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Brand Personas with a Story

- How they are created and categorized

by

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore how the phenomenon of *brand personas with a story* can be constructed and categorized by integrating literature theory, illustrated by case examples. There is a need for this type of study, as a profound knowledge gap exists in relation to brand personas, their stories and the creation of them as characters. Thus, the study is foundational and conceptual.

Theoretical perspective: The phenomenon of *brand personas with a story* within the field of strategic brand management is explored through the lense of literature theory.

Methodology: A document analysis with case examples that illustrates the phenomenon has been conducted. The case examples have been analyzed through thematic analysis.

Empirical data: Secondary data created by the companies behind the brand personas that tell their story in the form of documents such as websites, advertorials and videos. The selected material must be publicly accessible and published and/or created by the company.

Findings: This study has identified and defined the phenomenon of brand personas with a story. The study has identified six elements that can be used in storytelling as well as the Brand Persona with a Story Continuum that outlines different kinds of brand personas with a story. The Brand Persona Categorization Framework has been created that categorizes brand personas with a story.

Conclusions: Brand personas with a story can be constructed in the same manner as characters within literature, and their categorization depends on how storytelling elements are used and combined when building the persona. The managerial implication is that the framework can be used by organizations when constructing a brand persona whilst building their brand. The theoretical contribution is the merge of two academic fields in order to broaden the knowledge within the area of brand persona building.

Originality: The study pinpoints a gap in previous research and is foundational in its field as no prior study has integrated strategic brand management theory with literature theory in regards to how brand personas are created, making this study unique. Further, the phenomenon of brand personas with a story has been identified in this study – a phenomenon that has not previously been explored by scholars.

Keywords: brand persona, storytelling, literature characters, Forster's theory, stories, brand personality, strategic brand management

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Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction 1**
 - 1.1 Background 1
 - 1.2 Aim, Purpose & Contributions 3
 - 1.3 Research Delimitations 4
 - 1.4 Research Limitations 4
 - 1.5 Outline of the Thesis 4
- 2 Literature Review 6**
 - 2.1 Brand Personality 6
 - 2.2 Brand Persona 8
 - 2.3 Storytelling 11
 - 2.4 Brand Heritage 13
 - 2.5 Literature Theory 13
 - 2.5.1 Forster’s Theory of Characterization 14
 - 2.5.2 Development of Forster’s Theory 15
 - 2.6 Research Positioning 15
- 3 Methodology 17**
 - 3.1 Research Philosophy 17
 - 3.2 Research Design 18
 - 3.3 Document Analysis 18
 - 3.4 Sampling Strategy 20
 - 3.4.1 Description of Sampled Brand Personas With A Story 21
 - 3.5 Data Analysis 25
 - 3.6 Analysis Process & Identified Themes 26
 - 3.7 Method Reflection 27
 - 3.7.1 Reflexivity 28
- 4 Analysis and Discussion 29**
 - 4.1 What elements can be identified when creating a brand persona with a story? 29
 - 4.1.1 The story of the brand persona’s creation 29
 - 4.1.2 The story of how the product is made 30
 - 4.1.3 The story infused with humor 31
 - 4.1.4 The story with a focus on brand heritage 32
 - 4.1.5 The story with a focus on personality traits 34
 - 4.1.6 The story that explains the world of the brand persona 36

4.2	How are the characters of brand personas with a story created?.....	37
4.2.1	The Fictive Character	38
4.2.2	The Semi-Fictive Character	39
4.2.3	The Realistic Character	40
4.2.4	Brand personas with a story placed on a continuum.....	41
4.3	How can brand personas with a story be categorized?.....	42
4.3.1	Flat and static brand personas with a story	44
4.3.2	Flat and dynamic brand personas with a story	46
4.3.3	Round and static brand personas with a story	48
4.3.4	Round and dynamic brand personas with a story.....	50
4.3.5	Summary of framework and categorization.....	53
4.4	Summary of Analysis	54
4.5	Discussion	55
5	Conclusion.....	57
5.1	Theoretical Contributions.....	58
5.2	Managerial Implications.....	59
5.3	Future Research.....	61
	References	62
	Appendix A – All reviewed brand personas	69
	Appendix B – Visual representation of brand personas with a story.....	73

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Cohen’s (2014) continuum of reality..... 9
- Figure 2: Decision tree that outlines the sampling criteria..... 21
- Figure 3: The story of how the Colonel created KFC’s famous recipe, as stated by KFC 31
- Figure 4: Captain Morgan leading a workout 32
- Figure 5: An image from the film “No. 5” from Chanel’s website..... 33
- Figure 6: An image of Sir Kensington’s thesis 34
- Figure 7: Description of M&M character Ms. Brown’s personality traits..... 34
- Figure 8: Description of M&M character Yellow’s personality traits 35
- Figure 9: An image of the beginning of Hello Kitty’s timeline 36
- Figure 10: ATG’s Vinnie during a stand up performance..... 37
- Figure 11: Betty Crocker’s signature that appeared in letters from the company..... 39
- Figure 12: A quote by Fred Perry stated on the brand’s website 41
- Figure 13: The Brand Persona with a Story Continuum 42
- Figure 14: The Brand Persona Categorization Framework..... 43
- Figure 15: Visual development of the Sun-Maid Girl..... 44
- Figure 16: Visual development of the Green Giant 45
- Figure 17: Visual development of Miss Chiquita 45
- Figure 18: Visual development of Betty Crocker over the years 46
- Figure 19: The GEICO Gecko as a pilot 49
- Figure 20: the moustache Buzz the Bee grew during Movember 49
- Figure 21: Old visuals of the Michelin Man 50
- Figure 22: The Michelin Man as he is portrayed today, here seen meditating 51
- Figure 23: Image that shortly describes René Lacoste..... 52
- Figure 24: Brand Persona Categorization Framework containing the analyzed brand personas with a story 53

1 Introduction

The introduction chapter will present the background, problematization, purpose and aim of the study as well as the outline of the paper. This chapter aims to provide an introducing part of the research area to the reader, a problematization that describes the research gap within strategic brand management and the phenomenon of the brand persona with a story. The purpose and aim of the study presents what is going to be researched throughout the thesis and the outline of the thesis describes the structure.

1.1 Background

You most likely knew that Oliver Twist was a poor orphanage boy that lived in England, and that Pippi Longstocking is the world's strongest girl who lives in a house with her horse and her monkey. But did you know that Mr. Clean was found in a field by a farmer and that the farmer and his wife adopted him? Or did you know that Hello Kitty has a sister called Mimmy? How is it that we know so much about our favorite characters in literature, and so little about the characters that we meet and see everyday in the form of brands? Characters created by brands, or brand personas, have become an integral part of our everyday lives. We see them on cereal boxes, in commercials for insurance and on the clothes we wear. Thus, brand personas with a story have become a strategic and common way of communicating a brand.

Although brand personas have become a common element in the communications of organizations, the phenomenon has spurred little interest from academics. Within the field of strategic brand management, there is no clear definition of what a brand persona is. Researchers seem to use different terminology to describe the same or similar phenomena, with terms including "persona", "brand personification", "persona-fied brands" and "brand personifiers" (Stern, 1994; Dion & Arnould, 2016; Cohen, 2014). However, scholars that do mention brand personas in their studies seem to share somewhat of an understanding of what the phenomenon entails. Stern (1993) argues that the brand persona helps humanize the brand, whilst Herskovitz and Crystal (2010, p. 21) define brand personas as "the articulated form of the brand's character and personality". Furthermore, Cohen (2014) has created a continuum with reality on one side and fantasy on the other, where he argues that brand personas can be anything from a real person to a fantasy figure and everything in between.

When reviewing the academic field of literature theory, on the other hand, it becomes clear that authors highly value characters. Many books have been written on the subject of characters and character building, covering topics such as characters in children's literature (Jones, 1997), their imaginary aspects (Eder, Jannidis & Schneider, 2010) and their role as

protagonists or minor characters (Woloch, 2003). There are also different theories in regards to how a character can be built, such as Forster's (2012) theory of flat and round characters. In general, literature scholars seem to agree that strong characters can create emotional bonds with readers. It is interesting to note how literature scholars and brand management scholars place such different emphasis on characters. One reason could be that characters within branding are taken for granted, or that they usually are not viewed as characters in the same way as characters in literature are. But when reflecting upon the purpose of branding and brands, there is a general agreement within the field of strategic brand management that brands should create emotional bonds with their consumers in order to gain loyalty (Fog, Budtz, Munch, & Blanchette, 2010). Thus, the goals of branding can be said to overlap with the benefits of having strong characters in novels. As similar phenomena exist within both academic fields, although they are interpreted differently, it is interesting to explore brand personas through a lense of literature theory. By doing so, it is possible to see if brand personas can be categorized and understood in the same manner as literary characters.

Although little academic effort has been made in regards to brand personas, scholars have studied the use of storytelling in brand building to a larger extent, a concept that has a self-explanatory connection to literature studies. It has become a prevailing tactic amongst organizations to use stories in their communications, partly because it is easier to connect to and remember stories which also makes them more persuasive (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). When dissecting storytelling, Fog et al. (2010) identifies four elements that create a brand's story, where the characters are one of them. Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) also state that strong characters, or brand personas, are essential when building a brand's narrative, since recognizable personas help the audience understand the overall brand message and create long-lasting relationships. Thus, there is a strong connection between storytelling and brand personas. A relationship that is interdependent, as the story builds the character at the same time as the character is building the story. To better understand this relationship, it is beneficial to study it through existing literature theories.

In order to analyze brand personas from a literature perspective, it is essential that the brand personas have a story that explains their background and characteristics. Thus, this study narrows down the vague and broad concept of brand personas to the phenomenon of brand personas with a story. We define brand personas with a story as: *a fictional character or real person that the company behind the brand actively uses to express the brand's core values in their communications, that must be expressed through an explicit story that features a background story of the personas life or creation and/or a statement about the personas characteristics and preferences, meaning that the persona cannot simply be used in packaging or used as a feature in advertising.*

Since we have identified the phenomenon of brand personas with a story, there is no previous research on the topic. However, a limited set of research has studied the general concept of brand personas. Out of the few existing articles, the majority of them focus on the purpose of using brand personas and the value they have (Dion & Arnould, 2016; Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). To our knowledge, no study has attempted to understand how brand personas are built. This is also the belief of Cohen (2014), who argues that some basic questions regarding brand personas need to be addressed in order to further understand the phenomenon. He argues that

the *how* of brand personification must be asked since practitioners that want to implement a brand personification strategy have very little guidance in regards to what form it should take and so on. To use a brand persona requires planning and in order to plan, one must be able to answer these types of questions (Cohen, 2014).

All in all, a knowledge gap exists within the field of strategic brand management in regards to brand personas, and especially brand personas with a story. This is problematic for both academics and practitioners in several ways. First of all, the separate definitions and terminology of brand personas obstruct a coherent understanding of the phenomenon, which hinders future research to take place. From a managerial perspective, the contrasting definitions of brand personas and the absence of a framework that categorizes them, make it difficult for brand managers to use brand personas in their communications. Thus, this study will lay the groundwork for future research of the phenomenon as well as provide much-needed guidance for practitioners interested in implementing brand personas in their branding efforts.

1.2 Aim, Purpose & Contributions

The overall aim with this study is to explore and broaden the knowledge about brand personas with a story. There is a gap in previous research in terms of brand personas with a story. The phenomenon is interesting since it is commonly used by organizations but yet quite unexplored within research. Since the phenomenon is frequently used by organizations, it is relevant to explore how brand personas with a story can be constructed in order to deepen the knowledge. To build a character is well written about within literature science, thus the knowledge from that academic field can be merged into the field of strategic brand management in order to fill the existing knowledge gap and by that create a framework that can be used when building brands. Thus, the purpose of this conceptual study is to explore brand personas with a story through the lense of literature science by looking at case examples. In order to reach the aim of the research, three research questions will be answered:

- What elements can be identified when creating a brand persona with a story?
- How are the characters of brand personas with a story created?
- How can brand personas with a story be categorized?

This study has theoretical contributions and managerial implications. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the academic field of strategic brand management as well as the field of literature theory, as the two domains are merged. A second contribution is the identification, definition and categorization of brand personas with a story, which have not previously been explored. The generated knowledge is useful for managers as it enables practitioners to understand how brand personas with a story are created and categorized. Thus, the study is of both foundational and conceptual character as it explores the uncharted phenomenon of brand personas with a story.

1.3 Research Delimitations

Since this study explores the phenomenon of brand personas with a story, some delimitations were made. For a brand persona to be of relevance to this study, it must:

- a) Have a story that is created and explicitly communicated in an organization's marketing communications and/or the company must have explicitly expressed the personas characteristics and preferences.
- b) The information about the persona must be made available to the public and have been created by the company.

Thus, several types of brand personas fall outside the category. The phenomenon does not include:

- a) Characters from movies or books, regardless of whether they offer merchandise or have fan websites.
- b) Brand personas that are merely used as a logo or a mascot, meaning that there is no explicit backstory or character description available for the public.
- c) Companies that use celebrities or CEO's as spokespersons and ambassadors, unless the name of the celebrity/CEO is the same as the company name and that the company provides a story about the focal person in their messages.
- d) When companies use actors in their advertising to personify the brand but the actors are not directly linked to the brand values and/or identity.

1.4 Research Limitations

Our ambition has been to cover as many brand personas with a story that was reasonable in regards to the size of the study. We believe that we reached saturation, which is further explained in section 3.4 Sampling strategy. However, we acknowledge that we have not reviewed all brand personas with a story that have existed or still exist. For instance, the study focuses on brand personas that are mainly active in the Western world. It was also important that the stories about the personas were written in a language that we as researchers understood, which also impacted the sampling. In the section 5.3 Future research, we will discuss how this phenomenon can be further researched, where the limitations are addressed.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters which are all described and presented below.

The first chapter

This first chapter aims to introduce and problematize the subject of the study, as well as presenting the purpose and aim of the study. This section describes why it is important for the study to be conducted.

The second chapter

This chapter is the literature review. It begins by placing the reader in the context of the study. Furthermore, the literature review pinpoints the gap in previous research and clarifies the need of this foundational study. In this part, the literature theory is also introduced and explained before being used in the analysis as a tool for providing deeper knowledge about the concept of brand persona with a story. This part emphasizes the theoretical gaps that currently exist within the literature and by that position this study on the research map.

The third chapter

Afterwards, we present a description and discussion of the chosen methodology and research design that also acquaints the reader with the study's case examples. In addition, this part explains the research process and the themes that were identified in the material. It also entails a method reflection and a part that reflects upon the researchers reflexivity.

The fourth chapter

The fourth chapter is the analysis. The analysis is divided into three sections that each focuses on one assigned research question. The first part focuses on the story whereas the second part focuses on the persona. The third part is a combination of both the story and the persona and is being discussed and viewed through the lense of literature science. After the analysis, the findings will be summarized. Lastly, the findings are discussed and reflected upon.

The fifth chapter

In this ending chapter, the conclusion of the study is presented which deepens the insights of the study. This is then followed by theoretical contributions and managerial implications. Lastly, it identifies potential future research on the phenomenon.

2 Literature Review

Many brands have employed different types of characters in their communication, characters that they have created by telling stories about their whereabouts and personality. In order to explore the concept of brand personas with a story and create a framework to categorize them, it is crucial to first understand the context in which the phenomenon exists. Therefore, the first section of the literature review focuses on research within the field of strategic brand management. It begins with the concept of brand personality, which can be seen as a broader concept of brand personas as it refers to how brands incorporate personality traits in their communications. One way of incorporating personality traits to a brand is through a brand persona. Therefore, the stream is followed by a review of the most prominent studies within the niche of brand personas, to establish what aspects of the phenomenon that have been studied and what aspects that are still uncovered. Afterwards, the concept of storytelling will be investigated, as storytelling have been used by many organizations to create brand personas and tell stories about brands on a more general level. In addition, there is a link between telling stories and leveraging on a brand's heritage, which is why a section on brand heritage has been included.

Therafter, the remaining parts of the literature review is devoted to literature theory, in order to understand the process of building characters from another research perspective. Literature scholars have investigated and employed the concept of characters for a long time, which is why it is essential for this study to leverage on the accumulated knowledge within the field. To conclude the literature review, a section on how this study positions itself in regards to existing research has been included.

2.1 Brand Personality

Brand personality is a concept that has been discussed by numerous researchers in multiple ways. Brand personality can be described as the way that a brand speaks about its services or products that shows what kind of person the brand would be if it was human (Kapferer, 2012). Kapferer (2012) claims that the easiest way of providing the brand with a personality is to give the brand a spokesperson or a character, either real or imaginary.

Jennifer Aaker has developed a theoretical framework that describes different brand personality dimensions. The framework is based on the "Big Five" human personality structure (Aaker, 1997). Aaker describes brand personality as "*the set of human characteristics associated with a brand*" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). Aakers description of the phenomenon is well referred to by numerous scholars (Makbot, Shaari & Salleh, 2017; Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016; Lunardo, Gergaud & Livat, 2015). Absolut vodka can be used

as an example, if the brand Absolut vodka would be described as a person it would be “*a cool, hip, contemporary 25-year old*” (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). How a brand personality is formed and how a human personality is formed differs in multiple ways. A human personality trait is influenced by multiple factors such as attitudes and beliefs as well as physical and demographic characteristics whereas the brand personality is influenced by any indirect or direct contact that the consumer has with the brand (Aaker, 1997). Brand personality is formed by the human personalities, the customers, that are connected to the brand. This can be described as the direct way that the brand personality is being formed. The indirect ways are the more tangible factors such as the logo, the pricing, the product attributes and the advertising (Aaker, 1997). Aaker’s (1997) study and framework shows that brands have five distinct personality dimensions: ruggedness, sophistication, competence, excitement and sincerity. Furthermore, the study shows that the different brand personality dimensions influence consumer preference in different ways and for different reasons, that it evokes emotions for consumers and that it increases loyalty and trust (Aaker, 1997).

In the literature review on brand personality by Aaker & Fournier (1995), Allen and Olson starts off to describe personality as the process in which an observer attributes personality characteristics to another person based on their behavior. The same process is used to conceptualize brand personality. The brand personality is created when a brand is personified through personal attributes that describes the brands inner characteristics. There are numerous ways on how to create this process, one way of doing it is to apply a brand character. To give the brand a character is a narrative approach that creates a story around the brand (Allen & Olsen 1995 cited in Aaker & Fournier 1995). The primary way of how people make sense of each others behavior is through storytelling, which is one of the reasons why a narrative approach is successful when it comes to creating brand personality, it helps the consumers to make sense of the brand (Allen & Olsen 1995 cited in Aaker & Fournier 1995).

In Susan Fournier’s (1995 cited in Aaker & Fournier 1995) article “The brand as relationship partner: An alternative view of brand personality” a framework is developed that explains and further develops the knowledge about brand personality. The emphasis in this framework is the relationship between the brand and the consumer. When it comes to the relationship between the brand and the consumer, the brand can be seen as a contributing and active partner where the brands actions and behaviors together creates the consumers perception of the brand’s personality (Fournier 1995 cited in Aaker & Fournier 1995). Furthermore the article addresses questions such as, can the brand be seen as an active contributor in the relationship? And do brands reach out to customers on an individual basis? Fournier (1995 cited in Aaker & Fournier 1995) proposes that all the activities in the advertising and marketing mix can be described as the brands behavior, behaviors that trigger some kind of attitudinal or behavioral response from the consumer. This explanation makes the brand become a partner in the dyadic relationship between the consumer and the brand. Based on this, Fournier (1995 cited in Aaker & Fournier 1995) proposes the brand-as-a-partner concept and in order for the brand to become a partner, it needs to have a personality.

2.2 Brand Persona

When narrowing down the literature review from the broader concept of brand personality to the narrower concept of brand personas, it can be concluded that little research has been conducted on the phenomenon. We have included research that uses the terminology “brand persona”, “brand personification”, “persona-fied brands” and “brand personifiers”, since our understanding is that all terms refer to a similar idea of the phenomenon. In the literature review, we have chosen to keep the authors terminology, whereas the analysis only will use the term “brand persona”. To get an in-depth understanding of what has been studied, and the many areas that still are left to explore, we will review the work of researchers that have devoted time and knowledge into the subject of brand personas.

Cohen (2014) has attempted to categorize brand personas, where he defines the phenomenon as “the use by a brand of a character with human-like characteristics in packaging, promotion, public relations, or for other marketing-related purposes” (Cohen 2014, p. 3). Following this, Cohen (204) identifies four types of brand personification. First, a brand can be anthropomorphized in to a thing with human-like characteristics to make a brand easier to understand and remember. For instance, Exxon used the image of a tiger in combination with their slogan “Put a tiger in your tank” to give their brand what the author calls human-like characteristics. Another type of brand personification is when a brand presents a character with human-like characteristics where the characters does not necessarily have to personify the brand itself, the character can serve another purpose. A similar variation of the employment of characters is to use real humans in advertising but with the same purpose as with characters. A fourth use is when the brand is personified by the person who founded or owned the brand, where the brand often bears the persons name. In this case, the brand is often visually presented by pairing the brand name with something that the brand personifier is associated with.

In order to make sense of the phenomenon, Cohen (2014) places brand personas on a scale ranging from fantasy to reality, where the brand personifiers sometimes overlap (see Figure 1). At the lower end of the continuum, the researcher places animated cartoon characters such as Mr. Peanut. Taking a small step towards reality, one can find costumed actors portraying fictional characters, such as Ronald McDonald. Here, the costume is more important than the human wearing it, which is why a great deal of fantasy surrounds the brand persona. Moving forwards, brands can also be personified by seemingly real people where the people are non-person-specific or interchangeable. An example is Mr Goodwrench, created by General Motors, that was played by different actors over a timespan of many years. Getting closer to the reality side of the continuum, brands can also use human faces, where the faces either are the ones of living people, dead people or fictional people. Similar to this are brand personas where the human face is the one of a real individual that is viewed as “depersonalized” due to death or passage of time. One example is Chef Boyardee, a restaurant owner from the early 1900’s, who died in 1985 but still has his face on the food products that carries his name. At a very high end of the reality continuum we find brand personas where real people personify their own brands, and example being Debbi Fields that personify Mrs. Fields’ Cookies. The personas are the people that function as the human force behind the brand. Reaching the high

end of the continuum one finds brands personified or represented by consumers themselves. Dr. Pepper used this strategy in the 70's campaign "Be A Pepper" where people sang a song about everybody being "a Pepper" to convey their message about being a brand for the many people.

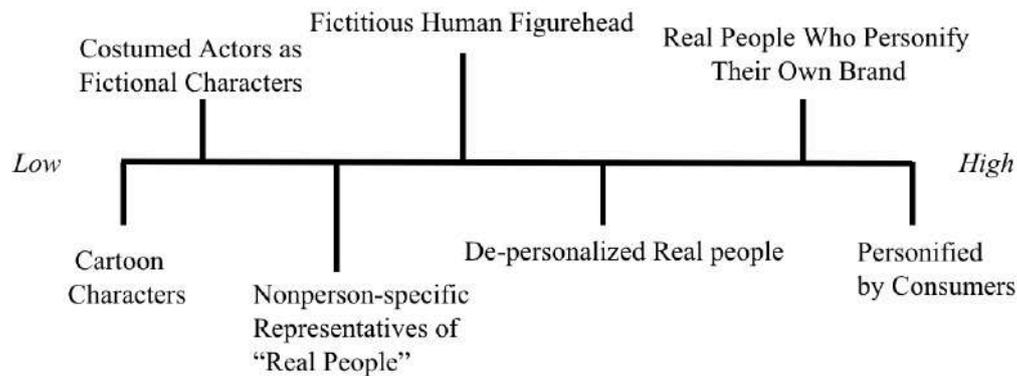


Figure 1: Cohen's (2014) continuum of reality

Dion and Arnould (2016) have studied brand personas in the gastronomy sector. The authors suggest that "it is not the person who provides the offering with value but the persona associated with this person" (Dion & Arnould, 2016, p. 121-122). They believe that brand personas differ from the use of celebrity endorsers since they, unlike endorsers, are central to the brand in question. Furthermore, they argue that persona-fied brands are different from brands with human characteristics and humans with brand characteristics. The most crucial aspect of differentiation is the one of performativity, meaning that persona-fied brands simultaneously represent and perform the persona through their actions and while building relationships. When studying how persona-fied brands can be managed, Dion and Arnould (2016) distinguish between two types of personification of the brand, one being multiple or fragmented, and the other being unified or unique. Multiple personification of a brand entails the use of different persons to display different facets of the brand persona, where a unified approach uses one individual to embody the different facets of the brand persona. Dion & Arnould (2016) conclude that a brand persona strategy is employed by many restaurants and they argue that brand personas are important for service brand management. When discussing future research, the authors state the importance of further studying persona-fied brands, where they mention other franchised services as an area of interest.

Barbara Stern (1988a; 1988b; 1993; 1994) has studied personas in advertising, where she argues that the language used in ads represents a company persona that can persuade consumers to consume. In her early work, Stern (1988a) uses literary theory to develop a "Speaker Schema". She argues that the persona has three main roles in advertising - to act as a

surrogate for the company, to determine consumer attitude and to define personal relationships. Basically, the persona becomes a mental picture that represents the company, which allows consumers to build a relationship with the company as well as to develop positive brand attitudes. When analyzing personas from a literary perspective, the author uses poetic theory to reflect upon the language used in advertising. The analysis resulted in a model that proposes six interactive components of language, such as syntax and sound, that together help advertisers develop better strategies for communication with consumers. Important to note is that Stern (1988b) argues that personas are present in advertising even if the message does not explicitly mention an expression of a human being, since any text implies an author, which in the case of advertising always is the company.

In a later study on personas in advertising, Stern (1994) focuses on authenticity while revealing three paradoxes of the persona. The first paradox is that a persona is simultaneously real and fictional. Stern (1994) refers to a spectrum of reality, where she argues that the persona can be completely imaginary, by for example taking the form of a cartoon. An example of the opposite side of the spectrum is when a CEO appears in advertisements, as the CEO still appears as a fictional being while representing a real company in a real world and being a "real" person. But since the persona is created for a specific purpose, it entails elements of fiction, no matter what form this persona takes on. Stern (1994, pg. 394) refers to this paradox as a "double-edged sword for it cuts through the permeable borders of categories and endows advertising with the capacity to deceive". The second paradox is that a persona is both original and reproducible. It gains its originality and authenticity because of its human personality that allows the persona to be associated with a brand. But this does not protect the persona from being reproduced. For instance, Dakota cigarettes copied Marlboros western characteristics to appeal to a specific market. The last paradox stemming from the personas reconstructed reality is that personas both reveal and conceal their status as an agent. Since the public sees the persona, it has a revelatory purpose, but at the same time a company can hide some message while displaying others, meaning that the persona also conceals parts of the brand. Stern (1994) believes that these paradoxes influence advertising authenticity.

When reflecting upon future research issues, Stern (1993) highlights the importance of conceptualizing the persona construct in order to measure it. She argues that researchers currently are making assumptions about how the phenomenon is used in advertising but that there is a need of literary precedents that closely studies the attributes of personas. In doing so, it can be argued that Stern (1993) indirectly supports our belief that a categorization of brand personas is needed in order for future conclusions to be drawn. By reviewing Sterns work, we can see that personas have been studied from a literary perspective, but Stern focuses on the language itself whereas our study uses theories that relate to character building and their stories and thus employ other aspects of literary theory.

When reviewing previous research within the field of brand persona, it becomes clear that brand personas with a story, as it is defined in this study, have not been the focus of any prior studies and as a consequence, it is an unexplored phenomenon.

2.3 Storytelling

A previous study has connected brand personas with the use of storytelling. The study begins with Herskovitz and Crystal (2010, p. 21) defining brand personas as "the articulated form of the brand's character and personality". They argue that persona-focused storytelling is crucial for building brand narratives. Strong brand personas provide an important connection between company's statements and performance, and help create long-lasting relationships based on emotions between the company and its audiences. In order to do this, the persona must be easy to recognize and remember, while also being relatable and consistent. When audiences "know" the brand persona they also understand the overall brand message, even if the company uses different stories in their communication. However, if the brand narrative and persona are weak, the audience might perceive company stories as multiple disconnected adventures which stands in the way of building a brand persona that people can develop a relationship with. Additionally, a strong brand persona can grow over time while staying sincere to its core values, making emotional connections to audiences even stronger. Thus, Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) argue that companies must start with developing a well thought-through brand persona before placing the brand in a story since the strength of a brand stems from the strength of a brand's persona. To illustrate their arguments, the authors mention that Coca Cola used their strong brand narrative to overcome struggles with blind testing. In a blind testing of Coca Cola and Pepsi products, it was revealed that consumers could not differentiate the recipes from each other. But when drinking while seeing an image of Coke, the brand influence was very strong on the participants, meaning that the belief that they were drinking Coke actually altered their experience. Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) believe that this effect was measured in the case of Coca Cola but not Pepsi since they use strong storytelling that is easy to relate to. Thus, persona-based storytelling that targets deeply felt implicit needs and attitudes of audiences can be used to build strong brands (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010).

As mentioned previously, the way people make sense of each others behavior is through storytelling, therefore when a brand uses storytelling it helps its consumers to make sense of the brand (Allen & Olsen 1995 cited in Aaker & Fournier 1995). To use storytelling is not only a tool that supports and strengthens the company brand, but also a tool that strengthens the company culture (Fog, et. al 2010). Strong brands usually represents a story, for instance Harley Davidson represents the story of freedom. The story should reflect the company values. The core story should be the factor that ties the brand communication together. Storytelling as a communication tool can therefore strengthen the company both on an internal as well as an external level (Fog, et al. 2010). By using an interesting story a brand can set itself apart from its competitors, offer an added emotional value and gain more attention by its customers (Wala, 2015 cited in Mucundorfeanu, 2018).

When a company uses storytelling it is way to describe who they are and what they stand for. There are four elements that together makes up the base for storytelling; The message, The conflict, The characters and The plot. To tell a story you need a message, in the perspective of company storytelling it is important to have a message that reflects positively upon the brand. The message should work as a central theme throughout the story. The conflict is needed in

order to create excitement in the story, it should be the driving force. In a corporate story, the conflict could be something that disturbs your core message Fog et. al (2010) illustrate this with the example of the story behind Domino's pizza. Domino's Pizzas message is that they bake and sell pizzas, but a conflict occurs when Domino's one night realizes that they are running low on pizza dough. This conflict disturbs the message and now they need to figure out how they can get a hold of more pizza dough before it is too late. Without this conflict, there would be no story behind Domino's Pizza, it would just have been business as usual. The third element that is necessary for storytelling is the characters, they are needed for the conflict to play out and for the story to keep going. Within storytelling it is usual to use the classical fairytale model when creating characters, this concept gives each character a specific role in the story, such as the hero or heroine, the villain as well as a benefactor or supporter. This structure highlights the individual character in different ways and their functions in relation to each other. The hero or heroine is often the one solving the conflict and the villain is connected to the actual conflict. From a corporate perspective, the villain can be the customer that does not believe in the product and that needs to be convinced by the hero (the company). The conflict is then the customers not believing in the product and the harmony (the message) is restored when the hero manages to convince the customer who in the end, ends up satisfied and happy. When creating a corporate story the fairytale model can be used in order to ensure that the story has the characters that are necessary to bring the story together (Fog et. al 2010). The plot is referred to as the concept of how the story should progress, the story must have a structure in order to maintain its interest from the audience. The traditional way of a story structure is that it has a beginning, middle and an end where the conflict increases in the middle and then resolves in the end (Fog, et. al 2010).

Related to storytelling is Aaker and Aaker's (2016) concept of signature stories. The authors argue that signature stories should be viewed as a critical asset for companies that generate growth while simultaneously offering guidance both internally and externally. For a signature story to function as an asset, it must be intriguing, authentic, involving and have a strategic message. This means that the signature story must grab attention of the audience while being perceived as credible. The story can be fictional, but there must still be substance behind it. When the story is involving it makes the audience feel, think and act in a certain way. Combined with a strategic message, the signature story will help clarify the brand and the business strategy while increasing the quality of customer relationships. A strong signature story is repeated over a long period of time, gaining authenticity and influence. Thus, a signature story should not be confused with the tactical stories companies use in their short-term communication, such as in an advertisement. However, the authors claim that a company still can have several signature stories in their portfolio as long as they represent multiple strategies and target groups. The advantages of having multiple stories is that customers can connect with a specific story that is more relevant for them, making the story appear as less generic (Aaker & Aaker, 2016).

Aaker and Aaker (2016) also reflect upon why stories are so powerful. They believe that there are several reasons why many companies today use stories in their marketing communications. For instance, stories are easier to remember than simple facts and they are also easier to connect to, making the audience more attentive and involved in the message. Further, stories are persuasive as they inhibit counter-arguing by distracting the audience, and also create emotional responses. When they are interesting and entertaining, stories are also

likely to be repeated on social media, making stories as great tool for word-of-mouth communication (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). The challenge with signature stories is to identify them (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). One way is to look at the history of the company, but for new companies or companies facing a change, it might be better to create one. No matter how the stories are sought after, one should look for heroes that can inspire both employees and customers (Aaker & Aaker, 2016).

Martino and Lovari (2016) highlights that companies with a corporate memory and history often uses storytelling in order to increase their brand heritage. Heritage is often associated with authenticity and luxury and by that it can be used as a strategic resource within brand management (Urde & Greyser, 2015). With this in mind the following section in this literature review will describe the concept of brand heritage.

2.4 Brand Heritage

Heritage as a concept can be found in different types of brands in all categories, both service and product. Urde, Balmer and Greyser (2007) make a distinction between brand heritage and heritage brand. Brand heritage is when the brand identity can be found in the organization's longevity, core values, track record, use of symbols and most of all in the organisational belief that the history of the organization is important. A heritage brand is a brand that has created its positioning and value proposition based on its heritage. To use, or not to use, the corporate heritage in the organization's positioning is therefore a strategic decision. Research shows that it can be a leverage, specially in global markets, when a brand is strongly connected to its heritage. The difference between heritage and history is that history explains what has happened in the past whereas heritage makes the past relevant for today's purpose and context. In the context of brand management, heritage helps the brand to be relevant both in the past and in the future (Urde, Balmer & Greyser 2007). Brands with a heritage are often associated with familiarity and stability. These brands also often have the image of being authentic. Authenticity, familiarity and stability are all strong features that appeal to consumers (Hakala, Lätti & Sandberg 2011). Thus, brand heritage can be used as a way to create a unique image that can differentiate them from competitors (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

2.5 Literature Theory

Within the field of literature theory, there have been many different interpretations and studies on the subject of characters and character building. One view in this field is the mimetic view, which is based upon the idea that characters are a direct image of the reality. On the other hand is the semiotic view. Semiotics is the knowledge of signs, where signs can be found in the language and then interpreted in different ways depending on the interpreter. In the same way is the semiotic view on characters based upon their language and the signs in their

language, where the signs do not have any direct connection to the reality and can only be understood in the context of the character (Nikolajeva, 2017).

In this study, Forster's (2012) theory on how to build a character will be used. This is one of the most prominent theories that since its creation has been heavily cited, the theory relates to the thickness of character descriptions. This theory has later on been further developed by the adding of dynamic and static characters, which is connected to the development of the characters (Nikolajeva, 2002). This development will also be used in this study.

2.5.1 Forster's Theory of Characterization

Forster (2012) has developed a theory in regards to how to build a character where two character types have been derived, flat characters and round characters. The defining quality of a flat character is that it has one specific trait. This trait is such a dominant feature that no other features are displayed. The flat character is built upon one single concept or idea that is connected to the particular story in which the character exists. Flat characters are, as opposed to round characters, not complex (Forster, 2012). Forster's (2012, p. 70) view on flat characters is that they are best when they are comic "A serious or tragic flat character opt to be a bore". The practical advantages connected to the flat characters are that they are easy to recognize for the reader on an emotional level (Forster, 2012). Since flat characters often have similar traits as other flat characters, they are familiar to the reader and so they remind the reader of previous encounters with similar characters. This makes the flat characters easy to understand without having to be explained. Flat characters become representations of previous examples (Mete, 2017). Flat characters do not change by circumstances, but rather moves through circumstances still remaining with the same specific trait (Forster, 2012). This shows that flat characters has an unchangeable nature and by that they do not have the qualities needed to surprise the reader (Mete, 2017), which are one of the strongest qualities of the round character (Forster, 2012). Flat characters are significant in Charles Dickens' books. Nearly all characters can be explained in one sentence. Dickens uses characters that the reader recognizes as soon as they enter the story (Forster, 2012). Although it can be argued that flat characters entail some benefits, not all scholars agree with this line of argumentation. Figlerowicz (2016) believes that flat protagonists often are given too much narrative space in novels, where they express too little in relation to the amount of attention they are given.

Forster (2012, p. 75) explains the round character in this quote: "The test of the round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round". When a character has more than one trait, they are in the beginning of turning into a round character. Round characters are complex characters that cannot be explained in a single sentence. They have the ability to surprise the reader in a convincing way (Forster, 2012). Furthermore, Forster (2012) explains that it is only round characters that can perform in a tragic way for a longer time and by that influence the reader's emotions in more than just a humorous way. According to Forster (2012), Jane Austen's characters are almost always round, they are complex characters with several different dimensions that sometimes contradict each other.

2.5.2 Development of Forster's Theory

Since the development of Forster's theory, the concept of static and dynamic characters has been included as additional dimensions used in character analysis (Nikolajeva, 2002). The concept refers to character development, where dynamic characters undergo some kind of change throughout the story whereas static characters stay the same from the beginning to the end. Characters can grow or mature in two ways according to Nikolajeva (2002), they can undergo chronological change, meaning that the development happens due to time passing, or they can undergo ethical change, which entails the development of the character's moral and ethical qualities.

By adding the concept of static and dynamic characters, a new more in-depth analysis of characters becomes possible, where Nikolajeva (2002) identifies four types of characters. First, there are characters that are both flat and static, meaning that they possess few personality traits and does not undergo any form of change. An example from the novel *What Katy Did* is the protagonist Katy Carr who stays true to her primary features throughout her story and expresses no development. However, some characters can also be classified as flat yet dynamic, such as *Heidi* from the classical children novel with the same name. Although her only prominent feature throughout the story is her goodness, she grows morally as she goes to school, becomes part of the civilization and pressures her grandfather into going to church. Thus, her character experienced ethical development while still remaining quite two-dimensional. The opposite type of character is round and static, where Pippi Longstocking is a suitable example. Pippi is clearly a round character as she possesses several personality traits and a rich backstory that enables her to surprise the reader. However, there is no possibility for Pippi to grow as a character since she already possesses all the qualities that the readers desire, she is independent, strong, rich and so on. Thus, she is in a power position that inhibits her from growing as there is no need for it. Some characters, such as the protagonist from *Anne of Green Gables*, are both round and dynamic. Anne is a complex character that grows in both a literal and symbolic sense in the book, as the author lets the reader follow her through different phases of her life (Nikolajeva, 2002).

2.6 Research Positioning

Since we have coined the term "brand personas with a story", no previous research on that specific niche exists as far as we know. When reviewing what has been studied on brand personas in general within the field of strategic brand management it is clear that a gap exists in relation to the phenomenon. The limited research that exists on the topic reveals a confusion in regards to how to define brand personas and what to call them, as a different yet similar terminology is used by researchers. The focus of most studies seems to be placed on why personas are used by brands and what benefits they bring, whereas no research that has been reviewed focuses on how these brand personas are constructed by their brands. This is one argument for why this study attempts to concretize how the characters are created. To our knowledge, no study exists that investigates brand personas by employing Forster's (2012)

theory of flat and round characters, making this study truly unique from a theoretical perspective. All in all, the literature review strongly suggests the need of a foundational study that explores brand personas with a story and how they are created from a conceptual standpoint in order to lay the groundwork for future research and generate meaningful understanding of the phenomenon for both academics and practitioners.

3 Methodology

The methodology chapter is devoted to explaining and justifying the choice of research design, method and sampling strategy. It starts out with an elaboration on the research philosophy and its implications. Second, the research design is presented which includes a description of what type of data that has been gathered. Next, the sampling strategy is argued for and the chosen units of data are presented. This is followed by a description of the chosen analysis strategy, an explanation of the analysis process and the identified themes. On a last note, we reflect upon the chosen method and discuss the quality of the study.

3.1 Research Philosophy

This research is a qualitative study with an interpretivist epistemological approach. Epistemological approaches address the issues of what types of knowledge that can be regarded as acceptable. The interpretivist approach is usually connected to social sciences and is preferable when research aims to understand a phenomenon or human behavior, instead of aiming to explain it (Bryman, 2008). Since this study aims to understand how a brand persona can be constructed and categorized by looking at theories connected to literature science it has an interpretivist approach. Furthermore, this study does not aim to find a certain truth but instead to understand and highlight a certain phenomenon. The ontological position is therefore constructivist. The constructivist position views social entities as socially constructed (Bryman, 2008). In this study we view the phenomenon of brand personas with a story as socially constructed.

To conclude this section, this study has an abductive approach, which can be described as a combination of inductive and deductive approach (Patel & Davidson, 2003). An inductive approach starts off with researching a phenomenon in order to create a theory, whereas the deductive approach starts off with a theory and finds hypotheses that can be tested in accordance with the chosen theory. An abductive approach, being a combination, has both a theory and a phenomenon that is continually researched by going back and forth between the phenomenon and the theory in order to expand the chosen theory and make it more general (Patel & Davidson, 2003). Since this study has a background in strategic brand management, viewed through the lense of literature science, the phenomenon is continuously being analyzed through both theoretic fields in order to expand the knowledge and fill the research gap.

3.2 Research Design

Since this study aims to research the phenomenon of brand personas with a story, the data collected in this research were documents that tell the story about different brand personas. To us, documents refer to texts, videos and pictures. By looking at documents that depict the personas stories, it becomes possible to see how the story as well as the persona has been created, making them possible to categorize. This is logic since the theory in this study is influenced by literature science, meaning that it is relevant to learn about brand personas with a story in the same manner as one can learn about characters in books - to read about them. Since the aim of this study is related to how brand personas with a story is created, it becomes evident that the documents reviewed need to have been composed by the organizations themselves for the purpose of using them in communications. The sampling strategy behind the chosen documents is further explained in the section 3.4 Sampling strategy.

After having collected the data, a thematic analysis was conducted in order to reach the objectives of the study. First, the data was analyzed from a storytelling perspective where the identified themes were different elements that companies use when creating a story. Secondly, in order to answer the following research question, the data was analysed by focusing on the persona and how they had been created. The last research question aims to categorize the personas in accordance with literature theories on round, flat, dynamic and static characters. Round and flat is connected to the amount of characteristics that a character has (Forster, 2012) and dynamic and static is connected to the development of the character (Nikolajeva, 2002). The identified themes in this part of the analysis were found by looking at characteristics and development over time in order to understand how they have been constructed.

3.3 Document Analysis

Bowen (2009, p. 27) defines document analysis as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic”. By examining and interpreting documents, one can gain the understanding needed to develop empirical knowledge. The term documents can include manuals, advertisements and organizational reports. From the documents, information in the form of quotes and excerpts can be organized into themes and categorizations during a process of analysis. For instance, researchers can conduct a content analysis or a thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009). We have chosen to undertake a thematic analysis, which is argued for and further explained in the section 3.5 Data Analysis. A strong advantage of document analysis is that documents in themselves are unobtrusive in the sense that they cannot be affected by the research (Bowen, 2009). Because of this quality, Bowen (2009) argues that the issue of reflexivity is generally non-existent in document studies. The concept of reflexivity is further discussed below. Furthermore, documents are exact and can be reviewed repeated times since the documents do not change (Bowen, 2009).

The basis of the document analysis in this study is secondary data. Secondary data is written sources of information such as company reports and advertisements that are created for another purpose than that of the research, but which still is of relevance for the research in question (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Two advantages with secondary data are its high quality, especially when it is created by firms that put considerable resources into the making of the documents, and that it opens up a historical perspective which is difficult to obtain via primary data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

Secondary data is well suited for this study since we are interested in how one can view brand personas with a story from an external perspective, which is why it is relevant to see how the brand personas with a story actually are presented to the public. However, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) mention some drawbacks of using secondary data to be that it might require trustful relationships between the researchers and the company, and that the data might not fit the research questions since it is created for other purposes. The dilemma could potentially result in a situation where the data guides the research question and findings, instead of the other way around (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). In response to the first drawback, we are only interested in data that is publicly available, which makes the trust-aspect irrelevant. Regarding the hypothetical situation Ghauri & Grønhaug (2010) refers to, we created the research questions before analyzing the data, and made sure to identify data that could be used to explore the subject, in order to ensure that we could reach the objectives with the thesis. As mentioned previously in this study, the reading of documents will entail both an analysis of the written word and pictures, which is in line with Bryman's (2008) definition of documents. The images that have been used are retrieved from open sources.

In order to base the thesis on documents of high quality, Scott's (1991) quality criteria were considered. He has identified four key criteria for assessing documents, namely its credibility, authenticity, representativeness and meaning. *Credibility* refers to the motivations behind the production of the document (Scott, 1991). The document should also be free from errors or potential distortions (Bryman, 2008). Scott (1991) defines *authenticity* as the documents genuineness. For a document to be *representative*, it must be representative of the total, meaning that deliberate removal of documents is troublesome (Scott, 1991). Lastly, a document must be of *meaning*, where meaning can be gained if the document is clear and understandable (Bryman, 2008). Bryman (2008) argues that official documents from companies most likely are authentic and meaningful and that it is most important to assess the documents in relation to their credibility and representativeness. This is because he argues that one cannot assume that company documents are unbiased, as documents are written in order to convey certain impressions (Bryman, 2008). However, since the thesis has constructionist viewpoint, we are interested in analyzing the companies' subjective communications, which is why biased documents in themselves are less problematic. All documents analyzed in the thesis have passed the criteria assessment.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

In order to find relevant data for this study, a purposive sampling strategy was chosen. Purposive sampling is appropriate to use when the researcher has a clear idea of what kind of sample units that are needed in order to meet the purpose of the study. After having defined the criteria that is needed for the data to be of relevance, the researcher approaches potential data that could be relevant in order to see if they meet the criteria. The data that meets the criteria is thereafter being used, and the data that does not meet the criteria will not be used (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson 2015). Since this study aims to explore and understand the phenomenon of brand persona with a story, it was relevant that the chosen data met the criteria stated in part 1.3 Delimitations. By using search words such as “most famous brand persona”, “popular brand persona”, “Companies with brand personas” and so forth, 57 brand personas were reviewed and the ones that met the criteria were used (see Figure 2). In order to see the reviewed data, including the personas that did not meet the criteria, see Appendix A. Some of the brand personas were also reviewed due to prior knowledge that the researchers had of them.

The sampling ceased when theoretical saturation was reached, meaning that researchers notice a redundancy in the collected material where no new insights are made (Bryman, 2008). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) claims that if the researcher continues to collect data after having reached the saturation point, the researchers may risk losing their research perspective. Thus, when it became evident that no new information was being derived by looking at potential units of data, the decision to stop sampling was made. For instance, we noted that many fashion brands included the same type of information about their brand personas with a story, such as a biography. Thus, after having reviewed a set of fashion brand personas with a story, we decided to stop sampling them since saturation had been reached.

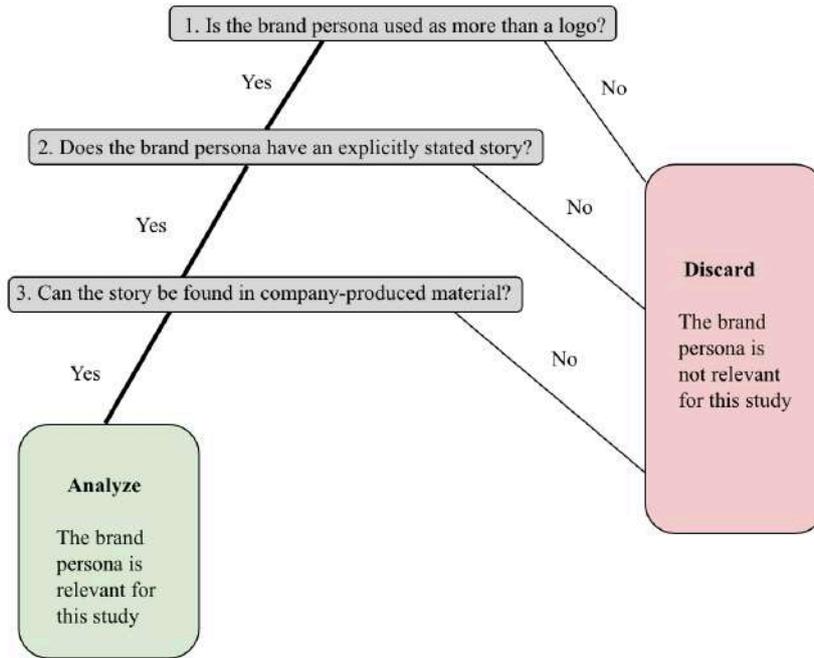


Figure 2: Decision tree that outlines the sampling criteria

3.4.1 Description of Sampled Brand Personas With A Story

In the following section, a short description of each brand persona with a story, their company origin and where the story can be found will be presented. For a picture or photo of the brand persona, see Appendix B. The story of the persona will not be described in this section but will instead be presented and used in the analysis. For a full list of all reviewed brand personas, including the ones not deemed relevant for the study, see Appendix A.

Wit Oddoski - Oddka Vodka

Wit Oddoski is the brand persona of Oddka Vodka, a brand from Pernod Ricard. He can be found on the company website in a video clip. The video of him shows images from when he was a child as well as images of him when he invented Oddka Vodka. He also presents the different flavours of Oddka Vodka and which one that is his favourite (Stawski Usa, 2017).

Lord Somersby - Somersby Cider

Lord Somersby is the brand persona of Somersby Cider, a brand from Carlsberg. He is described as the founder of the Somersby Cider. His story can be found on the company website as well as in advertisement clips. His story is often centered on his many discoveries, the most prominent one being the Somersby Cider. The Somersby Cider was a favourite drink among the Lord's best friends, Napoleon, Cleopatra and MC Hammer (Somersby Cider, n.d.)

Sir Kensington - Sir Kensington's

Sir Kensington is both a brand (Sir Kensington's, owned by Unilever) and a brand persona with a story. The history of Sir Kensington can be found on the company website. The story is divided into different chapters such as "The story of Sir Kensington" where you can learn

about where he was from as well as a chapter with the name “The recipe” that describes how he came up with a sauce recipe (Sir Kensington’s, n.d.a.)

Johnnie Walker - Johnnie Walker

The whisky brand Johnnie Walker uses the persona of John, or Johnnie, Walker to build their brand. The website features a section dedicated to the world of Johnnie Walker, where one can read about his childhood and passion for whisky, as well as how their iconic logo was created (Johnnie Walker, n.d.). The brand has also produced a six minute short film where the story of Johnnie Walker is told (Best Commercials, 2014).

Tea folk - Tetley

The Tea folk are the brand personas with a story of the company Tetley (Owned by Tata Global beverages). On the company website there is a site called “Tea folk”, where you can find presentations of the tea folk which are characters that works at Tetley Towers, the place where the tea is made. The presentations involve the characters job role, their favourite blend as well as a personal profile (Tetley, 2016).

The Keebler Elves - Keebler

Keebler is a Kellogg’s brand that has The Keebler Elves as their brand persona with a story. On the company website the house of the Elves are presented as well as some of their qualities and their occupation (Keebler, 2015).

Tommy Hilfiger - Tommy Hilfiger

Tommy Hilfiger is both the persona and the founder of his namesake brand. The brands website features Tommy Hilfiger’s biography that outlines his career in fashion from the start in high school to being the Principal Designer of Tommy Hilfiger (Tommy Hilfiger, n.d.).

Coco Chanel - Chanel

Coco Chanel is the founder of Chanel. On the company website the story of Coco Chanel is presented, which makes her qualify as a brand persona with a story. The story is presented in different chapters that describe important happenings in her life, every happening can be viewed in a short film (Inside Chanel, n.d.a.). There is also a timeline that tells the story about her life (Inside Chanel, n.d.b.)

Fred Perry - Fred Perry

Fred Perry is the founder of the clothing brand that bears his name. On the website, a substantial amount of space is dedicated to the Fred Perry persona, whom they refer to as ”The Man”. The website features pictures, quotes and videoclips from Fred Perry’s life, as well as sections describing his career, personal background and what inspired the design of his iconic shirts (Fred Perry, n.d.).

Betty Crocker - Betty Crocker

Betty Crocker is a brand (owned by General Mills) as well as a brand persona with a story. Her history, how it started and how the character was born as well as how she became a cultural icon is presented at the company website (Betty Crocker, n.d.a.).

Hello Kitty - Sanrio

Hello Kitty is a brand and a brand persona with a story, the company behind Hello Kitty is Sanrio. On the company website the history of Hello Kitty is presented through a timeline where important happenings in her life is being presented as well as the presentation of her friends and family (Sanrio, 2016).

Ted Baker - Ted Baker

Ted Baker is a persona created by Ray Kelvin, who founded the fashion brand Ted Baker. However, when reading about the brand on their website, it says that Ted was the one who founded the brand and that the idea came to him whilst fishing (Ted Baker, n.d.). Although no official face of Ted Baker is used as their logo, the brand has issued a series of commercials where the Baker family is introduced, where one could speculate that the father of the family personifies Ted (Ted Baker, 2017).

Captain Morgan - Captain Morgan

Captain Morgan is used as the logo for the rum brand Captain Morgan, and is used in the majority of the brand's marketing communications. On the website, one can read about "The Legend of Captain Morgan" which is written in first person singular (Captain Morgan, n.d.). On their YouTube-channel, the brand has released several videos that feature a man dressed up as the Captain, who partakes in many different activities such as workout classes and bar hangouts (Kaplan, 2011; Captain Morgan Europe, 2017).

Michelin Man - Michelin

The Michelin Man is an iconic brand persona used by the Michelin brand. On their website, they explicitly state that the persona incarnates the Michelin brand's values and missions (Michelin, n.d.). It also features the story of the persona's creation and one can read about the Michelin Man's real name being Bibendum, and how he has been depicted as a gladiator, kickboxer, ballroom dancer and so on throughout the persona's existence. Furthermore, the persona owns a dog and has been featured in several commercials (Michelin Guide, 2018).

Red, Yellow, Green, Ms. Brown, Orange & Blue - M&M

The confectionary brand M&M, owned by Mars, uses their colorful characters in most of its marketing communications. On their website, each persona has their own section where one can read about their characteristics such as age, weight, shortcomings and turn-ons (M&M, n.d.a). The personas further come to life in their commercials, where they talk, move and behave like human beings (mmschocolates, 2018).

René Lacoste - Lacoste

On the Lacoste website, one can read about the persona René Lacoste (Lacoste, n.d.a). The story includes quotes, highlights of his life, private life and the connection between the persona and the iconic crocodile (Lacoste, n.d.b). In addition, René Lacoste's different innovations, such as a golf driver, are presented. The brand has also told the story of the man behind the brand in commercials (lacostetennis, 2012).

Gordon Ramsay - Gordon Ramsay

Gordon Ramsay is a famous chef and a brand that has been used in TV shows, restaurants and in kitchenware design (Gordon Ramsay, n.d.a). There is also video game where one plays a restaurant owner coached by Gordon Ramsay (Gordon Ramsay, n.d.b). On the website, a section is devoted to different news in Gordon Ramsay's life, which often includes stories about his family (Studio Ramsay, n.d.).

The Sun-Maid Girl - Sun-Maid

The girl on the Sun-Maid raisin packets is presented at Sun-Maids website and referred to as the Sun-Maid Girl. The company presents the story behind her, where she was from and who she was. Her development and legacy is also described (Sun-Maid, n.d.)

Melinda/Wendy - Wendy's

Wendy is a red-haired persona used in much promotional material for the fast food chain Wendy's. The company was founded by Dave Thomas, who decided to name the restaurant after the nickname of his daughter Melinda. The Wendy persona also has her red hair. Throughout the history of Wendy's, it has been common to let people dress up as Wendy at promotional events (Wendy's, n.d.).

Colonel Harland Sanders - KFC

KFC leverages the persona Harland Sanders, or Colonel Sanders in much of the brand's marketing communications. On the website, one can read about the history and values of the persona, as well as his signature all-white outfit (KFC, n.d.). The brand has also made commercials that feature real clips of the deceased Colonel (KFC, 2017a). In recent years, actors have portrayed the persona in different video clips (KFC, 2017b).

GEICO Gecko - GEICO

Insurance company GEICO lets their brand persona take the form of a green lizard called GEICO Gecko, who has been featured in countless commercials. In the commercials, the persona can be seen golfing, assembling furniture and participating in a conference call (GEICO, 2018). The persona also has a personal Facebook page where the lizard interacts with its fans (GEICO, n.d.a).

Mr. Clean - Mr. Clean

Mr. Clean is both a brand (owned by Procter & Gamble) and a brand persona with a story. Mr. Clean is presented in text and in a video on the company website. Both video and text tells the story about who he was, where he lived, how he was as a child and what he decided to become when he grew up (Mr. Clean, 2018).

The Pillsbury Doughboy - Pillsbury

Pillsbury is a General Mills brand, their brand persona with a story is the Pillsbury Doughboy. On the company website his story as well as some of his characteristics is presented. The company presents fast facts about the Doughboy, his history and origin as well as his signature traits and many talents (Pillsbury, 2018).

The Green Giant - Green Giant

The Green Giant is both a brand (owned by General Mills) and a brand persona with a story. His story is presented at the company website where some of his characteristics is explained (Green Giant, 2017a) as well as in advertisements (Green Giant, 2017b).

Miss Chiquita - Chiquita

Miss Chiquita is the brand persona with a story at Chiquita. Her story, starting of with the first Miss Chiquita and then continuing on to who she is today, is presented at the company website (Chiquita, 2018) she is also featured in advertisements (Jersey Coaster, 2007).

Vinnie - ATG

Vinnie is the brand persona with a story for the company ATG. Vinnie has is own site on the company website where his story, where he was from as well as who is friends and family are, is being presented (Vinnie, 2014a) He is also used in advertisements for the company (Vinnie, 2014b).

Buzz the Bee - Honey Nut Cheerios

Buzz the Bee has his own section on Cheerios website, that is written from a first person perspective and also links to his Tumblr page (Cheerios, n.d.). On the Bees Tumblr-page, fans can ask questions and reblog his posts, which are often written in a personal way and focuses on topic such as Buzz tastes in music (Buzz the Bee, n.d.).

Duracell Bunny - Duracell

According to Duracell themselves, the Duracell Bunny is the heart of their organization, who has his story stated on their website (Duracell, n.d.). The company has also made a video about the iconic status of their brand persona, where toys and stuffed animals talk about their encounters with the Bunny (Duracell Sverige, 2016).

3.5 Data Analysis

The data has been investigated through a thematic analysis. The idea of a thematic analysis is to identify central themes and subthemes by thoroughly reading the gathered material (Bryman, 2008). The thematic analysis entails a careful and focused reading and re-reading of the data (Bowen, 2009). In order to conduct such an analysis, it must be established what qualifies as a theme within the material. Ryan and Bernard (2003) state two examples of how researchers can identify themes. First, they argue that one can look for repetitions in the data, which suggest that a certain topic is of importance. Second, researchers can use social scientific concepts as a starting point for identifying theory-related themes, where it is important that the researchers do not only find what they are looking for (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In this study, we combined both ways in order to find themes that derived indigenously as well as from a more theoretical perspective. The theoretical constructs used to analyze the data stems from the chosen literature theory, where concepts from Forster's round and flat characters were employed.

Since this study takes a dual theoretical perspective, it was important to incorporate theories

on how characters are being analyzed within literature science. There are numerous ways how you can analyze fictive characters within literature science (Nikolajeva, 2017). First of all, characters are being presented towards their readers in different ways, how they act, how they look, the way they speak and what they say as well as how other characters perceive them are different ways in how they are presented. The reader decides how they interpret the character based on the assumption that can be drawn from how they are presented, but it is not always what they do or what they say that decides how the reader interprets them. It can also be in how they are presented in regards to other characters, or based on what they do not say. Characters can from a theoretical perspective be analyzed in the same manner as when readers interpret characters while reading fiction (Nikolajeva, 2017). Another way how characters are being interpreted is through their actions. It can be everyday actions such as sleeping, going to school or eating as well as more extraordinary actions. It is easier to describe a character through the extraordinary actions since their unique characteristics often are more presented in these kinds of actions. Thus, depending on what kind of action the character takes part in and how they are presented in the action, this can also be a tool to analyze their characterization. On a last note, how the character speaks is also a tool that can be used when analyzing. It is not merely what they say but also how they say it, if they have a certain accent or a common phrase that they use (Nikolajeva, 2017). With this in mind, the tools mentioned above where being combined with the thematic analysis in order to gain a deeper understanding of how the brand personas has been constructed.

3.6 Analysis Process & Identified Themes

When looking at the material, different themes appeared. In order to be able to thematize the stories as well as the personas, the process was divided into two parts. First, we analyzed the material from a storytelling lense where the different elements of storytelling were derived.

The identified themes were:

- The story of the brand personas creation
- The story of how the product is made
- The story infused with humor
- The story with a focus on brand heritage
- The story with a focus on personality traits
- The story that explains the world of the brand persona

Since the different storytelling elements sometimes appear together (the story infused with humor could also be a story that explains the world of the brand persona, for example), we choose to name them as elements and not as categories since we view them as different ways of how a company can create a story.

In the other part of the analysis, we steered away from the story and directed our focus towards the actual persona. We initially structured the material into different categories, but realised that in order to be able to understand the persona it was more beneficial to look at it as a continuum since some brand personas are more difficult to categorize than others. The

continuum is divided into three different sections, which exemplifies the different types of brand personas with a story. Our continuum starts with *the fictive character* and stretches out to the middle part that we named *the semi-fictive brand persona*, the continuum then ends with *the realistic character*. Thus, the identified themes are the three parts of the continuum and the analysis consists of placing the brand personas on this continuum in order to create a deeper understanding in how they have been created.

The last part of the analysis consists of a categorization of the brand personas with a story by viewing it from the literature theory perspective. We created a framework with two axes where the horizontal axis has the concepts of flat and round in each end, which is connected to the character traits. The vertical axis has the concepts of dynamic and static in each end, which are connected to the development of the character. The brand personas with a story were analyzed both by how they are presented in terms of their character traits as well as depending on their development. The framework was drawn on a whiteboard and the brand personas were placed in the framework after have being analyzed accordingly. The analysis was written after have been divided into four parts which are the four categories that the framework illustrates.

3.7 Method Reflection

In order to assess the quality of the study, Lincoln and Guba's (1994 cited in Bryman 2008) criteria of trustworthiness was chosen, since they are created specifically for qualitative research. The criteria of trustworthiness are divided into four subcriteria - *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. *Credibility* can be established by carrying out research in a fair way that respects the practice of research. In this study, we have made efforts to respect the studied brand personas by collecting information from the same type of sources, such as company websites and advertising. In doing so, we ensured that all units of data had the same preconditions. *Transferability* refers to how findings can be of value in other contexts, where transferability increases when the researcher provides a "thick" description of the focal subject. By including a section that presents all sampled brand personas and by including quotes and pictures in the analysis chapter, the reader is able to make their own interpretations of the data. *Dependability* relates to being fully transparent of the research phases, by providing accounts of data analysis decisions, interview transcripts and so on. In doing so, readers are able to determine the fairness of the research. This study aims to be transparent by explicitly describing all parts of the research process and giving detailed descriptions of the methodology. As an example, section 3.6 Analysis Process & Identified Themes aims to describe the process for the reader in order to be fully transparent. Additionally, all material that has been collected is publicly accessible, which means that every reader is able to access the data that this study is based on. *Confirmability* parallels objectivity by urging researchers to show that they have acted in good faith and refrained from letting personal values bias the research. In order to increase the study's confirmability, we have made efforts to not let our personal opinions on the chosen brand personas to influence the analysis of them. Moreover, we have remained critical to the material as well as our own interpretations of them, which is further discussed in the section below.

It could be argued that this study should have incorporated primary data in the form of interviews with the chosen organizations in order to let them describe how they built their characters. However, we do not believe interviews to be better suited for this study for several reasons. First, we believe that since this is a foundational study that explores and defines a new phenomenon, it was necessary to look at the phenomenon from a theoretical standpoint at first. Thus, it was not relevant for this study to gain the managerial perspective at this point. The managerial perspective and other future research topic ideas are presented in section 5.3 Future research. Additionally, we are interested in seeing how the personas and their stories are created and presented to the public, which is why it is suitable to study secondary material that is published and cannot be edited, unlike the memories and opinions of interviewees.

Overall, the study has been interesting and rewarding to write due to its conceptual foundation, but this has also created some issues that we as researchers had to manage along the way. Since the concept of brand personas is broad and since there is no united definition, it was crucial that we created our own definition that would lead the way in the research. Since the study is an abductive study, we solved this dilemma by going back and forth between what previous literature had said and what the material showed us and in that manner the delimitations and criteria became clear and worked as our guiding-star during most part of the research.

3.7.1 Reflexivity

Reflexive practices aim to cast doubt on the assumption that researchers can be fully objective when conducting research (Alvesson, Hardy & Harley 2008). As mentioned previously, the issue of reflexivity is generally non-existent in document studies (Bowen, 2009). Despite this, our aim was still to practice reflexivity throughout the research process. There are multiple ways on how to practice reflexivity, one way of doing so is through a multi-perspective practice, since viewing a phenomenon from multiple perspectives can be a way to provide an understanding that is easier to comprehend (Alvesson, Hardy & Harley 2008). It can be argued that this study has a reflexive practice since it views the phenomenon of brand persona with a story from a dual lense of both strategic brand management and literature science. Alvesson, Hardy & Harley (2008 p. 486) describes the reflexive researcher as “a traveller, periodically moving from place to place so that he or she may see things differently... He or she is also a builder or ‘bricoleur’, piecing together a richer, more varied picture by viewing research – their own or others’ – from different angles.”. With this in mind, it has been our aim to be both a traveler in between the two academic fields as well as a builder, putting different pieces within the academic fields together in order to explore and understand the chosen phenomenon. The study aims to continuously view it from the two different academic fields. The ambition to be as free from bias as possible has been a pillar in this study. In the attempt to be minimally biased, we remained critical towards the material and our interpretations and relationships with the brand personas. Although, it is important to be aware that within qualitative research it is difficult to stay truly objective (Bryman, 2008). With this in mind, the multi-perspective practice is one way towards a more reflexive approach.

4 Analysis and Discussion

The analysis has been divided into three parts that will answer to each of the research questions. The two first parts aim to broaden the understanding about the different kinds of storytelling elements that can be identified in the material, as well as a continuum that aims to highlight different kinds of brand personas that the material shows. It is important to identify different kinds of stories as well as different kinds of personas in order to be able to answer to the third research questions, which aims to categorize the identified elements and personas through the lense of literature science. The third part of the analysis will end with a framework that shows how brand personas with a story can be categorized. Next, the findings will be summarized before a discussion will take place where the findings are related to previous research.

4.1 What elements can be identified when creating a brand persona with a story?

When analyzing the material, different themes were identified that exemplifies elements used by companies when creating a story connected to the brand persona. Each identified element will have its own headline in this section of the analysis, where they are further explained. This part of the analysis aims to highlight the identified different elements that can be used when creating a story in regards to the brand persona, it does not attempt to create categories. This means that some of the brand personas with a story can be mentioned under multiple headings since they can be influenced by more than only one of the storytelling elements. We would argue that the majority of brand personas with a story integrate several elements in the creation of their stories.

4.1.1 The story of the brand persona's creation

When exploring the stories told about the chosen brand personas, an essential theme regarding the creation of the brand persona with a story is identified. It is common that organizational websites feature a section that expresses where the brand persona with a story comes from. However, we distinguish between three types of stories, where brand personas with a story either are discovered, invented or birthed. Some brand personas with a story are discovered, as the case of Sun-Maid (n.d.):

“... she was discovered drying her black hair curls in the sunny backyard of her parents’ home in Fresno, California. She was then asked to pose for a painting while holding a basket

tray of fresh grapes. This striking image was first applied to packages of Sun-Maid raisins in 1916.”

Another example of a discovered brand persona is the one of Wendy's, where founder Dave Thomas tried to apply the names of all his five children before settling for Wendy, the nickname of his daughter Melinda (Wendy's, n.d.). Although it is obvious that many brand personas with a story are fictional, such as the Keebler Elves and M&M characters, only some organizations choose to reveal the story of how they were invented. For instance, one can read about the creation of the Michelin Man (Michelin Transport, n.d.), or Bibendum as is his real name:

“At the International Exhibition in Lyon, The Michelin brothers were looking for an original way of presenting the company's products. The organiser of the Michelin stand had placed two piles of tyres at the entrance. Edouard Michelin pointed to them and said: “Look at that. Add some arms, and you'd say they were men”.”

Michelin has also made a short movie about the birth of their brand persona, which differs from the website statement as it shows how tyres are stacked on each other until Bibendum is born (Macchinese, 2010). Thus, Michelin is an interesting example as they communicate two different stories of creation. A second example of a brand persona with a story about its invention is General Mill's brand Pillsbury, who are transparent when it comes to the invention of their brand persona. On their website, the name of the copywriter that had the idea is presented and it describes what inspired him, and they include information about how the design was developed and what material the brand persona was made of in their first animation (Pillsbury, n.d.). GEICO is also transparent when it comes to the invention of their Gecko, stating that the idea for the brand persona was born during a creative meeting at an ad agency (GEICO, n.d.b.).

The third type of creational story focuses on the birth of the brand personas. This is the most common type of creation story we identified. For instance, Johnnie Walker, Lacoste, Fred Perry, Captain Morgan, Chanel, Gordon Ramsay and KFC all choose to mention the year of birth of their brand personas which often is accompanied with a note on who their parents are and where they were born.

What can be concluded from the identification of three types of creational stories, is that the majority of the stories of the focal brand personas starts off with the description of their creation, no matter what type of creation that has taken place. Aaker & Aaker (2016) argues that it sometimes can be difficult to identify the company's signature story. By starting the story with how the brand persona was created, the company has created a starting ground off which their signature story can be developed from.

4.1.2 The story of how the product is made

Some stories about the brand personas highlight how the product the organization is selling is made. For instance, Keebler's Elves are the ones making the sweets: “The Elves bake their

cookies the old-fashioned elfin way, in magic ovens in the Hollow Tree®” (Keebler, 2015). Although Colonel Sanders, the brand persona of KFC, no longer is alive the fast food chain devotes a section of their webpage to the story of how the Colonel came up with the famous recipe, and how he made the chicken in the past (KFC, n.d.).

The screenshot shows the KFC website's navigation bar with links: OUR MENU, FIND A KFC®, CHICKEN KNOWLEDGE, OUR STORY, COLONEL'S CLUB, COUPONS, and ORDER NOW. Below the navigation bar, the 'OUR STORY' section is displayed with three main articles:

- THE ORIGINAL KITCHEN**: Accompanied by a black and white photo of the Colonel in a kitchen. Text: "The Colonel was never afraid of hard work! It was here that he perfected his secret blend of 11 herbs and spices, and the basic cooking technique that made both the Colonel and Kentucky Fried Chicken® famous." Below this is a photo of a pressure cooker.
- BRILLIANT UNDER PRESSURE**: Accompanied by a black and white photo of the Colonel using a pressure cooker. Text: "The Colonel went to a demonstration of a 'new-fangled gizmo' - the pressure cooker. It was the answer he was looking for. The Colonel had found a way to fry chicken, and it was the best he'd ever tasted. The irresistible taste we've come to know as Kentucky Fried Chicken was born, and even today, every KFC® cooker fries under pressure, just as the Colonel intended!"
- YES, HE REALLY WAS A COLONEL**: Accompanied by a black and white photo of the Colonel in a dining room. Text: "In 1936, Kentucky Governor Ruby Laffoon made Harland Sanders an honorary Kentucky Colonel in recognition of his contributions to the State's cuisine." Below this is a photo of the original dining room.

Figure 3: The story of how the Colonel created KFC's famous recipe, as stated by KFC

The story tells the reader of how the Colonel put hard work into the development of the food, that included both the perfecting of a recipe as well as how he tried new inventions such as the pressure cooker in the quest for the perfect product (KFC, n.d.). The story is further reinforced by adding pictures of the Colonel in the kitchen while he is cooking. When this element is employed, we argue that the organization attempts to use the brand persona as a connection between their statements and their performance which Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) claim is beneficial for building emotional connections with customers. In the case of KFC, we also interpret the use of the product story as an attempt to strengthen their signature story. Aaker and Aaker (2016) state that signature stories with a strategic message help clarify the business strategy both internally and externally and that a powerful signature story is repeated for a long time to increase its authenticity. There is a clear strategic message in KFC's story, as the devotion of the brand persona can be seen as a seal of quality. It is also interesting to note that although the Colonel is deceased, the story has not changed, instead KFC chooses to keep the already established story in order to create a stronger signature story that outlasts time.

4.1.3 The story infused with humor

Another element that can be identified in the material relates to the use of humor. Although humor is subjective and differs between individuals and culture, we classify some brand persona stories to have been made with the intention of being funny. For instance, Captain Morgan has created a workout video (see Figure 4), where the Captain leads a fitness class focused on his famous leg raise (Kaplan, 2011). The video also includes testimonials from class participants that vouch for how they got into great shape following the Captain’s training program (Kaplan, 2011).



Figure 4: Captain Morgan leading a workout

Other stories about brand personas often use funny anecdotes or formulations. For instance, Somersby Cider (n.d.) mention how their cider was the favorite drink of Cleopatra and Napoleon, and the M&M characters are described through funny phrases such as “Weight: Significantly lower than her IQ.” (M&M, n.d.b.) and “Turn-Offs: People who want to eat him (a turn-off for anyone)” (M&M, n.d.c.). Using humor when telling brand persona stories can be a way of triggering emotional responses, which in turn creates loyalty. Thus, when customers find the brand persona’s story to be humors, it could make them more involved in the messages that the organization is sending out (Aaker & Aaker, 2016).

4.1.4 The story with a focus on brand heritage

One element that is often used when creating a story is making the story revolve around the brands heritage. To use the brand heritage as an element can be a leverage and is therefore often a strategic decision by the company (Urde, Balmer & Greyser 2007). This storytelling element can be found in numerous of the cases. A first example is Chanel. They have a section on their website devoted to Coco Chanel, the founder of the brand. The site has two different parts, the viewer can both read about Coco Chanel’s (n.d.a) story in different chapters devoted to different topics, or through a timeline that shows her story in a

chronological order (Inside Chanel, n.d.b). Furthermore, the site also incorporates films that tell the story about Coco Chanel but also about their signature products. Figure 5 illustrates how the company has created a film about Chanel's (n.d.a) signature smell, No 5.



Figure 5: An image from the film “No. 5” from Chanel’s website

This element is also used in the case of Fred Perry. On their website (Fred Perry, n.d.) they have three sites under the title *The Brand*, named *The Man*, *The Shirt* and *The Fans*. When clicking on the site *The Man*, the story about Fred Perry appears. The story starts off with where Fred Perry was born, who he was and the story ends with him creating “recognisable and enduring piece of British clothing”, connecting him, his legacy as a tennis player with the company product, the clothes. This way of describing the man behind the brand and making a strong connection to the product can be viewed as a strategic tool to highlight the brand heritage.

If the company does not have a heritage, a way to still strategically leverage from your heritage is to create a fictive heritage. Sir Kensington’s illustrates this by their brand persona with a story, Sir Kensington. Sir Kensington is a fictive character (Sir Kensington’s, n.d.b.) and at the company website his story is being told (Sir Kensington’s, n.d.a.), focusing on his story and creating it in a way so that the feeling is that this happened a very long time ago, and by that creating a fictive heritage. Figure 6 illustrates how this feeling is being expressed by an image of Sir Kensington’s thesis that he wrote at Cambridge where the paper looks old.

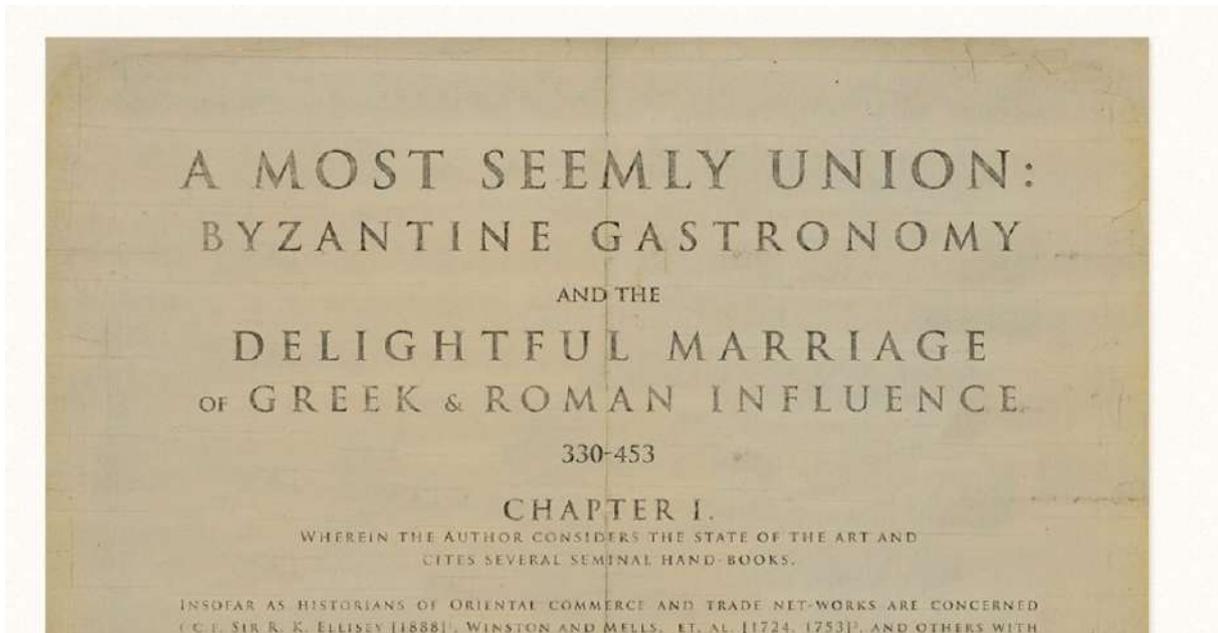


Figure 6: An image of Sir Kensington's thesis

4.1.5 The story with a focus on personality traits

The analyzed material also shows that another element to use when creating a story connected to the brand persona is to focus the story on the brand personas different personality traits. In the example of the M&M Characters, this theme is revealed. When entering M&M's website (M&M, n.d.a.), there is a site with the title "characters". When entering the site, the characters of Red, Green, Ms. Brown, Orange, Blue and Yellow appears.



Figure 7: Description of M&M character Ms. Brown's personality traits



Figure 8: Description of M&M character Yellow's personality traits

The story about the character Yellow (M&M, n.d.d) is connected to his personality traits, such as age, shortcomings, who his best friend is etc. To compare with other elements mentioned in this part of the analysis, nowhere can we learn about where he is from, who his parents are or where he grew up. Furthermore, this element for storytelling is to create a story around the persona in present terms and not by looking at the history or future of the persona. To connect it to the four elements of storytelling (Fog et. al 2010), this kind of story only contains the element of the character and does not directly incorporate neither conflict nor plot. With this in mind it can be argued that this element of storytelling is depending on a strong character (or brand persona).

Another example that illustrates this storytelling element is Tetley when telling the story about their brand personas, the Tea folk. At the company website the Tea folk are presented with personal profiles, the profiles present each of the tea folk and their perfect blend, if they want sugar or honey in their tea as well as a short section called personal profile where their characteristics are explained (Tetley, 2016). The Tea folk caretaker, Gordon, describes himself as:

"I'm a proud Gardener. I have my very own vegetable patch in my back garden, with carrots, parsnips, and all kinds of trees and flowers surrounding it. I got all the tools I need, forget a shovel - I have a spade with a kettle attached so I can garden and drink tea at the same time, although it gets a little too hot to hold when the kettle boils - Maurice and I came up with that one."

This example illustrates that the story is centered through the personality traits of the Tea folk, not their history, their legacy or how they came to be. Since the brand personality is the way a brand would be viewed if it were human (Kapferer, 2012) to humanize the brand by focusing on personality traits is one way of creating the brand personality.

4.1.6 The story that explains the world of the brand persona

To create a world around the brand persona, where the focus is on the environment around the brand persona, is another element that can be used when creating a story. This is illustrated by the story around Hello Kitty where her parents, sister and friends are described and where she is pictured in an environment that is a new world for the viewer. Figure 9 illustrates how Hello Kitty is presented to the public in her own world, showing some of her friends as well as her story.



Figure 9: An image from the beginning of Hello Kitty's timeline

Another case that illustrates this example is this quote taken from Gordon Ramsay's (n.d.a.) website, under the section *About Gordon*, "Now, Ramsay splits his time between Los Angeles and South London, where he resides with his wife, Tana and four children, along with their dogs, cats and tortoise". This quote paints a picture to the viewer about Gordon Ramsay's world and surroundings. This is a personal way of getting the viewer to understand more about him, such as the fact that he is an international celebrity as well as a family man. Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) explain that when the viewer understands the brand persona, it is also easier to understand the overall brand message. This storytelling element could be one way of giving the viewer the opportunity to understand the brand persona in order to increase their knowledge and understanding about the brand.

Vinnie, the brand persona with a story at ATG is a horse with a story on the company's website. At the website you can find images of Vinnie in different situations with his friends, when he is pursuing his dream of becoming a stand-up comedian (see Figure 10) and other scenarios (Vinnie, 2014b). To use images is also a way of creating a bigger knowledge about both Vinnie and his world.



Figure 10: ATG's Vinnie during a stand up performance

As mentioned in the introduction, these are elements that have been identified that can be used both separately and individually. To illustrate, an example where they are used together is the Keebler Elves – their story is infused with humor, they have their own world where they live in a tree and they tell the story about how the product is being made, the cookies are baked in the Elves hollow tree (Keebler, 2015). Thus illustrating that when creating a story, it is possible to incorporate multiple elements in order to create the best suited story for your brand persona and company.

4.2 How are the characters of brand personas with a story created?

The previous section focused on the actual story in regards to brand personas with a story, therefore this section will analyze the different kinds of brand personas that can be identified from the data. When analyzing the data, three themes in terms of different kinds of brand personas with a story is found – *the fictive character*, *the semi-fictive character* and *the realistic character*. The three themes can be viewed on a continuum that starts off with the fictive character, a middle part aimed for the semi-fictive character and the end of the scale, the realistic character. This continuum is inspired by Cohen's continuum (2014) of reality,

although with some adjustments as well as contributions. We have adjusted the continuum by departing from fictive to realistic, instead of low to high degrees of reality. This will be further explained below. The main contribution is the part in the middle that is named the semi-fictive character since it focuses on brand personas with a story that is built in a way where it is not clear if the persona is real or not. This type of brand persona has been left out in previous research, making it important to analyze it in order to broaden the knowledge about different types of brand personas.

4.2.1 The Fictive Character

The fictive character is a character that is not real. Hello Kitty, M&Ms and the GEICO Gecko are three of the cases that are at the beginning of the continuum when it comes to being fictive. They are made up animated characters that cannot be mistaken for being real. It is not only appearance that makes a character fictive or not, Lord Somersby is clearly also fictive although he is not animated. The story about Lord Somersby tells that among other things, he is best friends with both Cleopatra, Napoleon and MC Hammer which is not realistic due to them living a long time ago and not at the same time (Lord Somersby, n.d.). The unrealistic facts about him make him a fictive character despite his human traits. Aaker (1997) describes the brand personality as the set of human characteristics associated to a brand. To create a fictive character can be one way of taking charge of the brand personality since the company then decides what kinds of human characteristics the fictive brand persona should have and by that, what types of characteristics that are automatically associated with the brand.

Leaning more towards the middle of the scale are the characters that are fictive although not as outspoken as the previous mentioned cases. Mr. Clean is one of the cases that illustrate this phenomenon. His story starts of with him being found on a field by a farmer who together with his wife adopted him (Mr. Clean, 2018). Mr. Clean was not like a regular child that wanted to make a mess, instead he enjoyed cleaning. The quote below, taken from Mr. Clean's (2018) website, illustrates the phenomenon of being fictive but yet realistic:

“After years research Mr. Clean finally wrote ‘The Encleanapedia’, a chronicle of his adventures and everything he’d learned about cleaning. That book eventually found its way into the hands of a company called Procter and Gamble, who knew they’d found the man who would change the way people clean forever. For Mr. Clean, it was a dream come true.”

By using the company name, Procter & Gamble, the story becomes more realistic. Although the ambition seems to be to make it realistic, Mr. Clean is still classified as a fictive character due to other traits such as that he is animated (even though human), that he was found on a field and other components of the story that creates an impression of him not being realistic. If Mr. Clean would have been placed on Cohen's continuum (2014), he would have been a fantasy figure since he is not real. On our continuum we place him more to the middle since he is a fictive character although with some realistic traits.

4.2.2 The Semi-Fictive Character

With some brand personas with a story it can be less evident whether the persona is fictive or not. The created doubt can be due to several aspects of the persona, such as if the persona takes on a human-like impression, if there is a rich background story and so on. A strong example of this is Sir Kensington. When visiting the brand's website, one can read a long and detailed story about the life of Sir Kensington. For instance, the site describes his thesis about Byzantine Gastronomy that he wrote at Cambridge and how he attended a dinner with the emperor of Japan where he created his famous ketchup recipe. There is also an element of mysticism, as Sir Kensington's recipe went missing after his death only to be retrieved in 2008 by the founders of the company (Sir Kensington's, n.d.a). When reading the story, it can be difficult to understand whether Sir Kensington ever existed or if he is created by the brand. It is only after a careful analysis of the whole website where one can find a short statement saying: "Sir Kensington is an imaginary explorer, adventurer, and spice trade enthusiast" (Sir Kensington's, n.d.b). Although the brand acknowledges that he is imaginary, they still put emphasis on him being an explorer and adventurer, making the part about the persona being fictive less prominent.

A second example of a brand persona with a story where his or hers realness is unclear, is Betty Crocker. Today, the brand is open about the persona being created by the company, but it was less obvious back in the 1920's when the brand was founded. At that time, the company received many letters asking about baking, and they started to personalize the answers by adding a handwritten signature saying Betty Crocker (see Figure 11). Later, they expanded the notion by launching a radio show that became highly popular where Betty Crocker held a cooking school (Betty Crocker, n.d.a). In the 50's, the brand persona also appeared on television where she taught celebrities how to bake cakes. Over the years, portraits of Betty Crocker have also been drawn, where her clothes, hair and makeup have been altered to match what was fashionable during that specific time period (Betty Crocker, n.d.b).

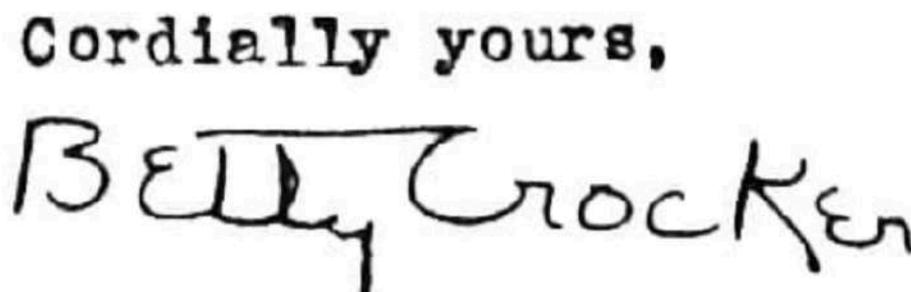
The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink. The first line reads "Cordially yours," in a simple, slightly slanted font. The second line reads "Betty Crocker" in a more cursive, flowing script. The signature is centered on the page.

Figure 11: Betty Crocker's signature that appeared in letters from the company

Furthermore, we have identified some brand personas with a story where the persona is deceased but have existed a very long time ago. Two examples are John Walker who lived between 1805-1857 and Captain Morgan, who lived between 1635-1688. Johnnie Walker's story begins with his father passing away, but despite the sorrow, there was "always

something special about John. A glint in his eye, a fire in his belly, a spring in his step perhaps” (Johnnie Walker, n.d.). The story goes on by describing his talents for both business and whisky, and how he was able to create a whisky that tasted great every time, unlike the other whiskeys on the market (Johnnie Walker, n.d.). After his death, the business has been passed down the family (Johnnie Walker, n.d.). But although much have happened with the business since the passing of John Walker, where many of his family members are the ones responsible for the global success of the brand, the company still chooses to leverage the story of Johnnie Walker both on their website and in videos. The brand has made a conscious decision about displaying the elder parts of the brand’s history, which is coated with layers of mysticism.

Captain Morgan, or Sir Henry Morgan, was a legal pirate who also was the lieutenant governor of Jamaica (Captain Morgan, n.d.). He lived and adventurous life, and the brand have chosen to name the section on their website about the brand persona as “The Legend of Captain Morgan”, which is written from the persona’s perspective. The legend ends in a mysterious way by stating that an earthquake shook Jamaica after the Captain’s death, where his coffin fell into the water and disappeared. The brand chooses to end the story by saying: *“My coffins has never been seen again, but my legend still lives on today...”* (Captain Morgan, n.d.). Thus, some brand personas with a story have existed but their story is still told in a way that is filled with mysticism and suspense.

The semi-fictive character exists in a space between fictive and realistic, where it can be difficult for the reader to understand whether the persona is an invention of the company or not. The semi-fictive character is often built through an elaborate story, where the persona is some kind of expert or genius in his or her field. For instance, Johnnie Walker (n.d.) was the best whisky manufacturer, Sir Kensington (n.d.a) created an amazing ketchup that made him famous, and Betty Crocker (n.d.a.) was so talented at baking that she taught housewives all over the country as well as celebrities how to make the perfect cake. By making these personas superior to the average individual, and by adding elements of mysticism such as Captain Morgan’s disappeared coffin (Captain Morgan, n.d.), a semi-fictive persona is created which is difficult for readers to verify unless the company chooses to openly reveal it. One could argue that mysterious stories such as the ones mentioned are more captivating and interesting for readers. An interesting story is beneficial according to Wala (2015 cited in Mucundorfeanu, 2018) as it differentiates the brand from competitors and gains more attention and emotional responses from customers.

4.2.3 The Realistic Character

On the other end of the scale is the realistic character, a character that we know is or has been a real person. Cases that illustrate this example are Coco Chanel, Fred Perry and Gordon Ramsay. Gordon Ramsay is placed on the far end of the continuum, he is viewed as the most realistic character today since he is still alive. Thus, it can be argued for that when founders of brands pass away they move slightly more to the semi-fictive part of the continuum since they become more mysterious, similar to the semi-fictive brand personas. The brand personas with a story that is placed on this part of the continuum are often are real people that have started a

company or created a brand. In the cases found with realistic characters, the company website often tells the story about the brand persona, shows pictures and describes the life they have led. As an example, Lacoste have a part on their website named “*Lacoste, the story of an iconic brand*” which starts off with this description:

“A love for the game, a passion for innovation and a certain French elegance. Since 1933, the story of Lacoste has mirrored that of its founder, René Lacoste, the French tennis legend who revolutionized the everyday wardrobe.” (Lacoste, n.d.a.)

Another way that the realness of these characters are expressed is through quotations. On the websites of many of the realistic characters, one can read real quotes said by the brand personas with a story. Fred Perry (n.d.) is an example of this, as the story of him is filled with pictures and different quotes he said throughout his life (see Figure 12).

Since brand heritage is connected to when the brand strategically use their heritage in order to gain leverage (Urde, Balmer & Greyser 2007), the usage of a real person with a remarkable background story can be viewed as a strategic resource for the brand.



Figure 12: A quote by Fred Perry stated on the brand's website

4.2.4 Brand personas with a story placed on a continuum

After having identified three types of brand personas with a story, the continuum can be drawn. The continuum serves its purpose since it shows that it is not as simple as three categories since some of the brand personas with a story can be placed in between the different pillars.

As illustrated by Figure 13, the majority of the brand personas with a story have a strong fictional undertone. In many of the cases, this was due to their appearances being unrealistic, such as The Pillsbury Doughboy - a talking cookie, or that they have unlikely stories, such as Lord Somersby and his famous friends from different time periods. The most realistic brand personas with a story are based on individuals that have existed, or still exist, where their stories are told in a way to reinforce their realness. Between the ends of the continuum we identified set of brand personas where it can be difficult for the audience to understand whether they are invented by the company or not. Some of them lean more towards the fictive side of the continuum, such as Sir Kensington who has an elaborate story but the company is transparent about him being invented, whereas some are given more of a legend status, such as Johnnie Walker who lived a very long time ago but is still portrayed in a similar manner as other realistic characters. Thus, brand personas with a story can be perceived in different ways in relation to their fictiveness, which is due to how their characteristics and stories are presented.

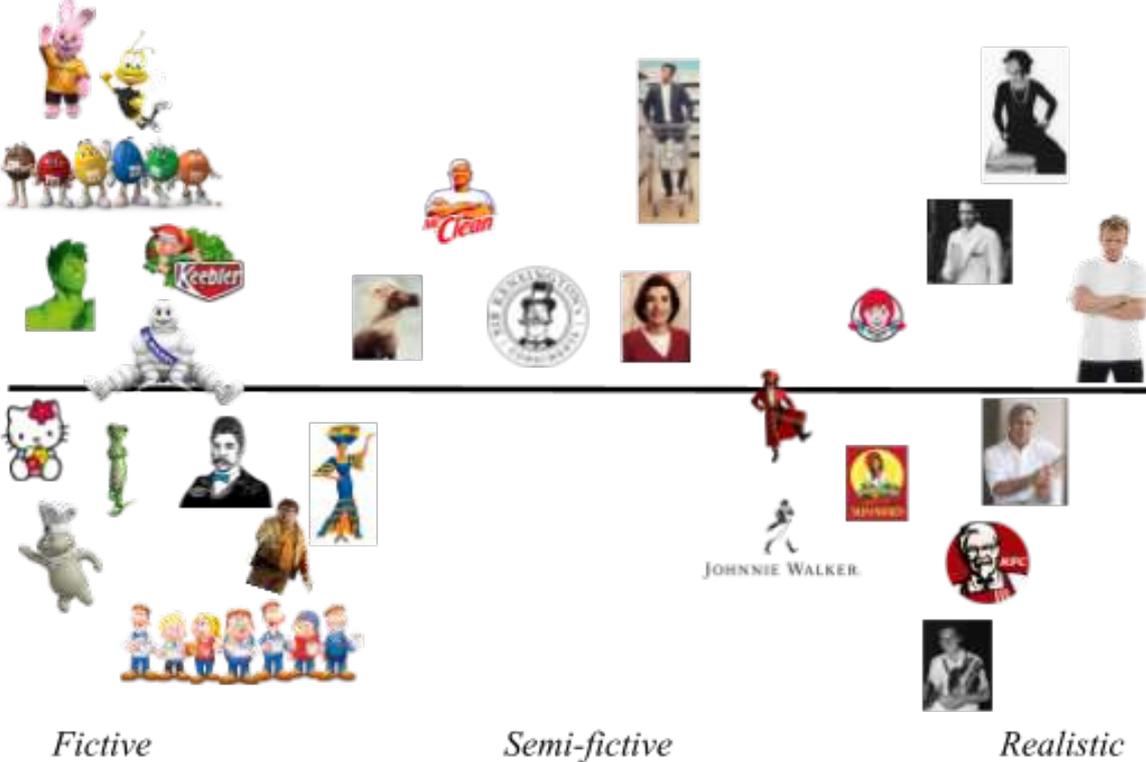


Figure 13: The Brand Persona with a Story Continuum

4.3 How can brand personas with a story be categorized?

After having analyzed the stories and the characteristics of the brand personas with a story, the next step of the analysis is to categorize the personas in relation to Forster’s (2012) theory of round and flat characters, as well as the added dimensions of dynamic and static (Nikolajeva, 2002). By creating a framework where the brand personas with a story can be

placed, a deeper understanding of the categorization of brand personas will follow. In order to categorize the personas, we have analyzed the strength of their personality traits and ability to surprise us, as well as their possible moral or chronological development. The personas will be placed into one out of four categories, they can either be:

- Flat and static
- Flat and dynamic
- Round and static
- Round and dynamic

After analyzing each brand persona with a story separately, they will be placed into the Brand Persona Categorization Framework (see Figure 14). This section of the analysis will end in a discussion about the framework.

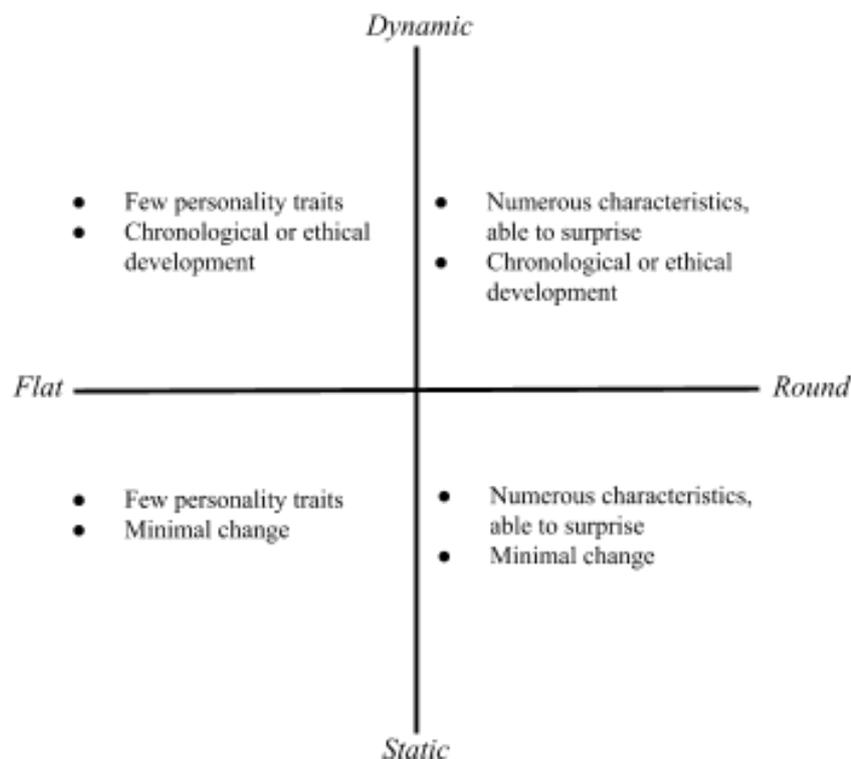


Figure 14: The Brand Persona Categorization Framework

4.3.1 Flat and static brand personas with a story

What is distinct for flat characters is that they express few characteristics and are unable to surprise us (Forster, 2012). Adding a static dimension to flat personas means that they do not develop chronologically or morally over time (Nikolajeva, 2002). When analyzing brand personas with a story, it becomes evident that the majority of them fall into the category of flat and static. At the lowest part of the framework, we placed brand personas with a story such as The Pillsbury Doughboy and Wendy's. What these characters have in common is that the companies behind them choose not to express any enriching stories about their personality or personal life. However, the companies have chosen to disclose the story of how the brand personas were created (see Analysis section 4.1.1). It is interesting that the companies have chosen the same strategy, where it can be argued that besides the story of their creation, the brand persona with a story almost only serves the purpose of being a logo. This makes us question why the companies tell the story about the brand personas, since it is used nowhere else in their communications. Relating back to the argument from Aaker & Aaker (2016) about signature stories, it could be viewed as an easy-way out when wanting to create a signature story. We argue that if the brand persona with a story were to be used as a powerful strategic tool of communication, as Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) state is essential for successful storytelling, these brands need to further leverage and build their brand persona with a story. Because as of now, we argue that these examples of brand personas with a story does not fill their purpose.



Figure 15: Visual development of the Sun-Maid Girl

At first glance, it could be perceived that The Sun-Maid Girl, Miss Chiquita and Green Giant should be placed right next to The Pillsbury Doughboy and Wendy's since they are strongly associated with their products and product packaging. However, we choose to place them slightly further up in the framework. This is because the brand personas with a story show signs of development in a visual sense (see Figure 15, 16 & 17). In the case of the Green Giant, he was originally depicted more human-like before the company decided to switch to a green skin tone and Miss Chiquita went from being a banana to a human lady. But despite these sign of development, we do not believe these brand personas with a story to be dynamic, as the characters still expresses the same values over time and do not seem to grow morally or age.

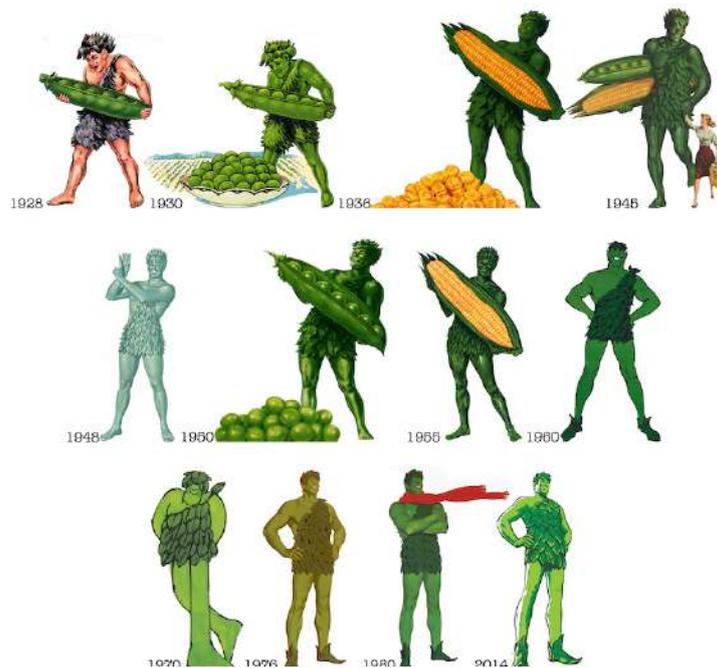


Figure 16: Visual development of the Green Giant

Other examples of flat and static characters include Ted Baker, the Duracell Bunny, Hello Kitty, Witt Oddoski and Lord Somersby. What these brand personas with a story have in common is that they can be identified through one personality trait. For instance, Ted Baker is fashionable (Ted Baker n.d.) and the Duracell Bunny (Duracell n.d.) never runs out of energy. These traits are not likely to change because that would mean that the brand's core message would risk becoming vague. After all, it could be difficult for Ted Baker to sell clothes and accessories if the persona stopped being recognized for his elegant sense of style. To have a brand persona with a story that emphasizes one single trait could be beneficial for the brand, since Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) argue that a persona must be consistent over time and stay true to the brand's core values in order to strengthen relationships with the public. Thus, a flat and static brand persona with a story could be interpreted as a strategy that companies use to ensure that a consistent brand message is communicated.



Figure 17: Visual development of Miss Chiquita

Two other brand personas with a story that are placed within the dimension of flat and static are Tommy Hilfiger and Fred Perry. First of all, both brand personas with a story are based on real individuals that created iconic fashion brands. Since all humans are complex and round by nature, one might believe that the personas therefore should be classified as round. However, we argue that there is a strong division between the real-life individual and the brand persona with a story when analyzing the companies' communication efforts. We can assume that Fred Perry had more traits in real life than only being a successful athlete with a strong sense of style. However, the brand's website choose to only highlight these features of him. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the persona will change drastically since the real Fred Perry is deceased, meaning that the brand might be vulnerable for a lawsuit from Perry's family if they suddenly were to portray him as something he was not during his life, such as a dental hygienist or cowboy. Thus, the Fred Perry persona is both flat and static. Although Tommy Hilfiger is alive and therefore undergoes a constant chronological development, the brand chooses to only focus on his career - how he studied fashion and founded his brand - instead of how he has developed morally as a person. Therefore, Tommy Hilfiger's brand persona is also categorized as flat and static. One of Stern's (1994) paradoxes with brand personas is that even if they are based on real individuals, they will still contain elements of fiction. This becomes clear with the example of Tommy Hilfiger, since we have established that his person and persona are different. When the brand chooses to only include some parts of Tommy Hilfiger's personality in the persona, the company is engaging in an activity which Stern (1994) refers to as revealing and concealing messages, where the persona actually conceals parts of the brand. Why the brand chooses to do so is beyond the scope of this study, but it is interesting to note that a brand that has a great opportunity to create a round character chooses to instead flatten the persona.

4.3.2 Flat and dynamic brand personas with a story

In comparison to the flat and static category, few brand personas with a story can be categorized as flat and dynamic. Although a few of them show signs of chronological or moral development, no brand persona with a story in this study can be argued to be fully dynamic while remaining flat. An example of a flat yet quite dynamic persona is Betty Crocker. Her visual presence has changed with time in order to follow trends, which can be seen in Figure 18.



Figure 18: Visual development of Betty Crocker over the years

She has also developed through her career, where she started with only being a signature on a letter, to hosting a radio show and later on a television show (Betty Crocker, n.d.a). Thus, it can be argued that Betty Crocker shows aspects of dynamic development. However, even as she progresses in her career and alter her appearances, Betty Crocker does not surprise or or display a wide array of personality traits. Her passion and talent for cooking and baking is always at the center of her persona, no matter if she is communicated via radio or video. Thus, Betty Crocker is a substantially flat character.

When analyzing the story of Johnnie Walker, what stands out is that the reader can follow him from his youth as a farm boy, to the establishment of his business, to his death in 1857 (Johnnie Walker, n.d.). In that sense, Johnnie Walker shows proof of chronologic development, which is why the persona is placed in the dimension of flat yet dynamic. Despite that the persona once existed in real-life, the company still puts emphasis on his talent for business and whisky which makes him appear as quite flat. However, in comparison to Betty Crocker, we argue that Johnnie Walker is rounder in his presence, since the company chooses to add personality traits in their communication. For instance, the brand mentions how Johnnie Walker had a certain “spring in his step” and that he was somewhat of a perfectionist when it came to developing the perfect whisky (Johnnie Walker, n.d.).

Two other examples of brand personas with a story that are flat yet somewhat dynamic are Sir Kensington and Mr Clean. Both personas have in common that they are travellers with a quest. In the case of Mr. Clean, the reader is able to follow him from his childhood as an orphan who was cared for by a farmer, to his adult life where he developed the “Encleanopedia” (Mr Clean, 2018). Throughout his travels and growth, his main purpose in life has always been to become the best cleaner, which is why Mr. Clean is flat character that still is dynamic. Sir Kensington shows signs of chronological and moral development, as the brand tells the story of his birth into a merchant family, his service in the British East India Company, how he obtained a doctorate degree at Cambridge and how he hosted gastronomic summits that powerful people such as the emperor of Japan attended (Sir Kensington’s, n.d.a). Despite his growth and travels, the persona’s main feature has always been related to his culinary interests and adventurous personality, which is why Sir Kensington is categorized as flat yet dynamic.

In the examples of Johnnie Walker, Mr. Clean and Sir Kensington, it is the stories about the personas travels, upbringing and adventures that makes them dynamic since that is the way the public can follow and understand the personas personal growth. Aaker and Aaker (2016) state that the challenge with signature stories is to identify them. With the three examples, we note that the companies have identified them in different ways. In the case of Johnnie Walker, the brand has leveraged their history, whereas Mr. Clean and Sir Kensington’s stories are invented by the companies. Despite the different approaches, all three brand personas with a story can be interpreted as the heroes that Aaker and Aaker (2016) argue should be in the center of signature stories in order to inspire the public.

4.3.3 Round and static brand personas with a story

The round characters are identified through their many characteristics as well as their ability to surprise (Forster, 2012), whilst the static personas are identified through them not developing over time (Nikolajeva, 2002). When looking at the material, we realized that there were similarities between three types of brand personas with a story; M&M characters, Tetley Tea Folk and The Keebler Elves. These are all round due to them being a group with different characters who all hold different character traits, and by that the illusion of them is more round than if they would be viewed separately. Although they are round in the sense that they are being described with different character traits, they are still static due to them not changing over time, neither chronologically nor ethically. This theme can be viewed as when a brand uses multiple personification, Dion & Arnould (2016) argues that to use multiple personification is one way of displaying different facets of the brand. These types of brand personas with a story display different personalities and characteristics and by that they also present different facets of the brand. The theme could also be explained through research by Aaker and Aaker (2016) that illustrate that when companies create signature stories, it can be a strategy to create multiple stories in order for the customer to more easily find a story that they can connect to. By that, to create multiple characters as a group can be argued to be a way of providing several stories in order for customers to be able to connect with the company through their signature story.

Vinnie and the GEICO Gecko are also static yet round characters. In comparison to the brand personas with a story mentioned above, they are categorized as slightly more round since they have the ability to perform different tasks, they are showed in different settings as well as their participation in different activities. The GEICO Gecko (n.d.b) is described as:

“His constant good cheer, insatiable need to meet people, and natural tenacity all make him perfectly suited to help people find outstanding values on insurance. In fact, the GEICO Gecko explains it best himself: “My job is saving people money. I love my job.””

Here he is explained with more than one characteristic (although still similar), which categorizes him as more of a round character. Both Vinnie and the GEICO Gecko have the ability to surprise since they can do different activities but without losing credibility. For instance, Vinnie performs as a street musician (2014c) and the GEICO Gecko flies an airplane (see Figure 19).



Figure 19: The GEICO Gecko as a pilot

Vinnie is a quite new brand persona with a story but during his time in the spotlight he has always been a pony, due to this he is viewed as static since he has not changed. The GEICO Gecko has not changed over time either, neither ethically or chronologically but is still a Gecko portrayed in the settings of a businessman.

Buzz the Bee is being categorized as less round than the GEICO Gecko and Vinnie since he does not hold as many character traits, but still he is being presented with details such as his favourite music, he has his own Tumblr account and he participated in Movember where he grew a moustache (Buzz the Bee n.d.), which can be seen in Figure 20. These details gives a broader image of him as a character, which makes him more round then if he merely would have been presented with one image.



Figure 20: The moustache Buzz the Bee grew during Movember

4.3.4 Round and dynamic brand personas with a story

Round and dynamic brand personas with a story are those that have changed over time, or have the ability to change whilst also having numerous character traits and the ability to surprise. Gordon Ramsay is categorized as the brand persona with a story that is the most round and dynamic. He has changed over time and this is used to build him as a brand persona. His childhood when growing up, his aspiration to become a football player and the injury that stopped him, to his travels around the world and working for great chefs until he one day became one of the biggest chef's himself is all presented at the company website (Gordon Ramsay, n.d.a). He is also presented as a family man that engages in social issues through his foundation and by that he is not only a chef, but holds different character traits as well (Gordon Ramsay, n.d.a). Furthermore, Gordon Ramsay has the ability to surprise us, this ability is strongly connected to round characters (Forster, 2012). As he is known for his culinary expertise, it may come as a surprise for his fans when he released a documentary about cocaine. In the documentary, he investigates how the drug impacts people's lives in the UK and South America (Gordon Ramsay, n.d.c). Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) argue that brand personas can be used as an asset to create long-lasting relationships that is based on emotions between the company and its audience. To emphasize all parts of Gordon Ramsay's life, his struggles, his success and his willingness to pay it forward could be viewed as a strategic way to create a relationship with the brand and it's customers.

Placed next to Gordon Ramsay is the Michelin Man. When looking at images of him, he and his actions have changed both chronologically (becoming more modern) as well as ethically. At the first images (see Figure 21) of the Michelin Man we see him as a gladiator, winning over another man made out of tires as well as an image of him when he is smoking.



Figure 21: Old visuals of the Michelin Man

This is not similar to how he is perceived today where he is more known as a friendly and kind figure. His actions are not as violent as before – for instance Figure 22 portrays him when meditating. It would not be viewed in the same manner today if he would appear smoking and fighting, which is why he can be categorized as a character with an ethical development.



Figure 22: The Michelin Man as he is portrayed today, here seen meditating

Lacoste and Coco Chanel are placed quite next to each other in the framework. They can be argued as dynamic since they both have a timeline on their websites that explains their lives and how they have developed. Since they are real humans, they have also had different character traits that are being highlighted at the websites. Lacoste was a great tennis player, but he is not presented as merely a tennis player but also as an inventor and a person with a sense of style, making him quite a round character (although not as round as Gordon Ramsay as shown in the framework) since he is presented with more character traits than one (see Figure 23).



Figure 23: Image that shortly describes René Lacoste

Coco Chanel, as been described previously, also has a timeline on her website, as well as chapters that describes different milestones in her life, such as when she created the perfume No. 5 and when she started to create jewelry (Inside Chanel, n.d.a). To emphasize the many different fields such as fashion, fragrance and jewelry where she has been an inspiration makes her somewhat a round character, although the different fields are all strongly connected to her fashion sense, making her not as round of a character as Gordon Ramsay. It also makes her more of a dynamic character since she has developed over time, but in comparison to Gordon Ramsay she is not as dynamic since she today is deceased and therefore cannot continue to develop whereas this is possible for brand personas with a story that are alive, such as Gordon Ramsay.

Captain Morgan is placed in between Coco Chanel, Lacoste and Gordon Ramsay on the round and flat axis. He is viewed as more round as Coco Chanel and Lacoste but not as round of a character as Gordon Ramsay. He is mostly round due to his capability of surprising in a convincing way, for example when he is shown in his own workout show (see Figure 4). Captain Morgan also has a timeline that tells his story, from when he was born until he became Captain Morgan. The timeline consists of different parts that describe his development as he has gone from a captain, to a prisoner and to a knight (Captain Morgan, n.d.). Thus, this timeline evolves around his development as a character instead of his history, as in the previous cases.

Colonel Sanders is a dynamic character since his story is presented at the company website where we can follow him from when he was a child, and upon till the day that he buys a motel and café where he starts to serve his chicken (KFC, n.d.). To learn about his history is one way of showing development, but in the same manner as with Coco Chanel the development

ceased when Colonel Sanders passed away. Of all the brand personas with a story mentioned in this section, he is less round since there are few details about him as a person, what still makes him categorized under this section is the fact that he was a human being and by so he is presented in some ways with multiple characteristics such as a family man, a hard worker as well as a successful businessman. Since multiple of the brand personas with a story has an explicit timeline that states their lives, both the fictive, the semi-fictive and the realistic characters, this could be viewed as a way to enhance the storytelling and by that enhance the character. Aaker and Aaker (2016) argue that stories are easier to connect to and easier to remember, and that they work as a tool to get the audience more attentive. To tell the characters story through a timeline could be argued to be a way to make it easier for the customer to remember the character and by that the brand.

4.3.5 Summary of framework and categorization

After having analyzed each brand persona with a story separately, they are placed into our Brand Persona Categorization Framework, as depicted in Figure 24.

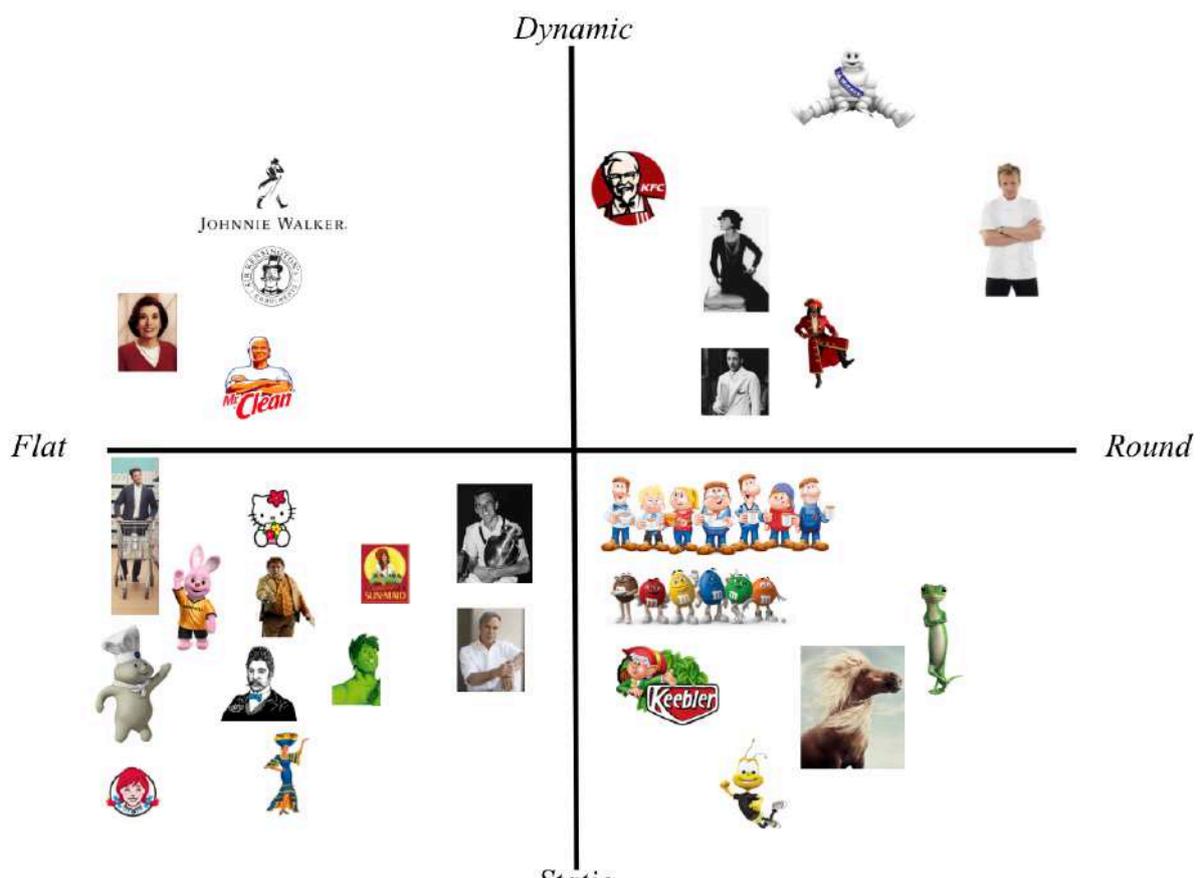


Figure 24: Brand Persona Categorization Framework containing the analyzed brand personas with a story

The framework suggests that brand personas with a story can be categorized in four different ways, where it becomes clear that there are many examples to be found within each category.

However, it is most common for brand personas with a story to be flat and static, meaning that they have few personality traits and undergo minimal change and development. The most rare brand persona with a story in this study is the dynamic and flat type. Moreover, it seems to be almost equally common for round brand personas with a story to be static or dynamic, where it can be interpreted that most of the dynamic characters are based on real-life individuals.

4.4 Summary of Analysis

The analysis has been divided into three different parts that each answer to a separate research question. The first question “*What elements can be identified when creating a brand persona with a story?*” is answered through six identified elements that were found in the material. The elements are:

- The story of the brand personas creation
- The story of how the product is made
- The story infused with humor
- The story with a focus on brand heritage
- The story with a focus on personality traits
- The story that explains the world of the brand persona

The elements show different ways on how companies can create their stories and that they can be combined or used separately. Although these are not the only storytelling elements that can be identified, it was the most prominent ones that we chose to analyze. It was important to investigate the different stories before exploring the personas since the stories provide background information and other details about the personas that was of relevance before answering to the second research question.

The second part of the analysis moved away from the storytelling focus and viewed the material from the perspective of the character instead. The research question “*How are the characters of brand personas with a story created?*” is answered through our Brand Persona with a Story continuum where three pillars have been identified:

- The realistic character
- The semi-fictional character
- The fictional character

The first contribution is therefore the Brand Persona with a Story continuum that has been created for this thesis. The brand personas with a story are placed on the continuum to illustrate the different kinds of brand personas that was identified. The second contribution from this part is two-folded since it both describes different ways on how brand personas are created as well as that it highlights the semi-fictional character. The semi-fictional character has not been the focus of previous research when it comes to brand personas that we have reviewed and is therefore a new concept.

In the third part of the analysis, we aimed to categorize the different brand personas with a

story. In order to do this, theories from literature science was used in order to view the brand personas with a story in the same manner as one can understand characters from books. The final research question “*How can brand personas with a story be categorized?*” is answered through the development of a framework. The framework is called the Brand Persona Categorization Framework and it shows where the different brand personas with a story have been placed and identified in relation to how complex their personality traits are and how much they have changed, chronologically or ethically. A brand persona with a story can belong to one out of four categories:

- Flat and static
- Flat and dynamic
- Round and static
- Round and dynamic

4.5 Discussion

In this chapter, we will discuss and reflect upon the findings in the thesis, where the emphasis is put on the storytelling elements, the Brand Persona with a Story continuum and the Brand Persona Categorization Framework. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect upon the findings from a more holistic perspective, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the study. In addition, the findings will be related to previous literature.

As stated in the beginning of the thesis, Cohen (2014) argued for the need of further research in regards to how a brand persona is being constructed. This was also argued by Stern (1993), who believed that the persona attributes was in need of a more thorough research. Taking a stance from these scholars suggestions for further research, the aim of this study was to emphasize the *how* and by that make a contribution to the field of strategic brand management, more precisely to the research field of brand persona and brand personality.

When reading about storytelling, characters are mentioned as one of four key elements that is needed in order to create a story (Fog et. al 2010) with this in mind, we view our definition of the brand persona with a story as more complex and with a bigger role then just one of four pillars than what has previously been the focus within the field of storytelling. A brand persona with a story that is constructed in a creative way can be used even though the other three pillars, the plot, the message and the conflict is non existent and that it can survive on its own. We emphasize brand persona with a story as a more important definition and concept then what it has previously been identified as.

When reviewing the findings related to the research questions and by analyzing the findings as a whole, additional insights can be made. First of all, the findings suggest that there are different ways on how to create a story and how to build a character, where there is no standard recipe for building a, for instance, semi-fictive character. By that, we mean that there is no specific combination of the identified storytelling elements that will result in the creation of a semi-fictive brand persona with a story, instead it is how the companies make use of the elements that determine where on the continuum the brand persona with a story will be

placed. On the other side of the same coin, the findings suggest that even though brand personas with a story are placed next to each other on the continuum, an analysis of their stories can reveal that different storytelling elements have been used in the creation of their backstory. This implies that brands can be inspired by the different storytelling elements and the three types of brand persona characters, but that it is their decisions regarding the formulation of the elements that will determine how their brand persona with a story will appear. But no matter what type of character or storytelling elements that are chosen, it becomes evident that all the examples of brand personas with a story can be placed somewhere on the continuum, and each example has used at least one of the identified storytelling elements. Thus, another implication of the findings is that in the case of brand personas with a story, the character and its story cannot be separated – they are interrelated and interdependent.

Further implications become visible when reviewing where the different types of characters - *fictive*, *semi-fictive* or *realistic*, are placed in the continuum. The framework shows that the majority of the brand personas with a story that are placed towards the side of fictive characters in the continuum are likely to be static. When looking at the fictive characters from a literature perspective, it is revealed that the majority of the fictive characters are flat, but round fictive characters still exist. The second type of character, the semi-fictive one, is spread out in the framework. Thus, it can be concluded that when creating a semi-fictive character there are multiple ways how you can design your character, which entails flexibility around the creation of these kinds of brand personas with a story. The characters that are placed in the end of the continuum, the most realistic characters, are as a majority round and dynamic characters. Some of the characters that are not placed equally as far on the realistic side are categorized as flat and static, which is interesting since they then are categorized in the opposite category of their neighbors on the continuum. This implies that having a realistic character does not necessarily mean that the brand persona with a story will be dynamic or round. This suggest that it is how companies make use of the persona's story that determines where in the framework the brand persona with a story will be placed. However, the identified storytelling elements are not always placed in clusters in the framework, which is not surprising considering that the elements can be combined and used in multiple different ways.

5 Conclusion

The last chapter of the study aims to summarize the study as well as to review the research questions, aim and purpose. The chapter also includes two separate sections that will clarify the theoretical contributions as well as the managerial implications generated by this study. Lastly, suggestions for future research will be presented.

The aim with this study has been to explore and broaden the knowledge about brand personas with a story. Therefore, the purpose of this study has been to research brand personas with a story through the lense of literature science by looking at case examples. It is a highly needed and relevant study since the phenomenon of brand personas with a story has been an integral part of consumers lives for a long time, but has received little attention by strategic brand management scholars. The scholars' tendency to overlook the phenomenon has resulted in a profound knowledge gap in relation to brand personas, their stories and the creation of their characters. Thus, this study is a foundational one that attempts to explore the phenomenon of brand personas with a story. Because of its foundational character and the limited previous research on the subject, the study is also conceptual, as it seeks to explore the phenomenon where the focus has been on the *how* of the phenomenon - *how* brand personas with a story are created and categorized.

In order to explore the phenomenon and give it the attention it deserves, three research questions were created that each focused on three different yet interrelated aspects of brand personas with a story.

- What elements can be identified when creating a brand persona with a story?
- How are the characters of brand personas with a story created?
- How can brand personas with a story be categorized?

The first research question sought to identify elements that companies use when creating the stories behind the brand persona, meaning that storytelling was highlighted. The second research question focused on how the characters themselves are created and resulted in the Brand Persona with a Story Continuum where brand personas with a story can be placed. By analyzing the data from both a storytelling as well as a character perspective, it opened up for the possibility to categorize the brand personas with a story by analyzing them through the lense of literature theory. Therefore, the last research question filled the purpose of creating the Brand Persona Categorization Framework that allowed the categorization of brand personas with a story. To further deepen the analysis of brand personas with a story, the research questions were answered from an integrated theoretical perspective where the main field of strategic brand management was complemented by influential literature theory. The integrated theoretical perspective was highly rewarding as it revealed that brand personas with a story can be analyzed in a similar manner as one can analyze characters from novels.

Looking back at what findings the research questions generated, and putting them into relation to the purpose and aim of the study, we argue that we have fruitfully answered each research question and fulfilled the aim and the purpose. We have successfully explored the phenomenon of brand personas with a story by presenting and analyzing several cases of the phenomenon from a strategic brand management perspective with complementary literature theories. All in all, this study has shed a deserved light on the phenomenon of brand personas with a story, which help academics, practitioners and customers understand the characters that have become a part of our daily life.

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

Looking at the study as a whole, it contributes to the academic field of strategic brand management in multiple ways. Thus, this section highlights the three main theoretical contributions this study has generated. The findings in the form of storytelling elements, the continuum and the framework are all embodied into the main contributions.

The first theoretical contribution is the definition of brand personas with a story that we have identified, defined and later on explored. The definition “*a fictional character or real person that the company behind the brand actively uses to express the brand’s core values in their communications, that must be expressed through an explicit story that features a background story of the personas life or creation and/or a statement about the personas characteristics and preferences, meaning that the persona cannot simply be used in packaging or used as a feature in advertising*” pinpoints a certain phenomenon within the strategic brand management literature that has previously not been explored, making this study foundational in its essence. By having stated a definition of the phenomenon, researchers are able to use it as a springboard in their future studies in order generate new insights and further explore the phenomenon of brand personas in the strategic brand management literature.

The second theoretical contribution lies in the knowledge about brand personas and how they can be created. When reviewing previous literature, it became clear that the *how* in regards to building a brand persona had not been the focus of previous studies since the majority of the studies focused on the *why*, creating a profound knowledge gap that this study has filled. By looking at the material and analyzing it through the lense of literature theory, different elements and patterns showed how brand personas with a story are created. More specifically, brand personas with a story are created in relation to their stories and their character. Thus, both the storytelling elements and the continuum are important contributions to theory in different ways:

- a) The six identified storytelling elements further develop the existing theory on brand storytelling. They can be used as a complement to other storytelling elements, such as Fog et. al (2010) four basic elements of storytelling. By adding our six elements, a deeper knowledge of how brands create stories is generated.
- b) The Brand Persona with a Story Continuum, where *fictive*, *semi-fictive* and *realistic characters* are presented, contributes to existing literature on brand personas in

general and brand personas with a story in particular. The Brand Persona with a Story Continuum further develops Cohen's (2014) continuum of reality and adds to the fragmented prior literature on brand persona types.

The final theoretical contribution is the merge of two academic fields - strategic brand management and literature science. Since research within literature science has put a stronger emphasis on how to build a character, it was beneficial for this study to apply literature knowledge to the field of strategic brand management and leverage from it. To our knowledge, previous studies have not merged these two academic fields with the purpose of shedding light on brand personas. Thus, the study contributes to both fields, even though we have put the main emphasis on strategic brand management. Additionally, the integrated theoretical perspective can serve as inspiration for future studies, as it shows the benefits of merging two different academic fields, as well as the joy it brings. In our opinion, the merge has been interesting and inspirational. A strong example of what the merge has generated is our Brand Persona Categorization Framework that allowed for a categorization of brand personas with a story. By using aspects pertaining to the field of strategic brand management - the brand personas with a story, and analyzing them through Forster's (2012) theory on flat and round characters as well as the added dimensions of static and dynamic (Nikolajeva, 2002), new insights could be made that would not have been possible if either one of the perspectives had been excluded. Thus, the framework is part of our theoretical contribution and can hopefully be used and further developed in order to generate new theory on the subject.

5.2 Managerial Implications

As this study shows, many companies use brand personas with a story in their communications, which is why the study is of relevance for managers and practitioners. We have chosen to highlight four implications that are relevant for brand managers, strategic communicators and marketers. Of course, other practitioners that are affected by brand personas with a story can also benefit from the stated implications. After presenting the main implications of the study, we conclude this section with a compilation of recommendations.

First of all, the six identified storytelling elements can help practitioners to better understand how stories of brand personas are constructed and what building blocks they consist of. By having an understanding of what elements to look for, it becomes easier for managers to analyze the stories they are interested of – and to create their own. For instance, after reading this study, managers know that they can start by adding elements of humor or incorporating a surrounding world where the brand persona with a story is accompanied by other characters. That way, the storytelling elements serve as a toolbox managers can use in the creation of brand personas stories.

The second managerial implication is related to the Brand Persona with a Story Continuum. After having understood the continuum, practitioners are able to estimate where their persona

could be placed, and where their competitors' persona lay. For practitioners interested in creating a new brand persona with a story, the continuum can serve as inspiration for the character's creation. When having decided on the desired character type, the manager can carefully craft their brand persona with a story by studying the insights presented in this study.

Furthermore, managers can use the Brand Persona Categorization Framework presented in this study when creating or evaluating brand personas with a story. The framework shows that brand personas with a story can be built in an equal manner as literary characters, where the different axes can guide managers during their creational process. By understanding what makes a brand persona flat, round, static, or dynamic, practitioners are able to:

- a) Determine where in the Brand Persona Categorization Framework their current or new brand persona should be placed
- b) Determine what aspects of the brand persona need to be altered or added in order to reach the desired categorization

The last managerial implication is related to the holistic understanding about brand personas with a story that this study has yielded. By attaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, managers are able to use the knowledge for guidance when creating new brand personas with a story, and/or when developing current brand personas with a story. This is highly important, as Cohen (2014) has argued that managerial guidance on the topic of brand personas - up until now - is lacking. By conducting this study, we have taken an important initial step by providing managers with tools they can use in their work with brand personas with a story.

To conclude this section, we have compiled the managerial implications into a list of recommendations. The list can be used as guidance when working with brand personas with a story. However, we would like to underline that the set of recommendation is not complete, but should rather be perceived as inspiration based upon the findings of this specific study.

- There are numerous way on how companies can create a brand persona with a story.
- Storytelling elements that have been identified in this study can be combined in order to create a brand persona with a story that will be a strategic asset to the company.
- Managers within the field of marketing and brand management can learn from how famous authors describes their characters in order to create a long-lasting brand persona.
- Brand personas with a story can be created as static, round, dynamic and flat and by using the Brand Persona Categorization Framework, managers can decide what type will be most beneficial when telling their company story.

5.3 Future Research

Since this study has a conceptual foundation, there are multiple suggestions for future research in order to further broaden this area within strategic brand management. First of all, there are other brand personas with a story that have not been analyzed in this study but which would be interesting to try and categorize in the Brand Persona Categorization Framework and place in the Brand Persona with a Story Continuum. Examples of unexplored brand personas with a story include those existing on non-Western markets, which we were unable to sample due to language barriers.

The focus of this study has been how the characters are created. Therefore, a complementary study could be to ask the companies that created the brand personas with a story what their strategies were when creating the brand personas. Why did they choose to create the brand personas with a story in a certain way and what did they aspire to accomplish? It would also be interesting to see if the answers from the companies cohere with the framework, do they believe that they have round, static, flat or dynamic characters or would they rather place them differently?

Another possible future study is to compare literary characters with brand personas with a story to see where they are created in a similar as well as different manner. This study has not focused on how customers to the companies with the brand personas with a story thinks about the brand personas, making this another potential area for future research. Do customers prefer a certain brand persona with a story over the other? What factors are important for customers and what factors does not matter?

To summarize, since this study is of conceptual and foundational character, future research could benefit from studying the phenomenon from other perspectives, such as a managerial or customer-based one. In doing so, the journey of exploring brand personas with a story that we have started would keep progressing, which we argue is beneficial for both academics, practitioners and maybe most importantly – the consumers who live side by side with brand personas with a story.

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Appendix A – All reviewed brand personas

Name of company	Name of brand persona	Brand persona is used as more than just a logo (If Yes, then stated where)	Persona has an explicitly stated story
The Laughing Cow	The Laughing Cow	No	No
Green Giant	Green Giant	Website Advertisement	Yes
Kellogg's	Tony the Tiger	Website Advertisement	No
Kool Aid	Kool Aid Man	Website	No
Kellogg's	Cornelius the rooster	Website Advertisement	No
Procter & Gamble, Mr. Clean	Mr. Clean	Website Advertisement	Yes
Kellogg's	Coco the monkey	Advertisement	No
General Mills, Pillsbury	The Pillsbury Doughboy	Website Advertisement	Yes
Kellogg's	The pringles man	No	No
Nestlé	Quickie - Nesquick	No	No
Uncle Ben's, Mars	Uncle Ben's	No	Yes
Confused.com	Cara	Yes Advertisement	No
Marlboro, Philip Morris International	Marlboro Man	Yes Advertisement	No
Gudrun Sjödén	Gudrun Sjödén	No	No
Filippa K	Filippa K	No	No
Churchill	Churchill the Nodding Dog	Yes Advertisement	No
Oddka Vodka, Pernod Ricard	Wit Oddoski	Yes Website	Yes

Somersby Cider, Carlsberg	Lord Somersby	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Sir Kensington's, Unilever	Sir Kensington	Yes Website	Yes
Johnnie Walker, Diageo	Johnnie Walker	Yes	Yes
Tetley, Tata Global Beverages	Tea folk	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Keebler	The Keebler Elves	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Chanel	Coco Chanel	Yes Website	Yes
Betty Crocker, General Mills	Betty Crocker	Yes Website Advertisement Radio show	Yes
Hello Kitty, Sanrio	Hello Kitty	Yes Website Tv-Show Advertisement	Yes
Sun-Maid	The Sun-Maid Girl	Yes Website	Yes
Maytag	Maytag Man	Yes Website Advertisement	No
Daniel Wellington	Daniel Wellington	Yes Website	No
Chiquita	Miss Chiquita	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Frito-Lay	Chester the Cheetah	Yes Website Twitter Advertisement	No
Mr Muscle	Mr Muscle	No	No
Captain Morgan	Captain Morgan	Yes	Yes

		Website Advertisement	
Lacoste	René Lacoste	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Christian Dior	Christian Dior	No	Yes
Ann Taylor	Ann Taylor	No	Yes
Quaker Oats	Quaker Man	No	Yes
Fred Perry	Fred Perry	Yes Website	Yes
Ted Baker	Ted Baker	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Chloé	Chloé	No	No
Johnnie Walker	Johnnie Walker	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Brandy Melville	Brandy Melville	No	No
Tommy Hilfiger	Tommy Hilfiger	Yes Website	Yes
Carl Edmond	Carl Edmond	No	No
Hollister	John M Hollister	No	No
Honey nut Cheerio Buzz	Buzz the Bee	Yes Website Tumblr	Yes
Michelin	Michelin Man	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Cap n Crunch	Captain Crunch	No	No
Gordon Ramsay	Gordon Ramsay	Yes Website TV-shows Advertisement	Yes
Kellogg's Rice Krispies	Snap, Crackle and Pop	No	No
Wendy's	Melinda/Wendy	Yes Website	Yes

General Mill's Trix	Trix Rabbit	No	Yes
M&M	Red, Yellow, Green, Ms. Brown, Orange & Blue	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Mr Owl	Mr Owl	No	No
KFC	Colonel Harland Sanders	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
GEICO	GEICO Gecko	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
ATG	Vinnie	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes
Duracell	Duracell Bunny	Yes Website Advertisement	Yes

Appendix B – Visual representation of brand personas with a story

Links to where the visual representations has been retrieved from can be found underneath each separate picture.

Wit Oddoski - Oddka Vodka



Butterfly London (2018). Bringing storytelling to Life Through Characters. Available Online: <http://www.butterflylondon.com/storytellingtolife/> [Accessed 16 May 2018]

Lord Somersby - Somersby Cider



The idea shed (2018). Somersby, Like A Lord. Available Online:
<http://www.theideashed.com/case-studies/somersby/> [Accessed 16 May 2018]

Sir Kensington - Sir Kensington's



Sir Kensington (2009) Sir Kensington's [Twitter] Available from://twitter.com/sirkensingtons
[Accessed 7 May 2018]

Johnnie Walker - Johnnie Walker



JOHNNIE WALKER®

KEEP WALKING®

MCTV (2018). New TVC for Johnnie Walker, Available from:
<https://www.mctv.com.au/new-tvc-johnnie-walker/> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Tetley - Tea folk



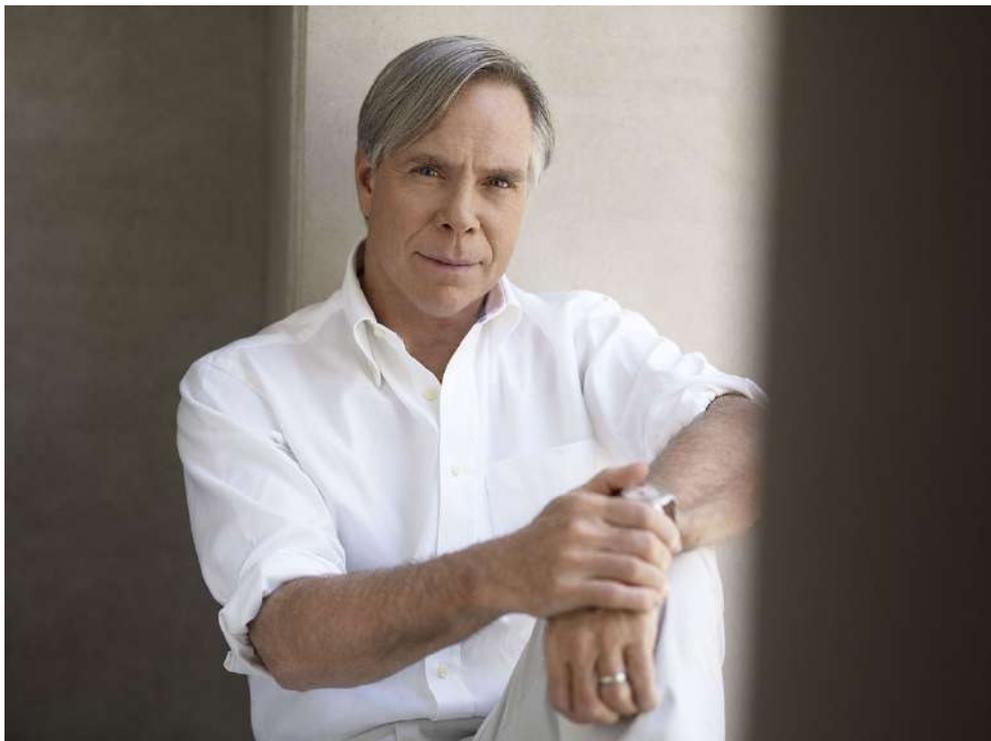
Tetley (2016) Tea folk. Available Online: <http://www.tetley.co.uk/tea-folk>
[Accessed 7 May 2018]

Keebler - The Keebler Elves



Advertising Week (2017) Elmer, Buckets, Doc, and More: Meet the Keebler Elves! Available online: <http://360.advertisingweek.com/who-are-the-keebler-elves/> [Accessed 16 May 2018]

Tommy Hilfiger - Tommy Hilfiger



Wikipedia (n.d). Tommy Hilfiger, Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tommy_Hilfiger [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Chanel - Coco Chanel



Yellow Trace, (2013). video // coco chanel – the woman behind the legend | inside chanel.
Available online: <https://www.yellowtrace.com.au/coco-chanel-inside-chanel/>
[Accessed 16 May 2018]

Fred Perry - Fred Perry



Wilkes, D. & Andrews, E. (2012). Don't cry girls, he did us proud: Tearful Kate, Kim and 15million Britons see Andy Murray's heroic Wimbledon final defeat to Federer, *Daily Mail*, 8 July, Available Online: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2170474/Wimbledon-2012-Kate-Middleton-15m-Britons-Andy-Murrays-heroic-final-defeat.html> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Betty Crocker - Betty Crocker



Walker Art Center (2018). Betty Crocker, Available Online: <https://walkerart.org/minnesotabydesign/objects/betty-crocker> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Hello Kitty - Sanrio



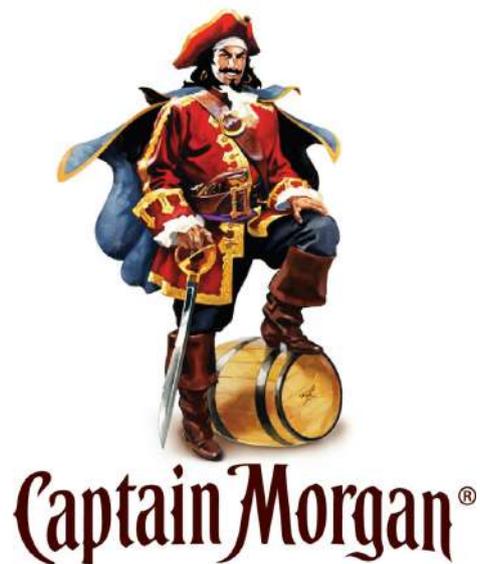
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Ted Baker - Ted Baker



Mortimer, N. (2017). Ted Baker talks creative freedom as it launches 'Keeping up with the Bakers' sitcom, *The Drum*, 15 March, Available Online: <http://www.thedrum.com/news/2017/03/15/ted-baker-talks-creative-freedom-it-launches-keeping-up-with-the-bakers-sitcom> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Captain Morgan - Captain Morgan



Barshopen (n.d.). Captain Morgan drinkglas, Available Online: <https://barshopen.com/cocktail-och-drinkglas/highball-och-longdrinkglas/captain-morgan-drinkglas/> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Michelin Man - Michelin



Autos (2011) Michelin Man joins advertising Walk of Fame, Available Online: <http://www.autos.ca/general-news/michelin-man-joins-advertising-walk-of-fame/> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Red, Yellow, Green, Ms. Brown, Orange & Blue - M&M



M&M's Wiki (n.d.). M&M Candy Characters, Available Online: <http://mms.wikia.com/wiki/File:Mm-candy-characters.jpg> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

René Lacoste - Lacoste



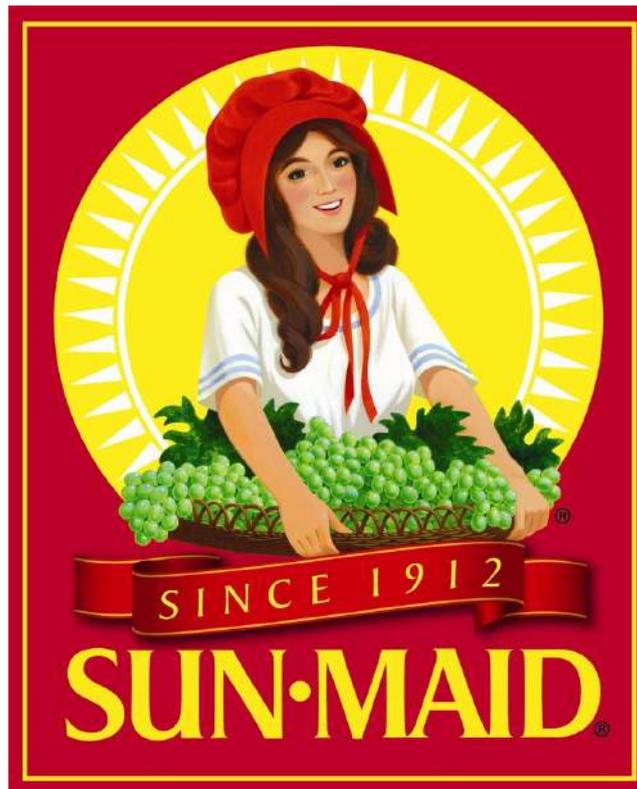
Biography (n.d.). René Lacoste Biography, Available Online: <https://www.biography.com/people/ren%C3%A9-lacoste-40186> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Gordon Ramsay - Gordon Ramsay



Sick Chirpse (2018). Gordon Ramsay Uploaded A Picture Of A Vegan Pizza On His Twitter Before Quickly Deleting It, Available Online: <http://www.sickchirpse.com/gordon-ramsay-uploaded-picture-vegan-pizza-twitter-deleting-it/> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

The Sun-Maid Girl - Sun-Maid



Yelp (n.d.) Sun-Maid Market. Available Online: <https://www.yelp.com/biz/sun-maid-market-kingsburg>
[Accessed 16 May 2018]

Wendy - Wendy's



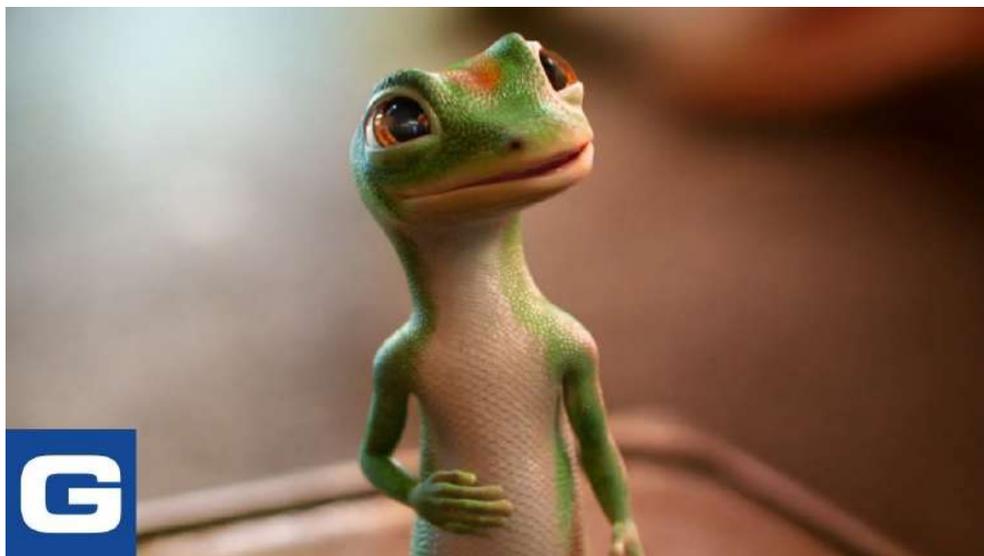
Wikipedia (n.d.) Wendy's, Available Online: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendy%27s>
[Accessed 7 May 2018]

Colonel Harland Sanders - KFC



Trivia People (2015) 171: Colonel Sanders, Available Online: <http://www.triviapeople.com/171/> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

GEICO Gecko - GEICO



Geico Insurance (2017). The Gecko visits Coney Island - GEICO [video online] Available Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ez-Et0rV8Tk> (Accessed 7 May 2018)

Mr. Clean - Mr. Clean



Pinterest (n.d.) Utforska städtips, oändlighet och mer! Available online:
<https://www.pinterest.se/pin/463307880398180193/>
[Accessed 16 May 2018]

The Pillsbury Doughboy - Pillsbury



Ramblings (2012). Pillsbury Dough Boy. Available Online: <http://ramblings-fran.blogspot.se/2012/04/pillsbury-dough-boy.html>
[Accessed 16 May 2018]

The Green Giant - Green Giant



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Miss Chiquita - Chiquita



Pinterest (n.d.) Utforska bra idéer, bananer och mer! Available Online: <https://www.pinterest.se/pin/282530576594670758/> [Accessed 16 May 2018]

Vinnie - ATG



Stratkom (2015) Intervju med Åkestam Holst: Så gjordes “Vinnie the Dreamer”. Available Online: <http://www.stratkom.se/intervju-med-akestam-holst-sa-gjordes-vinnie-the-dreamer/> [Accessed 16 May 2018]

Buzz the Bee - Honey Nut Cheerios



Ellwood City (2017). Cheerios Giving Away 100-Million Seeds to “Bring Back the Bees”, Available Online: <http://ellwoodcity.org/2017/03/15/cheerios-giving-away-100-million-seeds-to-bring-back-the-bees/> [Accessed 7 May 2018]

Duracell Bunny - Duracell



LAM Design (n.d.). Duracell Radiance, Available Online: <http://lamdesign.com/portfolio/duracell-radiance/> [Accessed 7 May 2018]