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The components of successful sonic branding

*– A music marketing study of how to effectively reinforce the
perception of brands by the creation of sound identities*

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For my dad

Abstract

Title: The components of successful sonic branding – A music marketing study of how to effectively reinforce the perception of brands by the creation of sound identities

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Purpose: By extensively examining sound identities and sonic logos, across all the possible phases of its creation and implementation; I am conducting this study with the ambition of finding, mapping and analyzing its potential success factors. My main purpose in carrying out this study is hence to contribute to a clearer, more focused knowledge base, surrounding the factors of success when applying the tool of sonic branding.

Methodology: To reach my purpose, I apply both qualitative methods using semi-structured interviews, as well as quantitative methods using a survey strategy. My main emphasis however lay on conducting this study with an interpretative, hermeneutic, abductive approach.

Theoretical perspectives: Theories connected to mainly corporate and brand identity, marketing aesthetics, sonic branding as well as branding in general, are used as mainstay for this study. The theories applied, display evident connections to the questions at issue and were chosen for this reason.

Empirical foundation: The empirical foundation is based on three semi-structured interviews, carried out with Jakob Lusensky, Søren Holme and Stellan Colt. It is furthermore based on a conducted survey, using a questionnaire. Four sonic logos were tested using the questionnaire, measuring factors of recognition, recall and association. The sonic logos being tested belong to the companies/brands of BMW, LOKA, Hornbach and Pressbyrå.

Results and conclusions: The results of my studies show, that there may in fact be potential success factors within *all* phases of sonic branding. When analyzing which success factors potentially may be of greatest importance, I have been able to conclude some of them as the following: -Knowing your *identity*, i.e. knowing *who you are* before trying to convince consumers of who you are, through sonic branding. -Conducting a *deep* and *thorough analysis*, prior to engaging in the creation of a sound identity; investing *sufficient enough of resources* for this to be made possible. -Understanding that certain core values, when translated into music and sounds, may lie very close to being perceived in a *completely different*, and perhaps greatly undesired way. -Reaching *internal* conviction within companies, of the reasons for a certain sound identity's components and attributes. -Enabling a sophisticated marriage between *sonic* and *visual* attributes; creating the sense of overall aesthetic appeal. -*Reviewing* and perhaps *modifying* a company's sound purchasing strategy; in so saving much resources and increasing chances of a unified sound identity. -Assigning a *special task force* in larger enterprises, devoted to the challenge of unifying its sounds.

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1. Introduction

"We are loyal to music because of how it makes us feel – a brand has the same ambition."

Ruth Simmons (2005)

This introductory chapter gives the reader a clear presentation of what this thesis will contain. Firstly, I will present a background followed by a problem discussion regarding the subject of music marketing. The discussion contains references to relevant past studies and articles within the field, which have been studied to enable me to find a possible area that is thought to be in need of further research. Having believed to have found such an area, this first chapter also contains the specific questions that I will study and attempt to answer throughout the remainder of the thesis. Furthermore; the purpose of the study is accounted for, as well as possible target groups for whom reading this thesis should be of value. A graphical presentation showing the outline of the thesis is also presented.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Choosing a research field

When pondering over how to approach and carry out this thesis, which in fact is my final assignment at Lund University before completing a degree of *Master of Science in Business and Economics*; a number of things were running through my mind. The choice of research field was certainly one of the most important causes for contemplation. Having recently completed master courses in Strategic Financial Management, as well as Strategic Marketing Management, my main interests and expertise are embedded within these two specific fields. Due to having written a previous thesis exploring the field of finance, I decided to broaden my horizons by devoting this master thesis to examining an area within the field of marketing.

Moreover; I also have a great passion for playing and experiencing the field of music and have previously studied musicology at Stockholm University. With the ambition of finding use for my musical knowledge, I started speculating whether it in some way could come to use when writing my master thesis within marketing. The seemingly contradicting fields of music and marketing have, it dawned on me, in fact historically often been linked together in attempts of using music for the purpose of marketing companies, products and brands.

1.1.2 An overview of the use of music in marketing

Several areas can be observed, in which the power of music has been taken advantage of in the history of the marketing field. All of which display ambitions of embracing the vast possibilities of music's emotional, cognitive and transcendental features. In the earlier days of marketing, music was mainly used as a complement to the verbal and latter visual information being communicated in commercials, though the use of so called *jingles* (Bjurström & Lilliestam, 1993). Such are certainly still frequently used in marketing, delivering messages and information in the form of persuasive melodies in musical compositions. The jingle is, effective as it still may be, however by many practitioners seen as the old way of implementing music in marketing.

In recent years it has become more common that marketers adapt original recordings by artists and musical acts, using them along side graphic displays embedded in commercials and promotional efforts. Possible advantages of such music strategies may perhaps be that a lot of contemporary music already has a strong emotional foundation among many consumers, which may in turn also help boost the emotions regarding the advertised companies and products. Goldman & Papson (1996) are convinced of the grand possibilities in attaching specific, popular music to commodities; in so applying the vast emotional attachments people may have to a musical composition onto the commodity. There are studies, which I will address more deeply in the forthcoming problem discussion, that have been conducted specifically testing the effects of such usage of contemporary, pre-written, hit-music for marketing purposes.

Furthermore; another recent trend within music marketing has emerged where the efforts are made at the crucial *point of purchase*, i.e. in stores, restaurants and other environments where actual sales are taking place. Specifically designed music playing in the background in such surroundings, has a purpose of creating specific moods and environmental settings. These moods and settings are to evoke and encourage increased customer purchase intent. Applying certain tempos, pitches, and other musical attributes through the use of sounds, can be intended to make customers feel more comfortable inside companies' stores. Consequently; this may encourage customers to stay longer and also purchase more. Studies with the purpose of testing the effects of such marketing attempts have also been conducted, the results of which is addressed in the problem discussion.

The role of music in marketing has historically to the most part been limited to the use of music in advertisements and commercials. As convictions in the musical possibilities within marketing have strengthened, more voices have been raised advocating a broader implementation of the music's role. Enabling these ideas has partly been the booming development of modern technologies and communication channels. Cellular phones and the huge possibilities of the Internet are examples of such channels.

These new technologies have brought on an increasing number of potential platforms, for the development of marketing strategies in general but also a rising use of new *musical* strategies, within marketing. Exploring such new venues and possible strategies for marketing activities has become increasingly essential, for companies wanting to maintain its competitiveness. It has so, simply because consumers seem to not take part of as much of the conventional communication channels i.e. television and radio, as they used to (Jakob Lusensky: seminar, 2009). New habits of watching television, using the Internet and TIVO, are enabling consumers to avoid traditional commercials to a much greater extent nowadays.

When discussing this ongoing development, Burrows (2008) stresses that the variety of *touchpoints* available for music marketers, i.e. possible channels where consumers may come in contact with the outputs of music marketing, greatly impacts the results of such strategies. One example in which such a touchpoint has been located, involves the music marketing activities of the Swedish telecom company shortly named 3. Upon calling the number of a cellular phone that has a subscription of 3's telephone services, the caller is not met by a conventional ring tone. Instead, a brief musical composition is played back, making it clear that the person being phoned is in fact a customer of 3. In my opinion, this action captures the essence of intelligent music marketing.

As far as I'm aware of, 3 is the only company offering telephone services in Sweden, having taken advantage of this opportunity. Making use of the short few moments when we are waiting on the phone, for the other line to be picked up, makes perfect sense. Such clever marketing moves, using the tool of music, raises the chances of attracting new potential customers and increasing brand awareness, all for virtually no cost at all. The trend within music marketing has with actions such as these, recently more specifically moved towards the creation of unified *sound identities*, to accompany and help strengthen the image of companies and brands.

One of the most vital parts of such sound identities is the creation of so called *sonic logos*. A sonic logo can be defined as a short series of notes and other sounds, put together to form a sonic representation of a company or brand. Simmons (2005) chooses to define sonic logos as short, melodic compositions; designed to act as triggers to enhance the identity of product names, services or benefits. The procedure of creating sound identities, in part by the creation of sonic logos, has logically been appointed the epithet of *sonic branding* (Jackson, 2003). The objective of sonic branding is to create sound personas for brands, designed to be used at the different levels where consumers might be exposed to them.

This greater implementation opportunity of sonic branding appears as one of its main selling points, when compared to the previous use of music in marketing. Sonic branding is a by far more complex activity than, let's say, jingles; even though they do share some common attributes. In terms of the shorter, often instrumental, sonic logo; such are designed not only to be applicable in ads and commercials. Its constructions rather encourage a *consistent* use, across the platforms where company brands are built, displayed and upheld (Capps, 2007). Understanding and realizing the potential advantages of sonic branding, is according to Franus (2008) what differentiates many of the world's top brands. This by stating that it simply can not be a coincidence, that many of top spots on ranking lists of the most successful brands in fact belong to companies applying the technique of sonic branding.

Perhaps the most well known, and certainly one of the earliest creations of a sonic logo, belongs to the American producer of microprocessors: *Intel*. The widely spread, rather simple Intel sonic logo is constructed of only a few short notes forming a recognizable melodic chime. With consistent usage, the Intel chime is thought to have been strongly connected to the internal values of the Intel brand. The practice of sonic branding has, in the wake of Intel's successes within the practice, grown at an astonishingly fast rate in recent years. According to Lamb (2006), there were in 2006 more than thirty companies operating in Europe, devoted solely to the development of effective sonic branding solutions to an ever-growing number of clients. Only half a decade earlier, sonic branding companies were quickly counted on the fingers of one's hand, proving only that the popularity and belief in the vital contribution of sound identities is growing at a tremendously fast pace. Research regarding the fairly new marketing phenomenon of sonic branding, is however still quite limited. This lack of research increases the importance of further contributions, adding to a growing knowledge of the success factors and potential effects of sonic branding. I address these needs more closely in the problem discussion below.

1.2 Problem discussion

1.2.1 Review of previous research

Upon reviewing the historical marriage of music and marketing, one certainly finds evidence that the two fields have endured an ongoing mutual relationship for a very long time. Similarly; research within music marketing can also be observed to stretch quite far back in time. There are in fact studies to be found from as early as the 1930's and 1940's, which could perhaps be applicable to marketing activities. These early studies generated findings showing effects on memory and emotional reactions, due to changes in musical attributes (Bruner II, 1990). Compared to many other academic fields however; the body of research surrounding music marketing is by no means vast, despite its quite long lifespan. This is rather strange, considering the wide-spread usage and assumed grand possibilities of marketing through musical channels.

In terms of research examining the earliest form of music marketing, meaning the use of jingles and slogans expressed as melodies, there are a few examples of studies showing somewhat inconsistent results. In a study conducted by Hunt (1988), findings were made indicating higher probability for consumer brand recognition and recall, when music was included as a variable in the marketing equation. However; in a study from two years prior to these findings, Sarel & Sewall (1986) found no such positive effects due to the use of music in commercial communications. The two scientists behind the latter study drew the conclusion that other issues, such as the number of verbal mentionings of a brand, may play a bigger part than the presence of music. However; neither of these two studies involved the *structure* of the music being tested, but merely its presence.

When discussing the use of contemporary, pre-written hit songs as music marketing tools, there are certain examples of studies indicating that the use of different types of contemporary music may also evoke different emotional responses, when listened to by consumers (Alpert, Alpert & Maltz, 2005). If these results hold some truth; a careful analysis needs to be carried out before choosing what type of music to apply, for it not to conflict with or hurt the image of a brand itself.

Another study has been carried out by Bylund (2004), who at the time of the research period was a scholar at Uppsala University, Sweden. The study examined brand recognition factors from the use of popular music in marketing strategies. However; no hard evidence was found

in terms of the effectiveness of such music. The author could draw the conclusion that there are many factors involved in the process of building strong brands, of which the nurturing of the internal values of brands is of uttermost importance. Using contemporary music to boost brand recognition and emotional associations might be a possibility, however there needs to be constantly delivered *reminders* of the brand, both sonic and visual, for them not to be forgotten amongst consumers.

Another, more extensive study, was conducted in the UK in 2006 by *Entertainment Media Research*. It also had a consumer approach, by exploring such marketing attempts in which contemporary music is applied through *collaborations* between brands and popular music acts. The study, entitled *Music & Brands*, was aimed at a large number of UK consumers. It had the purpose of determining what *end consumers* of such marketing activities, in fact think of brands and pop music in symbiosis.

The study was vast and detailed. However; its main findings implied that the most successful collaborations between companies and artists seem to emerge when the company *itself* has a strong musical connection, or some other type of connection to consumer lifestyles. The connection may be to clothing, mobile phones or other similar accessories. One example of a collaboration of such nature is the one between Apple and Irish rock band U2, a few years back. Apple can undoubtedly be said to have a strong musical connection, considering the nature of some of its products such as the iPod and computer music player iTunes. Apple's apparent connection to music may have been a greatly contributing factor, making the U2 collaboration i.e. Apple's incorporation of the Irishmen's music, successful.

However; it may be of great importance that the symbiosis between brands and musical artists is perceived as logical and natural. If a logical connection is lacking, a quite large percentage of the asked consumers, in fact 81 %, assumed a risk for significant damage to the credibility of the involved parties (Music & Brands, 2006). Another survey, studying similar issues, was conducted in 2007. Regarding the same asked question, there had been a decrease displaying a total of 67 % of respondents, expressing beliefs in the risk of such damaged images (Music & Brands, 2007). Despite the drop, this figure is still rather high. The results of these surveys should therefore perhaps be considered as warning signs, for companies to thoroughly conduct research before engaging in collaborations with musical artists.

When it comes to research regarding the effects of *in-stores music*, there are studies showing that specific types of music can affect consumers' rate and quantity of consumption, at

restaurants; as well as quantity and speed of purchases, in stores and supermarkets (Millerman, 1986; Millerman, 1982 and Linsen, 1975, through Gail, 1990). Another study where a similar phenomenon could be observed was conducted in the UK in 2005. The study, entitled *Store Atmospherics*, generated results indicating that background music playing in retail environments could have significant, both positive and negative, effects on the mind-set of customers visiting the stores. The study showed that up to 27 % of the visitors was at certain points encouraged to stay longer inside the stores, due to the appealing musical background settings (www.bizcommunity.com).

In a Swedish study, conducted by scholars at Halmstad Högskola in 2008; case studies of a number of restaurants and cafés was applied, examining its use of background music for marketing purposes. The study showed that certain case respondents had observed effects on the ability to attract customers, depending on what type of music was being played in the background at specific hours of the day. These tendencies had encouraged some of the respondents to apply different musical *mixes* for different times of the day, seeing a significant change in customer behavior (Riviere & Valenti, 2008).

As previously stated; the spurring popularity of applying sonic branding solutions, appear to have increased significantly in recent years. The rapid development has however not quite been caught up, when discussing the amount of research and number of studies being dedicated to the exploration of the sonic branding field. Few studies can therefore be observed, that are *specifically* examining the potential effectiveness of sonic branding strategies. There are however a few exceptions.

One American study for instance, conducted by Venkataraman (2007), explicitly examined issues of consumer brand recognition and brand recall, upon exposure to commercials both in the *presence* and in the *absence* of sonic logos. Interestingly enough, the study resulted in a conclusion saying that no significantly higher degree of brand recognition or brand recall was observed, in the presence of the sonic logos. In fact, there were even signs implying that a *non-use* of sonic logos could be more preferable.

The possible weakness of the study however, making the outcomes somewhat uncertain, was the use of completely unfamiliar sonic logos. Furthermore; merely the *presence* factor of the music was measured, without any real consideration to neither the *intended effects* of the sonic logos, nor the *emotional perception* of them. Moreover; no consideration was taken to the possibly poor combined usage of sonic and visual attributes, within the tested

commercials. These circumstances made the study interesting, yet also encouraging in terms of the need for further and deeper research.

Aldefors (2008) has also explored the new phenomenon of sonic branding, by introducing it in a religious context. The author's purpose was to find new ways of developing sonic branding, by investigating the use of music throughout the history of the Christian tradition. Several interesting connections were made regarding the use of symbols, rituals and mysticism. Furthermore; the author was able to outline certain musical attributes as perhaps more effective than others when used for marketing purposes, namely the use of minor keys.

Another completely fresh study, conducted in 2008 and released no more than a few months ago, is a survey entitled *Sounds like Branding*. The survey, which was carried out by the Swedish brand communication agency *Heartbeats International*, was dedicated to the exploration and examination of the ongoing and seemingly ever-growing love affair between music and marketing. The purpose of the study was to *research whether this seemingly increased interest in music branding is just a trend that will quickly fade out, or if it is here to stay*. Moreover; the purpose was also to *determine whether there is a shift in how brands relate to music as an important branding and marketing tool* (Sounds like Branding, 2009).

These questions were examined by conducting a survey involving a wide selection of respondents, including marketing and brand directors in charge of for some of the world's most known global brands. The survey generated several interesting results. One of the main findings however, was the appearance of an evident discrepancy. It appears there is a huge difference between how deeply one *believes* in the power of music marketing, and how one subsequently chooses to *invest* in marketing activities with music as a main ingredient.

Some of the most interesting results of the survey include a percentage of a staggering 97 %, strongly believing that music could strengthen their brands. However; a mere 37 % had defined how their brands sound, and no more than 21 % had created a sonic logo. Moreover; as many as 76 % of the participating respondents claimed to use music actively in the marketing strategies of their companies and brands, yet only 2 % use 25 % or more of their marketing budgets on music related activities. On the issue of budget; as much as 71 % claim to use only a tiny 5 % or less of their marketing resources on musical investments. These figures certainly deliver a clear picture of the discrepancy between what is *believed* and what is actually *carried out*. When being asked what major obstacles are observed, when it comes

to marketing with music; nearly half of the respondents replied that the primary obstacle is the difficulties of *measuring the value* of such investments.

It becomes evident when studying the results from the Sounds like Branding survey, that most companies and brands nowadays have started to understand the presumptive powers of music marketing. Many brands seem to have developed a *desire* to implement more musical components, within its marketing strategies. However; few seem to know exactly *how to do this*, which paths to choose and which sonic branding solutions could be viewed as appropriate for them specifically.

1.2.2 Possible gaps in the previous research

There are several areas within music marketing that display possible gaps and open, unanswered questions. This is due to the somewhat limited amount of research having been conducted in certain aspects. In general terms; many of the past studies examining the use of music for marketing purposes have had its main focus on merely the *presence* of sound and music, in examining its possible influence on brand awareness and consumer behavior. There are however opinions, stating that perhaps not only the presence but indeed the different *structures* of musical components, may be of importance for the emotional outcomes when applying music as a marketing tool. Bruner II (1990) made this remark in an article reviewing marketing, in the light of music and moods.

Therefore, there may be strong reasons to believe that the effects due to different musical components within the, thus far, insufficiently researched field of sonic branding, should be examined more closely. This could be carried out by examining issues of brand recognition and brand recall, upon the exposure to differently structured sonic logos. This idea is motivated by the undoubtedly endless possible ways of portraying music and sound, creating equally endless possibilities for the perceptions being evoked, when the variety of music reaches consumers ears.

I have, moreover, been able to observe a lack of studies focusing on examining the *entire process* that a sound identity or sonic logo undergoes, in the whole of its creation and implementation process. Hence; few conclusions can be drawn regarding how a *successful sound identity* in fact can be created. Reviewing and analyzing all of the possible phases of this process, may bring a deeper understanding of the success factors that constitutes the construction of enduring and valuable sound identities. Gaining knowledge of such factors

appears essential, for seeing successful results when attempting to apply sonic branding in boosting brand perception. There are voices, without any real hard evidence determining sonic branding as the fail-safe way of boosting brand recall and sales. This is often stated without any real in-depth analysis of *how* a sonic branding strategy can be carried out, for these effects to occur. The research gap I therefore feel needs to be filled is not as much a *gap*, as it rather is a lack of *overview*. This overview could be achieved by mapping and analyzing potential success factors, in the creation and implementation of sound identities.

1.3 The questions at issue

When consulting the available research in which the use of music marketing has been examined, certain possibly *underexplored* fields emerge, as I have discussed in the previous section. Overall, it appears that sonic branding is the field within music marketing, in greatest need of further and more thorough research. Hence; it may be motivated to add to such an expanded knowledge base. In an attempt of pinpointing the specific lack of documented knowledge within the field of sonic branding, I have found a need for exploring the following questions.

1.3.1 Main question

In the creation and implementation process of sound identities¹; can certain factors of success be determined, enabling the objectives of the sound identities to be successfully realized when reaching end consumers?

1.3.1.1 First subquestion

If such factors can be determined; are there structural components in either the creation or implementation process, making some sound identities more successful and effective than others?

1.3.1.2 Second subquestion

When creating and implementing a sound identity, in part by the creation of sonic logos; can certain measures be taken, making sure that the sound identity doesn't conflict with and hurt the brand itself?

¹ A description of the presumed steps in this process is found in the chapter *Methodological approaches*.

1.4 Purpose

By extensively examining sound identities and sonic logos, across all the possible phases of its creation and implementation; I am conducting this study with the ambition of finding, mapping and analyzing its potential success factors. My main purpose in carrying out this study is hence to contribute to a clearer, more focused knowledge base in terms of possible factors of success, when applying the tool of sonic branding.

1.5 Limitations

Firstly, I want to stress that this is a study solely within the field of *marketing*, even though it contains certain elements from other academic areas. Hence; even though I to some degree needed to use musical terminology and viewpoints to explore the questions asked, my main focus has been to conduct this study strictly from a marketing perspective.

Furthermore; the creation of sound identities can be done in many different ways, using a vast selection of different tools. Although I have the ambition of covering several of these tools in my quest for finding the success factors of sonic branding; my main focus lies on examining the tool of sonic logos.

I also want to stress that the resources at my disposal aren't vast. This has unfortunately limited me, in terms of needing to conduct this study in a fairly small scale. This implies that tests of sonic logo recognition, recall and association; needed to be carried out by simply asking questions and retrieving answers. I have, in other words, gathered the empirical foundation upon which this study rests, without any at all use of machinery or technical equipment.

1.6 Targeted groups

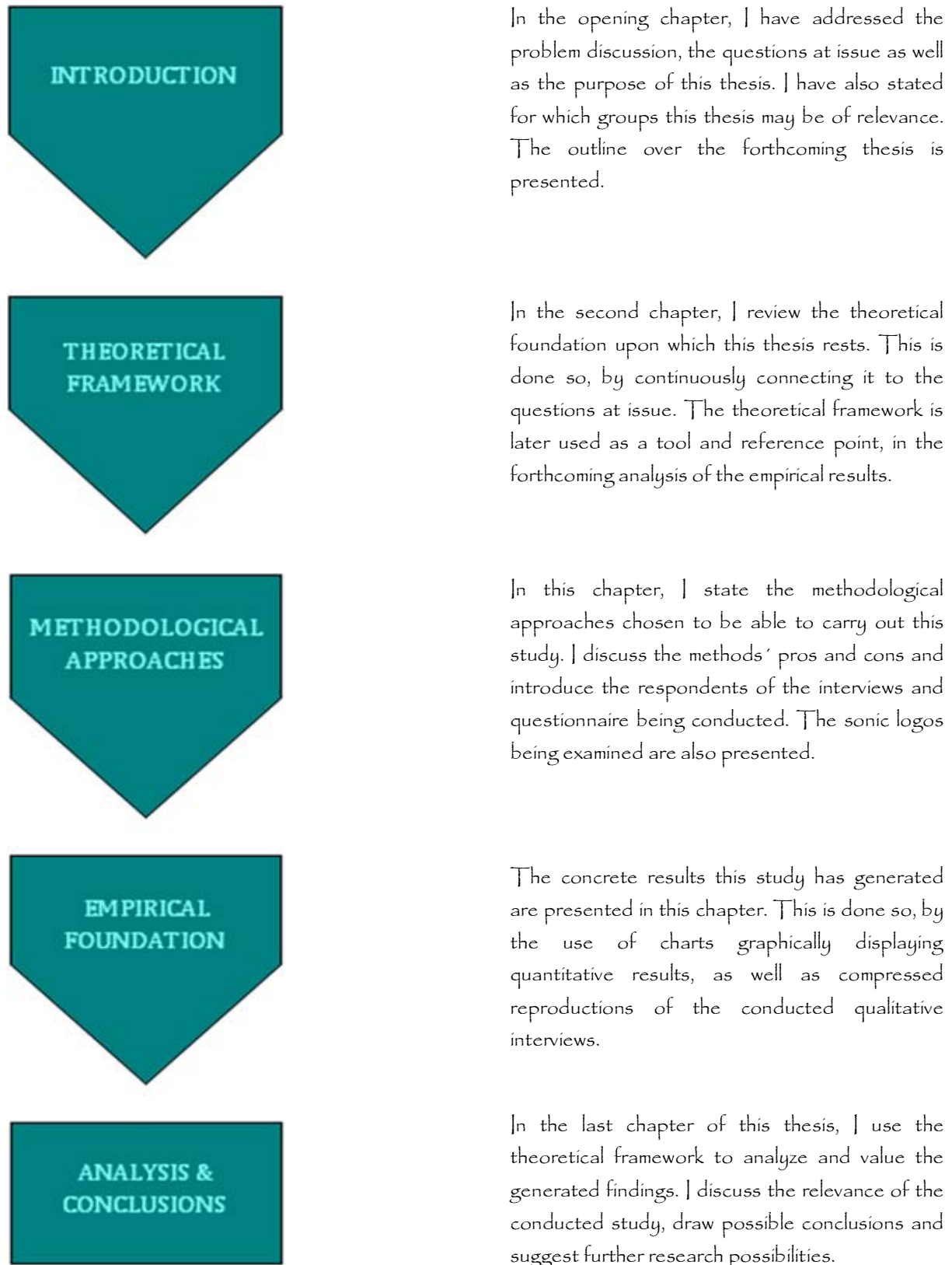
This thesis is hopefully of apparent relevance to a number of groups. These include businesses and companies that are looking to grow strong, efficient and successful brands in part by applying the tool of sonic branding. It must however be understood that sonic branding may be quite a useless activity, without there being underlying values that constitute the necessary *foundation* of a brand. Companies considering this necessity may have a great interest in

taking part of this thesis, and in so finding new ways of strengthening its brands. As studies show; many companies in fact *want to* invest more resources into music marketing and sonic branding solutions, by believing in its vast potential. However; many of them don't seem to have a clear idea of *exactly how to do this*. For this reason; this thesis may hopefully be of great relevance for companies looking to expand its knowledge and horizons, as to how sonic branding solutions can be incorporated in a successful way.

Furthermore; this thesis should be of relevance to a number of such company *stakeholders*, having an interest and involvement in the success of its marketing and branding activities. Such stakeholders may include suppliers, employees, marketing firms and shareholders. My ambition is also that this thesis will be of relevance and general interest to students, academics, professors and scientists involved in the research and development of marketing and branding strategies. Needless to say; the *fellow students* involved in the seminars surrounding this degree project, also constitute an important part of the targeted groups.

1.7 The outline of this thesis

Figure 1: Outline (Andersson, 2009)



2. Theoretical framework

“There is more to a brand than meets the eye.”

Heartbeats International (2009)

In the following chapter, I present and motivate the theoretical framework which was constructed as an analytical tool for this thesis. I have thoroughly chosen between possible theoretical perspectives, to finally implement the theoretical ideas of greatest assumed value for the study. The usefulness of these theoretical ideas, for applying to the questions at issue in this thesis, was the main reason for the choices made. The following presentation of the chosen theoretical framework is done in such a way, that it as frequent as possible is connected and related to the questions at issue. I have consciously tried to prevent a mere description of the chosen theories, by making sure of putting forth a continuous motivation of relevance. A review, rounding up the appliance of the chosen theoretical framework, ends the chapter.

2.1 Comprehensive theoretical summary

The theoretical perspectives that have been chosen as part of this framework mainly include ideas of corporate identity and corporate image, brand identity and brand image, marketing aesthetics, experiential marketing and sensory marketing. Prior to getting deeper into these perspectives, I however also discuss some concrete thoughts, ideas and models surrounding the field of sonic branding. Moreover; I also found it necessary and useful to review some theoretical perspectives involving the art of branding itself.

The thoughts of sonic branding are in part described discussing the so called SoundMapTM Matrix. When covering the concept of corporate identity, I mainly discuss the four parts on which corporate identities often are believed to be founded. These are the parts of products and services, environments, communication and behavior. I also discuss the different schools of thought surrounding corporate identity. Thereafter, I discuss the way in which corporate image in many respects can be viewed as the output of corporate identity, but at times also can take on a life of its own. This discussion is carried out by describing how companies can achieve a desirable image in the eyes of consumers. Moreover; the creation of brand identity and the perception of brand image are aspects in a similar discussion. These ideas are surfaced thereafter, using various theoretical viewpoints. I also discuss issues of design management, in the respect that these ideas may be applicable to the field of sonic branding.

Next, I discuss the four perspectives of marketing aesthetics i.e. publications, presentations, products and properties. These are linked to issues of sonic branding and subsequently linked to the ideas of experiential marketing. Thoughts of the assumed vast powers of sensory and emotional marketing are also reviewed, i.e. marketing with the use of specific tools to reach all of the five human senses, thereby deeply tapping into the emotions of consumers.

2.2 The art of branding

“We are no doubt in the Great Age of the Brand.”

Tom Peters

The issue of how successful brands can be created, perhaps with the partial help of tools such as sonic branding, first calls for a closer definition of what brands in fact are made of. Over the course of the past decades, there has been a vast body of literature written on branding and how the activity can be successfully carried out. All contributors seem to have the most brilliant solution and fail-safe model, as to how strong and successful brands can be strategically built. In my view however; the simplest yet also perhaps the most powerful definition of what constitutes brands, is the statement that brands in many ways are the *DNA* of modern business (Gad, 2002). Brands have to a great extent become the assigned *messengers*, defining the companies to which they belong. Brands also play an important part in how companies are judged and looked upon in the eyes of consumers. Jackson (2003), simply chooses to state that in the very heart of branding lies one, central attribute; *belief*.

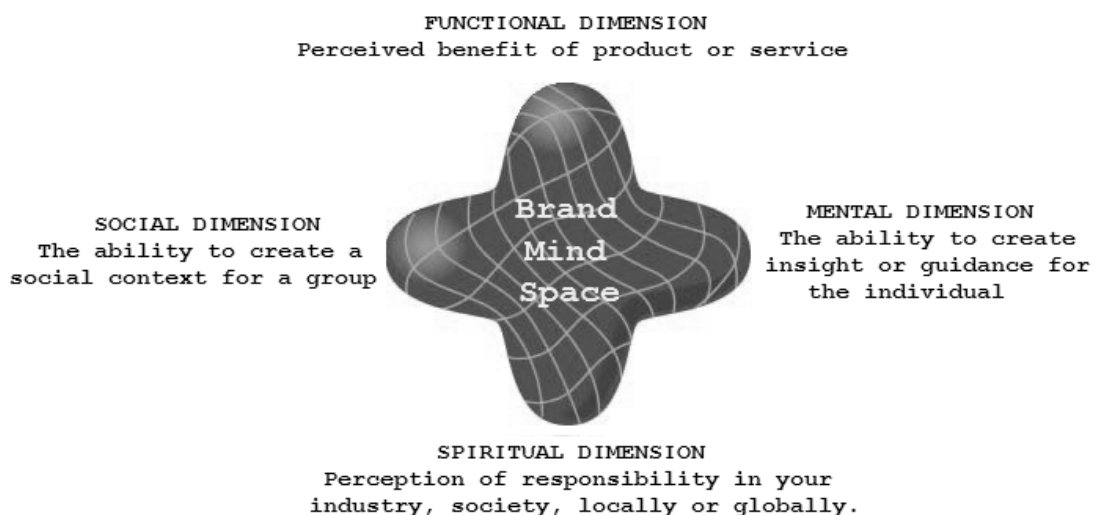
This belief may be in companies and products (or for that matter, human beings of as well), or more accurately belief in the *promises* that are to be fulfilled upon choosing amongst different brands. Or perhaps even the belief in whom you are to become, when a choice between brands has been made. Olins (2003) ponders over how branding has gone through enormous changes, since the practice first saw the light of day some hundred years ago. The most significant change has been the transformation from brands mainly representing security of quality and such mere *functional* characteristics, towards increasingly becoming the bearer of one of the heaviest attributes in modern society; *image*.

Certainly are factors of quality and craftsmanship still important ones for many brands. Nowadays though, many companies, products and brands can in certain respects offer a

somewhat *standardized* and sufficient level of quality. Because of this development; the cars we may drive, the food we may eat, or the clothes we may wear has largely come to define *who we are* to a much greater extent than *what we need*. The evolution of branding has even raised certain voices stating that the choice between brands is successively becoming the *only unique differentiator*, between different companies and products (Melin, 1999). The successful creation of brands has thereby, needless to say, become a very delicate process. It has so, simply because it largely has come to deal with the intangible, hard-to-measure outputs of consumer image, identification, emotional perception and belief. Lagergren (2002) discusses certain attributes, in his view defining the foundation upon which successfully managed brands often are built.

First and foremost; few successful brands can be created without the presence of a well-defined, underlying *business concept*. Knowing to which groups a brand is to be *targeted* to, with a *clear* and *persistent* message, are other crucial factors. Furthermore; it is of great importance that there is a clear *internal* communication regarding what a brand is to represent. A successful brand can not be built without persistence, and persistence can not be achieved without there being an undeniable internal agreement within organizations, what in fact is to be communicated as the brand's core message. Gad (2002) has created his own idea of what successful brands are constructed of, through the so called *Brand Mind Space-model*. It describes four central dimensions in which the creation of brands, which mainly is a process occurring inside consumers minds, are founded upon. The dimensions are described in the following graphical display.

Figure 2: The Brand Mind Space-model (Gad, 2002)



Regarding the *functional dimension*; it's still a force to be reckoned with according to Gad, as many brands still flourish because of attributes such as superior quality, safety or price advantages. Therefore, great brands can still in part be constructed upon the delivery of certain exceptional and unique functions. The *social dimension* to some degree covers the creation of the earlier mentioned factor of image. This meaning the existence of specific social contexts, in which consumers uses brands as extensions of their image and as signs of the social group to which they want to belong.

The social dimension could in certain respects be connected to the tool of sonic branding, due to music's often deeply rooted connection to issues of social belonging and group acceptance. The use of music in branding purposes could perhaps be seen as a tool to reinforce the perception of how human beings are portrayed, in their choices of specific brands. In turn, this may reinforce the perception of the *entire group* to which a human being belongs. In other words; there is an evident link between the types of music people choose to listen to, the styles of clothes they choose to wear, and the stores in which they choose to shop.

The *mental dimension* is to some degree an extension of the social dimension. It involves the way successfully managed brands sometimes take on the role of delivering an even *deeper* insight, by acting as mental guidelines for human beings. Brands can, through the existence of a strong mental dimension, become so important and embedded within consumers' lives, that they come to serve as friends and companions. In its extreme, brands are in this way not only a symbol of image, but rather a deeply rooted part of people's most inner selves. Because music can be said to have a similar feature, of being able to capture significant parts of the identities of human beings, the mental dimension displays a strong connection to the use of music marketing and sonic branding as well.

Lastly; the *spiritual dimension* has come to be an increasingly important platform for companies and the maintenance of its brands. It covers the factor of *ethics* and *morale*. Companies involved in the creation of strong brands inside consumers' minds, must consider and take on the responsibility of acting as ethical role models for the society in which they operate. The way in which companies act, as well as how they choose to conduct its business, constitutes an important part of the messages being sent out through the channels of branding.

2.3 Sonic branding

“Every business is going to have to take responsibility for its sound sooner or later.”

Julian Treasure (2007)

Following this description of how brands can be defined in general terms, as well as how the success of brands is believed to be reached, I will now more closely discuss the theoretical foundations of *sonic* branding. There has unfortunately not been published a great deal of literature within the fairly new field, though Jackson (2003) is an exception. His book entitled *Sonic Branding* is a thoroughly written exploration of the basic foundations of sonic branding. The main messages being put forth in the book covers both the underlying *logic* of using music as a branding solution, as well as *practical ideas* of how it can be carried out.

The author describes some of the emotional characteristics of the creation of sounds, by making a classification into three different sounds types; *voice*, *ambience* and *music*. This classification, the author admits, is a very broad one. Yet it is nonetheless useful when trying to create an understanding of the possible effects, emerging from the exposure to different sounds.

The human voice is certainly one of the most effective channels of expressing a wider palette of emotion. Both the spoken voice and the sung voice can be expressed in such various shapes and forms, that its communicative possibilities are close to endless. In terms of the creation of sonic logos, vocal components are however not used as frequently as one might expect. One exception is the recently implemented sonic logo of the German car manufacturer *Mercedes*. Its vocal sonic logo is built upon three closely connected notes, sung with a high pitch voice belonging to, presumably, a young choir boy. The easily sung melody, partially exposed in recent commercials accompanying a slow-motion shot of a Mercedes car, in my view delivers an evident feeling of *exclusiveness* and *class*. Much like some of the core-values incorporated within the Mercedes brand itself.

In terms of *ambience*, this is a rather wide term that can be said to involve every-day sounds i.e. sounds that normally aren't thought of as being parts of musical compositions. Ambient sounds are rather the *sounds of life* (ibid). Such may involve the sounds of animals, the sounds of nature, or the sounds of machines and other objects not normally considered to be musical instruments. The creation of ambience in musical compositions, by the use of such sounds, is

a technique of establishing certain moods and creating specific settings; at times dramatically changing the expressed sounds of a piece of music. When using ambience as a building block within sonic branding; the purpose may be to reinforce sound identities by attempting to place consumers inside specific atmospheric surroundings. This is often done by the presence of such non-musical, mood-creating sound effects and attributes.

The third sound type, *music*, can of course contain both vocal and ambient sounds; however it's often the addition of sounds from musical *instruments* that defines the creation of a music composition. Jackson (ibid) points out that music is the most fundamental element of sonic branding. It is so, simply because it actually can involve *all* sounds that can possibly be created; bringing the possibility of having them put together in an endless array of emotional arrangements. Therefore, there may be a very clear and close link between the creation of music and the emotional attributes of branding. Because of this link; music may be a suitable marketing tool for the enhancement of these attributes.

Jackson's classification into these three sound types is certainly a very broad one; however in my view sufficient as a possible categorization of different sounds, for the purpose of this thesis. In reality, an entire scientific area entitled *psychoacoustics* has been developed, more thoroughly examining the emotionally stimulating effects upon the exposure to different sounds and musical components. The science of psychoacoustics deeply examines the human hearing system, in it being one of the most efficient receivers of vast amounts of information (Fastl & Zwicker, 2007). Within the science, there are huge amounts of characteristics in the creation of sounds, all having different effects on factors of memory and emotional stimuli. The area of psychoacoustics is not explored more closely than this, in this study which has a marketing approach. It nonetheless displays an interesting area to be examined more closely within other academic fields.

Jackson (ibid) also describes certain *sonic guidelines*, in trying to explain how the musical components of sonic branding can be expressed in specific terms. These are the guidelines of *melody*, *harmony*, *key signature* and *time signature*. As a musician, these are all familiar terms to me, by being the basic building blocks of most musical compositions. For those inexperienced in regards of the language of music; melody can be described as what most people often remember from a piece of music, for instance a sonic logo. The main themes of songs are most often the melodic ones. Melodies hence play a distinctive role in the way music is remembered and connected to. Harmony is rather the opposite of melody, by often

merely existing in the periphery of musical compositions. The creation of harmonies could, in a sense, be described as the *interaction* of different melodies. In many respects; harmonic features represent the very foundations of songs. Such are often not primarily designed to be remembered by listeners, yet can play an important role in elevating the memorable abilities of a main melody.

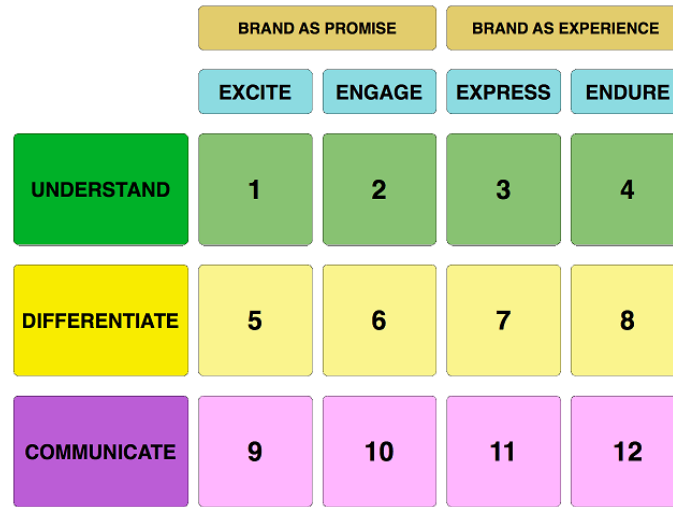
In terms of key signature; it also plays a defining role in the perception of a musical piece. Jackson (ibid) describes key signatures as the different possible platforms upon which melodies and harmonies are placed. In my view, there are two definitions of the term. On the one hand, various keys can be used to express different kinds of emotions. The most commonly known classification is presumably the one between the often happier sounds of *major* keys, and the often sadder sounds of *minor* keys. This is however somewhat of a simplification; there are numerous other types of key classifications that can be used to express a wide palette of different emotions. Yet for the purpose of analyzing the often simple nature of sonic logos, I find it sufficient to mainly bring up the basic major/minor distinction.

The other way of defining key signatures is that such also can be divided into *highs* and *lows*. High keys sound very bright and distinct, while as low keys are more dark and rumbling. The final guideline, time signature, is further described by Jackson as being the *rhythmic* component of music, meaning that a musical composition can be divided into a different number of parts and sections. On the topic of time, it is also common to speak about *tempo* which refers to whether music is played in fast or slow speeds.

In trying to map out how the use of different sounds may affect consumers' perception of brands, Treasure (2007) has developed a model described as the twelve-cell *SoundMapTM Matrix²*. The model has immediate relevance for the questions at issue in this study, because it considers both the marketer's perspective as well as the consumer's perspective in the sonic branding process. On the left side of the model; the marketing perspective is represented by the marketer's ability to *understand*, *differentiate* and *communicate*. The consumer's perspective, located on the top of the model, is represented by *brand as promise* (i.e. the brand's ability to *excite* and *engage*) and *brand as experience* (in terms of its capability to also *express* and *endure*). These dimensions are more closely defined and explained below the graphical display of the matrix, as well as the motif for the model's practical application in this study.

² Usage of the trademarked SoundMapTM Matrix was through mail correspondence approved by Julian Treasure.

Figure 3: The SoundMap™ Matrix (Treasure 2007)



The consumer's perspective of brand as promise is what occurs when a consumer first comes in contact with a brand. This may take place in either of a company's operating platforms. This initial encounter will enable the consumer to form impressions and perceptions of the brand, whether these are intended by the brand owners or not. In this first encounter, Treasure (ibid) finds it crucial to use the possibilities of *interconnecting* sonic and visual attributes, which if done well will have an impact on the formation of initial consumer opinions.

The first of the two subperspectives, excite, represents the very first impression. It may be formed from the sounds of for instance a sonic logo. Engage involves the process when the consumer decides to find out more about the brand, by being excited to do so in the wake of the initial encounter. When a consumer engages him- or herself; the sounds within stores is one of the sonic factors, which may influence whether the engaging process evolves into actual purchases.

The perspective of brand as experience is what takes place when consumers have decided to act on an initial promise. Taking place is the crucial equation of adding up whether a *first impression* of a brand, equals what is subsequently *experienced*. The subperspective of express embodies this initial equation. Sonic elements in this phase may be the sounds a product emits when in use, which may impact the overall experience for its users. If the equation adds up; the next crucial step will be the brand's ability to elongate the relationship, i.e. it's ability to endure. The use of sounds in the enduring phase, in retaining the loyalty of consumers, may for instance be the sounds incorporated within a company's telephone services.

The three dimensions of the marketer's perspective, decides a brand's ability to lead consumers through all of these phases, using the tool of sound. The ability to understand is crucial for applying sounds that are somewhat in line with the targeted consumers' tastes. Sounds that turn out to be largely disliked by being unpleasant in consumers' ears, will certainly increase the risk of hurting a brand's image.

Being able to differentiate the sounds of a brand is also an important dimension. Finding and implementing a brand's unique voice, separating it from competitors, can enhance the feeling of it offering something different and special. Car producers is one example I would like to stress in this regard, by many of such being similar in its sonic projections. There seem, for instance, to be a universal understanding that all sonic logos of car producers should be constructed in a certain way. Such similarities make it hard to differentiate what specific values are meant to be transmitted through a sonic logo, by them all sounding somewhat alike.

The last dimension of the marketer's perspective is the ability to communicate. It is therefore strongly connected to the ability to differentiate, in it implying the chances of communicating specific core values through the channel of sound. Treasure (ibid) uses the term *on-brand*, implying that the sounds representing a brand must have such components and attributes, which embodies the values of the company it represents. Furthermore; another very much a determining factor within this dimension, is how *consistent* the use of sounds is.

The twelve possible combinations of cells that emerge from applying the perspectives above, offer possibilities of finding and answering specific questions as to *where* and *how* a brand might be influenced by it's sounds. The SoundMapTM Matrix therefore appears as an excellent tool, for analyzing the success factors of sound identities and sonic logos.

2.4 Corporate identity

"You cannot escape identification."

Mark Rowden (2000)

2.4.1 The general ideas of corporate identity

Having described some of the building blocks of sonic branding; my intension is now to review some relevant underlying theoretical ideas, in describing how the success of brands is

strongly connected to the likes of its identity. These are ideas to which the practice of sonic branding might be applicable. The ideas surrounding *corporate identity*, are according to Olins (1990) built upon the notion that companies constantly are projecting the answers to three main questions towards the outside world. These are the questions of *who we are*, *what we do* and *how we do it*. Companies are in fact providing the answers to these questions, regardless of whether they are consciously aware of it or not. Subsequently; the answers to the questions are what constitute the *foundation* of the companies' identities. Close and careful attention must therefore be given to these crucial questions, by making sure that they are being answered in a desirable manor.

Furthermore; Olins also describes four main channels through which corporate identities are manifested. These are the channels of *products and services*, *environments*, *communication* and *behavior*. The channel of products and services is largely self-explanatory, by involving the outputs of companies. This meaning the way a company's corporate identity in part is defined by the appearance, quality and performance of its produced products and services. The channel of environments, i.e. all possible spaces in which a company operates, is through its appearances also important determinants of corporate identity. There are reasons to believe that both the channel of products and services, as well as the channel of environments, should have a potential link to the practice of sonic branding.

In terms of products, these needn't only involve attributes such as appearance and performance, but perhaps also *sound*. Many products, when you think about it, emit some kind of sound when in use. Therefore, companies are beginning to realize that it can be a favorable choice to somehow take control of the construction of these sounds. One example is once again the automotive industry, which is an industry producing products that undoubtedly generate a vast array of sounds when being used. The explicit sound of a car door closing may perhaps be seen as trivial and unimportant, but could actually be a factor that says something about the quality of the car.

Noticing this; some car manufacturers have embraced the possibility of creating pleasant, smooth sounds, emitting from its products when in use. In theory, it may perhaps also be possible to install sonic logos inside cars, as a touchpoint that enhances the car maker's sound identity. Such a sonic logo could perhaps embody the sound being played inside a car when the radio is turned on, or perhaps when the passengers are reminded to fasten their seat belts. If such touchpoints can be located, it may enhance a company's sound identity by

communicating something about its overall identity, in terms of core value propositions. It should be said though, that there may be a thin, thin line between the creation of identity and the mere creation of annoyance. Sonic logo touchpoints, one can imagine, must be chosen with finesse and subtleness. Otherwise, it may perhaps have the complete opposite effects, than the ones intended.

When it comes to the channel of environments, it should also display a possible linkage to sonic branding. The spaces in which companies operate, may it be office buildings, retail spaces, or perhaps exhibitions, are all according to Olins' classification distinguished as parts of companies' environments and thereby corporate identities. These environments may be largely important in terms of architecture and location, but perhaps also in sonic terms. To control the music, sounds and acoustics inside retail spaces is, in theory, a possible touchpoint where sonic branding may be practiced. One recent example of such usage involves *Absolute*, the Swedish producer of high-quality vodka. One of its recent marketing activities has been the opening of so called *Absolute Icebars*.

These concept bars are situated in several places around the world, and is a place where you can enjoy an Absolute drink or perhaps shot, in an environment completely made of *ice* (www.absolute.com). In an attempt of using these environments to enhance the identity of the Absolute brand, a specific so called *soundscape* was constructed to be played inside these bars. Not only that; the soundscape was also synchronized, so that it's being played simultaneously at all times, inside every Absolute Icebar around the world (www.heartbeats.fm). This was done to enhance the guests' experience and perception of the Absolute brand. Examples such as this one, touches the link between sonic branding and the corporate identity channel of environments.

Furthermore; the communication channel also plays a defining role according to Olins (ibid), by involving all of the ways in which a company communicates with the outside world. This may be done through advertising, public relations or other informatory channels. The fourth and last channel, through which corporate identity is manifested according to Olins, involves the *conduct* and *behavior* of companies. The acts and actions of company representatives, not only implying top management but all involved, has a defining impact on the way companies consequently is looked upon from the outside.

Another important aspect of corporate identity, however not explicitly mentioned as a part of Olins' categorization, involves *corporate design*. In certain ways, it can be said to flow

through many of the recently discussed channels of corporate identity. It covers the issue of design, and explicit look of companies' products, office buildings, retail spaces, signs, logos, advertisements and other public relation-materials. The practice of *design management* involves the challenge of creating a unified look in regards to all aspects of a company's outputs and operations. In doing so, there may be increased possibilities of developing and strengthening a company's corporate identity.

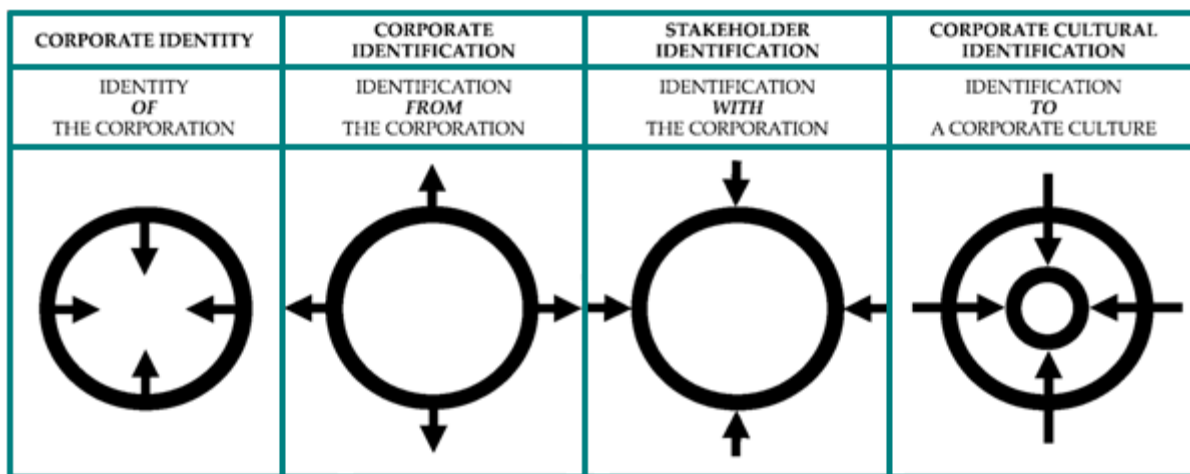
Working towards a joint design management strategy can, if successful, make the projected identity of a company more clear and unique. Such a strategy can be manifested through a company's *environmental design*, *product design*, *package design* and *graphic design* (Borja de Mozota, 2003). It is of importance to take all of these channels into consideration, by developing a differentiated look in terms of shapes, colors and other visual attributes. If a unified corporate look is the mission of design management, it shouldn't be completely farfetched to underline the importance of a unified *sound* as well. I find that perhaps an emphasis on *sonic design management* may be an equally important aspect in trying to create the appearance of corporate unity.

As one can observe, there are several channels of corporate identity that display a possible linkage to the practice of sonic branding. A few have already been discussed, but perhaps the most evident one is the connection between the channel of *communication* and sonic branding solutions. Much focus, in past descriptions of corporate identity in terms of communication, has been put on communicating through *visual* channels. But when you think about it, communicating through *sound* comes across as an equally, if not more logical way to get a message across. Therefore, the communication channel of corporate identity may have a close connection to sonic branding and the creation of sonic identities.

To express and manifest a company's identity through its outward communication could perhaps be conducted more efficiently, if the power of sound and music was understood and taken advantage of. Both visual and sonic strategies of communication can certainly be effective completely on its own, but the most effective way of getting messages across is according to Franzén (1999) to use different media channels *simultaneously*. When a message persistently reaches consumers from many different angles, in this case due to *both* visual and sonic communication; the synergy effects occurring will create an even greater possibility of a company's identity being well remembered and deeply cemented.

When discussing the topic of corporate identity; Balmer (2008) has classified five different schools of thought related to a company's identity, which may perhaps be useful to keep in mind when discussed in the light of sonic branding. Four of these schools are described in the following graphical presentation, whereas the fifth should be considered an umbrella category that covers the other four. The four visually displayed schools of thought, as well as the fifth umbrella category entitled *envisioned identity and identification*, are also described more closely in the text below.

Figure 4: Schools of thought related to identity and identification (Balmer, 2008)



The area of corporate identity has been discussed thoroughly in this chapter. It involves the actual and true identity of a company, which is often embedded within its output of products and services, environments, communication and behavior. Balmer however also stresses that the identity of a company never reaches a steady state, but is constantly *evolving*. Furthermore; a company's *projected* identity doesn't necessarily have to equal its *true* identity. Therefore, it is important to separate the true identity of a company, from the identification *from* a company. *Corporate identification* is by this definition rather the outward bound identification, being projected from the company towards the outside world.

In terms of sonic branding and the incorporation of sound identities; these strategies could be viewed as an outward bound identification channel. However; a sonic logo for instance, certainly doesn't necessarily have to be constructed in a way that it projects the true identity of the bearer of the sonic logo. It may on the contrary, consciously or subconsciously, emit values that aren't at all equal or even close to the ones of the company. Such a situation,

where the sound identity of a company *conflicts* with its true identity, could certainly result in a very problematic and harmful situation.

In my view, it could be problematic for two reasons: either the projected values are of such nature, that consumers find them unnecessary and unimportant and chooses to dismiss them. This could result in a huge loss of customers and business, if the company's customers simply choose to conduct their business elsewhere. On the other hand, it could also be problematic if the values projected in a sound identity are of such nature that they actually are able to attract *new* customers. However; what may occur is perhaps that the values subsequently *can not be delivered*, due to a display of a wrongful image³ that isn't a true reflection of the company's identity. This situation could in theory be hugely damaging for the reputation of the company, and may result in great losses of business.

Balmer also describes the areas of *stakeholder identification* as well as *corporate culture identification*. These areas point to situations that appear when stakeholders come in contact with the identity that is being projected from a company; whether truthful or artificial. The two areas differ in the way that corporate culture identification refers to stakeholders identifying with the internal *culture* of a company, whereas the area of stakeholder identification rather refers to stakeholders identifying with the company *itself*. Regardless of whether the stakeholders of a company identifies with the company itself or its culture, the critical issues of maintaining a distinct, memorable and unique corporate identity appears central within both schools of thought.

Reaching out to stakeholders, may it be customers, employees or others; involves the ability to *stand out* from a crowd of competitors by offering something different and special. Creating, and also being able to *back up*, such crucial core values; is the first important step. The other is to successfully make people aware of the core values by communicating them as part of a corporate identity. The use of sonic branding may be a tool suitable for this job, due to music's unique communicative features of delivering emotion and tapping into the memory of the targeted stakeholders. Music in the form of sonic logos and the creation of sound identities appears, in theory, to be a possible way of communicating both internal identification to employees, as well as external identification to customers.

³ The issue of image is discussed further in the section entitled *Corporate image* (2.4.2)

The fifth school of thought categorized by Balmer which he, as mentioned once, names envisioned identity and identification, touches several of the other schools of thought as well. However; it doesn't involve *what is*, but rather *what is thought*. In other terms; corporate identity and identification doesn't always portray the desirable persona of a company. Sometimes, companies need to envision how they are being looked upon, in order to construct artificial identities by making people, namely customers but also other stakeholders, *believe* that things are a certain way. The power of perception means that it sometimes is more fruitful for companies to create the mere *belief* in it holding certain values, traits and attributes. An identity change can then possibly occur, if the constructed beliefs can later also be realized. As Balmer points out however, this conduct is lined with risks such as the risk of creating customer dissatisfaction, if promises are made without them subsequently being held.

Sonic branding can perhaps in this regard be used as a partial tool to create a perception of companies, which perhaps isn't always fully in line with reality. One example I would like to mention in this discussion, is the sonic branding activities of the Norwegian-owned clothing chain *Dressmann*. Its use of music as a marketing tool to establish emotional connections has certainly been a success in many ways. Yet some of these emotions, in my view, may be *artificial* emotions not entirely rooted in the delivered core values of Dressmann. I feel that the music connected to the clothing chain's marketing activities has a very distinct, *cool* feel to it. Yet the word cool is presumable not the first thing popping into people's heads when discussing the offered *products* of Dressmann.

Even though there is an evident risk that people are disappointed upon the discovery that the clothes of Dressmann perhaps aren't quite as edgy and fashionable as advertised; I believe this risk has not been realized for the following reason. Dressmann still offer certain values that are important to people when buying clothes. The company's music has presumably attracted a lot of customers to Dressmann boutiques, because of the sonic aura of Dressmann offering the latest, hip fashion. These customers may have been able to conclude that some of the emotions and imagery surrounding Dressmann clothes aren't quite as they appear. However; people may still decide to purchase their clothes at Dressmann, due to the other values that emerge when entering its stores. These are perhaps values such as price advantages or an excellent service orientation.

2.4.2 Corporate image

All of Olins' channels of corporate identity, as well as Balmer's schools of thought related to a company's identity, should in some shape or form be seen as relevant in terms of the picture being projected as the *corporate image*. Gregory & Wiechmann (1999) point out that corporate identity mainly answers the question of *who we are* as a company, while corporate image rather answers the question of *what they are*, meaning how the company is perceived in the eyes, ears and minds of the surrounding public. Corporate image could therefore, in my view, be defined as the *gap* between a company's true identity and its perceived identity created in the minds of consumers. If no such gap exists, corporate identity and corporate image should in fact amount to the same thing.

A precise equivalence between corporate identity and corporate image is however rarely seen, by being vastly difficult to achieve. Therefore, companies must constantly be aware of the signals and messages that are being sent out, by continuously considering the perhaps greatly differing perceptions of the images being displayed.

Gregory et al. (ibid) proposes that there are six possible guides to success, which must be understood and deeply considered if companies are to successfully project a desirable corporate image. The six guides are *perception, direction, self-knowledge, focus, creativity* and last but not least *consistency*. These guides should in several ways display a link to the practice of sonic branding, as I explain further on.

The guide of perception is in many ways the most important one, meaning that it at times doesn't at all matter what in fact is true about a company's identity. It's rather the *belief* within consumers minds that plays a defining role, in the formation of corporate image. Understanding the guide of perception in regards to its vast powers, may therefore be one of the most crucial factors in the nurturing of one's image. On this note; the development of *perception management* has emerged as a distinct activity, in maintaining the image of companies.

The guide of direction refers to there needing to be a clear *vision* established from top management, regarding what the intended goals of the projected corporate image are. It's also of great importance that a thorough internal analysis is carried out before any goals are set. This latter guideline; self-knowledge, refers to there needing to be a mutual understanding within companies, regarding the true nature of its identity. Such an understanding must be

reached, before anything can be said or done about the objectives of a company's projected image. Simply; companies have to know exactly who they are, before they can discuss any changes in how they wish to be viewed upon. The guide of focus is also very important, by having its origin in the marketing activity of *targeting*. A company that is looking to change or modify its corporate image must first pinpoint and try to understand its main stakeholders. If companies don't know or understand to whom its corporate image mainly is being projected, attempts to influence this image will become too sporadic, unfocused and hence unsuccessful.

The two remaining guidelines involve the actual process of modifying a company's image. The guide of creativity refers to the importance of finding and communicating a specific and unique appeal in the projected image of a company, which differentiates it from competitors. Finding this appeal must be done by paying close attention to the needs, wants and demands of the targeted stakeholders. The last guide refers to the ever-so important factor of consistency. Maintaining or modifying a company's image isn't done over night. It takes consistent and persistent efforts, by constantly sending out the same offers of appeal and value through an appropriate spectrum of channels.

The use of music and specifically sonic branding comes across as a possible channel, through which corporate image could be manifested or modified. Even though the word *image* has an immediate visual association; managing one's image doesn't, in my view, merely need to involve actual visual design. Just think of the images emerging in your mind, when you think of the certain music associated with the different stages of your life. Imagine perhaps the songs you sang as a child; the music of your wild teens; the song accompanying your first kiss or perhaps the music playing at your wedding. The images emerging are all quite visual, I am sure. Yet they are sprung from the thought of a sonic memory. In other words; they have become strongly connected to the presence of certain musical ingredients.

Using these possibilities, of creating mental images from the addition of music, may have a great impact also in the marketing of companies' image. In analyzing the possibilities of using sonic branding in creating such images; the six recently reviewed guides to success may be a helpful structural map. Perception and focus are applicable because of the wide spectra of effects, which a piece of music may enforce on different groups of human beings. Thereby, it must presumably be fully understood to whom the music should be targeted, in the creation of a sound identity.

The guide of self-knowledge should be relevant, to be able to analyze which core values are to be sent out through sonic branding channels. Finally, the guides of creativity and consistency are also applicable to the tool of sonic branding. Without creativity, it is in my view not possible to express yourself through the language of music. And as we all know; consistent exposure to the same music over and over again, often makes it better remembered. And such consistent exposure to music may also have the effect of making human beings create personal relationships to musical compositions.

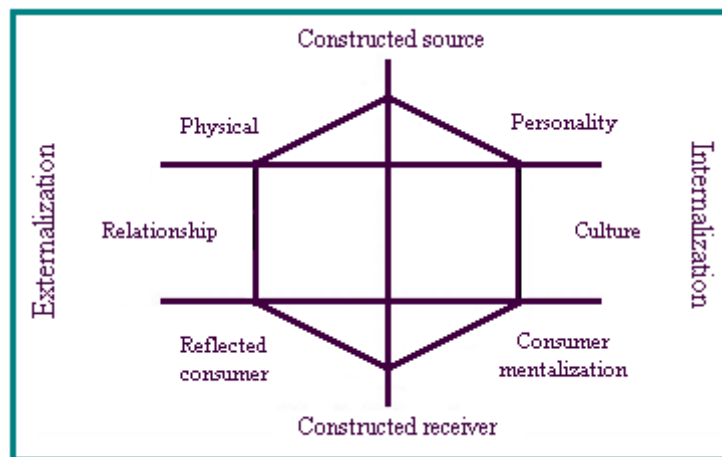
2.4.3 *Brand identity and brand image*

Sometimes; the identity and image of companies are not determining or crucial factors for the success of its activities. Instead, it may be more favorable to create identities for the *actual brands* representing the products of companies. In an extreme, a brand might through the implementation of an identity take on a life of its own, without the consumers ever knowing or perhaps even caring which company produces it. A company may have a wide selection of brands under its belt, each with different identities. BMW, for instance, is the producer and manager of the MINI brand. Yet it's not the core values of BMW that come to mind when thinking of a MINI car, by it rather having injected with an identity of its own. The different ways in which a company's brands and subbrands relate to each other, is often referred to as its *brand architecture*.

The creation of brand identities is according to Melin (1999) quite a sophisticated process of trying to market and differentiate the subtle differences between the attributes and values of different brands. Melin also stresses the importance of developing an emotional communication, in the attempts of portraying such brand identities. An important distinction to make is that *brand identity* should be viewed as the consumers' perception of a brand as *intended* by its owners. While *brand image* rather is the *actual* way in which a brand is perceived by consumers (Aaker, 2002).

Kapferer (2004) has developed a model describing the crucial factors in developing successful identities for brands; entitled the *Brand Identity Prism*. The prism's six facets and connection to sonic branding are described after the forthcoming graphical illustration of the model. As once established; brands are often built around actual company names. Therefore; brands that have in fact been constructed upon the identity of *actual companies*, should perhaps also be applicable for analysis using the model.

Figure 5: *The Brand Identity Prism* (Kapferer, 2004)



The model is built around six facets, explaining the process of creating core identities for brands that is hopefully intact when it reaches its recipients. The core identity can be controlled by the owner of the brand, using the *physical* facet as well as the *personality* facet. This physical facet can be controlled through the different product attributes that are connected to the brand's name. It is however also possible to rather create *intangible* attributes within the personality facet, by attaching certain values or emotional stimuli that are to appear upon consuming the brand.

At the other end of the prism, these physical and personal traits must be mirrored in the *reflected consumer* and *consumer mentalization* facets of the targeted consumers. These facets portray the actual needs, both physical and identity-based, of the recipients. If no reflection exists, there are no potential recipients of the values being sent out, meaning that the efforts are quite useless.

If there is however a reflection on this end of the prism, it is possible that this somehow has been affected by the internal *culture* (see the culture facet) and *norms* of the company behind the brand. As I stated earlier; this doesn't however need to be the case. Sometimes, it may be irrelevant who the sender of a brand's identity is. Another factor which may affect the identity of a brand before it reaches consumers, is its ability to create external relationships (see the *relationship* facet), meaning that some brands are better equipped for constructing such consumer-brand relationships. A brand's identity, in the shape of a reflection on the receiving end of the prism, can be defined as the brand's image in consumer minds.

Apéria & Back (2004) points out that the prism of brand identity is an excellent tool for examining the possible strengths and weaknesses when delivering a brand's identity. I find that it also may be applicable when analyzing the tool of creating sound identities for brands, partly because of the connection to emotional self-image and music's potential features of being able to create emotional relationships to its listeners.

2.5 Marketing aesthetics and sensory marketing

"From the moment we wake up to the end of each working day we are dazzled by what we see, hear, taste, smell and feel."

Bernd H. Schmitt & Alex Simonson (1997)

2.5.1 The 4 P's of marketing aesthetics

The thoughts of *marketing aesthetics* (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997) build upon previously discussed ideas of creating identity and image for both companies and brands. Schmitt et al. (ibid) argue that identity and image can often best be reached by the incorporation of *aesthetics* elements as strategic tools. The logic of using aesthetic tools rest on the notion that value can be created for companies, by understanding the consumers' need for *experiences*⁴. The authors are strongly convinced that many of the world's most successful companies and brands have reached its success, in part by focusing on the importance of creating aesthetic appeal to its names. Aesthetic elements can do so, by acting as important differentiators in a clutter of companies, otherwise appearing very similar in the eyes of consumers.

Unique expressions of aesthetic attributes are by this definition hugely important factors, in the creation of one-of-a-kind identities for companies and brands. In an attempt of categorizing the channels through which the expressions of a company's aesthetic identity is manifested, the authors suggest the so called 4 P's of marketing aesthetics. These channels share some similarities to the previously reviewed channels of corporate identity, however are taken *one step further* by taking the importance of aesthetics into consideration. The 4 P's are explained in the forthcoming sections of text.

Thereafter, I have also chosen to suggest a possible addition of a *fifth P*, involving the *Power of Music* as a least common denominator, flowing through all of the other four channels. The

⁴ See the section entitled *Experiential and sensory marketing* (2.5.3)

reason for this is that there is an evident connection between the ideas of marketing aesthetics and the use of music marketing and sonic branding, which of course are the main fields under investigation in this thesis.

2.5.1.1 1st P: Properties

The Properties channel involves the actual spaces in which companies operate, such as buildings, offices, retail environments as well as company vehicles. Such environments can be made aesthetically appealing in such a way, that it creates a sense of unity and identity.

2.5.1.2 2nd P: Products

The Products channel refers to the output of companies, in terms of the specific attributes of its offered products and services. This output can be accompanied with aesthetic attributes, making it distinguishable from the output of competitors, and in so enhancing a company's identity and image.

2.5.1.3 3rd P: Presentations

The channel of Presentations includes the aesthetic features within the surroundings of a company's products and services. In terms of products, it may for instance involve its packaging and labeling. When it comes to services, it may involve the appearance of employees or other aesthetic features in the close perimeter of a service exchange.

2.5.1.4 4th P: Publications

The fourth P of Publications is the channel through which a company promotes itself, or in other ways communicates to its surroundings. This may for instance involve advertising efforts, promotional materials and the construction of web sites. With all of these forms of publications, a company has a choice of adding unifying aesthetic features that can strengthen its identity and image.

2.5.2 The possible 5th P: Power of Music

My suggestion is that the use of music marketing, and specifically sonic branding, has a logical connection to all of the four P's of marketing aesthetics. In terms of properties; retail spaces can be equipped with sonic branding solutions. This may be the subtle sonic logo of a company, being played instead of a doorbell upon entering its stores or office facilities. A real world example involves IKEA, which is something I happened to notice when recently

visiting the IKEA warehouse in my hometown of Malmö, Sweden. When there is an announcement to be made through the speaker system of the warehouse, customers are made aware of this through the playback of a sonic representation, attracting the customers' attention. The same sonic representation is also exposed in the company's television commercials.

When it comes to products; the *sounds* of products are often discussed as a potential touchpoint of sonic branding. Many products, when in use, either emit or can be associated to some kind of product sound. This opens up for the possibility of controlling and using this sound, by incorporating it a distinguishable part of a company's identity⁵.

In terms of presentations, there is an evident possibility of using sound to present and label a product or service. An excellent example of such a presentation is the start-up and close-down sounds of computer operating systems such as Microsoft's *Windows* and Apple's *Macintosh OS*. The use of sonic logos as presentations within information technologies can be an excellent technique of building brand identity, in an industry where products often are intangible and sold without any packaging.

The channel of Publications perhaps incorporates the most evident and most used connection to sonic branding solutions. Even though there have surfaced numerous possible touchpoints, in which the appliance of sonic branding has great possibilities, there is still a lot of power in the good old fashioned channel of advertising. To this day, television advertising is still the most used platform for the creation of sonic identities. Even though possibilities have grown in recent years, for consumers to avoid television advertising; it is still an effective tool of making promotional messages reach a vast consumer base. Using sonic branding tools as part of a company's advertising strategy may be a crucial ingredient, in the creation of strong and distinguishable brands.

2.5.3 *Experiential and sensory marketing*

Through the channels of marketing aesthetics, ideas have been presented proclaiming the possibility of manifesting a company's identity using *all* the five human senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Schmitt (1999) uses the term *experiential marketing*. The term implies that virtually all companies nowadays need to understand the importance of creating strong consumer relations, by offering *complete* experiences rather than just focusing on

⁵ See the discussion on Vestas, in the next chapter's empirical results from *Interview #2: Søren Holme* (4.2.3).

product attributes or other benefits. The author proposes a five-fold classification, all being important issues when trying to create customer experiences. The five areas are described as *sense, feel, think, act* and *relate*.

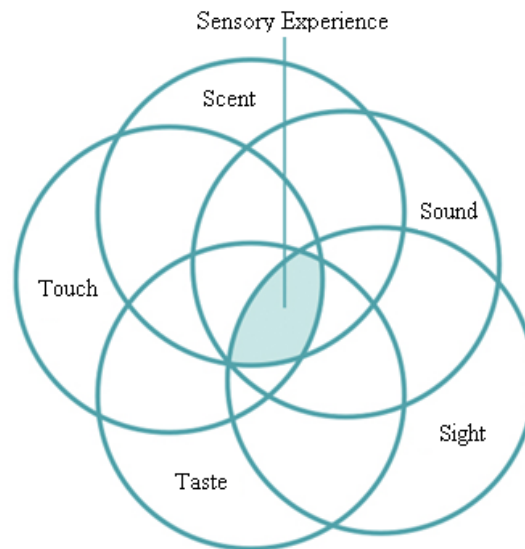
Sense, involves the ability to create experiences, by being able to target a company's marketing attempts towards the *entire sensory systems* of the consumers. Feel is rather the way in which brands can trigger consumers' most inner *emotions*, rather than their senses. It is also largely possible to offer experiences by engaging consumers' *minds, intellect* and *creativity*, by creating settings that encourages the need to think. Furthermore; offering consumers different ways to act, i.e. encourage consumers' choice of different *actions* rather than *thoughts*, is another way of enriching the experiential perception of a company or brand. Finally, it's also important to nurture the ability of making consumers deeply relate to the experiences offered by brands and companies.

The first of these crucial ways of creating consumer experiences, sense, involves a company's ability to make strong emotional, sensory connections to its customers and other stakeholders. Such *emotional branding* (Gobé, 2001) is a way of making people connect to companies and brands at an emotional level, by using the powers of the human senses as triggers. Söderlund (2003) points out that the importance of tapping into consumers emotions has increased in recent years, because of the vast supply of similar products available in today's society. If many products and brands appear the same, companies must cut through the brand clutter by emotionally connecting to potential consumers.

Lindstrom (2005) proposes this can be done by applying the concept of *5-D branding*. Each of the dimensions of 5-D branding is represented by one of the five human senses. Lindstrom finds that the possibilities of building powerful and distinguishable brands is enabled by incorporating as many of these dimensions, i.e. senses, as possible in the interaction with consumers. Similar ideas are advocated by Broweus, Van Dijk & Hultén (2008), by establishing their belief in so called *sensory marketing*.

The latter of the mentioned authors present a model, displaying the circumstances in which all of the five human sensory experiences can be brought together, in the marketing strategies of companies and brands. This creates the effect of a *concentrated emotional experience* which consumers take part of, when being exposed to a brand through multiple sensory channels. The *Sensory Experience-model* is presented below in a graphical presentation, and its main connection to this study is discussed thereafter.

Figure 6: The Sensory Experience-model (Broweus et al, 2008)



The area in the very centre of the model represents the *sensory experience* consumers are exposed to and consequently act on, when brands are able to make strong emotional connections to multiple senses. The theoretical ideas of 5-D branding and sensory experiences in marketing are certainly interesting for all of its five dimensions. However; for the purpose of this thesis, where the creation and implementation of sound identities and sonic logos is studied, it's mainly the experience of *sound* that makes these ideas relevant.

To be able to establish emotional, sensory, consumer experiences; companies may need to incorporate a deeper understanding of how sound can strengthen as well as weaken its image in the minds of consumers. Broweus et al. (2008) points out that marketing strategies in which sounds and music are incorporated in a *persistent* way, will largely contribute to a consumer's complete experience of the brand in its entirety. Important factors in such sonic branding, involves the creation of sounds and music that is *differential*, *memorable* and *flexible*. These factors may be potential reference points, in analyzing the sonic logos being tested in this study.

2.6 Round-up: applying the theoretical framework

I have constructed the theoretical framework as a backbone and source of reference, when trying to analyze the results of the conducted study. The ideas of corporate identity and corporate image I find to be very much useful, by involving several aspects and dimensions to

which the activity of sonic branding has a logical connection. It's an undeniable fact, that the very term *identity* constitutes an important aspect of the concept of music. Because not all brands bear the names of companies, I found it relevant and useful to incorporate the ideas of brand identity as well, within the framework. The selection of sonic logos being tested in this study can be said to fall under both of these categories⁶. Hence; some of the sonic logos bear the actual names of the companies owning them, while as the some are subbrands of companies, enabling them to embody separate identities apart from its owners.

The ideas of marketing aesthetics and sensory marketing are relevant for its emphasis on creating experiences for consumers. The sound identities of brands, may it be by the use of sonic logos, can in my view clearly be connected to these thoughts. The formation of a brand's sound identity could certainly constitute a significant influence over how the overall *experience* of a brand is perceived. Therefore, I find that these ideas have a motivated spot in the theoretical framework, by enabling a reference point to which I can draw influences.

Moreover; it was also in my own view clearly motivated to include the *actual* ideas of the powers of sonic branding, within the theoretical framework. In trying to analyze the results from this study, I find a certain assurance in the possibility of referring back to the specific models and ideas of sonic branding. The building blocks of music represent one of the important reference points, but I also find relevance in attempting to consult the SoundMapTM Matrix in the coming analysis of the generated results.

⁶The sonic logos being tested are presented in the following chapter entitled *Methodological approaches* (3).

3. Methodological approaches

"We all have ears, but most brands don't have voices."

Brian Rupp (2007)

The forthcoming chapter is devoted to the presentation and explanation of the methods being used in this study. After a comprehensive summary, I will first need to describe the steps in which I have divided the process of the creation and implementation of sonic branding. Upon reviewing relevant research philosophy, I thereafter present and motivate the general research methods I have found appropriate to apply when investigating these steps. This is followed by a description of the specific methods being used for the collection of data. I will also introduce the respondents taking part in this study, as well as the circumstances surrounding their involvement. Throughout the chapter I apply a continuous methodological discussion, in an attempt of critically viewing the possible weaknesses of the chosen methods. These are rounded up in an ending methodological evaluation.

3.1 Comprehensive methodological summary

I have found the need to conduct this study using both qualitative, as well as quantitative methods. Certain characteristics defining the steps in the creation and implementation process of sonic branding, in my view, called for an appliance of both of these distinctive types of methods. My ambition is however to conduct this study with a qualitative, exploring approach as the emphasis. The mainly exploring nature of the questions at issue motivates such an approach. I have furthermore had the ambition of incorporating the ideas of reflective research, throughout the entire research process and as a method of analysis.

The methods for collecting the needed qualitative data consist of semi-structured interviews, with such respondents possessing specific knowledge within the different processual steps being studied. Furthermore; I also needed to collect a certain amount of quantitative data by the use of a written questionnaire. The selection of respondents taking part in the questionnaire was chosen randomly, however with certain guidelines. I have, moreover, attempted to apply a hermeneutic, abductive research approach during the whole of the research process, as well as during the analysis of the empirical data.

3.2 Phases in the process of sonic branding

As a guideline and underlying research structure in carrying out this study, I found it necessary to divide the process in which sound identities and sonic logos may be created and implemented. I have split this process into *three* possible phases. I made this decision in order to enable specific choices of methodology, which was needed for approaching different parts of the study. In dividing the process into these three phases, I found that the gathering and analysis of empirical data could be made more focused, in terms of the possibilities for determining causal links. Thereby, I feel it may also create greater scientific value. The phases presented below are based solely on my *own* preconception of the likely procedure of creating and implementing sound identities and sonic logos. The three phases will come to practical use, as a structure of analysis in the fifth and final chapter of this thesis, i.e. the chapter entitled *Analysis and conclusions*. It should be mentioned though, that it's not likely these phases are completely set in stone, meaning that in real life they most probably interconnect with each other. However; for the purpose of this study I've found it useful to look upon the process, rather as separate phases.

3.2.1 1st phase: *Sonic branding envisioning*

During the first phase, a company may make a decision to attempt to extend and strengthen its brand or brands, by developing a sound identity using the tool of music. Upon making this decision, the responsible marketing directors and branding strategists must presumably first thoroughly examine how they could go about to incorporate such a sound identity. A review of the possible emotions and values, which should be communicated through a sound identity, may be of great importance.

3.2.2 2nd phase: *Sonic branding creation*

During the second phase, the envisioning of a sound identity is communicated to the ones being given the task of making it come to life. The ones assigned to the job, may for instance be a sonic branding agency. The information in the requested assignment is interpreted and analyzed further by the sonic branding agency, in terms of how it best can be expressed in the language of music and sound. When this in turn has been carried out, the sound identity is subsequently created along the lines of the results from the prior analysis.

3.2.3 3rd phase: *Sonic branding implementation*

During the third and last phase, the finished sound identity may be communicated to the end consumers, across the platforms chosen as touchpoints within the sonic branding strategy. Upon being exposed to for instance a sonic logo, the consumer will create his own idea and interpretation of the sounds and music. This implying which emotions it evokes, as well as how precisely the sonic representation of the brand in fact is in line with its perceived internal values. If turning out successful; the sonic logo is hopefully embraced in the same way as its intended purpose, making it well remembered and strongly connected to the identity of the company/brand and its core values.

3.3 The choice of research methods

Upon describing the possible phases of the sonic branding process, I will present and motivate the different research methods I have chosen in order to conduct the investigation of each of these three phases. First however; I will discuss what specific type of knowledge I believed was needed, to examine the questions at issue in this thesis. This discussion will motivate an overview and description of relevant research philosophy and possible general research methods. Such an overview hopefully makes the choices of the specific methods being adopted in this study, clearer and more sensible.

3.3.1 *The nature of the knowledge needed*

As stated; my main ambition with this thesis is to investigate whether there are possible patterns of success in the creation and implementation of sound identities, mainly by examining the tool of sonic logos. If such patterns exist; I intend to try to determine during which circumstances sonic logos and sonic branding activities may be effective and fulfilling of its purposes. This implies that I also intend to determine in which cases the opposite situation may occur. In order for me to be able to conduct such an analysis, I needed to collect specific types of knowledge and data surrounding these issues. When considering the nature of the knowledge needed, some crucial characteristics of this knowledge emerge.

Firstly, I found it to be of great importance that I was able to consult practitioners of sonic branding and music marketing, in order to cement an analysis in the real world experiences of those who actually practice it. Such practitioners partially include marketing and branding directors of companies, but mainly it involves representatives of sonic branding agencies and

music marketing firms. In consulting these practitioners; an ambition to thoroughly extract embedded thoughts and feelings appeared crucial. This motivated the use of an investigating method that enabled me to dig down deep, and retrieve a foundation of knowledge covering as many viewpoints as possible. Answering the questions at issue, therefore partially called for a deep exploration of the past and present experiences of people working with issues of successful sonic branding, on a day-to-day basis. The gathering of this type of knowledge covers mainly the first and second phase in the presumed process of sonic branding, which was previously explained.

Moreover; to be able to measure and analyze the circumstances in which the *outcomes* of sonic branding activities can be said to be effective and fulfilling of its purposes, there was a need for a different type of knowledge coming across as necessary. The spontaneous definition of a successful sonic logo would simply be when the consumers recognizes it, and remembers to which brand it is connected in a positive context. Furthermore; a sonic logo could probably be considered successful if it evokes the same emotions and propositions of value in consumer's minds, as the brand itself is intended to represent.

Examining when these circumstances occur, doesn't imply the same need for deep and exploring approach. This due to the simple equation of consumers either being able to correctly make the intended connections, or not. The rather simple nature of making these connections, instead called for a *wider* base of knowledge as apposed to a deeper one, to be able to draw valid conclusions. This in turn implied the need for such methods, which better could capture this kind of wide, rather than deep, body of information. The gathering of this knowledge covers mainly the third phase in the presumed process of sonic branding, which was also previously explained.

3.3.2 *Research philosophy*

Before I address the specific methodological choices of this study; an overview of possible and relevant philosophical approaches in regards to research methodology, is in place. In general, there are in fact countless different directions, within historical scientific philosophy. Some of them, many however feel, incorporate a somewhat outdated philosophical view, such as the positivistic viewpoints of there being an objective reality *out there*; one which is the scientist's mission to track down and determine. The positivistic view is still the major philosophical preconception within most natural sciences, however not in the same way the norm in most social scientific research.

Alvesson & Sköldberg (2008) find that the creation of valuable, social scientific research largely depends on the scientist's *ontological* and *epistemological* preconceptions rather than the specific choices of methodology. Ontology can be defined as the view one uses when looking upon the classical philosophical issue of what in fact *exists*, while as epistemology rather refers to the different processes in which we attempt to gain *knowledge* of this existence (Rennstam: seminar, 2008).

I recently mentioned the, for many, outdated viewpoints of positivism which is one of these epistemological trains of thoughts. Another direction in terms of epistemology, which many find rather healthy, is the *interpretivistic* way of looking upon the quest of gaining scientific knowledge. It is a viewpoint quite separated from the objective manor of looking upon knowledge, which is prominent within the positivistic view. The starting point of interpretivism involves a view saying that the reality surrounding us rather has been socially constructed; meaning that it therefore can not be studied using the simple tool of observation.

As opposed to being able to find knowledge through observation, one must rather attempt to *deeply describe* the world around us by interpreting its possible reasons for having been created. From such interpretivistic directives of looking upon the quest for scientific knowledge, the *hermeneutical* viewpoint can be said to have evolved. Hermeneutics also has its emphasis on interpretation, in terms of one needing to create a *wider* understanding of problems and issues at hand, by attempting to explain them from multiple points of views. Alvesson et al. (ibid) classifies hermeneutics as the epistemological *par preference* of our age, in it often being incorporated as a healthy philosophical mainstay. I am of a similar opinion, which has led me to an attempted incorporation of the hermeneutical trains of thought. The latter mentioned authors have chosen to further develop a recommended entry point in social scientific studies, namely so called *reflective research*. I'll be getting deeper into the context of reflective research both in the sections entitled *Qualitative, quantitative and reflecting research* (3.3.4), as well as *Method of analysis* (3.6).

3.3.3 General research methods

I have now presented a discussion showing my view upon the nature of the knowledge needed to conduct this study, as well as certain fitting philosophical foundations. This hopefully makes the following descriptions of the choices of research methods better understood and motivated. When further discussing research methods in general terms, there have emerged different hands-on ways of looking upon the process of creating and gaining scientific

knowledge. One of the most central distinctions is the one made between *deductive* and *inductive* research. The fundamental way in which these two scientific approaches differ, are grounded in the way a scientist looks upon and chooses to apply *previously* stated theories within the field that is being studied (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

When adopting a deductive approach, such previous theoretical perspectives are carefully studied in order for the scientist to be able to create and formulate specific hypotheses. These hypotheses are then empirically tested by conducting appropriate studies, allowing the scientist to either *accept* or *reject* the stated hypotheses. In doing so; an opportunity of analyzing and evaluating the power and effectiveness of the existing theories can hopefully surface.

Some situations however, may instead motivate the use of an inductive research approach. With such an approach, the entry point isn't existing theoretical ideas, as with the deductive view. Instead, inductive studies are carried out without any at all consideration to previously treaded theoretical paths. It is rather the attained empirical results from the scientist's *current* research that serves as the main target for analysis (ibid). The idea and purpose behind using such an approach, is to gain the opportunity of generating completely *new* theories, without the risk of them being merely additions to old, possibly outdated, ways of thinking.

Important to remember however, is that such a completely independent, inductive research approach might be virtually impossible to fully adopt in practice. The reason for this is simply that all human beings by nature undoubtedly have some type of preconception and underlying idea, as to how things are. These preconceptions will most probably, in some shape or form, emerge in the research and latter analysis being carried out. Therefore, one shouldn't naively have the impression that the distinction between deductive and inductive studies is completely black and white. On the contrary; the scale is quite grey.

On this note, the use of an *abductive* research approach has been developed and at times argued for. Such a view allows for a scientist to possibly find a somewhat *equal* amount of use in both the emerging results from the current investigations, as in the existing theories that have been formulated in the past. The abductive approach involves a specific way of consulting previous theoretical ideas, and should therefore not be simplified as merely being a *mixture* of deductive and inductive research (Alvesson et al, 2008). The use of theories in abductive thinking can often be viewed as being sources of inspiration, rather than being the starting points mechanically applied to the research problem at hand. As sources of

inspiration; existing theories may allow scientists to observe new patterns of understanding by enabling an interaction between empirical results and theoretical perspectives (ibid). To, in such a way, *intertwine* certain elements of both deductive and inductive methods, may in certain cases lead to ending results that can contribute to an even deeper understanding of the issue at hand.

I found a great deal of use for such an approach in this study, and have therefore chosen to adopt an abductive way of thinking throughout the process of my research and analysis. The reason for this is that there in fact are few concrete theories and models within the rather young field of sonic branding, which are of such nature that they will allow me to test and hypothesize around. However; I do believe enough relevant and applicable theoretical ideas exist, for me to be able to find some inspiration in these ideas when analyzing and evaluating the results of my investigations. My ambition is hence to embrace the opportunity of letting existing ideas within sonic branding, as well as theoretical perspectives of branding and corporate identity, *interact* with the ideas and results that this study generates.

Furthermore; another important aspect involving the choice of research methods, is the nature of the question at issue. Jacobsen (2002) points out that there are two main characteristics when defining the questions being investigated, in studies such as the one at hand. The author distinguishes between questions that are either *testing* or *exploring*. An asked question that is of a testing nature states few demands on the attained results, regarding the need for them to feature a wide range of *nuances*. Such a wide range of nuances is however appropriate, if not to say crucial, when the question at issue rather is of an exploring nature.

The range of nuances needed, allowing for the question to be answered in a satisfactory manor, should in turn have an impact on the methods being chosen for the collection of data. This meaning how such methods either can be characterized as *qualitative* or *quantitative*⁷. My view regarding the questions at issue in this thesis is that they mainly are of an exploring nature, however with a certain embedded testing element.

The statement that the main nature of the questions is exploring is motivated by the wide range of possible emotional and cognitive attributes of both conventional branding activities, as well as sonic branding activities. To be able to investigate and analyze the possible emotional features within such marketing activities, one will certainly have to incorporate a

⁷ See the section entitled *Qualitative, quantitative and reflecting research* (3.3.4).

wide range of nuances in order to become credible. Examining the mainly exploring nature of the questions at issue implies the need for such a wide range of nuances, consequently meaning that specific research methods were found appropriate for this purpose.

The main reason for there perhaps also being a testing element, embedded within the questions at issue, is that the partial outcomes of sonic branding activities, in terms of brand recognition and recall, actually is a rather simple thing. Either brands can be recognized by consumers, or they can not. Examining these factors therefore merely implies the need for a rather narrow range of nuances; hence will other specific research methods be appropriate for this purpose.

3.3.4 *Qualitative, quantitative and reflecting research*

When studying questions of an exploring nature, where the demands for a wide range of nuances are assumed to be high; the methods used for this purpose must enable such a vast creation of nuances (ibid). This is made possible when the number of objects being studied is few, enabling a deeper and more thorough investigation of each participant. This is the simple nature of qualitative research methods; few objects are being studied, however they are studied meticulously.

When studying a question that rather is of a testing nature, where the demands for a wide range of nuances are assumed to be low, the methods used for this purpose rather finds its validation from the use of *quantification*. This implies the process in which the gathering of data involves *many* participants or objects of study, for the possibility of making valid connections and drawing credible conclusions from the obtained results (Bell et al, 2007). When the number of sources from which data is collected is high, it can often only allow for *shallow* investigations of each participant, making the quality of the results rely on the need for the amount of data instead being *vast*. This is in part the rather simple nature of quantitative research methods; the objects being studies aren't done so very thoroughly, yet the number of objects being studied is *large*.

These are the main characteristics defining these two specific types of research methods. However, as Bell et al. (ibid) points out; there are several other defining attributes embedded within the different methodological approaches as well. One distinction that may be easy to remember, is that qualitative methods often are used when the main element of analysis consists of *words*; hence are not numerical. On the other hand, in cases where numerical

variables are measured, studied and analyzed it is more common and often more appropriate with the use of quantitative methods, which focuses on the analysis of *numbers*.

As previously stated; I have been able to determine the questions at issue in this thesis as being mainly of an exploring nature. However; there are possible elements within these questions that rather are of a testing nature. In considering this, I will need to conduct an analysis consisting of *both* words and numbers to be able to examine and answer the questions at issue. Therefore, I have found the need to use mainly qualitative methods, but have also found the need to incorporate certain quantitative methods, for the possibility of conducting this study in the most effective and fulfilling way. According to Alvesson et al. (2008), it may at times be sensible, and perhaps even recommended, to apply certain small-scaled quantifications. Even in such research that mainly appears qualitative in its nature.

In terms of using such multiple methods; some have argued that this kind of procedure can be a great advantage when conducting research due to the possibility of multiple dimensions being captured and portrayed. Holme & Solvang (1997) point out that the use of both qualitative as well as quantitative methods may increase the possibilities of reaching valid results. The authors stress that if similar results can be obtained from the use of multiple methods, it can often be ruled out that the results are wrongful, due to them merely being the product of a specific type of methodology⁸.

Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill (2007) find that there can be major advantages in using a multiple methods approach in the very same research project, if it's found to provide greater chances of answering the set out research questions. It can at times be fulfilling to use different methods for different purposes, simply because there may be various stages within the same research situation that calls for it. The authors exemplify by saying that there may be an *exploratory stage* in which the use of interviews may be the strategy to recommend, but there may also be a *descriptive stage* in which it may be more motivated to collect data using a quantitative method.

With this in mind; the qualitative methods with which I have chosen to conduct this study are *semi-structured interviews*, both *personal* as well *telephone-based* interviews. The quantitative method I have chosen, is the use of a so called *survey strategy* (Lewis et al, 2007), by applying the technique of a *questionnaire*. The section following this one (3.4),

⁸ See the section entitled *Round-up: evaluation of the applied methods* (3.7) for further discussion on this topic.

contain more thorough motivations and explanations to the chosen methods for the collection of data, as well as presentations of the respondents and sonic logos involved.

Regardless of whether qualitative or quantitative methods are adopted; Alvesson et al. (2008) propose the importance of applying so called reflecting research, as once mentioned under the discussion of research philosophy. Within this term, the authors place *interpretation* and *reflection* as central pillars. When conducting any kind of research, it's of great importance not to treat achieved results in an unambiguous manor. This meaning that research results shouldn't be seen as though they display one, correct truth, but rather could be seen and analyzed in different lights. The central pillar of interpretation embodies this belief, meaning that it's fundamental to understand the variety of possible interpretations that can often be spurred when analyzing research results. Two human beings may have *completely* different interpretations of a piece of empirical information, which must be taken into consideration in the entire process of conducting scientific research.

To display such constructive reflectiveness, when analyzing research results, implies the need to be skeptical towards seemingly obvious conclusions. These may have been drawn as a consequence of the researcher's preconceptions and interpretations. It is therefore of uttermost importance to be aware of these possibilities, by reflecting over the subjective impacts of different human beings.

Instead of trying to find and determine truths; reflective research means that such should be conducted in a way that it opens up for fresh, new ways of thinking and in so allowing for multiple possibilities of knowledge. These ideas have been found healthy to try and adopt in the study at hand. Furthermore; Alvesson et al. (2008) also determines four main elements of reflecting research, which I found to be suitable guidelines when analyzing the results of this study. These elements are discussed further in the section entitled *Methods of analysis* (3.6).

3.4 Methods for the collection of data

3.4.1 The use of primary and secondary data

When gathering empirical data for scientific studies, there are different ways of conducting this process in terms of what data to incorporate. The most common classification is made between *primary* data and *secondary* data. Primary data is, simply put, information that is

gathered by the researcher himself during the course of the study at hand, i.e. data that no one else have been able to take part of before. Primary data is collected when the researcher personally is out on the field conducting interviews, surveys and such to be able to collect and document the needed information. The opposite situation, resulting in secondary data, means that the researcher merely takes part of information that has already been gathered and documented in the *past*, in another research situation (Jacobsen, 2002). Such data may however be of equally great importance, simply because information sometimes can be viewed and analyzed in different ways and used for multiple purposes.

The information I am gathering and using in this study consists of mainly primary data, though certain secondary data was found useful as well. The primary data is collected using the techniques described in the following sections, consisting of interviews and a questionnaire. Due to the fact that very recent, quite vast studies have been conducted resulting in larger amounts of data concerning companies' views on music marketing and sonic branding⁹; I decided to make use of this secondary data in trying to formulate relevant questions at issue. Such a collection of vast information and empirical data had not been possible for me to gather on my own, considering the limited time and resources I have at my disposal. Therefore, I embraced the opportunity of referring to some of this secondary data, in the introduction of this thesis. The secondary data is however not used in the latter chapters of the thesis, which consists of primary data exclusively.

3.4.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

When choosing the methods for the collection of primary data, I needed to turn to the three-phased process in which I found it necessary to divide the creation and implementation process of sonic branding¹⁰. To collect data examining the first two phases of the process (*Sonic branding envisioning* and *Sonic branding creation*), I found the nature of *semi-structured interviews* to be best suited for this purpose. Such interviews are characterized by having a somewhat structured template for how the interviews are to be conducted, however with a certain span of freedom in which the researcher can choose to change and modify the structure of the interview in real time, as it is being carried out (Bell et al, 2007). The researcher can also choose to ask follow-up questions, which have not been previously written down, if this is found appropriate and necessary during the course of the interview. This

⁹ I am here mainly referring to the *Sounds like Branding* survey released early in this spring of 2009.

¹⁰ If needed, please review the section entitled *Phases in the process of sonic branding* (3.2).

method enabled me to create a suitable environment for qualitative reasoning and extensive elaborations, which was necessary for examining the exploring nature of the questions at issue in this thesis.

To be able to study the first phase of sonic branding, I needed to examine how marketing strategists are reasoning when envisioning the creation of their brand's sound identity. Retrieving this information was enabled by conducting interviews with respondents, possessing an extensive insight and knowledge of the possible ways in which such an envisioning can be portrayed. Thereafter, I needed to examine the second phase i.e. how the conclusions of such an envisioning is communicated, and how it subsequently is made come to life by the ones being given the task. The actual creation of for instance a sonic logo, in terms of how the client's initial request is translated into music, also needed to be deeply explored and documented. This, in my view, made the qualitative semi-structured interview a suitable and appropriate methodological choice. To collect the qualitative data regarding both of these two phases, I am applying the use of three, separate, semi-structured interviews with selected respondents that were found suitable for the task of being able to answer my questions.

To find such suitable respondents, I applied a so called *judgmental sampling technique* (Birks & Malhotra, 2003). It involves the way in which a scientist applies his own personal judgment and good sense, in choosing respondents that are believed to possess specific knowledge within the areas being studied. Furthermore; I also found it may be rewarding to choose such respondents whom each may have slightly different viewpoints, enabling a scenario where several approaches to the same problem can be made possible.

There may be certain difficulties arising when, as in this case, experts are consulted to explore the questions being asked. Knutsson (1998) defines three possible scenarios that one must keep in mind when interviewing such experts. Firstly, the expert may have his own personal agenda for letting himself be interviewed. This must be taken into consideration when reviewing the results. Secondly, the interviewee may sometimes take on the role of *being* an expert, without him quite having the actual expertise to do so. One must therefore carefully review the results from consulting experts, in trying to detect if the subjects commented on, is grounded in actual experience. Thirdly, one must also be aware of the fact that all human beings include personal values in his or her experiences, which may differ from case to case. Being aware of the interviewee's subjectivity is therefore a necessity.

Returning to the actual construction of the interviews; the first one needed to be conducted over the telephone, using the services of *Skype*. The geographical distance to the respondent of the first interview was the reason for needing to apply the method of telephone correspondence. The two other interviews, however, were conducted in person and face-to-face; the second interview in Copenhagen, Denmark and the third interview in my hometown of Malmö, Sweden.

There are certainly pros and cons with both interviews conducted in person, as well as interviews carried out over the phone. In terms of telephone interviews, it may sometimes be the only way of being able to conduct an interview with respondents located in far-away locations. It is a quick, accessible and cost saving method of conducting interviews, which otherwise perhaps wouldn't be possible to carry out (Lewis et al, 2007). However; telephone interviews may also be lined with certain risks. The main problematic issue is the possible difficulties of establishing *trust*, in such mere verbal conversations. A lack of trust will of course hinder the interview generating the best results possible.

I attempted to avoid the risk of there being a lack of trust, in the conducted interview which was telephone-based. I did so by corresponding with the respondent several times prior to the interview, with the objective of establishing a certain confidence in my intentions. By establishing such confidence, I enabled the interview to be conducted in a more natural and free fashion. Another weakness, however, is that a telephone-based interview doesn't display the interviewee's non-verbal behavior (ibid). Body language and facial expressions may at times be important for fully understanding another human being. This is something that I consciously tried to be aware of, when later analyzing the contents of the interview.

It should be said though, that such non-verbal behavior in personal, face-to-face interviews can be lined with certain risks as well. The most evident one being the so called *interviewer effect*, in which the actual interview situation may create biases caused by the behavior, tone and general personality of the interviewer. Lewis et al. (ibid) points out that such a situation may largely influence the reliability of the interview results. For this reason, I tried to be consciously aware of risk of creating biases by making sure the conducted personal interviews were done so in an as relaxed and non-stressful manor as possible. Moreover; I applied the use of an interview guide with certain structural guidelines, which was sent out to the respondents prior to the time of the interviews. This allowed the respondents to get acquainted with the topics, and better prepared for the forthcoming interview.

The interview guide was carefully and thoroughly constructed along the lines of the process advocated by Starrin & Svensson (1996). The authors suggest a selective sequence of work, where all possible, problematic and interesting topics covering the investigated questions making them eligible for discussion, are first written down. These should then be sorted in such a way that similar topics are arranged after another. If possible, certain topics may be merged if they cover similar areas. This is the process I followed in designing the interview guide that was used in the three conducted interviews¹¹. I found the need for including questions of an *open* and *probing* nature (Lewis et al, 2007), allowing for elaborate, analytical and descriptive answers that render specific significance to the issues being studied. The three respondents graciously taking part in the conducted interviews are presented in section 3.5.1.

3.4.3 The questionnaire

To examine the third phase of the creation and implementation process of sonic branding (*Sonic branding implementation*), I found the need to collect certain quantitative data by using the methodological technique of a *questionnaire*. The use of questionnaires is a cost efficient way of collecting data from a large selection of respondents, by having them answer a standardized form containing the same, pre-written questions (Ejlertsson, 2005). Hence; it is an effective and quick method of gathering answers, resulting in larger amounts of quantitative data.

I am implementing this method when exploring the third processual phase of sonic branding, because it enables me to extensively examine recognition and recall factors, as well as factors of emotional association, of a few distinct, differently structured sonic logos. The effects due to sonic logo exposure that was tested using the questionnaire can hence be defined as *recognition*, *association* and *recall*¹². The recognition factor merely describes whether the respondents can be said to have heard the music being played in their ears. The association factor measures the instinctive emotional connections that come to mind, upon the playback of a sonic logo. Lastly, the recall factor tells me whether the respondent can correctly connect a sonic logo to the brand it represents. I am of course fully aware that I by no means am the first researcher studying factors of recognition and recall. This has certainly been done extensively in past marketing studies as well, to the extent that it almost can be viewed as a

¹¹ The constructed interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

¹² A closer description is found in the section *Explanations to the factors being displayed in the charts* (4.3.1)

classic measuring technique. I do however suspect, that the *sole* testing of sonic logos in the way it's being done in this study, hasn't quite been carried out in the same way before.

The conducted survey was constructed in the following manor. A selection of respondents was kindly asked to listen to four short musical compositions; the sonic logos. After the playback of each sonic logo, the respondents were asked to answer a series of short, easily answered questions¹³. The possible answers were standardized meaning that the respondents were given the choice from a selection of different answers. This was a necessary conduct, because it allowed the answers to later be quantified. Had the respondents been able to freely deliver personal answers, there would have been no possibility of analyzing the generated results of the questionnaire in a quantitative manor.

The obvious problem and risk of such standardized answers, may involve a scenario where none of the possible answers correctly describe the true feelings and opinions of certain respondents. This problem was however only evident for *one* of the questions being asked in the questionnaire, namely the one regarding emotional association upon exposure to the sonic logos. This question demanded multiple possible answers; the other questions were based on the choices of either answering *yes*, or *no*. However; in trying to eliminate the mentioned risk of the multiple choice question, I added a possibility of an answer saying that *none* of the options of emotional association correctly captures one's opinion.

Furthermore; the other four association options were based on the intended values of the sonic logos being tested. These intended values were gathered in correspondence with marketing and branding managers of the companies and brands represented by the sonic logos. There were a total of 128 respondents involved in the answering of the questionnaire; 70 of them men, 58 of them women. The way in which the respondents taking part in the questionnaire were selected, is more closely described and discussed in section 3.5.2. The selection of sonic logos that I chose to test using the questionnaire is more closely described and motivated in section 3.5.3.

¹³ The constructed questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

3.5 Presentation of the respondents and sonic logos

3.5.1 The respondents of the interviews

3.5.1.1 Jakob Lusensky

The respondent of Interview #1 is Jakob Lusensky. Mr. Lusensky is the CEO and co-founder of Heartbeats International; a globally operating branding communication agency based in Stockholm, Sweden, which specializes in sonic branding and music marketing solutions. Mr. Lusensky has an academic background within marketing communications, and has through his company developed a vast knowledge and deep insight regarding how the power of music and sound can be used as a marketing and branding tool.

He is a frequent lecturer on the subject of music marketing and has been involved in the development of successful music marketing solutions for brands such as Absolute Vodka and Mitsubishi Motors (www.heartbeats.fm). Mr. Lusensky was chosen as the respondent of Interview #1 due to his passion and experience regarding the strengthening of companies' and brands' identities with the use of music.

3.5.1.2 Søren Holme

The respondent of Interview #2 is Søren Holme. Mr. Holme is the product manager at and one of the leading men of Sonic Branding. Sonic Branding is a Danish music marketing production firm with a name that clearly states its main expertise, namely sonic branding and the creation of sound identities for companies and brands. Mr. Holme's work with Sonic Branding is on a daily basis confronting him of questions concerning the development of sonic marketing techniques and the tailoring of sound identities for Sonic Branding's various clients.

He has extensive knowledge within the field of sound- and music cognition from his educational background within musicology (www.sonicbranding.dk). Mr. Holme was chosen as the respondent of Interview #2 due to his vast experience of working with music marketing and specifically the creation of distinctive sonic branding solutions.

3.5.1.3 Stellan Colt

The respondent of Interview #3 is Stellan Colt, who is one of the co-founders of the music production company Mellotron, which has its base in Malmö, Sweden. Mellotron's operations span from the production and mixing of sound and music for various television and film projects, to the creation and production of different forms of music marketing. This includes the creation of music for both radio ads, as well as television commercials and mood-based instrumental music created as parts of sound identities of companies and brands.

Mr. Colt is a praised and experienced Swedish musician who has worked with a wide range of acclaimed artists. As one of the leading men at Mellotron, he has been involved in the creation of music marketing solutions for a wide range of Swedish companies including IKEA, Sony Ericsson and Tetra Pak (www.mellotron.se). His main instrument is the drums, although he is skilled at several other instruments as well. Mr. Colt was chosen as the respondent of Interview #3 due to his experience and knowledge within the field of music, as well as within the field of music marketing.

3.5.2 The respondents of the questionnaire

The respondents of the questionnaire were approached in person, in various locations in the city of Malmö, Sweden. The gathering of questionnaire answers was carried out over the course of two and a half weeks, in April and May of 2009. In approaching potential respondents to the questionnaire; I tried to follow a random sampling technique, however with certain guidelines. The process was random, in the sense that those who happened to cross my path were the ones being asked if they wanted to participate. I consciously tried not to be selective when approaching potential respondents, meaning that just about *anybody* could have been asked to answer the questionnaire. However; because I also wanted to document possible differences in the answers due to the respondents being of different ages, I attempted to as evenly as possible spread the selection of respondents into three age groups. These age groups I later classified as *15-29 years olds*, *30-44 year olds* and *45-60 year olds*. Furthermore; I also tried to as evenly as I could, approach both men and women.

The possible problem in the conduct of selecting respondents in this fashion is that I subconsciously perhaps still chose respondents somewhat selectively. If this was the case; the

generated results may not be completely representative of the general public. If similar respondents were approached in terms of for instance social belonging, this could largely have influenced the overall results. Another potential problem may be the selection of respondents being too small, and for this reason perhaps displaying misrepresentative results as well.

However; I do believe that the results of the questionnaire, small-scaled as it may be, still can offer some kind of hint, as to the effectiveness of the tested sonic logos. I have this belief, despite its possible flaws and the risks of the selection not being representative. It should be mentioned, that I also considered using the tool of e-mail, to generate answers from respondents. After consideration, I however found it to be more appropriate to use in-person answers, by it measuring *immediate* reactions. I would also once again like to stress, that the main emphasis in this study lie in its exploring elements. The questionnaire should for this reason largely be considered a quantitative complement, enabling a hands-on basis of analysis yet without it diminishing the mainly qualitative emphasis in this study.

3.5.3 The sonic logos being tested in the survey¹⁴

When deciding which sonic logos to examine by the use of the questionnaire, I had set up a few guidelines as well. Firstly, I found there needed to be a certain discrepancy in the actual music of the different sonic logos. This meaning in terms of musical structure and texture, tempo, types and number of instruments being used, the presence or absence of vocal and ambient components, as well as the use of minor or major keys. There needed to be such a discrepancy in the selection, simply because if the sonic logos sounded similar; lesser possibilities of a constructive analysis of deviant results was assumed.

For the same reason, there needed to be a discrepancy in the intended values and emotions embedded within the music of the sonic logos. The selection of companies represented by the sonic logos was also chosen by the guideline of them needing to be different in terms of size, industry, country of origin and brand architecture. In other words; much effort was put into the selection of an as wide range of different companies and sonic logos as possible. The four companies/brands that were consequently included in the survey are the following¹⁵.

3.5.3.1 BMW

BMW is the head brand of one of the world's leading car manufacturer; BMW Group. The German car maker has a vast history and also produces the brands

¹⁴ A list of the company representatives approving usage of the sonic logotypes is found in Appendix C1.

¹⁵ The intended values of the sonic logos presented here, are re-presented in connection to the survey results.

of MINI and Rolls Royce Motor Cars (www.bmw.com). The sonic logo representing the actual BMW brand was created as early as 2002¹⁶ and has a rather simple construction. It consists of only two distinct hollow sounding beats of a drum, following on top of each other. The sonic logo has a certain ambient touch, in the sense that the two beats deliver a strong echoing effect.

Furthermore; the creation and implementation of the sonic logo was preceded by an analysis carried out by BMW Brand Management, which is a division within the BMW Group. Hence; no sonic branding firm was consulted in analyzing the sounds of the BMW identity. The values intended to be transmitted through the BMW sonic logo equal the core values of the BMW brand, i.e. the sense of exclusiveness, performance, power and engineering.

3.5.3.2 LOKA

LOKA is one of the main brands operating in the Swedish industry for flavored, bottled water. It is produced and sold by the Swedish brewery of Spendrups (www.spendrups.se). The LOKA brand has been accompanied by a specific sound identity since 2005. Its sound identity is built around a sonic logo that has been a part of all advertising efforts of the LOKA brand since then¹⁷. The LOKA sonic logo is constructed of a specific melody and harmonic change, being played in a minor key by one single instrument resembling a vibraphone.

Finding which values to incorporate in the sonic logo was furthermore an analysis carried out in collaboration with an advertising agency, in turn consulting professional composers assigned to its creation. The briefing to the assigned composers, said that the sonic logo should deliver a clear feeling of mystique and uniqueness.

3.5.3.3 Hornbach

The German Hornbach Baumarkt Group is a one of the world's five largest retail chains within the so called Do-It-Yourself builders market (www.hornbach.com). This implies the selling of tools, building materials and a wide range of other products related to the Do-It-Yourself market. The

¹⁶ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Daniela Honsel, corporate identity manager at BMW Group.

¹⁷ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Anna Lidström, branding manager of the LOKA brand.

Hornbach Baumarkt Group operates over a 100 warehouses in various European countries, there among a few in Sweden. The sonic logo of Hornbach has a very specific, mere vocal, construction. It is built as a multi-harmonically sung melody, expressing a vintage; some might even say barbershop-music, touch. The sonic logo, which is sung in a major key, was first taken into use as early as 2001¹⁸.

The way in which the sonic logo was created, involved an advertising agency assigned by Hornbach. The ad agency came up with the idea for the sonic logo; there was hence no professional sonic branding agency hired for its creation. The sonic logo is, in the company's statement, the crown jewel of Hornbach's branding model. The intended values desired to be transmitted through the sounds of the logo is a feeling of optimism, joy of life & self-determination.

3.5.3.4 Pressbyrån

Pressbyrån is a Swedish franchise retail chain constituting one half of Reitan Servicehandel Sverige AB, in turn owned by the Norwegian Reitan Group AS. The Pressbyrån brand has been around for over 100 years. It offers products and services ranging from magazines and newspapers, candy and beverages, to fast food and other retail products. Pressbyrån has around 320 stores in Sweden, situated in places where people are constantly on-the-go such as city centers and close to railway-stations (www.pressbyran.se). The sonic logo accompanying the Pressbyrån brand was developed in 2003¹⁹. It has the most instrumental attributes of the four sonic logos being tested, however no vocal components. The minor key composition is build around a drum beat, bassline, different computerized sounds, with a distinct synthetic melody up front.

The Pressbyrån sonic logo was constructed in an analytical process where an advertising agency was consulted, in turn contacting several different composers who were given the opportunity of pitching ideas and suggestions of a sonic logo. The briefing to the composers involved a wish for the values of the

¹⁸ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Weronica Lundgren, marketing manager at Hornbach.

¹⁹ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Maria Isaksson, marketing associate at Reitan Servicehandel.

Pressbyrån brand, to come across in its sonic logo. It should hence deliver a sense of quickness, convenience and spontaneity, with a youthful touch.

3.6 Method of analysis

There is, in the classification of Alvesson et al. (2008), four central elements if reflecting research, which I have found appropriate to apply as basic guidelines when reviewing and analyzing the results of this study. All of these guidelines are sprung from certain philosophical and theoretical viewpoints; however it was in this specific context not found additionally rewarding to derive them back to its philosophical origin. Therefore, I discuss the guidelines merely based on the way in which they are advocated by Alvesson et al. (ibid).

Firstly, it is of importance that the methods for the gathering of empirical information are critically questioned, in terms of its systematic and technical logic. It is in other words undesirable to view empirical information separately, set apart from the methodological techniques used. One must be able to draw logical connections, between the empirical results and the process in which they were gathered.

Secondly, an important key to qualitatively analyze research results lies in the scientist's ability to incorporate multiple interpretations, by being constantly aware of the impact that different interpretative preconceptions may have. This hermeneutically based viewpoint thereby implies that such analytical results, which claim to be completely free from personal values and preconceptions, should probably be looked upon with a grain of salt. My ambition is hence to avoid the drawing of unambiguous conclusions, without reviewing possible alternative entry points.

Thirdly, it is also of importance to remember that issues of power, politics and social context may greatly influence the way in which a research situation is carried out and analyzed. It is therefore of value to be aware of the impact that these issues may have, in trying to remain neutral to social and political pressure, through the avoidance of a subconscious benefitting of certain interests. Finally, and on a similar note, it is also healthy to constantly be critical to the objects being studied in research situations, but also of course to remain critical towards one self. It appears crucial to, in such a way, stay continuously reflective in the analytical review of research results, by implying the need to be aware of fragmented interests and influences which may be represented underneath the surface.

3.7 Round-up: evaluation of the applied methods

In choosing a multiple methods approach for examining the questions at issue in this study, I may have enabled greater chances of finding context in the differently characterized phases of the sonic branding process. However; such a fragmented methodological appliance within the very same study, may perhaps also have created an unwanted effect in terms of the risk that none of the used methods were exhaustively carried out.

What I mean by this is that a sole focus, on merely the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods, may perhaps have enabled better results for each method respectively. The mere use of qualitative interviews may have enabled a greater focus in analyzing its outcomes, as well as the mere use of a quantitative survey may have enabled an even vaster selection of participating respondents.

Moreover; the various risks of both telephone based interviews and face-to-face interviews did not, in my own view, significantly influence the interviews being conducted. Nonetheless; the possibility of the impact of such risks has been taken into consideration in the analysis of its results. In retrospect, it may have been a better methodological choice to apply *either* telephone based interviews *or* face-to-face interviews, for the effect of perhaps neutralizing its possible risks.

The way in which questionnaire respondents were selected was, as far as I am consciously aware of, a randomly conducted process. Therefore, I find that there should be a chance of determining certain tendencies, which resemble the views and abilities of a greater mass. Yet as stated; since there is a slight possibility of me being subconsciously selective when approaching respondents, it may perhaps have been a wiser choice to include participating respondents using a computerized, completely random selection method. In my defense though; no such tools were currently at my disposal.

The abductive research approach that was found suitable in this study could perhaps have been traded for either a more clear-cut focus on the theoretical framework, *or* on the results compiled in the empirical foundation. It may, for some, be perceived as the easy way out in choosing an abductive research approach, by not completely determining the nature of the relationship to past theories. Nevertheless; I am steadfast in my conviction that it was a suitable choice for the purpose of this study.

4. Empirical foundation

“Sound can pollute as well as enhance a brand’s image.”

Lisa Lamb (2006)

The forthcoming chapter contains the actual empirical results of this study. After a brief summary of the empirical foundation, I present the results of the three semi-structured interviews that were carried out with Jakob Lusensky, Søren Holme and Stellan Colt. An explanation to the interview results, in regards of how they are presented, is also given. Thereafter, I present the results of the questionnaire. These results have been separated, so that the charts for each sonic logo are presented independently. Furthermore; the results have been divided into three age groups, each also divided by sex. For easier access; the intended values of the sonic logos are re-presented in connection to the charts. For the same reason of accessibility, I have also chosen to explain the factors that were tested using the questionnaire, just prior to its actual results.

4.1 Comprehensive empirical summary

The empirical foundation is based on the three conducted interviews with, respectively, Jakob Lusensky, Søren Holme and Stellan Colt; as well as the results of the conducted questionnaire. The interviews generated certain results displaying consistency regarding all of the three respondents. However; some of the results also show an inconsistency, in terms of the respondents stressing different factors as the main determinants of sonic branding success. Jakob Lusensky returns several times to the importance of the analytical background work. He feels that the quality of the results, in terms of a sound identity reaching consumers in the intended way, largely depends on the quality of the analysis that was conducted beforehand.

Søren Holme rather, is convinced that the main emphasis should lie on the implementation phase of sound identities. In other words; a sound identity’s success mainly rests on the marketers’ and sonic branding agencies’ ability to consistently let it flow through all of a company’s sonic outputs. Being able to do so, is in Søren’s view to a great extent made possible by flattening out the hierarchic levels involved in the sonic branding process.

Stellan Colt is unanimous in the importance of both the analytical phase and the implementation phase. He can however also display examples of sound identities reaching its successes, simply because of them being built on a damn good idea. If no good ideas can be generated, it really won’t matter how well the implementation phase is carried out.

Furthermore; Stellan emphasizes the importance of evolving the techniques of implementing sound identities across the new technological platforms, such as the World Wide Web. As of today, there are problems in implementing music through such channels, which has lead Stellan to the conclusion that the ones cracking the code of how to effectively implement music one the web, will have largely greater possibilities of future success. All of the three interviewees are unanimous in it being of uttermost importance for brands to possess distinctive identities and core values. It's important both for the ability to envision and to transform a brand's identity into a sound identity, as well as the possibilities for a sound identity to successfully reach end consumers.

The results of the conducted survey display an evident discrepancy, in terms of which sonic logos can be best remembered and connected to the correct values and brands. Small-scaled as the survey may be; LOKA displays vastly greater results in terms of its sonic logo having been successfully absorbed by end consumers. Over 60 % of the respondents can correctly pinpoint those values, which were intended to come across in the LOKA sonic logo. Hornbach grabs the second place in terms of emotional association; however displaying the lower percentage of about 45 % making the intended association.

According to these results; LOKA is also superior in terms of the respondents being able to pinpoint a sonic logo to the brand it represents. Almost 40 % of the respondents instinctively answer *LOKA* upon being exposed to the brand's sonic logo, whereas the second most well recalled brand of Pressbyrån reaches less than a 20 % recall percentage. Moreover; the sonic logos also display large discrepancies in terms of the respondents' different ages. There can be seen vastly higher percentages for all of the measured factors, when looking at the answers of younger age groups. Older age groups most frequently display recall percentages of zero, as well as low percentages in making the intended associations upon hearing the sonic logos.

4.2 The results of the interviews²⁰

4.2.1 *Explanation to the presented results of the interviews*

The below following interview results are disposed in such a way that they are compressed and reproduced, so that the major points and opinions aired during the course of the

²⁰ The three conducted interviews lasted between approximately 45-75 minutes per interview.

interviews, are presented. The interviews are hence not presented completely transcribed, in its entirety. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled the structure of the conversations to allow a certain freedom, in terms of how and when topics were discussed. A complete transcript of these conversations would for this reason not be an appropriate way of presenting the results. Therefore, I have chosen to extract and present the most relevant points that were made by the three respondents, placing these within the five-themed structural format of the original interview guide²¹.

4.2.2 Interview #1: Jakob Lusensky²²

❖ Theme #1

Jakob and I carry out our telephone conversation on a sunny, late May afternoon. Upon making sure that my recording equipment is switched on, we begin our conversation by covering the question of how client companies normally go about in practice, when analyzing how they want its sound identities to be perceived by consumers. The creation of sonic logos can of course be an important component of such sound identities. In Jakob's experience; the industry of sonic branding is still in its maturing phase, meaning that many companies are still not completely familiar with how to explicitly treat sound and music as a marketing tool. However; Jakob stresses that the ones who actually go to the trouble of contacting a sonic branding agency, often have a certain underlying understanding of the need to deeply analyze how consumers may perceive a brand's sound identity.

It's however not very common, that there is an outspoken emphasis on how to explicitly speak to and please specific consumers. More often, companies emphasize the importance of communicating its *core values* to consumers. Important in this discussion is the targeted groups of a brand. Jakob finds that the process of envisioning a brand's sound identity is similar to the making of a graphical profile, in terms of the importance of determining whether a brand is to be directed towards 20-25 year olds, or perhaps 50 year olds. The platform of a brand, containing an analysis of the brand's core values and targeted groups, is hence what the clients of Heartbeats International often can provide, as a basis for the creation of a sound identity. When for instance creating a sonic logo; the consumers are normally treated as a secondary factor. Primary importance is rather placed on determining which core values should be projected.

²¹ The complete contents of the covered themes can be found in the interview guide, presented in Appendix A.

²² Interview conducted on May 5th 2009, at 16.00 CET.

It's not very common that there is an analysis made beforehand by clients, of how the music of a sound identity should be constructed to deliver something about the core values of the clients' brands. This is not necessary; Jakob is convinced that such an analysis is best left to the professionals, i.e. the individuals dealing with these issues and problems on a daily basis. Client companies often agree with this, by rather expressing post-opinions of the musical construction in terms of approval or non-approval, when the drafts of a sonic logo have been presented.

Also important to remember, Jakob feels, is that music is a greatly subjective medium. Heartbeats International may be assigned to the analysis and creation of a client's sonic logo, but when the logo is later presented to the client, there may be a disagreement of whether it will be able to reach effectiveness or not. Because music is subjective; the representative of the client company may have his own personal prediction of how the sonic logo will be perceived, which isn't in line with Heartbeats International's forecast. This is hence based on the representative's own personal opinion, and may not necessarily be the ideas of a general public. The superior experience of sonic branding agencies often make them better equipped of making this call, Jakob points out.

❖ Theme #2

Jakob and I carry on our conversation by discussing the actual analysis Heartbeats International carry out, when being assigned to the creation of a client's sound identity. Because the sonic branding industry still is in its maturing phase; Jakob points out that the amount of analytical preparation isn't yet as vast as he would have wished for. Laying the groundwork by analyzing the sonic representation of a brand, should be seen as *crucial* for the success of the sound identity.

Jakob emphasizes the importance of a thorough *brand briefing*. In such a briefing, there must be a detailed discussion carried out, involving the contents of a brand's propositions of value. This implies the brand's core values, target group analysis, goals and general communicative ambitions of the brand. Heartbeats International must simply learn as much about the brand as there is to know, to be able to conduct a rewarding and successful analysis. In the brand briefing, there is hardly anything at all outspoken of the actual music that is to be created. Jakob stresses the importance of fully focusing on the actual values of a brand during this phase; there should hence be no other distracting factors.

The music is however extensively brought into the light during the next step, namely a joint *workshop* involving Heartbeats International and a number of representatives from the client company. In such a workshop, which is based on the knowledge won during the brand briefing, there is at times also an advertising agency present, even though this is not the norm²³. The workshop, which is conducted over a time span of four hours, allows for the clients to share a great deal of their own thoughts, experiences and ideas. Various kinds of exercises are carried out, involving issues of target groups, musical preferences and what general emotions to communicate through the channel of music.

Jakob can not explicitly unveil the construction of these exercises; however the idea is to *position* the client company musically by determining which effects are appropriate to create, on the basis of the brand's core values. These values can be fundamentally different depending on what type of company is represented by the brand, in terms of the various needs of different brands. Some core values may even be directly *inappropriate* and *unsuitable* to translate into the language of music, by having a negative impact on the probability of creating successful sound identities.

Based on the discussions during the workshop, further analysis is thereafter carried out by Heartbeats International, subsequently leading up to a *music briefing*, where the suggested foundation of a brand's sound identity is presented and hopefully approved by the client. The whole of the analytical phase normally spans over a period of two to four weeks. This time period is, in Jakob's view, fundamental and crucial in terms of the quality and success of the sound identity.

In a sense; a sonic logo is actually not that different when compared to the creation of a visual logo, or for that matter any other type of communication as well. The underlying analytical groundwork is of uttermost importance, if a company is aiming to become successful in its efforts. In theory, just about *anybody* could create a logotype, Jakob speculates. Yet the quality of the logotype will vastly differ, depending on whether perhaps a mere friend is assigned to create the logo, or if the task is actually appointed to an experienced advertising agency. One can certainly find sporadic examples of lucky shots, where successful logos merely have been quickly jotted down, as opposed to there having been a thorough analysis conducted beforehand. But the odds of a lucky shot happening are very slim, so the

²³ Jakob's view of the role of advertising agencies is further discussed under *Theme #4*.

conclusion of this discussion is that the analytical phase largely determines the quality of the results, regardless of what type of communication is discussed.

❖ Theme #3

The next topic of discussion involved the actual creation process of a sound identity. When the content of a music brief has been approved by the client, the production phase can commence. If the task is to create a sonic logo, the production assignment is normally given to several producers, *perhaps three*; Jakob concludes. These producers are given the opportunity of pitching their finished products to the client companies, who may decide which sonic logo to implement. The number of producers being called in depends on time and budget factors, but Jakob finds that it's recommended to assign several producers to be able to generate the best results. The producers may, if needed, hire other musicians to the recordings of a sonic logo, but sometimes the work is done solely by the producer, depending on the specific circumstances.

The actual production process is usually initiated completely from scratch, meaning that it's not common with the occurrence of a recycling of past musical ideas, that are lying around. However; Jakob is not completely opposed to the idea of clients bringing prior musical references to the table, if a company has done some form of music marketing in the past. *It doesn't hurt*; Jakob says, if a certain amount of groundwork has already been done in the past, which may simplify a project.

There are in general several projects being attended to simultaneously, meaning that more than one client's sound identity may be under analysis and construction in a parallel sequence. Jakob sees no significant problems, with such a parallel sequence of assignments, in terms of there perhaps being a lack of focus. The determining factor of the creation process is rather the existence or non-existence of specific, well-cemented core values; in the ability of being able to produce successful sound identities. The musical creation process is hugely dependent on which values have been determined as the client's main propositions of value.

If such specific values can be found, it is easier to translate a company's persona into musical form in successful manners. If no specific core values exist, or perhaps the values at hand are inappropriate in the musical format; the task is vastly more difficult to carry out successfully. Jakob has examples of clients that have never even once considered its core values, in terms of what value propositions to specifically communicate to its consumers. In those cases; the

making of a sound identity becomes greatly more complex. Simply; the better the brand platform, the more simplified and successful the creation process can become.

When a sound identity has subsequently been chosen and approved by the client, there may initially be some legal rights to clear in terms of copyrights issues. Thereafter, the clients are normally offered the choice of conducting certain tests of the music in the sound identity. Such tests refer to the appliance of consumer *focus groups*, to be able to determine the effectiveness of for instance a sonic logo. Jakob tells me however, that there at present time actually are few clients that are inclined to pay for such an option, even though it may be to recommend. From Jakob's point of view, such tests would otherwise have been a standard procedure and hence *always* conducted, prior to the launch of a sound identity. Therefore, he would have wished that the demand for such a service was higher.

There are in fact few logotypes, neither sonic nor visual, that undergo such tests prior to implementation. On the contrary, it's more common with evaluation tests, *after* the implementation of a sonic logo. However; cases of pre-testing do certainly exist, depending on what type of company is in the midst of implementing a new logotype. Jakob exemplifies this by mentioning the American sports utility producer *NIKE* and the Swedish sports utility chain *Stadium*, whereas *NIKE* most probably would apply such consumer tests prior to implementation, whereas *Stadium* probably would not.

❖ Theme #4

The topic of deciding on how to implement a sound identity is aired next. Jakob stresses that *in the best of worlds*, there should always be a detailed and thorough *implementation plan* carried out; making sure the sound identity can successfully reach its intended target groups. The combination of platforms to use as touchpoints, of for instance a sonic logo, is decided by Heartbeats International together with the client. This is done as an ongoing process, throughout its entire analysis- and creation process.

Important to remember, is that there is no universal success factor in respects to which platforms to use. This is all very dependent on which type of company is at issue, in terms of which segment it may operate within. For the *BMW* brand, Jakob exemplifies; it may be greatly important to use the platform of television commercials for the successful implementation of a sonic logo. Whereas for clothing chains such as Swedish *Filippa K*, that doesn't apply the platform of television ads, it's vastly more important to implement a sound

identity in its retail environments. Another distinct example is the Internet search engine *Google* that presumably has a greater need of using web-based touchpoints, than perhaps the platform of television.

Jakob and I also discuss the possible involvement of advertising agencies and design agencies, when a sound identity is to be implemented. There may be cases when there are collaborations between Heartbeats International and an ad agency, to better *synchronize* the visual and sonic attributes of a brand's identity. This existence of such a collaboration is however also dependant on the type of company being at issue. In such cases where a sound identity is mainly to be used in retail environments, Jakob finds that there is no at all reason to involve an advertising agency. However; in those projects where there might be a certain amount of teamwork, it is mostly common that the collaboration starts when the music has been created, and the implementation phase is engaging. Even so; the involvement of ad agencies is at present time not as great, as it perhaps will be in the future. Jakob has been able to observe a growing trend in the desire for involving ad agencies to a greater extent, in the creation of sound identities. Such collaborations may enable an even greater success, when building the identities of brands.

❖ Theme #5

Throughout the entire interview, Jakob often returns to the importance of meticulously conducting research and analysis before engaging in the creation of a sound identity. To support the creation of a sound identity with a thorough analytical groundwork, is in Jakob's view the most crucial factor for creating sound identities, that when reaching consumers are perceived in the desirable way. For companies that wish to work with music and sound as marketing tools, it must be understood that the level of reached success, is largely due to the quality of the analytical phase.

Working with music demands the same meticulous preparations as any other type of communication. Without it, there are lesser chances of music strengthening the identity of a brand and greater risks of it rather being weakened. Those companies investing time and resources by treating the power of music seriously will have greater chances of success. If little or nothing is invested, similarly shy results will consequently follow. Jakob once again compares the creation of a sonic logo to that of a visual logo. If a company merely decides to contact the first best graphic designer it can come across; the achieved results with greatly

differ compared to if a professional advertising agency such as Swedish *Forsman & Bodenfors* is hired for the assignment.

Many marketing directors simply still don't understand, that there can be a huge difference between *music* and *music*. There is unfortunately an ongoing trend displaying a lack of maturity in the views of many marketing managers; a view implying that sound and music isn't of as great importance as visual components. Sound is therefore still not taken as seriously, as other forms of design. This is however a view that is slowly changing, Jakob is sensing, as the impact of sonic branding can be viewed more frequently in practice. The Sounds like Branding survey, which was mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, is evidence of the changing preconceptions amongst marketers. Jakob have been able to see continuous tendencies, saying that music in a near future will become an as natural and important part of marketing efforts as visual design. Only the past few years have displayed a tangible evolvement in the growing beliefs of sonic branding solutions. A lot of the development is sprung from the growing number of new technologies and potential platforms.

Jakob wants to stress that there are places and countries around the world where music and sound has already become a crucial and primary factor in the success of companies' communicative strategies. Japan is one of the most evident examples of this, and its development should therefore be studied carefully, if wanting to successfully implement sonic branding as a communicative tool. The Japanese market is highly competitive and its media static is immense and vast. The growth of Japan's and specifically Tokyo's competitive landscape has emphasized the need to find fresh, new strategies in the marketing of brands. Jakob finds that Sweden and many other countries around the world are moving towards a similar development. This also implies that music may become an as important part of marketing strategies, as in the Japanese example.

Another important aspect that Jakob once again chooses to stress as a determinant of success in sonic branding activities, is that there may be huge differences in terms of which consumers is targeted. To be aware of the possible differences when it comes to, for instance, different age groups is of uttermost importance. Music is certainly more important for some age groups than for others. Furthermore; in general Jakob finds that people of a younger age displays a much higher level of openness, in terms of the ability to absorb different kinds of musical messages. This, he feels, to a much greater extent than older generations. If trying to target defined age groups; this should be taken into consideration when attempting to deliver

specific values by the use of music. Jakob sees a similar possible scenario, when it comes to the consumers being either male or female. Hence; there may be discrepancies in which messages are understood depending on sex as well.

4.2.3 Interview #2: Søren Holme²⁴

❖ Theme #1

Søren and I meet in the offices and production studios of Sonic Branding, in the suburbs of Copenhagen, Denmark. I am well received, and right away given the opportunity of listening to a few working samples of a sonic logo, which will soon become an important part of the sound identity of a large Danish bank. I am offered a beverage, upon which we initiate our conversation on the topic of how client companies analyze and envision its sound identities. Søren however first finds the need to explain the two fundamentally different ways, for a company to purchase and implement sound and music to accompany its brand.

Typically, a company (to simplify: I will call it A) cooperates with several subagencies, such as an advertising agency, web agency or perhaps an event agency (B, C and D). Each of these subagencies, in turn, generally collaborates with its own sound production agency (E, F and G). These three are thereby sub-subagencies of A. Hence; when the subagencies of B, C and D are given various assignments by A, they typically purchase the needed sounds to these projects, from the different sound agencies of E, F and G. This creates a chain of command that has two main implications for A, Søren explains.

First, it is not always there is any at all communication conducted, between company A and the sub-subcontractors of E, F and G. This implies that the different projects that A undergoes may differ vastly in terms of its sounds and musical projections towards the end consumers. Such a mosaic of sound may make it virtually impossible to create any kind of context, in the palette of communicative outputs that A is delivering to the outside world. Hence; Søren feels it's difficult to analyze how a brand is perceived sonically, when following such an approach. Furthermore; each of the companies in such chains, certainly wants some kind of reimbursement for its efforts; often making it a very pricy deal for companies to treat sound in this manor.

The other way of purchasing sound, is also the conduct that Sonic Branding's business model is built upon. It rather implies the way in which companies have the opportunity of creating a

²⁴ Interview conducted on May 6th 2009, at 15.00 CET.

uniform and *cost efficient* sound identity, by collaborating directly with a sound agency. By being such a sound agency, Sonic Branding has the desire of placing itself at the very top of the hierarchical pyramid, in close and deep collaboration with the marketing managers of its end clients. This is quite a challenging and time consuming process; however according to Søren the *only way* to become successful in the long run.

On the topic of how client companies envision its sonic identities, Søren stresses the importance of recognizing that sonic branding would make no sense if it was conducted as a parallel activity, separated from other branding strategies. The potential clients of Sonic Branding must *know who they are*; otherwise Søren and his colleagues will not be able to apply a successful sound identity to a client's name. For some companies, it may be a great challenge to single out a clear-cut identity. This often occurs within industries where companies are quite similar of nature. The Danish bank, which was mentioned earlier, is an example of such a company, operating in an industry where it sometimes can be difficult to observe the differences between firms.

In general, clients have often carried out a thorough branding strategy analysis, giving them a fairly clear idea of who they are, as well as where they stand in relation to competitors. This analysis has to contain a certain understanding of the values on which a brand rests. Søren continues, by stressing that this primarily is the task of the client, emphasizing that Sonic Branding is not a company in the *branding* business, but rather in the *sonic* branding business. These are two completely different things, he concludes.

Building a brand is one thing, applying the *sound* to a brand is an entirely different activity. Therefore, Sonic Branding may perhaps carry out discussions; yet does certainly not *decide* over the clients' identities, by suggesting branding strategies. This is avoided, simply because it solely should be considered the task of the clients. The task of Sonic Branding is rather to create the appropriate sounds *accompanying* the clients' brands. In the same way, there are seldom any structural demands from the clients, in terms of how the music specifically should sound; even though there may be certain musical expectations. As a rule; the focus should rather lie on the clients being able to establish an identity.

If clients haven't thoroughly analyzed who they are, or who they want to be, Søren recommends waiting until such an analysis has been carried out, before initiating the creation of a sound identity. Otherwise, there will be nothing but confusion and turmoil as an inevitable effect. Søren can say this with certainty, because Sonic Branding has had past

experiences of trying to create sound identities for clients, without them having as much as a *clue*, of who they want to be. No matter how you look at it; such unfocused conduct simply does not work, by being far too uncontrollable.

❖ Theme #2

When a potential client has a fairly clear idea of its identity; the basic condition is met for Sonic Branding to take on the assignment. This is done by initiating a *workshop*, where there may be numerous representatives from the client company present. The three hour workshop may involve marketing directors, human relations managers, as well as participants from other divisions. Normally there are 4-8 people present at such a workshop, but it has actually occurred that as much as 15 people have been involved.

Sonic Branding has, during approximately two weeks prior to the workshop, also thoroughly taken part of all the needed brand material that has been given to them by the client company. This material must be meticulously studied in preparation for the workshop, for Søren and his colleagues to be able to throw light at the brand's general possibilities of a sound identity. This is done by applying various models and exercises, during the course of the workshop. In terms of the number of people present at a workshop; Søren sees both positives and negatives with the group being either large or small. One the one hand, it's certainly a good thing that as many representatives from the client company as possible is present, by it being able to spread a wide understanding of the activity of sonic branding. Many of them have never even once *given a thought* to the impact of music, Søren explains. However, on the other hand; there may be a lack of structure and focus, if the number of people present at workshops is too high.

The weeks following the workshop, is spent analyzing and figuring out a *sonic profile*, i.e. a recommended sound strategy for the client company. This is subsequently presented to the client along with some raw drafts of sound samples, mapping out the musical path that Sonic Branding finds suitable. When being asked whether the amount of *time* spent on the analytical phase determines the quality of the end results, Søren immediately says *no*. On the contrary, it may actually be more rewarding to rather work *intensely* on a project, in a rather compressed span of time.

Aside from the time spent, Søren is however quick to stress that the analytical phase *must* be carried out, for the creation of fruitful end results. There must have been determined a clear and unanimous musical direction, so that everybody involved knows what to do before any

instruments are picked up or any music is recorded. Even though ideas may sometimes evolve along the way; Søren dismisses that a sound identity can be created in a guitar jam session, by stressing that it must be thoroughly planned.

❖ Theme #3

Søren and I continue our conversation, by discussing the topic of the actual creation process of sonic logos and sound identities. This process, Søren explains, *always* needs to be started from scratch, i.e. on a blank page. A company's sound identity can not under any circumstances contain elements or fragments of past, unfinished projects created in some other context. There is perhaps, theoretically, a possibility of reusing certain time consuming background work. This has at times been discussed, Søren explains. However; it is a wrongful way of looking at this crucial process. It's wrongful, Søren emphasizes, simply because we need to be able to explain in detail, why a client's sound identity has its specific characteristics. A presented sound identity can not be viewed as coincidental. If there are old, unused ideas incorporated into for instance a sonic logo; its components can not be fully explained and motivated, when it's presented to the client. The creation process of a sound identity therefore needs to be started completely from scratch, by making sure every added component has a clear logic and evident association to the values and identity of the client's brand.

It is important that a client can understand the logic behind a suggested sonic profile, for another reason as well. Namely; it needs to be further explained to the employees and co-workers of the client company. Trying to enforce an identity change, implies the need for rounding up the *entire* company in this process, by making sure that every employee sees its cleverness and sensibility. If the logic behind an impending sound identity can not be explained internally, Søren stresses the risk of employees not understanding it and hence rejecting it. Whether there is such an internal conviction reached or not, also has implications for the implementation of the sound identity²⁵. Therefore; success in a client's sound identity change demands the possibility of *convincing employees*, which in turn demands focus and logic in the creation process of the sound identity. This internalization process is an important factor for being able to construct an enduring, successful sound identity, which is embraced by consumers.

²⁵ Søren's thoughts regarding the implementation phase is further discussed under *Theme #4*.

Finding focus in the creation process can be done in different ways, Søren explains. Often, it comes down to a question of the personalities of the ones involved. Typically, there is one or more producers (*sound designers*) assigned to the creation of for instance a sonic logo, as well as a project manager in charge of each client. In being the product manager, Søren is involved in several of the company's different projects. Once there is a clear understanding of the desired musical direction, there is more than one way to steer towards this direction. The important point to make, in terms of differing personalities; implies that for some musicians it may be fruitful to work in groups, whereas others can stay more focused when working alone in the musical creation process. The best results are reached when differing personalities are respected and allowed freedom. As the product manager, Søren needs to put trust in the assigned producers and musicians, by allowing them time and space in the creative process. Søren and the project manager may at times step in and offer constructive opinions and guidance, but it's important that the composers are given the opportunity of doing what they do best. Only then are there chances of the finished product resembling the envisioned one.

I continue by asking about the sequence of work in which Sonic Branding takes on its clients. Søren explains that the company attends to several clients, in a parallel sequence. There is obviously a limit as to how many clients can be attended to at the same time, but as a rule it shouldn't be seen as a negative to work with numerous clients simultaneously. In fact, Søren believes that it may actually be *rewarding* to have several parallel projects. He exemplifies by mentioning the creation of sonic logos.

When the working copy of a sonic logo perhaps has been listened to thousands of times in one day, there is an evident risk of the producer becoming overexposed and deaf to the music playing in his ears. Therefore, it is often to recommend that another project momentarily is attended to, which allows for some distance to the work that has been done in the initial project. When returning to this project, the time away from it often leads to new, fresh ears making the sound designer stay focused to the important goals and visions.

Next, Søren and I discuss the approval of the client companies, in terms of the final decision on for instance a sonic logo. We also discuss the possibilities of conducting consumer tests of a chosen sonic logo, prior to its implementation. Typically, it may take up to two or three months before a final decision is made, in choosing between the different prototypes of a sonic logo that have been created. As of today, the only test that is available and carried out, involves the client company's choice of approval or disapproval. This is done by putting

together a panel of listeners, on it being representatives of the client company. However; no consumer tests are conducted as of today, simply because there are not yet any sophisticated ways of conducting such tests. Søren explains though, that specific models and methods are currently in development and will hopefully be taken into use as they are becoming more refined.

The problem with consumer tests, Søren explains, is that issues of *recognition* and *recall* are immensely difficult factors to deal with. Recognition doesn't necessarily have to be a positive thing. Virtually all sounds can be made recognizable, but many of them might also soon become annoying and tiring. Another scenario is that a recognized sound has no depth or underlying significance to the consumer, by failing to evoke any emotional associations. Therefore; recognition is not an end in itself. There must, Søren stresses, presumably also be delivered some sense of *meaning* alongside recognition. Such meaning may perhaps create associations, making a sound identity more easily connected to the correct brand. One should also keep in mind that *consistency* is an evident determinant of recognition. Consistent exposure to a sonic logo over a long span of time will certainly make it better recognizable, but as discussed; not necessarily in a positive way.

Another factor that is sometimes discussed is *likeability*, Søren explains. Testing this factor is however also difficult, because likeable music doesn't always fit the profile of all brands. Søren exemplifies by him sometimes seeing the need to apply *unlikeable* music in the sound identities of some brands. Such may be music which a majority of consumers perhaps even find unpleasant. However; it may also be a perfect fit a specific brand, making the choice motivated without the apparent existence of likeability.

❖ Theme #4

The conversation is at this point led towards the topic of the implementation phase of sound identities. The touchpoints, through which a sound identity should be channeled, is decided in an ongoing process throughout the entire analytical phase, Søren tells me. The fragmented media landscape of today however hinders a complete overview of the touchpoints that is to be used. However; the simple answer is that a sound identity in fact should be implemented across *all* possible platforms on which a brand operates. The most important thing in this aspect is to convince the employees and co-workers of a company, that whenever a new and unexpected possibility of a touchpoint emerges; they should immediately think of implementing the company's sound identity. It must however be done in an optimal and

sophisticated manor. One of the challenges is to create specific and subtle variations of the sound identity, which will be suitable for different kinds of media channels. Hence; you can not merely apply the *exact* same sound across all platforms, without encountering the risk of people going completely mad.

The next issue I bring into the light is whether there are collaborations conducted, between Sonic Branding and visual branding firms such as advertising agencies and design agencies. Søren quickly says *yes*, and explains further that such collaborations can be quite common in the implementation phase of a sound identity. He also stresses that it may be of uttermost importance, that visual and sonic attributes can be synchronized in a fulfilling way. An evident flaw of some sonic logos is when they abruptly appear at the end of commercials, without any seemingly logical connection to the part of the commercial leading up to the sonic logo.

This unsynchronized use of sight and sound can sometimes project a rather unaesthetic appeal. For this reason, many ad agencies simply *hate* the use of such abrupt, detached sonic logos. Søren understands this dislike; there may have been created a beautifully shot commercial, which becomes aesthetically ruined at its ending, by the use of a misplaced sonic logo.

We discuss an example of a sonic logo that seems sadly out of place, which is the *Renault* sonic logo which ends both the car maker's television and radio commercials. The music in the sonic logo seems to belong in some other context, not at all in line with the aesthetic style of the rest of the commercial. Søren adds that many car manufacturers have a sonic logo that cuts a commercial in half, in a similarly abrupt manor.

The right way to do it, Søren feels, is rather to let the commercial logically lead up to the sonic logo, by it having a similar tone and feel as the other parts. The most successful sonic logos should hence be the ones where there is a *logical build-up*, which escalates into the sonic logo. This allows it to make perfect sense, and earn a motivated place at the end of the commercial. Søren exemplifies by mentioning the *I'm lovin' it* logo of *McDonald's*, which is built up logically and has a natural place at the closing of McDonald's commercials. Most frequently, one doesn't even consciously notice it being there, it is rather naturally embedded in the entire aesthetic experience as a whole. Thereby, it's in terms of sonic logos, where the most evident need for collaborations between ad agencies and sound agencies arises; when a sound identity is to be implemented.

Søren explains to me, that the implementation phase may actually be the most important phase for the success of sound identities, as well as the by far most complicated one. The most complex situation arises when a client is a huge, multinational corporation with countless divisions, subdivisions and communicative outputs. Søren exemplifies by bringing up IKEA, with which Sonic Branding has initiated collaborative conversations. I am asked to imagine that I was given the task of implementing a unified sound identity, across *all* of IKEA's subdivisions, in *all* its warehouses, in *all* its telephone systems and through *all* its commercial outputs in the entire world. This, Søren says, to the extent that *what goes down in Brazil* is connected to *what is being done in Japan*.

Upon being asked how to do this, I slowly lean back in my chair with a perplexed expression on my face. Søren tells me that this is the exact same expression that can be found on the faces of marketing directors, when being presented with the same question. Such a task can be so hard to grasp and get your mind around, that it undeniably makes the implementation process of a sound identity a *gigantic* challenge.

❖ Theme #5

The consumers' perception of a sound identity is the final discussed topic, which if successful should close the circle by it resembling its intended goals and effects. Søren once again stresses that success in this phase, as of today, is very difficult to measure. He speculates however, when being asked of the potential success factors of sonic branding, that it's all about finding sounds that *make sense* and delivers a feeling of *meaning* and *context*. This is the core of the practice. Finding such meaning sometimes implies the need to establish a strong connection between sounds and products.

This process becomes ever so tangible, when it is possible to find use in the *actual sounds* of a product. *Vestas*, the Danish producer of wind turbines and wind power solutions, is an excellent example. Its sonic logo has virtually no musical components, but can rather be described as *sonic design*. By incorporating the ambient sounds of winds and air flows, it has a strong connection to *Vestas* that makes perfect sense. Thereby it has, in Søren's experience, reached success by being easily associated to *Vestas* from the consumer's point of view. Had the *Vestas* sonic logo been constructed of three notes on a piano; there would have been no sensible connection to the company.

Another important success factor that Søren once again chooses to stress is the existence and nurturing of identity. It is of course important to envision the consumers' perception of a sound identity; however this can not be the starting point. If a brand chooses its identity based on constantly trying to satisfy its public image, it will end up with *no identity at all*. It is simply impossible to please everybody, meaning that it's completely crucial to decide for *yourself* who you want to be. Some people may not *like* who you are, but nonetheless they *know* who you are.

Søren admits however, that even though one shouldn't use consumer perception as the starting point, it's still important factor to be aware of. On this note, Søren refers to theories saying that human being's ability for musical perception peaks in the early 20's. This kind of information may be specifically important when working with defined target groups. If there is consensus that a brand's target group solely consist of middle-aged women; there must be continuous updates regarding the *needs* of this group, as well as knowledge of how to communicate them properly.

As we reach the end of the interview; Søren once again stresses his view of the importance of implementation. In his experience; companies are simply *clueless* as to how much resources are spent in purchasing sound. The fragmented conduct of buying sounds from multiple suppliers can in real terms be an enormous expense, which marketing directors seem to be willing to disregard. This is strange, when expenses in many other areas are controlled meticulously.

In reviewing the strategies for purchasing sound, Søren sees multiple advantages that are of huge impact. Partly, there is the possibility of using the power of a unified sound identity, which may greatly strengthen brands and increase brand equity. But there is also the advantage of saving money, by purchasing sound as *buyouts*. This defines the only way in which a sound identity can be purchased from Sonic Branding, allowing the buyer unlimited access to the purchased sound, across all platforms without any time restrictions whatsoever.

In general, sound is otherwise bought from composers not willing to give up the copyrights of their compositions. What this means is that companies actually receive limited access to the sound they are purchasing, often implying that a vast amount of excess money is spent on the *repurchasing* of sounds, which have turned out to generate positive responses. Therefore, according to Søren and his colleagues; there lies a hugely important task in coordinating a company's strategy of purchasing sounds. Finding smart ways of doing this may save

companies great amounts of money, thereby having a large impact on its possibilities for creating successful sonic branding solutions. Hence; the main challenge and determinant of success, to a great extent lies in the underexplored process of *implementation*.

4.2.4 Interview #3: Stellan Colt²⁶

❖ Theme #1

The third and final interview is conducted at the Mellotron headquarters, located on the very top floor of a central Malmö office building. Stellan kindly offers me a cup of coffee, upon which we initiate our conversation on the topic of how client companies analyze and envision its sound identity. Important to mention first however, is that Mellotron is a slightly different company in comparison to both Heartbeats International and Sonic Branding. I am referring to the way in which Mellotron isn't in the same way *exclusively* hired, as the creator of a client's entire sound identity. The creation of sound identities is Sonic Branding's only, niched business concept, whereas Mellotron spans over a wider range of operations, Stellan correctly points out. However; because Stellan and his colleagues still to a great extent work with issues concerning its clients use of sound and music as *parts* of sound identities, he is able to offer me another interesting, slightly different and wider perspective.

Stellan tells me that he certainly has experienced a *big difference* in recent years, in terms of companies paying greater attention to the use of marketing through the channel of sound. However; Stellan stresses that musical issues often are very hard to analyze, simply because music is greatly subjective. Mellotron does not, as in the Sonic Branding business model, apply the rule of aiming straight for the end customer by moving past advertising agencies and production company's. In fact, Stellan estimates that about 85 % of Mellotron's business actually is carried out through the channel of some kind of middle man. However; there is always a briefing delivered, containing information of what the end client is looking for.

Stellan is not entirely convinced though, he stresses, that the hierarchical model of having a middle man necessarily should be considered a negative thing. From his point of view, production companies are often far better at delivering and communicating the language and terminology of music than the end clients, which certainly simplifies the work process and creates greater focus in the finished results.

²⁶ Interview conducted on May 7th 2009, at 10.30 CET.

In getting closer into the questions of the first theme, there is *no doubt* Stellan concludes, that companies apply a great deal of emphasis on the importance of its musical outputs, even though some companies certainly are better at it than others. IKEA has been an end client of Mellotron's for quite a long time, and is in Stellan's view an example of an extremely meticulous company, in analyzing the perceived emotions of its sound identity. IKEA often emphasize the need and demand for its adopted music to have a certain punky edge, and youthful feel to it. In the IKEA example, there is hence a rather clear vision of the values that the company wants to have delivered through its sound identity, which often can make the end results more fruitful.

The internal values of IKEA, Stellan says, are meant to evoke similar emotions, of the company being young, modern and stylish. It is certainly more convenient in getting messages across through musical compositions, when such values exist. In many marketing divisions within companies though, it is still a certain underlying point of view that sound and music is of secondary nature and that it only needs to be added at the very end, as a *mere necessity*. These companies often also see results as follows. Stellan however, is beginning to observe changes in these views, by noticing more and more companies paying closer attention to the sounds they are emitting.

Stellan also brings up Mellotron's ongoing collaboration with the network of Swedish television, *SVT*. This is actually an example of a client that Mellotron has immediate contact with, when creating its accompanied music and sounds. Mellotron's creations for SVT have been used both as signatures in television programs, but also as sonic logos for the network brand itself. SVT's analysis of its desired musical profile is often quite thorough as well, in them sometimes presenting musical samples which they want Mellotron's creations to resemble.

To, in such a way, concretely *exemplify* by playing back a musical sample, may be a recommended way of creating a better understanding of clients' needs. As a rule, Stellan and his colleagues never argue or disagree with clients, in terms of their stated needs and demands. This resembles the old saying of *the customer always being right*; even though Stellan emphasizes that there certainly can be a joint analysis if the client is open for suggestions. The problem that may surface however, appears when there are misunderstandings because of music's subjective nature. Most people don't listen to music in terms of structure, making it important to learn what a client means, in the request of a certain

feeling. This is a crucial success factor in Stellan's view; namely to develop a language in which the involved parties can better understand each other.

❖ Theme #2

As we successively begin discussing the questions of the second theme, Stellan exemplifies a scenario where a client, through a briefing, may communicate the desire for a sound that resembles the British pop group *Depeche Mode* anno 1992. When Mellotron later attempts to recreate this desired feeling, it may subsequently turn out not at all as the client initially intended. This (fictitious) misunderstanding most probably occurred, because of the simple fact that the client has his own, personal perception of the 1992 version of *Depeche Mode*, which may be greatly difficult to put into words. Therefore, it may perhaps be a better strategy to present explicit musical samples during a briefing, for similar miscomprehensions not to occur.

This could also involve music samples from Mellotron's direction, allowing for the client to be able to either approve or dismiss of. This can often be the best way of understanding each other, by it being possible to determine whether a completely different musical path should be trotted. The analysis that Mellotron carries out in regards to the requests of clients, is done so largely by applying trial and error. In other words; the analytical phase to a certain extent *intertwines* with the creation phase.

The most efficient way of carrying out this analysis; Stellan feels, is as an ongoing process, that through continuous refinement of an initial gut feeling can generate the best results. It is *certainly no secret*; Stellan further admits, that the length and depth of the analytical phase is largely related to budget. This implies that the nature of the clients' musical beliefs, as well as the size of their investments in these beliefs, largely determines the quality of the outcomes. Lesser time and resources, Stellan believes, also means lesser chances of a company's sound identity delivering its intended goals and core values.

On the topic on consumer tests; Mellotron does not in its present form conduct any such tests, simply because neither time nor budget allows for it. Stellan however admits that such would definitely be carried out if an entire, unified sound identity was to be created for any of the larger clients of Mellotron, such as Sony Ericsson or IKEA. Because of the nature of Mellotron's projects being quite compressed and hectic, there is simply not enough time to conduct such consumer tests; desirable as it may be.

❖ Theme #3

The creation of the music for Mellotron's clients is almost always started completely from scratch, by them never incorporating any old, unused ideas. Stellan finds this conduct to be of highest recommendation, simply because old and rejected ideas often have been rejected for a good reason. Therefore, if a client isn't entirely satisfied with a presented musical piece; it is often better to start all over again, rather than trying to make changes in the unwanted creation. It's easier to come up with something new and better when there aren't old, dismissed ideas lying around, blocking the creative process.

The creation process that Stellan and his colleagues follow is largely based on teamwork, even though the actual creation as of today often is done on one's own. By each having studios in the homes; there can be effective work carried out from there, Stellan explains. The offices in Malmö is mainly used as a place for rendezvous', briefings and overall planning, even though there are also various recordings being done in the office studio as well. The clever option nowadays, of being able to send ideas and suggestions over the Internet, has enabled an approach where a lot of Mellotron's work can be conducted in the home studios.

The teamwork component is however still very important, by being able to share opinions and ideas over the web. In a near future; the construction of several larger studios in Malmö city is in its planning, which will allow for much more face-to-face teamwork. Stellan emphasizes that this may also allow for an even more effective creation process. Furthermore; Stellan sees no evident problems or risks in Mellotron's conduct of working with several projects simultaneously.

When being asked whether the actual creation process is affected by the presence or absence of specific core values within a brand's identity, Stellan answers *yes* however with the restriction the these values may at times differ from the *consumer's perception* of a brand. The companies of IKEA and Sony Ericsson are owners of brands that Stellan feels incorporate a certain universal perception in consumers' minds, making its internal values easier to embody through the creation of music. Whereas another one of Mellotron's clients, the huge Swedish packaging company of *Tetra Pak*, offers a much greater challenge in trying to determine how it can be personified through the channel of music.

Stellan and I begin discussing the Tetra Pak sonic logo, which often needs to be added in the projects that Mellotron takes on for the client. Because it may perhaps be difficult to pinpoint

Tetra Pak's specific core values, at least from a consumer's point of view; it may also be difficult to find an *emotional association* to Tetra Pak, when hearing its sonic logo. Stellan draws a parallel to the classical sonic logo of Intel, which he feels has quite the opposite qualities.

Another important aspect is the *size* of Tetra Pak, in it operating in a vast number of countries with a countless number of divisions and subdivisions. The span of different types of musical productions that Mellotron has created for Tetra Pak is nothing other than *huge*, Stellan tells me. This is certainly problematic, in it bringing an inconsistent image of the company's promotional outputs. When I ask of the possibilities of creating a unified sound for the Tetra Pak brand, Stellan recognizes the interesting aspect of such a discussion, but is also quick to express doubts of how in the *world* such a huge, multinational enterprise could go about, to carry out such an immensely overwhelming challenge.

❖ Theme #4

We are hence beginning to brush on the next topic of discussion, which involves the implementation of the musical productions having been created by Mellotron. The decision of touchpoints is a process that Mellotron isn't specifically involved in, other than through the indirect involvement of charging different prices depending on which platforms are to be used. However; Stellan stresses the importance of tailoring specific mixes depending on which platforms are chosen, whether it is television, radio or the web. The different touchpoints demand specific musical attributes.

In Mellotron charging different prices for different choices of touchpoints, as well as not yet being quite willing to give up its one to two year copyrights; Stellan is not entirely convinced of the concept of *buyouts*. This meaning when companies purchase complete access to a sound identity, which may be used *anywhere*, for as many years as desired. Mellotron is certainly inclined to do what they can, in making companies' purchases of sound as easy and accessible as possible. Stellan has in fact noticed an increased interest, regarding the possibility of completely buying out a musical composition. But as of today, he feels that it would demand a price tag that may exceed what companies are willing to pay.

Next, we discuss if there may be an optimal choice of touchpoints, for the implementation of a hypothetical sound identity; enabling it to be as successful as possible. Stellan ponders over how the channel of *television* still has an enormous impact, by being able to reach the most

vast consumer base. However; the *web* is becoming increasingly important and this implies that it most probably will create a greater need for developing a better and more sophisticated use of Internet sonic branding. In other words; it must be done in the right way, otherwise there is an evident risk of consumers merely reaching for the *sound off* switch when surfing the web. To have a sonic logo being played each time a new page is visited within a site, will probably cause annoyance and hence be quickly turned off.

Stellan further exemplifies by mentioning a past client of Mellotron, *Lexington*, which is a Swedish clothing and bedclothes company. They needed a suite of music for their quite flashy and stylish website, which should enhance the American east coast style identity of the Lexington brand. While as Mellotron certainly delivered music with such an Americana touch; Stellan still feels that there is an overwhelming risk when playing the same music over and over again inside websites; in that it subsequently will be switched off by bored web surfers. It is thereby a *great* future challenge, in creating new and fresh ways of implementing music marketing on the Internet that adds value, and hence consumers will not swiftly reject. It must, in other words, be approached in an entirely different way, than for instance the creation of music for television commercials.

Upon being asked whether Mellotron cooperates with design- and advertising agencies to synchronize sonic design and visual design; Stellan quickly and resolutely replies *yes*. He continues by explaining the importance, as well as the growing number of such collaborations; which in certain respects actually is due to the ongoing recession. The troublesome economic situation has forced companies to tighten its budgets, by looking over its media purchases. It has bought on increased reasons for subagencies to collaborate, in the marketing projects they are taking on for potential clients. In terms of sonic and visual coordination; Stellan shows me a few examples of IKEA projects, where the sonic elements have been aesthetically synchronized in line with the different changes in its visual elements, in collaborations with various production companies. The feeling of *synchronicity* certainly enhances the overall feeling of *unity*.

❖ Theme #5

Stellan and I round up our meeting by discussing the theme of consumers' perception of a company's sound identity. I bring up the question of whether it's possible to pinpoint and summarize certain factors, which decides the success of sound identities. Stellan tries to answer the question by immediately showing me what he calls a *classic* example, which has

generated a lot of responses and indications of it being recognized, as well as immediately connected to the brand it is meant to represent. It has been used over and over again, both in television- and radio commercials. The sonic logo that Stellan is referring to was constructed for *Weight Watchers Sweden*. Stellan continues by showing me a television commercial, in which the sonic logo has been incorporated. Immediately upon hearing it, Stellan and I are unanimous in it actually being a very clever idea, by displaying an evident *symbolic connection* to Weight Watchers. Presumably, this has made it more easily recalled as a part of the Weight Watchers overall identity.

The sonic logo is in fact rather simple, by first being built as a sole, whistled melody. What's clever about it however, is that the melody in its first state is rather unpleasantly whistled, by being *out of tune* and somewhat *screechy*. Suddenly a speaker voice asks: *have you tried everything?* Upon this announcement, there is a breaking point where the melody transforms from its unpleasant state, into a clear, pleasant and on-tune whistle. As the Weight Watchers brand name is outspoken, the transformed whistling also gets accompanied by a few instruments, making the music suddenly expressing joy and rejuvenation. The breaking point that separates the flawed and unpleasant melodic features, from the bright and pleasant ones that later appear, has an immediate symbolic meaning. The first thing that one thinks of is the breaking point in which an unhealthy and static lifestyle is traded for the healthy and nutritious lifestyle of Weight Watchers, full of energy and well-being.

The success of the sonic logo could in fact be said to have been reached, by it simply being a *damn good idea*. Stellan dismisses, that the success of the Weight Watchers sonic logo had anything at all to do with the analysis and briefing from the end customer. In fact, there was virtually no contact between Mellotron and Weight Watchers in its creation phase. In this case, success was hence reached even though Mellotron actually was located at the very *bottom* of the food chain. Weight Watchers was of course at the very top, by being the end customer. They had hired an advertising agency, who in turn hired a production company. The production company brought in Mellotron, to create the music for the Weight Watchers marketing project.

Stellan is well aware of the problematic situation that may arise, when there are too many steps in such a hierarchical ladder. One of the evident problems, which actually occurred in this case, was that the representative from the production company wasn't going to carry a musical idea from Mellotron further up the ladder, until he himself was satisfied with it. That

was exactly the scenario that occurred with the whistle idea, by the production company finding it too mundane and uninteresting. Fortunately, the idea somehow leaked to the end client, who loved it and chose it on the spot. Had it not leaked however; the success of the Weight Watchers sonic logo would probably never had taken place.

Stellan shows me another example of a Mellotron sound production, which was made for an Internet business based in Helsingborg, Sweden. *Tailorstore* enables its customers to order custom-fitted clothing over the web; in a way allowing for the customer to become its own tailor. In this project, there was more of a direct communication between Mellotron and the end client. Tailorstore wanted a commercial that they could use through the touchpoints of television as well as the web.

The sound identity that was subsequently created made perfect sense, by being strongly connected to the Tailorstore brand. In this case, not necessarily because of any values embedded within the brand; because these were actually difficult to pinpoint. It was perhaps rather because of the clever idea of adopting certain ambient sound effects, which in this case were the sounds one might hear when a tailor is making a shirt, i.e. the sounds of scissors, sewing machines and such. This gave the commercials a sound identity that had a logical association to Tailorstore. There were indications of it being well received by consumers, by an increasing number of clicks on the Tailorstore web site, as well as larger sales. The possible success factor in this case was sprung from the analytical phase, by coming up with an idea based on product sound, that worked beyond expectation.

Before Stellan and I finish up our discussion, I ask whether he believes it matters in terms of consumers' sex and age, when it comes to how well the message in a sound identity or sonic logo can be perceived. Stellan ponders for a while, but concludes that it certainly should matter in terms of what group is targeted. A brand targeted towards a certain age group for instance, will probably be best received and understood by individuals in this certain group. Stellan however stresses, that it's equally important if not more, what the music *should be used for*. Hence; *sophistication* in the implementation process is simply a must.

4.3 The results of the questionnaire

4.3.1 Explanations to the factors being displayed in the charts

4.3.1.1 Recognition

The Recognition factor answers the question of whether the respondents recognize the music being played in their ears. In other words; if a majority of the respondents has heard the music before, there will be a high Yes-percentage displayed in the charts for this factor. If a majority of the respondents claim to have never heard the music before, there will rather be a high No-percentage displayed.

4.3.1.2 Correct association

The Correct association factor answers the question of whether the respondents associate the music being played in their ears, to the actual values that were intended to be delivered through the sonic logos²⁷. Hence; if a majority of the respondents makes the intended emotional association upon hearing a sonic logo, there will be a high Yes-percentage displayed in the charts for this factor. If a majority of the respondents makes a different emotional association than the values that were intended to be delivered, there will rather be a high No-percentage displayed.

4.3.1.3 Recall, industry

The Recall, industry factor answers the question of whether the respondents can connect the music being played in their ears to a certain industry. For instance that one is able to determine the BMW sonic logo belonging to a company in the car industry. If a majority of the respondents can make this connection between the sonic logo and the correct industry, there will be a high Yes-percentage displayed in the charts for this factor. If a majority of the respondents do not know to which industry a sonic logo is associated with, there will rather be a high No-percentage displayed.

4.3.1.4 Recall, brand

The Recall, brand factor answers the question of whether the respondents also can correctly recall to which specific company or brand a sonic logo belongs. If

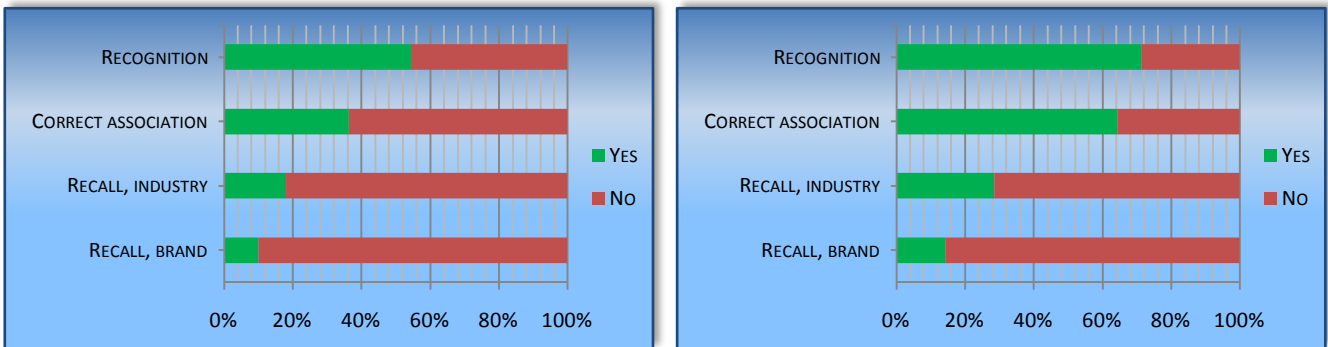
²⁷ The intended core values of the sonic logotypes can be found in connection to the displayed charts.

a majority of the respondents can pinpoint to which company or brand a sonic logo is associated, there will be a high Yes-percentage displayed in the charts for this factor. If a majority of the respondents do not know to which company or brand a sonic logo is associated with, there will rather be a high No-percentage displayed.

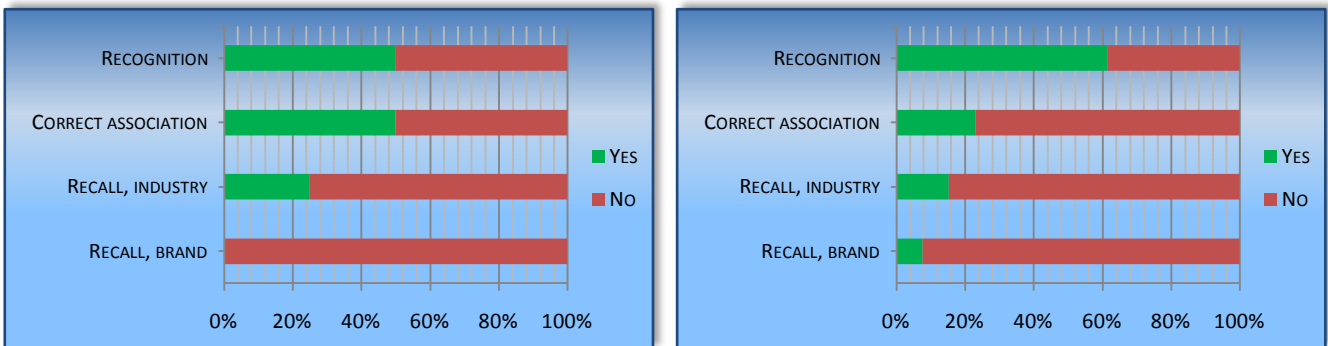
4.3.2 BMW

The BMW sonic logo has been constructed to deliver a sonic persona, embodying the internal brand values of the BMW brand²⁸. As a company policy, these values may not be *explicitly* outspoken by company representatives. However; I have indirectly been able to confirm that the brand values of BMW, which are intended to be delivered through the sonic logo, are feelings of *exclusiveness, performance, power & engineering*.

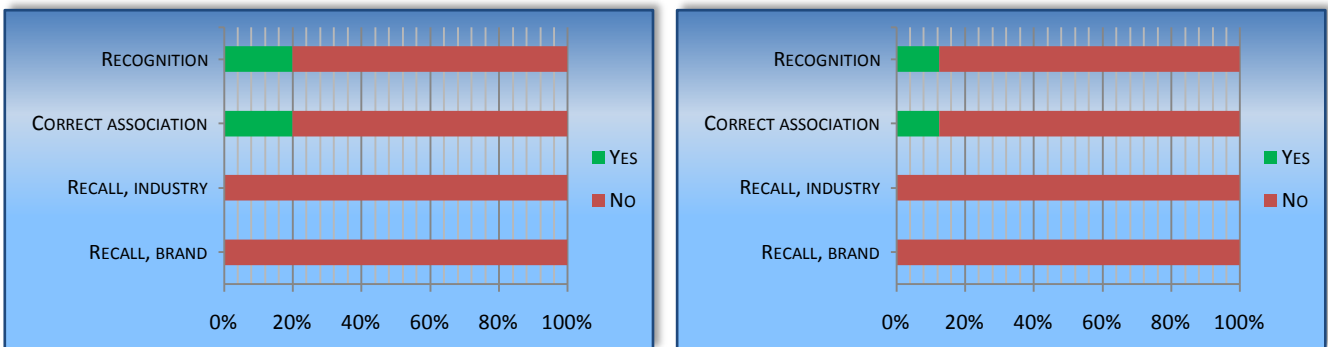
Charts 1 & 2: BMW, ages 15-29 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 3 & 4: BMW, ages 30-44 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 5 & 6: BMW, ages 45-60 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)

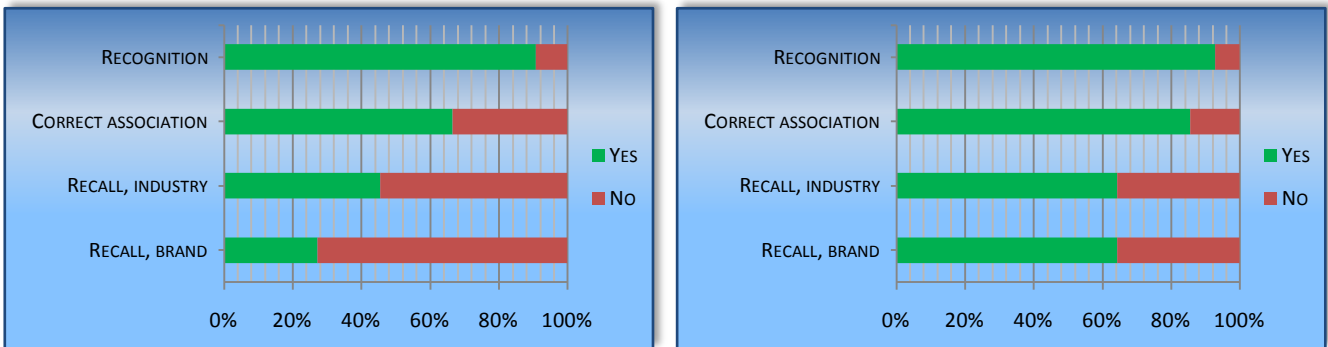


²⁸ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Daniela Honsel, corporate identity manager at BMW Group.

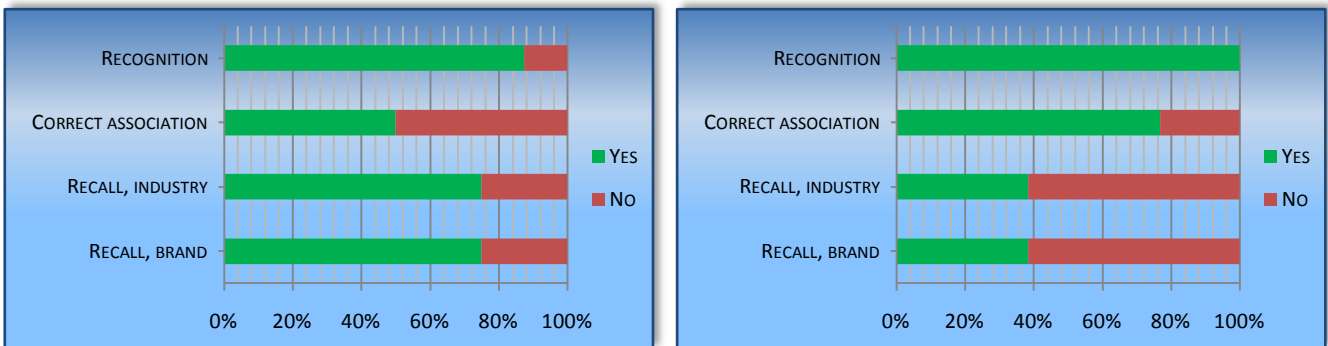
4.3.3 LOKA

The LOKA selling points and main brand propositions emphasize the *uniqueness* of the Bergslagen-well, from which the water for producing LOKA is retrieved. This uniqueness is intended to come across to consumers, upon hearing the brand’s sonic logo. Another important emphasis lies on the mysterious feeling of the bewitching forests, surrounding the LOKA-well. Hence; as feeling of *mystique* should also be evoked in consumers’ minds²⁹.

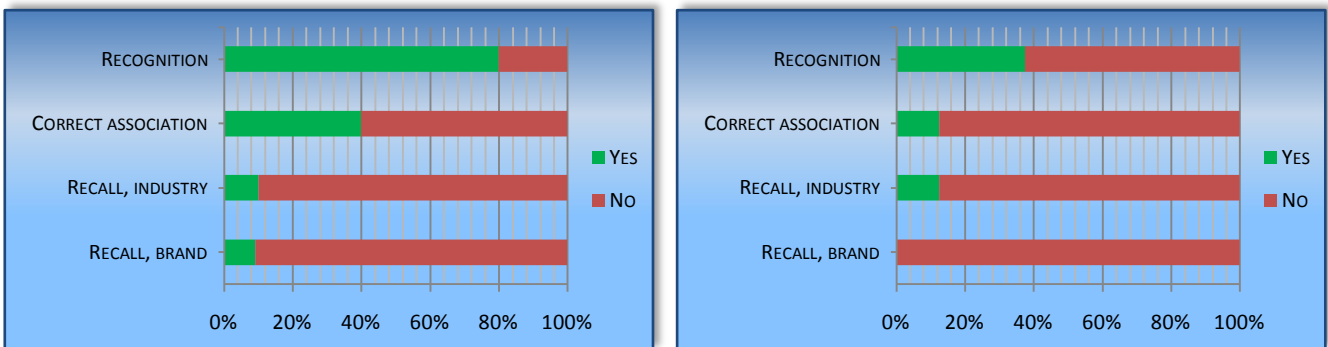
Charts 7 & 8: LOKA, ages 15-29 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 9 & 10: LOKA, ages 30-44 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 11 & 12: LOKA, ages 45-60 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)

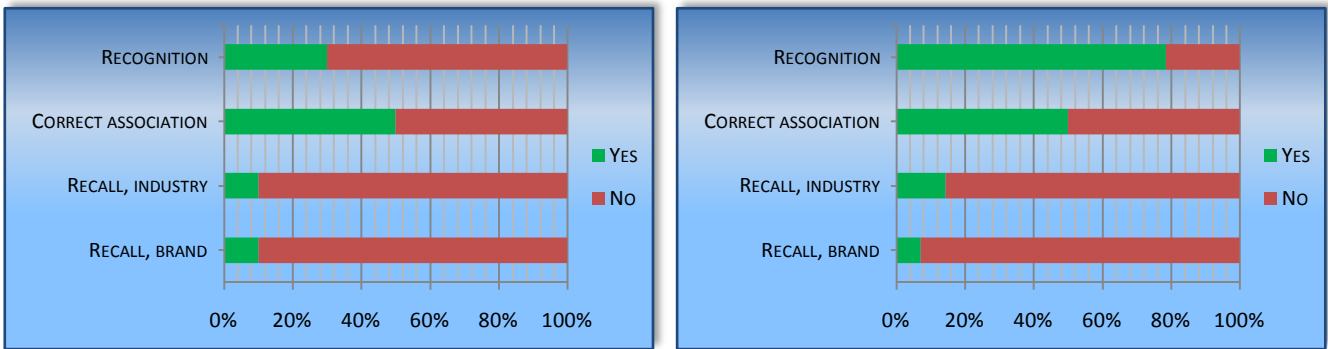


²⁹ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Anna Lidström, branding manager of the LOKA brand.

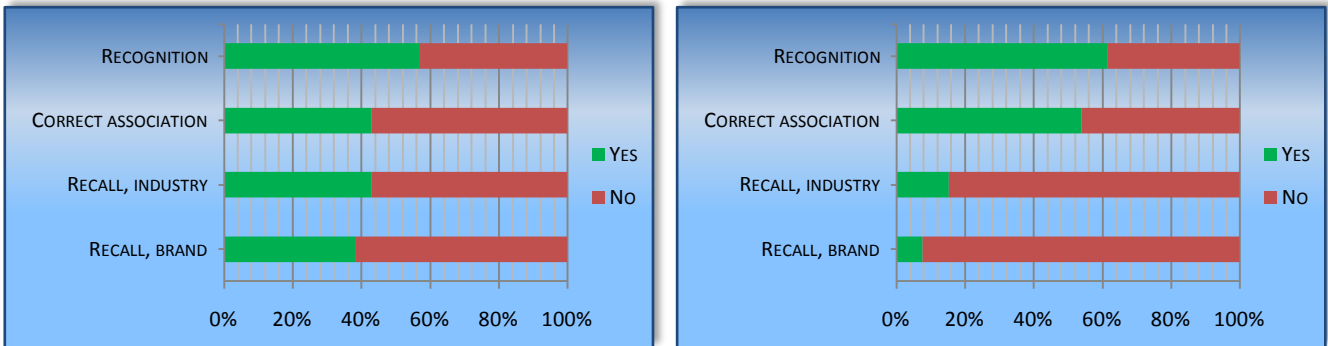
4.3.4 Hornbach

The feeling that is intended to be transmitted through the music of the Hornbach sonic logo is a sense of *optimism, joy of life* and *self-determination*. Hornbach wanted to communicate a feeling of having lust and passion for doing home renovating and restoration, on one’s own. The emphasis should be on the feeling of *want* as opposed to *must*, in terms of such Do-it-yourself renovations³⁰.

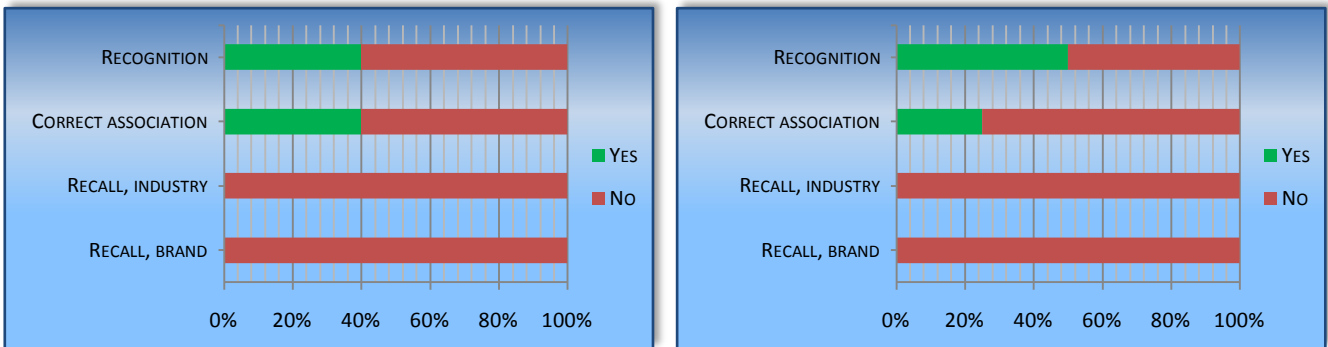
Charts 13 & 14: Hornbach, ages 15-29 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 15 & 16: Hornbach, ages 30-44 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 17 & 18: Hornbach, ages 45-60 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)

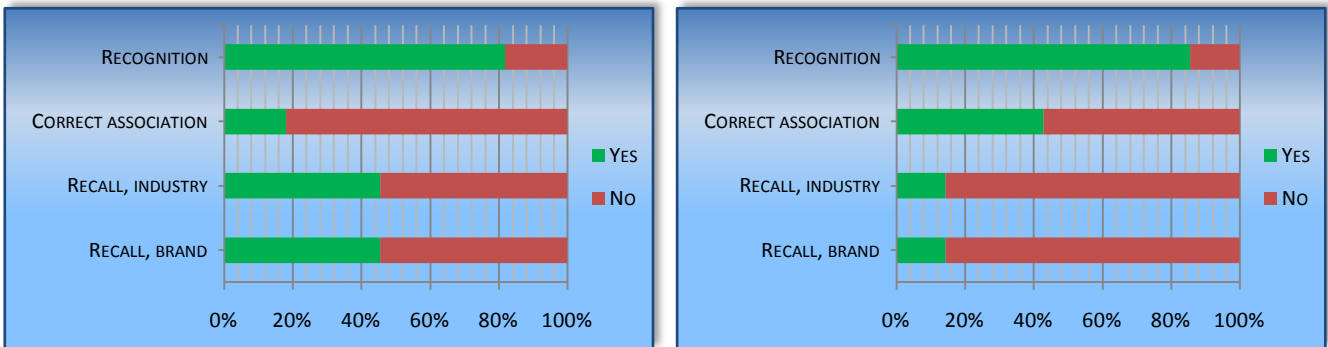


³⁰ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Weronica Lundgren, marketing manager at Hornbach.

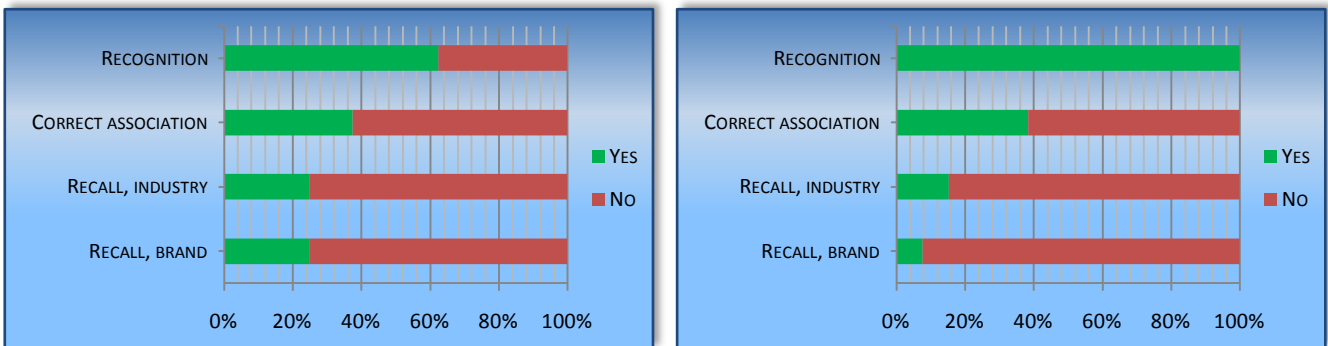
4.3.5 Pressbyrån

The intended goal of the sonic logo of Pressbyrån was to transmit the main advantages and values offered by the Pressbyrån brand. These values are believed to be *speed, convenience, spontaneity & youthfulness*. The city-centre locations, generous opening hours, as well as the product assortment of Pressbyrån stores, are meant to deliver a sense of being able to make quick, simple and spontaneous purchases without any hassle³¹.

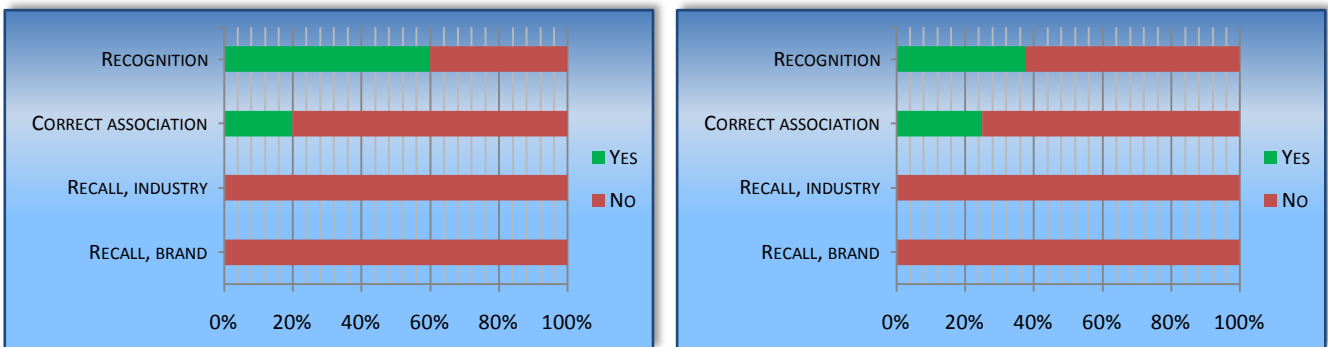
Charts 19 & 20: Pressbyrån, ages 15-29 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 21 & 22: Pressbyrån, ages 30-44 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)



Charts 23 & 24: Pressbyrån, ages 45-60 (Left chart: Women, Right chart: Men)

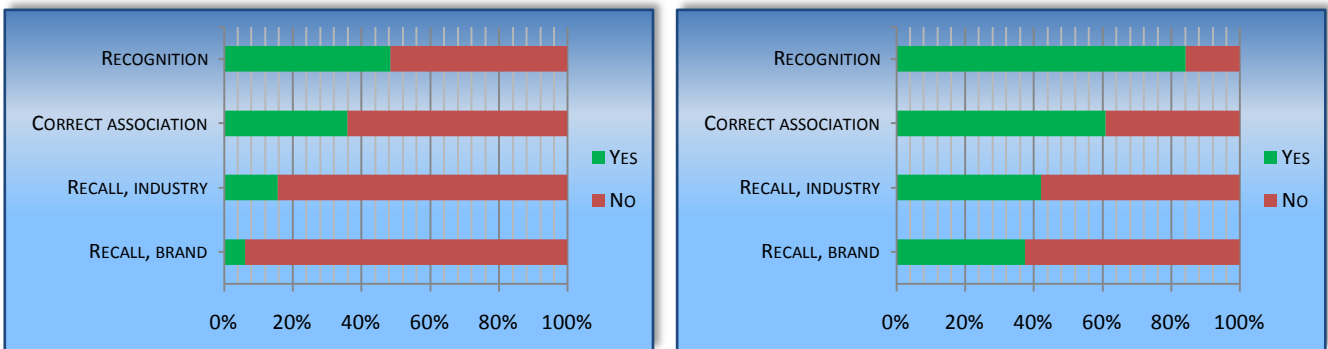


³¹ Info gathered in mail correspondence with Maria Isaksson, marketing associate at Reitan Servicehandel.

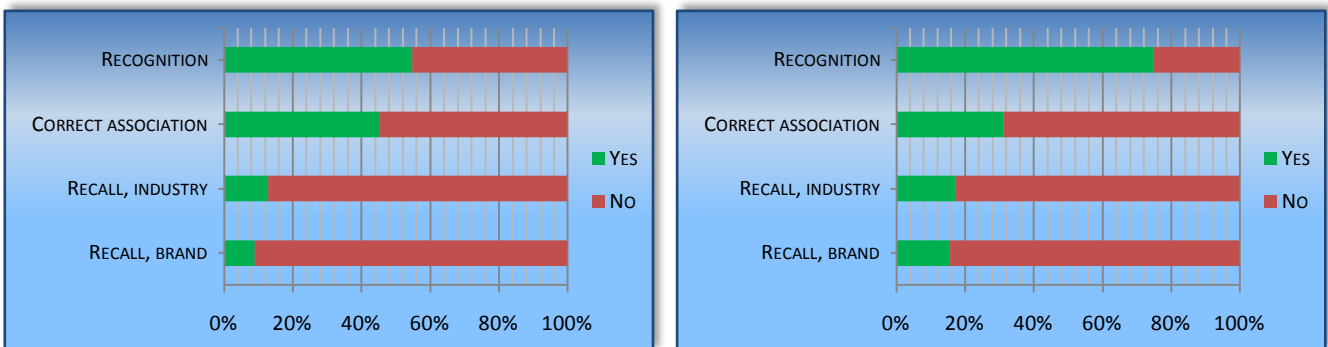
4.3.6 All ages & sexes

The LOKA sonic logo *by far* displays the best score, according to the results of this survey. It does so, in regards to all of the four measured factors. The Pressbyrån sonic logo overall shows the *second* best results, in it being both well recognized as well as somewhat well connected to the correct brand. It should be said though, that the leap from the score of the LOKA logo, down to the score of the Pressbyrån logo, is quite big. Both the BMW sonic logo, as well as the Hornbach sonic logo display quite low scoring percentages. They can only be recognized by about half of the respondents, and very few can say to which brands they belong.

Charts 25 & 26: (Left chart: BMW, Right chart: LOKA)



Charts 27 & 28: (Left chart: Hornbach, Right chart: Pressbyrån)



5. Analysis & conclusions

"If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else."

Yogi Berra

The fifth and final chapter of this thesis contains an analysis of the generated results from the three conducted interviews, as well as the conducted survey. As usual, I start with a brief comprehensive summary containing compressed contents of my analysis and conclusions. Thereafter, the analysis is presented in its entirety within the three-phased classification of the assumed creation and implementation process of sonic branding. My ambition is to, as frequently as possible, draw possible connections to the constructed theoretical framework. If needed, the reader may please review the theoretical framework which can be found in chapter two of this thesis. I end the chapter and thesis by drawing possible conclusions from my study, upon which I suggest future research possibilities.

5.1 Comprehensive analytical summary

In analyzing the results of the study, there may be reasons to believe that there are possible factors of success to be found within all of the assumed phases of sonic branding. When discussing the analytical envisioning phase, one of the crucial factors of success is possibly the presence of a company's distinct identity, i.e. a company may need to know who they are, before engaging in the creation of a sound identity. In finding the core values to use as input in the creation of a sound identity, it may be greatly important to choose such with respects to all values not necessarily being suitable, or even possible to recreate as music and sounds. Choosing values that are clearly differentiated from those of the competitors may also be an important determinant of success, as well as them being filled with a sense of meaning and being on-brand. It may also be of crucial value that the analytical process preceding the creation of a sound identity is done so with uttermost thoroughness; in so laying the best possible groundwork in order for the sound identity to reach end consumers in a desirable fashion. For being able to carry out this analysis; companies may need to understand the importance of investing sufficient enough of resources for the analysis not to fall short.

In the creation phase of sonic branding, it may be of crucial value to be aware of the risk of certain core values perhaps being very similar to other, completely different emotions after having been translated into music. To better be able to foresee this risk, it may be advisory to conduct consumer tests, for instance in putting together focus groups; in so being able to

determine if the values in a created sound identity are perceived as intended by the end consumer. When targeting specific groups, it may be advisory to also consider the tastes and musical preferences which are prominent within these groups. A largely underestimated success factor in the creation process may be to understand the often crucial importance, which lies in the ability of being able to generate clever ideas and smart, symbolic solutions. Such solutions may often involve using the actual sounds emitting from products. Moreover; for reaching success one should probably not forget the importance of creating a clear internal conviction within companies; of the reasons for and importance of a sound identity's components and features. Otherwise, there may be an increased risk of weakening the image of the brand, rather than strengthening it.

Lastly, in analyzing the implementation phase of sonic branding, possible determinants of success may be the following. There may be reasons to believe that emphasis should be placed on further developing the up and coming touchpoints, of for instance the World Wide Web, in which the use of sound as of today may be far from optimized. Even though the touchpoint of television still may be the most powerful platform when reaching out to consumers; this may soon be a swiftly changing reality. When choosing the touchpoints of a sound identity, it should presumably be done so in a greatly sophisticated manor, for not stirring up annoyance or other unwanted emotions that may hurt the image of a brand.

Also important is that many companies as of today may need to come to the realization, of perhaps needing to look upon the use of sound in its marketing and branding strategies with greater priority. Reviewing a company's sound purchasing strategies may show that an unnecessarily large amount of funds is fragmentarily spent on purchasing sound, within its different divisions and subdivisions. Coming to the conclusion that a company's output of sounds may need to be completely unified, for it to have any possibilities of strengthening its brand, appears essential.

Following through on this conviction, may be of determining value for the degree of success in a sonic branding strategy. For large, multinational corporations; the challenge of creating a unified sound is certainly vastly greater than for smaller companies. A possible consideration of circumstances, for carrying out this great challenge may be creating a *strong internal conviction*; applying a *self-evident* and *immediate* implementation to a sound identity whenever noise is to be made, and perhaps assigning a *special task force* who's sole purpose would be to unify an entire company's output of sounds.

5.2 Analysis

5.2.1 Analysis of the 1st phase: Sonic branding envisioning

When reviewing the results from the three conducted interviews, there is an apparent emphasis on the importance of developing a unique *identity*, before the attempts of turning to the vast powers of music for the marketing of companies and brands. This emphasis not only comes across in the three interviews, but is also frequently underlined in the ideas of the theoretical framework. Søren Holme even goes as far as to advise *against* an engagement in the creation of a company's sound identity, until the company itself has a steadfast idea of who they are, or who they want to be.

The process of applying sound to a brand is hence likely to being far more complex than merely hiring someone to create a snappy *ding dong* sonic logotype, as a trigger of brand recognition. The sonic logos that I myself am more often inclined to connect to a brand are instead the ones containing music, which delivers something *more* than the mere presence of a chirpy melody.

One of the crucial components in a communicated sound identity may hence be an evident connection to a unique identity. This meaning what values, emotions and advantages are coming across in the musical sound waves. Companies and brands that are successfully able to transform the inner core of it's values into musical elements, may be the ones best equipped for experiencing any effects of sonic branding. To understand that music is an intricate language of *emotion*, which at times can establish far more complex emotional connections than any spoken language, may be an absolute necessity for marketing directors intending to use musical solutions successfully within its branding strategies.

One could perhaps draw a parallel to someone attending an important job interview. In order to make a convincing impression, in so increasing the chances of getting the job; you may need to present a clear *conviction of who you are* and what *additional traits* you are bringing to the table. If you do not convincingly present the reasons making *you* right for the job, the employer is most likely going to have trouble remembering you, and will perhaps choose not to consider you amongst the other applicants. Then, there will be someone else stepping in with better selling arguments, grabbing the job in front of your nose. The same, I feel, may apply to the activities of branding and sonic branding. In a tough competitive business landscape; it may be crucial for a company to differentiate itself in terms of the appeal of its

communicative outputs; otherwise the consumers may choose the competitor who successfully does. Sonic branding may have the preconditions of being an excellent tool for a successful boost of a differentiated identity. Developing a unique and differentiated identity can however be a vastly difficult task; partly because it at times can be a somewhat uncontrollable factor. The *image* of a company in consumers' minds, which Stellan Colt points out, does not necessarily need to equal the *true* identity of a company. Perhaps Stellan has been able to experience cases of certain companies, projecting a vastly differing image depending on which consumers are being asked. In such cases it may be vastly more difficult, but also more important, to *unify* the values of a brand by the use of sound. In the ideas of Gregory et al. (1999), one can go to certain lengths in trying to influence the way in which one is looked upon. In part by using the guides of *creativity* and *consistency*, the image of a brand could perhaps be changed, modified or enhanced. These guides, I feel, may hold a crucial sense of value in the creation of a unified sound identity.

The brand of BMW has, in my eyes, always been one of the strongest keepers of a well-defined image. It of course has so, partly because of BMW's constant outputs of qualitative products and services; but also because the company has managed to maintain a certain aura around its name. The aura surrounding BMW has, for many, made it one of the most desirable cars to drive and own. If one were to project the BMW brand through Kapferer's (2004) Brand Identity Prism, one might find that both its *physical* and *personality* facet can be mirrored somewhat correctly, on the prism's receiving end. In my investigations of the four sonic logos however; the BMW sonic logo doesn't appear to have very much contributed to a strengthening of the BMW name, by scoring remarkably poor results in the conducted survey.

It does so, despite the assumed possibilities of attaching music to a brand which has a clear identity; the identity of BMW being associated with values of *high-performance*, *power* and *exclusiveness*. The problem, however, might be that *this is also the outspoken identity of a lot of other car manufacturers*. Perhaps the sonic logo of BMW, which has actually been around for the past *seven years* making lack of exposure an unlikely factor, frequently fails to be associated to its owner because it doesn't achieve enough *differentiation*, compared to similar brands in the automotive industry.

If placing the BMW sonic logo inside Treasure's (2007) SoundMapTM Matrix, it allows for the assumption that a possible glitch may have occurred within the *fifth* cell of the matrix, which is the Differentiate/Excite-cell. If having failed to analyze how to effectively

differentiate the BMW sonic logo from that of other, similar car manufacturers; BMW may have missed out on the important opportunity of creating *excitement* from the initial sounds that consumers encounter in association to the brand. If this is the case; it seems an unfortunate misstep, for a brand in fact having such grand possibilities of *backing up* the initial promises made, in the latter phases of *express* and *endure*. Had the BMW sonic logo been better differentiated, it could perhaps more effectively have taken advantage of the short yet crucial moments, when consumers are first feeling excitement over a brand's promises.

I had actually expected that the two, somewhat unorthodox, drum beats of the BMW sonic logo, would evoke immediate associations of power and performance. I believed so, partly because that's actually what they did for me. This, however, turned out not to have been the case for most respondents participating in the questionnaire. It seems that there perhaps may have been a failure to *understand* the difficulties of delivering the brand values of BMW through a sonic logo, making them turn out somewhat misguided, perhaps portraying *unpleasant* messages. A few respondents actually wrote down (as an added opinion) that they found the sounds playing in their ears to be *spooky* and *unappealing*.

If I were to once again place the BMW sonic logo inside Treasure's (ibid) SoundMap™ Matrix, it allows for another interpretation. An assumed glitch may perhaps rather have occurred in the *first* cell of the matrix, which is the Understand/Excite-cell. BMW Brand Management may have failed to *understand* and *recognize* that the BMW values of *power* and *engineering* in fact may tread a rather thin line, in terms of them rather being perceived as *angry*, or even *intimidating*. These emotions can hardly be viewed as *exiting* associations; once again implying that the sonic logo's crucial accomplishment of *excitement* may have been missed out on. If the values being projected through the BMW sound identity are largely *off-brand*, there may be an increased risk of less activity in the *ninth* Communicate/Excite cell as well.

If assuming that the feelings of *spookiness* and *unappeal* may be the common way, in which the BMW sonic logo is perceived; it's no wonder it renders a poor connection to the actual brand of BMW, which to a great extent rest on the identity trait of being very *appealing*. It's however certainly possible that an assumed glitch rather occurred in the *creation phase* or for that matter in the *implementation phase* of the sonic logo, partly because neither of the values of *exclusiveness* nor *power*, in my view, come across as impossible to recreate through the emotional palette of music. There are actually examples of this having been done successfully

in the past, which I return to when analyzing the creation phase of sonic branding. Perhaps BMW made a mistake in attempting to take on the creation of its sonic logo completely on its own, without the guidance of professional composers. These possibilities are also addressed further on.

In Olins' (1990) channels of corporate identity and Borja de Mozota's (2003) thoughts of design management, it appears of great importance to create the sense of corporate *unity* in the projected image emitting from companies. Even though these theories focus mainly on visual design; I feel that sonic design is equally or perhaps even *more* important, due to its assumed deep emotional foundations in consumer's minds and lives. In Søren Holme's experience; the creation of corporate *sonic* unity is of uttermost importance for the success of a sound identity. Sending out *mixed* messages, images and emotions may confuse consumers, rather than evoke in them the feeling of unity. The seemingly unfitting messages being sent out as the BMW sound identity, may in the long run perhaps be harmful for the BMW brand, even though few would probably as of today doubt its ongoing successes.

In our conversation; Jakob Lusensky and I discussed the possibility of the *envisioning* and *analytical* phase of sonic branding, perhaps *superseding* the other phases in terms of importance for the outcomes. Jakob highly emphasizes the *groundwork preceding* the creation of a sound identity, in it being of uttermost importance for the sound identity's future success. He furthermore stresses that it at times often is a *budget* and *time* related issue, in being able to effectively envision those values of a brand, which may be suitable in the format of sound and music. Søren Holme mentions a similar necessity of there needing to be a certain amount of *resources invested*, if a fruitful analysis of a brand's sound identity is to be made possible.

One should certainly be aware of the possible personal interests in such statements, by the interviewees presumably gaining from convincing as many companies as possible to invest bigger chunks of its marketing budgets into sound. However; it does undeniably make certain sense that the width and span on the analytical phase is of terminal importance, and hence need to be sufficiently funded. Søren Holme though, rather seems to advocate the importance of *intensity* as opposed to a stretched out analytical process. Spending *too* much time on analyzing an ongoing project, may perhaps result in a loss of *focus*, consequently having effects on the success of its outcomes.

I feel that it there may be need for a certain *delicacy*, in choosing the appropriate construction of the analytical phase. Jakob Lusensky certainly has a point, in finding the analytical phase to

be of crucial importance. By not taking one's time, there is an evident risk of not having enough possibilities to thoroughly consider all possible viewpoints. I know this for sure, having been a student for the past four years. If little time is spent thoroughly planning one's studies; one will see results that follow. Activities that are meticulously planned, more often generate the best results. However; when working with the creative medium of music, I feel that one can perhaps only plan to a *certain extent*. There may perhaps be a risk of overanalyzing a project as well; possibly resulting in a blurry idea of what was one's initial objectives.

Spendrups, when discussing its LOKA brand, claim to have analyzed a unanimous, clear-cut idea of the core values intended to be transmitted through the channel of its sound identity. Much like BMW Brand management also claim to have done with the BMW brand. The feelings of *mystique* and *uniqueness* are, in my view, certainly well in line with the water brand's image of being a bit different, and set apart from the rest. When Spendrups analyzed the desired values of the LOKA sonic logo; a contributing factor that BMW Brand Management perhaps may have lacked in its analysis, is the possibility of LOKA's brand values being *better equipped* for using as input in sonic branding. I discuss this possibility further, when analyzing the creation phase of sonic branding.

When placing the LOKA sound identity inside Treasure's (ibid) SoundMap™ Matrix, one can assume certain success factors having taken place in the *fifth* cell of the matrix (Differentiate/Excite), as well as the *first* cell (Understand/Excite). The LOKA sonic logo may have been able to *excite* consumers, because it may deliver values that are different from that of competitors. In *differentiating* the LOKA brand, by emphasizing its supernatural and mystical powers; it may have become successfully set apart from the values of other bottled water brands. Such, I feel, seldom deliver values other than perhaps certain product attributes such as *taste* and *freshness*. Adding intangible values to the LOKA brand; communicating them through music, may therefore have created a certain excitement in the otherwise rather unexciting industry of bottled water. Such an initial excitement, may be a necessity for the chance of leading consumers all the way through the latter phases of *engage*, *express* and *endure*.

Regarding the first cell; Spendrups may have been able to understand the importance of projecting values that presumably could reach a rather wide base of consumers. The LOKA brand isn't specifically projected towards any defined target groups, meaning that one may

need to choose somewhat *universal* values; in so evoking excitement for multiple age groups. The choice of LOKA's mysterious and unique brand values, may have enabled the creation of a pleasantly perceived sound identity, which could be made both *musically on-brand*, as well as *universally negotiable*.

Rather placing the Hornbach sonic logo inside Treasure's (ibid) SoundMap™ Matrix, allows for an interpretation of its rather poor survey results once again having been caused by a possible glitch in mainly the *fifth* and *first* cell of the matrix (Differentiate/Excite and Understand/Excite). Much like BMW Brand Management; Hornbach may perhaps have failed to create enough *differentiation* in the music of its sonic logo, making it poorly connected to the Hornbach brand. Causing this lack of differentiation may this time have been founded in some of the Hornbach values perhaps being a bit *too conveniently* translated into music, as opposed to being too difficult. In the Understand/Excite-cell there is a possibility of the intended happy and joyous values of Hornbach, rather being perceived as a bit *corny* when reaching consumers ears. The continuation of this discussion can also be found in the analysis of the creation phase of sonic branding.

There is however a certain discrepancy in the results for the Hornbach sonic logo, that perhaps should be mentioned. Interestingly enough, the results show certain indications saying that women aged 30-44, better can recognize the values of the Hornbach sonic logo, and connect them to the correct brand. One would otherwise have assumed that the Hornbach brand should have a certain masculine connection, by it's offering products within home renovating and construction. This may however be a somewhat outdated prejudice, not displaying much truth. Perhaps it rather is the *women* more often dragging their men to Do-It-Yourself warehouses, as opposed to the other way around.

The chosen Pressbyrån brand values may, much like the values of BMW, also be quite *difficult* to express in the format of music. Yet these values, such as *spontaneity*, may perhaps also be difficult to determine by consumers *regardless*. There may perhaps be a clear *internal* conviction of the core values of Pressbyrån, but this conviction might be problematic to further transmit to the consumers, by perhaps being a bit diffuse. If this is the case, there is a certain connection to Balmer's (2008) classification of *corporate identity* and *corporate identification*. Pressbyrån may however have been able to sidestep this problem by aiming its brand towards younger age groups, in intending for its sound identity to incorporate a youthful touch.

When reviewing the survey results for the Pressbyrån sonic logo, focusing on *younger age groups* particularly young females, one finds rather high percentages of a correct brand recall. Using Treasure's (ibid) SoundMap™ Matrix to process these results, gives me a reason to stress a seemingly successful *differentiation* of the Pressbyrån sound identity, in it being intended to target a younger audience. Jakob Lusensky stresses that companies working with defined target groups need to be extra careful and specific, as to the *needs* and *tastes* of the targeted groups. This appears as a crucial necessity, when it comes to the planning and envisioning of a sound identity as well.

Pressbyrån stated, in the briefing given to the musicians appointed for the creation of its sonic logo, that the music representing the Pressbyrån brand should have a clear sense of *youthfulness* to it, along with its other intended values. It was perhaps understood, that the musical tastes of younger generations may need to be taken into consideration. Pressbyrån appear to have observed possible advantages, in rejuvenating a brand that perhaps have had a certain *dusty, old* feel to it. This information appears to have been successfully processed by the composers of the sonic logo, allowing for a positive activity in all of the *first, fifth* and *ninth* cells of the matrix (Differentiate/Excite, Understand/Excite and Communicate/Excite).

One may have been able to create excitement by *understanding* the preconditions of younger age groups, *differentiating* its youthful appeal by incorporating it as a intended brand value, and finally *communicating* this appeal through a sonic logo which emphasizes its youthful touch. How this youthful touch could be created, is further analyzed in the discussion of the creation phase of sonic branding.

Whilst on the subject of age groups, there is an overall rather poor display of survey results, from respondents of older age groups. The discrepancy is actually quite vast, by all of the sonic logos showing brand recall factors of zero, or close to zero, for older age groups. This is rather strange; I had certainly expected that the sonic logos of BMW and Hornbach would display somewhat better brand recognition and brand recall, amongst older generations. After all; you rarely see 18-year-olds riding around in BMW's, or shopping for tools and wood at Hornbach.

There is however a possibility that one's ability for musical perception greatly decreases as one gets older, as both Søren Holme and Jakob Lusensky ponder over. It is quite possible that it becomes vastly harder to remember different brands and its various attributes, as one reaches a higher age. It may be *especially* difficult when merely being allowed to hear its

short musical representations. On the other hand, the discrepancy may perhaps have been caused by the selection of brands displaying mainly *youthful* connections. Another selection of brands, clearly emphasizing *older* targeted groups, may perhaps have generated the quite opposite results.

The quite different ways of conducting business; separating Stellan Colt's Mellotron from Søren Holme's Sonic Branding, is the number of hierarchical levels normally needing to be climbed, before reaching the end client at the very top. For Søren Holme and his colleagues, there are actually *no levels at all* to climb, due to the collaboration with their clients being completely horizontal. By strictly engaging in the creation of sound identities for those who are willing to work directly with Sonic Branding, it is believed to lessen the risk of a fragmented analysis in which there are too many opinions having a say in the important decisions. This risk of multiple opinions might be even more evident when dealing with the largely subjective medium of music, which is something Jakob Lusensky points to.

The possible problem with this way of doing business, which Stellan Colt stresses, is that there often may be very few representatives of the client companies' top management, having the ability to clearly communicate in a musical language. If a client company and sonic branding agency have difficulties understanding each other, it may for this reason perhaps be rewarding to have an advertising agency *in between* as a mediator. The ad agency may have co-workers on its line-up with greater aesthetic talents, simplifying an assumed problematic communicational process. This argument however implies that there *historically* must have been a deep collaboration between the client company and the ad agency; otherwise I suspect the communication problem is merely transferred rather than solved.

Søren Holme is however convinced that the only way of being successful when practicing sonic branding, is to engage in deep and direct collaborations with the owners of the brands that are to receive a sound identity. There is certainly an evident issue of personal interest in proclaiming the business model developed by one's *own* company, yet I can't help to interpret his intentions, as primarily being lined with the desire of benefitting the client companies involved. It makes certain sense, in avoiding a situation where desired needs and wishes are lost or misinterpreted, in a multi-stepped hierarchical ladder.

Returning once again to the issue of identity; the four sonic logos under examination in this study are, as mentioned before in this thesis, somewhat different in terms of its specific placement within its owners' brand architecture. By this I mean that Hornbach and BMW are

brands bearing the *actual names* of the companies, which owns and produces them. LOKA, on the other hand, isn't produced by an actual company, which some people I have encountered have had the impression of. It is rather a *subbrand* of the Swedish brewery of Spendrups. Pressbyrån is somewhat of a special case, by certainly being an actual company, yet one which is owned by a Norwegian conglomerate.

What does all of this information tell us? Well, mainly it might tell us that the only brand that doesn't specifically need to worry about its *corporate* identity is LOKA, in it not being an actual corporation but rather a subbrand of Spendrups. Therefore, Spendrups have had the opportunity of constructing a unique *brand identity* for LOKA, in part by using the tool of sonic branding, which may have little or nothing to do with the actual company of Spendrups itself.

If applying Kapferer's (2004) Brand Identity Prism to interpret these different conditions; LOKA may have a *personality* facet, implying it should be looked upon as a bit mysterious and unique. It also may have a *physical* facet, in terms of the qualities of the products bearing the LOKA name. However; the facets of *culture* and *relationship* may not actually even exist for LOKA, in the way that it more tangibly does for BMW, for instance. The reason for this being that there is no internal, physical LOKA *culture* or any actual humans of flesh and blood affecting the brand's *external relationships*. Because of this; the identity of the LOKA brand might have the possibility of shining *straight through* the prism, without any influencing factors changing its course. If you choose to look at it this way, it might be a possible explanation as to why the intended identity of the LOKA brand appears to have been rather well reflected in the consumer's end of the prism, using music to boost this image.

In the LOKA brand not being affected by external relationships, there is also a connection to Gad's (2002) Brand Mind Space-model. The public image of for instance the BMW brand may be largely affected by the acts and actions of mainly BMW Groups top management. If there is a lack of ethics and morale in the actions of BMW Group, it is likely to have a negative effect on the image of the BMW brand inside consumers' minds. LOKA isn't in the same way exposed to the risk of being deemed unethical, simply because there is no specific LOKA top management team under the public radar. There is of course the risk of the LOKA brand being stained if the *representatives of Spendrups* were to act unethically, but the impact would probably not be as considerable.

5.2.2 Analysis of the 2nd phase: Sonic branding creation

Regardless of whether the use or non-use of a middle man is proclaimed, it appears crucial that a brand's core values, targeted groups and other parts of a brand's platform is thoroughly communicated to the sonic branding agency. Both Jakob Lusensky and Søren Holme stress the need for a thorough brand briefing, in which all the necessary and important information is meticulously transferred. Another possibly crucial component, stressed by the interviewees, is the arranging of workshops for getting deeply acquainted with the tasks at hand. Important in this discussion is Stellan Colt's emphasis on developing a *joint language* for the involved parties; in so increasing the chances of them better understanding each other. Without these components; the analysis- and creation process following might severely suffer from the lack of knowing what is to be communicated.

I can identify with this notion a great deal, being a musician. When trying to create music; the process is often far more rewarding when there is a clear and present emotional direction, acting as inspiration for what is to be created. Certain emotional values are sometimes rather easy to map out as music; yet some emotional states appear far more difficult to recreate as music and sound. Perhaps the purest and most convenient emotions to express through music are either the feeling of *joy*, or the feeling of *sadness*. The choice of key signature, in terms of major or minor keys, plays an important part in expressing these feelings.

Hence; a brand's core values can be more or less convenient to transmit through a sound identity, depending on the nature of the emotion which lies underneath. Spendrups wanted to fill the LOKA sound identity with an immediate association to *mystique*. The results of the survey show a remarkably higher percentage for the LOKA sonic logo, in this emotion being spotted by the respondents. The perceived emotion of *mystique* is actually not an entirely uncommon attribute of musical compositions, simply because it quite easily can be created using specific musical building blocks.

In choosing a minor key, which may be colored with specific harmonic and melodic components, perhaps also applying some ambient features; a mystical feeling can appear. The sounds of certain instruments, as well as the choice of a slow tempo, can also increase the sense of *mystique*. There is hence a certain *convenience*, in attempting to recreate this feeling. Much more so than, for instance, attempting to deliver Hornbach's core value of *self-determination*. This may simply be a *far too complex* emotion, to embody using musical components. The *other* core values of Hornbach may therefore be the ones mainly coming

across in its sonic logo. The problem with these emotions may however rather be its *lack* of complexity; increasing the risk of there not being enough *specific connections* to Hornbach.

The Hornbach sonic logo is perhaps the closest example of the ones tested; in it expressing purely *happy* sounds. It has a rather *chirpy* and *carefree* construction, by being a melodic acapella harmonization, sung in a major key. The fact that it's *actual people* delivering the harmonies, I feel further implies the joyous expression of the sonic logo. According to representatives of Hornbach, *optimism* and *joy of life* are also some of the core values intended to be transmitted through the company's sound waves. Perhaps the sheer convenience in transmitting the pure emotion of joy, consequently made the respondents of the survey fairly well associate the music of the Hornbach sonic logo to these emotions.

However; it appears to have little meaning that the core values of *joy of life* and *optimism* are successfully coming across, if they aren't subsequently also connected to the Hornbach brand. When viewing the results of the survey, the values actually don't seem to very much be. Therefore, it appears insufficient to merely express the perhaps somewhat *mundane* and *colorless* feeling of joy, simply because it doesn't render enough specific connections to Hornbach. Some respondents made a remark that, aside from joy and optimism; the sounds also were perceived as quite *corny*. The, at times, somewhat mundane feeling of joy may perhaps tread a thin line of rather being perceived as, precisely, *corny*. The perception of corniness certainly does not appear to be a desirable trait for the Hornbach brand, nor for any other brand for that matter.

The Pressbyrån sonic logo was, as discussed earlier, intended to be targeted to somewhat younger audiences, by delivering a *youthful* touch. The measured brand recall factor of Pressbyrån was actually rather high, when singling out the younger respondents taking part of the questionnaire, particularly females. It appears the musicians assigned to create the Pressbyrån sonic logo was able to capture the sense of youthfulness rather well, by building it around a fairly basic hip-hop/r'n'b beat, which of course is a musical style often listen to by younger generations. Upon the beat, there was added a supporting bassline, some harmonic chord changes, as well as a very distinct electronic melody. The melody as well, in my ears, sounds rather modern and youthful in its instrumentation. It supplies the sonic logo with a recognizable sound.

There are however few connections, in my view, to the other values of Pressbyrån such as *spontaneity* or *convenience*. The reason for this, I feel, is that these values should be

considered quite hard to communicate through music; if possible at all. The sonic logo's recognizable youthful tone, combined with its difficulties in projecting any other values, may allow for young people to quickly recognize the sonic logo, yet fail in placing it. Recognition, which Søren Holme points out, is not a mean in itself. There may need to be a distinct connection to brand's specific values, for it to be recalled.

In the creation of the Hornbach sonic logo, there was no external collaboration with professional composers; the idea for the sonic logo was solely generated by Hornbach's advertising agency. The creation of the BMW sonic logo was carried out solely by BMW Brand Management. Hence; no external branding firm specializing in sound was brought in for creating the BMW sonic logo either. Whereas both the LOKA sonic logo, and the Pressbyrån sonic logo, was created by bringing in professional composers for analyzing how the values of the two brands best could be personified as musical compositions.

Jakob Lusensky advocates the need for consulting individuals with *musical expertise*; if aiming to be successful in sonic branding. The survey results can certainly be interpreted as purely coincidental, in terms of the two best scoring sonic logos being those having been created by musicians. But nonetheless, these figures display an interesting connection. I have a hard time believing that the seemingly clear-cut *mysterious* sounds of the LOKA sonic logo would have come across as clearly, had not a professional composer been given the task. BMW Brand Management perhaps made somewhat of a mistake in not incorporating more musical components into its sonic logo; in so not merely giving it the sound of two metallic beats. Had there been more professional guidance; it would perhaps have been advised to project the sense of power and forcefulness in a warmer, more melodic expression. In doing so, one could perhaps have avoided associations to other, unwanted values.

In the event of a sonic branding agency being hired for the creation of a client company's sound identity; it appears crucial that the creation process is started completely from *scratch*, i.e. on a blank slate. The reason for this may once again be, which Søren Holme points out, founded in the importance of *corporate-* and *brand identity*. The creation and duration of an *externally* projected corporate identity may be greatly dependant on the co-workers *internal* identification with a company, and its incorporated sounds. Balmer (2008) discusses the terms *stakeholder-* and *corporate culture identification*, which are terms displaying evident connections to the importance of convincing co-workers to *join in* on the idea of a sound identity which highlights a company's unique traits. In the creation process of a sound

identity, the music may need to be *uniquely tailored*, without any old ideas or musical components incorporated. Otherwise, it may not be possible to explain internally; the reasons for a company incorporating the likes of a certain sound identity. Lagergren (2002) also determines the issue of *internal conviction*, as one of the main ingredients of successful branding. I have personal experiences, where I've been convinced to strongly believe in the internal values of a company, for which I worked. The interesting thing is that the experience I'm referring to implied nothing more than a *dead end job*, which paid bad money and meant an unhealthy work environment. Despite the non-existent prospects of the job itself, I was subconsciously convinced to work my heart out for the company. I was so, simply because I had been persuaded and convinced of the terminal importance, of upholding the company values.

There was no specific sound identity embodying the values of the company for which I worked, yet had there been; I can certainly imagine myself having it spinning on my iPod. The point I'm trying to make with this anecdote is that an *internal conviction*, of the reasons for a specific sound identity, may make a huge difference for its successes. The co-workers of a company can at times be the most important spokespersons for the core values of a company, which is why its sounds may need to be completely custom-fitted; in so displaying an *evident* connection to these values. If co-workers do not understand or agree with the reasons for a specific sound identity, they may completely dismiss it. Hence; if there is an internal conflict of the sound identity's importance, such a conflict may lower the usage and success of the sound identity. Subsequently; such a development may rather weaken a brand's image, rather than strengthen it.

Stellan Colt is able to show examples of clever solutions, where the *actual sounds of products* are taken advantage of, for the creation of sound identities that fit specific brands. Perhaps this would have been a possibility for both Hornbach and BMW; being companies offering products emitting a lot of sounds when in use. The choice of the two metallic beats of a drum, which BMW Brand Management presumably thought would deliver an evident feeling of forcefulness and power, seem to have transmitted quite different values. As I've discussed earlier; the feelings of power may just as easily have been perceived as unappealing feelings of *wrath*, or perhaps even *fear*. Søren Holme however, doesn't see a problem with the use of unpleasant sounds per se, but rather sees a problem when they are put into the wrong context; unfitting of the brand they are to represent. Sometimes, he feels, it may be legitimate with the use of unpleasant sound if they actually do fit the brand. Another aspect however, may be the

possibly increased risk of people rejecting a sound identity, which is built upon unpleasant sounds. If it is rejected, it will not matter if the sounds fit the brand perfectly. Then there may also be a problem in regards to consistency, because people will most likely go completely mad if there are overexposed to a sound identity which sounds they find unpleasant. In my own view, I don't mind hearing the LOKA sonic logo over and over again, simply because it's rather pleasant to listen to. The BMW sonic logo however, I find becomes much more tiresome upon overexposure, which I feel also goes for the Hornbach sonic logo. These are of course my own personal opinions; there is likely to be as many opinions regarding a piece of music, as there are listeners.

Returning to issue of product sound; had the BMW sonic logo rather been infused with the powerful sounds of a *roaring BMW engine*, there would have perhaps been a clearer connection to some of the car manufacturer's intended core values. Another possibility may perhaps have been to apply more musical, harmonic features in the creation of the sonic logo. This may have diminished the sense of the sounds expressing anger rather than power, as well as perhaps making it more memorable.

Another example of a brand, which also defines its core values partly as being *powerful*, is the American motion picture sound system *THX*, which is more correctly a set of standards for optimizing a powerful sound mainly in cinemas. The sonic logo of THX (entitled *Deep Note*) has, in my view, an evident powerful expression with its gradual build-up, evolving into a rich and harmonic, pleasant body of electronic sounds. Yet *Deep Note* was created without incorporating any distinct sad sounds, as for instance by the use of a minor key signature. At the risk of becoming a bit too technical here; it actually has *neither* the happier sounds of major keys, *nor* the sadder sounds of minor keys, due to the specific note in a harmonic chord which defines this classification having been excluded. This leaves the listener with a certain feeling of neutrality; effectively transmitting the power of THX, along with a lessened risk of it being perceived as angry or unpleasant.

The THX sonic logo can also be said to incorporate the *product features* of the THX system, in it aiming to express the entire, rich spectra of sound, which is enabled when following the THX standards (www.thx.com). Furthermore; the THX sonic logo has also been somewhat of a predecessor in naturally combining its visual and sonic attributes. Stellan Colt's Mellotron has, by showing me a few examples of this, been able to successfully cooperate with advertising agencies and production companies, enabling a better synergic effect in some

tasteful marriages between sound and sight. I analyze the importance of this notion further on, in the discussion of the implementation phase of sound identities.

One must not forget the possibly great importance of *symbolism*, in the creation of sound identities which should evoke feelings of a specific emotional mood. The example of a roaring BMW engine may be a bit too *hands-on*; sometimes it may be better to apply subtleness. Stellan Colt and his colleagues realized that there is a breaking point for those who finally decide to live a more nutritious lifestyle, making this breaking point an excellent button to push when creating the sound identity of Weight Watchers Sweden. The transformed whistle of the sonic logo, in my view, *tastefully* and *symbolically* displayed this breaking point, which perhaps meant that it generated greater effects than had it been *bluntly outspoken*. On this note, I find that perhaps the generating of *great ideas* may be one of the aspects one can't stress enough, when creating a successful sound identity. This actually speaks *for* a business model where many people are involved in the process, as opposed to merely the client company and the sonic branding agency. If many heads are involved in the brainstorming of great ideas, it should be more likely that one pops up.

Another possibly crucial factor may be the development of better ways to *test* the effects of a for instance a sonic logo, prior to its implementation. The tests that were done for this thesis show greatly different results for the four sonic logos under investigation. Had similar tests been conducted before they were taken into use; possible flaws and glitches could perhaps have been determined. However; it also may be a costly process to conduct such tests which should also be taken into consideration. Jakob Lusensky proclaims the use of consumer tests, yet can regretfully say that the demand for them is low as of today. If tests were to be conducted more frequently in the future; it appears that the emphasis perhaps should be placed on testing which actual *values* are most suitable to be transmitted through a sound identity, as opposed to emphasizing recognition factors. Søren Holme points out that all sounds can be made recognizable if being exposed consistently enough in consumers ears. Yet a recognized sound has no meaning unless it can be further connected to a specific *association* and a specific *brand*. There should thereby be a link between the three factors of *recognition-association-recall*, making recognition a factor that nonetheless needs to be present. In the survey conducted for this thesis; this link becomes most evident when looking at the results for the LOKA sonic logo. It appears that the chain holding the three factors together can not be broken; hence all of the three factors may need to be present for the creation of a successful sound identity.

5.2.3 Analysis of the 3rd phase: Sonic branding implementation

The potentially crucial phase of implementation may largely define the rate of success of a company's sound identity. After all, it may not matter how cleverly a company's identity has been transformed into musical sound waves, if a poor implementation means that consumers subsequently do not take part of it. Jakob Lusensky places a great amount of emphasis on the analytical phase that precedes the creation and implementation phase, whereas Søren Holme is convinced that the greatly underexplored phase of implementation needs vastly more emphasis. In Søren's experience; there are great amounts of resources to be both saved and earned, if companies were to review its habits of purchasing and implementing sound. The great challenge however, appears to lie in how one can find the *best solutions* as to how large, multinational corporations better can *unify* its output of sound. I return to these issues further ahead.

When discussing touchpoints; there may be reasons to thoroughly review the choices of platforms through which a sound identity should flow. An inappropriate choice of outputs may, as a worst case scenario, be at risk of the creation of annoyance and disturbance. Having consumers reach such states will most certainly weaken the image a brand, possibly for a long time ahead. Jakob Lusensky stresses the vastly *differing needs* of companies, implying that different choices of touchpoints are appropriate for different companies. It is simply not possible for Spendrups' LOKA sound identity to be implemented as an in-store experience; for the simple reason that Spendrups doesn't operate any stores of its own.

It seems to me though, that if a company truly is to succeed in being strongly associated to its sound identity; it may need to implement its sound identity in *all* of the touchpoints it possibly can. One shouldn't forget though, that the key word in the implementation process appears to be *sophistication*. All types of sounds and music may not be appropriate to flow through all touchpoints, meaning that there may need to be a certain amount of *tweaking* and *mixing* of a sound identity for it fit through a specific output. These are activities proclaimed and emphasized by Stellan Colt. Broweus et al. (2008) also finds the need to allow for a certain amount of *flexibility* when applying sonic branding.

Stellan also emphasizes the hugely important touchpoint of television, which still appears to have a great power in reaching a wide base of consumers. The best performing sonic logo in the conducted survey, belonging to LOKA, mainly flows through the touchpoint of television (even though it can actually be heard in certain supermarkets as well), perhaps indicating the

great effectiveness and impact television still has. This may be a rapidly changing reality though, as more and more of the consumers' watching of television, in fact isn't channeled through an *actual television set*. The watching of television online and the continuously decreasing importance of traditional broadcasting, may diminish the importance of the touchpoint of television, at a faster rate than we might imagine. Planning for such a future, which may actually not lie very far ahead, may be an important consideration for companies hoping to apply successful future sonic branding. It implies the need for developing the use of sound through modern, new touchpoints. Of which the most crucial one may be the World Wide Web.

As of today, I don't believe the web is even remotely close to being optimized, in regards to its future possibilities of incorporating sounds and music. Stellan Colt and I discussed the way in which most people often reach for the *sound off* switch, when visiting web pages that offer a continuous output of sound. Why do we do this? Perhaps the reason partly lies in the fact that the output of sound online often has such poor variation, and low sound quality; that a consistent exposure becomes *unbearable* for frequent web surfers. Ultimately, it leads us to grab the opportunity of rather flipping the sound completely off. Perhaps we must find fresh ways to better *incorporate* the visual attributes and the sonic attributes available on the Internet, so that *one* becomes useless without *the other*. In other words, as for television; switching the sound off should have the effect of the entire experience losing most of its value. To merely *watch* the Internet shouldn't embody the entire experience, by rather making the accompanying *sound* a more crucial part of the equation.

The importance of visual and sonic synchronization may be huge, for the success of a sound identity. Jakob Lusensky stresses the consideration to a brand's sounds still not being even *remotely* as prioritized by companies, as the consideration to its visual qualities. Therefore, the development of collaborations between advertising agencies and sonic branding agencies hasn't come as far, as Jakob believes it will in a near future. There may be strong reasons to believe that it is in the *marriage* of visual and sonic design, in which one of the crucial success factors lie. Søren Holme and I discussed the issue of a sound identity possibly being at its most effective, when it isn't even consciously noticed by consumers. It's just *absorbed*, as a natural part of its surroundings. Consider television commercials. What makes us, the consumers, aggravated when we are being exposed to commercials? Well, for one thing, it's not very pleasant when the sound level suddenly pops up a couple of decibels, making us jump up from our seat. Another annoyance is when the pleasant, smooth, some might even

say aesthetically beautiful attributes of a commercial is abruptly disturbed by an unfitting, unaesthetic sonic logo that seem to belong somewhere else. This situation has probably occurred because of the poor collaboration between the ones in charge of the *sonic design* on the one hand, and the ones in charge of *visual design* on the other.

If better collaborations can take place, it may largely impact the way sound identities are perceived, remembered as well as connected to its underlying brands. A sonic logo may be at its most effective when it has a logical and continuous build-up, so that when it's finally exposed; it's hardly even noticed. The sonic logos being tested in this study has shown an evident tendency that this may be the case. The LOKA sonic logo is the most recognized, the most associated to its intended values, and also by far the best connected to its owner.

The commercials promoting LOKA bottled water, in my view, *define* the concept of sophistication. They are smooth, continuously flowing, aesthetically appealing in both its graphic and sonic design, and overall pleasant to watch. I don't believe we as consumers want to be completely hammered by the messages given to us; this may only cause annoyance and an inevitable channel switch. When we choose to take part of a commercial, we may rather want the messages to be slowly and smoothly given to us, so that we don't jump to our feet. The LOKA sonic logo, I feel, simply *belongs* in its surroundings. It has its natural place. However; the BMW and Hornbach sonic logos, I feel, do not. They rather seem *detached*, belonging somewhere else. In the BMW commercials for instance, the visuals are quite soft, classy and appealing. Suddenly the hard *clonk clonk* of the BMW sonic logo hits you, leaving you with a feeling of the sonic and visual worlds having collided.

The seemingly detached implementation of the BMW and Hornbach sonic logos may be a possible explanation as to why neither of them appears to be very much recognized, correctly associated, or correctly pinpointed to the right brand. Moreover; the sound identity of Pressbyrån also flows rather smoothly and freely, without any sudden disturbances. When reviewing the results of the survey; the Pressbyrån sonic logo is actually rather well connected to the correct brand considering its emphasis on younger, targeted groups. In the four P's of marketing aesthetics, Schmitt & Simonson (1997) propose that companies may need to *aesthetically unify* all of its outputs to reach higher success. I proposed that there may be reasons to add a fifth P, emphasizing the Power of Music. It may, once again, be in the aesthetically appealing marriage of sights and sounds, where success lie waiting.

This may be important for all the possible outputs chosen as touchpoints for a sound identity. If the web can be better developed in terms of the symbiosis of graphics and audio, it may increase the importance in implementing a brand's sound identity online. Such a development may also increase the *consistency* in which consumers are exposed, in turn affecting the chances of it being remembered and absorbed as intended.

The issue of consistency is stressed by Lagergren (2002) and also seen as an important factor to consider when consulting Treasure's (2007) SoundMap™ Matrix. In discussing consistency, it seems rather odd though, that the two sonic logos of respectively BMW and Hornbach, are the ones most poorly connected to the correct brands by the respondents of the questionnaire. It is odd because these are the two sonic logos that have actually been around for the longest time; seven and eight years to be exact. Pressbyrån has been around for six whereas the, by far, best performing sonic logo of LOKA only has been around for four.

There is however an apparent possibility that the most *recent rate* of exposure is what ultimately matters. The LOKA sonic logo may perhaps have had a much higher frequency in terms of air time, in the *past few years*. Whereas the BMW and Hornbach sonic logos, in recent years, may have slowed down the rate of the consistency in which its sonic logos are being communicated. But it could, as a third possible interpretation, however also be seen as though the somewhat older sonic logos have been around for *too* long, having made consumers slowly grow tired of them, and as an effect forget their origin.

Perhaps one should also take into consideration the fact that it's actually the *two Swedish brands* that perform the best; LOKA and Pressbyrån. The survey was conducted in Sweden, which raises the issue that consumers perhaps are inclined to give more attention to brands mainly operating domestically. Nor should one forget that we are in the midst of a worldwide economic downturn, largely influencing consumer behavior.

The brands of BMW and Hornbach represent companies, from whom purchasing products may demand a rather thick wallet. Pressbyrån and LOKA however, do certainly not. In a down spiraling business cycle, such as the one we are experiencing presently; companies similar to BMW may be the ones suffering the greatest. Perhaps this also affects the consumers' habits of taking part of such companies' promotional efforts. A car commercial for an automobile which one can not afford, is probably more likely to be switched off than a commercial offering products within one's reach.

I do however find it quite interesting to view the survey results from a sensory marketing perspective. Broweus et al. (2008) propose, that a marketing strategy which touches on all of the five human senses, will be vastly more effective in creating complete consumer experiences. Think about this for a second: which brand of the four tested, can one experience using all of the five senses? The answer is *LOKA*. It can be *seen, heard, touched, smelled* as well as of course *tasted*. A *mere coincidence* one might say; but if so, also an undeniably interesting one.

An analysis of the perhaps *greatest* challenge, I have saved for last. Søren Holme stresses the importance of *unifying* a company's output of sound, in the crucial process of implementation. A sound identity is most likely not going to become successful if it is only fragmentarily used, by companies emitting wide spectras of messages through its sounds. Hence; an evident problem may be a scenario where a company's many different divisions and subdivisions all have different suppliers of sound and music. The money spent on sound might in this way of doing business be a larger amount than one thinks, were it all to be added up. Furthermore; one can most probably not create the sense of unity in such an evident *diversity* of different sounds.

One should once again perhaps be aware of the interviewees' personal interest in this matter. If more and more companies begin reviewing its output of sounds, there is an evident possibility of Søren Holme's Sonic Branding gaining from such an increased belief in the creation of unified sound identities. On the other hand, it would most probably also increase its competition, in more sonic branding agencies surfacing. Setting all possible personal interests aside; I feel that many companies' present use of sound, as perhaps merely a secondary factor, may be a viewpoint which greatly underestimates its powers and possibilities. Music is an important and vital part of most human beings lives, and is so for a good reason. Music simply *matters* to people.

Let me draw a parallel here: consider the creation of a company's graphic design, perhaps the creation of a graphic logotype. One could mention the black, white and blue *BMW logo* as an example. This logo looks *the same*, wherever it can be seen, right? There aren't ten different versions of the BMW logo; it always has the same appearance. *Of course it has*, you may be thinking; the very idea of having multiple logos appears nothing but ludicrous. Why does it always look the same, one might ask? Well, probably because this creates the sense of *unity* and *identity*, by consumers making certain associations whenever the characteristic BMW

graphic logo is presented before their eyes. The decision makers at BMW Brand Management would most likely never, not even in their wildest dreams, consider *changing* its visual logo, because it has become an important carrier of the values offered by the BMW brand. If it's perfectly natural for company's visual logo to always look the same, it simply *makes no sense* that a company's output of sounds have ten or twenty different possible versions. Therefore, a sound identity may, much like visual logo, need to be determined as only *one* version; though allowing for certain possibilities of mixing the sound identity to fit different kinds of touchpoints. The *core* of the sound identity however, which remains unchanged, will most probably need to be filled with a certain sense of *meaning*. This sense of meaning can be reached by evoking *evident* associations and connections, to the identity and values of the brand it is to represent. Furthermore; a company's sound identity may need to be implemented in such a way that it's *immediately considered* whenever sound is to be used in for instance one of its promotional outputs. One may perhaps also need to, in a cleverly and sophisticated way, implement the sound identity across *as many possible* touchpoints as one can. Only then can sound be used to its full potential; when it is taken *seriously* and not only treated as a mere necessity.

The big question that arises is: how can the sounds of a company be *unified*, if the company at issue is a huge, multinational corporation with countless different divisions and subdivisions spread all over the globe? Finding the answer to this vast question may perhaps ultimately embody the *biggest success factor* of them all, when practicing sonic branding. I do not intend to be as arrogant, as to claim I know the universal answer to this puzzle. I do however have some thoughts of the circumstances, which may need to be present for becoming successful in the implementation process of sonic branding.

Firstly, I strongly believe in the great powers of a company's *internal conviction*, which perhaps is even more important for large companies where there are limited possibilities of control and supervision. If once again using the example of the BMW visual logo; I am fairly sure there is most likely *not a single co-worker* within the BMW Group, who would ever doubt the symbolic values embedded within the graphics of the BMW logo. If it's possible to convince an entire organization of the importance of a *graphic logo*, I simply don't see why a *sonic logo*, as part of a *sound identity*, shouldn't have the same possibilities. In the same way that BMW places its characteristic hood ornament on each and every car rolling out of its factories; one could implement a company's sound identity as a natural and self-evident component, whenever the company is making noise. It would need to, of course, be

constructed in the most effective way; incorporating the very essence of a company's core values. It would, in other words, have to have a distinct sense of *meaning*. It would also need to be implemented with *consistency*, without any possible exceptions. Furthermore; the implementation of the sound identity would have to be done with great finesse and sophistication. The idea is not to hammer it across people's faces. People should of course only be exposed to the sound identity, if they choose to be so themselves.

Hence; whenever there is an output of sounds in any of a company's divisions, one should immediately and without hesitation attach the sound identity. This implies the need to convince every single one of a company's divisions and subdivisions of the importance of consistency. Perhaps one will have to assign a *special task force*, who's sole purpose would be to bring together the entire company in a joint conviction. If such a conviction can be reached, it may show that a company has more to gain from a *truly unified sound*, than anybody could have ever imagined.

Let me lastly stress, that I am by no means attempting to deliver any *laws* or *truths* in the thoughts and ideas having been aired in this analysis. I am well aware of the fact that small-scaled surveys such as the one conducted for this study, merely can provide a tiny *sliver* of a possible truth, which by the way could most likely be interpreted in vastly different ways depending on who makes the call. I am also aware of the possible implications that the used methods may have had for this study. One should be aware of the possibility of the interviewees stressing different phases of sonic branding as important, mainly because they may experience difficulties in certain phases in their daily operations. They may also have certain preconceptions making them stress the importance of certain factors over others. As far as the questionnaire is concerned; there is certainly a possibility of there being glitches in its construction, perhaps making it easier for respondents to make certain connections over others. This will mainly be up to the critical reader to judge and evaluate.

However; for respondents to instinctively be able to think of a *specific brand* upon merely hearing a short musical composition, I can't help but interpret as abilities clearly pointing to an apparent tendency. This tendency implies the greater effectiveness of the LOKA sonic logo, when compared to the others. The figures displaying the results of the LOKA sonic logo by no means *went off the charts*, but compared to the other tested sonic logos, it is an expression that somehow comes to mind. Upon having analyzed the results from the three interviews, as well as the conducted survey, I am inclined to draw the following conclusions.

5.3 Conclusions

I have been able to determine the following factors, as *possible main determinants of success* in the creation and implementation process of sonic branding.

- ❖ Knowing your *identity*, i.e. knowing *who you are* before trying to convince consumers of who you are, through sonic branding
- ❖ Conducting a *deep and thorough analysis*, prior to engaging in the creation of a sound identity; investing *sufficient enough of resources* for this to be made possible
- ❖ Understanding that when determining core values, tied to a company's or brand's identity, one must also include a consideration to *them being suitable*, as far as being possible to clearly and distinctly recreate as music and sounds
- ❖ Creating a suitable environment for communication, by developing a *joint language* in which involved parties better can understand each other
- ❖ Gaining knowledge of the *tastes and preconditions* of certain targeted groups
- ❖ *Differentiating* the transmitted core values of a sound identity from that of competitors, so that it can become *clear and unique*
- ❖ Understanding that certain core values, when attempted to be translated into music and sounds, may lie very close to being perceived in a *completely different*, and perhaps greatly undesired way. If this occurs in the latter implementation of a sonic logo, it may significantly hurt the brand it is intended to represent
- ❖ Avoiding an underestimation of the importance of generating *clever* ideas and *smart, symbolic* solutions
- ❖ Making use of the *actual sounds* that the products of a company may emit
- ❖ Reaching *internal* conviction within companies, of the reasons for a certain sound identity's components and attributes. If co-workers are not entirely convinced of the *cleverness* and *importance* of its sound identity, they may *reject it* and in so increase the risk of it rather *weakening* as opposed to *strengthening* the image of the brand
- ❖ Considering sonic branding as *an equally important tool* when building strong brands, as visual and design attributes
- ❖ If possible, conducting *consumer tests* prior to the implementation of a sound identity, testing its perceived values by measuring emotional association
- ❖ Enabling a sophisticated marriage between *sonic* and *visual* attributes; in so creating the sense of overall *aesthetic* appeal

- ❖ *Reviewing* and, if needed, *modifying* a company's sound purchasing strategy, in so possibly saving large amounts of resources, as well as increasing the chances of creating a *unified* sound identity
- ❖ In regards to larger enterprises; considering *assigning a special task force*, having the sole purpose of bringing together the entire corporation in the joint conviction of a truly unified sound

5.4 Suggestions of further research

Because of the risk, when applying a mixed methods approach, of perhaps not completely exhaustively carrying out *all* of the used methods; a possible entry point would be to further investigate the success factors of sonic branding, solely using *either* a qualitative or quantitative approach. One could perhaps focus on carrying out a more *extensive* quantitative study by including a vaster number of respondents; in so more widely measuring the effectiveness of sonic logos and sound identities.

Moreover; the study carried out for the purpose of this thesis was done so in the city of Malmö, Sweden. Therefore, it would be interesting to see similar studies conducted in other cities and countries, across other continents. In doing so, one could perhaps examine whether domestic brands have greater chances of reaching success when applying sonic branding strategies, than foreign brands.

Furthermore; it would be interesting to see a study perhaps focused on conducting *qualitative consumer interviews*, in so deeply studying consumers' different perceptions of sonic branding activities. Another possible and interesting approach would be to thoroughly examine the effectiveness of sound identities, in which the use of product sounds has been applied.

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❖ *Mentioned companies / brands / sonic logos / musical acts*

3

Apple

BMW/BMW Group

Depeche Mode

Dressmann

Filippa K

Forsman & Bodenfors

Google

Heartbeats International

Hornbach/Hornbach Baumarkt Group

IKEA

Intel

iPod

iTunes

Lexington

LOKA

Macintosh OS

McDonald's

Mellotron

Mercedes

Microsoft/Microsoft Windows

MINI

Mitsubishi Motors

NIKE

Pressbyrån

Reitan Group AS/Reitan Servicehandel Sverige AB

Renault

Rolls Royce Motor Cars

Skype

Sonic Branding

Sony Ericsson

Stadium

SVT

Tailorstore

THX

Tetra Pak

U2

Vestas

Weight Watchers Sweden

Appendix A: Interview guide, semi-structured interviews

Theme #1 – “The clients companies’ analysis of how they wish its sound identities will be perceived by consumers”

- ❖ Question 1. Do the clients companies thoroughly analyze how they wish consumers will perceive its sound identities?
- ❖ Question 2. Is this analysis conducted together with the sonic branding agency, or is there already a clear vision of how the clients companies wish consumers will perceive its sound identities?
- ❖ Question 3. Do the clients companies state any structural demands on the creation of its sound identities, in terms of how it should sound to be able to deliver something about the core values of a company/brand?
- ❖ Question 4. How can the clients companies best go about to analyze how they want its sound identities to be perceived by consumers? Are there historical examples that have been more and less successful in terms of the intended message having reached end consumers?

Theme #2 – “The sonic branding companies’ analysis of how they, using music and sound, best can translate the clients companies’ wishes of how its sound identities will be perceived by consumers”

- ❖ Question 1. How are the client companies’ wishes of how they want consumers to perceive its sound identities communicated to the sonic branding agency? Thoroughly and extensively, or merely through a quick briefing? Is the communicated desire clear, or is it open for many interpretations?
- ❖ Question 2. How is the analysis of the client companies’ wishes concerning its sound identities from then on conducted, in terms of how they best can be translated into sound and music? Through brainstorming? Trial and error? Are different options and possibilities tested? Are there consumer tests conducted? Are there ways of going about that has worked well and less well?
- ❖ Question 3. How much time and resources is spent on the analysis of how the client companies wish consumers will perceive its sound identities? Does this differ from case to case; and if so, why?
- ❖ Question 4. Is this analysis seen as crucial, when discussing the final result? How important is the groundwork, in terms of how successful the sound identity later becomes? What is your experience?

Theme #3 – “The actual creation process of the sound identities”

- ❖ Question 1. Is the actual creation of the sound identities started from *scratch*, or do you sometimes continue building on old, unused ideas and demos? Which of these ways is usually the most successful?
- ❖ Question 2. How thoroughly is the conducted analysis of how the sound identities should sound followed? Does it sometimes occur that the analysis isn't entirely followed?
- ❖ Question 3. How is the actual creation process conducted, separately, or in groups? What way works best?
- ❖ Question 4. Do you work simultaneously with the creation of many client companies' sound identities, or is the work focused on one client at a time?
- ❖ Question 5. Is the creation process affected by what exactly is intended to be delivered? Does it matter if the companies and brands have specific core values that already are well implemented? Are such more easy to translate into music and sound?
- ❖ Question 6. When the sound identities are completed, how are they tested? Do you conduct any tests of recognition & recall? Are the companies involved in approving the sound identities? Are there any consumer tests conducted in this phase?

Theme #4 – “The implementation process of the sound identities”

- ❖ Question 1. How and by whom is it decided where the sound identities are to be used, i.e. across which platforms (touchpoints)? Is this analysis thorough? Are the client companies involved in this analysis?
- ❖ Question 2. What platform/combination of platforms is according to your experience the most effective and best working?
- ❖ Question 3. Are there collaborations conducted with advertising agencies/design agencies when the sound identities are to be implemented, or is the responsibility completely handed over when the sound identities are completed?

Theme #5 – “The consumers' perceptions of the sound identities”

- ❖ Question 1. Do you notice differences from case to case, in terms of how well the sound identities can be recognized and recalled by consumers?
- ❖ Question 2. If so, is it according to your experience, possible to pinpoint certain success factors regarding why some sound identities are better *remembered* by consumers and more easily connected to brands they represent?

- ❖ Question 3. Is it also, according to your experience, possible to pinpoint certain success factors making it possible for the brands' possible *core values* to reach all the way to the consumers, with the use of the sound identities?
- ❖ Question 4. Do you think it is relevant what the consumers' sex and age is, in terms of how well the messages are coming across, i.e. that they are perceived in the way they were meant to be perceived?
- ❖ Question 5. How do you follow up how the created sound identities have been perceived by consumers? Are there any after-tests conducted?

Appendix B: Questionnaire, sonic logotypes

Sonic logo #1

- ❖ **Do you recognize this sound recording?**

Yes ____ No ____

- ❖ **Which emotional associations do you get, upon hearing the sound recording?**

”Exclusiveness, Performance, Power & Engineering” ____

”Optimism, Joy of life & Self-determination” ____

”Quickness, Convenience, Spontaneity & Youthfulness” ____

”Mystique & Uniqueness” ____

“Neither of these options” ____

- ❖ **The company/brand that is represented by the sound recording; are you able say in which industry it operates?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

- ❖ **Are you also able to say which *specific* company/brand is represented by the sound recording?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

Sonic logo #2

- ❖ **Do you recognize this sound recording?**

Yes ____ No ____

- ❖ **Which emotional associations do you get, upon hearing the sound recording?**

”Exclusiveness, Performance, Power & Engineering” ____

”Optimism, Joy of life & Self-determination” ____

” Quickness, Convenience, Spontaneity & Youthfulness” ____

”Mystique & Uniqueness” ____

“Neither of these options” ____

- ❖ **The company/brand that is represented by the sound recording; are you able say in which industry it operates?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

- ❖ **Are you also able to say which *specific* company/brand is represented by the sound recording?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

Sonic logo #3

- ❖ **Do you recognize this sound recording?**

Yes ____ No ____

- ❖ **Which emotional associations do you get, upon hearing the sound recording?**

”Exclusiveness, Performance, Power & Engineering” ____

”Optimism, Joy of life & Self-determination” ____

” Quickness, Convenience, Spontaneity & Youthfulness” ____

”Mystique & Uniqueness” ____

“Neither of these options” ____

- ❖ **The company/brand that is represented by the sound recording; are you able say in which industry it operates?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

- ❖ **Are you also able to say which *specific* company/brand is represented by the sound recording?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

Sonic logo #4

- ❖ **Do you recognize this sound recording?**

Yes ____ No ____

- ❖ **Which emotional associations do you get, upon hearing the sound recording?**

”Exclusiveness, Performance, Power & Engineering” ____

”Optimism, Joy of life & Self-determination” ____

” Quickness, Convenience, Spontaneity & Youthfulness” ____

”Mystique & Uniqueness” ____

“Neither of these options” ____

- ❖ **The company/brand that is represented by the sound recording; are you able say in which industry it operates?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

- ❖ **Are you also able to say which *specific* company/brand is represented by the sound recording?**

Yes, namely _____ No ____

Appendix C1: Representatives approving usage of sonic logotypes

BMW

Mr. Stefan Ljung

LOKA

Ms. Anna Lidström

Hornbach

Ms. Weronica Lundgren

Pressbyrån

Ms. Maria Isaksson

Appendix C2: List of definitions

Music marketing

The *overall* activity of using different forms of music as strategic tools, in the marketing of products, services, companies, brands, individuals or groups.

Sonic branding

The *specific* activity of creating and implementing *tailor made sound identities*; integrating them as a vital parts in the attempts of marketing products, services, companies, brands, individuals or groups.

Sound identities

The musical embodiments of products, services, companies, brands, individuals or groups; designed to enhance the perception of its various traits and attributes.

Sonic logos

Short, tailor made musical compositions, designed to act as *immediate triggers* of brand recognition. A sonic logo may be an important part of a sound identity.

Sonic branding touchpoints

The channels used in the implementation process of sonic branding, i.e. the platforms upon which consumers may be exposed to a sound identity.

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