012) and, consequently, the likelihood that the startup will actually use it in

their business strategy, as it was developed with them, and not for them (Sanders & Stappers, 2014). The usage of design methods allows for engagement of all the stakeholders in the development process, combining different people's ideas into unified concepts that have direct, practical value for the company (Muller, 2007).

According to Muller (2007), *"the mix of novelty and creativity in Participatory Design practice emphasises change - in technology, working practices or relationships"* (p.16). Similarly, the idea of Participatory Branding is to disrupt the way branding is done at the moment: to shift the creating power to those who will actually use the brand without taking away the importance and role of the branding agencies.

*6. Conceptualise:
Participatory Branding*

6.0 CONCEPTUALISE: PARTICIPATORY BRANDING

This research phase further develops the preliminary idea of Participatory Branding born in the previous *Ideation* phase. In this chapter, the central concept of this thesis, Participatory Branding, is developed and conceptualised. In addition, each individual phase of the concept is explained and described.

6.1 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

6.1.1 SETTING BRAND OBJECTIVES

Definition of our own branding process was a prerequisite step for the development of the Participatory Branding concept. This was needed in order to find a feasible branding process that could be adapted into our context as well as define the branding objectives of the concept.

We began by analysing existing processes and models from the branding literature (i.e. Aaker, 1996; Neumeier, 2006), branding practitioners (i.e. Bloom Consulting, 2009) and our interviews with branding agencies (i.e. Paradigm, Brandclub, Mockup) (For the full analysis, see Appendix XX). Even though they all differed in details and naming, no other major discrepancies were found. Instead, we identified a repeating pattern of five steps:

1. Brand Audit: understand & analyse the company
2. Brand Essence Development: mission, vision, values

3. Brand Positioning: connect brand to its ecosystem & start a dialogue
4. Brand Strategy: strategic recommendations for implementation
5. Design Brief: development of visuals to bring the brand alive

These phases identified were then used as a basis for our concept and set the branding objectives of each phase. By combining the branding process with the startup context, the branding objectives for each phase were identified as follows:

1. Understand the startup
2. Frame the brand essence (values, mission and vision)
3. Connect the brand essence into the brand ecosystem (customers, competitors, other stakeholders)
4. Turn it into a brand strategy
5. Design the visual identity & communication material

For the Participatory Branding concept, the last phase “Design the visual identity & communication material” was intentionally left out. The reason behind this is the fact that the concept of Participatory Branding is focused primarily on the development of the brand essence. Since “*content dictates design*” (I.1, Zooma), the design step was seen as a secondary execution part that follows up upon the development of the brand essence (I.8, Paradigm).

6.1.2 FINDING THE APPROACH: PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

The discipline of Participatory Design was the departure point and guiding process for the concept of Participatory Branding. Participatory Design sees participants as the end-users of the final product; with relation to our concept, the final users are the CEO and employees of the startup who are going to use the brand in their everyday behaviour and business decisions.

The process of participatory design is described by Sanders and Stappers (2014) as a four phases iterative process (see Figure 6.0). It starts with the *'pre-design phase'*, in which research of the users is conducted with the aid of probes. Designer is seen as a researcher and user as a research subject. In the second phase, the *'generative phase'*, designer engages users in an act of co-creation through the use of tools and toolkits. In the third phase, called *'evaluative phase'*, designer and user are engaged in activities of prototyping to *"assess the effectiveness"* (Ibid., p.11) of what was designed in phase 2. The last phase is the so called *'post-design phase'*, in which designer becomes again a researcher and investigates how users use the final product (Ibid.). Overall, this process can be considered a design led one where users are seen as partners, and not only subject of a research. (Ibid.).

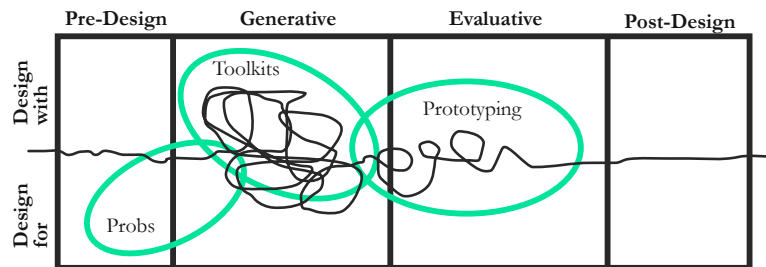


Figure 6.0: Participatory Design Process
(based on Sanders & Stappers, 2014)

The preliminary idea of Participatory Branding is based on the involvement of startups in the act of making. This act does not aim to perform a reproduction (Sanders & Stappers, 2014), but instead, it involves construction and creation of the brand essence meaning. Non-branding people participate in the creation of their company's brand essence through the use of specific design methods developed for this purpose (See 6.1.3). By accessing the branding process in its

early stage, non-branding people (the entrepreneurs) can express and define their own ideas (Sanders, 2010) about how they want their brands to be. The approach of Participatory Design and Sanders & Stappers' (2014) process became the basis and set the format and approach for the Participatory Branding concept.

6.1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN METHODS

As suggested earlier, the value of Business Designers lies in their ability to apply design methods into various business contexts. In addition, design methods are used as probes and triggers to support the participation and achievement of the desired outcomes (Sanders & Stappers, 2014). They are defined as *"a combination of tools, toolkits, techniques and/or games that are strategically put together to address defined goals"* (Sanders, 2010, p. 2).

Thus, a set of design methods, specific for our contexts was needed to help startups to participate in the branding process, support the facilitation and achievement of the desired outcome. Based on the branding goals identified, a set of design methods had to be developed in order to support achievement of these goals. These methods then became the methods of application of the Participatory Branding concept.

Once again, the process began by scanning through existing methods in branding literature (i.e. Neumeier, 2006), design methods toolkits (i.e. de Bont et al, 2013), business methods for startups (i.e. Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010; Gray et al, 2010) as well as methods we were introduced to during the interviews (i.e. I.2, Diiifferent; I.10, Mockup; I.11, Supersonic).

As a next step, these methods were organised accordingly to corresponding branding goals identified earlier. These were then used as inspiration material for the ideation and brainstorming session

in order to develop our own methods specific for the contexts of startups and objectives of the Participatory Branding concept. Before testing the methods with the final users (startups), they went through a first round of iteration with fellow Business Designers in order to test their feasibility and practicality. The application and testing of the methods is explained in the Chapter 7 and further details are provided in the Appendix 2.0.



Figure 6.1: Conceptualisation of Participatory Branding

6.2 PARTICIPATORY BRANDING CONCEPT

Based on the discussion above, the Participatory Branding concept was framed into 4 phases. The overall approach and format of the concept derived from Participatory Design, the branding goals of each phase were given by our branding process objectives and the desired outcome was achieved through the use of design methods.

The first three phases are executed through workshops, as “workshops are a kind of hybrid or third space, in which diverse parties communicate in a

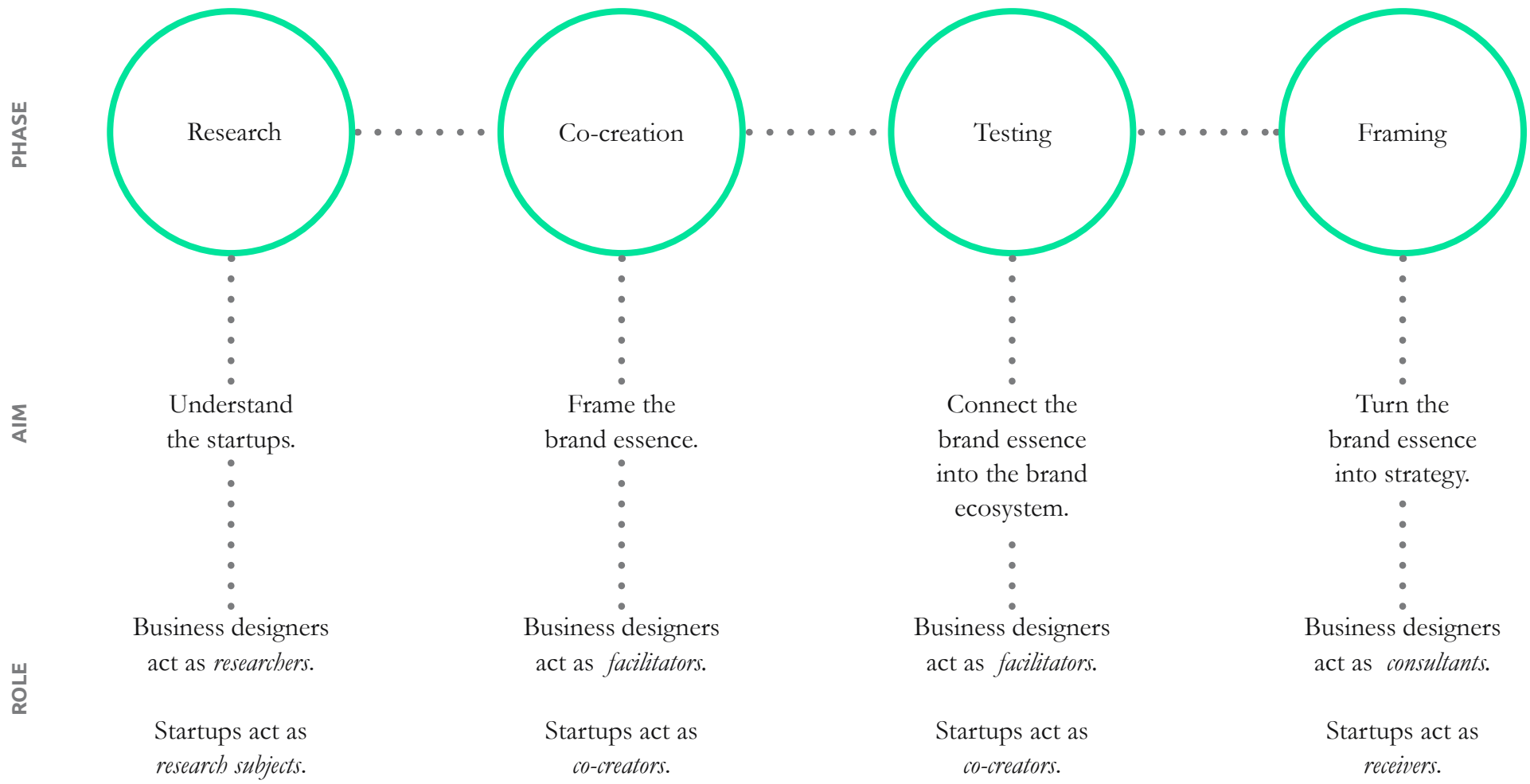


Figure 6.2: Participatory Branding Concept

mutuality of unfamiliarity, and must create shared knowledges and even the procedures for developing those shared knowledges” (Muller, 2007, p.20), while the last phase is a wrap up session. The four phases of the Participatory Branding concept have different aims, and consequently differ for set up, location, and number of participants.

Participatory Branding process starts with the first phase (*Kick Off* workshop) that helps Business Designers to understand startup’s stage of business development as well as its perception and understanding of branding. This phase is built upon Sanders & Stappers (2014)’ *pre-design phase*’, where the aim is to understand people’s experiences in the context of their lives. Thus, in this phase, startups are treated as research subjects whereas Business Designers take on the researcher role. Their role is further supported by probes and material given to participants that has been designed to provoke or elicit responses (Sanders & Stappers, 2014).

The aim of the second phase (*Me, Myself & I* workshop) is to generate and frame brand’s mission, vision and values as Laukkanen (2011) argues that having a clearly defined brand core is the foundation of a strong corporate brand and a prerequisite step for any branding activities. This phase corresponds to Sanders & Stappers’ *generative phase*’ and aims to generate ideas, insights and concepts (2014).

In this phase, startups are seen as active co-creators of meaning, while Business Designers are acting as process facilitators translating users’ ideas into ‘branding language’.

Design methods specifically designed for this workshop were given to startups in order to help them explore themselves as a company. As suggested by Sanders (2010), these methods will help participants to feel more comfortable with the creative and generative processes. In addition, the methods were used to support

participants in expressing their ‘tacit knowledge’ (as defined by Polanyi, 1958) about their brand that cannot be expressed in words. From a facilitator perspective, these tools give them the ability to empathise with the workshop participants and gain a deeper understanding of them (Sanders, 2005) and their brand.

The purpose of the third phase (*Get Out, Speak Up* workshop) is to prototype the brand through everyday interactions with other people and test whether the brand is being perceived as desired. This phase follows directly the brand essence developed in the previous step which is considered as an identity framework defined by Aaker (1996), within which the brand moves and adapts over the time as the interactions change.

Prior the workshops, startups are asked to fill in a set of blank Stakeholder cards (see Appendix 2.4) in order to map out their stakeholders ecosystem. Starting from small interactions, startup will be then able to communicate its brand correctly (staying true to its values, mission and vision) in more business-like interactions with stakeholders identified earlier. According to Velloso (I.13, Gravity) this step is crucial since strategist should design how a brand interacts, not only how the logo is used.

This phase is built upon Sanders & Stappers’ *evaluative phase*’ in order to “*assess the effectiveness*” (2014, p.11) of the outcome of the previous workshop (brand essence). Similarly to the previous phase, participants are seen as active co-creators and Business Designers are facilitating the process.

The process is concluded with the final session (*Wrap Up*) that aims to summarise the findings from the previous phases and discuss the possibilities of turning them into a viable branding strategy. This step is inevitable in order to make sure that employees and management team know how to act with the brand strategy and how

to implement it in everyday tasks (I.3, Brandclub). During the final meeting, Business Designers act as consultants advising the startups. Brand Brief is used to guide the discussion as well as to provide a summary of the work previously done together.

The brand brief will then become the *'guiding star'* for taking future brand related decisions since all the brand identity elements should be congruent in order to make the brand successful (as suggested by De Chernatony, 1999). For instance, when the startup will need to commission the realization of visuals (logo, website, ads, etc.), the brand brief will be delivered to the graphic designer and used as a starting point for creating a coherent visual identity.

The involvement of users is central to the concept of Participatory Branding. Therefore, in order to fully frame the concept, testing was an inevitable next step to validate and obtain user feedback on each individual phase.

7. Test

7.0 TEST

The last part of our thesis consisted of testing the Participatory Branding concept in practice with 6 startups based in Gothenburg. This was done in order to try the concept early and often in order to learn about its strengths and weaknesses (Brown, 2008) as well as to find out whether there were any new directions that could have been further investigated. We followed iterative cycles of testing and refinement for the duration of two months. As a result, we collected findings that helped us to answer our research questions as well as provided a set of implications for practitioners in the field of branding, startups and Business & Design.

It is important to note that the core of Participatory Branding concept is based on *'involving brand users in the branding process through design methods'*. However, these methods can vary depending on the Business Designers facilitating the process as well as the context of the startups. Thus, the design methods used in our testing phase are our interpretation of the concept and do not necessarily have to be used for every application of the Participatory Branding concept. Nevertheless, the aims and objectives of each phase remain the same, it is just the methods of achieving them that might differ.

7.1 CONCEPT TESTING

As stated earlier, the Participatory Branding concept was tested with 6 startups based in Gothenburg. The testing phases took place in two locations: HDK and the startup arena G-Lab 21 in Gothenburg. The testing phases were conducted through both, individual and group workshop, in order to observe and obtain in-depth feedback about the concept, as well as the methods developed. Thanks to the startup character, we were able to test directly with the CEO's and usually the rest of the company as well.

7.1.1 CASE STUDIES:

ACT by HEART

Startup based in Gothenburg
2 founders, Swedish
Business idea: personal consulting
B2C
Service

KPD

Startup based in Gothenburg
1 founder, Swedish
Business idea: platform for mentoring kids with dyslexia
B2C & B2B
Service

REKRY

Startup based in Gothenburg
2 founders, Swedish
Business idea: platform for recruitment
B2B
Service

TRINE

Startup based in Gothenburg
4 people, 2 founders and 2 employees with international backgrounds
Business idea: crowdfunding platform for solar energy
B2C
Service

WYRM

Startup based in Gothenburg
3 people: 1 founder and 2 employees, French
Business idea: an instant messaging app for gamers
B2C
Product

COMPANY Y

Startup based in Gothenburg
1 founder, Swedish
Business idea: non disclosable
Non disclosable
Non disclosable

7.1.2 TESTING WORKSHOPS & OBSERVATIONS

In the following section, each workshop and design methods used are presented and explained. In addition, overall observations and findings from each phase are described and discussed followed by an overall reflection upon the testing of the concept.

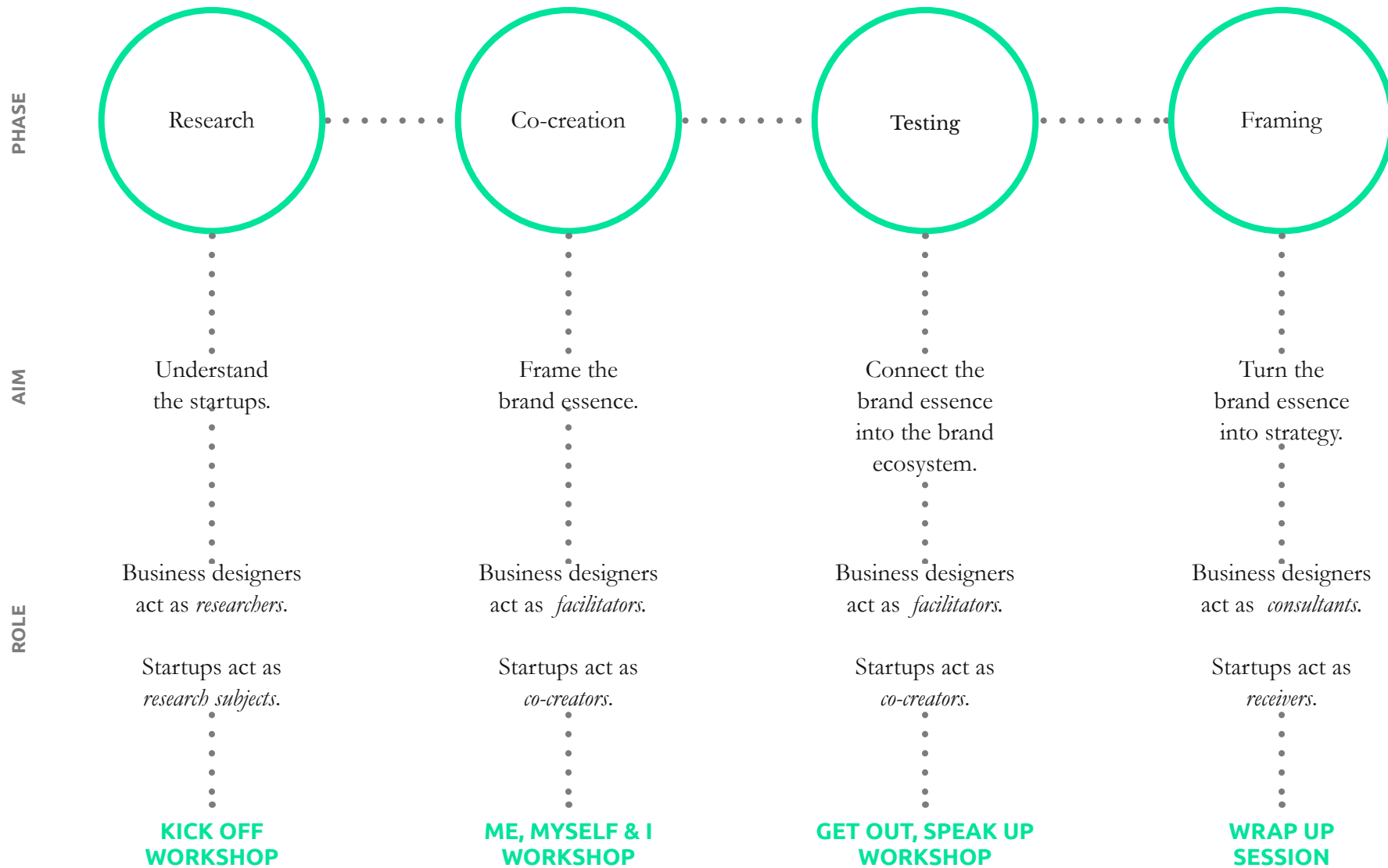


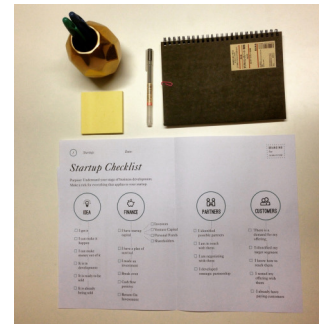
Figure 7.0: Participatory Branding Workshops

KICK OFF WORKSHOP

As stated earlier, the *Kick Off workshop* aims to help facilitator to obtain a better understanding of the startup. The purpose of the methods used in this phase is to map out startup's current stage of business development and their understanding of branding. The methods in this stage were a mixture of design and business methods for startups. The reasoning behind this was to start with something that startups should be familiar with in order to make them feel more familiar and comfortable with the creative process.

This workshop was tested individually with each startup and every workshop was considered as an iteration loop. Overall, the workshop was perceived well and acted as a good *'icebreaker'* to get to know the startup, their style of working and dynamics within the team. Based on the feedback and our observations, the methods were changed several times; mainly by simplifying the structure and the language in order to make them easy to use for people without a business background.

For more details on the methods used, please see Appendix 2.1.



Pictures from *Kick Off Workshops*

ME, MYSELF & I

Me, Myself & I workshop was designed in order to help startups to tap into their inner core and really reflect upon their values, mission and vision behind their brand. The aim of the methods used was to help participants to express their tacit knowledge - their inner drivers, through the use of visual material and metaphors. In addition, the workshop set up allowed startups to get out of their box of usual thinking and challenge their ideation process by experiencing different viewpoints.

The workshop starts with an icebreaker exercise in order to introduce all the participants to each other and trigger the energy in the creative process.

The first part of the workshop is focused on the brand values; variety of design methods and exercises are used in order to challenge startup and really questions their values (i.e. *'What you don't want to be?'*; *'Turn your values into business principles'*; etc). The facilitator is present the whole time, listening to startups and translating their thoughts into more brand coherent language.

The second part starts with *'The Nobel Prize'* method where startups are asked to imagine the future in 10 years where they have received a Nobel Prize for their contribution to society. Their task is to prepare a speech explaining what was their contribution and who helped them along the way. By using the Nobel Prize metaphor, startups can better describe the greater purpose of why have they started the company beyond the business goals. As a result, framing of their vision and mission is much easier.

The workshop finishes with a more practical, hands on method that pulls together all the findings from the workshop so far and finishes

the concept through the use of moodboards and personas. As a result, startup creates an analog paper *'brand director'* (See Appendix 2.3) that represents the essence of the brand with the values in his heart and the vision and mission in his brain.

Me, Myself & I workshop was tested in different settings: two groups of two startups together, one startup of three people alone and one startup of one person alone. The main reason was to observe the influence of the setting on the workflow and outcome of the workshop. However, all the workshops were conducted in the startup arena G-Lab 21 in order to get startups out of their regular thinking space and comfort zone.

Based on our testing, we can conclude that group dynamics greatly enhances the workflow, energy levels and the quality of the outcome. Thanks to constant comparison and feedback from the other startup, the results tend to be better and the process was more challenging towards the creative status quo. On the other hand, when the person representing the startup was alone, the level of the discussion and ideation was lower. As there was only one point of view present, it was a monologue more than a constructive dialogue. Therefore the facilitators needed to step in the ideation part more often in order to support the startup person with more ideas and different viewpoints.

Overall, all participants provided a very positive feedback on the structure and purpose of the workshop, especially on the use of the creative methods. They all appreciated the support from facilitators whose role was described as *"translating what we think into the branding language"*². In particular, all the participants appreciated having an analog take out from the workshop in the form of the brand director. The process of hands-on making allowed their brain to rest after four hours of intense work and left them with a tangible product that was summarising all the work they have done that day. By

² Skonblad, workshop participant.

creating it themselves with their own hands, it increased the feeling of ownership over it and the brand essence in general.

For more details on the methods used, please see Appendix 2.2.



Pictures from *Me, Myself & I* Workshops

GET OUT, SPEAK UP

The aim of this workshop is to use the brand essence developed in the previous workshop and connect it to the brand's ecosystem and prototype brand's interactions with them.

Two types of methods are used in this workshop. Prior the workshop, startups are given a set of stakeholder cards in order to fill them with information about their customers, competitors and stakeholders. These are then used as a context in the second method aimed to prototype brand's interactions.

In the second method, participants are asked to act as if they were the brand themselves, communicating their brand essence (values, mission, vision developed in the previous workshop) through everyday interactions. This is firstly rehearsed with the facilitators in order to improve and prepare startup for the task. Then, participants are sent out to the streets and asked to interact with 'random strangers', ideally close to the profiles of the stakeholders identified earlier, as if they were the brand themselves (conveying their values, mission and vision) through everyday questions (i.e. ask for directions, ask for time). After a short interaction, the 'random stranger' is given a 'Perception sheet' (see Appendix 2.6) to rate his/her perception of the brand. These sheets are then brought back to workshop and discussed whether the startup is perceived the way it wants to be and what can be changed in order to convey the right message, especially when interacting with the stakeholder identified earlier.

This workshop was tested individually with each startup in order to fully focus on each specific needs, especially with regards to rehearsing and preparation. They took place in the startup arena G-Lab again thanks to its convenient location in the city center (a lot

of people around to prototype with) as well as to get startups out of their comfort zone.

This workshop was generally perceived as the most challenging and eye-opening one, however the feedback still remained very positive. It was a steep learning curve for startups, their ability to convey the right message and perception improved significantly with each interaction. The biggest learning was to take enough time to rehearse and prepare startup for the interactions as well as show them good examples as the task is quite challenging to begin with.

For more details on the methods used, please see Appendix 2.5.



Pictures from *Get Out, Speak Up* Workshops

WRAP UP

The Wrap Up session is set up as a more traditional consulting meeting in order to summarise all the work done together, obtain feedback and discuss how to move forward. The facilitators act as consultants and help startups to understand how can they bring the brand essence present and alive through everyday business activities as well as advise on how to turn the findings into a viable strategy.

The *'Brand Brief'* is used to summarise the findings and guide the discussion. All the participants showed appreciation for the design of the brand brief. They all agreed that it was designed in a way that invited them to have it hanging somewhere in their office in a place where they could easily look at it, instead of forgetting it in a drawer.

7.2 FINDINGS SUMMARY

Based on our research, we can conclude that the concept of Participatory Branding has worked successfully. All the startups felt satisfied and pleased with the outcome; mainly they all agreed that it felt that it was something that came from them and was not imposed to them by an external body. Facilitators were seen as the people who helped them to articulate their brand essence by turning their thoughts into branding language as well as keeping the workshops fun, energetic and challenging.

With regards to the quality of the outcome, by comparing the brand essence framed during the workshops with the original one startups tried to frame during the first meeting, we could clearly see an improvement in terms of a higher level of uniqueness, differentiation and lower use of buzzwords.

At the beginning of this process, we could feel a noticeable difference between the startups we were working with. We could divide them into two groups: people with a dream and people with only a business idea. In the first case, the brand values were visible to us from the first meeting whereas in the second case, it felt that it would be harder to uncover & frame their brand essence. By the end of this process, we can affirm that as facilitators, we managed to tap into the inner motives of all entrepreneurs, revealing the reason why they have burned for their business and turning them into their values, mission and vision. This confirms that the entrepreneur truly is the brand him/herself as suggested by Krake (2005).

The continuously changing role of us as Business Designers was an important finding during the testing process. With changing character of the workshops, our role was constantly moving between being the facilitator of the process as well as the branding consultant. The character of Business Designer was definitely needed in this process: we were perceived as *"the creative ones"*³ and startups were naturally more likely to get involved in the process as they felt they were doing something different and more creative. At the same time our business rigour and branding expertise was needed in order to navigate the process and generate findings that have a real potential to differentiate the brand and be turned into a viable strategy. Thanks to our designerly ability of meaning-making, we were able to articulate and translate their thoughts and feelings into branding language and frame them in a meaningful way which was often highlighted by the participants.

To conclude, we believe that we succeeded in engaging startups in the participatory process thanks to our experience in conducting creative processes, finding missing information and facilitating the expression of their creativity by leading and guiding them, as well

³Manaberi, workshop participant.

as providing them with frameworks and a “*clean slate*” (Sanders & Stappers, 2008, p.11) to encourage their creative expression.



Pictures from *Wrap Up* Session

8. *Conclusion*

8.0 CONCLUSION

What brought us together in this thesis was our previous experience within branding for startups prior the Business & Design Master. Even though we both had experience from different perspectives (Lucia from Marketing & Branding, Flaminia as a Communication Designer), we both agreed that there was a need for new approach specific for startups. After starting the Business & Design Master and learning about the strengths and competences of this field, we saw possible opportunities for intervention in order to solve this issue which became the leading thought of this thesis.

By following the design process, we started by Immersing ourselves into the topic through secondary desk research and discovering the opinions from experts in the fields studied (branding, startups, Business & Design) through primary research interviews. As assumed, we were not the only ones seeing this need for new approaches for branding for startups. It became clear that the existing branding literature covers topics not highly relevant for startups (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010) even though branding is crucial for them: if startups fail to establish their brand on the market within a short time frame, they disappear from the market (Timmons, cited in Bresciani & Eppler 2010). Moreover, we have argued that the entrepreneur is often the brand himself/herself (as stated by Krake, 2005) and consequently, the construction of the brand simply requires strategic work to frame it.

Furthermore, our research suggested that the field of design is undergoing a major change as design has become a strategic discipline (Brown, 2008; I.1, Zooma; I.3, Brandclub; I.6, Mockup). In addition, we claimed that in the field of Business & Design, design can be

seen as an activity of meaning making (Jahnke, Krippendorff & Verganti, cited in Sköldbberg and Woodilla, 2013), usually performed by inviting people that we serve through design to actively participate in the designing activity (Sanders, 2005).

Thus, the research results provided a positive answer to our first research question, confirming that there is a clear opportunity for Business & Design to intervene in the field of branding for startups by using design as an activity of meaning making and involving people to participate in the design process in order to frame and design their own brand.

This was further supported by the central concept of this thesis: The Participatory Branding. We argued that this concept allows users of the brand (in our case, the startups) to participate in the development of their own brand through the use of design methods.

In order to be able to draw conclusions about validity and feasibility of this concept and provide implications for Business Designers, it first had to be tested with the users. This was conducted during the *Test* phase where we tested the concept through a series of workshops with 6 startups in Gothenburg in duration of 2 months.

Our testing confirmed what was earlier suggested by Krake (2005) that in the case of startups, the brand essence is rooted and coming from the inner and latent motives of the entrepreneur: it is the greater vision of the world, the driver and motivation behind their everyday business activities. Thus, rather than building the brand from scratch, what is needed is to find methods that will help entrepreneurs to express this tacit knowledge and turn it into a brand strategy. Through our research, design methods combined with the

expertise of a Business Designer were confirmed as a solution to accomplish so.

Secondly, by actively involving startup in the designing process of their brand, startup felt that the brand came from them, instead of being imposed to them by an external expert. This, in turn, created a feeling of ownership and a personal bond with the brand, increasing the likelihood that the brand essence will be brought alive in everyday business activities, which was identified as a crucial point for startups by the Brand Strategist of Brandclub (I.3, Brandclub).

Based on our results, we can confirm that the final outcome of the Participatory Branding (the brand essence) was more innovative, unique and differentiable in comparison with what startups had before. This was achieved through the use of design methods that increased startup's creativity and expression of their tacit knowledge combined with the support from Business Designers challenging their ideas, helping them to get out of their box of thinking and, ultimately, framing their thoughts and feelings into the branding language. Thus, the Participatory Branding proved to be a viable answer to our first research question.

The value and role of a Business Designer was clearly seen in our testing. By thinking like a designer whilst having the business rigour needed, we were able to trigger the creative process and ideas of startups whilst ensuring its relevance for the marketplace. Therefore, the role of Business Designer investigated in our second research question, was seen as a constant change between being the facilitator of the creative process and the brand consultant.

8.1 REFLECTIONS

Reflecting back on our research journey, we realised that we had the idea about how the brand essence would look like from the initial meeting, especially in the case of the dream driven startups. We firmly believe that if we would have framed it back then without undergoing the Participatory Branding journey together with them, the outcome would have been considerably different. The main difference lies in the notion of ownership: by actively involving startups throughout the whole branding process and giving them the tools to express their brand essence by themselves, all the participants felt that they have created the brand essence themselves and it was something that was coming straight from their hearts.

The changes in the roles that we, as Business Designer, played during the Participatory Branding process was a learning for us. During the testing phase, we realised that we did not have only one role as a facilitator, but we were actually acting as a consultant as well. We believe that in every participatory activity, the facilitator's role is not only to lead the process, but he/she also needs to bring in expert knowledge when the participants feel that more support and expertise is required. Therefore, it was optimal that both of us had previous experience with branding and startups.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS

With regards to branding, this thesis provides a new branding approach that helps branding consultant & agencies to better package the branding offering for startups. Instead of treating startups as smaller versions of large organisations, branding consultants are advised to treat startups as specific entities of its own and actively

involve them in the branding process since the startups are the brand themselves. The concept of Participatory Branding is suggested as a mean of achieving this and a Business Designer is suggested as an appropriate addition to the team in this matter.

Considering startup specialists (i.e. startup incubators, educational programmes for entrepreneurs etc.), the Participatory Branding concept provides a new way of approaching and involving startups in the branding process. Business Designer is again suggested to assist in this matter.

This thesis also provides a set of implications for the field and practitioners of Business & Design. Firstly, it uncovers a new field of application where Business & Design is needed and can be applied. Secondly, by observing different roles of Business Designers in this process, we identified their specific competences and strengths that cannot be found elsewhere, making them unique and highly relevant for today's world.

Generally thinking about the Participatory Branding concept, we believe that it will not spread by itself. As confirmed by our research, startups often see branding as an expense that they cannot afford. Therefore, we are convinced that startup incubators (organisations aiming to support the growth of startups by providing them with resources and services) and venture capital firms need to teach startups the importance of branding. This yields an opportunity for startup incubators to offer a new service of Participatory Branding workshops held by Business Designers.

8.2.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS OF PARTICIPATORY BRANDING

Even though our testing of the Participatory Branding concept proved to be successful and relatively seamless, there is a set of

implications for practitioners who aim to use the Participatory Branding in the future.

As implied by the nature of the concept, Participatory Branding is all about people. By working with people, there is a high level of uncertainty in the way participants will react to the concept and to the process that needs to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the topics treated are highly personal for the entrepreneurs (since the entrepreneur is the brand) so it does involve many emotions that need to be carefully managed by the facilitators.

Dealing with resistance is another important point for consideration when working with people. We tried to avoid it by keeping clear and structured agenda and carefully explaining the branding goal behind each design method. Based on our experience, we did not encounter any form of resistance. However, it is impossible to generalise and assume that resistance will never arise during the practice of Participatory Branding. Thus, we advise practitioners adopting the Participatory Branding concept to bear in mind that the outcome will highly depend on the participants and how the facilitators can handle them.

Lastly, it is important to note that even though the Participatory Branding concept proved to be successful in our research, it is obvious that it is not the only and ultimate answer to our research question. Instead, it is one of the feasible and viable approaches of how the competences of Business Designer can be applied in branding for startups.

designer working with it in the development of the visual identity (second part of the brand building process).

8.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

From a knowledge perspective, this thesis contributes to the field of Branding by proving a new approach for branding practitioners focused on specific needs of startups. Secondly, the design process followed in this thesis represents a contribution to the Design Research field by providing a design-led scientific research process. In this process, the thesis is considered the final *'design'* and the research process is seen as the *'process of designing'*.

Ultimately, this thesis contributes to the emerging field of Business & Design by identifying a new area of application for the competences and strengths of Business Designer. This is further supported by identifying different roles that Business Designer takes in this process and a concept of Participatory Branding that support this application. In addition, this thesis provides a serie of new design methods, developed uniquely during this thesis that can be further used by other Business Designer for achievement of similar goals (See Appendix 2.0).

8.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the scope of the research study, further research is needed in order to validate the Participatory Branding on a global scale. Since our testing was done with only 6 startups, all based in Gothenburg, we suggest a further research with alternative sets and more international and diverse environment.

In addition, it is needed to explore how the brand brief will be used in further life of a startup and how it will be perceived by the graphic

9. References

9.0 REFERENCES

- Aaker, D.A. (1996) *Building strong brands*, London, Simon & Schuster.
- Aaker, D.A. & Joachimsthaler, E. (2000) *Brand Leadership*, New York, The Free Press.
- Abbing, E. R.; & van Gessel, C., (2008). Brand-Driven Innovation. *Design Management Review*, 19(3), 51-58
- Abimbola, T., (2001). Branding as a competitive strategy for demand management in SMEs. *Journal of Research in Marketing & Entrepreneurship*, 3(3), 97–106
- Accenture (2014). *The Secrets of Seamless Retailing Success*. [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/Accenture-The-Secrets-of-Seamless-Retailing-Success.pdf> [Accessed 12 February 2015].
- Armstrong, R. & Ferracina, S. (2013) *Unconventional Computing. Design Methods for Adaptive Architecture*, Cambridge, Riverside Architectural Press.
- Björgvinsson, E. et al, (2012). Design Things and Design Thinking: Contemporary Participatory Design Challenges. *MIT Design Issues*, 28(3), 101- 116
- Blank, S. (2013) *Why the Lean Start-up Changes Everything*. Available at <https://hbr.org/2013/05/why-the-lean-start-up-changes-everything>. [Accessed 12 February 2015].
- Bloom Consulting (2009) *20 Steps for Branding*. Available at: <http://www.slideshare.net/bloomconsulting/20-steps-for-country-branding>. [Accessed 12 February 2015].
- Boyle, E., (2003). A study of entrepreneurial brand building in the manufacturing sector in the UK. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 12(2), 79– 93
- Brbaklic, D. & Kent, C. (2014) *Branding Roundtable: Challenges & Opportunities for 2015*. [Online]. Branding Magazine. Available at: <http://www.brandingmagazine.com/2014/12/16/16-branding-experts-on-trends-in-15-branding-roundtable-no-7/>
- Bresciani, S., & Eppler, M.J., (2010). Brand new ventures? Insights on startups branding practices. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(5), 356- 366
- Brown, T., (2008). Design Thinking. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(6), 84-92
- Brown, T. (2009) *Change by Design*, London, Harper Collins.
- Coca-Cola, HBC (2013). 2013 Annual Financial Report. [pdf]. Available at: http://www.coca-colahellenic.com/~/_media/Files/C/CCHBC/reports-and-presentations/2013_Coca-Cola%20HBC%20AG%20UK%20AR.PDF [Accessed 10 February 2015].
- Cross, N. (2006) *Designerly way of knowing*, London, Springer-Verlag.
- Cross, N. (2011) *Design thinking*, Oxford, Berg.
- Curedale, R. (2013) *Design research methods, 150 ways to inform design*,

Topanga, Design Community College Inc.

De Bont, C. et al. (2013) *Advanced Design Methods for successful innovation*. [Online]. Design United. Available at: <http://www.3tu.nl/du/en/downloads/ADM-2013-Book-screen-version.pdf?whs-download=ADM-2013-Book-screen-version.pdf>

De Chernatony, L., & Dall'Olmo Riley, F. (1998). Modelling the components of the brand. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32, 1074–1090

De Chernatony, L., (1999). Brand management through narrowing the gap between brand identity and brand reputation. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15, 157–179

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Design Council (2013) *The power of branding*. Available at: 04/02/2015 <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/power-branding>. [Accessed 18 March 2015]

Devine, P. (2003) Secondary data analysis. In Miller, R.L. & Brewer, J.D. (Eds.) *The A-Z of Social Research*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Dolak, Dave (2004). Building a strong brand: brands and branding basics. [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.metro-as.no/Artikler/36BuildingAStrongBrand.pdf>. [Accessed 18 March 2015]

Dorf, B. & Blank, S. (2012) *The Startup Owner's Manual*, Pescadero, K&S Ranch Press.

Economic and Social Research Council (2015) *The Research Ethics Guidebook*. Available at: <http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk>. [Accessed 18 March 2015]

European Commission (2008) *Putting small business first. Europe is good for SMEs, SMEs are good for Europe*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sme/policy_en.htm , accessed 29 March 2010. [Accessed 18 March 2015]

Gerzema, J. & Lebar, E. (2008) *The Brand Bubble*, San Francisco, Jossey- Bass.

Ghodeswar, B. M., (2008). Building brand identity in competitive markets: A conceptual model. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 17, 4–12

Gray, D. et al. (2010) *Gamestorming*, Sebastapol, O'Reilly Media Inc.

Gromark, J. et al. (2005) *Brand Orientation Index*, Gothenburg, Label AG.

Hartley, J. (2004) Case Study research. In Cassell, C. & Gyllian, S. (Eds) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. London, Sage.

Higginbottom, G. M. A., (2004). Sampling issues in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 12(1), 7-19

Hirvonen, S. & Laukkanen, T. (2013) *How brand orientation contributes to business growth in SMEs?*. In Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference. Auckland, December 1-4, 2013.

Hyper Island (2015) *Changes of Tomorrow - Business Trends*. Available at: <http://changes-of-tomorrow.hyperisland.com/business.html> [Accessed 11 March 2015]

Interbrand (2014) *Best Global Brands of 2014*. Available at: <http://www.bestglobalbrands.com/2014/ranking/>. [Accessed 11 January 2015]

Jonson, B., (2005). Design Ideation: the conceptual sketch in the digital age. *Design Studies*, 26(6), 613–624

Juntunen, M. et al., (2010). Corporate brand building in different stages of small business growth. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18, 115-133

Kapferer, J.-N. (1997) *Strategic brand management: Creating and sustaining brand equity long term*, London, Kogan Page Ltd.

Kelley, D. & Kelley, T. (2013) *Creative Confidence: Unleashing the creative potential within us all*, New York, Crown Publishing.

Kenny, G (2014) Your Company's Purpose Is Not Its Vision, Mission, or Values. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2014/09/your-companys-purpose-is-not-its-vision-mission-or-values>. [Accessed 18 March 2015].

King, N. (2004) Using interviews in qualitative research. In Cassell, C. & Gyllian, S. (Eds) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. London, Sage

Kirk, J., Miller, M. L. (1986). *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications.

Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of Learning and Development*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall.

Kolko, J. (2012) *Wicked problems worth solving: A handbook and a call to action*, Austin, Austin Centre for Design.

Krake, F. B., (2005). Successful brand management in SMEs: A new theory and practical hints. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14, 228–238

Kvale, S., (1983). The qualitative research interview: a phenomenological and a hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 14, 171-96

Lavrakas, P. (2008) *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications.

Laukkanen, T. et al (2011) How market orientation determines high brand orientation in SMEs? [pdf]. EMAC. Available at: https://www2.uef.fi/documents/77473/1340321/How+market+orientation+determines+high+brand+orientation+in+SMEs_EMAC_2011.pdf/5ab91af3-a6dc-409d-b483-ec002a27f05c. [Accessed 31 January 2015].

Lewis-Beck et al. (2004) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Research Methods*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Maxfield, F. N., (1930). The Case Study. *Educational Research Bulletin*, 9(5), 177-122

Muller, M.J. (2007) Participatory design: The third space in HCI (revised). In J. Jacko and A. Sears (Eds.) *Handbook of HCI 2nd Edition*. Mahway, Erlbaum

Neumeier, M. (2006) *Zag: The #1 Strategy of High-Performance Brands*, Berkeley, New Riders

Olins, W. (2008) *The Brand Handbook*, London, Thames and Hudson

Osterwalder, A. & Pigneur, Y. (2010) *Business Model Generation*, Hoboken, John Wiley & Sons.

Polanyi, M. (1958) *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, London, Routledge.

PWC (2013) *Money Tree Report Q4 2013*. [pdf]. Available at http://www.pwc.com/en_US/us/technology/assets/pwc-moneytree-q4-and-full-year-2013-summary-report.pdf. [Accessed 20 March 2015]

Ries, E. (2011) *The Lean Startup*, New York, Crown Publishing Group.

Sanders, E. B. (2005) *Information, Inspiration and Co-creation*. In The 6th International Conference of the European Academy of Design. University of the Arts, Bremen, Germany, March 29-31 2005.

Sanders, E. B., Stappers, P. J. (2008) Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 4(1), 5-18

Sanders, E.B (2010) *A Framework for Organizing the Tools and Techniques of Participatory Design*. In The 11th Biennial Participatory Design Conference. Sydney, Australia, November 29 - December 03, 2010

Sanders, E. B., & Stappers, P. J. (2014) Probes, toolkits and prototypes: three approaches to making in co-designing. *CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 10(1), 5-14

Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, New York, Basic Books.

Schön, D. (1991) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, Aldershot, Arena.

Schutt, R.K. (2011) *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publication.

Schwartz, B. (2005) *The paradox of choice*. Available at: http://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_the_paradox_of_choice#t-1158600. [Accessed 11 March 2015]

Simões, C., Dibb, S., (2001). Rethinking the brand concept: new brand orientation. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 6(4), 217-224.

Sköldbberg, J. & Woodilla, J. (2013). Arguing for design thinking interventions as a form of artistic interventions. *Swedish Design Research Journal*, 2(13), 32-42

Strauss, A., Corbin, J. M. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Strauss, S. (2014) *Branding in the new normal*. Think Branding with Google. Available at: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=1l2CUjkg0ug>. [Accessed 4 March 2015]

Tait, B (2004) *How 'Marketing Science' Undermines Brands*. Available at: <http://taitsubler.com/articles/how-marketing-science-undermines-brands>. [Accessed 7 February 2015]

The Economist (2014) *The startup explosion*. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2014/03/economist-explains-25>. [Accessed 3 March 2015]

Urde, M., (2003). Core value-based corporate brand building. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37, 1017 – 1040

Vaid, H. (2003) *Branding: Brand strategy, design, and implementation of corporate and product identity*, New York, Watson-Guptill.

Wallas, G. (1926) *The art of thought*, New York, Brace and Company.

Wheeler, A. (2006) *Designing Brand Identity*, Hoboken, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Wong, H.Y., Merrilees, B., (2008). The performance benefits of being brand-oriented. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 17(6), 372-383

Zwilling, M. (2013) *A New Era For Entrepreneurs And Startups Has Begun*. Forbes Magazine. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/martinzwilling/2013/12/25/a-new-era-for-entrepreneurs-and-startups-has-begun/>. [Accessed 19 January 2015]

10. Appendices

Appendix 1.0: Research	62
Appendix 1.1: Scan Cards	62
Appendix 1.2: Interview Questions	63
Appendix 1.3: Interview Analysis Framework	64
Appendix 1.4: Branding Process Analysis	65

Appendix 2.0: Testing	68
Appendix 2.1: Kick Off Workshop	68
Appendix 2.2: Me, Myself & I Workshop	75
Appendix 2.3: Brand Director	77
Appendix 2.4: Stakeholder Cards Example	78
Appendix 2.5: Get Out, Speak Up Workshop	79

APPENDIX 1.1: SCAN CARDS

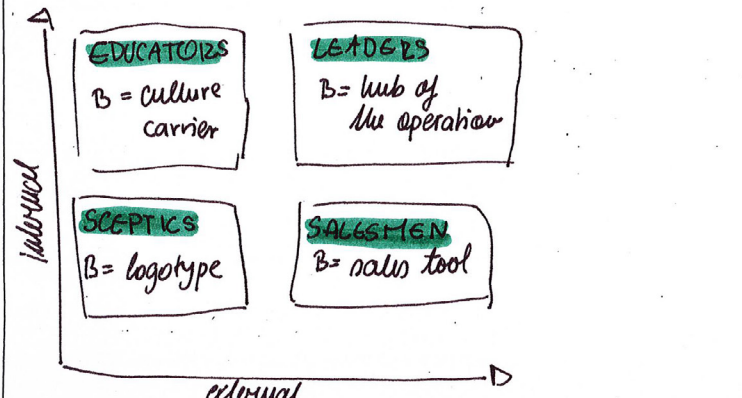
APPENDIX 1.0: RESEARCH

SCAN
CARD

TITLE **BoI** Matrix

Keywords *BoI branding*

Illustration, Picture, Models, Notes



DESCRIPTION
What is this?

*Matrix showing
diff. degrees of B
orientation reflecting
diff. attitudes to
B development*

RELEVANCE
Why is this interesting?

*External: connect to
outside target group*

*Internal: employees'
behaviour will build +
reinforce brand & identity*

Source: *BoI*

bespoke

APPENDIX 1.2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

BRANDING EXPERTS

1. What is your background? How did you get to do what you are doing now?
2. What is your role in this project/ company?
3. What is your process when it comes to branding?
4. What were the biggest challenges?
5. What was the most important steps?
6. What kind of methods do you use? Any design methods?
- are you familiar with the concept of co-creation/ user centredness?
Have you ever used them?
7. What is the understanding of design in branding?
8. What is the role of designer in branding?
9. What are the biggest challenges in the field of branding today?
10. What kind of trends & patterns you see? What hasn't changed and what won't change in branding?
11. Do you think the role of the designer is changing? Are designers still only executors in the field of branding? Or can they have a more strategic role?
12. What are your experience with working with startups?
13. What were the biggest challenges? (in general, with regards to branding)

BUSINESS DESIGNERS

1. What is your background? How did you get to do what you are doing now?
2. What does the company where you work do?
3. What clients do you work with? Corporations? Startups?
4. What is your process when it comes to branding?

5. What are the biggest challenges in branding?
6. What is the most important step of the branding process?
7. What kind of methods do you use? Any design methods? Do you work with co-creation/ user centredness?
8. What is the understanding of design in branding?
9. What is the role of designers in branding?
10. What is the role of business designers? In what are they different from designers?
11. What kind of trends & patterns you see in branding?
12. Do you think the role of the designer is changing? Are designers still only executors in the field of branding? Or can they have a more strategic role?
13. What are your experience with working with startups?
14. What were the biggest challenges? (in general, with regards to branding)

STARTUP EXPERTS

1. How does an average day in a startup look like? What are the activities that takes most of the time?
2. What is the main focus at the beginning?
3. What are the most important issues that startups need to focus on?
4. What are the biggest challenges? Restrictions?
5. How does the financing work? Are startups time-pushed to launch the product? How does it work with investors?
6. What is the relationship with venture capitalists? What is their role? Who takes cost related decisions?
7. Based on your experience, how do startups understand and approach branding?
8. Do they consider brand as an important asset of their company? Do startups work with designers? If so, how?

APPENDIX 1.3: INTERVIEW ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Name:

Position:

Date:

Type of interview:

Insights

Relevance

Name: **MICHAEL EICHELBERGER**

Position: **BRAND STRATEGIST**

Date: **15th / 02 / 2015**

Type of interview: **Skype**



Insights

THE PROCESS CHANGES ACCORDING TO THE KIND OF ORGANIZATION

3 STEPS ARE ALWAYS THE SAME:

- ANALYZE the org
- UNDERSTAND THE situation
- CREATE WITH THEM

VISUALS ARE THE LAST STEP OF THE BRANDING PROCESS

IMPORTANT TO USE USER CENTERED TECHNIQUES TO PROOF EXISTING BRAND MODELS

W.S.

- magazine cover
- EMPATHY MAP

BRAND STRATEGIST NEEDS TO BE SOMEHOW A DESIGNER & USE DESIGN as A STRATEGIC TOOL

Relevance

TOOLS ARE A BASE. U ALWAYS NEED TO REFRAME THEM.

MAGAZINE COVER + WS

15 covers = ≠ personalities for UX brand. Write vision, mission + headline about the company in 5 years

EMPATHY MAP



APPENDIX 1.4: BRANDING PROCESS ANALYSIS 1/3

Branding Agencies: ~~Process~~ 1

Mockup (Adv + Comm)	Define Core of P/S	Define the Target Group	Strategy: what to communicate	Build a story	Creative Phase	Channels	Brand Media	WOM
Michal E. (brand strategy)	Analyse the company	Understand the Target Group	Understand Status Quo	Analyse how to achieve obj + goals	Brand story	Strategy	Brand & Design brief	Graphic dev. (collaboration)
Brian (brand b&a)	Internal dev: - core values - UVP # unique	Design brief	Design development - moodboard - Pinterest - video	Implement + Test on small scale	Collect feedback + Adjust	Implement		
Bruno (strategy + innovation)	DISCOVER - Analyse + Understand brand & company	TARGET GROUP + MARKET analyse + understand	DEFINE plan + strategy	DESIGN	DELIVER	DISTRIBUTE - channels + interactions		
LABEL - Growth (B consultancy)	ANALYSIS	STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION	FOLLOW UP				
COGMO (met + media)	ASK questions to understand companies	Demographic research	Look at trends	Create mock-ups	Strategy			
DESIGN BRIDGE - Helene (b strategy)	Client services - understanding them	Market analysis - trends - strengths - competitors	STRATEGY	DESIGN				
BVD - Mia (b consultancy)	BRAND AUDIT - analyse B barriers - understand the B - analyse B experience	B IDENTITY Heritage, Vision, Mission Values, Personality Offering + audience	B POSITIONING Start dialogue + create relationship	Design Brief start B cues	Design Toolbox D development Match personality + Behaviour			

APPENDIX 1.4: BRANDING PROCESS ANALYSIS 2/3

PARADIGM (strategic + timeline)	OBSERVE - analyse clients - current paradigm?	THINK - Trends & holistic perspective: what will change - Develop strategic framework	ELEVATE - Prepare for the next paradigm - Look into the future	IMPLEMENT - Brand Platform				
BRANDELUP (adv + digital)	Analysis: ask the right questions	Broad Concept development	PROPOSAL to the client	Discussion & iteration	Action implementation			
THEORY								
Wally Olins	Investigation & Analysis	Strategic Recommendations	Develop the B idea	Launch & Production	Implementation			
Ulina Wulfer	Listening - internal analysis - SWOT	Collect Data - internal analysis - brand audit	Observing - user research	Weaving - market analysis	Dreaming - 1st conceptualization of strategy - moodboards + envisioning	Focusing - strategy - goals - segmentation	- mind map - positioning	Design Touch points
David Aaker	Strategic B Analysis - customer - competitors - self	Develop B Identity	Value Proposition	Relationship building	Implementation	Tracking		
Falle Harrison (communication)	Brand Planning - Identity	Brand Research - Distill	B Positioning	Express - B platform - B identity - B system	Amplify - B experience - Comm - SH			
Bloom Consulting	Market Analysis	Generation of Attributes - brand attributes	Concept development - moodboard - positioning	B COMMUNICATION Genesis of the B - tone of voice - visual style				
Allegory Studios (B consultancy)	Setting - shareholders interviews	Two Genre - und. personalities + culture profile	The Characters build archetype	Two Audiences	The Plot story	The Narrative B logo + positioning		LAUNCH internal + external

APPENDIX 1.4: BRANDING PROCESS ANALYSIS 3/3

CORE		MODELS ANALYSIS			
BRANDCLUST "Brand Eye Model"	B Platform - Vision - positioning - goals - Promise - business idea (to who? with what? diff from competitors?) - uniqueness - core values	Apply it through identity channels:			
		1) BRAND STRUCTURE - name - visual ID	3) PRODUCT/SERVICE ID - name - trademark - design → Make it attractive!	5) MEETING PLACE - touchpoints	
		2) ORGANISATION - implement core values w employees - org culture	4) PARTNERS - suppliers - retailers - distributors	6) COMMUNICATION - PR - content - Adverts	
PARADIGM 4 dimensions model	VALUE: we provide to the user SHARED BELIEF VALUES: in which way you do business with them → Bring them to all 4 dimensions	1) MISSION - Why are we here? - Mental handshake - What do we do? - How do we do it? - Common bond uniting brand & customers	2) CONTEXT - Which field/industry/niche/expertise are we in? 3) CULTURE - what is that unites ppl on the inside with ppl outside	4) INTERACTION - touchpoints - how do we connect with ppl & when?	What is the deal breaker?!
MOCKUP	VALUES • Workshop to find out	• POSITION • WHAT IS YOUR STREE?	• RELATION TO THE TARGET GROUP • VALUES (ethical)	• MISSION & PASSION • VISION • TARGET	• FUNCTIONAL USE & EMOTIONAL USE
B Identity PRISM (Kapferer, 1992)	B is build upon Internal & external factors	Theory			
		Internalisation • PERSONALITY ↳ B character • CULTURE ↳ values + principles • SELF-IMAGE ↳ for the target group	Externalisation • PHYSICS ↳ evoked when B is mentioned • RELATIONSHIP with users • REFLECTION ↳ stereotypical user		

APPENDIX 2.1: KICK OFF WORKSHOP

1

Startup:

Date:



Future

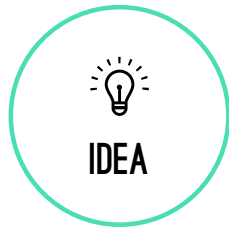
Make a tick for everything that applies to your startup.

- Succeed fast, or fail fast!
- I have a short term plan
- I have a long term plan
- I want to grow and develop.
- I want to eventually sell my company.
- I want to stay local.
- I want to go international.

APPENDIX 2.0: TESTING

Startup Checklist

Purpose: To understand your stage of business development.
Make a tick for everything that applies to your startup.



- I got it
- I can make it happen
- I can make money out of it
- It is in development
- It is ready to be sold
- It is already being sold



- I have startup capital
 - Angel investors
 - Grants
 - Loans
 - Personal
 - Venture capital
 - Other
- I have a plan of survival
- I made an investment
- Break even
- Cash flow positive
- Return On Investment



- I have identified possible partners
- I am in touch with them
- I am negotiating with them
- I have developed strategic partnership



- There is a demand for my offering
- I have identified my target segment
- I know how to reach them
- I have tested my offering with them
- I already have paying customers

Business Model Checklist

Purpose: To understand your stage of business development.
Tick everything that applies to your startup and fill in when needed.

WHAT DO YOU DO

Key Activities

Most important things to make your business model work.

You make money by:

- Manufacturing & selling a product
 - Providing a service
 - Network: connecting people
-
-
-

WHAT DO YOU NEED

Key Resources

Most important resources to make your business model work.

- Physical:
 - Human:
 - Financial:
 - Intellectual:
-
-
-

FOR WHO DO YOU DO IT

Customer Segment

Your most important customers, that you create value for.

- Our target we want to reach and serve:
-
-
-
- B2B B2C

WHY DO YOU DO IT

Value Proposition

How do you solve customers' problems and satisfy customers' needs.

- Which problem are we solving/need satisfying?
-
-
-
- What product/service do we offer? What value do we deliver?
-
-
-

AGAINST WHO

Threat & Competitors

Who do you compete with? Who is the possible substitute for your brand? What barriers are there to entry?

- Competitors:
-
-
-
- Substitutes: Barriers to entry/imitate:
-
-
-

WHO WITH

Key Partners

Network of suppliers and partners that make your business model work.

- Suppliers:
 - Partners:
-
-
-
-

4

Startup:

Date:



To do list

When it comes to launching your startup, what are the top 5 things on your to do list?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5

Startup:

Date:



Branding

Shortly write what does branding mean to you.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

On a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important), indicate how important branding is for the success of your startup.

1 2 3 4 5

6

Startup:

Date:

BRANDING
for
tomorrow

What is branding for you?

Purpose: To understand your perception of branding.

Cross each square that you consider to be part of branding.

LOGO	WEBSITE	VALUES	TARGET MARKET	COMPETITORS	PRODUCT / SERVICE	KEY MESSAGE	STORIES
END USER	EXPERIENCE	RETAIL CHANNEL	RATIONAL BENEFITS	EMOTIONAL BENEFITS	COMMUNICATION	VISION	MISSION
BRAND ESSENCE	PACKAGING	PARTNERS	VISUAL IDENTITY	TONE OF VOICE	SOCIAL IMPACT	TOUCH POINTS	CUSTOMER SERVICE
TRENDS	BRAND IMAGE	SOCIAL MEDIA	ADVERTS	VALUE PROPOSITION	STRATEGY	BRANDING AS AN INVESTMENT	BRANDING AS AN EXPENSE

Branding checklist

Purpose: To understand your stage of brand development.

Have you done this? If so, make a tick and fill it in. If not, leave it blank and we will fill it in together in the next workshop.

BRAND VALUES

What do you stand for?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

MISSION

Why do you exist?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

VISION

What are the larger effects that your brand can potentially have?

We dream of a world where...

.....
.....
.....
.....

CULTURE

What atmosphere do you want to have in your office?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

PERSONALITY

If your brand was a person, what character would she/he have?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

ECOSYSTEM

Which brands would you like to have as partners in your ecosystem?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

8

Startup:

Date:



Expectation Map

Purpose: To align expectations of the project members.

WORKSHOPS



OUTCOME

APPENDIX 2.2: ME, MYSELF & I WORKSHOP

AGENDA (FOR GROUP WORKSHOP)

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome & workshop intro by the facilitators: I DO ART (5 mins)

2. ICE BREAKERS

Guess What (10 mins)

Aim: to get the two startups to know each other and understand their business idea

Process:

- In a room, create a separate walls for each startup containing information & visuals collected from the initial kick off workshop
- Start by asking the startups to identify their corner
- Then startups are asked to switch places (so startup A is working with the startup B wall and vice versa)
- Each startup has 5 minutes to observe the wall, trying to guess what is the others business idea.
- Each startup is also asked to write down 3 question they want to ask the others in order to better understand their business idea.
- The question are used in the next One Voice exercise

One Voice (10 mins; 5 + 5)

Aim: ice breaker to get startups to interact with each other, observe the level of communication between the entrepreneurs as well as help startups understand how are they currently perceived

Process:

- Startup A is asking 3 question from the previous exercise
- Startup B has to answer them as if they only had one voice (both looking at each other eyes and answering simultaneously)
- Startup A has to make his guess about Startup's B business idea

- Startup B reveals its business idea
- Repeat in the reverse order

3. EXPLORE YOURSELF

What you don't want to be? (20 mins; 8 + 10 + 2)

Aim: often when we are not sure about who we are, we can start by taking the reverse perspective: who/what we don't want to be as a company.

Process:

- Use post-its and write down nouns, adjectives, example of other brands of what you don't want to be/to become
- Facilitator: cluster them together and write reversed values
- Reflect upon the values: What can you do in your business in order to prevent becoming what you don't want to be?
- Use post-its to write them down
- Present them
- Together, turn them into principles

Value Detox (30 - 40 mins)

Aim: to get rid of of all the generic values & buzzwords in order to uncover the true and unique values of each particular startup

Process:

- Each startup is asked to use post its and write down all their values from the top of their head. (5 mins)
- Share: Each of the startups present their values & compare them with the other startup (4 mins)
- Detox! (Values are crossed over with a masking tape as a metaphor)
- Startups are asked to do the same exercise again but this time they

- cannot use any of the words from the previous step (10 mins)
- Cluster them & Choose 5 non-negotiable values (10 mins)
 - Present (4 mins)

Nobel Prize (30 mins; 5 + 15 + 5 + 5)

Aim: to help startup to formulate their mission and vision

Process:

- “Imagine your company will be awarded a Nobel Prize in 10 years for its contribution to the society. What would you achieve it for? How did you achieve it?”
- Prepare the poster & Give a speech! Be ready for questions from the reporters!

4. GENESIS

Brand Framing (15 mins)

Aim: to summarise the findings so far & develop the brand mission

Process:

- Articulate the Vision from the previous exercise
- Ask: Do the original values still apply? Do you need to rethink them? Or do you need to rethink the vision?
- So now you know your values and where you want to go. But how are you going to get there? What is your mission?
- Frame mission

BREAK 15 mins

Bringing your brand alive (60 mins; 10 + 40 + 10)

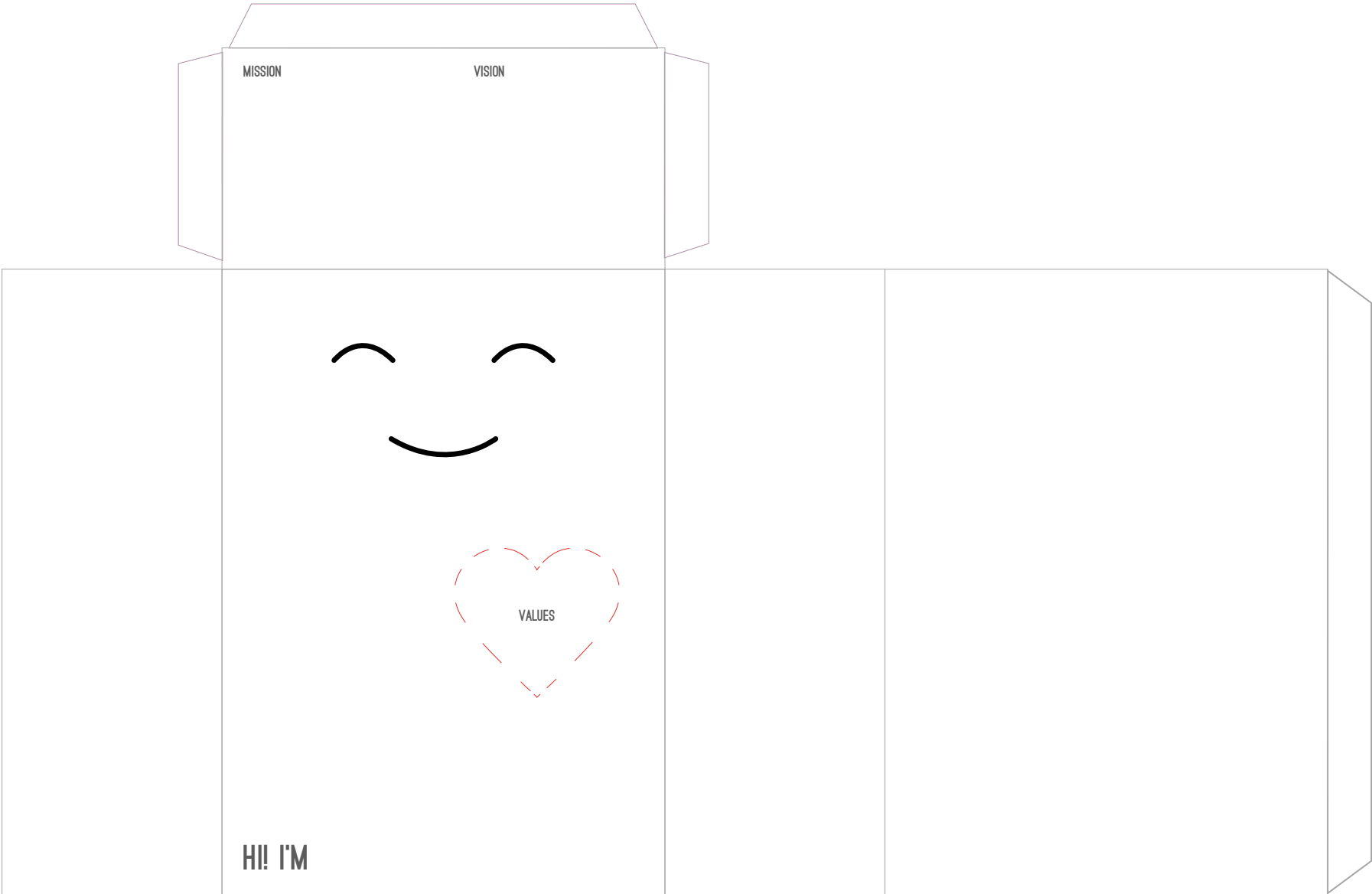
Aim: to create a tangible and visual model that summarises company's brand essence

Process:

- Prior the workshop, prepare a 3D cardboard model of a doll

- Each startup gets one and fill in with their new found vision, mission and values
- Use the rest as a blank space for a visual moodboard of their brand
- The doll in a physical artefacts that startups can bring with them back to their office to remind them of their brand essence
- Present & Discuss

APPENDIX 2.3: BRAND DIRECTOR



APPENDIX 2.4: STAKEHOLDER CARDS EXAMPLE

Customers Card

WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?	WHAT ARE THEIR HOPES, DREAMS AND FEARS?
WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?	WHAT ARE THEIR PAINS AND GAINS?
WHAT DO YOU OFFER THEM?	WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH THEM?

Partner Card

WHO	
WHAT DO YOU OFFER THEM?	WHAT DO THEY OFFER YOU?
WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH THEM?	

APPENDIX 2.5: GET OUT, SPEAK UP WORKSHOP - PROTOTYPE INTERACTIONS

AGENDA

0. HOMEWORK

Pre-workshop: Participants got a set of Stakeholder cards (Customers, Partners, Competitors) they were asked to fill in.

1. INTRODUCTION (10 mins)

- Welcome & introduce the aim of the workshop
- Link it back to previous workshop
- ICEBREAKER (5 mins)

2. BRAND PROTOTYPE (35 mins)

- Explain
- Role play: example (5 mins)
- Brainstorming for each situation & role play whilst one of the participants acts like the brand (10 mins/each):
 - Ask for directions
 - Ask someone for a phone number
 - Ask someone for a time

3. GET OUT (30 mins)

Go out and find people similar to your stakeholders

- One of the participants act as a brand
- Test your brand prototype by acting out one of the situations
- Explore & collect people's perception using the Perception sheet

4. REFLECT (20 mins)

Did your brand give the impression you wanted?

- Put the findings together in a framework

5. WRAP UP (10 mins)

Share impressions and reflect upon the methods used

APPENDIX 2.5: GET OUT, SPEAK UP WORKSHOP
- PERCEPTION SHEET

PERCEPTION SHEET

Values

- Sociable
- Break the norms
- Connect people
- Greedy
- Trustworthy
- Approved by others
- Entrepreneurial
- Ambitious
- Cool & hip
- Unconventional

How does this person move around the town?



Would you want to hang out with him on a Friday night?

- Yes
- No

