A Storytelling and Brand Identity Connection

A multiple case study on companies communicating through Storytelling and how it can connect to their Brand Identity

Authors: Erik Andrén & Therese Hermelin

Supervisor: Mats Urde

Examiner: Veronika Tarnovskaya

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We would also like to emphasize that the work on our thesis has been carried out to the same extent by both authors.

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City and date

Erik Andrén   Therese Hermelin

Abstract

Title: A Storytelling and Brand Identity Connection - A multiple case study on companies communicating through storytelling and how it can connect to their brand identity.

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Authors: Erik Andrén and Therese Hermelin.

Supervisor: Mats Urde.

Key Words: Corporate Brand Management, Corporate Brand Identity, Storytelling, Connection, Scandinavian Airlines, Bona, Volvo Cars.

Purpose: The purpose of theís study is to explore the phenomenon of storytelling as a theory for connecting brand identity with storytelling. And how it can contribute to effective brand communication. This will be conducted by looking at the three case companies: Volvo Cars, Scandinavian Airlines and Bona, and analyzing their brand identity and storytelling.

Methodology: The methodology of this study revolves around a qualitative multiple case study with a relativist and social constructionist perspective. Furthermore, this study has opted for an abductive approach.

Theoretical perspective: The theoretical perspectives of this thesis will primarily consist of Aristotle's Dramaturgy Model as the theoretical foundation of storytelling. Furthermore, the study will also apply two matrices within Corporate Brand Management, namely the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix, and The Storytelling Matrix as well as the theory of Signature Stories.

Empirical data: The empirical data consists of primary sources, which will be used in order to create the necessary identity matrices for the case companies, and secondary sources concerning the companies´ storytelling which will be further analyzed with the identity matrices and the storytelling matrix.

Conclusions: A storytelling and brand identity connection concerns when a brand´s elements in their brand identity matches the same elements in their storytelling. This is established by mapping the different lines in the matrices and later on comparing them with each other. The case companies have a certain connection in terms of storytelling and brand identity regarding the competition and strategy diagonal, and the communication horizontal.

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1. Introduction

The introduction chapter will present the phenomenon and chosen topic of storytelling. The topic will be introduced by initially clarifying what storytelling is, how storytelling has evolved in its time and illustrate the different definitions of storytelling. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the problematization, purpose, and study's research questions followed by delimitations concerning the study.

1.1 There Was Once Upon a Time a Story

> Good stories surprise us. They make us think and feel. They stick in our minds and help us remember ideas and concepts in a way that a PowerPoint crammed with bar graphs never can (Lazauskas & Snow, 2018).

The concept of *storytelling* has its roots in the ancient times where people told stories from their hunting and handed down different legends and myths encircling their ancestors and gods (Fog, Budtz, Munch & Blanchette, 2010). These stories helped carry on their expertise and experience through many generations, and hence shaped the identity of the tribe and gave it values and therefore helped to distinguish it from their rivals (Moin, 2020). Ever since, storytelling has continued to shape and establish culture and values for many organizations around the world, in a way that resembles the ancient tribes. "By sharing our stories, we define 'who we are' and 'what we stand for'." (Fog et al. 2010, p.18). Similar to the ancient tribes, the strong leaders of today´s companies differentiate by creating good storytelling; stories which employees can listen to, get inspired by, and respect (Fog et al. 2010). In that way, the ancient way of telling stories still remains within the concept of storytelling. Both as a method to establish the cultures and spread and pass down its values yet also a technique for the company to position against its competitors (McDougal, Syrdal, Gravois & Kemp, 2021).

As of today, storytelling has become a tool which dominates the brand and marketing communication (Moin, 2020). Telling stories holds a significant power to catch and capture the attention of customers (McDougal et al. 2021) and facilitates for customers to more efficiently understand the benefits of the brand (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & van Riel, 2013). It is a powerful tool in which a company can communicate and organize complex information in an intriguing way (McDougal et al. 2021). Furthermore, she states that storytelling is a proven value-driver for marketeers that can work as a sensemaking bridge between ambiguous data and strategic persuasion. It holds the ability to transform empirical marketing into robust messaging and communication, which can enhance the intentions and perceptions of customers by positioning the customer in a primary role in the stories (McDougal et al. 2021). Hence, storytelling functions as the way humans explain, teach, and entertain (Karampournioti & Wiedmann, 2021). Therefore, it is also a successful procedure for teaching and learning as well as a tool for companies to pull customers into a purchase decision (McDougal et al. 2021).

Once told by the movie director and writer Paul Auster "Telling stories is the only way we can create meaning in our lives and make sense of the world" (Fog et al. 2010, p.18). When companies communicate using stories, they implicitly assist us to navigate in the world (Fog et al. 2010). Customers tend to search for products and experiences that appeal to their dreams and emotions, which a good story allows them to (Lundqvist et al. 2013). Meaning that storytelling more or less becomes equivalent with the way the customers define themselves as individuals, and the products we purchase help us to communicate who we are and how we want to be perceived. Wherefore, storytelling and branding construct an ideal partnership which can be one reason why storytelling today is an extensively used tool within business-to-consumer brands (Fog et al. 2010).

1.1.1 Categorizing Stories

Because storytelling has been around for a significant amount of time (Thier, 2018), it can be understood through different categories due to its evolution over time (Roper & Fill, 2012). This means in which the phenomenon can be applied and designed in different ways for communicating stories. According to Roper and Fill (2012), these categories are: *myths and legends, corporate prophecies, hero stories,* and *archived narratives*. Firstly, they state that

myths and origins refer to a story telling how the brand came to be and their principles where the focus usually lies in how the brand overcame difficulties and thus achieved success. Secondly, they describe corporate prophecies as stories which illustrate the brand's future by telling past stories or other brands´ stories. Thirdly, Roper and Fill (2012) state in which hero stories are a way of communicating through storytelling which helps to make decisions and establish priorities. These types of stories often present how the brand overcame certain dilemmas during times of crisis, where they provide different sets of behaviors and values (Roper & Fill, 2012). Lastly, Roper & Fill (2012) states that archived narratives which are a collection of the brand´s history and development. These stories usually present key stories from the past which can include name changes, merges, and reconstitutions in order to provide a sense of history to the audience (Roper & Fill, 2012).

Even though the categories help to understand stories, there are still other types of storytelling with different purposes. One significant type of storytelling is coined *signature stories* by David Aaker. Aaker and Aaker (2016) describe a signature story as an intriguing, involving, authentic narrative which presents a strategic message of the brand. Furthermore, they state that the strategic message consists of the brand vision, customer relationship, organizational values and or the business strategy. This means in order to create a signature story, the narrative firstly needs to grab attention. According to Aaker (2018), the story will not generate any desired outcome without attracting the eye and mind of the audience. Exposure to the narrative is not enough for the reason in which a significantly small percentage of the exposures are processed. Moreover, Aaker & Aaker (2016) stresses in which to attract the eye and mind of the audience, the story should give them some combination of thought provoking, novel, informative, inspiring, exceptionally relevant, humorous, or awe-creating content. When measuring this criterion of creating a signature story, the brand looks at the stimulation of word-of-mouth communication through the brand's marketing channels (Aaker, 2018).

Secondly, according to Aaker (2018), to create a signature story, the narrative needs to be involving. This means that the audience should be drawn to the story in the sense that they feel the story becomes important or they start to empathize with the characters (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). This strategy is executed by trying to create a cognitive, emotional and behavioral

response (Aaker, 2018). Cognitively, this means that the audience can process the narrative by accepting the key aspects of the story. Emotionally, the story can be communicated in a way which creates certain feelings within the audience about the story's plot or characters (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). Behaviorally, the narrative can possess the power of motivating the audience to take action by for example generating a positive word-of-mouth to others about the brand or simply consume their products straight away (Aaker, 2018). Thirdly, Aaker (2018) states in which authenticity also is a criterion for creating a signature story which implies that a story must be told in a way which the audience does not perceive the narrative as a contrived or transparent selling effort. Although, the story being told does not have to be true to be authentic. However, even if some signature stories are not real, they still have the appearance of truth (Aaker, 2018).

Fourthly, and lastly, a story needs to deliver a strategic message to be classified as a signature story (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). This criterion empathizes communicating a strategic message which is relevant to the audience and enhances; the brand vision, the customer relationship, the organization and its values, and the present and future business strategy (Aaker, 2018). Aaker stresses that by providing a story with a strategic message, the story becomes energized and more visible to the brand which can inspire customers and employees in the long run. What sets signature stories apart from storytelling is due to the fact that a signature story implements the brand´s brand identity to their communication, which can be found in the strategic message of a signature story (Aaker, 2018).

1.2 Brand Identity

The concept of brand identity or corporate identity has a broad variety of explanations. Brand identity can be explained as the source of positioning where it specifies how a brand can penetrate and generate greater market share at the expense of its competitors (Rukosuev, n.d.). Furthermore, Kapferer (2012) refers to brand identity as following:

> Corporate identity is what helps an organization, or a part of it, feel that it truly exists and that it is a coherent and unique being, with a history and a place of its own, different from others (p.150).

The explanation underpins the importance of brand identity and illustrates how it works as a tool for constructing a competitive brand with a distinct uniqueness. Furthermore, according to Urde, (2013), the strategic management of a corporate brand identity can be seen as a key activity where a well-defined brand identity works as the very foundation of the management which builds a strong brand in the long run. A brand identity can also work as a protection in times of crisis (Urde, 2022). Urde continues by stating that it provides aid in retention and recruiting as well as giving the brand a sense of direction and purpose. As seen in The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix and its two outer layers, see Appendix 1, identity and storytelling work in a symbiosis. Whereas identity can enrich storytelling and vice versa along with influencing both the positioning and the communication of the company. Additionally, brand identity can also work as an instrument of supporting a brand´s competitive advantage, effectiveness, cohesiveness, and differentiation (Balmer & Podnar, 2021). When summarizing the explanations of what brand identity stands for, it can be stated in which brand identity is a significant tool for branding which helps the brand in various ways. It is a method for finding the brand's uniqueness and competitive advantage which will build the brand in the long-term. In theory, a company's brand identity consists of nine interrelated elements according to The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (Urde, 2013) which will be further discussed in 3.3 followed by assisting theoretical frameworks.

1.3 Problematization

The use of storytelling and the "power or stories" have gained increasingly more attention and has therefore become a common subject in the contexts of organizational culture, project management and knowledge management during the last years (Thier, 2018). The two most common questions, according to Thier (2018), regarding storytelling research is "how exactly strategic storytelling works" and "how it might benefit their companies" (p.3). Although the publications are many and the amount is constantly growing, the researchers generally tend to "fail to provide satisfying answers in these regards" (p.3). Furthermore, because of its significant foothold it has regarding how companies will be shaped in the future, there is still a noteworthy lack of knowledge about storytelling concerning how and why it can make a difference (Fog et al. 2010). Along with how a company can go about telling a story which supports and reflects the

brand in a favorable way and for some, storytelling can be explained as an abstract method of communication which does not provide any added value for the company (Fog et al. 2010).

In the context of this study, it is believed that though a significant amount of research regarding storytelling have been conducted, there appears to be a gap amongst storytelling research focusing on specific companies. Additionally, in relation to the great extent of research and previous knowledge about storytelling, there still seems to be a certain disconnection between storytelling and brand identity. Aaker (2018) presented a useful connection with how brands can communicate their identity with signature stories. Although the problem according to Aaker seems to be that many describe nearly all kinds of communication as a story. This results in storytelling not being as powerful as it may be and does not provide any consistently useful meaning (Aaker, 2018).

Urde (2013; 2022) has taken the brand identity and storytelling connection one step further and developed frameworks which reflect how they are linked. Urde´s framework works as a systematic method to identify a company's identity and their storytelling in a more thoughtful structured way to obtain effective communication. Due to the apparent disconnection between a brand identity and storytelling, there is room for further research within this field. In regard to these disconnections, this study will be significantly important to conduct in the sense that the overarching aim is to connect these two factors with each other which therefore could generate a solution for effective storytelling. Moreover, by connecting brand identity and storytelling, this study could provide valuable insights in the importance of storytelling and in which it can be an effective method of building a brand.

1.4 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to explore the phenomenon of storytelling as a theory for connecting brand identity with storytelling. And how it can contribute to effective brand communication. This will be conducted by looking at the three case companies: Volvo Cars, Scandinavian Airlines and Bona, and analyzing their brand identity and storytelling. Given the problematization and the purpose of the study, the following three research questions has been constructed:

- *What is a storytelling and brand identity connection?*
- *How and to what extent are the brands´ storytelling connected to their brand identity?*
- *Why, or why not, are the brands´ storytelling connected to their brand identity?*

1.5 Delimitations

This Master thesis is conducted within the area of International Marketing and Brand Management and is thus separated from other research fields which in turn could have conveyed other insights. The study is further delimited to results that can be achieved through a multiple case study. Based on the time scope of the study, the thesis has been further delimited to the three case companies´ Volvo Cars, Scandinavian Airlines and Bona, and more specifically to their storytelling and brand identity. With this said, it is of significant importance to be aware that the answers which will be presented with the brand identity matrix is based on what the interviewees have stated, and therefore solely primary data. This means in which different answers can occur if the answers are based on, for example, secondary sources. Additionally, the choice of secondary sources in terms of storytelling were based on what the companies stated were the main storytelling they focus on. This means we only looked at storytelling examples concerning those focus areas and did not use any other storytelling beyond that.

Furthermore, secondary data has been applied in situations when primary data could not provide any direct benefits, for instance gathered data regarding examples of the three companies´ storytelling which was collected from YouTube. Moreover, this thesis is solely exploring and understanding the company perspective and has completely excluded the consumer perspective. Furthermore, based on the many previous definitions of storytelling there is a need to state the definition used for this thesis. The definition this study will take on storytelling is a communication tool used by brands in order to present their communication in a unique and distinctive way. This implies that not all personal, as well as corporate, communication is storytelling.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1: The introduction. It provides a background concerning the chosen topic and presents the problematization and the importance of the research, purpose of the study, research questions, and delimitations.

Chapter 2: The theoretical review. This chapter presents and illustrates Aristotle´s Dramaturgy Model as the theoretical foundation regarding the phenomenon of storytelling.

Chapter 3: The theoretical frameworks. It presents the chosen frameworks of The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix and The Storytelling Matrix in order to answer the mentioned above research questions.

Chapter 4: The methodology. This chapter discusses the methodological choices and considerations regarding the research philosophy, strategy, design, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter 5: The empirical data. This section introduces the case companies´ Volvo Cars, Scandinavian Airlines, and Bona and presents the empirical material collected from interviews and secondary sources.

Chapter 6: The analysis. It analyses the empirical data collected from the case companies together with the chosen theoretical frameworks in order to initiate the main findings and give answers to the research questions.

Chapter 7: The discussion. This chapter presents and reviews the several findings and brings forward valuable insights acquired.

Chapter 8: The conclusion. The last chapter of this study concludes and summarizes the thesis by once more presenting the purpose of the study and the research questions followed by theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and recommendations for further research.

2. Theoretical Review

The theoretical review discusses valuable findings concerning the theory of storytelling, also known as Aristotle′s Dramaturgy Model to deepen the understanding of the topic as well as illustrating the anatomy of a story.

2.1 Aristotle's Dramaturgy Model

The dramaturgy model originates from the great philosopher Aristotle and functions as a description of how a drama should be built up (Smeds, 2005). Aristotle's theory can therefore be considered as one of the original theories behind storytelling, hence it is of importance when discussing storytelling. When constructing a story, the storyteller should start with the design. It consists of a whole which has a beginning, a middle and an end (Smeds, 2005).

The thought behind the dramaturgy model from Aristotle originates from which it is necessary to place certain elements in a specific order for the story to create dramatic tragedy as well as emotional catharsis from the audience (Cambridge Junction, n.d.). This means in which the elements in a story are essential for creating certain feelings and therefore they need to be accounted for when creating a work of any kind. These essential elements are; *plot, character, thought, diction, spectacle,* and *song* and can also be described as *what, who, why, how, where, and rhythm of speech* (Shider, n.d.). Shider (n.d.) starts by discussing the plot or what factor in a story and that it is presented as the main action of the story which can be described as the objectives of the character. He continues with the second element; character or who, which talks about the protagonist of the story which also includes the relationship between that person, the other characters, and the world in that story. The third element of thought or why explains the deeper factors of the story which is the psychology behind the actions of the characters (Shider, n.d.). This element pictures the motives to why the characters strive to have what they want. The fourth element, according to Shider (n.d.), of diction which describes the how of the story illustrates the dialogue. He states in which this element often pictures the dialogue as a tactic used by the characters to achieve their objectives. The element of spectacle or the where of the

story can be portrayed as the setting of the story (Shider, n.d.). Lastly, the element of song is the rhythm of speech or the use of music (Shider, n.d.). Shider stresses that this element is particularly necessary for the reason in which it drives the narrative forward by picturing emotions or any other essential parts of a story.

Followed by the categorization of Aristotle's elements, some criteria to the elements are presented by Aristotle himself which describe the importance of them. According to Aristotle (as translated by Butcher 1907), plots can either be complex or simple in the sense that the actions of the story changes based on whether the reversal of the situation or recognition changes the story or not. The character must focus on propriety, be true to life, and have consistency in order to be categorized as a good character (Aristotle, as translated by Butcher 1907). He continues with describing thought as an element which needs to be artistic. It is also necessary for thought to include the effects which the speech must produce. These effects are for example, proof and disproof, excitation of feelings such as fear, anger, and pity. According to Aristotle (as translated by Butcher 1907), diction also needs to be artistic and where it has to be included in the pauses of the action in the sense that there is no thought or character in it. Moreover, spectacle is an element in which Aristotle discusses needs to have an emotional attraction. Lastly, song holds a chief position in which it is important for this element to drive the narrative forward (Aristotle, as translated by Butcher 1907).
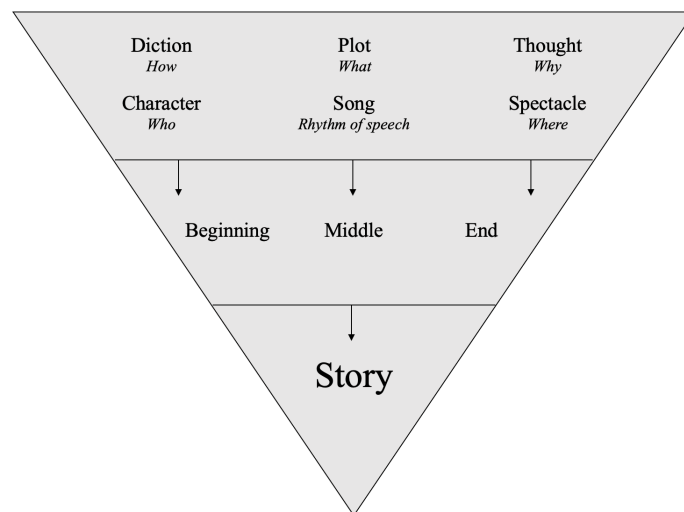
Figure 1. Illustration of Aristotle´s Dramaturgy Model

3. Theoretical Frameworks

This section of the study will present and illustrate the theoretical frameworks necessary for analyzing the empirical data. The chosen frameworks are The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix and The Storytelling Matrix.

3.1 Evaluation and Selection of Framework

When evaluating and selecting theoretical frameworks, a variety of theories were considered. However, The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (Urde, 2013) and The Storytelling Matrix (Urde, 2022) were found most suitable to the purpose, and therefore applied in the thesis. The chosen matrices and theories within Corporate Brand Management, contribute to a prominent general overview of the fields of storytelling and brand identity. Furthermore, The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix and The Storytelling Matrix are linked and therefore considered to be of interest for this study in accordance with the purpose of the study. Moreover, the chosen theory can be considered suitable for both non-profit and profit companies, which indicates another advantage with the chosen frameworks. Based on these theories, a gap was found which the thesis aims to further develop. Other relevant theories that were considered and which could contribute to other relevant insights was, for instance, Aaker and The Brand Vision Model (Aaker, 1996), Hatch & Schultz and The Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) model (Hatch & Schultz, 2001) and Kapferer and The Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 2012). These theories could result in other knowledge, concerning establishing a storytelling and brand identity connection meaning in which the definition can differentiate. For example, in the Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 2012), there are six main elements which differ to some extent from the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (Urde, 2013). Although, due to the connection between Urde´s Brand Identity Matrix and Storytelling Matrix, they were found most suitable for this particular thesis in order to apply them and create further development.

3.2 Corporate Brand Management

Every company has a corporate brand, although their function may vary. The corporate brands consist of a unique identity core which is the starting point in both understanding and managing the brand (Urde, 2022). Urde continues by stating that using and adapting it in a functional way, can function as an opportunity for the company to grow. This by, both communicate and position the corporate brand and build up its reputation (Urde, 2022).

The essence of Corporate Brand Management consists of three layers; identity, communication and positioning, and reputation (see Appendix 1). The identity core consists of the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix which incorporates answering nine significant questions about the particular brand. The first layer incorporates expressing the brand identity by telling its story in order to distinguish it from the rest of the market (Urde, 2022). The brand needs to consider and appeal to the three rhetorical techniques of persuasion namely ethos, logos, and pathos (Urde, 2022). Moin (2020) refers to ethos, logos, and pathos as the "rhetorical triangle" which includes the ability to appeal to the audience by firstly highlighting credibility, secondly by the use of logical argument and lastly, evoke the preferred and wanted feelings. By observing a brand's identity based on the three rhetorical techniques of persuasion, the second layer of the identity matrix can provide guidance for the corporate brands activation (Urde, 2022).

The second, and last, layer of the identity matrix is about building a reputation. According to Urde (2022), this incorporates what stakeholders, both customers and non-customers, think of the corporate brand. Urde adds in which everything told and executed by the company influences its reputation meaning that reputation is not something that the company has, it is earned or attributed to the brand by others. The main challenge for brands is to integrate these three layers into one integrated unit, in other words a corporate brand (Urde, 2022).

3.3 The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix

The application of the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix, or CBIM, can be critical for establishing a competitive strategy for the brand (Greyser & Urde, 2019). This is done by creating a clear and unified corporate identity and it is significantly necessary because of the fact that people have a

higher lack of knowledge concerning corporate brands rather than product brands (Greyser & Urde, 2019). This is just one of the reasons why a strong corporate identity is necessary for brands, and the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix can work as a tool of finding that. Given the introduction of the CBIM, the matrix is illustrated below:

EXTERNAL	*VALUE PROPOSITION* What are our key offerings and how do we want them to appeal to customers and non-customer stakeholders?	*RELATIONSHIPS* What should be the nature of our relationships with key customers and non-customer stakeholders?	*POSITION* What is our intended position in the market, and in the heart and minds of key customers and non-customer stakeholders?
INTERNAL/EXTERNAL	*EXPRESSION* What is distinctive about the way we communicate and express ourselves and makes it possible to recognize us at a distance?	*BRAND CORE* What do we promise, and what are the core values that sum up the essence of what our brand stand for?	*PERSONALITY* What combination of human characteristics or qualities forms our corporate character?
INTERNAL	*MISSION AND VISION* What engages us (mission) and what is our direction and inspiration? (vision)	*CULTURE* What are our attitudes and how do we work and behave?	*COMPETENCES* What are we particularly good at, and what makes us better than the competition?

Figure 2. The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (Urde, 2013)

3.3.1 The Internal Component

The CBIM by Urde (2013) is presented with nine different elements, four paths of evaluating connections, and three main components. According to Urde (2013), the three main components are internal (sender), external (receiver) and internal/external. The internal, or sender, component is described by three elements in the matrix. These elements are mission and vision, culture, and competences. Moreover, the elements shown in this component are represented by how the brand wants to be perceived internally (Urde, 2013). As shown in the matrix, the mission and vision element states what engages the brand in question, what their direction is and what inspires them. Moreover, the mission and vision can be defined as sources of commitment (Senge, 1990) and willingness to support (Greyser, 2009). The reason for this is because the mission for the brand is of significant importance to the corporate identity (Urde, 2013). Urde stresses in which this is for the reason in which it explains many factors but does not include the aim of making money. Instead, according to him, these factors are why the brand exists, what motivates the brand, and what engages them. Moreover, the vision works as an extension of the brand´s mission by

mapping the direction where the brand is heading and what is the inspiration for moving forward in that direction (Urde, 2013).

The next element of the internal or sender component is culture. According to the matrix, the culture describes what the attitudes of the brand are and how the employees work and behave in the workplace. Just as the mission and vision works as a source of commitment (Senge, 1990) and willingness to support (Greyser, 2009), the culture element works as a source for potential competitive advantage and differentiation (Brexendorf & Kernstock, 2007). Moreover, culture can be described as many examples which can work as influencers to the nature of the brand identity (Urde, 2013). These examples can be heritage and track record (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007), country of origin, and iconic leaders (Urde, 2013). Lastly, the third element of the sender component; competences. In the matrix, competences track specifically what the brand is good at and what makes them better than their competitors. Further on, the element of competences adds to the strategic relevance of the brand which either can create or maintain a competitive advantage (Urde, 2013). Those advantages circle the capabilities and processes of the organization (Leavy, 2003). However, the core competences are key in defining a brand identity and this element works as an important supporter to the competitiveness and value of the brand in question (Urde, 2013).

3.3.2 The External Component

After having established the internal component, the external component can thus be discussed where it consists of value proposition, relationships, and position (Urde, 2013). These elements represent how the brand wants to be perceived externally by customers and non-customer stakeholders (Urde, 2022). Firstly, the element of value proposition helps to map what the brand´s key offerings are and how they want to appeal to their customers and stakeholders (Urde, 2022). In other words, this element offers a combination of structured and appealing factors to their customers and stakeholders and shows great importance to the brand (Urde, 2013). This is because if effective, it should lead to a profitable relationship between the brand and the customers (Aaker, 2004). Furthermore, it could also lead to a higher willingness to purchase from a customer perspective (Aaker, 1996). Apart from that an effective value proposition can

result in a positive relationship between the brand and the customers, it can also have a positive effect on the reputation of the brand (Greyser, 2009).

Secondly, the next element of the external component is relationships. This element describes the fact that the choice of a brand is also a choice of a relationship (Kapferer, 2012) which makes this element profound. Further on, the element states that multiple relationships need to be integrated for the brand in question (Urde, 2013). The reason, according to Urde, is because there are typically more than one audience to relate to which makes the integration important. Thirdly, the last element of the external component is position. This element describes what the intended position on the market the brand strives for and in the hearts and minds of key customers and stakeholders. The element of position implies the intended position of the brand. However, it is of importance to keep in mind which position is not the same as positioning (Urde, 2013). As for the element of position in the CBIM, it works as what Urde (2013) explained as "a point of reference for the process of positioning" (p.753).

3.3.3 The Internal/External Component

Moving forward to the internal/external component. This component works as a bridge between internal and external components (Urde, 2013). In this component of the matrix, expression, the brand core, and personality can be distinguished. Firstly, the element of expression in the matrix describes helps to map out the communication and expression of the brand (Urde, 2022). This is done by asking what is distinctive about how the brand communicates and expresses themselves to make it possible to be recognized. The expression element works as a form of identification as a part of the corporate identity (Urde, 2013). The element is connected to different objects which makes the brand recognizable (Urde, 2013). These objects can be tone of voice, design, graphic style, and logo (Balmer, 2014). Apart from these objects, the expression element can also represent a product or a company representative which can help the brand to be recognized from a distance (Kapferer, 2012).

The second element of the internal/external component is the brand core. The brand core presents what the brand promises, what their core values are that sum up what the brand stands for (Urde, 2022). What makes the brand core so special to the CBIM is that it works as the very

heart of the matrix (Urde, 2013). The element works as a key aspect of the framework (Urde, 2013) where the brand promise takes the values and creates a meaningful whole (Urde, 2009). According to Urde (2013), the brand core works both internally and externally in a way in which it is communicated externally and also works as a driver and motivator internally. Furthermore, another more prominent and important aspect of the brand core is that it has a capacity to give guidance, focus, and coordination, and it can also build the brand in the long run (Urde, 2013). Thirdly, personality is the last element of the internal/external component. As shown in Figure 2, this element defines what combination of human characteristics or makes the brand´s character. The personality element can differ from product brand personality and corporate brand personality (Urde, 2013). The element with a product brand would focus more on the consumers and user imagery. A corporate brand on the other hand focuses more on the employees and their personality (Keller & Richey, 2006).

3.3.4 Evaluating Connections in the Matrix

After having distinguished the three components and the nine elements of the corporate brand identity matrix, four paths in the matrix can be used for evaluating connections between the elements, namely: strategy, interaction, competition, and communication (also called character) (Urde, 2022). Finding these paths can be done by answering certain questions and thus, the brand's strategy, competitive approach, and the nature of the external communications and interactions can be created. The goal of finding these paths is in which Greyser and Urde (2019) says "you´ll want to confirm that each element logically follows the one before it, regardless of which direction you're moving in." (p.10) Depending on how clear and logical the four paths are, the matrix becomes stronger and therefore the stronger becomes the corporate brand identity (Greyser & Urde, 2019).
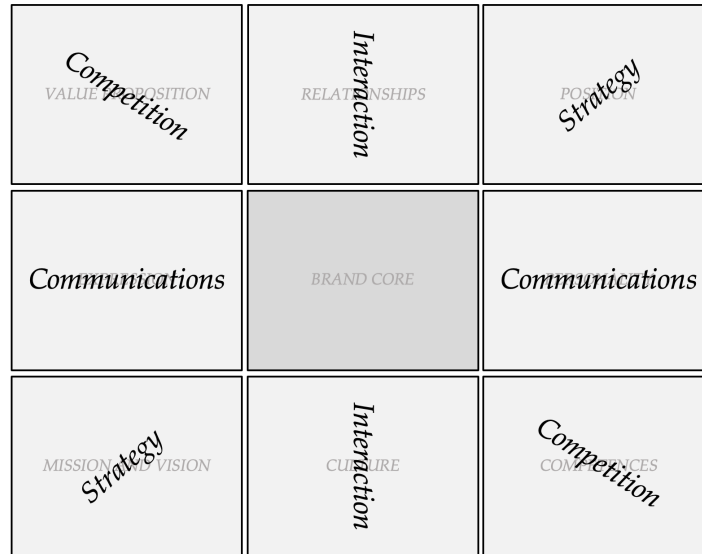
Figure 3. Connections of Elements in the CBIM (Greyser & Urde, 2019)

According to the matrix above, the different paths reflect certain elements with two diagonal paths, one vertical and one horizontal path. The first diagonal path focuses on strategy which aligns with the brand's mission and vision, the brand core, and position. The second diagonal path focuses on competition which concerns the elements of value proposition, the brand core, and competences. The third vertical path focuses on interaction which reflects relationships, the brand core, and culture. The last horizontal path focuses on communication which regards the elements of expression, the brand core, and personality.

In order to map these paths, the elements reflecting them must be logically coherent with each other in both directions (Greyser & Urde, 2019). According to them and to put this into perspective, the strategy diagonal is fulfilled if the mission and vision engages and inspires the people in a brand´s organization. Furthermore, this can be translated into a promise which the organization can fulfill, which can manifest the brand's position. This should also flow in the opposite direction starting with if their position echoes with their promise and if their promise aligns with the brand's mission and vision (Greyser & Urde, 2019). Moreover, the competition diagonal is fulfilled if the brand´s competences result in them keeping their brand promise which can create a foundation for a competitive value proposition (Urde, 2022). The interaction vertical is fulfilled if the brand´s culture and values resonate with people both outside and inside the organization which refers to their relationships (Urde, 2022). This is significantly important in

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the sense that if the people inside do not embrace these elements, the outside relationships will decline (Urde & Greyser, 2019). Lastly, the communication horizontal is fulfilled if the brand's personality resonates with the brand core and if this is expressed in certain ways, this can for example be the product design, marketing taglines or the corporate logo (Greyser & Urde, 2019).

In summary, the CBIM has many factors to keep track of in order to create a unified and strong corporate identity. Developing a comprehensive corporate identity usually can take a significant amount of time depending on how well prepared the brand is with the elements of the matrix (Greyser & Urde, 2019). Although, even if it can take a long time to establish, it is a useful tool for creating a competitive strategy (Greyser & Urde, 2019). Additionally, a strong brand identity can be seen as a key activity building a strong brand in the long run (Urde, 2013) and can also support the brand´s competitive advantage, effectiveness, and differentiation (Balmer & Podnar, 2021).

3.4 Signature Stories

When communicating about a brand, it is important to think about what story to tell, and what story that will later on be retold about your brand. The aim for the company is to search for a signature story (Urde, 2022). According to Aaker (2018), a signature story is: "An intriguing, authentic and involving narrative that delivers or supports a strategic message clarifying or enhancing the brand vision, customer relationship, organizational values and/or business strategy" (p. 19). Furthermore, the story communicates what the individual brand stands for, why it exists and why consumers could benefit from choosing the brand and not its competitors (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). A signature story has a particular value when communicating and positioning a brand (Urde, 2022) and is hence at the very center of marketing, branding, and advertising (Aaker & Aaker, 2016).

Signature stories can differ in a lot of ways. It can both be we-stories or they-stories, whether they are stories told by the company itself or stories told by others about your brand yet still in line with the brand's identity (Aaker, 2018). The stories can both be based on real life; based on a person, something that has happened or an experience, although on the other hand, it can also be an imaginary story (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). They usually consist of a beginning, a middle and an

end which reflects a meaningful message that catches the customers attention, and hopefully enjoy, share, and remember (Urde, 2022). According to Aaker, signature stories are most common in business-to-consumer brands considering that business-to-business brands tend to struggle to find the "wow" factor (Forbes, 2018). When brands tell their signature stories, they must establish the right desired effects from the audience (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). They continue by stating in which exposure to their signature stories is not enough for their communication for the reason in which only a small percentage of exposures are noticed, and an even smaller amount are handled by the audience. This results in that signature stories need to, first and foremost, attract the mind and eye of the audience and additionally offer a combination of following seven characteristics: thought-provoking, inspiring, informative, novel, humorous, awe-creating content, and exceptionally relevant (Aaker, 2018). In order to have a distinct signature story, the story needs to be realistic, strong and thoroughly not merely another selling effort (Forbes, 2018). The four criteria for determining whether or not a brand story is a signature story is: *intriguing*, *authentic*, *involving*, and lastly *delivers a strategic message* (Aaker, 2018).

3.4.1 The Storytelling Matrix

When searching for the right story to tell, a signature story, it is also important that the story reflects the brand's corporate identity (Urde, 2022). This can be done by, for instance, telling stories about the way a company works, what their ambitions are, what relationship they have with their customers or the story behind their name and logo (Urde, 2022). Hence, a connection between signature stories and storytelling, and The Storytelling Matrix, is established. One effective tool for executing this strategy is to use The Storytelling Matrix (Urde, 2022). The Storytelling Matrix is significantly equal and an application of the CBIM discussed above (see section 3.2), although here with the emphasis on stories:

VALUE PROPOSITION Stories about how the brand adds value	**RELATIONSHIPS** Stories about the brand and its relations	**POSITION** Stories about how and why the brand stands out
EXPRESSION Stories about the brand's design and communication	**BRAND CORE** Stories about how the brand keeps its promises and cherishes its values	**PERSONALITY** Stories about the brand's character
MISSION AND VISION Stories about engagement and visions	**CULTURE** Stories about the people living the brand	**COMPETENCES** Stories about the brand's performance and quality

Figure 4. The Storytelling Matrix (Urde, 2022)

The nine elements, as shown above, remain the same: value proposition, relationships, position, expression, brand core, personality, mission and vision, culture, and competences. However, the guiding questions have been altered to reflect storytelling.

4. Methodology

This section of the study will primarily present and discuss the research design accompanied with arguments to why the design is suitable for this study by presenting the contextualization of method. Furthermore, this part will also cover how and where the data will be collected and analyzed followed by a discussion concerning the evaluation of quality.

4.1 Research Philosophy

We find the illustration of the primary considerations chosen in terms of methodology using the four rings model. This model categorizes and provides an overview of our considerations and choices of certain steps in methodology; ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods and techniques (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).
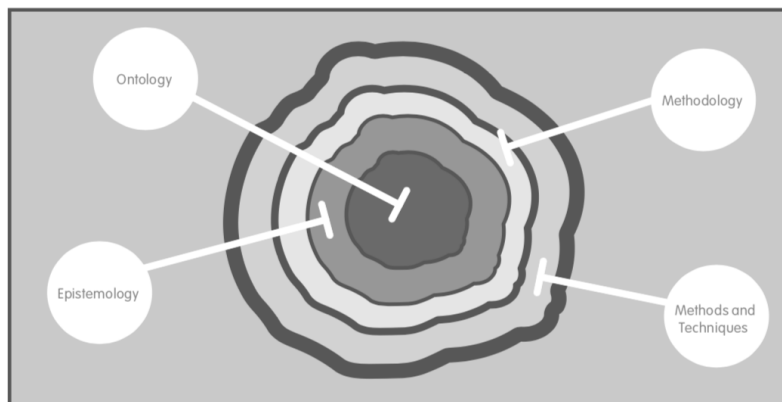
Figure 5. The Four Rings Model (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015)

The model illustrates four rings where ontology is defined as the first step of designing the methodology followed by epistemology, methodology, and methods and techniques. Guba and Lincoln (1994) address the ontological standpoint as assumptions to what configuration and nature of reality the researcher adopts and what there is to be known about it. In our thesis, we will follow a relativist ontology (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) meaning that we believe in which there are many truths out there which are created by people. Furthermore, within relativism, it is accepted that observers can have different viewpoints which results in

what counts as truth may vary from time and place (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). With this said, we also believe that knowledge is constructed and not something which exists independently of the learner (Charalambos, 2000).

The second ring of the model presented above concerns the epistemological approach. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) defines epistemology as the study of the nature of knowledge, meaning that there are a set of assumptions regarding ways of inquiring into the nature of the world. This is also accepted in accordance with Guba and Lincoln (1994) which define epistemology as "the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be-knower and what can be known" (p. 108). In our study, we follow a social constructionism epistemology for the reason in which we believe reality is determined by individuals and not objective and external factors (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Therefore, the focus in our study should lie in the understanding of what people, individually and collectively, are expressing and saying. As we identify ourselves as social scientists, our task is to appreciate the individual´s constructions and differences instead of searching for external factors. Because our study will adopt a social constructionist approach, we assume that there are many realities and in which we need to collect multiple perspectives through different qualitative methods, which is known as triangulation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

The third ring illustrates the methodology which concerns the way research methods and techniques are integrated with each other to provide a coherent picture (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Moreover, the methodology ring can be described as the question of how the researcher can approach to find what the researcher believes can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They continue by stating in which this question can be sought to be answered through the previous rings concerning ontology and epistemology. This indicates in which not just any methodology is appropriate and that it must be carefully selected (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Because the thesis follows a relativist ontology and social constructionist epistemology, it is suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1994) to follow a hermeneutical and dialectical methodology. This means in which individual constructions can only be obtained and clarified through interaction between the researcher and the respondents or participants. It is also stated that a hermeneutical methodology provides insights of interpreting material which can contain

recorded spoken words and written texts. Additionally, to the choice of methodology, an engaged research will also be conducted. An engaged research concerns the fact in which there is a positive value when closely investigating what needs to be studied (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). This type of research is significantly suitable when studying complex organizations which our thesis will set out to do. Moreover, an engaged research in accordance with social constructionism presents that any meaning structure must come from the individual´s lived experience (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

Lastly, it is of significant importance to keep in mind not only the strengths of social constructionism, but also the weaknesses. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) stress in which awareness of philosophical assumptions, in this case social constructionism, can "increase the quality of research and contribute to the creativity of the researcher (p.47). With this said, the strengths of social constructionism concern the understanding of individual´s meanings, the adjustment of new issues as ideas, and the contribution of the development of new theories (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Furthermore, it also provides ways of gathering data. Although, the weaknesses of social constructionism are in which the data collection can take up a significant amount of time and resources and the analysis can be difficult to execute which depends on the knowledge of the researcher (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

4.2 Research Strategy

Our thesis is conducted within the area of International Marketing and Brand Management with the purpose to explore the phenomenon of storytelling as a theory for connecting brand identity with storytelling. And how it can contribute to effective brand communication by zooming into three different companies. To achieve this purpose, our study will be conducted using a qualitative research method. According to Silverman (2014), a qualitative study is suitable for a thesis that seeks understanding by using theoretically based concepts and using words rather than numbers. Furthermore, Silverman (2014) states that a qualitative study often is conducted using case studies rather than knowledge that can be generalized.

In business research, two main research approaches are discussed regarding the relation between research and theory, namely deductive and inductive (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, another

approach, which can be seen as a combination of the two, is abduction. An abductive approach allows the researcher to move back and forth between the existing theory and the gathered empirical material and let the understanding gradually develop (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). This in order to make comparisons and clarification when searching for patterns and explanations (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). Because of our purpose, an abductive theory approach will be followed in order to move between the data and theory. According to Kennedy and Thornberg (2018), an abductive approach uses a creative and selective process to investigate "how the data support existing theories or hypotheses as well as how the data may call for modifications in existing understandings (p.52). Furthermore, the authors claim that an abductive approach involves discovering new explanations, ideas, and concepts by discovering or investigating new phenomena or data that cannot be explained by already pre-existing knowledge (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). In our thesis, an abductive approach enables us to be open to new information in the material while still starting from existing theories. The pre-existing theories are used as a source of inspiration and identification as well as to interpret patterns (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

4.3 Research Design

In relation to the purpose of our thesis, a multiple case study has been chosen as our research design. A case study is a widely used design in business research where the study using this design examines a single case with a detailed and intensive analysis (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). However, according to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), a multiple case study can also be used where the researcher investigates more than one case company in depth.

Furthermore, a case study can also be designed in a way which correlates with a relativist and a constructionist position (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). Because our study will conduct a multiple case study, it is suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) in which it can avoid the study becoming too descriptive and narrow. In their book, Miles and Huberman (1994) stress the fact that the outcome of investigating multiple cases on a deeper level can create more powerful explanations and sophisticated descriptions. Lastly, it is of importance to keep in mind the certain criticism multiple case studies have received when conducting our research. One significant criticism of using multiple case studies concerns the risk of only focusing on how the

multiple cases relate and differ from each other instead of focusing on the context (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). This is something we will closely keep in mind for the reason in which we want to focus on the context of the different cases. One way of assuring that this does not occur in our study, the research questions have been designed with questions of "what", "how", and "why". This is something which becomes suitable for multiple case studies because this design seeks explanations and not just incidence questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014).

4.4 Data Collection

When conducting a case study, it is suggested in which multiple data sources can work as a strategy for adding on the credibility of the data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014). In accordance with this, our study will combine the multiple data sources of primary and secondary data. As primary data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the chosen case companies. This was done for the reason in which we wanted to map the companies´ brand identity using the CBIM (Urde, 2013) and the guiding questions which come within. This would later on be used together with the secondary data to achieve the purpose of the study. Apart from the semi-structured interviews, the secondary data of our study consisted of looking at the companies´ storytelling from external sources. By not only using primary sources, we enabled the study to become more holistic and also present an outside perspective of the companies.

4.4.1 Interviews as Primary data

Qualitative interviews are described as a data collection method to gain understanding from the respondent´s perspective. This can include the viewpoint of the participant and also why the participant has this certain viewpoint (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Further on, the aim of qualitative interviews can be expressed as it should collect necessary information which captures the interpretation and meaning of a certain phenomenon in relation to the worldview of the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). When conducting qualitative interviews, the researcher can choose between certain structures in the interview. According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), there are two main types of qualitative interviews: semi-structured and unstructured. However, because the interviews of our study aim to map the brand identity of the case companies, semi-structured interviews work as the more suitable option for the primary data collection.

Semi-structured interviews follow a list of questions containing fairly specific topics wished to be covered but are not mandatory to follow (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Moreover, Bryman and Bell (2015) argue in which it is allowed to deviate from the interview guide in qualitative research by asking follow-up questions. This indicates in which semi-structured interviews can be categorized as more flexible because the interviewer does not have to follow the interview guide fully. Further on, the reason why semi-structured interviews were chosen for our study is because the interviews could take different directions based on what the participants touched upon and if those points could generate certain follow-up questions. Also, we sought to understand the reasoning of the participants in depth which according to Bryman and Bell (2015) can work as a suitable way of choosing semi-structured interviews.

Moreover, the interview guide (see Appendix 4) follows the guiding questions on how to map the brand identity of companies where the nine questions (see Appendix 2) resemble the elements of the CBIM by Urde (2013). These questions had to be answered in order to fill the framework which indicates that we could not skip some of them. However, if we felt the participants were answering these questions in a way which we needed clarification or additional information, follow-up questions could be asked.

The interviews were conducted via teams because of the various advantages of digital meetings presented by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) which include flexibility, speed and lower costs. An interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete and followed an interview guide. The interview started with welcoming the participants and by briefly describing what the interview was about concerning brand identity and storytelling. We wanted to give the participants a brief yet valuable background to what we aimed to study. Although, we did not present the research questions to the participants for the reason in which we did not want to influence the participants and their answers. In order to eliminate the risk of language barriers and ensure that the participants were comfortable, the interviews were conducted in English or Swedish, depending on the nationality of the participants. In other words, one interview was conducted in Swedish and two in English. Moreover, the participants were asked if the interviews could be recorded which meant that we as the interviewers did not have to take notes. The recordings were then transcribed, and one interview was translated, which later on would be

presented in the empirical part of the study. The translated interview with Scandinavian Airlines was conducted in an accurate way in order to not lose the important messages. Lastly, after having asked the questions regarding the companies´ brand identity, we asked them about their storytelling. These questions concerned what the main factor they want to communicate is and how it potentially can be connected to their brand identity.

4.4.2 Secondary Data

Within research, secondary data can be a valuable complement to primary data in order to explore new patterns and relationships within the existing data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) further states that secondary data within the business and management research field can provide valuable insights to, fully or partly, be able to answer the research question, and is a commonly used data collection method within a case study. Bryman & Bell (2015) describes secondary data as material collected by researchers who have not themselves been involved in the original collection, which indicates that the data collection most certainly have been implemented for a different purpose. Therefore, when using secondary data, the researcher must keep the quality and credibility aspect in mind and be careful and critical to the secondary data due to the possibility of the data being collected for a different purpose (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). With this mentioned, we observed the secondary data with critical eyes and attempted to receive as much valuable information as possible from the three collected primary data interviews.

The main advantage of using secondary data is saving in both time and effort (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). For our thesis, the secondary data functions as a complement to the primary data. Secondary data is a wide concept that involves a collection of different sources, for instance books, academic journals, company and government reports, articles, advertisements, newspaper, websites, blogs, and archival data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). A variety of academic journals and literature books were used to support the thesis, to guide us as researchers and to help build the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the main data collection for our thesis regarding the storytelling consists of secondary sources from the three chosen companies' websites, easily accessible information which the companies have published themselves. This secondary data functions as a complement to the collected primary data

regarding the company's storytelling. Lastly, additional secondary data consists of the company information in empirical findings in order to present and get an overview and insight to the three selected companies. The use of the company's websites as secondary sources facilitated easy access to information directly from the company on how they communicate storytelling connected to their brand identity. The majority of the journals and books were publicly accessible through Lund University Library Databases and the rest could either be rented at the library or bought.

4.5 Sampling

4.5.1 Sampling of Brands

Within social constructionism epistemology, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2015) stress that the sampling requires that a small number of cases are chosen and for a specific reason/s. For our thesis, a purposive sampling strategy was selected. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2015), a purposive sampling claims the researcher has the knowledge of what sample units that are most suitable in accordance with the purpose of the study. Since the purpose of our thesis is to explore the phenomenon of storytelling as a theory for connecting brand identity with storytelling by looking at three separate brands, the chosen brands were particularly suitable for highlighting and creating deeper understandings which means that a purposive sampling was appropriate.

In order to examine this phenomenon, we chose the brands Bona, Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) and Volvo Cars as they are brands within three different industries and operative in Sweden, see Appendix 3. The chosen companies are all using the phenomenon of storytelling, although in different extensions and with different purposes. When observing the companies, we discovered that Volvo Cars and Scandinavian Airlines tend to use storytelling more frequently than Bona although the biggest difference between the three companies is the purpose of the storytelling. Volvo Cars emphasize safety, Scandinavian Airlines emphasize "We Are Travelers" and the traveling community and Bona, at least strives to, emphasize sustainability but focuses on what history floors has to tell.

4.5.2 Sampling of Interviewees

In order to generate the most suitable information from the interviews, first of all, solely managers within marketing and communication were chosen who we considered to obtain the suitable knowledge to answer the specific questions. Furthermore, when selecting the interviewees for our thesis, one interview was held with each company which we considered enough. This since the purpose of our thesis is to identify and map the company's brand identity, which we sense one company manager who is responsible for marketing and communication is adequate to answer on its own. Although, the interview with Bona contained three interviewees, with different company positions, during the same time because the company preferred to have additional employees during the meeting.

The sample of the interviews (see Appendix 3) consisted of the Head of Brand at Volvo Cars, Brand Manager at Scandinavian Airlines and the SVP of Global Marketing and Communications, the VP of Global Brands, and the SVP Product Management & Marketing at Bona. The sampling strategy used for selecting the interviewees is therefore also a purposive sampling, seeing that we are researchers who rely on our own judgment and knowledge about who to interview. The chosen sampling method contributes to the result being relevant due to the possibility to collect data from the person found most suitable to provide valuable insights and more precise research results (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). All of the interview participants for our thesis were accessed through contacts, both people within the company and externally. These contacts thus helped us get in touch with suitable participants to interview. Because the interview with Bona consisted of three interviewees, the quotes presented in the empirical data will visualize which interviewee stated which quote. This will not apply for Volvo Cars nor Scandinavian Airlines due to the fact that only one interviewee participated in those interviews.

4.6 Data Analysis

Along with the purpose of our study, the analysis will primarily set out to develop brand identity matrices of the chosen case companies using the frameworks of Urde (2013) based on the collected primary data. More specifically, the interviews of the case companies. After having developed the matrices for each company, the next step will commence by mapping certain

logical connections within the identity matrices, as presented by Greyser and Urde (2019). Finding those connections within the identity matrix is a crucial step for establishing a connection between a brand's storytelling and brand identity for the reason in which the logical connections will permeate the analysis method. Moving on, after having established said connections, the analysis will then examine the storytelling of the case companies based on the secondary sources. The secondary sources concerning the case companies are chosen based on what the companies state from the interviews is their most prominent storytelling with factors they are focusing on. These stories from the companies will be analyzed with the storytelling matrix by Urde (2022). Same as the identity matrix, logical connections will be mapped in the storytelling matrix by looking at the case companies´ storytelling. Lastly, the analysis will compare the connected elements in the storytelling matrix with the same elements in the identity matrix. If these elements are similar or speak of the same aspects, those elements are thus connected and a connection between storytelling and brand identity is established. Furthermore, this means a connection with storytelling and brand identity can differ from certain companies based on which logical connections or elements that are established.

Because the analysis and empirical data collection are based on certain guiding questions in order to create identity matrices, our study has not adopted the points presented by Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018) concerning sorting, distilling, and categorizing nor using themes. This is for the reason that the purpose and analysis is constructed in a way where those factors do not make the study any better. Additionally, if those were to be implemented in our study, the logical flow would suffer and not be coherent. In order to keep the logical flow and have a coherent thesis, the empirical data and analysis will provide clear topics and not follow the factors presented by Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018). Moreover, as a reminder, our study opted for a reflexive approach as suggested by Alvesson, Hardy and Harley (2008) as well as adopting critical thinking when collecting empirical data and analyzing the findings.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

4.7.1 Evaluating Quality

When assessing quality in business research, validity and reliability have been two significant criteria (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, according to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), their relevance has been questioned in qualitative research and alterations to these criteria have been suggested. Validity and reliability have been useful in quantitative research but have gained new meaning in qualitative research where, for example, validity concerns implications of measurements which is not a major preoccupation in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Therefore, when assessing quality in qualitative research, Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) suggest trustworthiness and authenticity as alternate criteria for assessing quality. Because of this, these criteria will be the factors discussed in our study.

Trustworthiness contains four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Starting with credibility, this criterion which parallels internal validity where the establishment of credibility can either be executed through respondent validation/member validation or triangulation (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Because we are gathering information from different views where the primary data consists of qualitative interviews and secondary data consists of looking at the storytelling from the companies through alternative sources, we believe triangulation can increase the credibility of our study. By adopting more than one method of gathering empirical data, the study generates additional perspectives which becomes particularly important in the sense that it cannot only be achieved through interviews.

The next criterion for trustworthiness is transferability which parallels external validity (Bryman & Bell, 2015). They continue by stating in which transferability is a vital criterion for trustworthiness for the reason in which qualitative research usually necessitates an intensive study of a small group. Furthermore, qualitative findings tend to be navigated to the significance and contextual uniqueness of the world the research examines (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). This creates the need for what Geertz (1973) addresses as thick descriptions which involve rich details of a culture. Because we only interviewed three companies, our empirical data collection

was small. On the other hand, these companies represent different industries from automotive, floors and aviation which can in turn increase the transferability.

The third criterion concerning dependability, which parallels reliability, involves the aspect of how trustworthy the study is (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In order to achieve dependability, the idea of an auditing approach is suggested which refers to keeping complete records throughout every part of the study such as interview transcripts, data analysis decisions, and fieldwork notes (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). To make sure this was accomplished, we kept all the necessary material in an accessible manner on Google Drive. The interviews were transcribed directly after the interviews, and the interview with Scandinavian Airlines translated, which we later stored in said software. The same procedure was executed with the collection of storytelling material from secondary sources.

Lastly, the final criterion of trustworthiness; confirmability. This criterion parallels objectivity and is said by Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) in which it is impossible to achieve complete objectivity in business research. Although, it aims to ensure that the researcher has acted in good faith during the study and has not let personal values interfere and influence the study (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Concerning our study, we adopted an objective view which did not let our personal values or theoretical inclinations influence the research. It can be started in which we have significant experience of adopting objectivity to various studies which strengthened the confirmability of our study. However, storytelling is something we have researched before. Although, this can be seen as something positive for the reason in which we could explore the phenomenon even more.

The second main criterion for assessing quality is authenticity which also will be discussed. Authenticity refers to issues concerning the wider social and political impact of the research being conducted (Bryman & Bell, 2015). These impacts concern responsibility and fairness in representing different points of views (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). What can be said concerning our research and authenticity is the fact that the majority of our conducted interviews were only represented by one person from the company. The study could have benefited additionally if the interviews were conducted with more than one manager from those

companies. This way, the empirical findings could have been more extensive with more than one perspective on the topic being studied.

4.7.2 Research Ethics

Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) stress the importance of research ethics where they explain ethics as something vital for business research. They continue by addressing in which research ethics works as an integral part for the research process where the researchers have to frequently revisit these factors throughout the study. One significant factor regarding research ethics according to Bell and Bryman (2007) is reciprocity. The authors argue in which research ethics goes beyond the fact of protecting individuals from allegations concerning misconduct. Reciprocity concerns the idea that the research should mutually benefit the participants and researchers and in which a form of collaboration should be integrated into the research (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

Moreover, Bell and Bryman (2007) conducted an analysis containing nine associations regarding ethical principles in social science where eventually, ten ethical principles were identified. These ten principles could be summarized to two main ethical factors where the first six symbolize the protection of the interests of the informants or research subjects (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). They continue by stating in which the last four symbolized the protection of the integrity of the research community by ensuring lack of bias and accuracy. The aspects discussed concerning ethical practice were taken in consideration during our study for the reason in which the interviews consisted of three major companies. We made sure we treated the participants with dignity and respect during the whole interview. This was executed by protecting the privacy of the participants as well as asking them for their consent in participating. Lastly, we believe our study follows reciprocity in the sense that this can be beneficial for both the researchers and the participants when investigating the brand identity and storytelling of the chosen companies.

5. Empirical Findings

The empirical part of the study will present the data collected from the interviewed companies. The empirical findings will initially present background information concerning the companies, in order to give an overview on each company. Moreover, the empirical data will be illustrated by presenting valuable data in forms of quotes from the interviewees and also data from secondary sources.

5.1 Volvo Cars

Volvo Cars is a global car manufacturer which was officially founded in Gothenburg 1927 when the first cars left the fabric (Volvo Cars, n.d.a). Their global headquarters remains in Gothenburg, although in 1999 the production was first sold to Ford Motor Company and since 2010, the company is owned by the Chinese company Zhejiang Geely Holding Group (Volvo Cars, n.d.b). Volvo Car Group includes Volvo Cars, 85 percent of a software company named Zenseact and the mobility company M (Volvo Cars, n.d.b). They produce cars in Sweden, Belgium, US and in China and their cars are sold in more than 100 countries (Volvo Cars, n.d.b). Volvo Cars focuses on personal service, sustainability, and safety (Volvo Cars, n.d.b). In 2021, Volvo Cars had a revenue of 282,045 MSEK (Investors Volvo Cars, n.d.).

5.1.1 Volvo Cars Brand Identity

The findings concerning Volvo Cars brand identity were structured with the questions included in the CBIM (Urde, 2013), see Figure 3. Firstly, regarding the question on mission and vision, Volvo Cars states in which they do not have one on purpose. They used to have a mission and vision until a couple of years ago where they changed their mission and vision into a purpose. Furthermore, the Head of Brand at Volvo Cars (interview, 2 May 2022) communicates that:

> We modeled our brand strategy around some of the insights of Simon Sinek. Who a couple of years ago said that it is better to have a purpose, a why, rather than to say what you want to reach. [...] So what we did is, we sort of archived the

mission and the vision and we worked on a very clear purpose. Obviously, we have a commercial mission and vision which you can find in our annual report. [...] Commercially then, we want to be fully electrified. We want to sell 1.2 million cars; we sell 700 000 today. We want to expand, and we also want to have direct-to-consumer relationships.

On the next question, regarding Volvo Cars culture, does their Head of Brands state that it is a very interesting and dynamic question because if we think about the automotive industry, it used to be a very engineering driven business since a car was a rather complex feat of engineering skills with many parts with many complicated technologies. So, what you had was very much a project engineering culture:

We are on a transition of competences and if you need to swap competences and get new competences in, you need to have a culture that is able to deal with change rapidly. [...] We work a lot with culture because our business environment and our product technology are changing rapidly. And so, you want from a culture of predictability and accuracy. You need to move to a culture of adaptability and agility. [...] Historically, Volvo has had a very strong culture of flat organization and what we call "medarbetarskap" where you have to be able to talk to your coworkers and be very transparent with them. So, that helps. But of course, it is not so easy in the different disciplines to find out new ways of working.

Furthermore, when asking about the competence´s Volvo Cars sits on, their Head of Brand emphasizes the importance of safety and the importance of being the leaders in safety:

I think what we are really good at, which is also a very typical Swedish characteristic, is that we are able to ask ourselves 'why are we doing this' and 'does this make sense to more values than just the commercial value'. Why are we leaders in safety? Obviously because we believe very strongly that this is our position in our market but there is more to it. Everybody has this in their DNA when they are at work and when safety is being compromised then everything

stops. Because we see the bigger picture. The same with sustainability. I´m quoting one of our old design directors: 'why would we spend so much time and effort saving somebody's life in an accident when we would only slowly kill them afterwards due to the environment'. So, zooming out and looking at the bigger picture with humanistic values. And that's very typically northern European and very Swedish.

Moving forward to the external/internal component in the matrix, expression was asked to Volvo Cars concerning what is distinctive about the way they communicate. Regarding this question, the interviewee puts emphasis on their heritage and the Scandinavian part of the brand, which clearly have a visible part of the brand's expression.

Since a couple of years, we have adopted a rather Scandinavian look, feel and tonality. Particularly in graphical design and pictures. So, for a while we even had the slogan "Made by Sweden". We worked together with some Swedish celebrities, both in music and in sports, to underline our swedishness. Why was that important? Because we are proud of it having been acquired by a non-Swedish nationality. Purity, simplicity and trying to simplify everything to the core message, not having too much bling around it.

Further on, the fifth question concerning the brand core which touches upon the brand´s promise and core values was asked in which the interviewee stated the following:

Our purpose is to bring freedom to move in a safe, sustainable, and personal way. Where that comes from is that if you think about cars as a category, or a subcategory for mobility. What it does very specifically is that it generates a sense of personal mobility and personal freedom. [...] However, in the last 20-30 years, starting in urban areas, cars have become the symbol of the opposite. They have become a symbol of not freedom because you are in a traffic jam. They have become the symbol of a problematic factor of the environment while they have become a cultural issue. So, we want to bring back freedom to move, but we want

to do it with our secret source. And that secret source is of course safety, in a safe way, in a sustainable way and in a personal way. Because we are there to protect your life, we are there to protect living as well and we are there to protect the planet. Because if you find that balance, then you can enjoy the freedom of driving again. In a guilt freeway.

The last question of the external/internal components concerned the personality element regarding what combination of human characteristics or qualities forms the brand´s corporate character. For example, Volvo Cars touched upon the brand being understated, intellectual and having a "just right" feeling:

I think Volvo is a brand that is known to be what we call understated. You have some brands that are clearly overstated. You have some brands that are not stated at all. But we are understated. [...] The cool thing why I like working in the car category is that cars are like fashion. You wear them. And when you wear a Volvo, you are wearing something else than when you are wearing a Fiat 500. [...] Because that is the beauty of the car category. You can compensate, you can overcompensate, or you can just be right. And that sort of "lagom" feeling in a good way is what Volvo stands for. It is very well thought through. It is on the edge of being a little bit intellectual. It has extremely high morality, so it's trying to do the right thing. But it has a certain style that is understated. Obviously, drawing from its design heritage of Scandinavia and Sweden in particular.

Later on, the external component was introduced with the question regarding the brand's value proposition. In other words, what are Volvo Cars key offerings and how do they want these offerings to appeal to key customers and non-customer stakeholders. The interviewee puts the brand in the premium market of cars and touches upon other insights to this motivation:

We are resolutely a part of the premium brand market in cars. Meaning that you pay a premium, you pay more for the engineering or the values and the personality and the technology of a certain set of brands vs the volume of brands

who are more value for money. It is not the top of the market because there are supercars and super luxurious segments. But we are in the premium segment.

Moreover, the question about relationships was asked concerning what the nature of Volvo Cars relationships with key customers and non-customer stakeholders should be. When this question was asked, the interviewee though it was a significantly relevant question because this factor changed during last year after they went public:

> Super-hot and relevant question because we stipulated when we went public in the autumn last year, that we want to have direct-to-consumer relationships. You probably wonder if we did not already have that before, but the reality is that there are two different business models. The problem with a wholesale business model is that you don't have a relationship with the end consumer of your products. [...] What digitization has done is that if you go online and you make your ideal Volvo, the only thing that's missing is a buy button. [...] So, the direct-to-consumer relationships are very important for us because we want to grow together with our consumers. We also want to develop new business models where we over time can sell more than just hardware because the mobility reality will be potentially also more software driven. More service driven that goes all together. It is more about service than it is about things in a postmodern economy.

Lastly, when asking Volvo Cars concerning their intended position in the market, and in the heart and minds of key customers and non-customer stakeholders, the interviewee empathized on electrification, direct relationships, and technological advancements.

> We want to be a leader in electrification. We want to be a leader in digitization with direct relationships with our consumers and we want to bring mobility through the application of a human centric technology approach. So, digital technology is going to be more dominant than it was before when mechanical technology was more dominant in the product. But all of that digital technology that will probably one day also make autonomous driving happen. All of that data,

all of those technological advancements, you still need to do with your values in mind. Now we are sort of back to what the values are. And if we want to bring freedom to move, or if we want to bring autonomous driving, then we need to do that in a safe, sustainable, and personal way.

5.1.2 Volvo Cars Storytelling

When looking at the storytelling of Volvo Cars, they tell stories through a so-called "slice of life" perspective. By using this perspective, Volvo Cars tell stories about how the world is in a realistic way compared to their competitors. The Head of Brand describes their storytelling as the following:

> What we are really good at and what we are currently doing in terms of storytelling is what they call in advertisement, a slice of life. A lot of car manufacturers show some sort of a dreamy aspirational world. We are much more of a brand that shows the way things are. So, a little slice of life.

A campaign Volvo Cars recently launched that reflects a slice of life is "Family bond: It's Time" (Volvo Cars, 2022). The advertisement consists of a video that shows a young boy talking about how his parents seem to know so much about time, but forget the most important thing, that the "time is now". This campaign is an example of how Volvo, through the use of storytelling, takes action and communicates about their newest decision to offer all employees worldwide 24 weeks of paid parental leave. So, every parent has time for what matters most, their families (Volvo Cars, 2022).

> We have taken a stance where we will pay the rest of the world, where we have employees, exactly the same as here in Sweden. We made a campaign about that. But instead of saying "look what a kickass employer we are", we made a campaign last year by first of all asking our employees to go on their LinkedIn profile and talk about how it was to have parental leave and what it meant for them personally. Not for us as a company but for them personally. And now we have launched a campaign that revolves around a boy and his perception of time

and how it is as a small kid to grow up with parents that are obviously juggling all these balls up in the air. That is a very good short way of looking at what we would like to say.

This type of storytelling is designed with the purpose of tapping into the audience's emotions by highlighting the most important aspects in life and getting in touch with one's own values. Moreover, the storytelling from Volvo Cars also differs from their competitors in terms of electrification. What Volvo Cars aims to achieve by telling stories about their electric cars is to bring it down to earth and not being too flashy. The Head of Brand describes how they tell stories about electrification and how emotions play a significant part in their storytelling as following:

> The same goes for cars. Apparently, the car industry has decided that the color of electrification is blue and it's all very funky and technological. So, most of these commercials show some blue flashlights, cables, and all of that. That is not really who we are. We want to bring it down to earth and show how things really are in life. And that is a slice of life approach which is very emotional but which is also recognizable to people so they can get in touch with their own values. Recognize how they match with our values and then have a relationship with us.

The campaign "Family bond: It's Time" can be described as what Volvo Cars call "storytelling by storydoing". This indicates in which a brand tells stories about what they have done and not what they are going to do. In the interview, the Head of Brand define this on a more in depth perspective:

> We are firm believers that if you have a story to tell, you should not tell it, you should do it and then tell what you have done. That is a very nice additional Swedish characteristic. It is a little bit like jantelagen. Don't say what you are going to do, do something and say what you have done. In the campaign, there is no car in the whole campaign because it is not about cars. it is not a story that "we are going to this'. We have done that. We gave everybody of our employees and

employers the same benefits and then we made a campaign about what we have done. So that is what we call storytelling by storydoing.

Moreover, Volvo Cars also focuses on safety, sustainability, and electrification in their storytelling. Concerning safety and sustainability, Volvo Cars launched their campaign; The Ultimate Safety Test (Volvo Cars, 2021). In this campaign, they created a story which initially takes place in the Volvo Cars safety center where the personnel try to find out what the ultimate safety test is. Further into the story, they try different kinds of safety tests which seem to be more and more extreme. Although, the cars complete these tests by not harming any of the test dolls. In the end, we see the safety team out in nature trying out the safety of their cars by dropping them 100 feet from the air. However, when they are about to execute the safety test, they see a big piece of a glacier losing its grip and falling in the ocean. The story changes setting and describes in which climate change is the ultimate safety test with the statement from Volvo Cars saying that they are changing to all-electric starting today (Volvo Cars, 2021).

This storytelling works as a representation of their safety, their work in sustainability, and their electrification strategy. Although, this storytelling does not go far away from their slice of life experience for the reason in which the storytelling about the ultimate safety test can be categorized as a slice of life because of the climate change and the setting.

5.2 Scandinavian Airlines

Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) is a Scandinavian airline company based in Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Oslo (Scandinavian Airlines, n.d.a). According to them, the company primarily focuses on departures and offers for people who travel frequently from, to and within Scandinavia. In 2018, before the covid-19 pandemic, the company accomplished more than 800 scheduled flights per day and hosted in total more than 30 million passengers to 125 destinations in Europe, Asia and the US (Scandinavian Airlines, n.d.a). In the year 1997, SAS was one amongst 26 airlines who founded the global network Star Alliance (Scandinavian Airlines, n.d.b) that together fly to 1300 destinations worldwide (Scandinavian Airlines, n.d.c). SAS priorities are safety, punctuality and care and their brand promise is "we make life easier by making time

matter to travelers, to employees and to the planet" (Scandinavian Airlines, n.d.c). In 2021, SAS had a revenue of 14,000 MSEK (Scandinavian Airlines, 2022).

5.2.1 Scandinavian Airlines Brand Identity

The findings concerning SAS´s brand identity followed the same structure as Volvo Cars with the CBIM (Urde, 2013) by starting with the mission and vision of SAS. Their Brand Manager states the following: SAS (interview, 27 April 2022)

> Our mission is to make life easier for Scandinavia's frequent travelers. Meaning that our most frequent travelers are from Scandinavia and travel around 5 times a year. This is our main target group, and we will be there to make their lives as smooth as possible by connecting Scandinavia to the world and the world to Scandinavia. Have good networks, good flights, be punctual: make their journey as smooth as possible. Moreover, our vision and mission go a little hand in hand.

After having established the mission and vision of SAS, the questions regarding culture were asked. The Brand Manager explained in which there are three major points in their DNA which they focus on in terms of culture and later on giving detailed explanations about them:

> We have our DNA which is safety, punctuality, and care. It is something we always take with us to our customers, no matter what we do. We always focus on safety, that we should be punctual and that is also where we take care of the service when we fly. Out to our customers, we have some pillars that are important to us. We are a strong community that takes care of our travelers. We want to be inviting, we are curious and passionate about traveling while we feel that we do it safely. We often talk about 'We Are Travelers' and that means we want to create a cohesion around the love of travel. We take the lead in sustainability in aviation, especially in Scandinavia, but also around the world. We have also promised our customers that we have the leadership to change to sustainable flying. This is the mantra we are working towards from our side. Then

we also have our crew and other factors about what our internal culture is based on.

Continuing on the internal component, the Brand Manager was asked about their competences. It was revealed in which the three major points described in their culture also defined their competences. Moreover, they also mentioned how they can connect Scandinavia to the world and the world to Scandinavia:

> Once again safety, punctuality, and care. Right now, all airlines have some problems. But I would say that our strength and what we do best is that we connect Scandinavia to the world and the world to Scandinavia. That is what we are best at, and we do it in our Scandinavian way. We are the company where you feel that when you get on the flight to New York you are already home on the flight. We are incredibly strong on the issue of sustainability. We make it possible for our travelers to travel now, but we also do it for the future. Our strength lies in the fact that we are the Scandinavian airline.

The external/internal components were later on introduced with the element of expression. SAS stated in which they have communicated with the campaign "We are Travelers" and what their communication means. Moreover, they also explain in which their graphical components play a significant role in their expression:

> We have a strong communication that has worked for a long time, and we have in recent years communicated through a concept called 'We Are Travelers'. This means that we elevate travel and what it does to us, not just flying from A to B. This is the external communication which we build on through different areas. Travelers and traveling are a strong equity but also our sustainability agenda. [...] But our characteristics are our colors, our main message linked to "We Are Travelers", different messages, our logo and how we express ourselves towards the customer.

When asking the question regarding the brand core of SAS, the answers empathized on time, both for travelers, employees and the planet and that SAS wants to create a community and be a smart solution with sustainability:

> Our brand promise right now is to 'make time matter'. That means for travelers, employees, and the planet. In this we make sure that you get the time you need. Your time is important to us and that you should be able to use your time in the best possible way and it means that time matters also for the planet and sustainability. Then with employees, it means that we make sure that they feel good and what is important throughout the travel chain for them. We want to be a smart solution with sustainability and creating a community.

Lastly, in the external/internal components, the personality of SAS was asked. Because they had shown about their Scandinavian essence of the brand, this was a factor which permeated their brand personality:

> This is summed up with our Scandinavian way. We meet everyone on an Eye Level. We are relaxed but not too relaxed. We are not like Qatar saying Mr. and Mrs. but we see you on the same level. We are warm and personal and focus on service. But we see that travel is something that changes us as well. So, the Scandinavian way is very clear.

Concerning the external component, the Brand Manager was asked about their value proposition. This element also circulated around safety and punctuality as well as their flexibility concerning travel. Furthermore, their key offerings also emphasized on having a high standard on their flights, even for their more basic travel options:

> Our key offers are that we have Scandinavia's best flight product. And we do this by making our customers understand that we are not Ryanair or Norwegian, but we may not be Qatar either. We understand the value of the customer's journey.

Our key points are security and safety. You can trust us. We have our punctuality. We have our flexibility in how you want to travel.

When asking SAS about their relationships and how they want the nature of their relationships to be, the Brand Manager explained in which they have a personal and special relationship with their key customers and non-customer stakeholders:

It's quite personal. It is very special between our customers and us. SAS is a brand that many people have close to their heart and most people know what SAS is and there is always something you can like about it. But we are a company where, for example, if things go badly for us, everyone loves to cheer on us. You have that little extra heart and many of our customers who fly with SAS feel the pride we feel of our Scandinavian airline.

Lastly, the question concerning their intended position, SAS stated in which they go through a significant change in how we in the world see on travel and why we travel. The Brand Manager explained in which they want to be a brand that is sustainable and can give travelers the opportunity to meet new cultures and new experiences:

Right now, there is a very big change in how we in the world see travel and why you travel. We believe in travel in the future as well. We believe that you should be able to meet new people, share experiences and that we become richer by being seen and experiencing different cultures. We see that travel must be changed and made sustainable. There, we take the lead in sustainability issues. If we look at recent years, where we have focused a lot on our frequent travelers, but we are broadening and we need to look at what is important for our leisure travelers as well. For us, it is important that we are at hand for them and what makes their journey important. That is what we will see in our position in the next few years.

5.2.2 Scandinavian Airlines Storytelling

When looking at the storytelling of SAS, their main focus is on 'Going places takes us places - We Are Travelers'. The Brand Manager says that they do storytelling when they can, and when there's a story behind it. All their communication is based on their fundamental strategy and that it should be connected to our brand promise and vision, as well as how we want to position ourselves (interview, 27 April 2022). Furthermore the interviewee talks about their storytelling as the following:

> We have slightly different tracks, but it is clear that it is a little different after a pandemic. But the main purpose is we are travelers who are on a journey. A journey is not just about getting to a place. The journey does something with you. The journey changes you. You can be on a personal journey. That trip does not just have to mean that you go out and sunbathe and swim. We talk an incredible amount with our loyal customers. That they should get a little more when they use Euro Bonus. There we also have a traveler's trail on it. In our storytelling, it is incredibly important that we talk about communicating about all the great initiatives that we do in sustainability. Then it is also obvious in the storytelling about how we sell tickets and sell travel emotionally. We are seldom pressing tactical messages, but we usually bake it into some form of higher purpose. This can be seen on YouTube for example.

On their YouTube channel, a lot of different storytelling videos can be found. For instance, the concept "We Are Travelers". One of their campaigns is called "The Arrivals" and launched in 2019. The video starts with a simple question "have you ever stopped and observed the beauty of the arrival hall?" (Scandinavian Airlines, 2018). And through the video we get to follow families, friends, grandparents, partners and so on, waiting for their loved ones to come through the doors into the arrival hall. The campaign is Scandinavian Airlines way to say that "Going places takes us places" by conveying feelings, hence focusing on pathos (Scandinavian Airlines, 2018). Furthermore, the Brand Manager states:

We really believe in the concept of pathos since everyone can sell a plane ticket but not everyone can sell a feeling. Then it is both the feeling of what the trip does with one but also the feelings one gets when traveling with SAS. Why is it worth traveling with us instead of our competitors? This is where storytelling is important. The storytelling must be based on the fact that we have the right products and on our foundation. We talk about our strong qualities in the form of an emotional message that we really believe in. It's nothing we're just saying. We are emotionally connected to our brand and how the journey affects us.

Ever since 2014, "We Are Travelers" has followed a story based on lifting the travelers. Although the Brand Managers also state that there has been a trip within the company, and they focus on communicating what that trip does to one as well.

We also work very much with storytelling about our Nordic segment products called "New Nordic". Within this segment we have incredible storytelling that should be locally produced, and it should be seasonal. [...] Same goes when we launched our new "Livery". It was more than just storytelling, we did not only talk about our new aircraft and our aircraft painting, we told the whole story.

5.3 Bona

Bona is a Swedish family-owned and sustainability driven brand originating from Malmö which works as a supplier for installing, maintaining, restoring, and renovating premium floors (Bona, n.d.a). According to Bona, the company was founded in 1919 by Wilhelm Edner and is present in 90 countries through 17 international subsidiaries and 70 distributors. Bona has been a trusted brand in floor care for 100 years with significant knowledge in the importance of long-term sustainability and durability (Bona, n.d.a). The mission of Bona states in which they create beautiful floors that bring happiness to people's lives and with the vision of bringing out the beauty in floors (Bona, n.d.b). Sustainability is a significant factor since Bona has sustainability as the core to their business and has been embedded in their culture since the founding of the company (Bona, n.d.c). In 2021, Bona had a revenue of 3,100 MSEK (Bona, 2022).

5.3.1 Bona Brand Identity

Initially, when interviewing Bona concerning their brand identity using the CBIM (Urde, 2013), it was shown in which Bona already had developed a brand identity using the matrix. This led to the interview being somewhat different from the interviews with SAS and Volvo Cars. This resulted in which instead of asking the certain questions regarding the matrix, Bona was asked to talk about their brand identity and what they felt was more prominent in the matrix. During the interview Bona (interview, 26 April 2022), Bona emphasized on what engages them. The interviewees continued by stating the following:

> We saw an opportunity to take our knowledge and expertise and part of our brand to see what kind of expansion possibilities we had within the floor segment and expand that step by step. Of course, it is a huge undertaking because when you have been around for 100 years and been entirely focused on wood floors as seen as the premium flooring that existed and take it beyond that. It takes a bit of time to learn and understand the different dynamics in different market shares. But that's what it comes from really, something we believe that we can do, creating beautiful floors to bring happiness to people's lives. That is what engages us, and in that statement, it is also very much about sustainability and that we are renovating. Our main business is to renovate. - SVP Product Management & Marketing

Further on, Bona talked about the importance of putting people in their matrix. They stressed in which there is significant history and life in the floors they have renovated:

> The point about people's lives, there was a lot of discussion around that. It was important for us to put people in this matrix because these wood floors can last for generations. We have renovated floors that have been 100-200 years old and there is so much history and life that happens there. So, it is not just bringing that beauty to them but bringing life to them and creating that connection between the contractor and the homeowner and all the history that happens around it. - VP, Global Brand Group

One aspect in which Bona takes pride in is the fact that working at Bona feels like working with a family. This was an aspect which was implemented in the brand identity matrix in the culture element. The saying of that Bona feels like a family came from when they had workshops with the purpose of developing their brand identity matrix:

> The whole matrix was created by workshops with different functions and different people. So, when we did these workshops, there was a lot of saying that Bona feels like a family. So, what was surprising about this was that almost everyone came up with the same words and some kind of expressions. But the biggest thing there was that people were saying that it feels like working with a family at Bona.
> - SVP Global Marketing and Communications

Another prominent aspect Bona empathized on was their education. This was something which could be found in several elements in the matrix. It could be traced to for example their relationships, value proposition and personality:

> When talking about relationships, we have a program where we train people, and we try not to be patronizing. We try to help and build relationships and do it together. [...] In our value proposition, it is very much about solutions and services and sustainability. Before we did the matrix, we talked a lot about quality and performance. What we added in our value proposition was about communicating emotions and not just having the performance. In terms of emotions, we want to show that life happens on the floors because a floor does not exist on its own. There is always going to be something happening whether it's in a home or somewhere else where a baby takes its first steps on the floor or if you have a million people walking in an airport. So, that is a little bit about how we want to communicate emotions about life happening. [...] Personality is a little bit about how we educate. We try to help out in B2B where we educate people in floors and many other things such as management, social media and so on. We don't want to be patronizing. So, that is where "helpful experts" come in where we try to help

everybody in education. Additionally, we just want to be there and support them. -
SVP, Global Marketing and Communications

Furthermore, concerning the education and relationships Bona brings forth, they state in which it can be favorable to create connections with contractors and that the contractor strays with the same supplier. In this way, the contractor could eliminate the risk of receiving a bad reputation or doing a bad job. Bona puts themselves as helpful experts:

> One important thing we can connect to our education is that we believe that we will be more successful if our contractors are successful. And one way to eliminate the risk of doing a bad job or getting a bad reputation as a contractor is to stay with the same supplier (us). That is concerning the service part of our identity where we stay with the contractor's day and night and work as a helpful expert. We always walk the extra mile. So, this is a significant essence of our value proposition and our values. - SVP, Product Management & Marketing

Finally, when talking about Bona´s position, they stressed in which what is written in the matrix is an undertaking. They said this because of the fact that they have stretched the bar and have gone beyond with only working with wood floors. Furthermore, they emphasize on their competence and heritage and that this can be a factor in which they are doing a good job:

> I think it's a big undertaking here if you look at "the most trusted and caring name in floor care". We even raised the bar and stretched our ambitions beyond wood floors. We really have a long heritage and a long competence, and we are a really established brand. We expand so you can say that the statement is a big undertaking. Wood floors are one of the trickiest products out there and we have cracked the code of this because of our heritage and competences. This results in people thinking that we most certainly also will be good at other types of floors as well. - SVP, Product Management & Marketing

5.3.2 Bona Storytelling

Storytelling is a relatively new communication method for Bona in terms of sustainability. During the interview, they stated in which they are starting with developing storytelling surrounding that factor. This was for the reason that many other brands are focusing on sustainability which resulted in Bona wanting to be a part of it. Furthermore, Bona expressed in which they are planning on incorporating pathos in their storytelling:

> The storytelling is quite new for us when talking about sustainability. The reason why we started this is because we were looking at the sustainability part because we are very proactive in our sustainability work. A lot of brands are screaming about sustainability, and we want to find a way to tell our stories about it. We have a lot of sustainability in our brand identity which means that we want to incorporate that in our storytelling. So, to keep that position, we need to tell these kinds of stories about sustainability and use it. But we are just starting with our storytelling by looking at what kinds of stories are there we can tell. What we also have done is to incorporate pathos in our storytelling. - SVP, Global Marketing and Communications

Apart from focusing on sustainability in their storytelling, they also want to incorporate their significant heritage. Bona wants to tell stories concerning where they came from and the pride around it and that they want their storytelling to work as an inspiration to others:

> Heritage would be a big thing to focus on in our storytelling as well. The heritage part concerning where we came from and the pride. It is also to look at the stories as an inspiration and not dwell on it too much. You should tell stories about what you have done and that you are proud of, which means that the pride factor is also significant in our storytelling. We want to do storytelling in order to inspire.
> - SVP, Product Management and Marketing

When planning their storytelling, Bona talks about establishing the internal mission and vision when telling stories. Additionally, Bona expresses in which their storytelling will focus on their mission and vision, brand core, and position:

> The essence of what we do in brand management is to tell stories and try to establish the internal vision and mission. And what we want to do is to be the most trusting manufacturer in floor care. The most significant factors we want to touch upon in our storytelling is also around the mission/vision, brand core and position. - SVP, Product Management and Marketing

Apart from developing new storytelling about the sustainability factor, Bona has communicated through storytelling before. Although with other main points than sustainability. One of their more prominent communicated storytelling of Bona is "If these floors could talk" (Bona, 2019). This story brings forward the beauty in different floors and brings happiness to people's lives, suggesting in which every floor has a story to be told. It visualizes different settings, from apartments to hospitals and houses to offices (Bona, 2019). Moreover, Bona incorporates three significant factors about their brand in the story: passion, performance, and pioneering. Additionally, what Bona does in this storytelling is to incorporate their significant knowledge, heritage, and product assortment in a way where they do not actually have to tell it. The audience can see this because the story revolves around the different floors Bona offers and their proudness concerning their heritage and knowledge in floor care. The story works as a creative way of bringing forward the beauty in floors and in a creative way communicating that every floor is special (Bona, 2019).

6. Analysis

The analysis chapter will set out to analyze the empirical data with the theoretical frameworks of Corporate Brand Management. This section will be illustrated with the theoretical frameworks presented above by filling out the different elements of the matrices based on the answers from the interviews.

6.1 Volvo Cars

6.1.1 Volvo Cars Brand Identity

Based on the empirical data gathered from the interview with Volvo Cars, the following identity matrix could can be developed:

VALUE PROPOSITION	RELATIONSHIPS	POSITION
A premium car manufacturer that focuses on safety and sustainability	Personal, direct to consumer, sell a service not a hardware	Take the lead in electric driving, digitalization and autonomous driving
EXPRESSION	**BRAND CORE**	**PERSONALITY**
Scandinavian, simplicity, Swedishness: proud and purity	Bring freedom to move in a safe, sustainable and personal way	Intellectual, high morality, understated and having a "just right" feeling (lagom)
MISSION AND VISION	**CULTURE**	**COMPETENCES**
Purpose: fully electrified, expanded sales number and direct to consumer relationship	Predictability and accuracy. Be able to deal with change	Leaders in safety and sustainability

Figure 6. Brand Identity Matrix Volvo Cars

When analyzing the brand identity matrix of Volvo Cars, it is prominent in which Volvo does not talk about their mission and vision, rather a brand purpose. However, purpose and mission and vision speak of similar aspects, but Volvo Cars uses a different terminology. Moreover, the

matrix suggests in which Volvo Cars focuses on safety and sustainability. This is for the reason in which those factors are recurring in their value proposition, brand core, and competences. In other words, the sustainability and safety of Volvo Cars are arranged in a certain way which can be symbolized with the competition diagonal in the matrix. Moreover, in order to fulfill this diagonal, the elements concerning this line must be logically coherent with each other in both ways and that the competences result in the brand keeping their brand promise which can create a foundation for their value proposition (Greyser & Urde, 2019). With this said, the elements of the competition diagonal go in line with Greyser and Urde (2019) making this diagonal fulfilled in the identity matrix of Volvo Cars.

Furthermore, when analyzing the mission and vision, the brand core, and position of Volvo Cars, electrification and sustainability follows a logical path with those factors being in the elements presented above. The elements of mission and vision, the brand core, and position represents the strategy diagonal. In order to establish the connection and fulfillment of this diagonal, the mission and vision resonates with a brand promise which later on can manifest the brand's position (Greyser & Urde, 2019). The purpose of Volvo Cars is to be fully electrified, having increased sales numbers and establishing a direct-to-consumer relationship. This can in turn generate the promise of bringing freedom to move in a safe, sustainable, and personal way because of the electrification and direct-to-consumer relationship. Their brand promise can later on manifest the intended position regarding being the leader in electric driving, digitization, and autonomous driving. The promise manifests more to the electrification factor in the position element than the other two factors. However, the elements seem to fulfill the criteria of establishing the strategy diagonal making it fulfilled.

When analyzing the communication horizontal, which includes the expression, the brand core, and the personality, the personality must resonate with the brand core and if this is expressed in some way in order to be fulfilled (Greyser & Urde, 2019). The personality element suggests Volvo Cars being an understated, intellectual brand with high mortality. Because their brand core is to bring freedom to move in a safe, sustainable, and personal way, the personality element does not resonate with the brand core. Thus, making the communication horizontal not fulfilled. Moreover, the expression states in which Volvo Cars touched upon the Scandinavian and simple

factors as well as the Swedishness. This does not follow in line with the brand core, nor with the personality.

Lastly, the interaction vertical consists of culture, the brand core, and relationships. In order to establish this line in the matrix, the culture and values must resonate with the people both inside and outside the organization which refers to the relationships of the brand (Greyser & Urde, 2019). The culture element talks about the brand focusing on predictability and accuracy and being able to deal with change. This element does not resonate with the brand core, nor the relationships for the reason in which it does not go in line with bringing freedom to move in a safe, sustainable, and personal way. However, the brand core and relationships resonate with each other because the personal factors occur in those elements. Although, this is not sufficient enough for establishing the interaction vertical.

6.1.2 Volvo Cars Storytelling

Looking at the storytelling of Volvo Cars, the storytelling matrix (Urde, 2022) can be applied. This can therefore be analyzed by looking at what elements their storytelling represents and or illustrates (see Figure 5). One significant factor to disclose before analyzing the connection between Volvo Car´s storytelling and brand identity is that they express their storytelling as "storytelling by storydoing". According to them, storytelling should be focused on campaigns or initiatives which have been executed and not something that is planned to be (interview, 2 May 2022). Their commercial concerning "It´s Time" can be categorized as storytelling because their initiative they present had already been executed before they went live with the commercial (Volvo Cars, 2022).

By looking at the storytelling of Volvo Cars with the storytelling matrix (Urde, 2022), further analysis can be conducted to find connections primarily in their storytelling. Firstly, starting with the competition diagonal concerning their value proposition, brand core, and competences, it can be seen in which their storytelling fulfills this diagonal. Firstly, Volvo Cars present their storytelling in a way which tells something about how the brand adds value in "The Ultimate Safety Test" and "It's Time" by showing how the brand works towards a more sustainable and equal future (Volvo Cars, 2021; Volvo Cars, 2022). Moreover, their storytelling tells the audience

in which the ultimate safety test is climate change, and that Volvo Cars are going all-electric to build a more sustainable world as well as illustrating the safety of the cars (Volvo Cars, 2021). "It's Time" tells us that equality and time matters when they offer the same parental leave as in Sweden for all employees at Volvo Cars (Volvo Cars, 2022). Secondly, this also indicates in which the brand core of the matrix is fulfilled. Their storytelling concerning sustainability, safety and equality illustrates how they cherish their values and keep their promises. Thirdly, the competence element is also fulfilled for the reason in which their performance and quality is illustrated in "The Ultimate Safety Test" where they test the safety of their cars in numerous ways (Volvo Cars, 2021). By already having established in which their brand core is fulfilled according to the storytelling matrix, this element will not be further analyzed when looking at the other connections of the matrix.

Secondly, when looking at the strategy diagonal concerning mission and vision, brand core, and position, it can be said in which this diagonal is fulfilled. Firstly, their mission and vision is fulfilled for which their storytelling illustrates their engagement with offering the same parental leave as in Sweden to all employees (Volvo Cars, 2022). Their vision can also be detected in their storytelling because of their electrification strategy in "The Ultimate Safety Test" (Volvo Cars, 2021). Secondly, their position can be fulfilled because Volvo Cars present stories that make them stand out. Their storytelling presents a "slice of life" perspective and tries to bring everyone back to earth by not having too flashy storytelling (interview, 2 May 2022).

Thirdly, the communication horizontal concerning expression, brand core, and personality. This horizontal is not fully fulfilled for the reason in which the element of personality is not visible in their storytelling. Because their storytelling focuses on safety, sustainability (Volvo Cars, 2021) and equality (Volvo Cars, 2021) in a "slice of life" perspective, the brand's character is not fully visible. Their expression however can be fulfilled to some extent for the reason that their cars can be seen in some of their storytelling. Even though the car is not the main focus area in their storytelling, it is still visible to the audience which says something about the brand´s design.

Lasty, the interaction vertical regarding relationships, brand core, and culture can be analyzed through the storytelling matrix. This vertical is not fulfilled when looking at Volvo Car´s

storytelling with the storytelling matrix. Their storytelling concerning "The Ultimate Safety Test" and "It´s Time" does not visualize the relations of the brand. Although, their storytelling says something about the brand in terms of safety, sustainability, and equality (Volvo Cars, 2021; Volvo Cars, 2022). The culture element in the storytelling matrix can be categorized as fulfilled because the storytelling of "It´s Time" illustrates what they do for their employees in terms of parental leave, symbolizing individuals living the brand (Volvo Cars, 2022).

6.1.3 Connecting Storytelling and Brand Identity

After having mapped the certain connections separately in the identity matrix and the storytelling matrix, the analysis of the connection between Volvo Car´s storytelling and brand identity can commence. In order to establish such a connection, the elements of the fulfilled lines in the storytelling matrix must be compared and analyzed with the same lines in the identity matrix. In this case, Volvo Cars have fulfilled the competition and strategy diagonal in the storytelling matrix. This indicates in which the value proposition, brand core, competences, mission and vision, and position must be compared with the same elements in the identity matrix in order to establish a connection.

When looking at the identity matrix of Volvo Cars and specifically the competition and strategy diagonal, three main points can be identified. These are safety, sustainability, and electrification. Their value proposition suggests that Volvo Cars is a premium brand with focus on safety and sustainability. The safety and sustainability factors can then be traced throughout the competition diagonal with the brand core and competences. This is something that also can be traced in the strategy diagonal. However, the elements also present additional factors such as their relationships, the personal tone to the brand and digitalization. When analyzing the storytelling of Volvo Cars, it becomes prominent in which the elements in the two diagonals become visible. In "The Ultimate Safety Test", the safety factor can easily be found because that story illustrates how the cars perform in terms of safety related assignments (Volvo Cars, 2021). Furthermore, the sustainability and electrification factors also become visible in that storytelling because there is a turn in the story where the Volvo team sees a piece of glacier breaking free. Afterwards, the story puts emphasis on how the climate is the ultimate safety test and that Volvo Cars is going fully electrified (Volvo Cars, 2021). Additionally, the It´s Time storytelling of Volvo Cars also

suggests in which the personal tone of the brand becomes prominent. That story plays a more personal setting than "The Ultimate Safety Test" because there is another message to the story. This message is of course the parental leave aspect (Volvo Cars, 2022).

In terms of connecting the storytelling of Volvo Cars with their brand identity, it can be seen in which the connection lies in the competition and strategy diagonal. This means in which their brand identity is connected with their storytelling in terms of their value proposition, brand core, competences, mission and vision, and position.

6.2 Scandinavian Airlines

6.2.1 Scandinavian Airlines Brand Identity

Based on the empirical data gathered from the interview, the following brand identity matrix for Scandinavian Airlines can be created. Their brand identity matrix is characterized by the term Scandinavia and the Scandinavian way of thinking. Together with the convenient part of traveling, being sustainable and to engage all the travelers and employees in the concept "We Are Travelers". These are the main value words that permeate Scandinavian Airlines.

VALUE PROPOSITION	*RELATIONSHIPS*	*POSITION*
Scandinavia's leading airline company: Safety, security, punctuality and flexibility	Personal, strong community, respect and proudness	An airline company that wants to make travel sustainable. Make every journey important
EXPRESSION	*BRAND CORE*	*PERSONALITY*
We Are Travelers! Scandinavian by name and nature	Make life easier by making time matter for travelers, employees and the planet	"The Scandinavian way": eye level communication, warm, personal, relaxed and service minded
MISSION AND VISION	*CULTURE*	*COMPETENCES*
Make life easier for Scandinavia´s frequent travelers	Safety, punctuality and care	Connect Scandinavia to the world and the world to Scandinavia

Figure 7. Brand Identity Matrix Scandinavian Airlines

When analyzing their brand identity, the first thing that can be identified is their competition diagonal. The competition diagonal is fulfilled if the brand´s competences result in them keeping their brand promise which can create a foundation for a competitive value proposition (Greyser & Urde, 2019). SAS competences is a condition to be able to keep their brand promise and can therefore be perceived as complete. It can in turn somewhat create a foundation for a competitive value proposition by connecting Scandinavia to the rest of the world and therefore pave the way to being the leading airline company in Scandinavia. The competition diagonal can therefore to some degree be fulfilled but could be even more strengthened.

Over to the strategy diagonal. SAS´s brand vision and mission goes hand in hand to make life easier for Scandinavia´s frequent travelers, which according to themselves and their target audience are people who travel around five times a year or more. Same goes with their brand core, where they also talk about making time easier but also choose to involve making time matter for travelers, employees, and the planet. This takes us to the third part of the strategy path, namely the position that puts the sustainability factor as their top priority for their future position. Although the focus on sustainability is of importance for them, their priority also includes to always take care of the passengers and help to make their journey important. These three strategy elements are, according to themselves, very important in their communication. According to Greyser and Urde (2019), it is important that the elements must be logically coherent with each other in both directions, which they clearly are in the strategy diagonal. Both the position and mission and vision are clearly connected to their brand core and the coherence between all three is strong. Their mission and vision are engaging, which is being translated into a brand promise which in turn determines the direction for the brands future. This results in their strategy diagonal being fulfilled.

In the communication horizontal including expression, brand core and personality, there is a clear connection between SAS expression and personality. They both emphasize the Scandinavian aspect of the brand, both the name and the proudness of their heritage but also how the company acts and treats their travelers. Resulting in that their brand is symbolized by Scandinavian personality traits for instance personal, warm, and eye-level communication. This is also reflected in their main brand communication expression "We Are Travelers", that both

they at SAS together with their travelers are in a unit which together travel on a journey to find inspiration and bring home perspectives. These two elements are somewhat connected to SAS brand core in the meaning that everyone is involved, both the employees, the travelers, and the planet although the connection in the communication horizontal could be even more strengthened in order to be completely fulfilled.

Lastly, the interaction vertical includes the elements relationships, brand core and culture. A certain connection between the culture and the brand core can be interpreted in the making life easier and making time matter and the punctuality and care aspect. SAS strives to be punctual and therefore making time matter and making life easier for the travelers. Making life easier can also be connected to safety and care, that it should be easy and safe to travel in an airplane and that the travelers always can expect good service and to be well taken care of. Furthermore, the care aspect from the culture element can also be connected to the relationship element in the way that care is reflected in both personal and respect. This results in the interaction vertical being somewhat connected but not entirely in order to be logically coherent with each other in both directions (Greyser & Urde, 2019).

6.2.2 Scandinavian Airlines Storytelling

Scandinavian Airlines base their communication on the fundamentals of the company to make sure that the communication reflects their brand promise, vision, and position. Meaning that they take the strategy diagonal into account when communicating about the brand. A pattern between the communication and their brand identity can therefore already be somewhat visible but does this also include their storytelling communication. SAS often use storytelling as a tool when communicating about their brand, as said by the interviewee, they do storytelling when they can, and when there's a story behind it (SAS interview, 27 April 2022). In the empirical material above is an example of one of their storytelling attempts called "The Arrivals". When looking at their storytelling in relation to "The Storytelling Matrix" (Urde, 2022), see Figure 5, one can notice a few interesting connections within the campaign "The Arrivals".

Firstly, when looking at the competition diagonal concerning value proposition, the brand core, and competences, the connection is not fulfilled. In "The Arrivals" the value proposition and

how the brand adds value becomes visible for the reason that SAS touches upon traveling changes and unites people. It takes us places where we can visit other people (Scandinavian Airlines, 2018). Their brand core also becomes visible in their storytelling because it shows that SAS keeps their promise and cherishes their values. This means in which they make life easier regarding travel, the travelers and the relatives to the travelers can feel safe when choosing SAS. These two elements can be distinguished in their storytelling. However, their competence is not fully visible in their storytelling. The competences element in the storytelling matrix asks for stories about the performance and the quality (Urde, 2022). These factors are not visible in a clear way. Although, quality can be visible if that factor symbolizes in which SAS is a trustworthy and safe airline. However, the connection is not sufficient enough for establishing a connection. Similar to Volvo Cars, because the brand core is already established, this element will not be further analyzed in this section.

Secondly, the storytelling converting the strategy diagonal including mission and vision, brand core and position is fulfilled. As mentioned before, the brand core element is already established, and a position and mission and vision fulfillment can also be noticed. SAS communicates their position in their storytelling by illustrating feelings and that traveling takes you on a personal journey. Communication feelings, pathos, is very special and important for SAS storytelling, resulting in them standing out from their competitors. As said by their Brand Manager, "Everyone can communicate a brand, but not everyone can communicate a feeling" (SAS interview, 27 April 2022). Moreover, the mission and vision element in the storytelling matrix talks about stories about the engagement and visions of the brand (Urde, 2022). In their storytelling, their vision is visible for the reason that they mention "going places takes us places and in which traveling changes people to the better and that we are travelers. Furthermore, it is mentioned that people who travel and experience the world can create great ideas which can lead to change.

Thirdly, when looking at the communication horizontal including expression, brand core and personality, it can be distinguished in which this horizontal is fulfilled. The reason for this is because the expression of the storytelling brings forward SAS´s communication. Their communication stands out in certain ways with more emotions and from a customer perspective

where they are waiting in the arrival hall (Scandinavian Airlines, 2018). Furthermore, their personality is also fulfilled in the matrix for the reason in which that element in the matrix consists of stories about the performance and quality (Urde, 2022). The storytelling of SAS tells us that they are personal and take care of everyone whether you are a business or a leisure traveler and no matter their age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nor health condition. This indicates in which the communication horizontal in the storytelling matrix is fulfilled and can thus be analyzed with the identity matrix of SAS.

Lastly, the interaction vertical including relationships, brand core and culture, does not have a fulfilled connection in "The Arrivals" (Scandinavian Airlines, 2018) due to the culture element. SAS does not completely include stories about people living the brand in the campaign video and there is no direct focus on the employees, except one short motion of an employee walking out with a child to the arrival hall. This results in the interaction vertical not being fulfilled, although the relationship element is very present in the storytelling which is visible in many ways. When using the expression "We Are Travelers", SAS creates a unit that consists of themselves, their employees and the travelers and the brand is therefore all about building a relationship with the customers. The relationship element is further strengthened when mentioning that they take care of more than a million travelers each day, and when the employee walks out with a child who travels along, which indicates that they are a loyal brand that takes care of their customers.

6.2.3 Connecting Storytelling and Brand Identity

After having established in which SAS has fulfilled the strategy diagonal and the communication horizontal according to the storytelling matrix, the analysis with the identity matrix will be conducted with those lines. In other words, this means that the mission and vision, brand core, position, expression, and personality of SAS will be analyzed in order to see if those elements from the storytelling matrix are connected with their brand identity matrix.

Firstly, what can be distinguished from the strategy diagonal in the identity matrix of SAS is in which they want to make life easier and make time matter in terms of sustainability and their employees. Secondly, the communication horizontal illustrates that SAS is a Scandinavian and personal brand who focuses on a warm and relaxed personality. It is prominent in their

storytelling that they touch upon the slogan of "We Are Travelers" and in which they opt for a Scandinavian setting in their communication. In "The Arrivals" it can be seen that the communication horizontal is connected. This is for the reason in which the storytelling expresses Scandinavian tones as well as presenting "We are travelers". Moreover, the brand core which states that SAS promise to make life easier by making time matter for travelers, employees, and the planet also is visible in their storytelling. Their storytelling talks about how travel changes people and in which SAS values time for their travelers, employees, and the planet (Scandinavian Airlines, 2018). The personality element can also be connected in terms of storytelling and brand identity for the reason that their personality can indirectly be identified by looking at the setting of the story. Their personality is warm, personal, relaxed, service minded, and having eye-level communication. This is something that can be identified when looking at the people meeting their friends and family at the arrival´s hall. Their reactions can be categorized as what the personality of SAS is. This indicates in which there is a connection between their storytelling and brand identity with the communication horizontal.

Looking at the strategy diagonal, it is prominent that the brand core and mission and vision relates to one another with the promise of making life easier. Moreover, their position states that they want to make every journey important while focusing on making travel sustainable. The storytelling of SAS talks about the importance of their journeys and that they want to take care of their travelers (Scandinavian Airlines, 2018). Moreover, they also express in which they incorporate sustainability in a subtle way in their storytelling (interview, 27 April 2022). Even though SAS talks about making life easier in their storytelling, they do not bring forward Scandinavia´s frequent flyers. This is something that needs to be visible in their storytelling in order to establish a connection with their mission and vision and therefore a connection with the strategy diagonal. This indicates that there is no clear nor obvious connection with their storytelling and brand identity in terms of the strategy diagonal.

6.3 Bona

6.3.1 Bona Brand Identity

Because Bona already had constructed a brand identity matrix before the interview took place, the analysis is based on that matrix. Their brand identity can be illustrated as following:

VALUE PROPOSITION Making floors look great: Solutions, services, and sustainability	*RELATIONSHIPS* Working together to inspire better results	*POSITION* The most trusted and caring name in floor care
EXPRESSION Recommended by professionals – since 1919	*BRAND CORE* "Bringing out the beauty in floors" Passion, Performance, Pioneering	*PERSONALITY* Helpful expert
MISSION AND VISION Creating beautiful floors to bring happiness to peoples´ lives To bring out the beauty in floors	*CULTURE* Welcome to the Bona family	*COMPETENCES* Heritage and knowledge in wood floors

Figure 8. Brand Identity Matrix Bona (interview, 26 April 2022)

By analyzing Bona´s brand identity, it can be distinguished that heritage and knowledge are two significant factors which permeate in the matrix. Moreover, it is crucial for the elements to be logically coherent with each other where four certain lines are distinguished (Greyser and Urde, 2019). Looking at the competition diagonal including value proposition, the brand core, and competences. In Bona´s identity matrix, it can be distinguished in which their competences focus on their knowledge and heritage in floor care. Their brand core indicates in which Bona wants to bring out the beauty in floors with passion, performance, and pioneering as their core values. Lasty, their value proposition states in which they make floors look great by focusing on solutions, services, and sustainability. It can be established in which their competences lay a foundation for their brand promise because they have a significant knowledge and heritage in wood floors, making those two elements connected. Furthermore, their brand core can therefore lay the foundation for their value proposition of making floors look great. This can be done by

bringing out the beauty on floors. Therefore, the competition diagonal follows what Greyser and Urde (2019) suggests regarding this diagonal and is thus fulfilled in Bona´s identity matrix.

Moving to the strategy diagonal, which includes the mission and vision, the brand core, and the position. One significant and logical factor is to bring out the beauty in floors. This is something which flows through the mission and vision and brand core stating that those elements are logically connected. Furthermore, their position concerning the most trusted and caring name in floor care can be connected to its other diagonal elements for the reason in which passion, performance, and pioneering works as Bona´s values which tells us something about how the brand works. In order to establish the strategy diagonal, the mission and vision must resonate with the brand core and the brand core to the position (Greyser & Urde, 2019). This indicates in which the strategy diagonal is fulfilled based on what Greyser and Urde (2019) suggests.

In the communication horizontal concerning the elements of expression, the brand core, and personality, there is a connection regarding their expertise. The personality of Bona indicates in which they are helpful experts, stating that they are good at what they do. This resonates with their brand core which presents their core values. These core values can be the explanations to why they act as helpful experts because of their passion, performance and pioneering. Lastly, this goes to their expression where it states that theft has been recommended by professionals since 1919. In summary, it can be explained in which Bona is a helpful expert that focuses on certain core values. And because of the fact that they are helpful experts with these core values, they are recommended by professionals. This indicates in which the interaction vertical is fulfilled because the Bona´s personality resonates with the brand core and is expressed in certain ways (Greyser & Urde, 2019).

Lastly, the interaction vertical regarding relationship, the brand core, and culture of Bona´s brand identity signals the familiarity of the brand. Their culture states in which working at Bona feels as if working with a family. Their brand core presents their brand promise of bringing out the beauty in floors and their core values of passion, performance, and pioneering. In order to establish and fulfill the interaction vertical, the culture and values must resonate with the relations of the brand (Greyser & Urde, 2019). In this case with Bona, their culture and values

resonate with their relationships concerning they value teamwork in order to inspire better results. Working together in a familiar setting can help to create better results. Furthermore, working together in a familiar setting with a brand who focuses on passion, performance, and pioneering, teamwork could generate better results. In summary, the interaction vertical is fulfilled which indicates that every line in Bona´s identity matrix is fulfilled.

6.3.2 Bona Storytelling

When looking at the storytelling of Bona, the storytelling matrix can be applied in this case to establish whether there are connections between their storytelling and the storytelling matrix (see Figure 5). Starting with the competition diagonal concerning the elements of value proposition, brand core, and competences. In Bona´s storytelling concerning "If these floors could talk", it is visual in which the story puts emphasis on the beauty in floors and in which they bring happiness to people's lives. The story also visualizes the significant heritage and knowledge of Bona regarding floors, plus expressing their business with the three factors: passion, performance, and pioneering (Bona, 2019). With this said, it can be established that the competition diagonal in the storytelling matrix is fulfilled. The factors presented in their storytelling add value for the brand for the reason in which they seem to care significantly about floors and wanting to bring happiness to peoples´ lives while bringing out the beauty in floors. This can also be connected to their brand core where it is presented in their storytelling that they cherish their values as well as keeping their promises concerning bringing out the beauty in floors. The element of competence can also be traced in their storytelling because "If these floors could talk" presents the performance and quality of Bona with their heritage and knowledge. The storytelling tells us in which their floors have a significant history behind them stating in which they have had a high quality and performance (Bona, 2019). In summary, this indicates in which the competition diagonal is fulfilled and because the brand core is fulfilled, that element will not be further analyzed.

Moving on to the strategy diagonal concerning the elements of mission and vision, brand core, and position. These elements speak about stories concerning the brand´s engagement and visions, promises, and values, and how and why the brand stands out (Urde, 2022). The storytelling of Bona works as a good example on how and why the brand stands out. This is for the reason in

which they communicate about floors in a creative way where all kinds of floors have their own history stating, "If these floors could talk" (Bona, 2019). Furthermore, because of their significant heritage and knowledge which they include in their storytelling, it can be established that this is how and why the brand stands out. Concerning the mission and vision element regarding Bona´s engagement and vision, it can be seen in their storytelling in which their vision is coherent. In "If these floors could talk" it becomes prominent that Bona strives to bring out the beauty in floors as well as bring happiness to peoples´ lives (Bona, 2019). Additionally, their storytelling seems engaging because of their different ways of marketing floors. Moreover, the storytelling shows in which Bona is a brand who is significantly engaged in floors strengthening the engagement factors in the mission and vision element. With this said, it becomes clear that the strategy diagonal is fulfilled.

Looking at the communication horizontal concerning expression, brand core, and personality, it becomes prominent in which the expression element can be fulfilled by looking at Bona´s storytelling. The expression element asks for stories about the brand´s design and communication (Urde, 2022) and by looking at "If these floors could talk", those factors become clear. The story revolves around the product itself, visualizing different floors and what kind of history they have. Even though the story does not specifically talk about different floors and what comes within, their products are communicated in a subtle yet creative way (Bona, 2019). Furthermore, the personality element concerning stories about the brand's character. This element also becomes visible in their storytelling for the reason that when "If these floors could talk" brings forward Bona´s heritage and knowledge, it says something about the brand's character. It tells the audience in which Bona is trustworthy as well as knowledgeable in their floor work. In summary, this means that the communication element also is fulfilled according to the storytelling matrix.

Lastly, looking at the interaction vertical concerning the elements of relationships, brand core, and culture. These elements talk about stories showing the brand and its relations, promises and values, and people living the brand. When looking at "If these floors could talk", it does not visualize or talk about the relationships with Bona. Although the story says something about the brand in question regarding their heritage, knowledge, and products (Bona, 2019). Furthermore,

this does not indicate in which the relationships element is fulfilled. The same goes with culture because the story does not show employees living the brand. Although it shows other individuals living the brand by having their floors in their homes, offices, or basketball halls. Moreover, because they do not show employees living the brand, the element of culture is not fulfilled. This states in which the interaction vertical is not fulfilled.

6.3.3 Connecting Storytelling and Brand Identity

After having analyzed Bona´s storytelling with the storytelling matrix, the conclusions which can be drawn are that the competition diagonal, strategy diagonal, and communication horizontal are fulfilled. This indicates that those lines will be analyzed with Bona´s identity matrix to see if there lies a connection between their storytelling and brand identity.

When looking at the different elements concerning the competition diagonal, strategy diagonal, and communication horizontal in their identity matrix, it is prominent that they focus on their heritage, knowledge, and expertise. These factors include they are a trusted brand that wants to bring happiness to peoples´ lives, bring out the beauty in floors, and make them look great. Additionally, they also put emphasis on passion, performance, and pioneering as well as, solutions, services, and sustainability. Firstly, it becomes clear in which connection between Bona´s storytelling and brand identity in terms of the competition diagonal can be established. The factors presented in their identity matrix are visible in their storytelling. "If these floors could talk" presents their heritage and knowledge by illustrating this in a creative and engaging way (Bona, 2019), making this element connected with their storytelling. Furthermore, the brand core is connected for the reason that "bringing out the beauty in floors" is one of their main messages in the story. Additionally, their values are also presented (Bona, 2019). The value proposition is also connected because their storytelling revolves around making floors look great with smart solutions and services (Bona, 2019). Moreover, the sustainability factor is something Bona is starting to create storytelling about (interview, 26 April 2022).

Further on, it can also be established in which there is a connection in their storytelling and brand identity with the strategy diagonal. The mission and vision in their identity matrix states in which Bona wants to create beautiful floors to bring happiness to people's lives and to bring out the

beauty in floors. This is something that relates to the brand core for the reason that their brand promise is their vision. Moreover, their position states they want to be the most trusted and caring name in floor care. By looking at their storytelling, the mission and vision, and brand core are fulfilled. This is because the factors presented in those elements in the identity matrix are illustrated and visualized in "If these floors could talk". Furthermore, stating that floors have their own history results in Bona bringing out the beauty in floors as well as bringing happiness to peoples´ lives (Bona, 2019). Moreover, the position regarding Bona wanting to be the most trusted and caring name in floor care. Although this is not mentioned precisely in their storytelling, it can still be found if analyzed between the lines of the story. In their storytelling, they speak about how their heritage and knowledge plays a significant part of their brand and how they can be categorized as trustworthy (Bona, 2019).

Lastly, analyzing if there is a connection between their storytelling and brand identity in terms of the communication horizontal. The element regarding personality speaks about Bona being a helpful expert according to their identity matrix. In "If these floors could talk", it presents Bona as experts with their heritage and knowledge as well as how they cherish floors in a creative and engaging way. Moreover, the setting and imagery of the story speaks about how they are helpful (Bona, 2019). Although, the expression element does not become visible in their storytelling. Their expression indicates that Bona has been recommended by professionals since 1919. This is something that is not directly presented in their storytelling but is also not indirectly presented as their position. In summary, this results in the communication horizontal not being connected in terms of storytelling and brand identity.

7. Discussion

The discussion chapter of this study will present and review the acquired findings from the analysis concerning the storytelling and brand identity connections with the case companies followed by various insights explaining storytelling and brand identity.

After having presented and defined The Brand Identity Matrix and The Storytelling Matrix for the three case companies, it is interesting to further discuss the connection between storytelling and identity. It can be established in which the three companies differ to some extent when connecting their storytelling to their brand identity. Two of the case companies seem to have a connection in the strategy diagonal. Beyond this line, the differentiation between the companies starts to occur. Volvo Cars have a connection with the competition and strategy diagonal. Bona has a connection with the competition and strategy diagonal and SAS has a connection with the communication horizontal. The reason why the majority of the companies have a connection with the strategy and competition diagonal can be discussed. One thought can be in which it is a matter of what aspects are more popular to communicate. Because the strategy diagonal concerns the elements of mission and vision, brand core, and position which seem to be important to communicate, it can be an explanation to why that line is connected throughout the majority of the companies.

For a company, it may be more effective to communicate the vision, brand promise and values, and the intended position in the future rather than other elements. This can also be a further explanation to why none of the companies have a connection with their storytelling and brand identity in terms of the interaction vertical. In other words, the elements of relationships and culture. As previously mentioned, SAS is the only company out of the three which have a clear connection with the communication horizontal. This can be because SAS have a desire to communicate their expression and personality more than the other companies. It became clear from the interview in which they focus on their Scandinavian tone and personal communication. Although, these elements are not only important for SAS but according to the analysis, it seems in which they focus more on those elements in terms of storytelling.

After conducting the interviews, developing the brand identity matrices, and linking them to their brand storytelling, one of the main insights was the differences amongst the connection between storytelling and identity. The insights resulted in two new models, illustrated in the following figure, namely *storytelling driven identity* and *identity driven storytelling*. Storytelling driven identity is based on and emphasizes the story. For instance, a strong signature story which permeates the company and its values. Meaning that the story is a foundation to the company, which the brand creates its brand identity around. Identity driven storytelling, on the other hand, is instead storytelling based on the brand's core values and its identity which they communicate through the use of storytelling. The developed frameworks confirm that identity enriches storytelling and storytelling enriches identity if they are used in a certain way whereas a company's identity and storytelling can be seen as connected. All three of the case companies in our thesis, are leaning more towards identity driven storytelling.
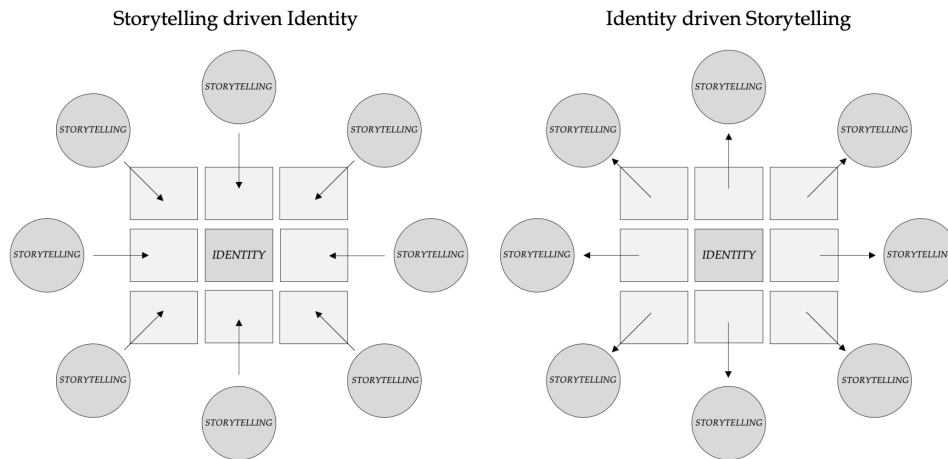

Figure 9. Storytelling driven Identity vs Identity driven Storytelling

What can be said about Bona is they seem to be focusing on identity driven storytelling. Their identity revolves around their significant heritage and knowledge as well as being a helpful expert who focuses on sustainability and other important aspects. This is something that is occurring in their storytelling, especially in their storytelling concerning "If these floors could talk" (Bona, 2019). Storytelling is something Bona focuses on right now where they are planning new areas to focus on. Sustainability is one of those factors they are starting to incorporate in

their storytelling. This can indicate in which Bona takes aspects from their brand identity and communicates it through storytelling, strengthening their identity driven storytelling.

Scandinavian Airlines also lean more towards identity driven storytelling. Their main identity attributes involve safety, punctuality, care and that they are very proud of their heritage and the ability to connect Scandinavia to the rest of the world. This by making life easy and making time matter for travelers, employees, and the planet. SAS communicates about these attributes through storytelling and the use of pathos when advertising "We Are Travelers". That we are travelers on a journey and what that journey does to us and how it changes us personally. This explains what SAS strives toward selling a feeling and not just a ticket, and why storytelling is so important for the company. Furthermore, they also focus on communicating what they have done, much like Volvo, but with the focus on what they do for the environment in order to reach a higher purpose.

Volvo Cars put extra emphasis on communication about their safety. Their storytelling often involves safety, sustainability, the personal freedom to move and the focus on electric driving, digitalization, and the future of autonomous driving. They do so by advertising "a slice of life" which reflects the most important aspects of life, which for their customers most certainly involves being able to drive their loved ones around in a safe way, hence the focus on safety in both Volvo Cars brand identity and their storytelling. Through communication about "a slice of life", Volvo manages to tap into the audience's emotions, by including pathos as a main aspect in their communication. Further, one interesting aspect which they pointed out themselves, is a concept they call "storytelling by storydoing", which in turn can be seen as an extension of the identity driven storytelling model, presented above. Meaning that Volvo Cars, as a part of their mission and vision, strive towards telling stories about what they have done and not what they will do. As in the campaign "It's time" (Volvo Cars, 2022) where they communicate about their decision to offer all employees worldwide the same paid parental leave rights.

In summary, it seems in which all three companies focus on identity driven storytelling meaning that they communicate certain elements from their brand identity in their storytelling.

8. Conclusion

The final section of the study will firstly revisit the research questions and purpose followed by the conclusions which answers the questions. Secondly, this chapter will present the various theoretical contributions and managerial implications this study has established. Lastly, future implications will be discussed.

As presented in the introduction chapter, the purpose of the thesis was to explore the phenomenon of storytelling as a theory for connecting brand identity with storytelling and how it can contribute to effective brand communication. In order to strengthen the connection between storytelling and identity. Hence, the three following research questions was formulated to guide the thesis:

- *What is a storytelling and brand identity connection?*
- *How and to what extent are the brands´ storytelling connected to their brand identity?*
- *Why, or why not, are the brands´ storytelling connected to their brand identity?*

Regarding the question, what a storytelling and brand identity connection is, we propose that it is when a company's storytelling fulfills certain elements in the storytelling matrix and further on fulfills the same elements in the brand identity matrix of the company. This is made by establishing connections of elements in the identity matrix and using those lines, the competition- and strategy diagonal, the communication horizontal and the interaction vertical, the same way in the storytelling matrix. In relation to the second question regarding whether, and to what extent, the three case companies' storytelling is connected to their brand identity, it differs within the three companies. It can be stated in which the company does not fully have a connection between their storytelling and brand identity when looking at the chosen storytelling. Based on the analysis and the storytelling of the companies, all of them have a connection with two out of four lines. Volvo Cars and Bona have a connection with the competition and strategy diagonal while SAS has a connection with the strategy diagonal and communication horizontal. Although, it is not a question of a full connection and a half connection. Even if the companies

only had one connection with one single element, it would still have been a connection between their storytelling and brand identity, but only with that element. Answering the third, and last question, the case companies do not fulfill the criteria of having a full connection whether it is in the storytelling matrix or in the brand identity matrix. This means in which the elements in the brand identity are not fully incorporated in their storytelling. The reason why they do not have a full connection between storytelling and brand identity is because they do not communicate certain aspects from their brand identity in their storytelling, making them not being connected.

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

The first and most significant theoretical contribution this study has found is the establishment of linkage between brand identity and storytelling. This linkage indicates in which brand identity and storytelling can be connected with each other and thus creating a coherent picture of a brand's identity and storytelling. When looking at the corporate brand management layers (Urde, 2022), it can be seen in which identity (brand identity matrix) and communication (storytelling matrix) are next to each other. Although, the very linkage between them has not been entirely clear which our study has established. The reason why this contribution plays a significant role is because of the fact that other contributions revolve around it. By establishing a linkage between brand identity and storytelling, the other contributions revolving around this is in which our study has applied the frameworks of the brand identity matrix (Urde, 2013) and the storytelling matrix (Urde, 2022). This has been made with three different case companies resulting in the frameworks being more renowned for the reason in which it shows that it can be applied to more companies. Furthermore, separate linkages have also been established for the different case companies which opens up to the second major theoretical contribution.

The second theoretical contribution revolves around the insights presented in the discussion chapter. Because the study has identified certain connections between the case companies´ storytelling and brand identity, illustrations have been created to present how storytelling and brand identity can enrich each other. These illustrations are called *identity driven storytelling* and *storytelling driven identity,* which demonstrates the connection between a company's identity and storytelling. The developed framework (see Figure 9) works as an extension to Urde´s Brand

Identity Matrix (Urde, 2013) and can further be applied together with Urde´s Storytelling Matrix (Urde, 2022).

The third contribution of this study is the creation of an analysis method to see connections in storytelling and brand identity. The analysis method was specifically created for this study's purpose with three certain steps. Firstly, when having developed the brand identity matrix for the case companies, the look for logical connections within the matrix starts. These connections concern the strategy and competition diagonal, communication horizontal, and interaction vertical. After having established those connections within the identity matrix, the same connections will be examined through the storytelling matrix. This step examines what kind of stories the companies have and if they have certain stories which cover certain elements, logical connections are established in the storytelling matrix. The last step is to see the very connections between storytelling and brand identity which is fulfilled by comparing the connections from the storytelling matrix and the same connections in the identity matrix. If these connections are similar to each other or speak about the same thing, a connection is established.

The fourth and final contribution this study has created is the illustration of Aristotle´s Dramaturgy Model. This illustration visualizes what Aristotle stressed concerning what is a story starting with the aspects of diction, character, plot, song, thought, and spectacle. These aspects are crucial for a story and if these are achieved, the aspects of having a beginning, a middle, and an end must also be achieved for it to be categorized as a story.

7.2 Managerial Implications

Even if the connection between storytelling and brand identity was conducted with certain companies, it is still significantly interesting and valuable for other companies to look at. The established connection between storytelling and brand identity can especially be helpful for brand managers for the reason in which the connection shows what elements that are connected and those who are not. Furthermore, three managerial implications are addressed to brand managers. In addition, executives sitting on more strategic positions should also be included for which it is a strategic choice concerning what elements that are not connected should be implemented in their storytelling or their brand identity.

The first managerial implication is the finding of implementing a way for brands to see which elements are connected in terms of storytelling and brand identity. Moreover, this can give cohesive visualization of which elements brands either can implement in their brand identity or in their storytelling. This can act as a valuable implementation for the reason that a brand can easily see which elements are connected and those who are. Furthermore, this cohesive visualization can also show what factors can be implemented in their storytelling and thus differentiate themselves. It was established in which none of the case companies had a connection with the interaction vertical which means this can be an uncharted territory in terms of storytelling. Therefore, brands can use this information to create storytelling regarding those elements.

The second managerial implication is the illustration of storytelling driven identity and identity driven storytelling. By implementing these illustrations, brands can easily map whether they are focusing on a storytelling driven identity or an identity driven storytelling. The reason why this can be favorable for brands is because it can help them enrich their storytelling or brand identity depending on what driver the brand focuses on.

The third and final managerial implication is the creation of an analysis method brands can use for themselves in order to establish whether there lies a connection between their brand identity and storytelling. This managerial implication indicates which brands can incorporate this analysis method and track a connection between their storytelling and brand identity themselves. This implication revolves around the first regarding the creation of a cohesive picture concerning which elements are connected and which are not. However, the analysis method works as an implication on its own because of its significance it may have on brands.

7.3 Future Implications

This thesis looked at using storytelling as a theory for connecting brand identity to storytelling using The CBIM and The Storytelling Matrix, a future route could be to add The Reputation Matrix. This way, further research could also connect reputation to a company´s storytelling and brand identity and therefore further develop this study.

Secondly, for the reason that there seems to be a lack of knowledge about how companies use storytelling and connect it to their brand identity, future research could further investigate whether there is a connection between storytelling and a company's brand identity in an effective way. This by using different models and theories than the once used in this thesis. This could be executed by applying the different frameworks presented in 3.1 instead of the CBIM and Storytelling Matrix. Moreover, other companies than the three used in this thesis, can also be examined by looking at specific sectors such as the automobile or furniture industry.

Lastly, it can be of significant interest to further develop this thesis by examining potential storytelling and brand identity connections in business-to-business companies. This can act as a new direction since Volvo Cars, Scandinavian Airlines, and Bona are operating in the business-to-consumer market.

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10. Appendix

Appendix 1: The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix and its two Outer Layers (Urde, 2022)
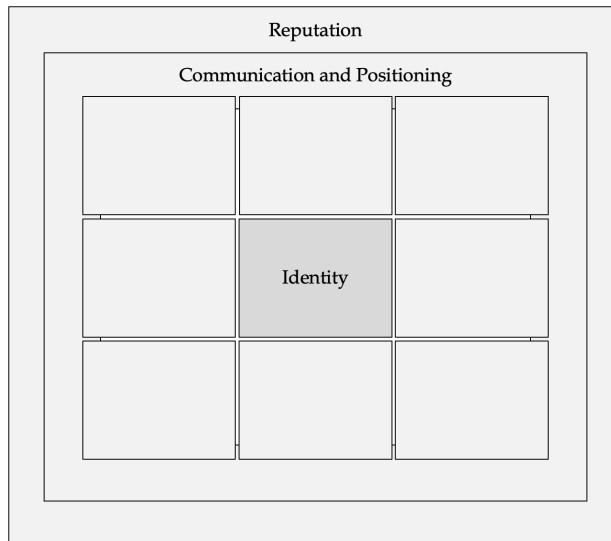
Appendix 2: Guiding questions for Evaluating the Matrixes (Urde, 2022)

IDENTITY	The Identity matrix's questions	*The storytelling matrix's questions*	The reputational matrix's questions	REPUTATION
Mission & Vision	*What engages us (mission) and what is our direction and inspiration? (vision)*	*Stories about the brand's engagement and visions*	*How engaging and inspiring are their purposes and practices?*	*Willingness-to-support*
Culture	*What are our attitudes and how do we work and behave?*	*Stories about the people living the brand*	*How committed and accountable are they?*	*Responsibility:*
Competences	*What are we particularly good at, and what makes us better than the competition?*	*Stories about the brand's performance and quality*	*How solid and consistent are their quality and performance?*	*Performance*
Expression	*What is distinctive about the way we communicate and express ourselves and makes it possible to recognize us at a distance?*	*Stories about the brand's design and communication*	*How distinct, visible and consistent are their overall communications?*	*Recognisability*
Brand core: Promise and core values	*What do we promise, and what are the core values that sum up the essence of what our brand stand for?*	*Stories about how the brand keeps its promises and cherishes its values*	*How well do they live up to their promises and values?*	*Promises*
Personality	*What combination of human characteristics or qualities forms our corporate character?*	*Stories about the brand's character*	*How believable and convincing are they?*	*Credibility*
Value proposition	*What are our key offerings and how do we want them to appeal to customers and non-customer stakeholders?*	*Stories about how the brand adds value*	*How appealing and meaningful is the value they offer?*	*Relevance*
Relationships	*What should be the nature of our relationships with key customers and non-customer stakeholders?*	*Stories about the brand and its relations*	*How dependable are their words and deeds?*	*Trustworthiness*
Position	*What is our intended position in the market, and in the heart and minds of key customers and non-customer stakeholders?*	*Stories about how and why the brand stands out*	*How distinctive is their position in the market?*	*Differentiation*

Appendix 3: Overview of samples

Company / Category	**Volvo Cars**	**Scandinavian Airlines (SAS)**	**Bona AB**
Founded	1927	1946	1919
Company position of interviewees	Head of Brand	Brand Manager	Senior Vice President Global Marketing & Communications Vice President, Global Brand Group Senior Vice President Product Management & Marketing
Storytelling	Slice of Life	We Are Travelers	Sustainability Heritage

Appendix 4: Interview guide

Hello and welcome to our interview about storytelling and brand identity. We are here today to talk about your brand identity and storytelling. The interview today will start off with a little introduction where we say each other's names and then you can also fill in with your position at the company. Afterwards we will jump into the interview. We are using a certain framework for mapping a company's brand identity using 9 questions which later on can be applied to the framework.

So let's start with a little introduction about ourselves:

Now we can move on to the questions regarding brand identity. These 9 questions concern different elements of your company such as your mission and vision, brand promise and core values, personality, expression and more.

The question regarding mission and vision: what engages you (mission) and what is your direction and inspiration (vision)?

The question regarding culture: What are your attributes and how do you work and behave?

The question regarding competences: What are you particularly good at, and what makes you better than the competition?

The question regarding expression: what is distinctive about the way you communicate and express yourselves and makes it possible to recognize you at a distance?

The question about the brand core: What do you promise, and what are the core values that sum up the essence of what your brand stands for?

The question regarding personality: what combination of human characteristics or qualities form your corporate character?

The question regarding value proposition: what are your key offerings and how do you want them to appeal to customers and non-customer stakeholders?

The question regarding relationships: what should be the nature of your relationships with key customers and non-customer stakeholders?

The last question regarding position: what is your intended position in the market and in the heart and minds of key customers and non-customer stakeholders?

Now that you have answered the questions regarding your brand identity, we can take some time and talk a little bit about your storytelling.

What is your main aspect you focus on in your storytelling? What do you want to communicate to the audience?

Would you say that your storytelling reflects what you have said regarding your brand identity? If so, in what way?

Is there something else you would like to add concerning your brand identity or storytelling? Is there something we did not cover?

This will conclude our interview. Thank you so much for your participation.