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MASTER PAPERS

Dramatically Changing Brand Image

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Fourth Edition

Student Papers

2018
September - October

Strategic Brand Management: Master Papers

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Abstract

The purpose of this journal is to further investigate how a brand, during a limited time frame, can change an unwanted image by challenging the stereotypical perceptions of their brand by adding an element of surprise. The research is conducted through a multiple-case study consisting of four cases: Mercedes-Benz, Opel, McDonald's and Lidl. A resulting matrix has been developed to demonstrate the findings on how the actions in each case impact the change of brand image. The journal has found the impact on change of brand image to depend on the level of challenged perceptions and the visibility of the sender, where the rhetorical concept of paraprosdokian enables greater dramatical impact on change of brand image. Thus, surprising elements have been proven to have a high impact when addressing brand prejudices. The matrix can function as a managerial tool which can be used for companies coordinating themselves while conducting activities regarding change of brand image.

Key words: Brand image change, paraprosdokian, cognitive dissonance, brand perceptions, brand prejudices, elements of surprise.

Introduction and Background

A brand image is concerned with how certain groups perceive a brand. Brand image is further defined as *'consumer perceptions of any preferences for a brand, measured by the various types of brand associations held in memory'* (Kotler & Keller, 2015, p. 636). The brand image therefore refers to the decoding of associations to the brand, such as products, services and communications (Kapferer, 2012). A strong brand image results in the creation of trust, differentiation and stability (Grace & O'Cass, 2005; Kay, 2006). However, brands today often find themselves in a situation of being misunderstood. Stereotypical perceptions in the minds of the consumers prevent brands from demonstrating their true essence and the benefits that follow. The existing literature proposes that changing a brand image is not only costly but takes a long time (Huimin, 2005; Kapferer, 2012). Simultaneously Kapferer (2012) states that very little is needed to diminish a brand image; a statement which might occur

frustrating and unfair for brand practitioners. This raises the question of whether it is possible to dramatically and in a short matter of time change, or at least initiate change, of the brand image when suffering from unwanted brand perceptions and through which methods this then is achieved.

An issue for brands is that the associations and perceptions connected to the company does not necessarily reflect the brand identity and intended image of the brand (Kapferer, 2012). Prejudices against the brand is formed, possibly resulting in the consumer avoiding the brand or product (Huimin, 2005). Thus, brand prejudices can be highly problematic for a brand since these prejudices might not be correct nor aligned with how the brand wants to be perceived. In such a case, brand practitioners are in need of changing these perceptions to establish a brand image that is in line with what is intended by the company. This raises an additional question regarding whether the brand prejudices is more effectively refuted depending on if the

brand is visible or hidden as a sender. A prominent campaign where the sender operated as hidden is Lidl's Dill campaign in 2013. As later discussed in detail, Lidl experienced that consumers had perceptions about their products being of low-quality, which affected their brand negatively since these perceptions did not reflect Lidl's actual offerings. In order to initiate change of the brand image, something drastic needed to be done. By studying cases such as Lidl this journal aims to investigate how a brand, during a limited time frame, can change an unwanted image by challenging the stereotypical perceptions of their brand by adding an element of surprise. Moreover, the journal will contribute with a framework which can be used in a theoretical as well as a managerial manner to understand the phenomena.

Literature review

Brand Image

The importance of brand image has been stressed by a number of writers (E.g. Aaker, 1992; Kapferer, 2012; Kotler & Keller, 2015) and is well established as being in the eye of the beholder (Rindell & Iglesias, 2014). The image is thus created on the receiver's side and refers to the way in which certain groups decode all the signals emanating from the services and communication conveyed by the brand, as well as from the product itself (Kapferer, 2012).

According to Biel (1992) brand image consists of three contributing subimages: the image of the user, the image of the provider of the product/service and image of the service/product itself. The contribution of each component varies depending on the brand and the category in which it operates in, and thus the subimages' relative contribution to the brand image can differ. Nevertheless, each component is essential for establishing the

brand image. Similar findings as well as the concept of subimages are supported by several authors (E.g. Aaker & Biel, 1993; Gensch, 1978; Kazmi, 2007; Verma, 2006) and will thereby constitute the base of this journal's view on brand image and its components.

Several authors have previously stated that repositioning and revitalising a brand and its image should be done through gradual, incremental changes to successfully change the specific brand positioning, the brand perception or changing the market conditions (E.g. Aaker, 1991; Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Kapferer 2012). Kapferer (2012) stresses this further by highlighting that it takes years to build a reputation but could be diminished within a time frame of only days or weeks. In spite of this, Gartner (1986) states that even though brand image as a whole may not fluctuate a lot over time, components of the brand image may fluctuate greatly. Thus, temporal actions or factors might be able to impact a brand image to some extent in either a positive or a negative matter. However, the research findings of Gartner as based on a rather small data selection which further motivates the research undertaken in this journal.

Rindell and Iglesias (2014) review the concept of context and time in building brand image further, stating that brand building in the minds of the consumers is created through both everyday moments and special occasions over time, as well as through glancing moments. Thus, what shapes the brand image tends to be a summary of memorable moments and turning points in the past, present and the future. Thereof, a difference between image heritage and image-in-use is highlighted. Image heritage enables a mental relationship with a company and is developed over time. The image is then built on related experiences derived over time, meaning that it focuses on past brand-related experiences. In contrast to image heritage, image-in-use refers to the images

created in present and real time. Image construction is therefore not only constrained to physiological (social/with whom) and physical (location/where) circumstances, but also include when (time and activity). As a result, single memorable moments that only occur once can still have significant impact on the brand image built over time (Rindell & Iglesias 2014).

Brand Prejudices

According to Huimin (2005) a brand prejudice is defined as the emotional aversion towards a brand. The aversion is mainly based on a stereotypical perception of the brand. The aversion and avoidance of the brand is often deliberate in the mind of the consumer, rather than being based on involuntary disgust. Brand prejudices are distinctive from consumer dissatisfaction as the prejudices are not necessarily created through consumption or purchase. Rather, the concept is strongly correlated with anti-consumption, meaning that the consumer deliberately avoids the brand despite of having limited or no experience of the brand (Huimin, 2005). In terms of altering prejudices, Edwards and von Hippel (1995) state that affective methods are more effective than cognitive persuasion. Edwards and von Hippel's (1995) study indicates that affective persuasion is more effective when changing affect-based attitude. Since brand prejudices arise from emotional judgements rather than actual consumption or purchase, thus cognitive-based and objective judgements (Huimin, 2005), these findings are highly relevant for the purpose of this journal.

Leon Festinger's (1957) idea of cognitive dissonance can be related to brand prejudices as consumers tend to stay true to their established perception of a brand. Cognitive dissonance arises when a person experiences a difference between two existing cognitions, for example having an attitude towards a brand and then experiencing something that contradicts the existing attitude. The contradicting feelings are what constitutes the dissonance, which is uncomfortable for the subject and is something he or she wants to reduce by either altering current attitudes or adding new ones (Festinger, 1957; Schewe, 1973). The theory of cognitive dissonance will be applied in this journal since the reducing of contradicting feelings could contribute to changing an attitude towards a brand.

Huimin (2005) describes self-affirmation as an effective tool to alter prejudices. Self-affirmation could be conducted through one-on-one service and mass media. As the research study of Huimin (2005) is limited to self-affirmation, there is further interest to investigate whether other emotional techniques could effectively alter brand prejudices, such as surprise in combination of a hidden sender, as discussed later in this journal.

The Rhetorical Perspective

When evaluating the possibility to dramatically impact the brand image in this journal, a rhetorical concept is needed to add insights on how prejudices can be changed through affective methods. Rhetorics is defined as *'The art of convincing'* (Lindstedt, p.17) and holds a number of figures of speech. One of these figures of speech is the concept of paraprosdokian, which is when the latter part of a phrase or a sentence is unexpected or surprising. A surprising ending then causes the listener to reinterpret or reframe the previous part of the message. The rhetorical concept is often used to add a dramatic effect which encourages the receiver to change or re-evaluate the early phrase (Casselman, 2011). Thus, the concept of paraprosdokian is closely related to the phenomena studied in this journal where the sender being hidden impacts the established image of the brand. Thus, a dramatic and surprising ending could possibly impact the established image as

well as the interpretation of the first part of the message.

Contrasting Views

The following section will briefly discuss alternative techniques seen as somewhat related to challenging a brand image by using affective methods, and contrast them with our approach.

Buzz marketing: The concept of buzz marketing is closely related to viral marketing and is a technique focused on maximizing word-of-mouth potential and reach for a certain product or campaign (Mourdoukoutas & Siomkos, 2009). In contrast to changing the brand image through challenging the stereotypical perceptions of a brand, the main objective with using buzz marketing is to promote and increase sales and profits of a certain product or service (Leila & Abderrazak, 2013) and thus, do not aim to change the perception of the brand. Therefore, the concept of buzz marketing will not be further researched due to the purpose of this journal.

Shock advertising: Shock advertising has become an established form of advertising, as advertisers need to find new ways in order to get their message noticed in the ever-overloaded communication landscape (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003). Belch and Belch (1998) define shock advertising as *'A genre of communication that aims to elicit attention for a brand name by jolting consumers'* (p. 269). Shock advertising is further defined as an appeal that startles and offends its audience deliberately rather than inadvertently (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003) by including controversial and provocative content (Sandıkcı, 2011). Thus, shock advertising will not be an object of further research in this journal firstly because of its origins in marketing rather than branding. Secondly, because of the content being offensive rather than surprising and simultaneously focusing on offending its audience rather than refuting current perceptions as studied in this journal.

Rebranding: Change of name, logo and slogan are categories of changes usually made by corporate rebranders where the aim is to change the brand image (Stuart & Muzellec, 2004). The process of rebranding further includes redefinition of the corporate brand identity, such as new corporate brand vision and new corporate brand values. (Gotsi & Andriopoulos, 2007). Stuart and Muzellec (2004) further explain that companies perform a rebranding process when something about the company has changed in regard to the stated categories above. This contradicts the research undertaken in this journal, since rebranding involves change of fundamental grounds of the corporate brand identity instead of solely focusing on changing brand perceptions, as researched in this journal.

Methodology

Previous relevant literature regarding brand image, brand prejudices, buzz marketing, shock advertising and rebranding has been reviewed in order to identify a gap of knowledge where this journal could contribute. The research concerning to what extent it is possible to change brand prejudices by one memorable occasion and during a short matter of time is limited and thus, leading to a theoretical gap where this journal could contribute. Based on previous findings by Edwards and von Hippel (1995) regarding how to effectively impact brand prejudices, affective methods are recommended. Thus, the rhetorical concept of paraprosdokian and different elements of surprise are affective methods researched in this journal. In regards to the above mentioned, the aim of this journal is to further investigate how a brand, during a limited time frame, can change an unwanted image by challenging the stereotypical

perceptions of their brand by adding an element of surprise. This has led to the development of the following research question:

- How can a brand dramatically change an unwanted image by challenging the stereotypical perceptions of their brand by adding an element of surprise?

In order to fulfil the purpose of this journal and to answer the research question stated above, a selection of the existing literature presented in the literature review was combined in the development of a matrix in order to provide new insights regarding change of brand image. The matrix was used to present the combination between level of challenged perception of the brand and the visibility of the sender of the message. Henceforth, the matrix was developed to facilitate managerial application as well as to clearly visualise the phenomena. The development of the matrix will be discussed in detail later in this journal.

The research of this journal was conducted through a study of four cases: Mercedes-Benz, Opel, McDonald's and Lidl. Case studies are of relevance when exploring a phenomenon over time in order to get a full understanding of important stages and outcomes (Yin, 1994). In this type of study it can be favourable to use a multiple-case design (Yin, 1994), since a number of cases can provide insight in the usage of different strategies. Siggelkow (2007) further elaborates on the strengths of case studies by stating that case studies can be used in order to shed light on a particular phenomenon. By consciously choosing cases to study, as done in this journal, knowledge can be reached that otherwise would not have been generated (Siggelkow, 2007). The cases in this journal all contain different levels of surprising elements by challenging one or more components of a brand image in order to change the

stereotypical perceptions held against the brand as well as being hidden or visible as a sender. Moreover, each case includes a company which attempts to achieve a fast image change, which contradicts previously mentioned well-recognized literature concerning the time perspective when trying to change an image. Thus, the cases have been chosen as they effectively demonstrate the theoretical findings as well as the practical usage of the matrix.

The cases will be studied through a document analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2015) of online articles, websites and videos which were posted during the different case campaigns. Multiple sources were reviewed for each case in order to form a broad context of the cases. Hence, company websites, visual documents and mass media outputs such as posts on websites and independent articles from newspapers or blogs were studied. A combination of these sources provided information of both the intended message and aim of the campaigns, but also reactions and the general tone from media and the public.

Developing the Matrix

On the basis of the insights from the literature review presented, the matrix (figure 1) was developed from a theoretical approach. In terms of the theoretical approach the matrix is built upon the three subimages that together constitute the brand image: the image of the user, the image of the producer and the image of the product/service itself. Henceforth, the matrix is developed upon the findings regarding that even though brand image is built over time, it can effectively be influenced by temporal changes and memorable moments that only occurred once with the aim to further investigate the limited area of existing literature. Furthermore, the rhetoric perspective influenced the development of the matrix since there is a clear connection between a paraprosdokian and the phenomena where

the brand is hidden to reach a greater impact on the brand image. Moreover, it was essential when developing the matrix to understand brand prejudices as they can be a vital factor when experiencing an unwanted brand image. Thereby, the necessity of challenging these perceptions were acknowledged and included in the matrix.

From a managerial point of view the matrix aims to contribute with insights on how a company can attempt to change an unwanted brand image by challenging perceptions about their brand by adding an element of surprise. The matrix is relevant when a company desires to change the perceptions of the brand quickly without changing fundamental parts of the brand identity as they are currently satisfied with what the brand stands for, but not how it is perceived. Furthermore, an alternative use for the matrix regards evaluating previous campaigns aimed at altering the brand image. The matrix would then clarify what the brand could have done differently to achieve a more dramatic change of the brand image.

Elements of the Matrix

In regard to cognitive dissonance, the established image and expectations of a brand influences how any message is received by a consumer (Festinger, 1957; Schewe, 1973). The existing attitudes mean that the level of surprise and thus, to what extent the target is refuted, depends on firstly 1) if the sender is visible or not, and secondly 2) if the sender challenges the existing image within several subdimensions of the brand image or solely focus on one of them. In regard to above mentioned, the two axes were developed.

The x-axis is concerned with to what extent the brand is challenging the existing perceptions of the brand. This is measured through how many of the three subimages, the image of the user, the image of the producer and the image of the product/service itself, are challenged. To challenge the existing brand image fully, each of the subimages needs to be addressed. The x-axis range from 'challenged perception' to 'very challenged perception' meaning that each character present in the matrix challenge the existing image to some extent. However, in order for the message from the sender to result in a 'very challenged perception' more than one of the subimages needs to be addressed, while for 'challenged perception' only one of the subimages needs to be addressed.

The y-axis regards the visibility of the sender. This concerns whether the sender of the message is hidden or visible in the initial part of the campaign. Being a hidden sender, a brand could use a fictional brand as an initial cover during a campaign, or be anonymous not stating who the sender is. In contradiction to the x-axis the variable of the y-axis, the sender, is either completely hidden or fully visible initially.

The overall impact on change of brand image can be studied vertically and horizontally in the matrix, but not diagonally. Thus, the impact on change of brand image increases when moving from 'visible sender' to 'hidden sender' and when the level of challenged perception moves from 'challenged perception' to 'very challenged perception'. The reason for the greater impact is due to the increased level of surprise when communicating as a 'hidden sender' and due to several subimages being challenged when the level of 'perception challenged' increases.
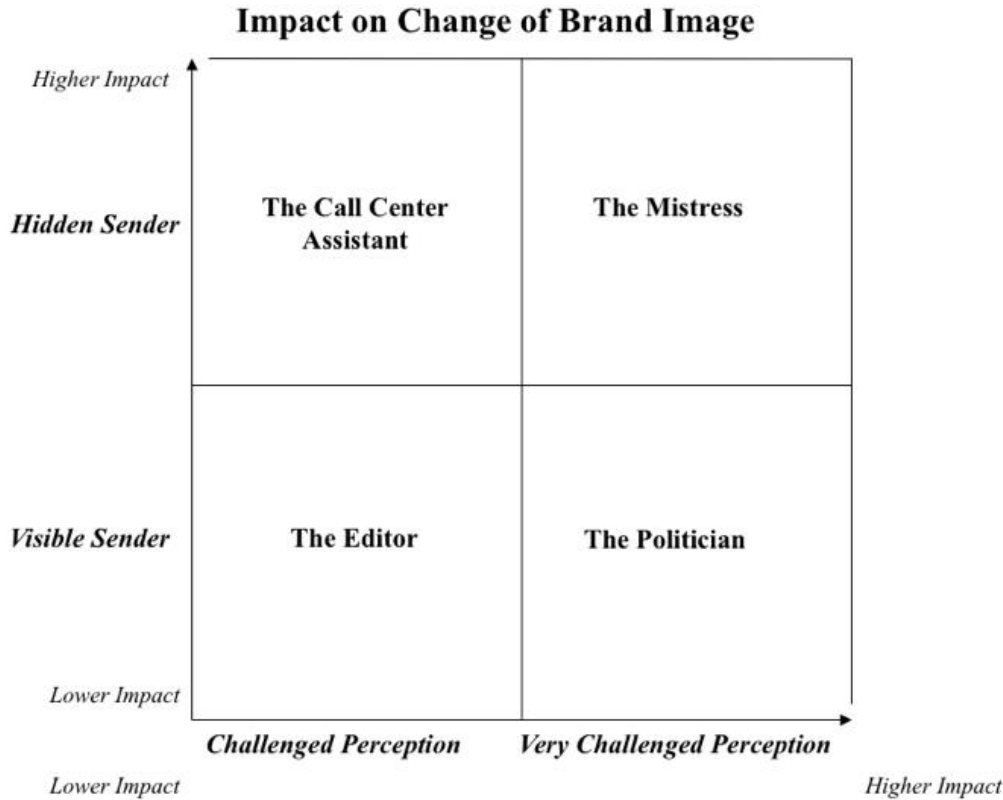
Impact on Change of Brand Image

Figure 1: Impact on Change of Brand Image

Characters of the Matrix

'The editor' (figure 1) is visible during the campaign while only challenging the perceptions by addressing one of the subimages, resulting in a low dramatical impact of change on that subimage. Metaphorically it can be described as an editor who adds small changes to an existing text, resulting in only a few new surprises. Thus, the editor only focuses on smaller adjustments.

'The call center assistant' (figure 1) is hidden during the campaign while only challenging the perceptions by addressing one of the subimages, resulting in a higher level of dramatical impact on that subimage. Thus, 'the call center assistant' differs from the editor by initially being hidden instead of being visible which

increases the dramatical impact. A call center assistant can work as a metaphor since the employee is hidden behind a phone but still has the ability to impact the overall image created by previous customer experiences to some extent, resulting in a positive or negative surprise.

'The politician' (figure 1) is visible during the campaign while addressing several subimages, which generates a lower dramatical impact of change on the challenged subimages compared to 'the mistress', as the politician is visible. Politicians are characterized by their eagerness to drive change and impact their surroundings within several areas of interest. Furthermore, politicians are clearly visible when campaigning.

'The mistress' (figure 1) is hidden during the campaign while addressing several subimages, which results in the highest level of dramatical impact of change on the subimages addressed compared to the other characters of the matrix. A mistress tends to be kept hidden, but once revealed he or she is a big surprise with a vital impact on the existing relationship and the power to dramatically change the previous image of everyone involved.

Applying the Matrix

The matrix has been applied to four cases in order to demonstrate the impact on change of brand image, in regard to the four elements of the matrix as described above.

Case 1: Mercedes-Benz - The Editor

Mercedes-Benz is a German vehicle manufacturer that was founded in 1926 through the merger of the two brands DMG and Benz & Cie (Mercedes-Benz, 2018). The brand is a premium brand and is today ranked as one of the most valuable brands in the world (Black Eight, 2018). Mercedes-Benz has historically primarily targeted males, where the average consumer of the brand is 57 years old (Zetlin, 2018; Jagodic, 2017) resulting in a narrow image of the user, with the stereotypical user being a middle-aged man.

However, during the last few years Mercedes-Benz has made efforts to widen their target group (Baker, 2011) and in 2015 a specific theme was introduced. Through the launch of the campaign 'She's Mercedes' the brand aimed at increasing the attractiveness for Mercedes-Benz among women (Daimler, 2015) and thus challenging the image of the stereotypical user. The campaign portrayed women driving Mercedes-Benz cars in their ordinary life. Throughout advertisement phrases such as 'She's successful', 'She's connected' and 'She's in motion' are present. Lastly the slogan 'She's Mercedes' is presented, indicating that the woman is all of this, including a Mercedes-Benz buyer (Mercedes-Benz, 2015).

During this campaign, Mercedes-Benz solely focused on challenging the image of the user, striving to move away for the image of a middle-aged man driving a Mercedes and move more towards a diversified image of the user by thus highlighting women. Mercedes-Benz as a brand were visible during the campaign, which affected the level of surprise. However, some level of surprise still remained due to Mercedes-Benz challenging the established perceptions about themselves; an approach which is new to the target group. Moreover, as existing prejudices and stereotypes were present due to Mercedes-Benz being visible, the impact on change of the subimage was reduced as described by cognitive dissonance theory. Cognitive dissonance theory reduced the extent of which the target audience processed the new message and image that Mercedes-Benz wanted to convey. Furthermore, since the brand only addressed one of the subimages, the impact on change of the brand image as a whole was reduced and thus, not dramatically challenged in the minds of the consumers. Nevertheless, to only change the image of the target group was in line with Mercedes-Benz intention with the 'She's Mercedes' campaign. In regard to the above-mentioned, Mercedes-Benz can be viewed as 'the editor'.

Case 2: Opel - The Call Center Assistant

Opel is a car company that was founded in Germany in 1862. Today, it is the third largest car company in Europe (Opel n.d.a.; Opel n.d.b.). Opel in Sweden noticed that there were certain perceptions and prejudices about their brand: *'Many believe that only old men in hats drive our cars'* (Pia Brunn, Director of Communications Opel, 2015). To change these perceptions

they engaged in the campaign #challengeyourprejudices where the intention was to alter the image of the user. The first step involved posting ads stating general prejudices with the hashtag #challengeyourprejudices from an anonymous sender. None of these prejudices where related to Opel or the car industry. The second stage was the release of a set of advertisements involving the campaigns ambassadors Anders Bagge, Eric Saade, and Viktoria and Joshi Helgesson in which Opel was a visible sender. The ambassadors used are all Swedish famous celebrities and relatively young in comparison to the stereotypical image of the Opel user. In the advertisements, the ambassadors drove Opel cars and spoke about their prejudices about Opel (Löfvenberg, 2015) and thus, aimed to widen the image of the stereotypical user. Opel experienced a steady escalation of test drives of their cars with an increase of 180 percent, where an increase in the target group of women in the ages of 18-44 was apparent (House of Friends, n.d.).

Opel as a brand was hidden in the beginning of the campaign, resulting in an increased level of surprise while assuring that existing prejudices did not influence the current message being communicated. Similar to Mercedes-Benz, Opel only addressed and challenged one of the subimages - the image of the user - resulting in a lowered impact on the overall brand image. Since Opel was hidden during the initial part of the campaign the level of surprise was increased due to the reveal. In spite of this, the rhetorical concept paraprosdokian is not leveraged on since the dramatical surprise created by the reveal of Opel, and thus their existing brand image, does not relate to the first part of the campaign. This is due to the first message of the campaign not being related to either Opel and the image of the user, nor the industry they operate in, resulting in the consumer not re-evaluating their interpretation of the first part of the

campaign. Therefore, the overall image of the brand is not effectively changed by using an element of surprise. Rather, the change of the image of the user is created by the second part of the campaign where different types of images of the Opel driver are visualised and challenged through the use of ambassadors. In regard to the above-mentioned, Opel can be viewed as 'the call center assistant'.

Case 3: McDonald's - The Politician

McDonald's started as a hamburger restaurant in the United States in 1940 (McDonald's, n.d.a.). Today, McDonald's wants to be perceived as a company with high quality products, where service is fast and personal (McDonald's, n.d.b.). However, this is not generally perceived as true (CNBC, 2014) since the image that many people apply onto McDonald's is that they serve food of poor quality, which also reflects the general perception of McDonald's as a brand.

To change the perception of the company and the perception of the quality of their food, McDonald's arranged a number of gourmet dinners; journalists and bloggers were invited to the events where different courses were prepared by celebrity chefs. All of the courses were based on McDonald's products, such as their potato fries, chicken nuggets and beef. The ingredients were then used to create fancy dishes to demonstrate that McDonald's products were of high quality (CNBC, 2014; Delish, 2013). The intention of the event was not to present a menu that would be served in the restaurants, but to change the perceptions of McDonald's by conveying an image of McDonald's serving high-quality food: 'good food served fast' (CNBC, 2014; Tezeno, 2014).

McDonald's challenged several dimensions of their image; primarily the image of the product and the service regarding the quality, as well as the overall image of the

producer. This resulted in a very challenged perception of the overall brand image, compared to the cases of Opel and Mercedes-Benz where only one subimage was challenged. As in the case of Mercedes-Benz, McDonald's being visible during the campaign limited the extent to which the receivers re-evaluated their previous perceptions about the brand and the quality of the products. Furthermore, McDonald's being visible limited the level of surprise. However, the surprising element still exist due to the unexpected way of demonstrating McDonald's food as part of level of challenged perception. McDonald's can be viewed, in regards to the mentioned-above, as 'the politician' since they strive to impact their surrounding through the campaign while being clearly visible.

Case 4: Lidl - The Mistress

Lidl is a grocery store which opened its first shop in Germany in the 1970's. Lidl argues that the key to their success is keeping the prices low for high quality products (Lidl, n.d.). However, Lidl in Sweden had issues mediating their equation of low prices and high quality to their consumers. Lidl is known for having low prices, but there is no general belief that they are a high quality company with high quality products (INGO Stockholm, n.d.).

In September 2013, Lidl opened the gourmet restaurant Dill anonymously in Stockholm. They recruited the chef Michael Wignall, awarded two Michelin stars, and his team to Dill with the mission to create a nine course menu with products from Lidl. During a few weeks, the whole restaurant was constructed from scratch, employees were trained and the menu was set. Even before the restaurant had opened, it was widely written and talked about, partly because of the involvement of Michael Wignall. The restaurant became wildly popular and it was even difficult to get a table; the opening night was booked solid in 29 minutes with a waiting list of 500 people.

Dill was open for three weeks, and during the second week Lidl revealed the big secret; that everything on the gourmet menu was based on Lidl products. After the reveal, media exploded of the news of Dill's reveal. In addition to the reactions of the media, numbers showed that the campaign had worked. Before the news of Dill, only ten percent of people in Sweden could consider shopping at Lidl. After the reveal, 33 percent could consider doing their shopping there (INGO Stockholm n.d.; Guldägget 2014).

Similar to McDonald's campaign, Lidl managed to challenge several subimages; the image of the products and the image of the producer, resulting in a very challenged perception. Furthermore, Lidl as a brand was hidden during the campaign which increased the level of surprise. In contrast to Opel, Lidl managed to successfully leverage on their brand not being initially visible. They created their ideal image of the brand by establishing perceptions regarding high quality in the minds of the consumers using Dill as a cover. Since the consumers were unaware of the sender being Lidl they were open to the concept, where previous expectations and prejudices did not prevent them from creating a favourable image. Once it was revealed that Lidl was behind the concept of Dill, Lidl could in a beneficial manner leverage on the new perceptions created towards Dill. Thus, being a hidden sender successfully prevented the consumer from being affected by the concept of cognitive dissonance. Furthermore, in accordance with the concept of paraprosdokian, the consumers dramatically and effectively reevaluated their image of Lidl due to their contradicting images of Lidl and Dill.

Thus, the case of Lidl illustrates an example where a company has been able to dramatically change their brand image. This outcome was a result of the combination of the use of a surprising element, the rhetorical concept of paraprosdokian and

challenging stereotypical perceptions by addressing several of the brand's subimages. Lidl can thereby be viewed as 'the mistress'.

Discussion and Conclusion

This journal has argued that change of brand image can be managed through challenging existing stereotypical perceptions connected to the brand by adding an element of surprise.

This study's theoretical implications adds support to previous literature by Rindell and Iglesias (2014) and Gartner (1986) that brand image to some extent can be altered or created through solitarily occasions. Thus, the brand image can be altered more effectively and dramatically than what is previously well-recognized within the literature of branding. 'The mistress' has been proved to be the character with the most dramatic impact on the overall brand image. By highly challenging the perceptions of the brand in combination with communicating as a hidden sender, 'the mistress' challenges the brand image to the greatest extent out of all the characters. Furthermore, the usage of the paraprosdokian concept is crucial for this type of brand image change since it allows the target group to re-evaluate their already established perceptions about the brand. This can further be described through the concept of cognitive dissonance, where the target group either develops a new set of attitudes or enhances already existing attitudes in order to reduce the dissonance. Thus, as proven in the case of Lidl, when the concept of the paraprosdokian is present the outcome is likely to result in the consumer developing new perceptions as their previous attitudes are effectively refuted. However, for the rhetorical concept to successfully alter the existing perceptions, two requirements need to be fulfilled. *Firstly*, the sender needs to be initially hidden to assure that existing perceptions do not prevent new perceptions to develop, and *secondly*, the latter part of the message which is communicated when the sender is visible need to be clearly connected to the first part of the message. The effect of not fulfilling the later requirement is demonstrated through the case of Opel, where the paraprosdokian concept does not successfully alter the perceptions of the brand since the first part of the campaign did not concern anything related to Opel or the car industry. Thus, in support of Huimin, (2005) the study recognizes and contribute with theoretical implications regarding affective methods such as surprise as an effective way to change brand prejudices, but adds a new dimension by highlighting the rhetorical impact as vital.

The matrix used in this journal provides a framework for different levels of change of brand image, enabling brands with different aims of challenging unwanted perceptions to use the framework. For example, Opel and Mercedes aimed to challenge the image of their target groups while McDonald's and Lidl wanted to impact the overall image of the brand as well as their products. Thus, depending on the managerial intentions the different characters of the matrix can be applied. From a managerial perspective, the framework developed in this journal can be used by brands that need to dramatically change one or several components of their image. The usage of the framework is, as stated above, guided by the intentions of the brand. Moreover, which character a brand defines themselves with depends on how many subimages of the brand image the company wishes to address, to what extent an element of surprise is present and whether they are hidden or visible as a sender. The managerial process of applying the framework could be described as following: *Firstly*, the existing perceptions of the target group must be established by conducting research to identify whether they are in line with the brand image that the company wish to convey. *Secondly,* the

number of subimages that needs to be challenged due to existing brand prejudices are determined which when applying them to the matrix will result in either a 'challenged perception' or 'very challenged perception'. *Thirdly,* the brand determines how dramatically they wish to change their brand image, where being a hidden sender will result in a greater and more effective impact if done according to the concept of paraprosdokian. Thus, the brand's position within the matrix will be determined and thereby illustrate the situation the brand could experience during an intended campaign. Furthermore, the framework could work as a tool for analysing an previous campaigns aimed at altering the brand image. The matrix would then clarify what the brand could have done differently to achieve a more dramatic change of the brand image.

Limitations and Future Research

This journal has been based upon studying brands and their subimages. Thereby, the developed matrix is dependent on these components, meaning that it can only be used for brands that have consumers, products/services and an overall image of the producer. Moreover, the matrix demands that companies using the framework must have conducted their own initial research in order to determine current brand image. The use of the four cases has provided insight regarding how brands can impact the change of brand image by using the earlier mentioned variables of the matrix. However, for the study to be more extensive, more cases could have been used to develop the different characters of the matrix. The cases could also have been investigated further to gain deeper insights, for example by conducting interviews with people involved in the different cases. It could also have been interesting to have followed the cases and their outcome during a longer period of time to establish how long these newly changed perceptions remained with the consumer. Moreover, to gain a wider perspective on the effects of the cases, interviews with consumers could have been used to develop a further understanding of the outcomes of the different cases.

In regard to future research, different affective methods to alter brand prejudices, other than elements of surprise and paraprosdokian as studied in this journal, could be investigated to determine effectiveness in changing a brand image dramatically.

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