

# **From Champagne showers to the back of the grid: A case study of Williams Racing**

---

## **TEACHING NOTES**

---

---

The authors prepared this case solely as a basis for class discussion and not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. Although based on real events and despite occasional references to actual companies, this case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or entities is coincidental.

## Teaching plan

This teaching plan provides a guide for the case of Williams outlining how the case can be best organised, taught, presented, and discussed. The Williams case provides a real-life branding and management problem where organisational change is needed to solve poor performance and financial struggles. This teaching note provides teachers and case presenters with instructions and advice on how to structure the case session, engage participants using questions and provides the information and tools necessary to achieve the learning objectives. The teaching note analyses the Williams case using theories of brand heritage as well as brand identity and reputation. Both a time and board plan is provided to further aid in the planning and execution of the case. Appendices are also attached to provide further information on the rules and point system within F1.

## Case summary

Williams is a long standing, family owned and operated Formula 1 team. Their track record of success is closely tied to their status as a skilled and independent constructor in a highly competitive and monetized sport. When founder Frank Williams steps aside and his daughter Claire takes over, the team struggles to produce the glory of yesteryear. Claire's appointment fuels accusations of nepotism and questions about her ability to lead the team at a time when they face some of their greatest challenges. Formula 1 has introduced regulations that allow teams to outsource parts they previously had to make in-house, reducing manufacturing costs and allowing teams to stretch their budgets. Claire remains committed to maintaining Williams as an independent constructor and refuses to outsource parts. Williams' financial struggles compound after failing to secure consistent sponsorship and once Covid-19 hit the team faced no other option but to sell. The new owners, Dorilton take over to bring back the Williams name to its former glory, but with a new approach to outsource.

## Rationale for being an evergreen case

The history of the Williams heritage brand and the outcomes that are illustrated through this case can arguably be considered an evergreen case. The case of Williams illustrates how a brand's heritage, when not modernised to fit the new environment, can lead to poor financial performance and reputation decline. The Williams case can be applied across time and various industries. No matter the time period, brands who care for their heritage may find difficulties in adapting to stay relevant and this case highlights the dangers in failing to do so. Similarly, the issue with having a poor reputation that does not align with the corporate identity is a problem that can affect

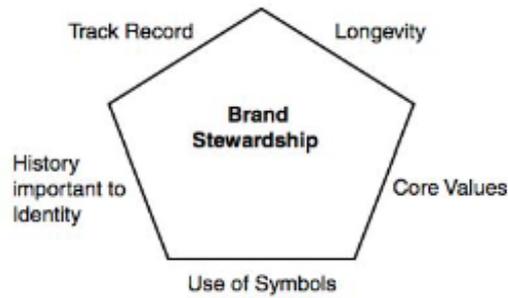
any organisation. In contrast to other cases, the Williams case creates a dialogue about how to deal with a poor reputation that is not caused by a sudden crisis but rather a systemic failure in the delivery of the brand promise. More than anything, this case demonstrates an organisation that has been performing poorly for a prolonged period. Many other organisations may experience a similar slow but steady downfall and have a hard time breaking the cycle to recover. The case touches on family-owned business practices, the feeling of sentiment, and the notion of letting go in order to save the organisation. Although the 2020 pandemic became the final drop for Williams, the case is still useful for future situations where other external elements hinder a brand's ability to evolve.

## Learning objectives

During the presentation, discussion, and overall execution of the Williams case, participants are expected to learn how to analyse and manage a heritage brand and its identity. The literature and models used aid the analysis of the case and brand. The heritage brand and its elements act as a tool to help participants identify and analyse the parts of Williams that make up their heritage and how it should be managed. Further, the corporate brand identity and reputation matrix along with other literature on corporate reputation help participants distinguish differences between the external and internal perceptions of the brand. This can assist in the discussion about which elements of the Williams brand and their identity that need to be reconsidered. The case and the models in this teaching note are useful for those who wish to study and learn about heritage brands and their challenge to adapt, as well as the implications on performance and reputation of failing to do so.

## Williams as a heritage brand

As presented by Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) there is a strategic difference between brand history and brand heritage. Brand heritage is used to create a competitive advantage, offer credibility to brand values, and create meaningful relationships with stakeholders whilst also generating a sense of pride from within. According to Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) brands that call themselves a heritage brand have five elements that together form a brand's heritage quotient (HQ). The presence of these elements indicate the level of heritage that can be found within a brand. A high HQ is achieved by having the five elements strongly present, and the higher the HQ the more the brand's heritage is perceived as relevant and valued externally instead of merely internally. These elements are put into a model with brand stewardship in the middle that describe the mindset necessary to nurture and manage the brand heritage (**Figure 1**)



**Figure 1** The elements of brand heritage

### *Track record*

The track record of a company illustrates that the company has lived up to the values as well as promises it has made to their stakeholders. As such, the company's performance is central and signals their success in delivering their promise. Those companies that manage to be consistent and are confident about the future gain credibility and trust which are crucial to a heritage brand. Stakeholders usually expect companies to deliver on their values and promises in the future and can give companies competitive advantages.

### *Williams' track record*

Although the glory days of Williams were in the 80s and 90s when they won several championships, they have continued to compete in the mid-field and up to third place. However, in the last decade Williams have seen their track record diminish all the way down to last place. Despite that, they are still a revered constructor who have produced many legendary drivers within F1, and even receives a monetary bonus each year from the F1 organisation for their long participation in the sport.

### *Longevity*

Longevity is not a pure measure of time, however, it may be better understood as the enduring commitment to exemplifying other elements of brand heritage. The continuation and cultivation of brand heritage must be evident across generations of leadership as evidence of the embeddedness of heritage within the brand. Longevity is therefore dependent on the maintenance of brand heritage elements over time.

### *Williams' longevity*

Ever since their first championship in 1978, Williams have participated in every single Grand Prix. Throughout the years they have stayed true to their identity as an independent constructor with a business model dedicated purely to racing. They have stayed at their office in Grove, England and the family has always been the leader and primary owner of the company, passed on to the second generation of Williams from Frank to Claire.

### *Core values*

For heritage brands a part of their identity are their core values that they have continuously lived up to for a long time. The same core values have acted as a guidance for positioning, communication, strategy, and actions. These long-held core values are used to guide the brand both internally and externally. Eventually, the core values become not only the identity of the brand but also its heritage.

### *Williams' core values*

While the core values of Williams are not explicit they are easily identifiable in every aspect of the company. Frank Williams' determination to create a F1 team that is purely focused on racing has guided the Williams company in their corporate governance since its beginnings. The Williams brand, unlike other competitors, was not created as a marketing extension for commercial car manufacturers. Thus it has been able to focus its efforts solely on producing the best race car. They are committed to excellence in engineering which is evident internally by their production of parts in-house. These values have cultivated the Williams guiding principle, independence which encapsulates the Williams strategy to racing. This is communicated both internally and externally as fundamental to the Williams approach and adherence to in-house production has positioned them as the true independent team in racing.

### *Use of symbols*

Symbols act as identifiers for both the presence of the brand and what it stands for. Used within communication, symbols convey the brand heritage and often are presented as logos. Strong brand heritage symbols are able to acquire their own identity however they still represent what the brand stands for.

### *Williams' usage of symbols*

The world of F1 is very much associated with endorsement and sponsorship where various brand names appear on both the vehicles and drivers' uniform. It is crucial for heritage brands to be distinctive in order to distinguish their own identity. Williams takes pride in their brand name and ensures that it is visible and easy to identify, even when accompanied by other brand names such as sponsors. This is best demonstrated by their blue and white colours that are synonymous with the brand logotype. However, arguably Williams' most distinctive symbol is the family behind the brand. Frank and Claire are interchangeable with the Williams brand and are the two main characters that are primarily used as symbols of the brand.

### *History important to identity*

Heritage brands use their history to identify with and guide them for the future. Their history is celebrated internally and also communicated externally. For many brands their history becomes an integral part of their product or service and an influence for their choices.

### *Williams' history being important to their identity*

Williams take great pride in their history, therefore they have created the Williams Heritage division in 2014 to maintain and curate the brand's heritage and fleet of historic cars. The purpose is to create a Williams family museum and an exhibition hall to showcase their historic cars and sell service cars to collectors and those who want to bring them out to the racetrack again. The company has always been an independent constructor since the start of their racing, and this is something they continuously refer to when asked about potential outsourcing decisions. This in combination with their long history within F1 shapes their strategic decisions and has become something that they identify with.

### *Stewardship: The mindset needed to manage a heritage brand*

First management needs to feel a sense of responsibility to the brand and know that the brand is bigger than they are. Second is the notion of long-term continuity – the mindset that you as a manager may bring something special to the brand, but that it is only a matter of passing the baton in a long line of managers with the same core brand and heritage. Another vital element is the safeguarding of the brand's trust and credibility. Finally, and a bit contrary, is the notion of adapting the brand to stay relevant over time. The authors note the importance of being open to modify the product or service in order to stay the same, meaning that one should not fear change as long as the underlying values remain the same.

Claire Williams has many times stated the importance of cultivating her father's legacy and that she feels a great responsibility to keep the family brand intact. Therefore, in the sense of responsibility and continuity the stewardship of the Williams heritage brand cannot be denied. The company's values and history have been what guides the brand going forward, even with the handing over of the team principal role from Frank to Claire. No matter the season, the core values and pride in the brand's heritage has been what is most important. Even the decision in 2020 by Claire to sell the team and step down was made with the mindset that the brand is bigger than her. The selling of Williams was done in order to protect the brand, name, and its people, rather than having it close down completely due to potentially poor management and performance.

However, the safeguarding of the brand's trust and credibility is debatable due to the management team failing to maintain Williams as a credible competitor. This is shown not only in their low rankings during the last decade, but also in high turnover of drivers, investors, and sponsors. Although Williams could be considered a credible racing brand due to their continuous commitment to the sport and their authentic ways of doing things throughout time, it is hard to argue that stakeholders feel like they trust the brand. Again, the poor performance and subsequent financial troubles argue for the management stewardship failing to adapt in order to stay relevant. Williams have chosen to focus their history and heritage on their status as an

independent constructor, and subsequently have suffered financially as well as failed to keep up with the development of other teams who outsource and share technologies between each other. Williams' way of engineering and producing racing cars has resulted in them having the slowest and weakest cars on the grid. This illustrates that there have not been modifications in their product and service which would have been needed for them to stay the same: a racing team to be reckoned with at the front of the grid.

## **Identity and reputation**

Corporate reputation can be defined in numerous ways according to Roper and Fill (2012). Cambridge dictionary defines it as "the opinion that people in general have about someone or something" or "how much respect or admiration someone or something receives, based on past behaviour or character."

Reputation is a sum of all the images stakeholders have about an organisation and demonstrates the corporation's attractiveness (Roper & Fill, 2012). The argument for investing in building and maintaining your brand's reputation is that the brand can charge a higher premium for its product or service, the brand is perceived of being high quality, and that uncertainty amongst stakeholders is diminished. Fombrun (1996 cited in Roper & Fill, 2012) presents that there are four dimensions that make up a good reputation: credibility, reliability, responsibility, and trustworthiness.

In regard to Williams, they used to have a strong reputation for being one of the best and fastest teams and as such everyone wanted to be associated with them. Reputational associations can contribute to a strong reputation and may result in a 'halo effect' for the brand (Roper & Fill, 2012). Williams' strong reputation enabled them to take advantage of their corporate halo by recruiting the best employees, drivers, and sponsors. However, the continuous poor performance of Williams has diminished their credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness. Overall, the Williams reputational reservoir has run dry due to their inability to deliver the brand promise (Greyser, 2009). Ultimately this raised questions regarding the responsibility of team management who led the brand to near ruin, costing Williams not only prize money, but also sponsorship, talent, and drivers.

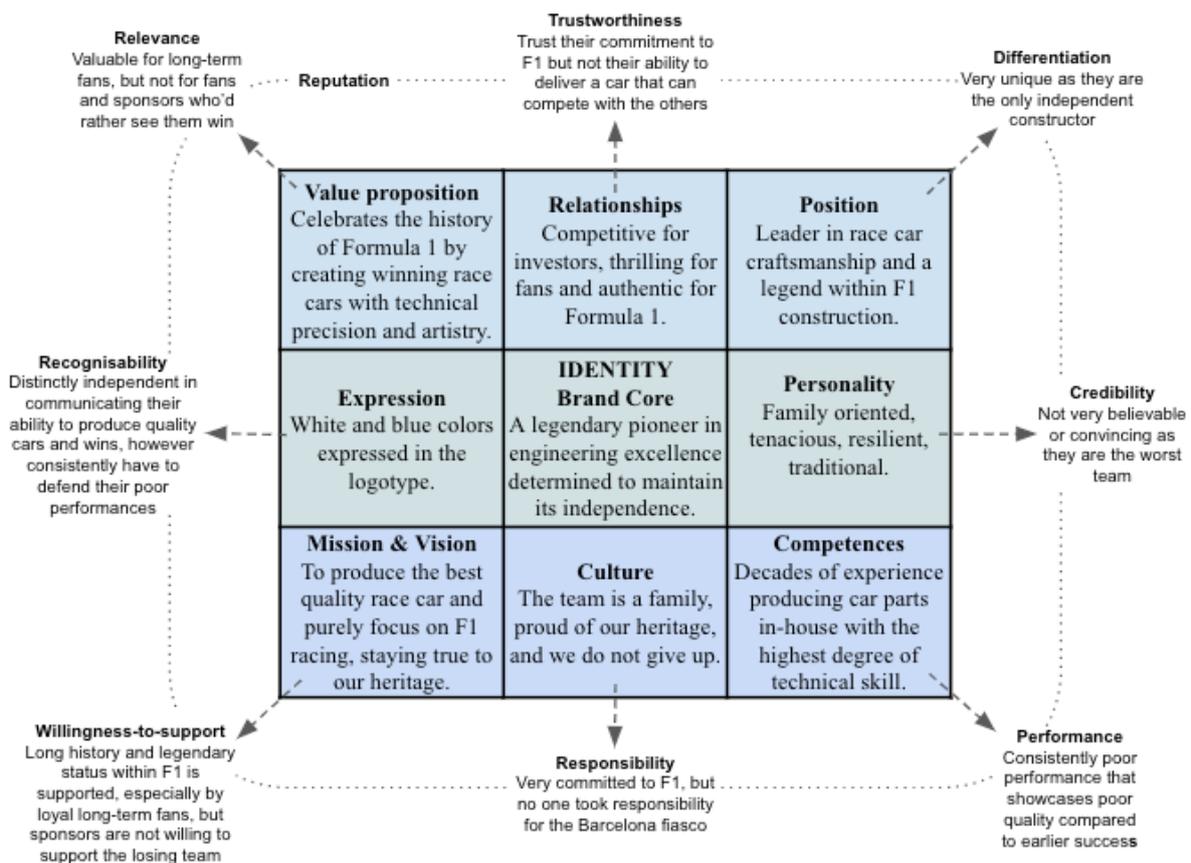
### *Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix*

According to Urde and Greyser (2015) a focus on brand identity means taking an inside-out approach. Focusing internally requires consideration of who we are, where we come from, what we stand for, and where we want to go. 'Internal' is the key word when developing and safeguarding the corporate brand identity. The brand identity becomes the core of the organisation and the bedrock for all relevant decisions. The

corporate brand identity and reputation matrix (**Appendix 1**) provides managers with a tool to not only build the corporate brand identity, but also to compare it to its reputation. The identity matrix has nine elements (external, internal, and internal/external), together making up four dimensions/organisational capabilities (competition, interaction, strategy, and communication). Each of the four dimensions cut through the brand identity core and the aim for managers is to make adjustments where necessary. In a complete matrix, all elements not only reflect the core but also link and align with the other elements on their shared dimension. The brand identity is seen as being a core strength that can create value and strategic competitive advantages.

The reputational layer creates image and reputational value and is meant to be used for alignment and troubleshooting, but also for exploration of new business opportunities. Whereas the identity matrix focuses on the internal side of the corporation, the reputational layer focuses more on the external environment, asking questions regarding how stakeholders perceive you and what they think about your brand. The reputational layer connects to and echoes the identity core matrix. Together they provide a tool to compare how others' perception of the brand matches (or mismatches) the internal identity and any mismatch should be addressed by management. The Williams brand identity and reputation is illustrated in **Figure 2**.

**Figure 2** Williams' corporate brand identity and reputation matrix:



It is clear that there is a significant mismatch between how Williams perceive themselves to be (or rather where they want to be) and how stakeholders perceive them to be. Much of their poor reputation stems from their poor performance rather than their values, albeit their values for complete independence are arguably what contributes to their poor performance. Additionally, the many misalignments between their identity matrix and the reputation layer threatens the brand identity core as they are not living up to the identity matrix that they have set for themselves. It is important for Williams to improve their reputation, especially through their performance as they depend on sponsorship and investments to produce a competitive car and retain top talent. Unless they want to change the elements of the identity matrix in order to create a match between their internal and external perception, their only option is to create changes within their corporation that ensures they can live up to their identity matrix. This would subsequently improve not only their performance, but also their overall reputation and not least the willingness-to-support which they very much need to attract new sponsors.

From the brand heritage theory as well as the brand identity and reputation matrix, the case demonstrates the problems with misalignment between internal and external perception. It is clear that Williams treasures and wants to uplift their brand's

heritage, however their failure to live up to the image and identity that they consider themselves to be capable of causes them a poor reputation and a lack of necessary sponsorship. The Williams family have throughout the years remained firm in their decision to stay truly independent and do everything in-house as they consider this the key thread throughout their HQ. However, while the new owners want to maintain Williams' heritage, their first action was to outsource key parts in order to save both money and time for the team, much like their competitors already do. The new owners don't appear to consider full in-house production as a necessary part of Williams' heritage and brand identity. Although the new owners are yet to compete in their first season, the pre-season testing has gone well and they have not received any notable negative comments for their outsourcing decision. On the contrary, the changes have brought new life and hope within the team for the new season, albeit time will have to tell if this is the recipe for success. Potentially this hints at a poor evaluation of the brand's heritage elements previously made by the Williams family and a failure to adapt and modify their brand in order to stay relevant and perform well.

Finally, a key learning objective from this case is the importance for corporate brands to continuously evaluate and adapt to the external environment as it changes. For Williams this has been showcased in the changed legislations that allow for more outsourcing of parts and sharing of technology between teams, as well as modifications in the look and performance of the cars. These elements have changed the sport radically since Williams' glory days in the 80s and 90s. However, whilst Williams have insisted on doing things the way they always have, the rest of Formula 1 has consistently innovated their manufacturing practises to shape the future of racing.

## Overview of Key Learnings

The Williams case and group discussion that follows should engage the class and contribute to further knowledge within the field of corporate brand management. The key learning objectives are presented in the figure below which is based on Bloom's Taxonomy (Armstrong, 2010).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES		
<b>Remembering</b>	...how companies need to evolve their brand heritage and how this affects their corporate reputation.	This case: Williams' fall from a leader to the slowest within F1
<b>Understanding</b>	...the dangers of living in the past and not accounting for external changes.	This case: Conduct external analysis to locate internal factors that need to be adapted
<b>Applying</b>	...corporate brand and reputation tools to discover misalignments between external and internal perceptions.	This case: Brand heritage, corporate reputation, brand identity matrix
<b>Analyzing</b>	...how different options will affect the organisation, their pros and cons, and what changes are possible within the range of the company core.	This case: The different options that Williams had and how it could affect their identity and future.
<b>Evaluating</b>	...the management decision made and how it is justified	This case: The final decision made by Williams and the actions of the new owners.
<b>Creating</b>	...an action plan to manage the reputation and development of a heritage brand.	This case: Knowing when to let go of outdated routines or even letting go as a manager and letting someone else take over.

## Discussion questions

Stimulating an engaging and productive discussion is necessary to achieve the learning objectives. Presenters are recommended to start the discussion with the main case question. However, if the audience is not engaging with the main question the presenter is encouraged to choose among the additional questions that are provided. Should participants be less than forthright in their answers, the presenter may use the topic areas of brand heritage and corporate brand reputation to encourage a dialogue regarding the case.

*Main question:*

*Assuming the role of lead consultants, how would you advise Claire about the future direction of Williams and why would you take this approach?*

Things to consider:

- *What are the pros and cons of the options presented?*
- *Is Williams' focus on brand heritage justified?*

*Supporting questions:*

- What is the state of Williams' current reputation?
- What is the main reason for their lack of success?
- Can Williams' reputation be revived?
- What decision would you make regarding Williams' future?
- Who are the relevant stakeholders that may be affected? (**Figure 3**)
- Can the heritage be altered without harming it?
- Would it hurt the heritage if a decision was made to outsource?
- What should the CEO emphasise, the heritage or financial performance?
- What are the main actions you would take to return Williams to its former glory?
- How should the decision be communicated to its relevant stakeholders?

After the discussion about the different options that Williams have and the proposed solutions by student groups, the actual management decision is presented. As the management decision of this case is fairly recent at the time of writing the outcomes of the decision are unknown in this case. Therefore, the following question is intended to open up discussion regarding whether the right decision was made and what student thinks this will mean for the brand in the future:

*Do you think that Claire made the right decision? Why? And do you think Dorilton's new approach will keep the Williams heritage intact as intended, or is their new strategy sailing them away?*

*Supporting questions:*

- What are the internal impacts of the outsourcing decision?
- Will the change of owners and tactics affect how stakeholders, and especially fans, think about the company?
- Is it possible to keep the family spirit alive even in the absence of the Williams family?
- Dorilton decided to keep the Williams name, team, location, and symbols, but would you have advised them to do a complete rebranding? What are the pros and cons of that?

# Teaching Suggestions

The below outline presents possible teaching techniques to strengthen engagement with the specific case presentation from participants. Presenters are allowed to alter the way the case is taught, however, it is recommended to follow the teaching plan as it outlines all crucial steps that should be highlighted in order to engage the audience and utilise the relevant material.

## Pre-presentation and introduction phase

Prior to the presentation, it is advisable to identify the roles and responsibilities of each presenter. Depending on the size of the presenting team there should be two main responsibilities assumed by presenters; moderating the discussion and capturing the discussion in written notes.

In advance of the presentation commencing a concise outline of the case background should be distributed to participants. Providing the audience with contextual information should strengthen their understanding of the case and lead to stimulating discussion. The outline may be distributed as a pdf via email prior to the meeting and for those who wish to have a physical copy, one may be provided. As the audience may have limited knowledge about the F1 sport and how it works, it is suggested to provide them with the **appendix (2)** that is outlining the rules and point system.

If the presentation is to be conducted online via video telecommunications software (e.g. Zoom) the presenters should ensure that they have tested the Zoom link and that it is available for all invited participants. The presenters should be aware of the necessary steps required to take when screen sharing, including enabling sound if their presentation requires video sharing. It is advisable to select 'presenter mode' once screen sharing has begun to avoid participants seeing speaking notes. Prior to screen sharing, the presenting team should ensure the audience has arrived and no participants are in the waiting room and all participants have signed in with their names. Once all participants have arrived the presenter should ask for all participants to 'mute' themselves and turn their cameras on to allow the presenter to engage with the audience in virtual face-to-face discussion. If the presentation is conducted in a physical classroom it is still advisable to conduct thorough checks of any technology used to present and provide participants with name tags to identify each other and engage in dialogue.

The presenting team is encouraged and advised to use available media as support throughout the case. The benefits of visuals, such as videos and/or PowerPoint presentations are that they can engage the audience and provide a good

---

overview of the case in a short period of time. Additionally, the case presenters will be provided with speaker notes that will guide them throughout the case. An evaluation form will be created in advance and distributed to the judges. The evaluation form enables judges to evaluate the participants on various criteria after the completion of the case. All supporting documents should be digital and enable the presenting team to stage the case without any obstacles even when conducted online.

## **Discussion phase**

In this case it is advised to ask students to assume the role of consultants hired by Claire Williams. Here participants are encouraged to discuss in groups, assuming that they represent the YMC consultancy firm. Participants should be directed to consider the different factors, pros and cons of the possible solutions to move the Williams brand forward. Another potential set-up could divide participants into: external consultants, the Williams family, and a potential investor/sponsor. It is at the presenter's discretion as to which option they wish to present the case in. Regardless of set-up, presenters are encouraged to leave the PowerPoint open on the slide that presents the question for the class. If the case is conducted online, the presenter could either provide participants with a picture of this slide in the chat or advise participants to take a screenshot before entering their breakout rooms.

Throughout the discussion, the presenter should be there to guide and aid where necessary in the discussion. However, it is important to keep a neutral tone so as not to guide or influence the discussion. It is also advisable to locate and direct both active and passive participants to find a balance in the teams. At the end of the discussion phase, ask one volunteer from each team to present a summary of their discussion.

## **Concluding phase**

Throughout the case, the presenter needs to be aware of the allotted time and may need to mediate participants during the discussion in order to bring the case to a close. Once the discussion has concluded, it is time for the management decision to be presented to the audience. The presenter should have a clear question for the audience based on the management decision and invite participants to discuss their evaluations. Finally, the presenter should thank both the participants for their contributions and invite the judges to submit their evaluation forms to announce the winners of the case. After the presentation of the case winners, presenters should thank all members for their time and adjourn the audience.

## Board plan

A board plan can be approached in various ways and its usage amongst presenters varies widely. The benefits of a board plan is that it enables the presenter to lead the discussion with less interruptions and in a more effective and constructive manner. As a result, successfully managed board plans may enhance the audience's overall view of the case and the relevant outcomes.

For the purpose of identifying key stakeholders that are involved in the case, **Figure 3** outlines both the internal and external stakeholders affected by the Williams management decision. By examining the different stakeholders' perspectives the audience is able to assess the case from multiple views to calculate the state of Williams' image and reputation.

The second board is created to capture the audience's key ideas presented within the discussion. Three themes Challenges, Alternatives, and Actions are outlined in **Table 1** and **Table 2**. The board is used to frame the potential deliberation process the audience may engage in to produce their resolutions. It serves to guide the audience to identify the main issues at hand, the options available and the steps they would take in order to reach a conclusion. As the case presents two main questions, it is advisable to create two boards to deal with each question and the possible answers. **Table 1** has been created for the case prior to the WPHG board meeting and **Table 2** focuses on the situation post the WPHG board meeting when the Williams sale was announced.

**Figure 3:** relevant stakeholders for Williams



**Table 1:** Possible challenges, alternatives, and actions for the board meeting

Challenges	Alternatives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of money and funding</li> <li>● Bad reputation</li> <li>● Poor performance</li> <li>● Brand identity is challenged</li> <li>● Maintenance of the brand heritage</li> <li>● Keeping the Williams family brand name alive</li> <li>● Slow downturn that's hard to change</li> <li>● Being last on the grid means no prize money and loss of sponsors</li> <li>● Difficulty attracting new investors</li> <li>● Struggles to pay employees</li> <li>● Deadline to commit to five more years in F1 through the Concorde agreement</li> <li>● Uncertainty of what should be done to save the brand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reduce costs</li> <li>● Finding new sources of income</li> <li>● Restructure the organisation and its management</li> <li>● Recruiting new drivers</li> <li>● Abandon current heritage</li> <li>● Change the brand identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Outsourcing parts to other teams and exchange technologies</li> <li>● Selling the whole or parts of the company</li> <li>● Merge with another company</li> <li>● Cease to exist</li> <li>● Finding new investors</li> <li>● Teaming up with new sponsors</li> <li>● Switching to have two pay drivers</li> <li>● Make redundancies</li> <li>● Appointing a new team principal, i.e. Jonathan Williams</li> <li>● Moving out of F1 and focusing on a less competitive league such as F2</li> <li>● Becoming a B-team for e.g. Mercedes (whom they already have a partnership with)</li> <li>● Give up on heritage and focus on being a modern but small team such as Haas</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Possible challenges, alternatives, and actions for the new owners

Challenges	Alternatives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keeping the family spirit within the Williams brand</li> <li>● Maintaining loyalty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ignore the heritage brand elements</li> <li>● Seek efficiencies in manufacturing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Begin a new chapter of Williams that does not keep the same independence</li> </ul>

<p>from employees under a new management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintaining the heritage within the brand and adapting it</li> <li>● Improving performance</li> <li>● Being new managers in the sport compared to the previous management with decades of experience</li> <li>● Pressure from stakeholders to bring something new and better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain the current Williams culture or restructure the company</li> <li>● Attempt to learn the ropes of F1 or bring in a seasoned principle to guide the new team</li> <li>● Implement radical changes to innovate or attempt a slow change over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recruit the best engineers and drivers</li> <li>● Outsource the manufacturing of parts like other competitors</li> <li>● Poach a successful competitor team principle to lead Williams</li> <li>● Use team building, workshops, and extensive internal communication to connect with the employees</li> <li>● Expand collaboration with Mercedes and learn from them</li> <li>● Restructure the organisation</li> <li>● Attract new sponsors</li> <li>● Walk away from the heritage identity</li> </ul>
---	---	--

## Time Plan

To ensure the teaching outcomes are achieved throughout the presentation and discussion, it is important that time is allocated appropriately to each phase of the case session. The below time plan is an indication of how presenters may wish to structure their session to cover the material.

The time plan begins with the case introduction and background of Williams. As not all participants may be familiar with Formula 1 or the Williams team, it is necessary to spend time covering this aspect of the case to ensure participants feel confident they have grasped the situation in its entirety. An **appendix (2)** outlining the relevant rules and points system used in F1 is included in the pre-presentation phase should participants wish to review the rules of the sport. Following this the Williams poor track performance and financial issues should be presented. At this stage the case question will be asked before assigning participants to their relevant teams to discuss potential outcomes. Once the teams have had time to discuss the group discussion phase can commence. After some time the management decision taken by Williams will be presented to the audience and the ensuing debate will be centred around the second question formulated in the teaching plan. The proposed timeline is an estimate of sufficient time intervals to conduct a productive case discussion.



## Epilogue

The Williams case provides participants with key learnings regarding heritage brand stewardship and the problems that can arise from a misalignment between internal and external perception. A central question throughout the case is how long you can try to revive a brand before you need to give up. While the internal communications, culture, and opinions are not publicly available, this case uses supplementary evidence from official interviews and media appearances by the Williams team. Thus, questions regarding brand pride and the unwillingness to change are also examined. Claire decided to stick with their old ways of doing things despite continuous poor performance. This management decision ended up leaving the family with no option but to sell the company, providing a great source of material for discussion regarding the potential misevaluation of a brand's elements of heritage

and identity. Outsourcing was evaluated to be the core management decision that Claire refused to implement in the Williams strategy. As the new owners have decided to outsource and move on from being an independent constructor, only time will tell if this will bring back life to the Williams team. If proven to be effective, the new strategy will further illustrate the importance of modernising your brands heritage to stay competitive and relevant.

## Reflection

The course Corporate Brand Management and Reputation at Lund University aims to provide students with competences and skills such as understanding a corporate brand's importance in relation to the business strategy. A key requirement is to write and present an intriguing case that will engage the class and encourage vibrant discussion. The case assessment provided the opportunity to apply theoretical frameworks across a wide range of industries, demonstrating their applicability across contexts within business.

The case studies were conducted in a group of three students with various cultural backgrounds and experiences. As such, different case topics were discussed and evaluated through supervision with Associate Professor and course responsible, Mats Urde. The aim of the supervision was to identify a unique case that would be relevant for future students and possibly considered an evergreen case. The Williams case was chosen as its history illustrates the importance of modernising heritage and strategy to stay competitive. We pitched the case and main question to our student colleagues to ensure the relevance of the case and test its potential to generate engaging class discussion. As a result, we altered and reformulated our initial question as the test group found it to be too narrow.

The case posed many challenging elements when discussing the difficulties of reviving a heritage brand reputation. Our discussions centred around the all-important question of whether or not it was too late to save Williams. By examining the case from multiple stakeholder viewpoints, it became evident early on that both the Williams brand and Claire as a leader faced a unique set of challenges. It was particularly interesting to examine the response from F1 fans regarding the brand and Claire's own words when discussing the sale of Williams. The case exemplifies the emotion that a brand can carry and the difficulty of navigating changes when sentiment is infused with history. As a group we mitigated potential influences of bias in our evaluation of the Williams brand by reviewing accounts and sources from a variety of perspectives. It was important to ensure that the emotional value of the brand was conveyed throughout the case but did not permeate our evaluation of the management decision.

The basis and original idea of the case stems from the Netflix show *Drive To Survive*, which provided us with unique insights and direct quotes from Claire Williams. However, we had to consider during the writing of this case that the Netflix show may not depict the whole truth and may be edited to create more drama. A lot of information was gathered from news articles and press releases as well as copy from Williams' own website. Opinions and feelings from people presented in the case were taken from articles on websites (often racing, sports or general news outlets) where these people were either directly interviewed or quoted from events and conferences. This combination of news articles, websites, and interviews provided us with a wider view of the case. However, considering how public figures may tend to speak the truth they want the world to know, we had to consider that the information available from these resources could not be guaranteed to be fully truthful or representative of the stakeholders' thoughts and emotions. Furthermore, in order to provide an academic analysis of the case, theoretical models regarding branding, heritage, identity, and reputation were used. These were gathered from LUSEM's library and then analysed amongst the group in parallel with the case.

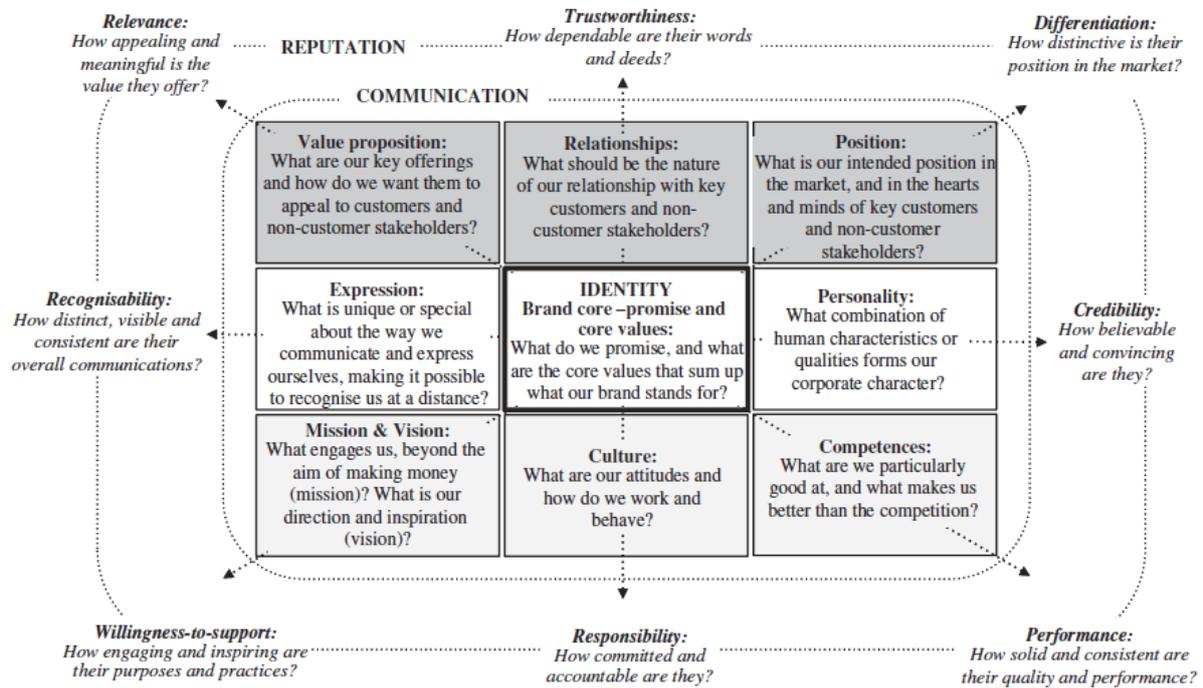
The case assessment provided the opportunity to apply our theoretical learnings to real management implications. Not only was this beneficial in developing our abilities to solve business dilemmas, but it also underscored the considerable impact such decisions have on their stakeholders. This is a critical learning to carry with us in our future careers, as no business decision can be made in isolation. The skills gained throughout the case assessment have reinforced our critical thinking, project management and analytical skills outside of the classroom walls.

## References

- Allen, J. (2008). Interview: Sir Frank Williams, Financial Times, March 15, Available online: <https://www.ft.com/content/2a037a9c-f1ff-11dc-9b45-0000779fd2ac> [Accessed 18 February 2021]
- Armstrong, P. (2010). Bloom's Taxonomy. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Available online: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/> [Accessed 18 February 2021]
- Cooper, A. (2020). F1 Analysis: Why Williams is up for sale, Autosport, May 29, Available online: <https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/149686/analysis-why-williams-is-up-for-sale> [Accessed 15 February 2021]
- Drive To Survive. (2020). Netflix, Season 2, Episode 9 [Online]. Available online: <https://www.netflix.com> [Accessed 2 February 2021]
- Formula 1. 2020. Williams family to step aside from running of the team after Italian GP, Available online: <https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article.breaking-williams-family-to-step-aside-from-running-of-the-team-after.2Ss3rwUeVit4NJ3XR6oLDn.html> [Accessed 15 February 2021]
- Greyser, S.A. (2009). Corporate brand reputation and brand crisis management, Management Decision, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 590-602. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/library> [Accessed 15 February 2021]
- Hunt, B. (2019). NO CHANCE Claire Williams says claims Williams are set to sell the team are 'rubbish' as team plots return to the top of F1, The Sun, July 13, Available online: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/9501092/claire-williams-f1-sell-team-rubbish/> [Accessed 11 February 2021]
- Reuters (2021). New sense of optimism at Williams: Button, Global Times, January 28, Available online: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202101/1214262.shtml> [Accessed: 19 February 2021]
- Roper, S. & Fill, C. (2012). Corporate Reputation Brand and Communication. Pearson Education Limited. Rotolito Lombarda, Italy.
- Urde, M. & Greyser, S. A. (2016). The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix - The Case of the Nobel Prize, Journal of Brand Management, vol. 23, no. 1, pp.89-117. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/library> [Accessed 15 February 2021]

Williams Grand Prix Engineering Limited (2020). Williams Racing Is Acquired By Dorilton Capital, Available online:  
<https://group.williamsf1.com/corporate/news/2020/08/williams-racing-is-acquired-by-dorilton-capital> [Accessed 13 February 2021]

## Appendix 1: The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix



Source: Urde & Greyser (2016)

## Appendix 2: Rules and points within F1

There are ten constructor teams with two drivers per team. F1 is governed by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) who sets rules and regulations regarding formation, safety, power of cars etc. for each season. Before the season starts the teams get a few days to test their new cars on a track, and this is the first time the car is tested outside of simulators and on real ground instead. Each season consists of around 20 races (Grand Prix) that are set around the world. The number of races and locations switch each season, but most of them are recurring, such as the Monaco Grand Prix. During a race the drivers drive around the track (circuit) for however many laps are required to reach 305km (or a maximum race time of two hours). For each season there are two championship titles that the teams race for:

- Drivers championship: awarded to the driver with the most points at the end of the season
- Constructors championship: awarded to the team with the most total amount of points at the end of the season. All the points earned by both of the teams' drivers collectively add up to the points the team gets at the end of the season.

Points are awarded for drivers after the race depending on their finishing placement:

1. 25 points
2. 18 points
3. 15 points
4. 12 points
5. 10 points
6. 8 points
7. 6 points
8. 4 points
9. 2 points
10. 1 point
- 11-20. 0 points

FL. 1 point awarded to the driver with the fastest lap of the race  
(driver must finish within the top 10)

A race weekend lasts for three days. On Friday the teams get two practice rounds to test their cars. Saturday is for the qualifying races which determine the starting order for the upcoming race. The driver with the fastest qualifying time starts first (pole position) and then the rest of the starting grid is organised based on the other drivers' qualifying times. Sunday is race day where the 20 drivers race the Grand Prix. Apart from the races the Grand Prix weekend hosts a lot of events and parties, attracting thousands of fans, celebrities, businesspeople and more. F1 is a very expensive sport with teams spending a total of around \$2.6 billion annually and often recording losses or barely breaking even – but the prestige and brand value gained act as a couple of motivations for teams to compete in this very exclusive

sport. Team revenue usually comes from three areas: sponsorship; drivers who pay to race (pay drivers) and funding from team owners; and prize money and bonuses received from the F1 group (based on different set-ups and individual bonus agreements).