Purpose, Vision and Mission:

A Clarification of fundamental Concepts

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Abstract

Title:	Purpose, Vision and Mission: A Clarification of fundamental Concepts
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Authors:	Mari-Anne Daura, Tina Pers
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Keywords:	Purpose, Vision, Mission, Brand Orientation
Thesis purpose:	Clarification of the concepts purpose, vision and mission in theory and practice
Methodology:	We are using a social constructionist view to explore these concepts. The study is a exploratory study with a iterative approach to theory and data. As our research method we have chosen hermeneutic phenememology applying a qualitative research strategy. Furthermore, a multiple case study approach is chosen.
Theoretical perspective:	Our main theory is Urde's brand orientation framework
Empirical data:	We have gathered empirical data through semi-structured interviews and multiple case studies
Conclusion:	The concepts purpose, mission and vision are very much interconnected. Within a brand orientation business setting these concepts have gained in importance again and provide a number of managerial functions

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1. INTRODUCTION

"Yes, the world changes - and continues to change at an accelerated pace - but that does not mean that we should abandon the quest for fundamental concepts that stand the test of time. On the contrary, we need them more than ever!" Collins & Porras, (2002, p.xiii)

Most agree that purpose, vision and mission are extremely important concepts in the business world. At the same time, everyone agrees that these concepts are a tangled chaos. Part of this chaos could potentially stem from the fact that the organization's business purpose, business vision and business mission are rarely given adequate thought and consideration. As pointed out by Drucker (1974 as cited in King et al., 2011, p. 22), "this mission is perhaps the most important single cause of business frustration and business failure."

Today, it appears that especially the mission and vision have lost their original "sense of purpose". Many organizations only seem to apply it as it is expected of them and is seen as common practice for a company to have a mission and vision statement. The true meaning and function of mission and vision have been lost along the way. However, in the modern competitive environment with businesses trying to add intangible value to what they offer, we believe that the mission and vision might regain some meaning within the approach of brand orientation.

When talking about the mission specifically, there is one more concept that is often used to describe the mission: the purpose. Jauch and Glück (1988) for example define the mission statement as an expression of the fundamental reason for an organisation to exist. The purpose is the most fundamental concept. It describes the organization's reason for existence. (Strong, 1997) Without a starting point which is the basic reason for existence an organization will not be able to have a direction.

One aspect of the confusion surrounding these concepts is that they are often used interchangeably. Additionally, these concepts often lack thorough consideration as individual concepts. It is therefore important to recognize the interconnected nature of the concepts as well as the differences in order to understand what they actually mean and how they are applied.

Despite the confusion, every organization recognizes that it is important to have a mission and vision. In the 2011 study "Management tools and trends 2011" Bain and Company (2011) rated the mission and vision statement as number three in the "Top 10 most used tools". This recognition has led to mission and vision being two of the most widely used yet grossly misunderstood business management tools. Part of the misunderstanding stems from the fact that it is also widely recognized that there is no clear consensus with regard to the definition or application of the concepts as they are invariably confused. Hackley supports this premise when he states:

"Mission statements have been seen as strategically important management tools but the precise rationale for their use has remained confused" (1993, p.93)

In terms of mission and vision within the literature, one of the contradictions found lies between the studies of Bart (2001) and of Sufi & Lyons (2003). Bart (2001) conducted a study aiming to find out if there is a connection between financial performance and a well defined mission statement. The results indicated that the mission statement can have a positive influence on the financial performance of a company.

"(...) mission statements (...) have a positive association with performance and make a positive contribution towards it". (Bart et al, 2001, p.32)

However, in the study conducted by Sufi & Lyons (2003) within the hospitality sector, no relationship could be found between the mission statement and the financial success of a company. That brings up the question of how these researchers are able to define what a good mission statement is when there is no real consensus on the definition and the formulation of such a statement.

1.1 Research Aim

The aim of this study is to explore the current applications, meanings and interaction between the purpose, vision and mission within the literature. This thesis additionally aims to provide clarification of the three concepts in light of the confusions and contradictions surrounding the concepts within the literature. We will then more specifically look at the concepts in relation to the paradigm of brand orientation.

In the current market environment with unstable economies and fierce global competition, companies can no longer differentiate themselves based solely on the products they offer or the service they provide. As a result of this new market environment, branding has reached new levels of importance in terms of providing a differentiation strategy. In order to differentiate themselves, companies are looking to provide more intangible value to their customers through the products and services they offer. Branding is now more important than ever to help companies create an anchor in the minds of the consumers. Urde (1994) takes branding from a product-focused discipline to an integrated orientation for a whole organization. He describes brand orientation as "organizing and controlling the operations in such a way that an attractive added value can be created" (Urde, 1994, p.18) This basically refers to making the brand a strategic outline that starts at the management level and goes through all the other levels. The

brand orientation approach starts by making the formulation of the brand vision a management issue. As we believe that the brand orientation approach brings with it a new importance to the concepts of purpose, mission and vision, we will explore these concepts within the context of brand orientation.

1.2 Research Questions

We have formulated two research questions that are aligned with the aim of the paper.

1) Does the purpose, vision and mission of an organization interact? If yes, how?

2) How are purpose, vision and mission perceived and applied by management in a brand oriented business setting?

The answers to these research questions are provided through multiple case studies, qualitative interviews and an extensive review of the literature and relevant concepts.

The knowledge we are aiming to provide includes theoretical contributions as well as managerial implications. In so doing, this thesis provides a deeper understanding of these concepts and their interconnectedness as well as the practitioner's perceptions and application of purpose, mission and vision.

1.3 Background

In order to be able to relate to the beginning of the literature review we will give the most basic definitions of the three concepts. Purpose is defined as the reason for existence (Mourkogiannis, 2006). As the word mission has its roots in religion, at its most basic level it is defined as "the act or instance of sending". Derived from the Latin word "missionem (Merriam-Webster, 2012), its origins are traced back to 1530 "when the Jesuits sent members abroad" (Merriam-Webster, 2012). For vision of an organization we will use the definition from Bennis and Nanus (1997, p.86) as " a mental image of their desirable future state". We will start off the literature review with a multidimensional approach as the scope of these concepts touches upon a number of different fields of study. We will specifically focus on the areas of: social psychology, strategy and brand management. As the majority of past literature has mainly focused on exploring the mission and vision, the initial part of our literature review will explore these two concepts. We will then continue with a more in-depth look into the three concepts in order to further understand their meaning as well as their interconnectedness.

One concept that has been steadily coming up in regards to those concepts throughout our research has been identity. Creating an identity for employees is the starting point of creating an organization. A crowd of people turns into a group when they have something in common to believe in. (Freud, 1922) It seems therefore evident that purpose, mission and vision play a crucial role in the

creation of an organization's identity as they are concepts that are supposed to describe the whole organization and not just one part of it. Providing identity seems therefore the most basic function of the purpose, mission and vision. After discussing the foundation requisites of an organization we continue with exploring mission in relation to strategy. Strategy is seen as giving direction to how a company plans to develop (Piercy, 1993) which would be the next step after creating an identity. Connecting building an identity for the organization with the strategy, we will continue with covering the field of brand management, especially the brand identity. As mentioned before, we want to explore these concepts in the context of brand orientation. We therefore need to have an understanding of how to create a brand identity and how it is connected to the concepts. After having explored the three concepts in these areas, we then present our theoretical framework that we put purpose, mission and vision in. As we cannot point out one specific framework right in the beginning as these concepts have different dimensions, we chose to present the theoretical framework after the review and discussion of these fields of study. We will then review the purpose, vision and mission individually to gather what the current literature says about them.

2. Literature review

In the following we will present our literature review. We will start by reviewing the related field of studies, then go on with the theoretical framework and last but not least review the concepts. These related fields of studies include social psychology, strategy and brand management.

Before going into detail in the literature review we would like to draw attention to one fact. When searching for purpose, vision and mission in the literature it mostly only talked about vision and mission. Purpose seems to be a concept that has only emerged recently. Therefore literature specifically on this concept is hardly found. However, this literature review is still valid also for pupose as the especially the mission is mostly associated with expressing the purpose, the reason for being, of a company. Hence, we can conclude that whenever talking about mission or vision the concept of purpose applies as well.

2.1 Social Psychology

As mentioned above, the fundamental nature of these concepts requires us to explore their basic foundation. In doing so we will look at purpose, vision and mission within the context of social psychology. As we are trying to clarify these concepts, we think it is necessary to first explore the purpose, vision and mission within their root foundation. In order for us to determine how these concepts are understood and applied by people as individuals, it is necessary to explore the concepts from an individual and core background. Social psychology will enable a thorough understanding of the concepts from the point of view of the individual.

Sigmund Freud defines social or group psychology as being "concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people who have been organized into a group at some particular time for some definite purpose." (Freud, 1922, p .3) This statement connects the theory of social psychology to the purpose, vision and mission statement as it gives a "crowd of people" (Freud, 1922, p. 27) something in common which is necessary to form an organization.

At its most fundamental level, social psychology is concerned with the individual as a member of a group. Therefore, in order to develop a deeper understanding, we will first explore the Theory of Social Identity.

2.1.1 Social Identity Theory

In order to understand the importance of these concepts at an individual level, it is important to understand the fundamental concept of Social identity theory. Social identity theory maintains that a person identifies him or herself as a member of a society. In addition to a personal identity, the self-concept is also composed of a social identity (Bhattacharya et al., 1995). Additionally, Ashforth & Mael (1989) argue that social identification is the perception of belonging to a group. The sense of belonging to a group is a fundamental component in the formation of an organization. The purpose, vision and mission provide this sense of belonging as they all state something that is applicable for every single employee within the organization no matter which department or level he works in.

Furthermore, it is relevant to explore social identity theory in the context of organizational identification. Organizational identification is a specific form of social identification in which the person defines him or herself in terms of membership in a particular organization (Bhattacharya et al., 1995). This is an extremely important phenomenon. Firstly, it has been proposed that identification has a positive effect of the willingness to contribute to collective work (Shamir, 1990). Secondly, Bhattacharya et al., (1995) indicate that identification is indeed necessarily connected to the causes or goals that an organization represents. Therefore, when an organization stands for a specific purpose or cause, stakeholders may be loyal to the brand or its products because they identify with the purpose, vision or mission of the organization.

This phenomenon especially helps to clarify the link between organizational identification and the importance of the mission statement. Ran & Duimering, (2007) suggest that mission statements can be can have the purpose of outlining the actual identity of an organization. In this light, it may be argued that mission statements readily facilitate the formation of organizational identity as it provides a definition of the present of an organization.

In the next section, we will explore the concepts of purpose, vision and mission within the field of organizational behavior. Social Identity Theory provides the first step towards the formation of an organization. Therefore we are led to take purpose, vision and mission to the next step by exploring them within the context of the organization, more specifically, within the context of organizational behavior.

2.1.2 Organizational Behavior

"Organizational behavior studies the influence that individuals, groups, and organizational structure have on behavior within organizations" (Judge and Robbins, 2010, p. 9).

It is important to understand the relationship between the purpose, vision and mission statements and organizational behavior. As stated by Cooper & Thatcher (2010, p. 517) "an organization can be

defined as a structured social unit made up of a group of people that pursues specific goals." Prodgers (1999) compares the organization to the family which makes it more than a production system or the place where people go to work. Just like the family, they are associated with providing a sense of belonging, a structure and meaning. Falsey states that a mission statement "tells two things about a company: who it is and what it does" (1989, p. 3). In addition to conveying a corporation's nature and reason for being, "the mission statement may also outline where a firm is headed; how it plans to get there; what its priorities, values, and beliefs are; and how it is distinctive." (Williams, 2008, p.96) Looking at this definition of mission statement it seems to include all the three concepts. Again, there is no clear distinction made between the purpose, vision and mission.

From this, as pointed out by Sidhu, (2003, p. 439) "mission statements are argued play a vital direction-establishing role that facilitates strategy formulation". Regarding the vision statement, Slack et al., (2010) found in their study that if the vision statement is communicated to the employees by the management and understood by the employees it enhances the employee organizational satisfaction. Therefore it is necessary to further explore the role of the purpose, vision and mission statements within organizational behavior. According to Slack et al (2010) the mission and vision statement seem to have more than one purpose. "These include providing a sense of purpose, promoting shared values, establishing behavioral standards, and maintaining employee focus on organizational strategy and direction" (Bart 1997 as cited in Slack et al 2010, p. 422). Wang (2011) provides further support by suggesting individuals in mission-driven organizations may be highly motivated by the mission as they identify with it. For these individuals, the mission statements provide a strong sense of belonging as it helps motivate the employees who contribute to the day-to-day activity understand why they do what they do. This supports the connection between organizational behavior and the purpose, vision and mission statement as it points out that employees create a sense of belonging, which affects their behavior, as they are able to understand the purpose of them fulfilling their daily work.

Accordingly, "an important issue arises regarding how individuals within an organization could be influenced by the mission and philosophy. A philosophy that is both articulated and enacted may facilitate a transformation of commitment into productive effort because it could provide direction for individuals, set constraints on employee behavior, and enhance individual motivation through the presentation of a clear picture of the organizational goals, norms, and values" (Wang, 2011, p.112). Although the author here talks about philosophy, we can assume that this covers the purpose, vision and mission as he is talking about organizational goals, norms and values. Therefore, it is obvious that there is a link to organizational behavior as the author states it "may facilitate a transformation of commitment into productive effort" (Wang, 2011, p. 112)

Furthermore, according to Dutton et al., (1994) as cited in Wang, (2011, p. 113), "members become emotionally attached to their organizations when they incorporate the characteristics they attribute to their organization into their self-concepts". As stated in Ashforth et al. (2008, p. 333) "organizational identification has been conceptualized as a cognitive link between the definitions of the organization and the self, and the individual's identity and fate become intertwined with those of the organization".

Bhattacharya (1995) states that researchers in organizational behavior have shown that satisfaction with the institution's contributions to the attainment of personal goals is associated with identification. Additionally, Dukerich et. al, (2002) point out that organizational identification is associated with a number of positive outcomes in organizations, including cooperative behaviors that support organizational goals.

Thus, the link between the purpose, vision and mission statements and organizational behavior provides further evidence of a close relation to identification. However, the link also provides evidence of a close relation to motivational theory.

2.1.3 Motivational Theory

Increasingly, mission statements are widely recognized as a strong management tool that can keep employees focused to fulfill the purpose of the organization and motivate them. (Brown et al., 2004) Reliance on the mission as a management tool is often recognized as an effective strategy to improve performance in many organizations. (Brown et al., 2004) Given its significance as such a widely used management tool, it is pertinent to develop an understanding of the relationship between mission and the individual in terms of motivation.

According to Morphew & Hartley (2006), previous research has suggested that the process of articulating an institution's mission has two potential benefits. One of the benefits is that "a shared sense of purpose has the capacity to inspire and motivate those within an institution and to communicate its characteristics, values, and history to key external constituents" (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 457). To develop a deeper understanding of the level of capacity the mission has to inspire or motivate, it is necessary to explore the theory of motivation.

One of the most powerful human motives is the desire to form and maintain social bonds. In general, humans have a need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This need to belong may provide motivation for domains that offer positive social-relational environments (Walton et al., 2011). This level of motivation is an extremely relevant concept as "mere belonging can increase motivation by creating

socially shared goals around a performance task." (Walton et al., 2011, p. 513) This is an important phenomenon to understand in determining the effectiveness of mission statements.

According to Walton et al., (2011), developmental research provides a link between social connectedness and motivation. The research suggests that "early in life, humans are sensitive to the goals of others and try to establish socially aligned goals". (Walton et al., 2011, p. 514) If it is argued that mission statements provide a common goal for members of an organization, social connectedness provides a deep and profound motivation for aiming to achieve the goals set forth by the mission statement. Once again, this phenomenon has extremely relevant managerial implications as leaders of organizations benefit greatly by understanding how to motivate their employees.

Walton et al., (2011) state that people eagerly adopt the goals and motivations of others. This finding deepens the understanding of the psychological mechanisms that contribute to social coordination and cooperation. It is argued that a mere sense of social connectedness with even unfamiliar others can cause people to adopt the interests and goals of these others as their own. (Walton et al., 2011) These findings are further supported by previous research. According to Walton et al., (2011, p. 515) and as pointed out by Tomasello et al., (2005, p. 682), it has been suggested that people have an innate drive "to create shared goals to which they are jointly committed". "A foundation of human culture is the capacity of people to cooperate to pursue joint goals, create cultural products, and forge technological innovations" (Walton et al., 2011, p. 529). As leaders often seek to utilize the purpose, vision and mission statement in creating joint goals, it suggests that these concepts do in fact have the potential to be a powerful motivational tool.

Furthermore, though the theory is often contested, (Trigg, 2004) one of the most commonly recognized theories of motivation is that of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow's theory explains that social needs are fundamental to a person's development. These social needs include friendships, family relationships and organizational memberships. Jones (2004) further supports Maslow's theory and alludes to the significance of the mission in terms of organizational membership. He points out that it satisfies the Hierachy of Needs of the employee when he believes in the work the organization does.

In the next section we will explore the concepts of especially of vision and mission within the traditional field of corporate strategy. Mission and vision are most often connected to strategy therefore it is essential to develop an understanding in this field.

2.2 Strategy

Porter defines the essence of strategy "in the activities-choosing to perform activities differently or to perform different activities than rivals." (1996, p.64) Although there is a lack of a common definition of mission statements in the literature, many authors agree that within the strategy process corporate mission statements are the first steps in strategy formulation (Strong, 1997). Furthermore, the mission statement has been closely connected to the survival and growth of any business. Without a defined mission statement, businesses are deemed to fail in the opinion of a majority of researchers. (Analoui and Karami, 2002).

Piercy states that the mission statement, or corporate mission, is "the purpose and direction of the business". (1993, p. 32) Strategy and corporate mission are closely connected as the strategy "is a statement of how the firm plans to develop, while the mission provides the logic linking together the different elements of strategy." (Piercy, 1993, p. 32)

Piercy also defines corporate mission as "the heart of strategic planning" (Piercy, 1993, p.35). Finding and defining the corporate mission should be seen as the foundation of strategic planning. It facilitates strategic decisions, once the corporate mission is identified and defined. Considering how Piercy (1993) describes the mission statement, we recognize that he uses the word purpose as one ingredient that the mission statement should include.

Raynor provides a theoretical framework that shows how mission and vision statements are created and influenced by other forces. Raynor states "the mission should emerge from a broad understanding of a company's core competencies, but applied in a way consistent with the company's value". (1998: 371) In other words the mission statement should describe the company's current competitive positioning which also underlies the definition of the mission statement defining what a company is and does right now. It is the basis for the present identity of an organization.

A vision statement in Raynor's (1998) eyes describes the future. It formulates the desired future state of the company within its competitive environment. In general Raynor (1998) also believes that mission and vision of a company are not able to stand alone. Raynor (1998) developed a whole framework where he places mission and vision in regards to other concepts. As we only focus in this paper on the purpose, vision and mission, only the important extracts, that include the vision and mission, of this framework will be introduced. He describes this in three graphs.

Figure 1: Defining the Vision (Raynor, 1998)

Figure 2: Defining the Mission (Raynor, 1998)
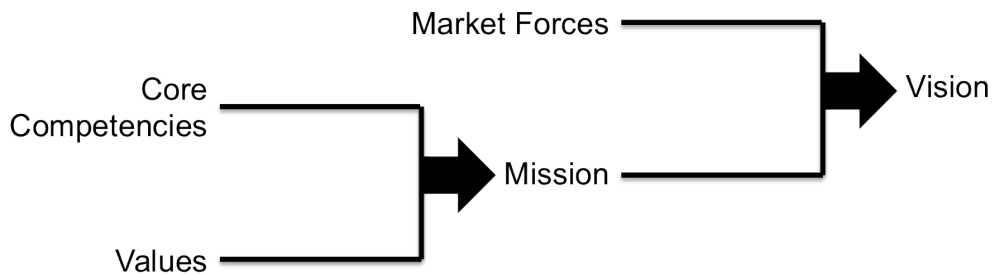
Figure 3: Creating the Vision and Mission (Raynor, 1998)

These three graphs demonstrate how Raynor (1998) sees the construction parts of the mission and vision of an organization. The core competencies and the values of a company combined define the mission. After having defined the mission, the vision can then be described by looking at the mission and the acting market forces. Raynor (1998) clearly puts the mission and vision concepts within the framework of strategy. He tries to explain how the mission and vision are created using strategic concepts.

This framework by Raynor clearly shows that the mission and vision of an organization are a part of a bigger picture and play a crucial role in the identity of an organization and its strategy.

In the next section a closer look is taken at the connection between Brand Management and purpose, vision and mission. As Brand Management is the combination of developing identity and

strategy to, it combines all the above discussed already. Therefore it is important to have a closer look at the three concepts within this field of study.

2.3 Brand Management

Brand management has become increasingly important for organizations in recent years. It is not just a logo on a product anymore but is more and more seen as an overall strategy approach for the whole organization. This means that the definition of the brand vision and purpose, which are the foundation of creating a brand (Kapferer, 2008), is now a task of the management. (Urde, 1994) Incorporating brand management as an integrated strategy for an organization requires "organizing and controlling the operations in such a way that an attractive added value can be created." (Urde, 1994, p. 18) This type of alignment is also referred to as brand orientation. As an essential part of brand orientation is to create a brand identity that goes hand in hand with your organization's identity, the purpose, vision and mission play an obvious role in this process. Therefore we will have a closer look into the development of a brand identity and how it connects with the purpose, vision and mission.

Leuthesser & Kohli (1997, p. 59) identify the mission statement as an important tool to "form its identity, purpose, and direction". Furthermore these authors postulate that mission statements are "important instruments by which a firm's essential values are conveyed to its stakeholders." (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997, p. 59) These statements show a clear connection of the mission statement and the identity of the organization. Additionally the mission statement is also closely connected to the identity of the brand, which is very much connected to the corporate identity. Urde (2003) explains the connection between the mission and the corporate identity as follows: "Within a company that competes using its corporate brand, the mission is (…) an unmistakable driving force and expression of the organization's overall goals. It thereby becomes a part of the brand's identity." (Urde, 2003, p. 1024) However, not only the mission plays a crucial role in forming the corporate brand's identity but also the vision statement. "A brand is not the name of a product. It is the vision that drives the creation of products and services under that name. That vision, the key belief of the brands and its core values is called identity." Kapferer (2008, p. 171) identifies the brand identity as one of the critical tools in brand management together with positioning. As mission and vision are connected with the identity of an organization we will explore the concept of brand identity.

As stated in Cunningham et al., (2009, p. 68) "a mission statement is one type of summary projection of corporate identity." Leuthesser & Kohli, (1997, p. 59) as cited in Cunningham et al., (2009, p. 68) also point out that "a mission statement is thought to be necessary in helping a company form its

identity and is purported to be the starting point for consultants specializing in corporate identity programs".

Kapferer (2008, p. 32) states that a brand is "driven by a vision" to transform a category. This means that a brand should aspire differentiation and not conformity with the competition. It needs to take on a unique position and consequently a unique identity. This supports our assumption that the mission and especially the vision are connected to the brand identity. Kapferer provides further support when he states that "identity expresses the brand's tangible and intangible characteristics – everything that makes the brand what it is, and without it would be something different. Identity draws upon the brand's roots and heritage – everything that gives it its unique authority and legitimacy within a realm of precise values and benefits." (2008, p. 178) As mentioned before purpose, vision and mission provide organizations with the foundation of forming their identity. Therefore, the corporate brand identity is automatically influenced as well.

According to Kapferer (2008, p. 182), "engaging brands must not be hollow, but have a deep inner inspiration. They must also have character, their own beliefs, and as a result help consumers in their life, and also in discovering their own identity." Kapferer defines six dimensions of a brand, which compose the identity of the brand. The most important dimension is the culture. It includes the values which are the very similar or shared by the organization's identity and the corporate brand identity. (Urde, 2003) As the culture again is part of the brand identity, the purpose, vision and mission are crucial concepts for forming the brand identity.

As we have now explored the purpose, vision and mission in the context of the three areas of study in social psychology, strategy and brand management, we now present our theoretical framework.

2.4 Theoretical framework

As we have previously established the links and effects of purpose, mission and vision on organizational identity, strategy and brand management, we will put these three concepts in the context of the brand orientation framework. This framework is chosen as it illustrates the efforts of an organization to develop a core value based corporate brand that interacts continuously with the identity of the brand, consumer and the organization. Furthermore, we chose this model as it highlights the concept of identity which has been a major topic covered by the three concepts. In addition to that, the brand orientation, connects the strategy with the brand management, which again are two fields of study that the purpose, mission and vision have been related to. Later, during the empirical evidence section, we found that this framework was in fact, proven to be relevant.

Figure 4: The Brand Orientation framework (Urde, 2003)

This model states that the organizational values, which are the basis of the organizational identity, provide the starting point for the brand identity. The brand identity is defined in the core values. It is a steady interplay between the organization's identity, the brand identity and the consumer's identity. This is where the mission and vision come into play. The core values incorporate the mission, vision and organizational values. As the mission is often said to include the purpose, all three concepts are included in this framework. Therefore, we can conclude that the purpose, mission and vision of the organization represent an integral role in building the brand identity and hence in being a brand oriented company.

"When an organisation grows from a position in which the mission, vision and organisational values are brought together in the form of core values, a vital step on the road towards high-level brand orientation has been taken." (Urde, 1994, 1997, 1999; Hankinson, 2000 as cited in Urde, 2003)

As already mentioned in the introduction, our belief of brand management being an integral part of the organizations strategy, this framework provides the clear connection between the brand orientation concept and mission and vision.

2.5 Concept review

The following section will provide a literature review of the purpose, vision and mission and related concepts. These related concepts are brand promise and leadership. As these concepts have often been mentioned in relation to the three concepts, we will also give a review of these. To start this section we have created a table that shows the commonly used terms when referring to the three concepts.
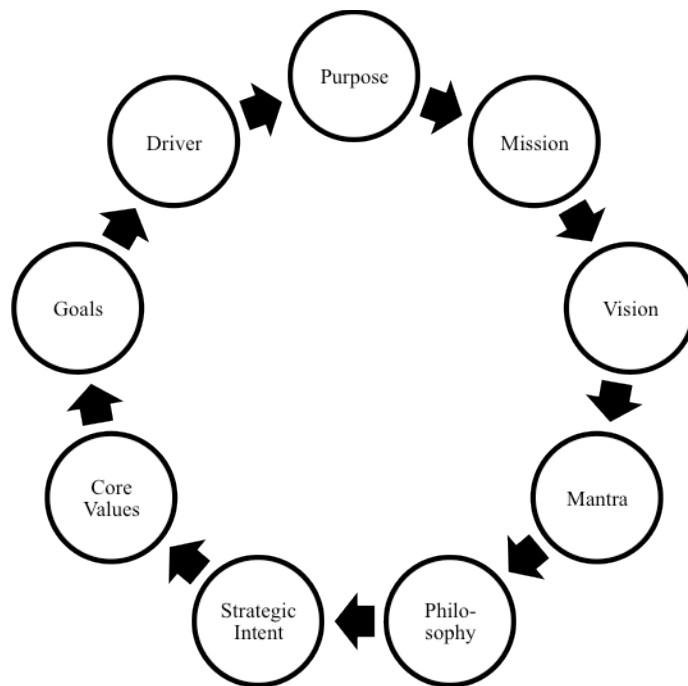
Figure 5: Terms commonly used to refer to Purpose, Vision and Mission

2.5.1 Purpose

We will start with trying to define and explain the concept purpose as it seems to be the most all encompassing concept among the three. Especially since purpose is often used to describe the mission it is important to differentiate between these two concepts to understand each impact and meaning. Therefore we will gather what purpose is not.

Mourkogiannis (2006) differentiates purpose from vision by stating that vision is about the success of the company in the future. Vision as mentioned before is a desired future state or image of a company. Mourkogiannis (2006) argues that the vision is most often amoral, meaning that it is mostly focused on achievements solely by the organization. The purpose on the other hand provides a moral aspect and "creates a direction for the company but not necessarily a snapshot of the destination." (Mourkogiannis, 2006, p. 52) This already gives the impression of purpose being something bigger that provides an ideological outlook of how an organization wants to be without a specific image.

In regards to the mission, Mourkogiannis (2006) also states that mission is more about the output and impact of the company with an added moral twist. This gives the mission a more operational approach combined with a touch of moral and makes it more of a management tool. The purpose on the other hand, although it also provides a sense of direction for the organization, is far less operational oriented and more existentiel. In comparison to both concepts, mission and vision, purpose has by far a greater scope and ubiquity and should therefore be considered separately. (Mourkogiannis, 2006) However, Mourkogiannis provides confirmation of the interconnectedness of all three concepts when he states that "when a company is driven by a purpose, the vision, mission and values flow naturally from that purpose." (2006, p. 54)

2.5.2 Vision

Larwood et al. (1995), describe the concept of vision as "one that is not directly observable and that seemingly carries meaning beyond any single description" (Larwood et al., 1995, p. 740) One possible description is brought forth by Campbell and Yeung (1991). The authors point out that the critical point is that "a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists" (Campbell and Yeung, 1991, p. 145). However, there are additional views of the vision.

As stated by Campbell and Yeung (1991), and Bennis and Nanus (1997) vision is identified as a central concept in their theory of leadership. According to the theory, "to choose a direction, a leader must first have developed a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This mental image may be as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or mission statement." (Campbell and Yeung, 1991, p. 145)

The major distinction between the concepts of mission and vision is that vision is mostly connected to leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2009) identified in a survey that the second most important attribute a leader should possess is that he or she is 'forward-looking'. As above stated the definition of a vision "is a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization" (Bennis and Nanus, 1997, p.82) which explicitly uses the term 'forward-looking'.

The vision moves between utopia and present reality. (Rüegg-Stürm and Gomez, 1994). It is a fine line between fantasy, that is unlikely to come true, or an actual vision, that describes something desirable in the future to happen. Furthermore vision can only be strong if it is shared. For CEOs, founders or leaders, this means that they need to find a vision that the employees of the organization will believe in and are willing to follow. Due to its close relation within the literature to leadership, a closer look at the concept will be taken.

In the following a table is presented with definitions for "vision statement" from different authors

Author	Definition
Rüegg-Stürm and Gomez (1994)	Vision delineates a certain perspective of the world, a perspective of a future desired reality
Bennis and Nanus (1997)	A mental image of a desirable future state of an organization
Morden (1997)	Vision is an organized perception or phenomenon. It is an imagined or perceived pattern of communal possibilities to which others can be drawn, given the necessary enthusiasm and momentum on the part of the leader who is promulgating that vision.
Raynor (1998)	A statement of the desired future state of the organization within the arena of competition defined in the mission.

Table 1: Definitions Vision

2.5.3 Mission

Among managers and academics, there is much confusion surrounding the concepts of mission and vision. In order to fully understand and be able to differentiate between the concepts, it is important to formulate more succinct definitions of the terms.

There are two schools of thought in regards to mission (Verma, 2009). The first school of thought believes that the mission of an organization should be seen as a business strategy or strategic tool. The views held by Campbell and Yeung (1991) lie within this first school of thought. Campbell and Yeung (1991) point out that some organizations take the view that mission is primarily a strategic tool, which defines the rational behind the business of the decisions made as well as the business's target markets. The authors also point out that in this context, mission is perceived to be the first step in strategic management.

The second school of thought holds the belief that the mission statement should be seen from a more philosophical or ethical point of view. This philosophical approach holds that the mission is seen as the "cultural glue that makes the organization work as collective unity" (Verma, 2009, p. 156).

Despite these differing schools of thought, Campbell and Yeung (1991) argue that a mission exists when "strategy and culture are mutually supportive". The authors believe that "an organization has a mission when its culture fits with its strategy." Campbell and Yeung (1991, p. 145) According to the

authors, the mission is concerned with the way the organization is managed today and its purpose (Campbell and Yeung, 1991).

In the following we want to shortlyintroduce one of the most wel known models for mission statements by Campbell and Yeung (1991)- The Ashridge Model

Purpose	Strategy	Behaviour	Values
To satisfy Shareholders Stakeholders	A definition of what business are we in? Position strategy Strategic Competitive advantage	The Behavioural Standards required to convert 1&2 into action	The beliefs and moral principles of the organisation, culture & philosophy which provides meaning to individuals, give meaning to work; work gives meaning to life.

A STRONG MISSION EXISTS WHEN THE 4 ELEMENTS REINFORCE EACH OTHER

Figure 6: The Ashridge Model (Campbell and Yeung, 1991)

This model consists of four pillars which a mission statement should include and define. Purpose, Strategy, Behavior and Values. It states "that mission is an issue which involves both the culture (heart) and the strategy (minds) of the organisation, requiring commitment and enthusiasm among employees, which comes from a commitment to the principles on which the company operates" (Campbell, 1989 cited in Strong, 1997, p. 269). From this perspective it can be concluded that the mission statement is not only a concept used for managers to be guided for strategic purposes of an organization but it should also address the employees (internal stakeholders) and external stakeholders.

Analoui and Karami (2002, pp.14) state that "a mission statement allows the firm to articulate a strong vision for the organisation and to communicate that to its growing number of employees and professional managers." This statement expresses the close connection and interdependence of mission and vision. Although often in the literature these two concepts are used interchangeably they do have different purposes and meanings.

In the following we are presenting a table with different definitions of mission.

Author	Definition
Bart (2003)	Mission statement is designed to answer the most fundamental questions for every organization: Why do we exist? What are we here for? What is our purpose?
Strong (1997)	Mission is the organization's vision of its future position and how it will be achieved.

Bontis, (1996, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003a)	They are the launching-pad for setting organizational objectives. They drive organizational priorities and intellectual capital development.
Analoui and Karami (2002)	A mission statement allows the firm to articulate a strong vision for the organisation and to communicate that to its growing number of employees and professional managers.
Van der Weyer (1994)	They set the tone for the organization's climate and culture
Desmidt et al (2011)	A formal document that articulates an organization's distinct and enduring purpose
Toftoy and Chatterjee (2004)	A commonly advanced view is that a firm's mission statement is an enduring statement of purpose that distinguishes its business from its peer firms, identifies its scope of operations, embodies its business philosophy and reflects the image it seeks to project
Raynor (1998)	A concise statement of the customers and core competencies of the organization; in other words, the arena of competition for the organization and those characteristics of the profession that will allow it to perform successfully in that arena.

Table 2: Mission Definitions

2.5.4 Brand Promise

The next concept we want to look into is brand promise. As we have previously connected the brand identity to the purpose, mission and vision statement, the brand promise is the next step in relating these concepts to the external side. The brand promise is intently related to brand identity. It is what needs to be delivered by the brand to their consumers. (Pungaisri, 2008) Hence, the brand promise is what the consumer receives in the interaction with the brand.

Brand promise is an important concept in our research as it is widely recognized as a central theme in the process of positioning through differentiation. As stated previously, both brand identity and positioning are instrumental in effective brand management, therefore it is now important to explore the concept of the brand promise.

"Positioning a brand requires an emphasis on the distinctive characteristics that make it different from its competitors." (Kapferer, 2008, p. 175) The first step in doing so, requires a brand to determine its benefit. This benefit refers to the brand promise and consumer benefit. According to Kapferer (2008), the

brand promise is what actually causes the differentiation which causes the consumer to choose one brand over another.

In order to understand the connection between the brand promise, purpose mission and vision, it is first necessary to acknowledge the difference. Some people might refer to the brand promise and the mission and vision as one and the same. (Knapp, 2008) However, it is not. The brand promise describes more of a feeling about the experience with the brand, a relationship, rather than a present or future state of how the brand is or what it does. The brand promise is therefore rather an the outcome of the actions and communications of the organization according to the purpose, mission and vision. Knapp continues by saying "The promise should become the heart and soul of an organization and set the tone for everything it does" (2008, p. 30). Referring to the brand promise as the heart and soul of an organization provides an even more intangible character of this concept.

2.5.5 Leadership

Bennis & Nanus (1997) clearly state in their book "The Leaders: Strategies for Taking Change" that leadership only works with a strong vision. They define leadership as "the pivotal force behind successful organizations and that to create vital and viable organizations, leadership is necessary to help organizations develop a new vision of what they can be, then mobilize the organization to change toward the new vision." (1997, pp.2-3) This quote clearly connects the leadership to the vision in that the leadership is basically responsible for helping the organization to fulfill the vision. Furthermore the leadership needs to be able to create a vision that the organization should work towards.
"Leadership is what gives an organization its vision and its ability to translate that vision into reality. Without this translation, a transaction between leaders and followers, there is no organizational heartbeat." (Bennis and Nanus, 1997, p.19) This quote also refers to translating the vision into reality which means to be able to relate the vision to today and act accordingly towards the vision. This acting involves again the mission which is the present definition of the organization.

Hamstra (2011) quotes Mike Krzyzewski, the men's basketball coach at Duke University, when he says that the people need to feel the vision, they need to own it. He touches upon a very important aspect of leadership and vision. If nobody shares a vision the leader is powerless as nobody will follow and engage in his vision. Therefore, it is important for leaders to create ownership of the vision in order for people to feel responsible which consequently leads to engaging and supporting the vision.
Furthermore leadership is also connected to identification.

 "It motivates by identification, rather than through rewards and punishments." (Bennis and Nanus, 1997, p.74) Leadership will not be very successful if nobody is able to identify with it. As the

purpose, vision and mission have been closely related to creating identification, the leadership needs to be in line with these concepts in order to be effective.

2.6 Summary of the theory

In order to provide a summary of the theory part we have created a tentative framework that shows the connections between the purpose, mission and vision and how they interact.
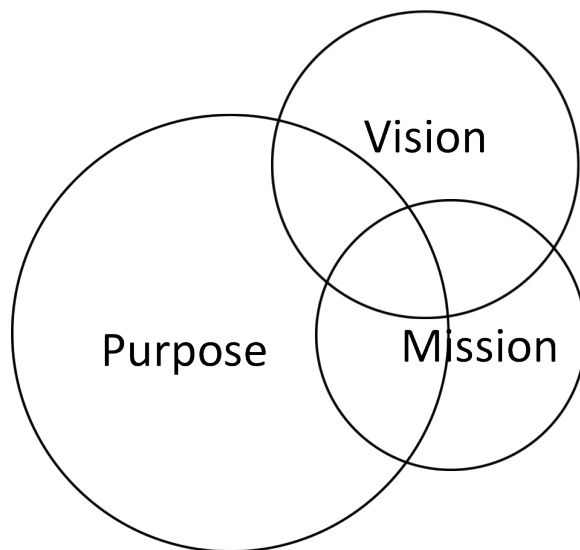
Figure 7: Tentative framework of the interconnectedness of Purpose, Vision and Mission

The different circle sizes of the purpose, mission and vision represent the relative scope of these concepts. The purpose is represented by the largest circle and intersects each of the other concepts denoting the ubiquitous nature of purpose (Mourkogiannis, 2006). Although the purpose gives a sense of direction, it does not provide a snapshot of a future image. The vision is represented by the second largest circle as it is a rather broad image of a future state. It does not include how this state should be achieved which would narrow the vision further down. Therefore the mission is represented by the smallest circle as this denotes the narrowed down focus of the mission which provides the direction that is taken towards fulfilling the vision and the overall purpose.

From our literature review, we have determined that one aspect that these concepts have in common is that they all provide a sense of identity (Ashforth et al., 2008). Therefore we represent the concept of identity within the intersection of all three circles. When all of these concepts flow into each other then the identity of the organization is formed. The intersections also show that these concepts connect in different areas with each other.

3. Methodology

In this section we will provide an outline and arguments for the the specific methodological approaches we have used in conducting our research. This section will provide explanation as well as justifications for the application of these approaches.

The concepts of purpose, vision and mission are intertwined through various theoretical perspectives. These concepts are not an end in themselves but rather feed into a number of other related processes. These related processes combined with our concepts lead to the establishment and survival of the organization as well as an integrated brand approach. Additionally, the presence of other factors such as identity, leadership and brand promise, have affected the research strategy and methodology as well as the data collection methods and indeed the research design. After the research design we will continue arguing for the sampling method and selection of our participants as well as how we designed and conducted the interviews. Lastly, an explanation and justification for the choice of data analysis will be given.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Not only are business situations complex, they are also unique. They are a function of a particular set of circumstances and individuals. (Saunders et al, 2007, p. 107) Our analysis of the literature has led us to apply certain research philosophies which will affect the end result and the applicability of the concepts when studied within different approaches. In our research on the meaning of visions and mission statements we had to apply respondent meanings of the social phenomenon within the following research fields:

· Social psychology
· Strategy
· Brand Strategy

As we are trying to gain an understanding of how practitioners use and understand the concepts of purpose, vision and mission, it is crucial for us to understand the "differences in humans in a role as social actors." (Saunders et al, 2007, p. 106) Furthermore we believe that we are not a totally objective, as the positivism argues, but rather already have our own pre-constructed set of meaning through which we interpret that of others. (Saunders et al., 2007) Our interpretivist stance is additionally supported by the

fact that business situations are a "function of a particular set of circumstances and individuals" (Saunders et al, 2007, p. 107) which makes them highly complex as well as unique.

In conducting qualitative interviews connected with case studies we are trying to find out the meanings and views that the respondents connect to purpose, mission and vision within the context of their organization. That is why we have tried to focus on interviewing CEO's or higher management level employees in order to understand how these concepts are used in their organization and how these persons are interpreting the meaning of those concepts.

As we are exploring what these two concepts mean in the context of the organization as a social construct, it is important for us to understand the perceptions and actions of the participants.

It is for this reason that we take on the view of a subjectivist ontology. More specifically, a social constructionism as we are aiming at understanding how the respondents see certain issues. (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008, p. 73). As we are looking at individuals as social actors within the organization, we try to find out how they place different interpretations of purpose, mission and vision within their organization. (Saunders et all, 2007) We do not believe that the organization exists in a reality that is external to the social actors and is pre-given (Bryman and Bell, 2011) but it is rather a construct of "perceptions and consequent actions of social actors" (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 108) This consequently means that we take the view of the companies that we are studying are not a given "reality" but are rather based on the perception that the individuals have.

3.2 Research Strategy

Based on the fact that the concepts of purpose, mission and vision are so widely misunderstood, one of our main goals is to provide clarification of the concepts as well as the actual importance and relevance of these concepts for organizations. In order to realize our goal, and add to the existing knowledge base in social science, we conduct an exploratory study of the three concepts – purpose, vision and mission in order to understand their theoretical meaning as well as their practical function.

We believe that this approach was the most appropriate as "an exploratory study is a valuable means of finding out 'what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light" (Robson, 2002, p. 59). In particular, the point of "assessing the phenomena in a new light" was of special interest to us in this research paper as we aim to connect these concepts to an integrated branding strategy.

We are applying qualitative research as this type of research provides the information we are looking for. Qualitative research focuses on the outcome of words rather than numbers (Bryman and Bell, 2011) which helps us to identify the meaning and function that are connected to purpose, mission and vision. Although qualitative research is often criticized for not being reliable and valid as they cannot be

measured in the sense of quantitative research, we still believe that qualitative research is the most appropriate for our study as there is a focus on the understanding of how people see the concepts. We do not believe that there is one certain truth about these concepts, but rather believe that there can be more than one (Bell and Bryman, 2007) due to the applied stance of social constructionism.

In order to be able to evaluate a qualitative study, Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Lincoln and Guba (1994) as cited in Bell and Bryman (2007) suggest two different criterias to assess a qualitative study: Trustworthiness and authenticity. The biggest concern of this study is trustworthiness. Therefore we will go into detail with that criteria.

Trustworthiness is broken down into four sub-criteria:

Credibility: requires carrying out the research "according to the canons of good practice and submitting research findings to the members of the social world who were studied for confirmation that the investigator has correctly understood that social world." (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 396) In order to fulfil this criteria, we have informed each respondent that we will send excerpts from the study so that they may validate our interpretations.

Transferability: Qualitative research aims to understand the unique construction of the respondents social world, and therefore provides depth rather than breadth. A thick description, (Geertz, 1973a in Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 298) which includes "rich accounts of the details of a culture" (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 398) is given. For our study, the clarification of purpose, mission and vision, accounts of organizational culture, daily activities and historical accounts were given. This thick description enables or allows for judgements of transferability.

Dependability: An "auditing" approach is adopted in order to establish the merit of research in terms of trustworthiness. Complete records are kept of the entire research process.

Confirmability: Although complete objectivity is impossible, we conduct our research in good faith and with the utmost level of objectivity possible.

Furthermore, it was necessary for our study to conduct case studies. Robson (2002, p. 178) defines a case study as "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon with its real life context using multiple sources of evidence".
As we are able to apply multiple sources of evidence, which include the interviews and public available texts and documents about the company, the case study is justified.

Saunders et al. (2007) state that the case study is appropriate if you are trying to answer the questions "Why" as well as "How" and "What". Since we are trying to answer why and how these concepts are used in specific organizations, the case study approach is justified. As our aim of this study is to gain a rich understanding of the context in which purpose, mission and vision are applied, it is necessary to employ a case study strategy.

Within the literature, there are a number of differing theoretical views on the concepts of purpose, vision and mission. Additionally, from a practical point of view, the understanding and application of the concepts is extremely varied. As a result, we have also found a number of different topics that relate to the concepts and hence need attention. Therefore we had to apply an iterative approach of going back and forth between theory and data in order to makes sense of the concepts (Bryman and Bell, 2011) and to identify relevant themes. The initial stage of the iterative approach involved conducting an extensive literature review of the concepts applied across a number of various fields of study. The iterative approach was additionally appropriate as it is in line with the hermeneutic philosophy. Our frame of reference is based on the knowledge gained from our extensive literature review, as well as our previous studies in brand management and strategy.

The complex nature of the concepts of purpose, mission, vision and within the organization make it necessary to use an inductive approach as this approach helps to make sense of concepts that are less than straightforward. (Bryman and Bell, 2007) As we are trying to develop theory after the data have been collected the inductive approach is applicable. (Saunders et al, 2007)

The unit of analysis is also important to consider as we are applying case studies. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2007, p. 103) In our research we have two units of analysis. First of all we have the organizations that serve as our case studies to put mission and vision into context and find out how it is used and functions. The embedded unit of analysis is the perception of meaning that the practitioners interviewed are placing on the purpose, vision and mission.

Additionally, another aim of our research strategy was to provide complete anonymity of the respondents and the case studies in order to provide a feeling of comfort. As we wanted the respondents to speak as practitioners and be open to share their honest opinion, the granted anonymity should provide the feeling of being able say what they honestly think. This way we hoped they would open up more and we could really get down to the bottom of these concepts. It would also provide our study with great and interesting insights that we might not have received if the respondents and case studies had been named.

3.3 Research Method

Hermeneutic phenomenology, which much like mission itself, has its origins in religion background. It is a "research methodology aimed at producing rich textual descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the lifeworld of individuals that are able to connect with the experience of all of us collectively" (Smith, 1997, p. 80). As we are trying to explore the meaning and usage of the purpose, mission and vision statement by asking practitioners for their opinion, we are aiming at giving a description of how they view and experience these concepts.

Phenomenology from an epistemological point of view "phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasise the importance of personal perspective and interpretation" (Lester, 1999, p.1). Therefore this method is usually applied in connection with qualitative research approaches as it uncovers the subjective perceptions of the interviewees. As we are researching the concepts of purpose, mission and vision, which underly a certain confusion and different interpretations, we are conducting research among practitioners that are able to give us their view and experience. Therefore hermeneutic method is applied as we "encounter meanings that are not immediately understandable but require interpretation" (Gadamer, 2004, p. xii). The hermeneutic phenomenology gives us the possibility to understand the experiences the practitioners have with these concepts and in addition, includes the interpretivist approach of interpreting the data based on our theoretical knowledge background. (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007)

During the course of conducting our research, we have changed and adjusted our direction in response to emerging notions that have given us more insights in the understanding of these concepts (Gadamer, 2004). In order to also be able to apply the hermeneutic approach to the interviews, we kept the questions rather open in order for the respondents to bring in their own thoughts. These were then, in return, added to our theory as relevant additional concepts (Bryman and Bell 2007, p. 406)

Broadly speaking, in conducting our case studies, we found that techniques similar to ethnography were suitable for the purpose of this research. These techniques were in no way a full fledged ethnography as we did not spend extended periods of time in the organization becoming part of the culture ourselves. Rather, our aim was to gain an understanding of how the respondents think within their context. Although ethnography is not a dominant research strategy in business, we argue that the similar techniques used were appropriate as we aimed to gain insights about purpose, mission and vision within a practical context and better understand and interpret these concepts from the perspectives of business practitioners (Saunders et al., 2007). In conducting our face-to-face interview either on location or via Skype, these similar techniques proved useful in arriving at an understanding of our respondent perceptions (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008: 73).

A multiple case study research strategy is used "to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events" (Yin, 2003, p. 2) As our main research questions involve how the

mission and vision concepts are used, why they are used and what meaning they have a mixture of a explanatory and exploratory case study is applied. (Yin, 2003, p. 6) The case studies that we have conducted are sourced from the interviews taken with managers from these organizations and other sources that were publicly available on the internet. For two out of the four case studies we were able to conduct two interviews with different managers. Unfortunately, our time frame limited us to these interviews as well as the time of the organizations studied. In order to compensate for the only few interviews within one organization, we have undergone additional six interviews with managers from other organization to support the findings from the case studies.

Furthermore, when conducting interviews, there are a number of ethical issues to take into consideration. It is important to ensure that no harm comes to the respondents (Bryman and Bell, 2011). As our research aims to develop a deeper understanding of the perceptions held by management in relation to the function of the concepts of mission, vision and purpose. We did not want to risk divulging any sensitive information about our respondents or their organizations both individually and within the case studies. Therefore, we offered all respondents full anonymity for themselves as well as their organizations. Additionally, anonymity encourages the respondents to speak freely and honestly about the concepts.

We have chosen 2 case studies that apply those concepts in a way that gives them meaning and therefore are useful to the organizations. Conversely, we have chosen one case study in which no meaning has been attached to the concepts and are therefore of little relevance to the organization. As a fourth and additional case study, we chose a relatively young start-up company in order to provide a contrast to the long established ones.

3.4 Data collection

As we are using the phenomenological hermeneutics method to conduct our research which aims at collecting rich language data, we chose the in-depth interview. The interview provides natural language data as it aims to "discover views, perceptions and opinions from both individuals and groups through language (...)" (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008, p. 42). Furthermore, the interview represents the chance to discover new concepts or insights as well as finding new dimensions that have not yet been covered by the literature review (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008). As we are aiming to develop an understanding of how the interviewees see those concepts, how they are used and why they are used, the in-depth interview provides the possibility to gain those insights. (Ibid, King, 2004) "The aim of qualitative interviews should be to collect information, which captures the meaning and interpretation of phenomenon in relation to the interviewees' worldview" (Kvale, 1996 as cited in Easterby and Smith,

2008, p. 144) This statement leads us back to our ontological and epistemological approach of interpretivism and social constructivism.

We chose to conduct interviews with practitioners who use these concepts in their work life or have used them before. The mission and vision concepts have been mostly used in strategy and as a basis for leading a company. Therefore we have tried to contact CEO's or high level managers who can provide us their insights and experiences on these concepts. In a discussion with them we were hoping to gain access to their specific knowledge and views. These concepts are said to be highly relevant and important for organizations. Yet so often, they are confused and applied in a manner that transforms the concepts into meaningless glossy words. We were hoping that the interviewees would recognize the value of this research by re-thinking the use and function of their own purpose, mission and vision, and therefore be more willing to share their insights (Saunders et al, 2007). Hence, after the interview, we offered to send them a copy of the completed study. In order to increase our chance of receiving an hour of their time, we have contacted them in advance, either through their secretary or through mutual acquaintances. This enabled us to establish a relationship, in advance via previous contact either by phone or through email. (Robson, 2002 as cited Saunders et al, 2007)

Another reason for why we chose the interview was the case studies. As we conduct four case studies of organizations, we needed to gather information as to how they are using these concepts and how the organization makes sense out of them. As in case studies usually more than one approach of data collection is applied in order to confirm and deeper explore meanings and experiences, (Yin, 2003) we are trying to conduct one in-depth long interview and have two follow up interviews that touch upon the most important insights given from the first interview. This also reflects the phenomenological hermeneutics approach as we are going back and forth between text and data, interpreting it and follow up on new insights.

We tried to conduct face to face interviews as we think it is important to establish a relationship of trust with the respondent (Bryman and Bell, 2007) Furthermore, we held the interview in a setting that made them feel comfortable which contributes to the respondents openness and willingness to share insights (Bryman and Bell, 2007) Despite, we decided to apply the semi structured interview which gave us a framework of questions that guided us through the interview. As we are still quite inexperienced in conducting interviews, the semi-structured interview was the right choice in order to maintain a certain degree of quality. Unstructured interviews require confidence and practice and were (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008) therefore not an option. However, our aim was to still leave freedom for the respondents to touch upon topics that have not been included in the guideline in order to ensure that the respondents is able to share his feelings, thoughts, experiences and actions.

Since we chose to do a "long" interview we wanted to make sure to come close in being able to construct how the respondent makes sense of his social world.

3.5 Sampling Method and Participant Criteria

Our choice of sampling method was that of non-probability sampling. This method was deemed appropriate for the purposes of answering our research question. Non-probability or non-random sampling was chosen rather than a statistically random sample as our case study research requires purposive sampling. Therefore, purposive sampling was chosen based on our desire to sample organizations and participants in a strategic way. It was necessary that those sampled were relevant to the research questions being asked. Therefore our participant selection criteria was based on the participants deemed relevant to our research topic (recruited on the basis of their positions in the organizations more specifically a variety of organizational types) (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Easterby-Smith et al, 2008)

It was additionally important to have a variety within the sample in order to ensure a variety of perceptions and interpretations (Bryman and Bell, 2007). To achieve this level of variety, we chose to sample participants from different types of organizations and who differ from each other in terms of key characteristics including: age, position, gender and experience. Our respondent were selected as a result of their relevance to understanding the concepts of purpose, mission and vision within the social constructs of their various organizations. Using the non probability sampling method of purposive sampling was appropriate for the small samples case study research. The objective was to select cases that were particularly informative (Neuman, 2000).

In maintaining the anonymity of our interview subjects, we developed a table to identify the respondents based on organization type.

Organization Type	Technology Start Up	Industrial Wholesaler	Manufacturing
	Engineering & Service	Food & Beverage	National Finance
	International Consulting	International Research Consulting	

Table 3: Participant Organization Type

3.6 Designing and Conducting

When designing our interview guide we tried to cover all the concepts that we discussed in our literature review in order to gain the respondents opinion and views in connection with these theories. As we had already conducted a literature review, some level of understanding the concepts and topic already existed. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008, p. 142) Therefore we entered the interview with some key questions that however were flexible enough to change in response to the interviewee's insights. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008, p. 142) However, we have still tried to cover all the topics that we have established beforehand in order to assure that we gain all the relevant knowledge. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008, p. 143)

In order for the interviewee to gain an understanding of what we were interested in, we gave a short introduction to the topic and into our research. This assures that the data will not be poor as the interviewee is informed of the issues that are important to us. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008, p. 143)
The guideline for the semi-structured interview included a section about the organization itself and the personal background of the interviewee in order to be able to interpret how he constructs his social world. (See Appendix:A Semi-structured interview guide as well as Appendix B for boiled down version for follow up interviews) The interview guide is also offered in the appendix in order to strengthen dependability. (Bryman and Bell, 2008, p. 473) Within the interview we have tried to apply all the relevant question types suggested by Kvale (Bryman and Bell, 2008, p. 477):

Introducing questions
Follow-up questions
Probing questions
Specifying questions
Direct questions
Indirect questions
Structuring questions
Silence and
Interpreting questions

During the interview we have tried to be good listeners and pay close attention to what the interviewee was trying to say. It is important to be sensitive during the interview to be able to notice when the respondent might feel uneasy or uncomfortable which is a big concern for us as ethical acting interviewers. (Bryman and Bell, 2008, p. 478) Moreover, we have recorded all the interviews to be able to transcribe and reflect on them afterwards. (Bryman and Bell, 2008, p. 482)

Burgees (1982, p. 107 as cited in Easterby-Smith et al, 2008, p. 144) summarized the importance of the in-depth interview as follows: "(the interview) is (...) the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience". Therefore we tried to capture the meaning and viewpoint that the respondent has in regards to the concepts as well as why he has them. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008, p. 144) The semi-structured interview was chosen by us as we tried to address more specific issues that had emerged throughout our literature review (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 472) We also chose the semi-structure interview as we were not able to conduct all the interviews together. Therefore we needed a guideline that covered the same topics in order to be able to analyse it later and make comparisons. (Bryman and Bell, 2008, p. 472) Additionally, the multiple case study research required us to gather data that is comparable between the cases. (Bryman and Bell, 2008, p. 472)

During the interview we applied the approach of a conversation. (Thompson et al. 1989) This had mainly two reasons. First we wanted the respondent to not feel nervous or under pressure to "say the right thing" as this interview was meant to uncover his meanings and associations with these concepts. To clarify this we also mentioned in the beginning of the interview and at the first contact that this is solely to gain insights into his viewpoint and experiences with these concepts and that there is no wrong or right. Second a conversation provided a deeper understanding and comfort for the respondent on what this is about and why we are here. Although the interview was held as a conversation, we tried to be passive in order to not lead and influence the interviewee in a certain direction by sharing our opinions or personal values. We were also not trying to turn the interview into a strict question answer session in order to provide the freedom to the respondent to share whatever he felt is important (Thompson et al. 1989)

The interviews were conducted in a familiar environment, mainly the office or the building the respondent works in order to create a comfortable surrounding in which he can open up. (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008: 151) In cases where it was not possible to conduct a face to face interview, we held the interview via skype or telephone to still have some human factor included. That is why conducting the interviews via chat was not an option for us.

3.7 Data Analysis

Bryman and Bell highlight the difficulty of analysing qualitative data as "it very rapidly generates a large, cumbersome database because of its reliance on prose in the form of such media as field notes, interview transcripts, or documents" (2008, p. 571) The first issue to address with the analysis is that we do not misrepresent the data. (Saunders et al, 2007, p. 192) This refers to our integrity and honesty as

researchers which places an ethical approach to the analysis on us. The second major concern is to keep the granted confidentiality of the respondents. (Saunders et al, 2007, p.192)

Having addressed the major concerns while analysing data, the next concern is how to analyse the data. As our research method is hermeneutic phenomenology we are analysing our data in respect to the hermeneutic circle which includes the "movement back and forth between the parts and the whole in process of understanding" (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010, p.132) This approach is used for the literature review as well as for the data produced by the qualitative interviews.

Moustakas states that "the text, or interview protocol, provides an important description of conscious experience. Reflective interpretation of the text is needed to achieve a fuller, more meaningful understanding, to bring (before me something that otherwise happens "behind my back")" (Gadamer, 1976, p.xviii) To be more specific in the analysis part we will use an approach that comes close to grounded analysis which means that we are trying to systematically analyse the data in order to "tease out themes, patterns and categories that will be declared in the findings." (Easterby-Smith et al, 2007, p.175) As we conducted the interviews to find out how practitioners view these concepts, what meaning they assigned to them and how they are used within the specific organization, we had a rather inductive approach which is also reflected in the analysis. Easterby-Smith et al (2007) suggest a seven step approach to analysing in-depth interviews which we have tried to follow. Due to the limitation of time, we had to adapt these seven steps in accordance to the time available. However, it was followed to our best practice. The steps included familiarization, reflection, conceptualization, cataloguing concepts, re-coding, linking and re-evaluation. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2007, p.179)

The four case studies served as the foundation of the analysis. Due to having conducted more interviews than from the four case study organizations, we will use the results from the other interviews to support the finding of the case studies. This is also justified by having only been able to gather at the most three interviews per case study due to the time limit of the organizations and that of us.

Attached in the Appendix C and D is an analysis table that was developed to help analyse the big amount of data.

3.8 Collection of Primary and Secondary Sources

As our research involved an extensive literature review which was undertaken after the hermeneutical method of going back and forth between the whole and single text, we have tried to mostly consider primary sources. This includes everything that is "first-hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation" (Yale, 2012). These sources are not characterized by their format but by their content.

Primary sources assure that we receive knowledge first hand and not through the interpretation of somebody else. As the quality of our research paper was aimed very high, these were our major type of sources. Most primary sources were found through the electronic library of the Lund University and databases such as Emerald, Ebesco and JSTOR. Although we have tried to use primarily primary sources we also considered secondary sources when they have been issued by academic press. Key words in the literature review included: mission, vision, corporate mission and vision, mission and vision statements, purpose, core values, corporate philosophy and synonyms.

4. Analysis

In this section we are going to present the analysis by starting off with the genera empirical results, following the case studies and the analysis un regards to the theoretical framework. The case studies have been used to generatet he results and have been supported by the other interview staken.

4.2 Empirical Results

As mentioned above we will start the analysis part by presenting the general empirical results. This section will include the perception about these concepts, a general view on the three concepts and their functions and how their difference is seen.

4.2.1 Perception- Bad reputation but useful overall

In order to gain an understanding of the personal perceptions the managers had of the concepts of mission and vision, at the start of each interview, we asked the same two questions: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the term mission? Followed by: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the term vision? The following are some of the answers:

"America. As stupid as it sounds, but I think that it is very American to state mission-vision statements that are formulated and the they are just there. If I think about mission and vision a little bit it is often just empty words with no meaning for the real life".
Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

"That it is corporate language. I used to work at (a company) and we had really strict mission and vision in that use to the point where I think it was almost too pushy. So, corporate I would say."
Manager,Technology Start Up

When asked "what is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the term mission?"
Manager A, International Research Consulting answered:

"Impossible (laughter)"

From these statements we can see that there are negative connotations and almost a critical view of mission and visions statements. In the past mission and vision have been widely used without activation or the attachment of much meaning. Therefore the comments made, either associating mission and vision with being American or making light of the concepts indicates that management finds little

meaning or value in the concepts. However, when the interview went on to discuss the importance of the concepts, their importance was still recognized and agreed upon in almost all interviews.

4.2.4 The special case of purpose

During the course of our interviews, purpose was rarely mentioned explicitly. It however, was indirectly mentioned in some interviews when talking about the mission.

During the course of the interviews conducted with the International Research Consulting, it came to light that the mission of the International Research Consulting firm is actually the purpose of the company. Despite the actual words stated within the redefined mission statement, which the employees have no connection to, they still had a strong sense for what they are here for. When broken down, the reason that they are there translates into their purpose:

(...) "we do have that mission very clearly, you know and when there is tension between management and the employees about how to do business, it is about management saying 'look, we gotta talk about the bottom line, because if we lose money on these contracts, you won't be able to continue to work, and we won't be able to give good advice and we won't be able to fulfill our mission which is to improve the well being of our fellow man."
Manager A, International Research Consulting

Manger A further emphasized the importance of the purpose when he stated:

"And that's why I am still working for (the company), in truth".
Manager A, International Research Consulting

When the organization attempted to rewrite their mission and vision statements, it was seen as something that was forced upon them and did not represent what they actually do. However, the individual's purpose as well as that of the organization was so strong that it remained despite the new glossy words.

"(...) the problem with the mission and the vision statement is they are relatively short and concise multiverb, multi adjective phrases because everybody tries to get it just right."
Manager A, International Research Consulting

In practice, unlike the mission and vision, the purpose can still be filled with meaning without necessarily being connected to brand orientation. This is possibly a result of the employees coming to the organization with their own personal purpose that's aligned with the organization's purpose.

In analyzing the statements made by the various managers, it came to light that the company for which the purpose seemed to play the biggest role was the one serving humanity. This provides a link to Mourkogiannis' (2006) concept of purpose having a moral idea.

4.2.3 Vision

The vision has been mostly connected to leadership within our empirical study. As we are exploring practitioner's perceptions of the concept of vision and its relation to leadership, we will provide an overview of the perceptions obtained from our selected case studies and interviews on this matter.

"The real leader they do not talk about IT they have it, because they have a strong idea".
Manager, Engineering & Service

"If founder lacks inspirational power, you need to hire someone to provide that for the organization. Important to identify goals and timeframes and to communicate those to the team. Depends on size of the organization, but strong leadership is necessary to help people prioritize."
Manager, Technology Start Up

"If the leader is in fact inspiring, the employees of the organization will actually want to follow and fulfill the overall objectives of the organization".
Manager B, International Research Consulting

For these managers, there does in fact seem to be a relative consensus in terms of the connection between leadership and vision. What this analysis draws out is that, for the selected interviewees, both the vision of the organization and the leadership need to provide inspiration as well as a sense of direction for the members of the organization. For a deeper analysis, we look now at additional perceptions of the link between leadership and vision:

"The leadership of the company has to carry the mission and vision otherwise it will not work".
Manager, National Finance

"Leader is important to show employees that they also live the mission and vision".
 Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

"Leaders have the responsibilities to create what makes the vision come true".
 Manager, International Consulting

For these managers at these various leading corporations, their perception of vision seems to share its strongest connection with leadership. At its most basic level, Manager, Food & Beverages believes that if nothing else, it is those in leadership who are most aware of the organization's mission and vision. *"Those in leadership [are] probably more aware of mission and vision".* When taken to the next level, many share the opinion expressed by Manager, Technology Start Up Firm. "The founder is crucial in providing vision and drive for the company". This shared perception clearly illustrates the link between the vision of the organization and its leader.

Now that the link between leadership and vision has been established, it is necessary to determine the overall impact of this link. As stated by Manager B, International Research Consulting, *"If the leader is in fact inspiring, the employees of the organization will actually want to follow and fulfill the overall objectives of the organization".* This statement illustrates the purpose of having an inspiring leader as well as a vision. It's all about the people. According to Manager B, International Research Consulting, it is

"Not enough to have a strong vision alone. Must also have a competent team to carry out the objectives of the organization and its vision".
Manger B, International Research Consulting

These elements are all interdependent on one another. It is not possible to inspire, without people to actually inspire. A vision cannot stand on its own, it must be articulated by an inspiring leader in order to create a sense of purpose or drive internally for the people of the organization.

As pointed out in Frisina & Frisina, (2011, pp.30) "Organizations do not do things; people do. People do things better when they are connected emotionally to the mission and vision of the organization and to its leadership." This statement suggests that it is therefore important for leaders to create ownership of the vision in order for people to feel responsible for it which consequently leads to engaging and supporting the vision. Again, when inspired by the vision and the leader, it is the employees who carry out the objective of the organization in order for it to move closer to its vision.

4.2.2 Mission

Comparing our case studies and the responses of our interviewees, there seems to be a common understanding of what mission means to them although their definitions differed. When asked how they would define the mission statement, we received numerous definitions, however, when asked to define it in their own words, the majority answered that a mission is what you do in order achieve your vision or what you do at the present and the reason you exist. It was also agreed upon that the mission defines the differentiation factor from the competition.

According to Manager, National Finance: *"The mission means all that what we know how to do, what makes us unique to the clients and to the market, at the present time, that is our way"* These definitions express a common theme which includes the recognition that the mission is the expression of what you are doing right now to achieve a goal or your vision. A majority of the mission statements that the companies have, also express the company's reason for being within the mission statement.

"As for our mission, uhm we see it very much as uhm what we do. Our reason for being, what we uhm, what we do (...) Uhm, and our mission is to continuously develop our products uhm to lead and to develop the whole category (...) "
Manager, Food & Beverage

As this company is a product focused company in FMCG, the focus in the mission is the development of their products as that is what they do best. It also includes the differentiation factor that they possess and is given through their products.

"(...) And for the mission our obvious mission is of course working with fruit smoothies, but we also integrated with a new, kind of a new part of our strategy and values which is, we want to highlight the importance (as we see it) trading with the exotic countries from where we but our fruits, and increase awareness of the fact that we actually use fruit which is not locally produced which is very much a big trend per se"
 Manager, Food & Beverage

In this statement the mission is clearly connected to their strategy which basically has been expanded to also place importance on ethical trading. So the mission in the company that defines its brand mainly through its products also has a mission that is very much product focused. This is why they exist and what they are doing in their daily work.

4.2.5 Time makes all the difference

From our analysis, we are able to determine that there is in fact a perceived difference between the concepts of mission and vision. According to the data collected during our case studies and interviews, there seems to be a general consensus among the managers as to the overall meaning attached to the vision. For almost all of the managers, they were able to recognize the vision as some futuristic and idyllic future state. A driver, something to strive for, or to be achieved. On the other hand, the majority of the interviews conducted show that the mission is understood to be the actions taken or what is done in order to achieve the organization's vision. Basically, the mission is more of the current focus of the organization, prioritizing what needs to be done in order to move closer to the vision.

"Vision is absolutely long term, it is very global. It demonstrates what we want to be, or where it should go. The mission concretes all that. The mission concretes and narrows it down. The vision is independent from the century you are in, independent from the market environment, independent if there are acquisitions or new establishments from other business operations, we as a business as a business group stand for the following. The mission is what breaks it all down and adds values."
Manager, Industrial Wholesale

4.2.6 General function of these concepts

A) Identification platform for employees

"So for us, mission it is the leading star, it's really putting all of us on the toes it put the company together in a way as from a one company point of view and its really customer oriented"
Manager, Engineering & Services

This statement already points out that it unites the people in the company and focuses on what they have to do. That is why it is really customer oriented as their main concern is the customer. Although this company is an engineering company, which produces products and numerous patents every year, they are not focusing their mission statement on their products but rather on what differentiates them and brings value to the consumers.

According to every interview conducted, the activation of the mission statement was perceived to be an internal. It is used to give guidance in their everyday work, to help prioritize and to know what you as an employee are.

"At our company, we determined the mission-vision and the principles. Every employee has a card, which is as big as a check card, where the principles, mission and vision are written down and to summarize in a compressed way "I embody those things"".
Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

This quote refers to the mission and vision as something for employees to know who they are "I embody those things". A clear connection is made between the company identity and the employee's identity. Hence the mission serves as an identity platform for the employees to create a sense of belonging and unity as stated by Manager, International Consulting:

"We say, or I think the goal of the mission statement is that it gives a platform for all employees for identification. So it defines what employees must do in their daily work, working for that specific company. And therefore it is important that every employee knows the mission as well as the vision"
"For me it is multidimensional and it has to reflect everywhere otherwise it is just empty words. An empty word for example for me is Coca-Cola with "We want to refresh the world". I don't know how you can translate that into everyday work. That is too unspecific. Although it shows that Coca-Cola always wants to stay within a specific segment but that was it then already. And if you connect "refresh" always with beverages or if you build a swimmingpool. I don't know. Insofar it is too unspecific for me therefore I think that the vision and mission have to be directed in a way that they are applicable long term, as a guideline, but is also anchored in every corporate function and communication unit and every employee has to know what it is and how he can use it himself:"
Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

B) Expression of the brand
"Because the mission that we have is basically the corporate peak performance, that we brought on point when we say: Okay, the mission means all that what we are able doing, what makes us unique in regards to the client, to the market, at the present point of time, that is our way (...) so that is our definition of brand (...) Brand in our understanding is the expression of corporate peak performance. That means it is an essential part of our doing, our right to exist in the market."
Manager. National Finance

This statement clearly connects the mission with the brand, which they both title as being the corporate peak performance. The mission states it and through the brand it is lived. By acting as a brand the mission is coming alive from just being words to being something of real value.

"The biggest part is that we live it. Absolutely. (...) For us the brand has the same values as the mission-vision. Insofar we also don't say when talking about the corporate principles, that it is necessarily owed to the mission-vision but to the brand. (...) I am absolutely agreeing with you that there cannot be made a difference between the brand and mission-vision if you are trying to sell a brand."

Manager. Industrial Wholesaler

Again, the connection between the brand and the mission and vision is made by stating that they have the same values. The mission and vision are seen as a necessity for 'being and selling' a brand. Furthermore we have identified two more applications of the purpose, vision and mission:

- Communication tool of what the company is
- Assessment tool and guidance tool for making decisions (strategy)

4.1 Case Studies

In the following we will present four case studies of companies that we have chosen to as a context analyze the mission and vision in. After the description of the cases, an analysis will be undertaken with the support of the other interviews that we have additionally conducted.

4.1.1 Case Study: The Technology Start Up

Formed within the last ten years, the company has seen both rapid growth and expansion while maintaining its focus on ensuring that its products and services available to its 10 million consumers across the globe. As a relatively new company, the process of formulating a corporate mission and vision statement was rather organic.

The company is very much focused on its approximately 1000 employees who play a critical role in the success that the company has seen. The vision of the founder and the core values they have defined is what the company lives by. For this company the vision plays a crucial role in everything they do. It helps them to prioritize and serves as an orientation for the work that they do. During the interview with the manager, strong emphasis was placed on what a crucial role the founder, with his vision, plays within the company. The manager expressly stated this: *"The founder had this vision and is the one who drives the company to where we are going."* The vision is therefore seen as the driver of everyday business that helps the employees to know what to do and how to do it.

As mentioned before, instead of the concept of mission, this company has its core values which serve as a *"tool for how to behave and how to foster the culture internally",* the Manager states. A

mission statement to them is not necessary, as *"the internal departments will clear that up."* In the early days when they were founded, the development of the core values and the vision was an organic process for them. There was no need to write it down. Everyone knew why they were there. Now that the company has grown and expanded, it needs a little bit more structure. The employees need to understand where they are going in order to understand what they are doing, and why they are doing it.

However, the core values and vision do not only play a role internally. The vision and core values are reflected in everything that they do. This is then communicated externally through their actions and external communication. So by living the core values and the vision, they are reflected outside. This is also in line with the way in which the company sees their brand. For them, the brand is not a direct result of their actions, but rather the result of how the consumers interpret them. The manager states: "Our brand is what our users say we are". Therefore their brand is shaped by their internal culture which enables them to live their brand. The process of building the brand was described by the manager in this way:

"I'd say in the early days when I did a workshop together with the team at the time when we were only 10 people we occupied a couple of core values. Those core values set the structure for both, the brand and the company culture. Since then we've been recruiting based on these core values. So now we say it's more the brand that shapes the culture rather than the culture shaping the brand. But in the early days the brand derived from the culture."

This culture, which is described as *" entrepreneurial, focused, pioneering, prestigious, hard working and fun"*, was clearly carried externally as it helped to shape the brand. In the above quote, the manager clearly states that the brand developed out of the people working there and the core values that were evolved which then gave the foundation for the brand and the company culture. The core values and culture also play an important role in the recruiting process as stated by the Manager. The company aims to create a natural setting where the core values and vision do not have to be pushed on people but rather are lived by them genuinely.

4.1.2 Case Study: Industrial Wholesaler

This company is the international leader in its core business. It consists of more than 400 associated companies in more than 80 countries. They currently employ around 66.000 people but still refer to the company as a family business. The company was founded almost 70 years ago and has always been able to save its unique, family oriented culture that the employees as well the business partners value. The founder of the organization plays a crucial role in the company even today. Although the

group consists of more than 400 companies they have for overall the same mission and vision. The only thing that differs is the operative plans which they have for every company.

The company carries the same name as the founder, which makes the founder and his family an essential and crucial part. The founder shaped the corporate culture and therefore the especially the vision. He started this company with a vision that ever since has been lived in this company. The mission and vision as such have only been formally written down a few years ago of which the founder's brother played a crucial role. Without his consent and approval the mission and vision would have not been finalized the way it is today. For this company it is obviously important that the mission and vision are lived in every aspect. And this can only be done if the mission and the vision are reflected in the corporate culture. The mission and vision for this company is a tool to transmit in a summarized version their corporate culture and corporate philosophy. The mission and vision is a summary of what is anchored in their corporate philosophy and corporate culture. Therefore for them it is so important to have these concepts. It comprises what is important for the company in order for every employee to know and to live by it. And the origin of all this is the corporate culture and philosophy. The manager also states that it is important to have a mission and vision that is useful in a multidimensional way. If it was only used one dimensional, it fails its purpose and would only be able to be used as a guideline of doing. Therefore in their company decisions have to be able to be assessed based on the mission and vision. And this does not only include the employee's decision but also the management's decisions. Their mission and vision is carried through all the hierarchies in order to be meaningful and not just empty words. Hence the mission and vision are reflected not only in the strategic decisions they take but also in the marketing that they are conducting and of course in their brand. In order for every employee to know what the company stands for they handed out little cards which included the mission and vision. Only if the employee knows what it is he can use it himself. In terms of activation, the management of the group, which supports the concept of living the mission and vision and communicating it indirectly, mostly only communicates the mission and vision.

Speaking of the role of the brand, the company recognizes no difference between the brand and the business. The brand is the business and the business is the brand. The brand and company respectively the mission and vision both have the same values. During the interview when talking about their strong corporate culture the manager said: *"... the corporate culture is the most important element of doing, 60% of the success represents the corporate culture."* The corporate culture of the company can be described in catchwords like *"predictability, youthful, open to the new"*. They are trying to stay curious and interesting. Despite its large size, the company does not have a very bureaucratic culture. This makes the mission and vision even more important to them. As said before, the mission and vision are seen as a

boiled down version of their corporate philosophy and culture which reminds and tells the people who they are and why they are here. It gives them a guideline to make a decision and to assess them.

The manager states that *"the company and the brand have exactly the same content as the mission and vision"* Furthermore for them the mission and vision are important for a long-term basis. If you do business in order to be able to keep doing business you need something that helps keep you focused on the core or essence of your business. The manager also states:

"For me the Vision and Mission is important for the people so that something can be transmitted that you can grasp. And everywhere, where you work with that is it important."

The company is also very transparent. On their website one can find a lot of information about the company itself, about the way they do business and about the people that work there. This reflects the way that the company sees its brand, that the people are part of the brand and that the corporate culture and philosophy play a big role. Although the company is a big international cooperation, they managed to keep their spirit of a family own company.

The company's success depends on their people. They want to be close to their clients and therefore need competent employees that know who and what they are working for in other to represent the company in their daily work. Their identity is clearly defined in the mission, vision and brand which cannot be separated. That is who they are.

"No matter who of the 66,000 employees promises something under his name (the founder) promises, that is a Brand Promise, he stands for that."

This statement clearly shows how the company sees its employees as part of the brand. If they promise something, it is a brand promise which makes them have to take ownership. The mission and vision also is a leading guidance in acquisitions and strategic decisions. If the company thinks that this specific organization does not fit to them, that they cannot justify it under the mission or vision, they will not acquire it.

4.1.3 Case Study: Engineering & Service

Founded over 100 years ago, this Engineering & Service Company has also revisited the corporate mission and vision statements within the recent past. With over 16000 employees worldwide, the company is completely focused on how its products and services can help their customers. Though the company had operations and employees around the globe, they describe their corporate culture as Scandinavian. *"(…) our origin is Scandinavia, this reflects our corporate culture(…)"*

"We kept the Scandinavian because what we are trying to say is that we believe that we have, a way of leading a way of business principles point of view that we feel are very connected to our culture in Sweden; and we believe that this is again what attracts people in China, brazil and so forth. In those countries, we will be much more Scandinavian that our competitors, it means that the way we look upon what we do and do not do, of course bribes is a no-no, and the way we look upon our sub suppliers, ethical and moral way, its not about nationality. Its more the value set".

In conducting this case study, it became apparent that this company perceives the mission and vision as multifaceted tools, and placed much emphasis on the role of the mission and vision statements in delivering the company's brand promise. For this company, the mission and vision is set out to attract the right people, with the same mindset and skill set. Management places emphasis on the strongest link being placed on having the right employees. *"Mission and vision is set out to attract right people, with same mindset and skillset".* The company also stressed that the importance of having the right people is so that they are able to deliver on what they call their brand promise. *"In order to deliver promise we need to have right employees and attract and keep them"*

According to the manager, the organization's vision is both a driver and employee focused. The company holds the belief that the mission and the vision have a connection, but that the vision of the organization should be more inspirational and aspirational for the future. The company is *"committed to create better everyday conditions for people".* While they believe that the mission is relevant to every one of its 16000 employees, and is the heart of everything, the company believes that *"Vision makes people proud of who they are, and attracts people on a continuous basis".*

4.1.4 Case Study: International Research Consulting

We offer this case as it presents some unique features as well as particular relevance to the study of mission and vision statements. It is important to mention that a case study of this organization is of particular relevance as the organization has recently gone through a rebranding exercise, which involved a close examination of the current mission and vision statements, as well as redefining the statements based on the input of the employees.

As a relatively small professional services firm that specializes in providing assistance for governments, economic development, health system services, and non-profit organizations, this company has a number of distinct characteristics. Though they are, by definition, a for-profit organization, the company operates in much the same manner as a non-profit. Founded in the mid 1960s, the company specializes in utilizing interdisciplinary social science research in order to provide advice and technical

assistance as a means of helping to solve various social, economic and technical problems for its various clients. With over 2000 employees, in locations around the world, the internal culture of the organization is described as *"extremely diverse, multicultural and international."* According to Manager A, the culture of this organization is *"a good reflection of the people."*

During the course of two separate interviews, conducted with two different managers, both interviewees placed strong emphasis on the importance of the people within the organization. Manager A expressly stated that *"The people in the organization are the culture of the organization"*. The manager also expressed that the people of the organization were a major deciding factor in the decision to work for this particular company. In terms of the mission and vision of the organization, the manager does not think that these concepts are of use in day-to-day life. *"…Where the value is actually, and I guess because the value is multidimensional and the mission and vision are more theoretical, I don't think they are useful in day to day life."* Therefore, during the course of the interview, not much importance was placed on the actual mission and vision statements. The mission and vision of the organization are *"a materialization of our values and our thinking. They are not used to drive our values and thinking."* During the rebranding process for the organization, the mission and vision statements were closely examined. Manager A believes that: *"... the problem with the mission and the vision statement is they are relatively short and concise multi-verb, multi-adjective phrases because everybody tries to get it just right."* However, Manager A was able to find some use in the overall re-branding exercise.

"Again what I think is more useful is the discussion that you have about the statements when you have those discussions on the mission and the vision and as I said before, because we have the values part of it, that was the part that really got people more excited."

What came across as more important for the people of the organization were the organizational values. It is these organizational values that the manager felt that most people could relate to. *"most employees would be able to recognize in the values of the organization."*

During the course of the interview with manager B, the culture of the organization came up as a relevant theme. Manager B states that the organization has a distinct organizational culture that also shares some aspects of its larger, collaborative funding partner organization. Manager B explains that the organization faces a unique sector challenge. Since the work of the organization is highly collaborative with the organization often acting as a facilitator or middleman between the clients and the larger funding organization, there are a number of shared cultural traits between partner organizations. However, the

manager also states that *"Though the various organizations share some cultural similarities in the way they operate, they still want to be recognized as individual, bringing something unique to the table."*

During an interview with Manager B, heavy emphasis was placed on the importance of having the right people in the organization in order to carry out the goals and objectives set forth by the mission and vision of the organization. Manager B states that it is not enough to have a strong vision alone. *"(...) but that strong vision should be accompanied by a competent team(...)"* Therefore, having the right employees with the right skills is integral to being able to carry out the objectives of the organization and its vision.

Manager B, shares the opinion that the mission and vision statements of the organization do not influence the behavior of the employees. Manager B sees the vision as *"some lofty ambition that seems to string together a number of technical sounding terms."*
The manager sees the rebranding as well as the newly formed mission and vision statements simply as a leadership tool to remind employees of why and what the organization is all about, but does not feel that they add any value without the right people to carry out the organization's goals and objectives. *"Without the right people with the right skills, it just paying lip service to the mission and vision."* Additionally, when asked how the branding efforts of the organization were perceived, Manager B emphasized that it's not enough to just be a brand. These types of organizations should be recognized for their provision of quality services that actually add value. *"(...) they can only achieve that recognition if they do good work, which the community appreciates".*

As we have now highlighted our case studies in regards to the mission and vision statements, we will continue with the analysis of specific themes and topics that were found. In this analysis we will support our finding with the additional interviews that have been conducted.

4.3 Analysis within brand orientation theory

As our selected theoretical framework is the brand orientation framework, we will in the following analyze the data in respect to the brand orientation concept.

4.3.1 Brand orientation and these concepts in general
As Urde states "[T]o conclude, brand orientation is, like market orientation, a mindset. The core of this orientation is customer satisfaction within the limits of the core brand identity." (2011, p. 4) This quote summarizes what brand orientation is about. During our analysis of the interviews, we have found that these concepts are only filled with meaning and function when they correspond to this mindset of

brand orientation. This brand orientation is represented by the companies having an inside-out perspective and the view that brand identity is key. (Urde, 2011) This was clearly shown in the example of the Industrial Wholesaler where brand identity was key to everything they do. As a major part of brand identity is the culture, this company clearly has the brand orientation approach as their culture plays an important role in forming their identity.

"The biggest part is, that we live it. Absolutely. As you said before the brand is very closely connected to the values of the Vision-Mission, for us the brand has the same values as the mission-vision. (...) I absolutely share your opinion that there should not be a difference between the brand and mission-vision if you are selling a brand."
Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

Here, Manager, Industrial Wholesaler clearly makes the connection between the mission, vision and the brand. For this manager, the mission, vision and brand share the same values and should not be separated. Furthermore he points out that the company lives the mission and vision just as much as they live the brand. Additionally, in the majority of the interviews it was stressed that the corporate culture plays a critical role. Manager, Engineering & Services indirectly points out how the culture influences the identity of their organization through communications.

"When you look at that communication, it has a flavor of the Scandinavian culture, if you compare Scandinavian with mid Europe, Austria, Switzerland, which is much much more that you decorate things, I mean the ads are much more, you have a lot of stuff there; if you question, why is that orange? They will just say it's beautiful, so why couldn't you have it? They decorate much more. We have much more of a Scandinavian way."
Manager, Engineering & Services

Hatch & Schultz (2008) point out the connection between the corporate culture, the vision and the brand image. They state that if there is a failure in aligning these concepts the brand is deemed to underperform (Hatch & Schultz, 2008). This statement represents another approach to brand orientation. We can see this illustrated in the case of the Engineering & Services company, where the corporate culture, brand image and vision are aligned.

On the other hand we have found opinions where the mission and vision did not play a crucial role for the organization. From what we can see, these companies did not follow a brand orientation

approach. Manufacturing company provides an example as through the interview it became apparent that the company did not actively live the vision and mission nor did they practice brand orientation.

"I can imagine, you always have to define, and when you have a strategy, you always have to ask yourself: Where am I today? I learned it the classical way, you always have to look at the marketing triangle: We are here, that is our competition and that is our client. That is basically the principle of the market environment. And regarding that you constantly have to position yourself: (...) And those theoretical rudiments you are doing in the back of your head."
Manager, Manufacturing

This company is obviously market oriented (Urde, 2011) and does not place a lot of importance on the active use of the concepts. To further illustrate this lack of importance, the concepts were referred to as strategic concepts held in the back of your mind.

4.3.2 Brand orientation and creating ownership through the mission and vision

When employees are part of the brand they have to feel responsible for it. In order to feel responsible they need to know that the work they are doing is contributing to the end result. (Scott, 2011) Ownership has to be created. Therefore the vision and mission need to be aligned to the brand in order for the employees to contribute with their actions and communication to the brand. As the mission has a more operational side to it which let's the employees know why they are here and what they are supposed to do, the employees are able to take ownership through the mission. According to Pollard, "As a person sees a reason for the task that is personally satisfying and rewarding and has the confidence that the mission of the firm is in alignment with his or her own personal growth and development, a powerful force is unleashed that results in creativity, productivity, service quality, growth, profit, and value". (2000, p. 22) This statement is also supported by the following quote:

"The mission is the concrete framework of action, that I give to the employees to go towards the vision and to formulate the vision and to just give him goals, which is important."
Manager, National Finance

He further elaborates:
"Because the mission, that we have, is basically the corporate peak performance, that we bring to the point"

Here we can see how the Manager connects the mission to the actions the employees take. He then further describes the mission as the expression of corporate peak performance which is also referred to as their brand. Here it is expressed what we have been saying in the beginning. The employee needs to contribute with his work to the brand in order to feel responsible. The mission provides that connection.

4.3.3 Brand orientation and the creation of leadership through vision

The vision is the concept most closely connected to the brand. "In the brand-oriented company, the brand vision represents the essence of the strategy." (Urde, 1994, p. 26) This means that all resources and communications are directed towards the fulfillment of the vision. In terms of vision in relation to the brand orientation concept, we have found that out of all of the concepts, visions as well as the mission are very interdependent. They are connected to a number of other concepts. During the course of our interviews and case studies, the connection that seemed the strongest was that of leadership.

We have found out during our interviews that though vision is activated internally, it can also be carried externally through strong leadership. As previously stated, the brand vision is the essence of the strategy (Urde, 1994).

4.3.4 Living IT with focus on employees

One theme or expression that was repeatedly mention was "Living it". The majority of the companies was saying that they are living the concepts. This

"From a behavioral perspective, brand orientation characteristics include the importance accorded to the internal anchorage of the brand identity (mission, vision, and values). The idea of "living the brand" has a strong link to the brand orientation concept." (Urde, 2011, p.4)

It has been stated that culture is everything to organizational performance (Frisina & Frisina, 2011). Through our interviews and case studies, we found that culture plays a central role in the formation, application and activation of both mission and vision within an organization. Culture came up as an overall fundamental element in the ways in which the mission and vision were perceived by each of the organizations. This is an extremely important revelation in terms of application and activation of both the mission and vision for the various organizations.

"Culture is very much influenced by the founder and his mission and vision".
Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

"It played a crucial role in the definition of the statements. Mission is part of the culture".
Manager, National Finance

"Core values are used as a guide for how to behave internally and foster culture within. Everything that the company does will reflect externally, what the company is and behaves internally".
Manager, Technology Start Up

"The corporate culture is reflected in the mission and vision".
Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

In terms of culture, management seems to recognize the influence culture has on both the mission and vision of the organizations. With the mission and vision reflecting the corporate culture, it is clear that both of these concepts are deeply imbedded within the culture and thus the activities, behaviors, and values of the organization. As we established earlier, the vision is perceived as where the organization would like to go, the culture of the organization will in essence represent both who you are as an organization as well as how you will go about achieving your vision. The mission and vision must be in alignment with the culture of the organization. If an organization is bottom-line performance driven, it will not make sense for them to have an altruistic mission or vision, as it will not fit a performance driven culture. Conversely, if the mission and vision of an organization is forced upon the employees and not the result of an organic process, it will not work, as these statements must be genuine expressions of the organization's culture and identity. This point leads us to the next finding, the involvement of the employees

4.3.6 Involvement of the employees
The case study of the International Research Consulting firm is a good example of an organization failing in its attempt to rewrite these statements.

"I think that it is in our case having rewritten our mission and values and vision after 20 some years, of international and about forty years as a company, it was rewritten based on the way we felt we should be acting. Or what we should be doing. Not what we are actually doing if you know what I mean".
Manager A, International Research Consulting

The result of this exercise was that the rewritten mission and vision statements were formulated as an expression of what the people felt they should be doing rather than a genuine expression of what they actually do. Therefore, this rebranding exercise was widely seen by management and the employees as a useless experience as well as a waste of money. Manager A states that: *"It was probably part of the rebranding exercise which was perceived to be a total failure by most employees"*. However, what did come out of it that was seen as valuable was the discussion of the core values, which are believed to be a genuine expression of the company's culture.

Brown et al (2004) states that the acceptance of the employees towards the mission statement requires at least three principles to be fulfilled: Awareness, agreement and alignment. For this organization, the perception of the new mission statement is that it is somewhat useless, as the employees were not fully involved in the development and therefore have no connection to it.

In the majority of the other interviews the managers stated that the employees have been involved in the process of development either right from the start of the company or through participation in workshops well after the founding of the company.

"We involved different employee-areas, the leadership, F1-, F2-, F3-level on to other different employee-areas, that we have involved in some sort of brand workshop"
Manager, National Finance

Here, the process of involving all level employees enabled the organization to develop the concepts organically by bringing the employees' voice and identity into the statements rather than forcing it upon them.

4.3.7 Recruitment tool and Internal Branding

Within the brand orientation concept it is also important to have the right employees. As the identity is the key in brand orientation, it is obvious that the mission and especially the vision play an important role in the recruitment process. Additionally, it is important to mention that in the course of conducting our interviews and case studies, it became apparent that management also perceived the vision and its connection to the culture of the organization as somewhat of a recruitment tool. This was most clearly suggested by Manager, Technology Start Up who stated that the company has been recruiting based on the company culture and core values and vision.

"I think it is crucial to understand our overall vision. For me, I get a lot of CVs with like a perfect resume but what I'm looking at are the ethics and the values that person is having. That is for me the most important thing, rather than a brilliant student".
Manager, Technology Start Up

This point was further emphasized when Manager, Industrial Wholesaler stated:
"Every company that really have the brand and that define the brand with a vision, will persist and find good and longterm employees."
Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

This statement clearly connects the vision statement to the recruitment of employees. The vision attracts good employees and helps keeping them loyal and emotionally attached. Which consequently leads to the concept of internal branding.

"Internal branding was considered important because it enhanced employees' sense of pride and belonging to the brand (brand identification)." (Urde, 2011, p. 4) This ties in with the statement made by the majority of the interviewees that they are "living the brand". Internal branding enhances this aspect and can only be done with the right employees.

The increased importance attached to the employees in regards to the mission and vision, has led to the use of internal branding as an additional application of the function of mission and vision. By making the employees a part of the brand, they are able to identify with it, creating a sense of belonging and a willingness to support the efforts of the brand. As mentioned before sharing the vision of the brand creates an emotional attachment, which inspires the employees to fulfill the vision. In this respect, the mission statement may be used as an internal branding tool providing guidelines on how the employees can deliver the brand promise and ultimately move closer to fulfilling the vision.

4.3.8 Mission and vision and the brand promise
"So the business but also the relation very much, and the good thing with this mission is that this is relevant for every one of the 16,000 employees in the company (...)"
Manager, Engineering & Service

The brand promise, the mission and the vision statements are closely related. The Manager, Engineering & Service even goes as far as saying:

"So uh, and actually it's even simpler than that because the brand promise, the business idea and the mission is the same (...)"

Manger, Engineering & Service

The brand promise has been defined as how a brand wants their customers to feel (O'Malley, 1991), which implies the relationship between the brand and the customer.

"Awareness of the mission, agreement with its principles, and confidence in one's ability to help carry it out are fundamental aspects of one's attachment to the organization's mission." (Brown et al, 2004, p. 32)

This statement stresses the importance of employees in the usefulness of the mission statement. If the employees are not agreeing with or are understanding the mission and its principles the mission will not have an effect and fails its purpose. The employees, as stated above, also need to be able to take ownership of the mission meaning that his work needs to contribute to fulfilling the mission. This is done by incorporating the brand as an overall business strategy and making the employee a part of the brand and therefore part of the delivery of the brand promise.

"No matter who of the 66,000 employees promises something in his name (the founder), that is a brand promise, he stands for that."

Manager, Industrial Wholesaler

Here the connection between the brand promise and the employees is clearly made. Everything they promise under the name of the company, the brand, is a brand promise. The employee is seen as an active part of representing and carrying out the brand. As mentioned above the employees are the crucial component of living the mission and vision. As being part of the brand they shape the brand identity and therefore the brand promise.

5. Conclusion and Contributions

In the following we will present our conclusions from the analysis and answer the research questions. Furthermore we will give our theoretical and managerial contributions. We will then end with the limitations and further research suggestions.

5.1 Conclusion

From the analysis we have gained different insights into the perception of these concepts as well as their function within the organizations of a brand oriented business context. The following are the conclusions.

Perception

Although the initial impressions of the concepts were either given a humorous or slightly negative association, in general, the interviewees agreed that these concepts actually have an important function. Furthermore, they were seen as having long-term importance.

The purpose has a special role

Our case study of the International Research Consulting firm showed that the purpose, compared to the mission and vision, is not necessarily dependent on the brand orientation to give it meaning and function. The purpose is something greater that the people who work for a specific company already bring with them. Therefore it is important that the purpose of the company and the own purpose of the employees are aligned. Unlike the vision and mission, the purpose is not something that is organization specific. The purpose is more of a general moral idea that someone seeks to fulfill.

Vision

The vision was mostly defined as a future goal. It represents a concept that was connected to the concept of leadership by the majority of the practitioners. We furthermore conclude that the vision and leadership are two concepts that are essentially connected to each other.

Mission

The opinions on mission seem to all have in common that the mission defines who they are at the moment and what they do. Although the definitions differ somewhat in their wording the practitioners seem to have a common understanding of it.

Brand orientation plays a crucial role for vision and mission

The majority of the organizations that we have interviewed used the purpose, vision and mission in the context of the brand orientation in one way or another. It can therefore be concluded that the brand orientation business approach enables active usage of the vision and mission by making the employees a part of an organization's brand. Hence we can conclude that the mission and vision need to be aligned with the brand strategy as well as thoroughly activated.

Mission and vision as multidimensional tools within a brand oriented business context

Within the interviews it was widely agreed that the vision and mission have more than one function. The main functions that we can conclude are:

1) Providing an identification platform for employees

2) Assessment and guidance tool for making decision

3) Supporting leadership

4) Recruitment

5) Internal branding

6) Delivering the brand promise

These different dimensions make the vision and mission necessary for a brand oriented company to stay on track long term and to not lose focus of what an organization actually wants to achieve. In particular, the function of mission, vision and purpose as an identification tool for the employees, makes these concepts a crucial part of forming the organization's identification.

Employees

The employees have played a major role in the majority of the interviews. They are the ones filling the vision and mission with meaning. Furthermore the employees have also been crucial in the development of the statements as they were mostly based on the corporate culture. Therefore it is important that an organization employs the right people in order to make use of the vision and mission in an authentic way.

5.2 Answering the research questions

As we have made our conclusions, we should now be able to answer the research questions stipulated in the beginning of our research paper. As we have explored the concepts of purpose, vision and mission our first question was:

1) Do the purpose, vision and mission of an organization interact? If yes, how?

The purpose, vision and mission definitely interact. As we have already shown in our literature review, these concepts interconnect with each other. They can also be said to depend on each other, as none of the concepts are really able to stand by on their own. They reinforce each other. In the empirical part, we could also show that the mission is seen as the way or rather how to get to the vision. Although unfortunately the purpose did not play that big role in the interviews, we can still conclude that this concept is interacts with the other two as it provides the basic moral idea behind an organization. However, according to the type of company, the role of the purpose, vision and mission may differ as shown in the example of the International Research Consulting.

Our second question was:

2) How are purpose, mission and vision perceived and applied by management in a brand oriented business setting?

In particular, the vision and mission are perceived to be very important concepts by management in a brand oriented business setting. We could clearly connect the meaning and usefulness of the vision and mission to a brand oriented business setting. The majority of the managers interviewed that found these concepts important also apply a brand oriented business approach. The application of these concepts lies mostly internally to provide an identification platform as well as guidance for the employees in their everyday work. They are applied to form 'one' organization and to help employees both make and assess decisions. Furthermore, we have also found that they are applied to communicate in a summarized version what the company stands for and hence, what the employee stands for. In addition, the connection to leadership could be pointed out as well as the function to serve as a tool for recruitment and internal branding. Overall, these concepts have shown to play an important role for the management in a brand oriented business setting.

5.3 Contributions

In the following we will present our scholarly as well as managerial contributions. This study has shown and shared some interesting and important insights not only from a theoretical approach to these concepts but also in a practical sense. The major theoretical contribution of this study is that it highlights the interconnected nature of these concepts as well as emphasizes their multi-dimensional functions. Combining the existing literature with the practical perception and experiences of managers working with these concepts brought some interesting insights. Furthermore we will present our own theoretical

framework of the purpose, vision and mission illustrating the interconnected nature of the concepts as well as their multidimensional function in a brand oriented business setting. Within the managerial section we will provide two contributions.

5.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

A. The purpose, vision and mission interconnectedness framework

Our first contribution illustrates the connected nature of the concepts purpose, vision and mission. We have already introduced this framework within the summary of our theory. In the analysis we could support this framework by connecting the theory with the empirical data. Most significantly, our contribution highlights that these concepts all provide a sense of identity (Ashforth et al., 2008). Therefore our framework represents the concept of identity within the intersection of all three circles. When all of these concepts flow into each other, the identity of the organization is formed.

This contribution now gives a clear overview that these concepts are not able to stand alone and are very well interconnected. This contribution brings the theory one step further in fully exploring these three concepts. Showing how and why they are interconnected but also having point their differences out, gives a much clearer understanding now of these three concepts.

Additionally, we believe that this framework offers an important theoretical contribution in that it provides clarity and illustrates the interconnected nature of these concepts for researchers within the field. The framework additionally provides researchers with a unique perspective in terms of research within the field of organizational identity formation.

As we stated before the purpose represents a moral idea that is of a ubiquitous nature. (Mourkogiannis, 2006) Within the case of the research consulting we have proven this to be true. The vision was supported by the empirical data as being rather global and a future ideal state of the company. The mission has also been identified by the empirical data as the most narrow concept. The interconnectedness of the mission and vision has certainly been evidenced as well. Although the purpose was not mentioned explicitly by the management, the research consulting case has still shown that these statements interconnect as the purpose just like the mission and vision provide a sense of identity. The red area where all the three concepts intersect can now clearly be identified as identity. This was the major topic that all three concepts have clearly been connected with throughout the literature review but also the empirical data.
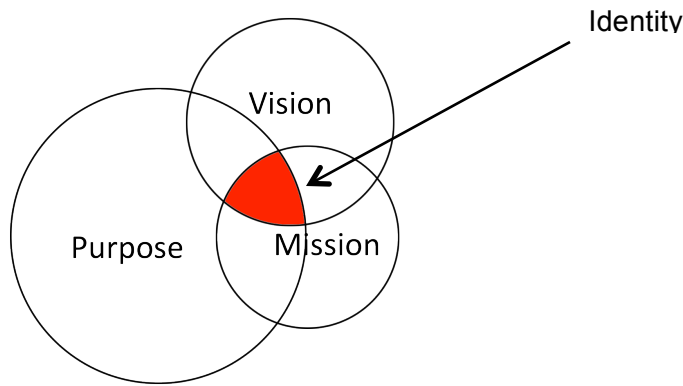
Figure 8: Purpose, Vision and Mission interconnectedness framework (Daura and Pers, 2012)

B. Purpose, vision and mission multidimensional function framework

Our second contribution illustrates the multidimensional function of purpose, vision and mission. During the course of our literature review and empirical data analysis, we determined that the concepts purpose, vision and mission have a multitude of functions related to other concepts. This contribution can be seen as an important insight as it shows how much power and influence these three concepts can have when they are applied and filled with meaning in the right way. It furthermore helps scholars to have an overview of the concepts scope as well as functions on which further research can be based upon.

Figure 9: Purpose, Vision and Mission multidimensional function framework (Daura and Pers, 2012)

The figure shows that we have identified the three concepts to serve as a function for other related concepts which means in detail:

i) Delivering the brand promise

Especially the vision and mission have been proven to be closely related to the brand promise. The employees are made part of the brand by taking ownership through aligning their actions and communications according to the vision and mission. As being part of the brand, every interaction they have with external stakeholders is a brand promise.

ii) Internal branding

Making the employees part of the brand also leads to internal branding. As the employees are a part of the brand by aligning their actions and communications according to the vision and mission, internal branding is caused. "Internal branding was considered important because it enhanced employees' sense of pride and belonging to the brand (brand identification)." (Punjaisri, 2008, p. 416)

iii) Recruitment

The vision and mission also have the function of helping to find the right people for the organization. As stated before when the purpose, vision, mission and core values are aligned to each other, the identity of the brand is formed. As it is important to have the right people in an organization that fit the identity of the brand, recruitment is also a concept in which purpose, vision and mission take on a crucial function.

iv) Identity

Purpose, vision and mission together with the core values form the brand identity which is the main concept of brand orientation. (Urde, 2011)

v) Leadership

Vision and leadership go hand in hand. This also connects to the mission as a leader needs to guide the employees to get to the vision. Without a strong vision a leader will not be able to attract followers and is therefore powerless.

vi) Strategy

Strategy has overall been a very big theme within the research of these three concepts. The literature has already stated in a great manner how important these three concepts are for strategic purposes. Within our empirical analysis we have as well found strategy to be a major field where purpose, mission and vision play a crucial role

5.3.2 Managerial Contributions

Overall our managerial contributions lie within showing the different functions that purpose, vision and mission serve. We have presented how the concepts are used in successful, mostly brand oriented companies and what functions they have.

Our study has resulted in a deeper understanding and clarification of the concepts of purpose, vision and mission by way of literature review. We were able to provide clarification of the meaning of the three concepts within the literature. In doing so, we were able to determine that these concepts are highly interconnected. Additionally, our study has also resulted in a deeper understanding of how these concepts function within a brand oriented business settings. Through our case studies and interview with management, we were able to provide insights into the function of the concepts within practical settings. From this we were able to provide insights into the interconnected nature of the concepts within multi dimensional functions.

In terms of managerial implications, our study has can provide three major topics of concern for management. Our study highlights the importance of ensuring that organizational goals, vision, mission, leadership, employees and purpose are in alignment. Furthermore, we have found that management should assure to involve the employees when developing the purpose, mission and vision. Last but not least we want to conclude that you have to listen to who you are in order to find out how to fill these concepts with meaning.

A) Alignment

The leadership style, organizational structure and employees need to be aligned to the brand identity and consequently to the purpose, vision and mission of the organization. If the organizational structure or the leadership do not support the purpose, vision and mission, the brand will not be able to form its identity as the prerequisites are not given. The purpose, mission and vision will only have meaning if the whole organization is living it. Therefore the organizational structure and leadership play a crucial role.

B) Involvement of the employees in the process of the creation of these concepts

Our empirical data have shown that it has a positive effect when the employees are involved in the creation process of these concepts. If this is not the case, as in the example of the international research consulting, management risks that employees will have no attachment to these concepts. This consequently leads to the purpose, vision and mission turning into glossy words instead of meaningful and useful concepts.

C) Listen to who you are

As we have studied different kind of companies, one thing that was clearly obvious is that you have to listen and be true to your company in order to find out how to fill your purpose, vision and mission with meaning. Of course there are some guidelines management can apply to find the right formulation but the key is to find out who you, as a organization really are. Therefore the management has to start from inside and involve every different department and all different levels of employees to find the "real" organization. Above all, the organization must be true to itself or its identity in ordert o give purpose, vision and mission genuine meaning for that particular organization.

5.4 Limitations

This study was conducted in order to clarify the concepts of purpose, vision and mission and to contribute theoretical and managerial knowledge. Our study was both a holistic and multidimensional look at these concepts within the context of a diverse range of organizations. As we are students operating within a limited timeframe and monetary budget, we were only able to conduct at the most two managerial interviews per organization for the case studies. Therefore we suggest the following further research topics:

As this study only involved the perceptions, opinions and experiences held by management we suggest a broader study including employees from different levels in order to conduct a more critical study.

We also suggest a study that takes on an intercultural approach of exploring differences and similarities in the application, function and perception of these concepts.
Finally it would be interesting to gain insights of the role of mission and vision in the evaluation of brands.

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Appendix A

Guideline for questionnaire

Overall goal is to find out what vision and mission means to them

Intro:

We are conducting a Masterthesis on mission and vision statements. In our literature review we found that these terms are often confused and that there is no consensus on the application of these concepts. In this conversation we would like to find out how practitioners like you view these concepts and how they apply it, if they apply it at all.

Structure:
1. Mission and vision statement
Goal: Their view on this topic and how it is used
- Difference
- Importance, in which direction
- What kind of function does it have?
- For who is it important
- Do you think organizations are able to survive without?
- Important in all industries?
- Activation

Questions:
Introduction question:
Mission and vision: What comes first to your mind when you hear these two words?
(Which connection do they make?)
Why is the mission and vision so popular? (fact of importance leaves question why?)
Maybe to mirror the structure of our paper, we could ask them how they would define mission and vision in their own words...?
Do they have a mission statement?
How do they use the mission statement? Do they use it at all?
- Motivation? Leadership/management tool
- Inspiration? Leadership tool
- Operational guide? Strategy/organizational tool
- PR tool?
- Branding tool?
How do they view mission statement in terms of stakeholder?
Does the mission statement speak to their primary stakeholder?
- Customer focus
- Employee focus
- Shareholder focus
How in your experience do other CEO's see these concepts?

2. Organization
Goal: How is the organization constructed?
How would you describe your corporate culture?
       - Specific values
       - Beliefs
       - Employee involvement
How would you describe a well functioning organization? Why?
What style of leadership is applied in your organization? Why?
Would you describe your organization as a brand or business?

3. Brand
Goal: To find out how they see the role of branding
What is a brand for you?
How would you define it?
How do you see branding: as tool or philosophy?
Why do you think Coca-Cola is so successful?

4. Personal values, beliefs, behavior
Goal: To find out personal beliefs, values, to be able to understand how he sees the world
       - If you were a CEO, what would be your tools to lead?
       - How do you define a great leader?
       - What are your most important values/beliefs in life?
       - What is your background? (Education; previous positions; etc...)

Outro: Thank you very much. We value your opinion and appreciate your time. Before it is published we will send the transcripts.

Appendix B

Outline for Semi-Structured Interview

Overall goal is to find out what vision and mission means in the real world

Intro: We are conducting a Master thesis on mission and vision and how they are viewed or applied in real life business settings. In our literature review we have found that these concepts are viewed as extremely important yet are often confused. We have also found that there is no consensus on the application of these concepts. In this conversation we would like to find out how you as a practitioner view these concepts in your everyday work experience.

I Goal: Understanding the perception of the topic and how/if it is used

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the term 'Mission'?
2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the term 'Vision'?
   - Difference – is there a difference?
3. Are the concepts of mission; vision or core values something that is seen as important for your organization? – How are they used?

II Goal: Understanding Corporate Identity of the Organization

1. How would you describe your corporate culture?
   - Specific values
   - Beliefs
2. Is your organizational culture reflected in: (pick one or more)
   - Business Practices
   - Products
   - People
3. Do you think that the mission/vision or core values play a role in your corporate culture?

III Goal: Understanding the role of branding in your organization

Branding has been associated with an expected benefit or value provided by the organization. ('Brand Promise')

1. What is most important for your organization to deliver its 'brand promise'? (pick one)
   - Marketing
   - Products/Service
   - Employees
2. Are your mission, vision or core values connected to delivering brand promise?

IV Goal: Understand personal beliefs, values, to be able to understand how you see the world.

1. Do you feel that your organization's values are in line with your personal values?
   (Example: Teamwork, Honesty, CSR, fun, Diversity, Work-life balance etc.)

Thank you very much. We value your opinion and appreciate your time. All respondents and organizations will remain anonymous. Before publication, we will send the transcripts of any quotes used.

Appendix C

Mission	Y	M	S	F	A
Activation	Give the mission, vision, values to new employees	Mission and vision are more important internally for the employees	Living the vision and core values has been an organic process	Those in leadership probably more aware of mission and vision	Don't use it externally but you can feel it
How is it used?	Does not think these concepts are useful in day to day life	From working in the organization, you get a sense that the mission functions as a means of achieving you vision	Use of storytelling as a means of communicating the goals of the company which speaks to their overall vision	Sees mission as very much connected to strategy as a whole	Mission statement is the same as business idea
What is its use?	They are not influential	Mission and vision seem to be used as a leadership tool to remind employees of why and what the organization is all about.	Core values and vision act as both a communication tool as well as what the company lives by	Mission is seen as something to be accomplished	Mission is the leading star, it puts everyone on their toes, puts the company together like from a one company point of view and its really customer oriented
What does it mean?	Mission is what the organization is trying to do	Identification of mission as what you do in order to achieve your vision	Mission is even more misunderstood than vision	Mission is seen as what the company does as well as their reason for being	Mission is part of the brand promise
Common Characteristics with vision	Mission and vision are materialization of their values and thinking.	Mission and vision seem to be used as a leadership tool to remind employees of why and what the organization is all about.	Negative connotations of mission and vision. Comes across as corporate	Mission can be adjusted as necessary to provide strategic flexibility	The brand promise, the mission and the business idea are the same

Difference from Vision	Mission and vision does not reflect what they are actually doing	Recognition of difference between mission and vision, but perhaps not as distinctly as would like to.	Recognition that concepts are different and therefore deserve separate application	Vision is seen as bigger than mission and as something that you would like to happen eventually perhaps	The balance between mission and vision is a little different but it has a connection

Vision	Y	M	S	F	A
Activation	Does not think anybody could remember these statements	Mission and vision are more important internally for the employees	Living the vision and core values has been an organic process for The company	Vision is seen as most important to communicate internally to provide employees with motivation and direction	Don't use it externally but you can feel it
How is it used?	It does not influence the way they behave or the company	For the organization, Vision is seen as some lofty ambition that seems to string together a number of technical sounding terms.	Motivational and inspirational tool for The company to provide direction	Indication that vision for them is seen in the light of strategic or operational goals (to become leader in Europe)	Vision is more inspirational or aspiration for future "committed to create better everyday conditions for people"
What is its use?	They are not influential	The vision should provide a guide to why an organization even exists.	Importance of concept is that it provides direction for where an organization is going	Vision is seen to have a larger perspective of what the company wants to achieve	Vision is employee focused, a driver
What does it mean?	Vision is where it is trying to go and how	Identification of Vision as a ideal future state	Negative connotations of mission and vision. Comes across as corporate	Vision is seen to have a larger perspective of what the company wants to achieve	Vision makes people proud of who they are, attract people on a continuous base
Common characteristics with mission	They are not influential	Mission and vision seem to be used as a leadership tool to remind	Negative connotations of mission and vision. Comes across	Recognizes that it would be difficult to have success without	Mission and vision have a connection

		employees of why and what the organization is all about.	as corporate	knowing where you wanted to go, or rather what you wanted to achieve. Mission and vision are necessary for providing direction	
Difference with mission	Values are multidimensional and mission and vision theoretical	The vision should provide a guide to why an organization even exists.	Recognition that concepts are different and therfore deserve seperate application	Vision is seen as bigger than mission and as something that you would like to happen eventually perhaps	The balance between mission and vision is a little different but it has a connection

Culture	Y	M	S	F	A
How is the culture constructed?	• The people ARE the culture of the organization. • Culture is also extremely diverse, multi-cultural and international. Is a good reflection of the people • Culture is collaborative and non-hierarchical. Management are taken to task	• There is a distinct organizational culture that also shares some aspects of the larger funding organization. • Though the various organizations share some cultural similarities in the way they operate, they still want to be recognized as individual, bringing something unique to the table	Now, the brand shapes the culture rather than the other way around. However, in the early days, the brand was derived from the culture	• Small company culture, open to suggestions • Corporate structure set up to be more like a big company	• Corporate culture is not easy to change • Have a book which states values and drivers and personality
How does it interact with the mission?	Culture of the organization is described in the value statement of the organization. Culture is quality oriented, progressive and liberal in a social sense	Certain ways of doing things that are influenced by culture of funding organization	Living the vision and core values has been an organic process for The company	Mission because of the fruit farm initiative is something that they are communicating externally; but they see it as something that gives the company a soul. For them, the mission is held as a belief	Mission is the heart of everything Mission is relevant for every of the 16000 employees
How does it interact with the vision?	Culture of the organization is described in the value statement of the organization. Culture is quality oriented, progressive and	Though the various organizations share some cultural similarities in the way they operate, they still want to be recognized as	Core values are used as a guide for how to behave internally and foster culture within The company. Everything that the company does will reflect externally, what the company is		Vision makes people proud of who they are, attract people on a continuous base

	liberal in a social sense	individual, bringing something unique to the table	and behaves internally		
Employees	**Y**	**M**	**S**	**F**	**A**
How are they affected by mission and vision?	Only five percent of employees actual took part in process of formulating new mission/vision Feeling that most employees would be able to recognize themselves in the values of the organization.	Not enough to have a strong vision alone. Must also have competent team to carry out the objectives of the organization and its vision.	Most important in terms or recruitment is finding people with the right values and ethics. Connection to having the right people to deliver on your brand promise.	Mission can be adjusted as necessary to provide strategic flexibility Employees might be aware of the overall concept of the company vision, but management most likely to be able to articulate it	Mission and vision is set out to attract right people, with same mindset and skillset
Alignment	The people are what attracted him to the organization.	Without the right people with the right skills, it just paying lip service to the mission and vision	Team had a strong passion for what they were doing	New strategy in line with value of improving the lives of the fruit farmers all over the world	In order to deliver promise we need to have right employees and attract and keep them

Leadership	Y	M	S	F	A
How is leadership seen in the organization?		Want distinct leadership with a definite sense or purpose, but that also provides direction for the organization	Founder is crucial in providing vision and drive fort he company		• The real leader they do not talk about IT they have it, because they have a strong idea • Leaders do not talk about being a leader the competitors do
How is it connected to mission and vision?		If the leader is in fact inspiring, the employees of the organization will actually want to follow and fulfill the overall objectives of the organization	• Connection of strong leader for the overall vision • If founder lacks inspirational power, you need to hire someone to provide that fort he organization. Important to identify goals and timeframes and to communicate those tot he team. Depends on size oft he organization, but strong leadership is necessary to help people prioritize.	Those in leadership probably more aware of mission and vision	Mission is about leadership and creating a brand and leading

Branding	Y	M	S	F	A
What role does the brand play?	Thinks because they provide services to governments etc that the brand is not important	Brand is a perception. It's about what you think of or feel in reference to an organization or product or logo	Must be genuine expression and not forced. Must be aligned. Speaks to telling the truth. If you have a playful culture, they your brand should not have a corporate feel.	Brand should communicate to the consumer and give them a feeling of what they actually stand for	Need strong brand to do that as connected to reputation
How is it formed?	Thinks they rebranded because competition rebranded and senior management lives influenced by neighbors	Within this sector, the brand recognition should come from the community perceiving the good work that the organization does and recognizing what value they provide.	Develop the brand on the basis oft he internal culture, attitude and philosophy within the culture	Brand should provide some sense of value for the consumer	
How is the brand connected to mission and vision?	It was a corporate decision to rebrand which was really not discussed with the troops	It's not enough to just be a brand, You have to be recognized for providing good quality and add value	You need to live your brand in a genuine manner and express it as so	Branding seen as a integral part of the whole company in all aspects	

Company specific comments and characteristics	Y	M	S	F	A

Values	Y	M	S	F	A
What role do the values play in the company?	Recognition of the greater good of the work comes from the values of the organization. Ethical standards also come from organizational values				
How are they interacting/connected to mission and vision?	Mission and vision does not reflect what they are actually doing Values are more important, gives room to expand on what the company is				

Appendix D

Mission	A	S	W	I	B
Activation		The mission is a concrete framework of action, which I give my employees to go ahead-> employees	Internal-live the mission and carry it with that outside	Mission is inside activated as it describes what to do in daily work	
How is it used?		It is used to position and to give the organization a guideline giver and concrete corporate action	Mission is used in a multidimensional way- one dimensional use would only make it a guideline. It is also used to justify strategic decision- something actions taken can be measured with. It is also used as motivational tool	It is a platform of identification for every employee	It is not really used
What is its use?		It guides the organization and with that the employees	Mission concretes the vision and narrows it down and adds value		
What does it mean?		Mission is present instant of time, that describes the goal or way to get to the goal. It is all what we know how to do, what makes us unique to the clients and to the market, at the present time that	It means to summarize the corporate philosophy- transport medium	Mission statement describes what a company in best case scenario does best in every day work.	

		is our way			
Common Characteristics with vision	Mission and vision are materialization of their values and thinking.	A mission without a vision does not function. Mission and vision act as concrete corporate action focus and guideline giver	Mission and vision are important for humans that transport the with it that you can understand. Concepts are applied for the whole group.	Mission and vision shape company strategy and are foundation of brand platform	
Difference from Vision	Mission and vision does not reflect what they are actually doing		The difference is that the mission is more concrete as the vision	Mission is what to do today and vision where they want to be tomorrow	

Vision	A	S	W	I	B
Activation		internal	Biggest part is internal but also activated external for important presentations	Internal importance	
How is it used?		It is a standard where the journey should go-acts as a concrete corporate action focus and guideline giver. It is also adjusted to the environmental variables	It is used long-term and for strategy. That show who do we want to be and where to we want to go	Is also important for external communication. Foundation of brand platform. To inspire	It is not really used
What is its use?	They are not influential	It guides the organization and with that the employees	Vision is concentrated on the client-	Vision is a look in the future where they will be if they do what is in the mission statement	

What does it mean?	Mission is what the organization is trying to do	A formulation of where the journey should go	The vision is independent from the century you are in, independent form the market environment, independent if there are acquisitions or new establishments from other business operations, we as a business as a business group stand for the following	It draws a world where they want to be in the future without a specific date,	
Common Characteristics with vision	Mission and vision are materialization of their values and thinking.	The brand, mission and vision has charisma into all departments and therefore focuses actions You focus as an organization, you give yourself the motivation, the playground the guideline to reach certain goals	Not important shortterm but longterm to concentrate on essentials. Is important as it serves as a summary which you can transmit to your employees as well as external partners for what we are standing –to get the right people to join. Important compressed tools to know what u are	Mission and vision shape company strategy and are foundation of brand platform	
Difference from Vision	Mission and vision does not reflect what they are actually	Present and future	Vision is more concentrated on the client	Mission is what to do today and vision where they want to be	

	doing			tomorrow	

Culture	A	S	W	I	B
How is the culture constructed		Leadership is a very important theme in the culture as well as change and development, collaboration	Corporate culture has always been important for the company. Founder already placed much importance. Flat hierarchies to be flexible. Want to be close to the client. Culture is very much influenced by the founder and his mission and vision	Teamwork, flat hierarchies, every opinion is valued	
How does it interact with the mission=		It played a crucial role in the definition of the statements. Mission is part of the culture	The corporate culture is reflected in the mission and vision		
How does it interact with the vision?					
Employees	A	S	W	I	B
How are they affected by the mission and vision?		The mission and vision focus the action of every employee	Need to feel and think that everybody especially their leaders are following mission and vision. "I am these things"	Every employees needs to know the mission and vision to understand it, believe in it and make it come true	
Alignment					

Leadership	A	S	W	I	B

How is leadership seen in the organization?		Leadership is very important within the company and for the company itself. Leaders need to be responsible and nurture the corporate culture	Leader is important to show employees that they also live the mission and vision	Leaders have the responsibilities to create what makes the vision come true. Leadership style needs to be according to the brand	
How is it connected to mission and vision		The leadership of the company has to carry the mission and vision otherwise it will not work	Every leader in the company has to follow mission and the vision to incorporate that	Leader is closely connected to vision	
Branding	**A**	**S**	**W**	**I**	**B**
What role does the brand play		Brand is the corporate peak performance. It is an essential part of our work, our purpose of existence on the market	The brand is the business. There should not be a difference between the mission and vision and the brand if you are selling a brand. The company is the brand as they have the same values. Brand is closely connected to founder	Brand is a really business asset which affects every part of the business	
How is it formed?			Brand is basically formed by employees as they live it	Brand strategy is based on the mission and vision	
How is the brand connected to mission and vision		The brand is integral component of the mission in order to accomplish our vision. The brand is an	Every company that has a brand and that has defined the brand with a vision, will stay and find good	The brand is based on them	

			integral corporate orientation	long-term employees. Brand is more than mission and vision because it is daily communicated in the doing		
Values	**A**	**S**	**W**	**I**	**B**	
What role do the values play in the company?		What are the values that make them unique. Values are what you identify with in the company	Values concrete what is important in our organization, goes in the direction of philosophy, corporate culture, leadership of employees	Values are an addition to mission and vision. They represent a criteria everyone needs to fulfill. The brand values define what the brand needs to deliver to the customers as well as employees		
How are they interacting/conne cted to the mission and vision?			Values are the principles that derive from the mission and vision			
Company specific comments and characteristics						