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# Authentic Thinking

## Branding Differently

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**Date :** June 1, 2010

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# Prefatory Note

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'Authentic Thinking, Branding Differently' is a masters thesis in International Marketing and Brand Management and has been authored during the the past months at the School of Economics and Management at Lund's University. It's been challenging task and I sincerely wish you will find its content interesting.

I also want to dedicate my gratitude towards my supervisors, Lars Carlman and Cecilia Cassinger. They have both provided me with invaluable assistance and guidance when required. To you both, thank you!

Lund, Tuesday, June 1, 2010

Axel Enström

# Abstract

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Keywords:	Authenticity, Cultural Branding, Personal Branding, Steve Jobs, Mythology, Storytelling.
Purpose:	To examine how iconic personal brand are created and how they affect iconic brand creation and perceived authenticity.
Method:	An abductive approach when studying narratives through Joseph Campbell's Hero Cycle, which represent the analytical tool for this thesis.
Conclusions:	Iconic personal brands, when tightly connected to a brand, does induce iconic brand creation and further strengthens perceived authenticity of the company in question.

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# 1. Introduction

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*This chapter attempts to present an introduction to both Steve Jobs and Apple by defining the problematics, limitation, previous research and purpose of this thesis. This segment will also propose the target group, but it will also introduce the reader to the subject and attempts to answer the question as to “why” this paper is written. It will also introduce the reader to the discussion of iconic personal brands.*

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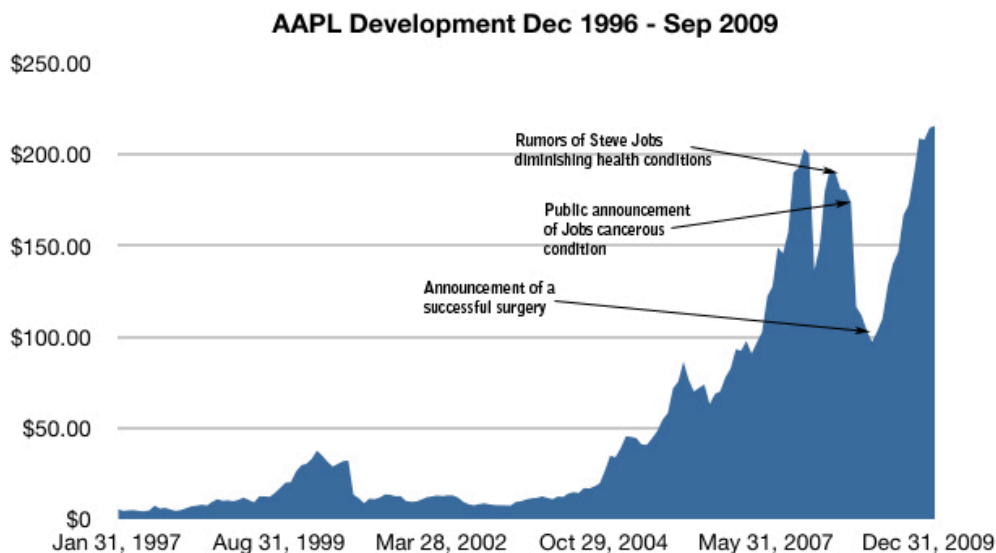
## 1.1 Introductory Paragraph

Back in 1997, in the management magazine *Fast Company*, Tom Peters 'pitched' the term personal branding. The article introduced a discussion about the idea that brands consist of more than just inanimate entities, suggesting individuals are becoming effective means for branding, and not just superstars but people like you and me. Whilst no clear definition of the concept was provided for in the article, it introduced common individuals to the branding battlefield. In *Management Communication Quarterly* Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005) defined the concept by describing it as involving "...concepts of product development and promotion..." "used to market persons for entry into or transition within the labour market". Lair, Sullivan and Cheney's rather narrow definition was broadened by Andrew Hughes (2007) in his article "*Personal Brands: An Exploratory Analysis of Personal Brands in Australian Political Marketing*" by incorporating individuals to the 2007 American Marketing Association definition of branding. Andrew Hughes defined personal branding as "...a person, name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller, or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of competitors". In abjuration of a proper definition or not, Peter Montoya (2002) gave the concept a more scientific theoretical framework in his book "*The Personal Branding Phenomenon*". Among other things like iconic status, Montoya introduced the concept of authenticity to personal branding, a concept Gilmore and Pine (2007) extended in their book "*Authenticity, what consumers really want*". Personal branding, as a trend in management consultation, appear to enjoy an increasing popularity. Personal Branding is today discussed in various books, magazines, web sites, personal coaches, training programs and specialized literature, with the promise of business success through self-branding. The galvanizing nature of the phenomenon invites further examination.

When Tom Peters introduced the concept personal branding it was solely intended for the individual but have in recent times emerged into a successful aspect in a branding strategy, where the relationship between the personal brand and a parent brand co-exist and reinforce one another. A somewhat frequent occurrence in today's business environment. This reinforcing relationship represents the foundation of Andrew Hughes (2007) study, but applied only to the political aspects of personal branding. It neglects the utilization of the concept in corporate branding. In accordance with Keller's (2002) preposition of the theoretical gap between theoretical and practical utilization of branding in general, research concerning personal branding in the corporate world need to be extended.

## 1.2 Iconic Figureheads

Corporate success is frequently associated with good leadership. Correlation between the two is significant to say the least. Virgin has Richard Branson, Ikea has Ingvar Kamprad, The Body Shop had Anita Roddick, Microsoft has Bill Gates and Apple has Steve Jobs. Considering the cultural aspect of contemporary theoretical practices, these companies all have an iconic brand and a myth associated with it. More importantly, the entrepreneurs behind them are all iconic representatives for the brand, heritage and history of the firm. Few would disagree that Virgin, Ikea, The Body Shop or Microsoft would exist in abjuration of their influence, at least not in the shape they exist in today. Apple is no exception. Whenever Jobs was present at the company it was prosperous, during his absence it almost faced liquidation. The intangible iconic status of Steve Jobs is by definition unquestionable, as are the beneficial attributes derived from it. The iconism can virtually be defined as tangible. When Apple announced publicly the troublesome health condition of Steve Jobs, and a following leave of absence of the iconic figurehead in January 14th 2009, the stock started fluctuating heavily. Even before the announcement, rumors of Jobs health had investors significantly concerned as early as August 2008, which is illustrated in Chart 1<sup>1</sup>. While the stock only acts as an indicator, it also confirms Steve Jobs iconic status through reliable data, not just in theory. However, the fact remains that during the period of absence Apple performed just fine in abjuration of Steve Jobs. This indicates that whilst an icon is a promising tool, not only for cultural creation and branding, it also increase the sustainability of consumer conception. The most tangible reason for this is questionably the mythology concerning the iconism, which seemingly endures independently of physical presence. As long as the iconic status and mythology is sustained it prevails and derived from it the rewards of successful branding can be reaped.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.google.com/finance?q=NASDAQ:AAPL>

### 1.3 Problematics

When Douglas Holt introduced the upending concept of cultural branding in which attention to acute contradictions in society through performance of myths posed as the means for iconic brands, he in some regards failed to account for the branded individual (personal brands) and its potential to create the same. Furthermore are any excess beneficial attributes, in terms of authenticity, derived from such a branding strategy unknown.

### 1.4 Scientific Problem

To examine whether it's attainable to create an iconic brand through the presence of an iconic personal brand and what are the requirements as to achieve such an extensive iconic presence which, not only creates an iconic brand, but also reinforce the authenticity of the brand?

### 1.5 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to reward the reader with extended knowledge of how an iconic personal brand successfully manages to endorse iconic brand creation and authenticity, and how such a personal iconic status is attained through an historical and mythological presence. In short, the purpose is to combine successful personal branding with cultural branding and determine whether this is a viable combination and to determine if the combination rewards extended benefits in terms of authenticity.

### 1.6 Target Audience

This paper targets a broad audience, not only the academic community. This paper is interesting for Apple gurus as well as for marketers and corporate leaders, but personally I hope this paper will pose as an example and inspire entrepreneurs to regain faith when all seems hopeless and to persist through complicated times. If there is something most successful entrepreneurs agree upon, it's that the road to success is not a stroll down easy street, but a roller coaster ride and only the truly persistent can prevail.

### 1.7 Limitations

Cultural branding, in Douglas Holt's definition, involves previous accepted forms of branding such as mind-share, emotional and viral branding. This thesis will only focus on the additions to previous theories, which in turn creates cultural branding. Furthermore, when concerning authenticity, this thesis will only attend to the derivatives achieved through iconism within cultural branding.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

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*This section will present the theoretical framework for the analysis, thus providing the reader with an increased comprehension of the field of study. The theories below attend to what the author considers to be relevant for the thesis. More commonly practiced theories applicable on the subject are assumed to be accustomed by the reader.*

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### 2.1 Personal Branding - Iconic Status and Explicit Self-Packaging

When the term personal branding first emerged in Tom Peters article *"The Brand Called You"* in 1997 it was initially intended as a statement that acknowledges every individual as it's own brand, just like the behemoth sized companies around the world. This discussion-inviting statement was based on observations of an increasing trend where corporate managers are becoming prominent figureheads who, through their presence, reinforce the beneficial qualities of a brand. Personal branding by this definition has been an abundant occurrence since the mid-19th century when branding in general emerged as an accepted method of marketing, but it wasn't theoretically acknowledged until 1982 in Dale Carnegie's *"How to Win Friends and Influence People"* according to Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005).

Lair, Sullivan and Cheney did not only declare personal branding affiliated to other self-helping management concepts, they also underlined the radical departure from previous self-helping concepts. Rather than focusing on self-improvements as the means to achievement, personal branding suggest that success is rewarded through explicit self-packaging. In personal branding, as Lair, Sullivan and Cheney elegantly describes it, "...success is not determined by individuals' internal sets of skills, motivations, and interests but, rather, by how effectively they are arranged, crystallized, and labeled—in other words, branded."<sup>2</sup>

According to Montoya (2002) a personal brand is "the public projection of certain aspects of a person's personality, skills or values that stimulate precise, meaningful perceptions in its audience about the values and qualities that person stands for". To successfully utilize personal branding Montoya identified "eight" laws of personal branding; *Specialization, Leadership, Personality, Distinctiveness, Visibility, Unity, Persistence and Goodwill*. If utilized correctly this collection of rules will strengthen the personal brand and thus also reinforce the branding relationship concerning believability and authenticity. Peter Montoya also identified three levels of influence a personal brand can achieve. Every succeeded state is more advanced and retains a higher level of beneficial attributes. The three levels are<sup>3</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> *"Marketization and the Recasting of the Professional Self"*, Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005)

<sup>3</sup> *"The Personal Branding Phenomenon"*, Peter Montoya (2002)

i. **Advocate**

The personal brand is *associated* with a trend or culture.

ii. **Trendsetter**

The personal brand *influences* a trend or culture.

iii. **Icon**

The personal brand is *etched into* the trend or culture.

Whilst the iconic state is the ultimate goal it's very challenging to achieve. Icons within personal branding symbolize entire cultures or movements and influence these in an undisputed fashion. Iconic individuals set the trends and increase their endurance by creating culture characteristics through them, whether by innovation, ingenuity or achievement. In a personal branding strategy, an iconic personal brand is the most valuable intangible asset a firm can have.

## 2.2 Good vs. Evil - Concerning the Mythology Myth

*"Myths are useful fabrications that stitch back together otherwise damaging tears in the cultural fabric of the nation. In their every day lives, people experience these tears as personal anxieties. Myths smooth over these tensions, helping people create purpose in their lives and cement their desired identity in place when it is under stress."*

(Douglas Holt 2004:8)

Contemporary use of rhetoric can be observed in diverse scopes of social life. In branding, rhetorics are utilized for the purpose of modifying consumer attitudes towards a brand. According to Fabián Bautista (n.d.), rhetoric branding requires constant renovation of its arguments in order to succeed at retaining a perceived attitude towards a brand. To achieve this, Bautista emphasizes the profound emotional connection society have with classical metastories like the great adventures of Iliad or the Odyssey and their "...memorable mythical images..." which "...are now updated by the rhetoric of branding, using its basic topics, that transcend time and speak directly to the primary and even holy feelings of human kind"<sup>4</sup>. According to the same, this illustrates how contemporary branding utilize the force which radiates from a myth, a figure with great power of persuasion. The source of this power constitutes of the intrinsic characteristic of the actual myth, which in turn, appeal to fundamental images of humanity, thus rewarding the myth with profound endurance through the fray of time. In addition, mythology endorse structure upon social groups, defining social behavior. Joseph Campbell (1949) affirms the function of mythology as a framework for moral order and an adaptation of the individual to the requirements of the social group<sup>5</sup>. In summary, the characteristics that conform a myth, ultimately constitutes as an argumentative vehicle and of extremely powerful persuasion within the rhetoric of branding."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "The Rhetoric of the Mythological Branding", Fabián Bautista (n.d.), p.1

<sup>5</sup> "Las máscaras de Dios. Mitología", Joseph Campbell (1949), p.26-27

<sup>6</sup> "The Rhetoric of the Mythological Branding", Fabián Bautista (n.d.), p.2

*"The intrinsic power of myth resides in its capacity of action in our behavior, which in many occasions appears without our knowledge"*

(Denis Rougemont 1986:19)

## 2.3 Authenticity - What is it and How Does One Achieve it?

In the seemingly endless changing business environment there is always something new added to the equation that equals success. In today's environment it's not enough to appear in a certain way through various marketing concepts. Claims made through guerilla marketing, emotional marketing, viral marketing and all the other hundreds of adjectives placed before of the term marketing won't have a lasting effect if it isn't true. As consumers become more intelligent, the importance of being what you claim, being authentic, is becoming ever more important. James H. Gilmore, author of the book *"Authenticity: What consumers really want"* and conceptual co-founder, briefly describes authenticity as a new criterion for consumption. He describes the concept as following:

*"In the Agrarian Economy, the dominant purchase criteria was Availability (price being set by supply-and-demand, and only influencing the quantity of materials purchased in the marketplace). In the Industrial Economy, Cost became the dominant driver of purchases as Mass Production made more and more goods affordable to the masses. In the Service Economy, Quality came to dominate, with the performance of offerings became most important as consumers increasingly rely upon others to perform certain activities on their behalf. And now, in the Experience Economy, in an increasingly unreal world of staged places and mediated events, consumers want Authenticity..."be associated with people of substance, whose success is based on real achievement" and entices celebrities with the opportunity to craft their life-stories (as a commercial) and not just monetary compensation. (Indeed, selling out for the big bucks is not "being real".)"<sup>7</sup>*

Reformulated, the concept of Authenticity outlines two dimensions of authenticity. If the dimensions are fulfilled, the likelihood of a customer satisfaction and retention will increase since consumers will get what they expect. Inspired by Shakespeare's Hamlet *"To thine own self be true; And it must follow as the night and day, Thou canst not then be false to any man"*, the two dimensions are:

- i. Being true to your own self.

and

- ii. Being what you say you are.

But, the complexity of authenticity far exceeds Shakespeare's disposition. Considering the widespread claims of being real or authentic e.g. Minute Maid's Lemonade ("Made with *Real* Lemons"), Simply Orange Grove's Made orange juice ("Made with *Real* Bits of Orange"), Bud Light's ("Fresh. Smooth. *Real*.") or Kellogg's Rice Krispies ("With *Real* Strawberries") to name a few, the word authentic might just be the least authentic word around. As folklorist Regina Bendix states, today *"so much has been declared authentic that the scarcity value is*

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/jim-gilmore/authenticity>

*evaporating: once tomato sauce carries the label 'authentic,' the designation loses its special significance.*"<sup>8</sup> James H. Gilmore argues a far more severe situation; *"the very act of proclaiming oneself to be real leads almost inexorably to the perception of being fake"*<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, three axioms are established within authenticity<sup>10</sup>:

- i. If you *are* authentic, then you don't have to say you're authentic.
- ii. If you say you're authentic, then you'd better *be* authentic.
- iii. It's easier to *be* authentic if you don't say you're authentic.

The question remains, how then can one be authentic? There are various ways in achieving authenticity. The literature underlines five genres of perceived authenticity<sup>11</sup>:

i. **Natural authenticity**

*People tend to perceive as authentic that which exists in its natural state in or of the earth, remaining untouched by human hands; not artificial or synthetic.*

ii. **Original authenticity**

*People tend to perceive as authentic that which possesses originality in design, being the first of its kind, never before seen by human eyes; not a copy or imitation.*

iii. **Exceptional authenticity**

*People tend to perceive as authentic that which is done exceptionally well, executed individually and extraordinarily by someone demonstrating human care; not unfeelingly or disingenuously performed.*

iv. **Referential authenticity**

*People tend to perceive as authentic that which refers to some other context, drawing inspiration from human history, and tapping into our shared memories and longings; not derivative or trivial.*

v. **Influential authenticity**

*People tend to perceive as authentic that which exerts influence on other entities, calling human beings to a higher goal and providing a foretaste of a better way; not inconsequential or without meaning.*

Keep in mind that these genres are means for achieving 'perceived' authenticity, not actual authenticity. In reality nothing that is manmade is really authentic, it's artificial and therefore fake. But, the experience derived from the product or service is exclusively unique and authentic. It's a question of rendering an inauthentic offering as

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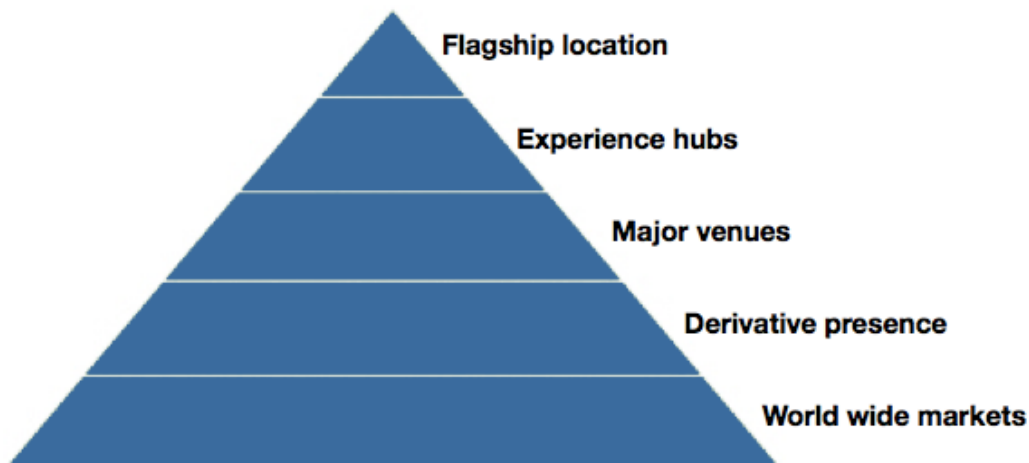
<sup>8</sup> "Authenticity, what consumers really want", James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II (2007) p.43

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.44

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.49-50

authentic and being phenomenologically perceived as real and authentic. In addition to the genres, there are other ways of creating an increased perception of authenticity. One of the most prominent being the concept of Placemaking. Placemaking underlines the importance of reflecting ones identity in every aspect of the organization *id est* both internally and externally, e.g. products, company cars, processes, exhibits or *major venues, experience hubs, derivative presence*, meeting rooms, people, *world wide markets, flagship locations*, even parking lots.<sup>12</sup> To further demonstrate the concept, Gilmore's simplified placemaking portfolio<sup>13</sup> will be illustrated and explained below. It consists of five levels:



i. **Flagship Location**

Represents a location that proclaims who you are. A location which represents the history and heritage of the firm. Flagship locations should create an experience and engage customers in such a way that it's showing that you *are* in fact who you *say* you are.

ii. **Experience Hubs**

Represents various densely populated locations such as cities or regions. Depending on the offering, placemaking in some locations, or experience hubs, are more suited than in others i.e. if you are selling cars Detroit is a suitable hub.

iii. **Major Venues**

Major venues should be situated wherever a large enough population creates sufficient demand and mirror the identity of the firm.

iv. **Derivative presence**

Involves having a presence inside of another venue or event, a place within the place, deriving value both from the surrounding environment as well as distilling the essence of flagship location,

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<sup>12</sup> "Authenticity, what consumers really want", James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II (2007) p.147-177

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p.156

experience hub, or major venue in a more accessible way.

#### v. **World Wide Markets**

This level comprises of every feasible place where customers might encounter a company's offerings.

To entice the largest number of customers available it's important to assemble a rich portfolio of harmonized places flowing one from another that yield cross-demand throughout the portfolio whilst also preserving or reinforcing the perceived authenticity of the firm, illustrating you are who you say you are. Utilizing every level in the portfolio isn't imperative as long as the mix constitutes a suitable mix for the company in question.

### 2.4 Cultural and Iconic Branding - Branding in Mythical Proportions

Conventional methods of marketing aspire to influence consumer perceptions about the brand, e.g associations tied to quality, personality, beneficial attributes and aspirational user imagery. Marketing communications should utilize whatever creative content that is available to persuade the public. But, in alignment of cultural branding theory, persuasion will not have a lasting effect. Customers presumably discard these rhetorical attempts to sway their conception once they understand that the communication was designed for the sole purpose of making them believe. In cultural branding, myths and experience play a more central role than in those of more established forms of marketing. Consumers purchase the product to experience the myth it involves. The product itself is simply a conduit for storytelling. An effective cultural strategy supplies a storied product, a product that holds distinctive branded features through which customers experience identity myths.<sup>14</sup>

Douglas Holt, author of "*How brands become icons*", categorize the conventional methods of marketing into three branding models: *Mind-share branding*, *emotional branding* and the more recent *viral branding*. Together, according to Holt, these three models account for virtually every consumer branding undertaking done by ad agencies, brand owners and brand consultancies initiated today. Whilst these models may work for other types of branding, they do not create iconic brands. In order to make an iconic brand, it's imperative to utilize all four branding models, not just one or two. The key characteristic differences of the three conventional models compared to the cultural branding model will be illustrated below, in Table 1<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> "*How brands become icons*", Douglas Holt (2004) p.24

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* p.14

## Comparison of Axioms Across Four Branding Models

	Cultural Branding	Mind-Share Branding	Emotional Branding	Viral Branding
Key Words	Cultural icons, iconic brands	DNA, brand essence, genetic code, USP benefits, onion model	Brand personality, experiential branding, brand religion, experience economy	Stealth marketing, coolhunt, meme, grass roots, infections, seeding, contagion, buzz
Brand Definition	Performer of, and container for, an identity myth	A set of abstract associations	A relationship partner	A communication unit
Branding Definition	Performing myths	Owning associations	Interacting with and building relationships with customers	Spreading viruses via lead customers
Required for a Successful Brand	Performing a myth that addresses an acute contradiction in society	Consistent expression of associations	Deep interpersonal connection	Broad circulation of the virus
Most Appropriate Applications	Identity categories	Functional categories, low-involvement categories, complicated products	Services, retailers, specialty goods	New fashion, new technology
Company's Role	Author	Steward: consistent expression of DNA in all activities over time	Good friend	Hidden puppet master: motivate the right consumers to advocate for the brand
Source of Customer Value	Buttressing identity	Simplifying decisions	Relationship with the brand	Being cool, fashionable
Consumers' Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personalizing the brand's myth to fit individual biography</li> <li>Ritual action to experience the myth when using product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that benefits become salient through repetition</li> <li>Perceiving benefits when buying and using product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interaction with brand</li> <li>Building a personal relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Discovering" brand as their own, DIY</li> <li>Word of mouth</li> </ul>

Table 1.

When studying Table 1 it becomes evidently clear that cultural branding involves extensive mythic and iconic creation in difference to *mind-share branding*, *emotional branding* and *viral branding*. The conventional models propose that a brand consists of various abstract associations, and consequently managers obsess over which concepts the brand should own. With cultural branding in contrast, the brand value resides in the details of

cultural expressions associated with the brand. In other words, the particular cultural contents of the brand's myth and the particular expression of these contents in the communication.<sup>16</sup>

Deductively, since history represents a vital role in culture creation, it also has its role in cultural branding. Historic events continuously, in a philosophical perspective, reshape our priorities in a newtonian fashion. I am, of course, referring to causality paradigm, which also have its own meaning in marketing, particularly cultural marketing. Mind-share, for example, assumes brands reside outside of history, staying above the fray of changes in culture and society, thus requiring consistency. Cultural and iconic brands applies the opposite philosophy. The brand represents a historical entity, whose desirability resides from myths that address the most vital social tensions in society. In other words, cultural branding is not consistent due to causality. The success of cultural branding depends on how well the myth associated with it adjusts to historical exigencies.<sup>17</sup>

Numerous articles have utilized Holt's iconic branding concept on various brands which are considered to be iconic. Sharon Schembri, in the *Journal of Business Research*, studies Harley-Davidson, which in many aspects is considered an iconic brand. Sharon underlines, not only the uniquely designed rumbling roar of the engine, but the importance of the socially constructed patterns implied by owning a Harley-Davidson. Patterns to which she rewards the historical presence of the company. Beyond functional aspects, Harley-Davidson has over 100 years of rebellious history which challenges conventional marketing.<sup>18</sup> Just as Holt (2004) highlights, the material markers of a brand is imbued with purpose and meaning after time, and in effect users consume the history of the product as well as the product itself. Further more, Schembri acknowledges that consumers engage with the image of Harley-Davidson, just as much as they do with the bike, the brand or the brand community members (HOGs). Thus, the consumption itself strengthens and construct the brand experience. With intent to focus on historical exigencies, Schembri observed the near bankruptcy Harley-Davidson endured during the early 1980's, which was reversed through the foundation of the HOG - a means of simply riding and having fun. The HOGs, or Harley Owners Group, proved to be what consumers really wanted. Initially, membership was given to only a few devoted fans in order to return to the essence of the brand, but as time ran it's course, facilitated a global mainstream movement and created the iconic brand it is today. In other words, the implication is to facilitate brand experience through experiential consumption. Consumers are constructing it's own interpretation of what a brand means, and should pose as the central focus in marketing according to Sharon Schembri.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "How brands become icons", Douglas Holt (2004) p.36

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p.38

<sup>18</sup> "Reframing brand experience: The experiential meaning of Harley-Davidson", Sharon Schembri, *Journal of business Research* 62 (2009), p. 1309

<sup>19</sup> Ibid



### 3. Methodology

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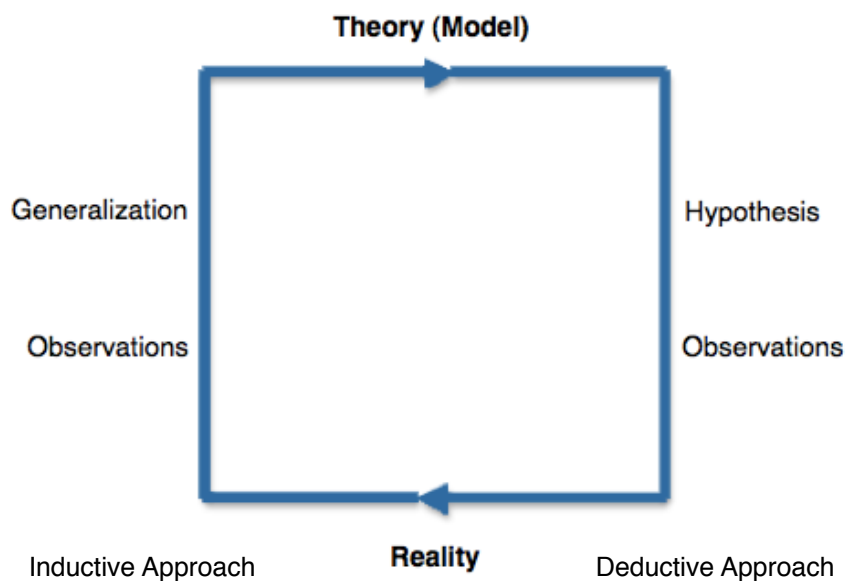
*This chapter will present the practical method used for the thesis. It will extend information about the validity and relevancy of the of the analysis, but also define story and myth. Attention to criticism of sources and information gathering is also comprised.*

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#### 3.1 Practical Method

In science, in order to reach conclusions, there exist various practical methods to choose from. Depending on the nature of the thesis, some methods are exceedingly more suitable than others. A deductive approach implies that the scientific conductor shapes hypotheses deducted from an existing theoretical framework. Induction, on the contrary, assumes theoretic and model creation derived from observations of reality. The following model illustrates the connection.

#### Inductive and Deductive Projection



In addition to induction and deduction there exist a third choice of method. The third, abduction, constitute a combination of the previous two. An abductive approach is a qualitative measurement emanating from empirical conditions but also allows for utilization of an existing theoretical framework. This qualitative method is appropriate when attempting to find understanding for a certain phenomenon, interpreting, in this case a myth, or story's, ability to create iconic brands through iconic personal brands and their effects on authenticity.

This paper utilizes a more narrative approach whilst applying the *abductive* and *qualitative method* through a theoretical framework consisting of personal branding, Gilmore's authenticity concept and the rather 'unconventional' cultural and iconic branding concept, presented to us by Douglas Holt. Due to the nature of the branded relationship attended to in this thesis it's equally imperative to study both entities separately as well as in unison in order to achieve a deeper understating of the relationship and what renders it viable. The same is true for the theoretical framework. In order to define the potential of this branded relationship it's imperative to examine how and if the different branding and marketing concepts reinforce one another. This involves not just the personal branding concept but also the authenticity involving this branding strategy. To further understand the application of the relationship, the theoretical framework also include cultural and iconic branding.

### 3.2 Defining Stories and Mythology

A story have numerous characteristics. It's commonly accepted throughout the academic community that stories provides structure, context and purpose to experiences.<sup>20</sup> The process of defining a story for it's specific characteristics are, however, more complex. Something that can be observed in the absence of a commonly accepted definition. Viveca Adelswård (1996) provides a simple definition where a story emerges when one, in words, recites previous occurrences or course of events, thus acknowledges that stories reside in past tense. A story attempts to recount events in history and is generally comprised of pithy narratives with plots, characters and conflicts. The requirements of accuracy and veracity are normally relaxed in the interest of making a symbolic point.<sup>21</sup> Yiannis Gabriel in *Storytelling in Organizations* defines a story as:

*"...narratives with plots and characters, generating emotion in narrator and audience, through a poetic elaboration of symbolic material. This material may be a product of fantasy or experience, including an experience of earlier narratives. Story plots entail conflicts, predicaments, trials and crises which call for choices, decisions, actions and interactions, whose actual outcomes are often at odds with the characters' intentions and purposes."*

(Yiannis Gabriel 2000:239)

In other words, stories are interpreted as symbolically and emotionally characterized narratives. They do not extend valid facts about 'events' but rather enrich and imbue facts with purpose and meaning. Commonly, stories trade accuracy in the interest of purpose of generating an emotion. Ultimately, the 'truth' of a story does not reside within it's historical accuracy, but rather within it's meaning. In that definition, stories are closely related to myths, but a myth often concerns a further remote past and not seldom involves 'supernatural' characteristics. A myth can, however, be defined in various ways. Wether it's folklore, an ancient tale or collective beliefs, a myth involves extensive storytelling and some aspect of uncertainty. Exactly what a myth implies is, in some regards, ambiguous, it's can nearly be considered a myth in itself. Whether concerning the prevailling good against evil (see Fabián Bautista), David and the Goliath, the transition from underdog to top-dog, or a hero rescuing a damsel in distress from certain death, or a combination of these a myth is nevertheless intriguing and engaging. Due to the mythic nature of a myth, interpretations comprise a vital

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<sup>20</sup> "*Narrativ teori och metod*", Anna Johansson (2005) p. 17

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid* p. 26

element when considering a myth. Myths are normally interpreted differently depending on cultural belonging and of that reason defining a myth is rendered complicated.

### 3.3 Analyzing Narratives

Narrative analysis can be considered as an interpreting decipherment, where the scientist in his or her own way interpret the narrative data. Thus, the scientist should foremost be considered as an interpreter.<sup>22</sup> When conducting an analysis of narratives one cant assume the data as objective nor reliable, but rather the opposite. The analysis must critically interpret the narrative with models, theories and perspectives which are relevant to the purpose of the study.<sup>23</sup> Due to the characteristic of the empirical narrative studied in this thesis, which in my definition stretches more towards a myth rather than a story, the analytical model for the narrative is comprised of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, more commonly known as 'The Hero Cycle'. Utilization of the monomyth provides understanding for the iconic creation, a product whose consequences can be analyzed in accordance to the theoretical framework through abductive methods by applying the concept of authenticity, personal- and cultural branding on the narrative.

### 3.4 Information Gathering

Much of the information have been mostly gathered through electronic sources, but also via scientific articles, published material and other references. Due to the narrative approach on the subject, a segment of the information relies upon commonly accepted interpretations of historical occurrences relevant to the analysis. Interpretations which are best illustrated and referred to through a movie named "*Pirates of Silicon Valley*"<sup>24</sup>, supplemented by electronic sources and documents like "*15 Things You Didn't Know About Steve Jobs*"<sup>25</sup> along with my own interpretations of his past proceedings such as statements, e-mails, product announcements and alike, which are all available on the Internet. Whilst the accuracy and realism in some cases may be questionable, they still pose significant subjects of study. Whether true or not, they are experienced and distributed through, what can be defined as, contemporary cultural and mythological marketing communication. The process of information gathering have been an ongoing process for many years, with the rewards of a deeper understanding for the mythological and cultural evocations dispersed by Steve Jobs. This extensive research renders me able to utilize the theoretical framework in a somewhat creative and unconventional fashion. Over the years I've assembled a somewhat rare collection of experiences with Apple, thus also indirectly Steve Jobs, a circumstance only achieved through a long and prosperous relationship (received my

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<sup>22</sup> "*Narrativ teori och metod*", Anna Johansson (2005) p. 31

<sup>23</sup> Ibid p. 280

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0168122/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.onlineschools.org/blog/steve-jobs/>

first Macintosh in 1994). The fact remains however, much of the information does not consist of tangible data, but rather of common perceptions and interpretations, which are intangible and volatile, and thus also unreliable.

### 3.5 Validity and Reliability

Narrative analysis is a question concerning interpretations. How can one evaluate an interpretation? Is it possible to distinguish a good narrative analysis from a lesser good one? According to Anna Johansson (2005) stories, analyzed in this thesis, are socially constructed, which implies that the stories should not be considered as precise statements of past events. In other words, whether the story is historically accurate or not bears little importance.<sup>26</sup> Instead one assumes that the same historical events can be represented in various ways, where each and every narrator, or story-teller, is constructing narrative truths which all are interpreted differently whether one is a woman, man, black, white, middle- or upper-class etc. Consequently, there are no 'true' or 'objective' analysis. The 'truth', which is constructed, is contextually bound.

Whenever a thesis is written, there is a timeframe. A limitation from which all authors are subordinates to. Under the assumption of an infinite amount of time, the research and theoretical framework could be considerably broadened. Furthermore, due to the characteristic of secrecy associated with the company, a significant portion of the information required is either inadequate, unavailable or even nonexistent, and will therefore occasionally be forced to rely on rational assumptions and common interpretations.

### 3.6 Relevance

In today's fiercely competitive business environment, successful marketing has become ever more important. It's a tougher challenge to separate oneself from the other participants. Porter's industry rivalry reminds all participants of the threat of entry and possibly a forced exit. One needs to constantly adapt to the market, maximizing, optimizing, segmenting etc. to survive. Under the assumption that iconic brands hold the key to success and conventional methods of branding doesn't suffice but cultural branding does, this thesis is most relevant. Cultural branding is a fairly recent concept and upends conventional models. If this paper in any way influences, motivates, aids or increases awareness about personal- and cultural branding, mythical creation, authenticity or icons, it has purpose and therefore also holds relevance.

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<sup>26</sup> "*Narrativ teori och metod*", Anna Johansson (2005) p. 313

## 4. Concerning Apple

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*This chapter's will extend background information about Apple and Steve Jobs with intent of rewarding the reader with a deeper understanding for the analysis and it's application on the subject. It also allows for comparison between history and narrative.*

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### 4.1 The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree

Whenever a discussion about Apple emerges, for whatever reason, in some way or another it's almost exclusively connected to Apple's co-founder and acting CEO Steve Jobs. One of the more recent examples of this is the 27th January release of the Apple iPad when *The Economist* ironically named the product "The Book of Jobs" due to the almost religious nature Apple represent and Steve Jobs govern. Steve Jobs's influence over internal and external processes and his achievements at Apple have over the years rewarded him with an almost deistic or iconic status, which as interpreted as a personal brand infers an increased level of reliability and influence various perceptions of the Apple brand. A connection not arduously translated into a branding strategy between the Apple brand and the personal brand of Steven Paul Jobs. This rather unconventional branded relationship represent the reason for the affiliation between the two entities and is easily observed when Apple releases a product. Everything Apple does is reflected upon Steve Jobs. He's held responsible for their failures, but also worshipped for their successes. Most of the time, it's almost impossible to separate one from the other, a circumstance well illustrated by the example "The Book of Jobs". Steve Jobs does not only represent Apple, he *is* Apple and Apple *is* Steve Jobs. Instead of being two separate entities they are, and rightly so, considered as one successfully branded entity and consequently interpreted in this fashion. This interpretation constitutes as a vital assumption throughout this thesis.

The fundamentally interesting aspects concerning the relationship isn't as much as to "why" this circumstance, but rather the descending effects rewarded from it. The important questions to address are the potential of a successful branded relationship and how its created successfully. Is this branding strategy a viable mean for successful authentic, cultural and iconic branding? Furthermore, what importance have this strategy constituted for Apple's success in recent years and was it deliberate or emergent. Questions that, in this thesis, are attended to through studies of the authentic iconic state of Jobs's personal brand branded with the cultural and iconic brand which Apple today represent. Having problems separating the two? Well, you are not alone. Now, lets see how far from the tree the apple really falls...

### 4.2 Background

Apple Inc. ("Apple") has, throughout its lifetime, been a company characterized with a high level of volatility. Much like the dotcom era of information technology companies in the late 90's and early 00's, Apple have experienced its shares of ups and downs. Unlike its greatest competitor Microsoft, Apple Inc. suffered many

years of unprofitability and only a few, today referred to as 'Apple Evangelists', believed the company would ever get back up on its feet. Today we know their optimism was justified. Ever since Steve Jobs return to Apple in 1996 he has delivered an annually averaged shareholder return of 30 percent (calculated from 1997) and bolted an astonishing \$150 billion into Apple's market cap value.<sup>27</sup> Steve Jobs was recently rewarded CEO of the decade by Harvard Business Review for his efforts at Apple.

In an ever more competitive market Apple have managed to surpass all expectations, and in some cases redesigned the market itself (iPod, iPhone). How is it one single company manages to outcompete numerous established mp3-player developers? How can that same company, inexperienced as a mobile phone developer, jumpstart the mobile phone market years forward with its first device, and in by so doing revitalizing the entire market? Haven't economic theories taught us that in an ever more competitive environment, in order to achieve competitive advantages, a company should focus on its core knowledge in order to optimize processes? Yes, but at the meantime it also acknowledges the fact that everything can be sold successfully if branded correctly. Apples core knowledge constitutes of personal computing: the Macintosh. A segment where Apple have been the least successful. Although, in recent years it have enjoyed increasing market shares due to an increasingly growing brand. In fact, Steve Jobs removed "Computing" from the Apple Inc. brand after introducing the Apple iPhone. What is it Apple manages to do in order to succeed where others fail? What is so unique with that little 'fruit' company, founded in a garage somewhere in Los Altos, California, called Apple?

When one studies a company like Apple Inc. it becomes evidently clear that Steve Jobs as a figurehead has a significant role in Apples success. But, how significant? During his presence at the company, its financial results have annually increased considerably. The company have also had an organic expansion rarely observed in todays fierce competition. Apple is today an active contender in personal computing, digital music and movie distribution, mobile phones, portable music devices, software development, music creation, video editing, website hosting, cloud computing and much, much more. This by itself isn't unique, but the fact that Apple is the most, or nearly so, successful participant in many of these segments is unparalleled in todays business environment. This is the most prominent reason why Apple, Steve Jobs and particularly their branded relationship provides such interesting subjects to study.

### 4.3 Why Apple, Why Jobs?

Steve Jobs co-founded Apple in 1976. Apple was immensely prosperous during the following decade and rewarded Jobs a place in the entrepreneurial literature. Shortly after he was ousted from the company in 1985 Apple faced diminishing returns so severe that the company's very existence was in jeopardy. When Steve Jobs returned, via the acquisition of neXT, and was appointed interim CEO the stock started climbing along with cash and marketable securities. After securing the position as CEO in 2000, things really started to look up. Apple optimized their computer line and released numerous innovative and successful products. Sales grew and the

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<sup>27</sup> Harvard Business Review <http://hbr.org/web/extras/100ceos/1-jobs>

company was well on its way to its former glory. Over the years the stock started climbing and Apple products like the iPod and iMac was on everyones lips. Since 2000 the stock have increased with a staggering 700% (approx) from \$ 29.97 (1 Jan 2000) to \$ 210.73 (31 Dec 2009)<sup>28</sup>. Evidently, Apples successes is very much correlated to the presence of Jobs and this clear connection renders Apple and Steve Jobs viable subjects to study. What is it that makes Steve Jobs so unique? Most studies rewards his ingenuity, entrepreneurialism and leadership skills as his most prominent assets, but my research indicates differently. Whilst previous studies are accurate, the majority fail to account for Steve Jobs as an iconic figurehead, a personal brand, deeply entangled in the Apple culture of which he represents the deity. Steve Jobs, in many regards, *is* Apple and this unique circumstance represents the foundation for this paper.

#### 4.4 Not Just Another Success Story

The success story of Apple has one profound difference compared to others, which renders the history of the firm relevant to the analysis. What separates Apple from the rest is the branding relationship between the parent and the personal brand. As the history of Apple infers, this reinforcing connection has unquestionably been the load-bearing structural foundation on which the company's survival has relied upon. The history of the firm confirms that statement, but it's not the historical achievements, the "how to's", of Steve Jobs that present the important subjects for the personal branding concept but rather his iconic status achieved through them. To achieve a deeper understanding for this causality a brief historical statement is required. It's Steve Jobs and Apples adaptability to historical exigencies that have rewarded them respective strong brands, which in turn, strengthen both the cultural and mythic creation as well as reinforcing the authenticity of the parent and personal brand. Considering cultural branding, this rather rare circumstance, where one individual so forcefully endorses authenticity and cultural aspects for branding, is to date, scarcely studied.

#### 4.5 The Brief History of Apple - Pre Apple Renaissance Era

On April fool's day 1976 Steve Jobs, Steven Wozniak and Ronald Wayne<sup>29</sup> co-founded Apple Computers in a garage belonging to Jobs parents. The initial business concept was to sell a machine named Apple 1, an early version of what we today consider to be a personal computer. The Apple I was manufactured and sold approximately 200 times. In 1977 Apple released, with venture capital funding from Mike Makkula<sup>30</sup>, the very successful Apple II. The model sold estimated one million units well into the 80's. Increasing demand for Apple products necessitated corporate expansion. On December 12, 1980, in order to gather funds Apple decided to

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.google.com/finance/historical?cid=22144&startdate=Jan+1%2C+2000&enddate=Dec+31%2C+2009>

<sup>29</sup> Often referred to as the "third founder" of Apple Computers. His involvement ended early on due to risk aversion. He sold his stake in the company for \$800.

<sup>30</sup> Mike Makkula was rewarded one third of the company for his \$250.000 dollar investment. He appointed the first CEO of Apple who was Michael Scott in 1977. Makkula later replaced Michael Scott in 1981 and became the second CEO of Apple. Co-founder and Apple entrepreneur Steven Wozniak credits Makkula a major reason for Apple's success.

go public. Speculation of increasing sales due the recent success of the Apple II and III rendered the initial public offering, to say the least, very popular. The IPO opened at \$22 and closed at \$29, creating more millionaires than any IPO before it.

As early as 1978 Apple started working on a project which would change personal computing forever. In 1983 the project in question lead to the first graphical user interface (GUI) computer: LISA. Many argue the computer was named after Steve Jobs firstborn Lisa Jobs but Apple officially stated it was an acronym for "Local Integrated Software Architecture". With it came new revolutionary gadgets like the *mouse* and introduced new conceptual words like *desktop*, *icon*, *click* etc to the computing vocabulary. LISA was the first of its kind and and is considered to be the ancestor to the computers that we know, love and use today.

John Scully<sup>31</sup>, a former CEO of PepsiCo, replaced acting Apple CEO Mike Makkula on April 8, 1983. The marketing skills possessed by Scully was quickly realized. In January 24, 1984, during the third quarter of Super Bowl XVIII, the now famous Apple 1984 commercial was aired and represented the introduction of the Macintosh, the Apple personal computer succeeding LISA. The Super Bowl commercial, which today is considered to be a masterpiece, revealed Apple and the Macintosh to the consumer market, immensely increasing public knowledge and awareness. Apple initially enjoyed increasing sales as an effect of heavy marketing<sup>32</sup>, but the Macintosh was hastily considered to be more of a toy than a computer. The platform suffered many problems where the most prominent being the application shortages. Software developers faced challenging undertakings when their applications had to be redesigned to fit the GUI and consequently most of the undertakings was evaded, resulting in the above mentioned shortages. Despite these complications the Macintosh brand was a successful endeavor for Apple. Although it largely failed to reach the broader public due to fierce competition with Amiga and Atari, the Macintosh became, de-facto, a standard for various industries e.g. cinema, music, publishing and art. During Scully's tenure Steve Jobs was forced to leave Apple in 1985, due to "internal power struggles".<sup>33</sup>

In the early 1990's the IBM PC became the most popular personal computer platform on the market. It outcompeted the Macintosh, Amiga and Atari, much as a consequence to a comparable GUI, today famously named Windows. The soon-to-be standardized Windows 3.0 compatible IBM personal computer (PC) created diminishing market shares for all other competitors on the market, largely rendering them incapable to create back-to-back viable financial results, at least for any period resembling near-future. Apple's board of directors ultimately forced Scully out in 1993, due to his inability to effectively manage Apple's product line. He was replaced by Michael Spindler.

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<sup>31</sup> John Scully served as vice-president (1970-1977) and president of PepsiCo (1977-1983), before he joined Apple. He was appointed CEO on recommendation from Steve Jobs. Jobs reputedly asked Scully: "*Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want to change the world?*". Scully is best know for his marketing successes at PepsiCo. mainly the "Pepsi Challenge" campaign. During his ten year tenure at Apple (1983-1993) sales was increased from \$800 million to \$8 billion.

<sup>32</sup> In November 1984 Apple Computers further marketed the Macintosh, spending over \$2.5 million to buy all 39 advertising pages in Newsweek's special post-Ronald-Reagan-election edition in November 1984.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/01/22/technology/20090122\\_JOBS.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/01/22/technology/20090122_JOBS.html)



After the now-called “Rise and Fall of Apple” period between 1986-1993, Apple Inc. faced severe financial shortages. Numerous attempts very made to increase sales through various products like the handheld Newton, the Macintosh LC and the Powerbook. Whilst some of these products was fairly successful, Apples failed experimentation with video consoles, TV- appliances, handhelds and alike rendered the company incapable of conceiving a positive financial result. During the period Apple Inc. faced continuous losses in market shares to it’s main competitor Microsoft, and only a few optimists expected the company to ever get back on its feet. After 1993 Apple Inc. continued to suffer from experimental failures in an attempt to increase sales by cooperating with Motorola and IBM. The alliance greatest achievement was the PowerPC platform, but it wasn’t until 1996 the cogs of success started spinning. That same year Michael Spindler was replaced as CEO, in the favor of Gil Amelio. Amelio emphasized the importance of the interaction between the operating system and the hardware, a accentuation which shortly after resulted in various projects to enhance the Macintosh operating system (Mac OS), such as Taligent, Copland and Gershwin. When all of the projects failed to create a suitable operating system for the Macintosh platform, Gil Amelio decided that a corporate acquisition was necessary. The target for the acquisition was a company named NeXT, which previously developed computer workstations intended for higher education and business markets but was more successful as a software developer. The company had developed a UNIX-based operating system named NeXTSTEP, which suited Apples hardware. NeXT so happened to be founded by the same Steve Jobs who co-founded Apple Inc. April 1, 1976. The acquisition was finalized in 1996, thus bringing Steve Jobs back to the company he created almost 20 years prior to his return, but at the time only as an advisor. It wouldn't take long until he assumed the role of interim CEO, a position he was rewarded after Gil Amelio was ousted by the board of directors due to crippling financial losses and a three-year record-low stock value. Jobs reorganization and revitalizing of the company, mostly through the iMac and Mac OSX, rewarded him a position as permanent CEO, which was officially announced on the January 2000 MacWorld Expo.<sup>34</sup>

#### 4.6 Return to Profitability - Renaissance Era and Beyond

As early as 1997, after the acquisition of NeXT, Apple opened the online Apple Store with a build-to-order manufacturing strategy. The same year, at the Macworld Expo Jobs announced that Apple would enter a partnership with Microsoft. Microsoft committed to release Microsoft Office and Internet Explorer for the Macintosh as well as investing \$150 million in Apple. Since Microsoft was Apples main competitor at the time, this cooperation didn’t suit well with some Apple evangelists who in some ways felt betrayed, but it did, however, open the Macintosh to a broader market. In order to motivate the partnership, jobs said the following to the expo audience:

*“If we want to move forward and see Apple healthy and prospering again, we have to let go of a few things here. We have to let go of this notion that for Apple to win, Microsoft has to lose. We have to embrace a notion that for Apple to win, Apple has to do a really good job. And if others are going to help us that's great, because we need all the help we can get, and if we screw up and we don't do a*

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/01/22/technology/20090122\\_JOBS.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/01/22/technology/20090122_JOBS.html)

*good job, it's not somebody else's fault, it's our fault. So I think that is a very important perspective. If we want Microsoft Office on the Mac, we better treat the company that puts it out with a little bit of gratitude; we like their software...So, the era of setting this up as a competition between Apple and Microsoft is over as far as I'm concerned. This is about getting Apple healthy, this is about Apple being able to make incredibly great contributions to the industry and to get healthy and prosper again.”<sup>35</sup>*

As early as the '98 Expo, Apple released the all-in-one computer iMac and in by so doing introduced the “i” concept. For the first time in a long time Apple had a worthy competitor to the windows based PC. It sold close to 800.000 units during the first five months and returned Apple to profitability for the first time since 1993.<sup>36</sup> The iMac also re-introduced Apple and Macintosh brand to the public as well as the media. It also introduced the design concept to the personal computer.

Apple continued to release various computer models, but it wasn't until 2001 Jobs and Apple managed to really make a name for themselves. First came the new operating system Mac OSX, then in March Apple opened its first retail store, and thirdly, and arguably the most important, the release of the iPod mp3-player. With its slick design, comparability with the recently released iTunes, and five gigabyte hard drive, capable of storing a thousand songs, it totally crushed all opposition. The device received overwhelming media coverage, and sold, in various models, just over 100 million units between November 2001 and April 2007<sup>37</sup>. On January 27th 2010 Jobs announced Apple had sold it's 250 millionth iPod, rendering it the fastest selling music player in history. In June 2005, at the Worldwide Developers Conference keynote, Steve Jobs announced that Apple would enter a partnership with the “PC” CPU manufacturer Intel. In conclusion, the partnership meant that all future Mac's would be intel-based, just like the PC.

Since the introduction of the iPod, Mac OSX and various new and more compatible computers, Apple started to enjoy growing revenues and increasing cash reserves. At the end of 2005 Apple had \$8.7 billion in cash and short term investments, nearly 15 percent of their market capitalization which represents an increase of 91 percent from \$4.6 billion in 2003.<sup>38</sup> In the first quarter of the 2008 fiscal year, Apple added \$3.1 billion in cash or equivalents to its balance sheet and by the end of 2007 Apple had about 60 percent of its total assets of approximately \$30 billion in cash, which roughly represents \$18.4 billion.<sup>39</sup> Contemporarily, or more exactly September 2009 Apple hold approximately \$34 billion. Much of Apple's post 2007 successes is directly or indirectly related to the iPhone introduction of January 2007, as illustrated below in chart 1<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.leadershiptrainingskills.com/can-michael-dell-become-the-next-steve-jobs/>

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.apple.com/ca/press/1999/01/iMac\\_Sales.html](http://www.apple.com/ca/press/1999/01/iMac_Sales.html)

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2007/04/09ipod.html>

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/apr2006/tc20060405\\_452855.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/apr2006/tc20060405_452855.htm)

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.financialweek.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080225/REG/259088503/1022/opinion>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.businessinsider.com/chart-of-the-day-apples-cash-2009-11>

## Apple's Total Cash & Marketing Securities

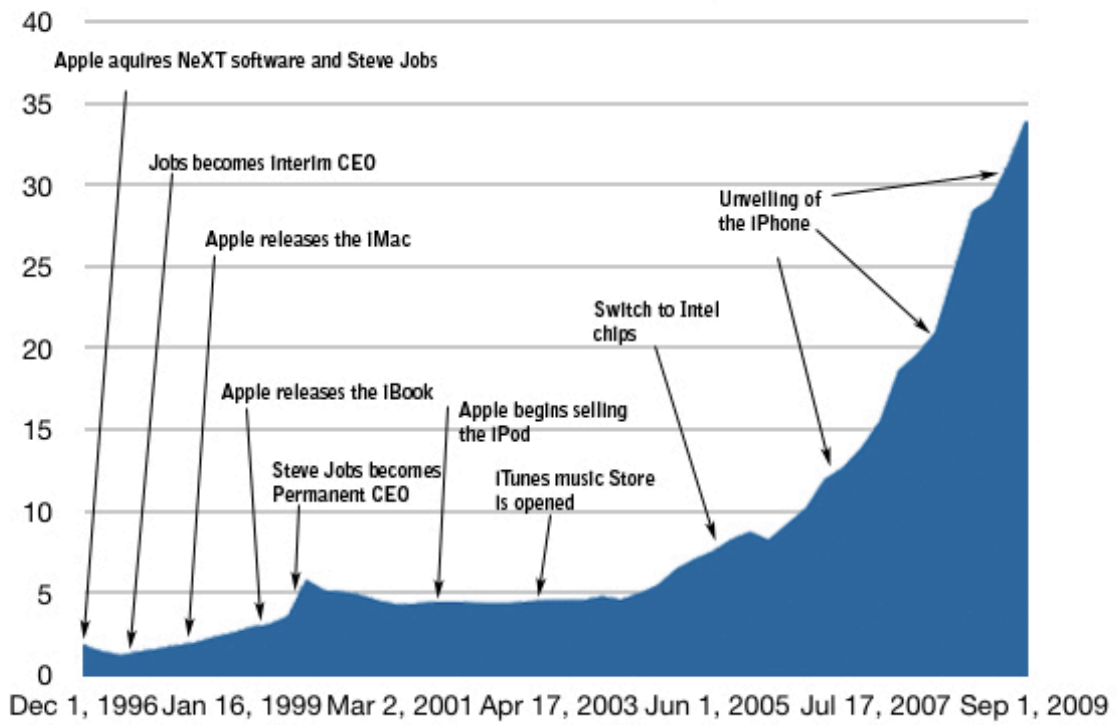


Chart 1.

## 5. Analysis

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*This chapter's purpose is to present the analysis of the research, applying relevant segments of the theoretical framework on Steve Jobs and his mythological story. The section strives to deliver a deeper understanding for Apple and Steve Jobs as one authentic, cultural and iconic entity.*

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### 5.1 A Heroic Branding Strategy

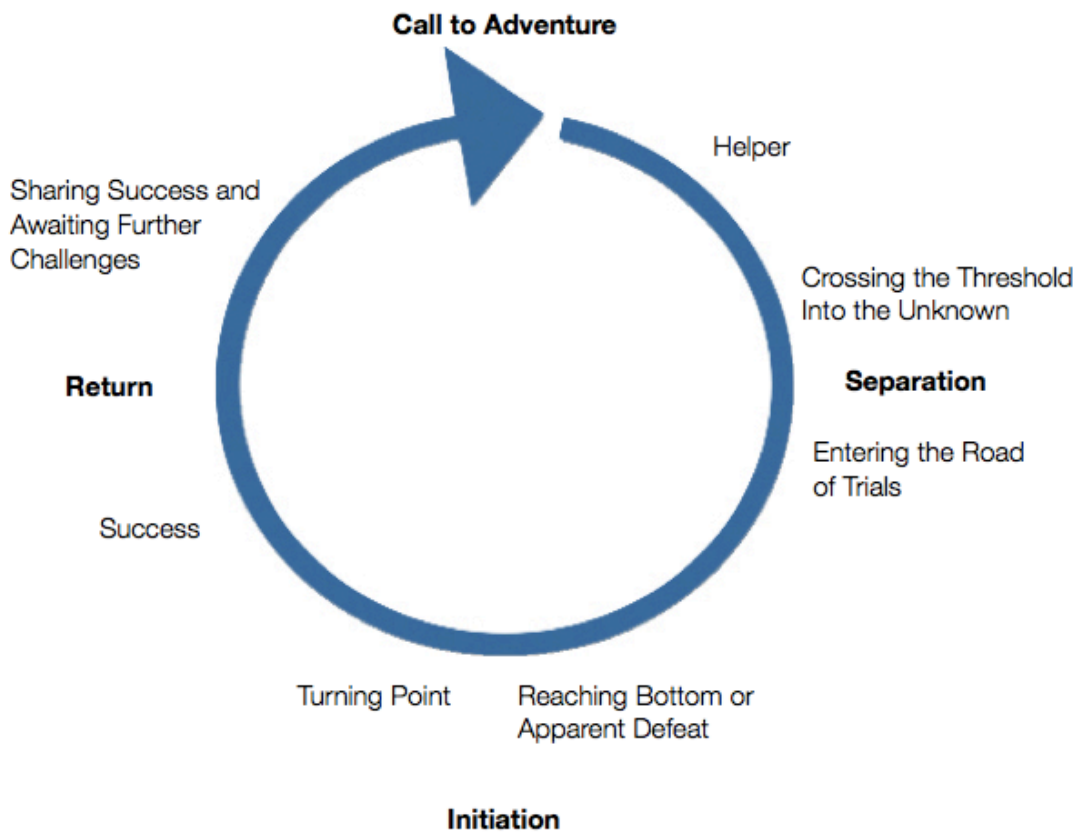
There isn't much debate concerning the level of success the Apple's branding strategy have enjoyed since the re-arrival, or rather heroic return, of Steve Jobs. Obviously, acknowledging this isn't the reason for this thesis, but rather why it's successful and how it's done successfully. As the theoretical framework implies, in order to be successful, a branding strategy where a parent and personal brand coexist, the personal brand imperatively need to reinforce the parent brand on various levels of both authenticity and iconic and cultural branding. Steve Jobs as a personal brand postulate a perception of authenticity to strengthen the Apple brand, and in by so doing reinforcing the iconic status of both himself and thus also the parent brand. Is this the prevailing circumstance or not, and if so, how is this circumstance achieved and because of what. Which are the significant beneficial attributes derived from it? Vital to the analysis is the interpretation of the branding strategy in which Steve Jobs and Apple constitute as one entity, not two separate ones. Jobs induce influence over everything Apple does, and is one of the very few who knows about the full picture. Deductively, every Apple product released is done so in accordance with the influence inferred by Steve Jobs. Reformulated, if Apple release a product it's just as plausible to consider it as a Steve Jobs product just as much as an Apple one. Therefor, throughout the analysis, whenever Apples position is strengthened, it's imperative to also consider the gesture as derived from the presence of Steve Jobs, thus also being interpreted in that fashion.

### 5.2 The Heroic Journey - The Rites of Passage

Joseph Campbell's monomyth, commonly called Hero Cycle, (1949) is a model illuminating the mythological adventure a hero must undertake in order to achieve iconic status. Mythological heroes have all ventured along a dangerous path, a journey glugged by misfortune and hazardous perils, but against all odds, return victorious. Derived from victory originates glory, heroism and iconism. Dante's jaunt through thirteen levels of hell was no effortless undertaking, but only because it required exertion above imagination was he rewarded with heroism, and through his status pose as an example to others. Iconic or heroic status is achievable in various ways but more often than not, they segregate themselves from others by accepting perils and endure the journey required to reach a higher purpose. A defining aspect as to why heroes, or icons, are what they are. Campbell's Hero Cycle provides the tools for analyzing these heroic journeys and will pose as the analytical model for analyzing Steve Jobs journey from a, as the story goes, witty, pot-smoking hippie with an idea and a garage to billionaire, CEO of the decade and cultural icon on the forefront of successful branding.

The mythological and heroic journey from which the iconic status originates constitutes as the most tangible and fundamental aspect for understanding, not only authenticity, but the cultural derivatives enjoyed by iconic entities. It's the stories that separates the hero from others and initiates the reward as an icon when he or she returns. The nature of the journey is irrelevant, as long as it abides by the formula presented in the rites of passage following a 'higher' calling: *Separation - Initiation - Return*.

**Joseph Campbell's Monomyth - The Hero Cycle**



**5.3 Steve Jobs - The Man, The Myth, The Turtleneck**

It's hardly challenging to persuade someone to agree with the notion that Steve Jobs constitute as an iconic representative for contemporary corporate success. Steve Jobs represent one of the very few who plausibly can facilitate the combination of the words "business" and "celebrity". Independently of how you may twist and turn your arguments, Steve Jobs is a business celebrity, but not just any celebrity either, he has achieved rock-star status but his hands are clutching an iPhone instead of a Gibson. When a semiserious discussion emerges whether Jobs turtleneck is wired for internet access, as a part of a new line of iNecks, oneself realizes there is more to this individual than to any other common man. Steve Jobs is no common man, he's a hero and an icon, and the reason for this is the 'monomythic' journey he have experienced throughout his professional life. Everything from 'hippie vans' and blueboxes to internet connected turtlenecks and the 'book of Jobs'. Steve

Jobs 'heroic' journey will be attended to in the following sections, analyzed in accordance to Joseph Campbell's Hero Cycle.

### 5.3.1 Call to Adventure - Change the World

Due to the nature of Steve Jobs upbringing, being adopted at an early age, he always lacked a sense of belonging. He experienced complications in social aspects of life as well as in school. He was referred to as a troublemaker, as a self-confessed 'little terror', who seemingly enjoyed letting snakes loose in the classroom and to explode 'bombs'. With hopes of finding his own identity he eventually sought refuge in the company of older kids. This, of course, led to various identity alterations but he ultimately ended up, however unlikely, as a hippie. Not just any hippie though, but a collage-dropout-hippie with a vision of changing the world. Exactly how this world altering was to be achieved was, at the time, forwarded to the realm of the unknown. In accordance with the monomyth, a helper or messenger emerges, in this case the older and trusted friend Steve Wozniak, presented an opportunity. Wozniak, being a brilliant engineer, had by chance discovered that a toy in Cap'n Crunch's cereal boxes made the same tones as AT&T used for long distance phone calls and with it, along with some ingeniously inspired ingenuity, it was attainable to manufacture a device which allowed for free long-distance phone calls. The device, notoriously named 'bluebox', became the duo's main source of income. Steve Jobs wasn't significantly concerned about the somewhat unethical nature of the device, which of course was illegal, unlike Steve Wozniak. Wozniak, in an attempt to phase out the illegitimate aspects of their enterprise, initiated another promising project. Reluctantly Jobs agreed to liquidate the bluebox business to pioneer something as eerie as a 'personal computer'. The application of computers, at the time, was strictly considered to be reclaimable for corporations, not unique individuals, mostly due to their sheer size but as circuit boards and transistors became ever smaller, so would also computers. A connection Steve Jobs soon realized. The board was set, the pieces in motion. A two man team. A garage. A Volkswagen hippie-bus-worth posing as funding. Steve Jobs had found his true calling.

### 5.3.2 Separation - 'The Garage Myth'

'The garage myth' have to some extent been academically studied with the consensus that it's not the actual garage, but rather the entrepreneur(s), who represent the decisive aspect for relative success. Whilst this 'conclusion' empirically stretches towards reality, the garage myth also testifies against predetermined prerequisites to facilitate relative success. A testimony which is most definitely verified by the story of Steve Jobs. Although a heroic gesture, sacrificing the hippie bus didn't get the duo very far in terms of financing, something easily omitted when venturing into the unknown. It did however render them able to manufacture the Apple I, and with it, the first personal computer was born. The mythological 'elixir' was received, but as technological advancements were made available more frequently, it didn't take long until the Apple I was obsolete. The duo was thus forced to fabricate a new and more modern device, which eventually got the very imaginative name Apple II. Unfortunately Wozniak who, contemporaneous to the Apple I, was employed by

Hewlett Packard, had contractual obligations to present all his innovations to his employer. In other words, for Jobs and Wozniak to be allowed to work on the Apple II, Wozniak had to receive a permit from Hewlett Packard. Inevitable defeat was knocking on the door, but on the day of presentation, after extending information about the target segment, the duo literally got laughed in the face with the motivation -'what on earth would ordinary people want with computers?', ha ha'. The Apple II project thus received a 'green light' and the garage retailing business called Apple, shepherded by Steve Jobs, began its journey along the road of trials, shielded from peril by the Apple II 'personal computer'.

As Jobs' journey went ever further into the (silicon)valley of the unknown, perils grew increasingly ferocious and the protective characteristics of the Apple II diminished as time ran its course. External demands screamed for more and the entourage required further strengthening. Reinforcements arrived in the shape of Mike Markkula, a true visionary and successful venture capitalist whom, for longer periods of time, endured all the trials silicon valley had thrown his way. Mike saw potential in Steve Jobs and his device and invested a quarter million dollars in Apple which facilitated increased manufacturing capabilities and ultimately aided the catering of their destiny to 'change the world'. A second helper had emerged, Apple no longer ran its operations from a garage but in the 'belly of the beast'. The hippie-bus a memory long gone. Apple Computers Inc. was no longer 'just' an entourage, but a 'real' company right in the heart of the valley, prepared for whatever challenges may lie ahead, or at least so it seemed... Unknowingly, evil grew in the east.

### 5.3.3 Initiation - Apparent Defeat

Succeeding the external investment from Mike Markkula Steve Jobs and his army of engineers became a force to be reckoned with. In 1984 Jobs and Apple finalized the ultimate conduit for their goal of world domination. The conduit, more commonly known as the Macintosh, would revolutionize daily proceedings. Everything from communication and numerous work applications to, well, how we go about our daily lives. The Macintosh's most tangible strength was the mouse with an integrated graphical user interface and the potential of the conduit was derived from the combination of the two. After months of manufacturing, Jobs and Apple was prepared to face the annual onslaught of the Christmas trade, but for now, they had to patiently await its impending arrival. As time went on, Steve Jobs became increasingly unstable. Whether by delusions of grandeur or a troubled past returning to haunt him, he became in some definitions corrupted by it. He fired people left and right, screamed at employees for no reason and forced them to work a minimum of 90 hours a week. He applied the concept of 'it's better to be a pirate than to be in the navy' and obsessed about trust, loyalty and 'family'. Internal fractures started emerging and the content with Steve Jobs was diminishing. During the meantime, rumors of the "not-yet-released" Macintosh and its properties began to circulate far and wide. Eventually news reached the ears of two uncharted computer programmers, Paul Allen and Bill Gates. The latter, a Harvard dropout, had for years been searching for a suitable platform to run his operating system. The Macintosh, which unfortunately for Bill Gates ran a competing operating system, posed a viable candidate. The mouse was of peculiar interest and, in correlation to the expression 'keep your friends close, but your enemies closer', Gates requested to come work for Apple. The goal was of course not to aid Jobs and Apple in their

quest for global attunement, but rather to bolster the prospects for his own company, Microsoft, to complete the same. In a Picasso inspired fashion of 'good artist copy, great artists steal', Gates and Microsoft de-facto stole the mouse and the graphical operating system from Apple and developed their own, now famously known as Windows, and ran it on third-party hardware. Before the Christmas trade, when the deceiving truth surfaced, Windows computers was already on retail, thus plucked Jobs and Apple of a proper and revolutionary introduction to the market. However, Jobs faith in the Macintosh endured. He proclaimed his machine to be superior to Windows and the Macintosh would still prevail, a proclamation to which Bill Gates replied to, with an agreeing undertone, 'it doesn't matter, we were first'. For once, Steve Jobs was wrong. The Macintosh failed to 'change the world' and instead Windows reigned supreme. Jobs misplaced trust in Bill Gates proved to constitute his grandest mistake. Steve Jobs was navigating his sinking privateer straight towards underwater rocks, only hoping for shallow waters. Apparent defeat was scratching the hull and patience with his leadership was running out like sand in an hourglass. Mutiny crawling ever closer. Steve Jobs was inevitably ousted from Apple and abandoned to whatever fate destiny had in store for him.

#### 5.3.4 Return - Veni Vidi Vici

In difference to the barbaric hordes of Attila the Hun, roaming forces of evil in silicon valley proved not to be as ferocious. Steve Jobs conduit, The Macintosh, and it's creator, Apple, endured in his absence. The Macintosh achieved victory on other fronts and managed to survive, although with a hair's breath. For Steve Jobs the narration was different. As luck would have it, fate had great things in store for him. After being forced to abandon the navigational charts of Apple, Jobs sought refuge elsewhere. A wise decision it seemed. Jobs, who still craved glory, founded NeXT, a company very similar to Apple, but with a very different objective, to aid among other things, education and numerous business markets. He also invested heavily in Pixar, an animation production company, whatever that may be, or at least, that was the common conception at the time. However, NeXT was the grand jewel, the flagship which would carry him on his destined path. As previously indicated, Apple was fighting a losing battle, and in order to survive, it retreated to the comfort of mediocrity where it, under siege, dwelled for a decade over its previous failures. Apple did however, receive endorsement from 'evangelists' with firm dedication, whom with an unimpeachable loyalty, would eventually make all the difference in world. In unison, they kept Steve's privateer afloat, but only just. In the benefits of Apple, drastic measures was imperative. Influence induced by these evangelists, in concert with NeXT, the above mentioned beneficial measure required was to bring Steve Jobs back to the company he founded all those years ago through acquisition of his current grand jewel NeXT, thus also stringing him along with it. And so, the 'messiah' had at long last returned, although, as biblical scripture ludicrously preaches, not on the third day, but eleven years posterity to his ousting, and not from death, but from deviation from a destined path. A path which would eventually *do* change the world.

Although considered a subjugation, Steve's ousting from Apple proved to be of value to him. It provided him with a set of experiences, which ultimately altered his character, but, not yet the world. When he returned to Apple, Jobs himself was in control of his actions, not a troubled past or megalomania. Although optimistic



towards the future, he acted in accordance to rationality and was able to concede the past for its true nature, times far departed from the present or future. His goals were clear, ascend Apple from mediocrity and return it to its former glory. Although an appreciated return, one of Steve Jobs first initiatives didn't receive equal recognition. He daringly turned to Microsoft for aid, the very company who, a decade earlier, betrayed him and consequently displaced Apple and the Macintosh to the dustbin of 'historical failures'. A true undaunted initiative, but eventually it would prove fruitful. Jobs, with his newfound virtues, managed to accumulate a substantial investment but also, and more importantly, managed to acquire the 'conduit of evil', which was comprised of Microsoft Office, and made it available for the Macintosh, thus hugely increasing support for Apple products. The turning point was finally reached, and in combination with substantial funding, and primarily, a turtleneck-wearing pirate manipulating the rudder it would prove much more than just a turning point. Apple initiated an annual development of new, innovative and designed 'conduits', continuously reminding all opposition of Jobs and Apples former glory. Products which, each and everyone, have ever since been gaining ground though fair and just victories over opposing forces. Various attempts to counter Apples immense expansion have all failed. Even conceptual theft, as once befell Apple and Jobs all those years past, declined the forces of evil the slightest of victory. This time around, Jobs was first, so, to quote Bill Gates, 'it doesn't matter'. Steve Jobs *came* back, he *saw* the path which fate had laid before him and he emerged *victorious* in to the light. Some battles are won, the 'war' however, is still present, but this time he doesn't captain one privateer, but an armada in which he himself constitute the admiralty, steadily navigating his flagship ever closer towards his destiny to change the way of the world.

#### 5.4 Creating Iconic Cultural Brands Through Icons and Mythology

The physics notion that 'to every action there's an equal and opposite reaction isn't just a good idea, it's the law' is just as applicable on contemporary marketing concepts as to newtonian gravity. In order to create cultural and iconic brands historical occurrences (action) are essential in creating cultural affiliation or iconic status (reaction). Culture isn't created overnight, as Holt's (2004) cultural and iconic branding concept implies, it requires an extensive historical presence independent of whether categorized by success or failure, in this case represented by Steve Jobs and his 'heroic' journey. Previous failures are often required to increase mythic and cultural associations, completing the revolution in Joseph Campbell's Hero Circle. As Steve Jobs journey illustrate, Apple have on numerous occasions, throughout it's lifetime, failed to successfully adapt to historical exigencies, which consequently resulted in poor cultural creation and negative financial statements, but in the end aided cultural creation though the reward of iconism. When the situation was most dire, along comes Steve and ultimately, as the expression goes, 'saves the day'. Of that reason Steve Jobs represent the turning-point for Apple and constitutes the white knight who's actions is the most tangible reason for Apples' contemporary presence. Steve Jobs is the sole reason why we have an iPod, iPhone or MacBook and on account of this, he has been rewarded an iconic status. A state which have heavily been reflected upon Apple and through the years induced cultural creation which in turn contributed to it's success, just as Holt's (2004) branding theory predicted it should. But of course, there's more to cultural creation than just iconism in itself, the extensive mythic creation that lie behind it is just as important. In theory, mythology acts similar to an element which

structure social groups and is utilized as a didactic framework that supplies order and form to social behaviors<sup>41</sup>. Joseph Campbell (1949) interprets the function of the myth as “the imposition of a moral order: an adaptation of the individual to the demands of its social group”<sup>42</sup> In other words, the myth about Steve Jobs creates the alteration in behavior which in turn create culture through the defining of social patterns. The iconic ‘turtleneck’ wearing guru constitute the myth, thus defines behavior, and with it, is etched into the culture, which in turn is the definition of an iconic personal brand according to Montoya (2002).

In cultural branding, in accordance with Holt’s (2004) theories, the requirements for a successful iconic brand is the ability to perform a myth that addresses an acute contradiction in society. In the case of Apple, whether this contradiction is represented by the garage myth, good vs. evil, knight in shining armor or a combination of these poses little significance. The contradictory aspect is still present and Steve Jobs is the one who constitutes, author and performs the myth. He engineers the branding role and defines the brand through his presence alone. The cultural aspect of the Apple brand is a direct descendant of the iconic state entitled by Jobs, achieved through a historical presence, and derived from it springs the fruit of success, well and high above the canopy. But, success is, as previously stated a relative measure and should be nominated carefully. Although in some definitions victorious, Jobs and Apple have a long journey still ahead of them. The ‘war’ is not yet won and they constitute, in the the great scheme of things, the underdog, subordinated to the combined strength of the opposition. As Douglas Holt, in his cultural branding theory suggest, successful cultural branding depends on ones ability to supply a storied product. Whenever someone consume an iPhone, iPad, iMac or an iPod he or she does not only experience a product, but, united under the Apple banner, enlist to join Steve Jobs aboard his privateer in Apple’s campaign for revolution. The greater their numbers, the greater their chances of success. To enlist and ‘join the fight’ extends the promise of identity, intelligibly separates oneself from confusion with other entities.

## 5.5 Iconism’s Influence on Authenticity

Steve Jobs journey provide rewards beyond ‘just’ an iconic personal brand. It provides history and meaning to everything it involves. The journey, or myth, is *exceptional*, *influential* and *original* in its own accord. It testifies for authenticity though the genres of perceived authenticity and proclaim Jobs as being different, just as their slogan “Think Different”, and through that very proclamation conform to the *axioms* within authenticity. The journey also connects the myth with locations such as the Apple Cupertino campus in Silicon Valley. Cupertino have been Apple HQ since Jobs moved from his parents garage and pose as the flagship location in Gilmore’s placemaking portfolio since it represents the history and heritage of both Steve Jobs and Apple, thus also influence all the levels below (in the portfolio). The flagship criteria, according to Gilmore (2007), extends beyond just representing the history, it should also *create an experience and engage customers is such a way that it’s showing that you are in fact who you say you are*. Something Steve Jobs journey provides for. It rewards

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<sup>41</sup> “*El Amor y Occidente*”, Denis Rougemont (1986), p. 19

<sup>42</sup> “*The Rhetoric of the Mythological Branding*”, Fabián Bautista (n.d.)

meaning to all locations from where the story originates, this also involves, not only Cupertino, but the garage where Apple was founded. These places prove indeed valuable for the story and all its implications. The 'garagemyth' referred to above is a direct descendant from Jobs' story which took place in the garage. The myth is contradictory due to its unlikelihood to succeed and acts today as proof of alternate routes to success or victory. Just as Eric Godelier wrote in his article "*Do You Have a Garage?*"; *the (garage)myth stresses the fact that an individual, with a unique personality, a strong will, and acting with perseverance, can achieve extraordinary things*<sup>43</sup>. Note that it's the individual who is exceptional, not the garage. In this study, the garage acts as a symbol for the phenomenon, but Steve Jobs is the one who's *exceptional*, at least according to Gilmore who defines exceptional authenticity as following: "*People tend to perceive as authentic that which is done exceptionally well, executed individually and extraordinarily by someone demonstrating human care; not unfeelingly or disingenuously performed*".

During the *initiation* period of his journey, Jobs and Apple did in fact construct the first graphical and commercially intended personal computer. Even long before that time, during his *calling* he was involved in manufacturing one of the first non-graphical personal computers. Ever since his *return* to Apple, he has continuously introduced products which have been the first of their kind. Possibly not always conceptually, but nevertheless new and innovative. More importantly, they were conceived as originals as a consequence to executing Gilmore's definition of *original authenticity*: "*People tend to perceive as authentic that which possesses originality in design, being the first of its kind, never before seen by human eyes; not a copy or imitation*"<sup>44</sup>. Whilst understandably applicable on the numerous 'original' products he created, the definition of originality applies just as well on his journey. In some definitions it's as far from original as may be since it's contradictory, but at the same time it's possible to interpret it as an original, not least in Gilmore's definition. Jobs' story testifies for something so rarely observed it can be considered unique, not a copy or imitation, thus also an original. The transition from a mislead, soul-searching, India traveling, dyslexic hippie-geek whose personal hygiene was so bad he was forced to work nightshifts (prior to Apple), to a billionaire, entrepreneur, CEO for one of the highest valued companies in the United States, second only to Exxon Mobile, a true icon for everything that Apple creates and represents, but foremost his endorsement upon social structure and behavior. The mythological story, or journey, in this retrospect is the first of its kind.

When rumors of the Macintosh reached the ears of Bill Gates, it was such a groundbreaking innovation which promised a foretaste of a better way, a foretaste which is today referred to as the information society. The Macintosh was the first computer which, on a greater scale, was intended to be used as we use computers today. Although on a more basic level, it exerted influence and had purpose. Of that very reason, Bill Gates felt he had to 'steal' it, he realized its potential influence. Although it's sometimes complicated to separate Jobs from Apple, it's Jobs' induced influence on Apple which over the years has rewarded it (Apple) with an iconic brand. A brand which in turn has influenced others in its own way. The relevant aspect here is the fact that all

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<sup>43</sup> "*Do You Have a Garage?, Discussion of Some Myths about Entrepreneurship*", Eric Godelier, Business and Economic History, Vol 5 (2007)

<sup>44</sup> "*Authenticity, what consumers really want*", James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II (2007), p.49-50

the influence Apple disperse is a derivative from it's connection to Steve Jobs. The connection to Gilmore's influential authenticity is hardly ambiguous: "*People tend to perceive as authentic that which exerts influence on other entities, calling human beings to a higher goal and providing a foretaste of a better way; not inconsequential or without meaning.*" It's hardly an interpretation to acknowledge Jobs success with consequence or meaning.

## 6. Final Discussion

*This section will introduce the final discussion of the thesis. Based on the analysis it will attempt to make rational conclusions concerning the purpose of this thesis, along with the importance of the iconic nature of Steve Jobs and Apple and their connection to each other.*

### 6.1 Just an Apple or Emerald Green Granny Smith?

So, how does Steve Jobs presence at Apple reinforce the brand in terms of authenticity? Proclaiming authenticity is potentially mordacious, in theory we know it to be true, but does Apple postulate as being the 'real' deal? Well, as the theoretical framework suggests it is not. Nothing manmade is, not even our own achievements. The real question remains however, do we conceive Jobs, thus also Apple, as authentic or not. In correlation to the theoretical framework it's, in my interpretation, plausible to argue that Apple is one of the most authentic firms around, at least if Gilmore's authenticity concept is true, and the reason for this is, yep you guess it, Steve Jobs. As the analysis indicates through the genres of perceived authenticity Apple is indeed perceived as authentic through the genres of original, exceptional and influential authenticity, as a consequence of Jobs connection to the company. This authenticity is further strengthened through the placemaking portfolio, in which he provides meaning and substance to locations. In correlation to the analysis, Steve Jobs evidently applies authenticity to Apples offerings through his presence. To illustrate how an increased level of perceived authenticity is applied, i've constructed a matrix which establishes a connection between the three genres when an iconic personal brand is present. The matrix suggest that an offering which is perceived as an *original* in Gilmore's definition, but also is perceived as *exceptional* in the definition of the same, is self-rewarded with *influential* authenticity. The connection applies in all combinations of the three genres as shown in the matrix below:

Self Rewarding Concept of Authenticity Matrix			
	Originality	Exceptionalism	Influentialism
Originality		Influentialism	Exceptionalism
Exceptionalism	Influentialism		Originality
Influentialism	Exceptionalism	Originality	

I will illustrate by example and 'suggest' that the iPhone has been a successful product. It's also safe to say there are many smartphones attempting to replicate it's success by imitating design, services and alike. If we assume the iPhone to be the first groundbreaking smartphone on the market, the first of it's kind and possess originality in design, in other words perceived as an *original* in Gilmore's definition. The iPhone is also *exceptional*

in the definition of the same, due to its ability to respond to customer needs. These assumptions, under which the iPhone is both an original and exceptional, it have also influenced others to manufacture an imitation. If you are iconic and offer something exceptional, which is the first of its kind, you create influence over your competitors. Take the iPad as another illustration. The iPad, which was released over 2 years after the Amazon Kindle, is considered to be 'the first of its kind', an original, because it's both exceptional and influential in Gilmore's definition. The three genres are interconnected and self rewarding. *Originality* and *exceptionalism* render *influentialism*, *exceptionalism* and *influentialism* render *originality*, and *influentialism* and *originality* render *exceptionalism*. Remember though, this only affects the perceived authenticity, not actual authenticity, and in my research applies only on the iconic brand which is Apple. So where does Steve Jobs fit in all of this? Well, he's the one who applies the genres of authenticity to every Apple product. Unless you've been lying under a rock for the past decade you know who Steve Jobs is, and you know it because when you consume an Apple product you also experience it. Not only the product, or offering, but more importantly the story it involves. The product is the means for storytelling, telling you the contradictory story of Steve Jobs, thus rendering it influential in Gilmore's definition. When you consume an iPad, iPhone or a MacBook you cancel your connection to the dull 'mainstream' and join the rebellious and the 'hipp'. However, the details of the story or experience, varies since it depends on unique interpretations. Your story, through which you are experiencing the product, is most likely not the same as mine, it's unique and yours alone, in other words authentic.

## 6.2 Falling Apples

Occasionally, during this thesis, I've made the comparison between contemporary marketing concepts and physics, or more accurately newtonian gravity. Whilst the comparison may seem farfetched to some, it's actually quite suiting. As the myth implies, it was an apple that fell to the ground when Isaac Newton discovered the force which makes the world go round. Is the mythology circulating the story authentic or hoax and is that relevant? Does that even matter? The earth was in orbit long before the discovery of gravity, likewise was marketing present long before conceptual marketing strategies entered the battle against competition. The point being, whilst marketing, just as newtonian gravity, have since it's 'discovery' been altered, redefined and even upended on occasion. What we know to be true today, might just as well be obsolete tomorrow. Meticulous understanding of fundamental and contemporary principles will not render precise predictions of future outcomes. Not now. Not ever, and with this in mind, who can accurately reward an outcome equally meticulous and precise principles?

As my research indicate, the success of Apple is correlated to the presence of Steve Jobs as an iconic figure but alas, it's also not the only reason. Apple's success has depended on countless more variables than cultural and iconic branding, authenticity, personal branding and Steve Jobs. It's not about extending a universally applicable success coupon, but instead providing understanding for a success story which is defined by a cultural branding strategy where personal branding represent the most prominent reason for its success. In other words, acknowledging the true potential for such a strategy. Although success is a relative term, my research intelligibly testify that the combination of a authentic and cultural inspired branding strategy inherit the

tools necessary for achieving success. Combined they constitute the means to relative success, but do they represent the cause for it? That's a question not easily answered if even plausibly extended. The contribution of means, which are functional, is what's important, not analyzing causality. Every enterprise is challenged by unique prerequisites, thus requiring a unique set of tools in order to be successful. Seemingly for Apple, Jobs was the one reason why it became successful. So, how far from the tree does the apple really fall? In contemporary terms, not very far it seems...

### 6.3 Concerning Cultural Branding

In the case of Apple, Steve Jobs iconic influence probably exceeds any other example. The reason for its success, according to my research, is the grave nature of the myth he represents. Considering his mythological characteristic, the myth perpetually exceeds imagination. The historic accuracy of it must intelligibly be questionable, otherwise the myth wouldn't prove as intriguing. More often than not, the myth derives from some aspect of historic validity, but the details remain uncertain which leaves room for interpretations. What makes mythology such a reclaimable tool in marketing is its indifference to beliefs. Whether we believe it to be true or not poses little significance, it's the message it implies, and our own interpretation of it which is important. It's a myth, and we consider it as such. We want examples to follow, and examples are forged in the wakes of success, but equally as much in failure. To succeed, one can't originate from success, but must arise to it from the opposite, thus becoming an icon and performer of a myth. The contradictory aspect of their success is what bears meaning, indifference to validity, and derived from it originates the acute contradiction in society, reminding us of alternative paths to relative success. As examples in the shape of corporate icons, business heroes and alike, just like Steve Jobs, are emerging in an ever more rapid succession, each and everyone telling a contradictory tale, one can conclude that the more contradictory to contemporary practice the path to success is, the more correct it becomes. The 'right' path becomes the 'wrong' one, the wrong becomes the right.

### 6.4 Conclusions

To create an iconic personal brand an extensive historical presence which is characterized by failure as much as success and addresses an acute contradiction in society is required. Such an iconic personal brand, when closely associated with a certain company, can in fact reflect its status upon that same company, a reflection which reward is an iconic brand. Companies, which have been rewarded an iconic brand through clear associations with iconic personal brands, does not only enjoy the benefits of iconic branding, but also possibly increase authenticity through the *Self Rewarding Concept of Authenticity*. Furthermore, iconic person brands provides substance to locations which increase authenticity through the placemaking portfolio.

## 7. Further Research

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*This section will propose further research which is tangent to the subject, both considering the theoretical framework, Apple and Steve Jobs.*

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### 7.1 Iconic Endurance

Steve's six-month absence significantly affected the stock mostly due to speculation, not declining sales. With this in mind, another important question emerges. What will happen when Steve Jobs, or any iconic figurehead for that matter, leaves their respective company for good whether by death or retirement? There is little doubt such an event will affect the stock, but what tangible effects will follow such an occurrence? Will it represent the demise of a firm or pose as an opportunity of some sort? The Body Shop is still among us, so is Ford Motor Company. Steve's leave of absence is a good indicator for Apple-post-Jobs-survival, but can it endure for longer periods? Chief operating officer Tim Cook replaced Jobs during the period and the company was performing just as well. Furthermore, Apple have assembled a rare collection of ambitious individuals who all are entwined in the Apple culture. Tim Cook (COO), Phil Schiller (Senior VP), Jonathan Ive (Senior VP of industrial design) to name a few. In fact, some analysts suggest Apple is better equipped to face future challenges than any other hardware company in the world today.<sup>45</sup> Future projections are about as good as they can get and expectations have a way of coming true. In abjuration of an iconic figurehead or not, for an iconic brand like Apple, will it continue to supply revolutionary and innovative products for decades to come? Will the mythology concerning the iconic status prevail and continue to benefit the brand for longer spans of time? Is mythology such a powerful tool? A prediction of this kind indeed poses a difficult challenge, but nevertheless interesting. Is it actually manageable to predict the unpredictable and prognosticate the random walk concerning the relationship?

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<sup>45</sup> [http://www.9to5mac.com/apple\\_exploding\\_312777](http://www.9to5mac.com/apple_exploding_312777)



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