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Supervisor	Ilkin Mehrabov
Examiner	Nils Holmberg

When AI Rewrites a Brand: A Case Study of Generative AI and Brand Image

VERONICA WÄRN

Lund University
Department of communication
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Abstract

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This study addresses a gap in existing research by examining how generative AI contributes to the construction and representation of a company's brand. The research question is as follows: "How do generative AI descriptions align with, contribute to or deviate from a company's intended corporate brand image and brand identity?". Using a qualitative research design in the form of a case study of Mannheimer Swartling, a law firm, the study combines prompt-based data harvesting and semi-structured interviews with communication professionals. It explores AI-generated descriptions from 5 different personas and how these responses are interpreted by communication professionals, and how such responses may influence Mannheimer Swartling's brand. The results show that AI descriptions align with the intended corporate brand in some ways, but also reconstruct the brand through external sources, produce persona-dependent brand reconstructions, apply stereotypes and gap-filling, hallucinate and make errors, and exclude information from responses. These findings suggest that AI-generated descriptions both align with and deviate from a company's intended corporate brand image and brand identity, while also contributing to the construction of that brand.

Keyword: Artificial Intelligence, Branding, Corporate Brand, Brand Identity, Brand Image

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is often talked about as if it has suddenly arrived and changed everything overnight. However, AI has been part of the digital environment for quite some time. What is new is how accessible it has become, especially through generative AI tools and how quickly the technology continues developing (Sutherland, 2025, p. v). Since the launch of ChatGPT by OpenAI in November 2022, generative AI has attracted significant attention and become a visible part of both professional and everyday life (Kingsley, 2025, p. 62). This growing accessibility has opened new possibilities in strategic communication, where AI is often associated with increased productivity, efficiency and personalized communication for consumer preferences. AI has become a valuable tool for strengthening relationships with audiences and helping brands evolve together with their environment (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 173).

So far, AI has mainly been discussed as something organizations use to improve branding and communication efforts. But that is only a small part of the picture. Generative AI is not only used by companies, but it is also increasingly used by private individuals as a source of information. People can now ask AI about organizations, their values, services, reputation, and identity, and receive immediate descriptions in return. This raises an important question: what happens when AI becomes a part of how a company is described and understood? Now AI is no longer just a tool in the hands of communication professionals. It also begins to act as an intermediary that contributes to the construction of a company's brand image.

Technological innovation has long reshaped the practice of law, but generative AI has intensified these changes by enabling tasks performed by lawyers to be completed partly or entirely by machines. As a result, it has created a significant discussion about the future role and relevance of the legal profession (Robb et al., 2025, pp. 1-2). In combination with the influence of AI on branding, this makes it

particularly important for law firms to examine how AI may affect not only their legal services but their broader business strategy and brand.

Mannheimer Swartling is one of the leading business law firms in the Nordics (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.). The firm presents itself through a clear ambition: to deliver the best in everything they do. That ambition does not only apply to their legal practice, but also to how the firm is perceived and how its brand is maintained over time. For a firm like Mannheimer Swartling, staying at the forefront of developments in AI is therefore not only a matter of technological awareness, but also of brand management. As generative AI becomes a bigger part of our lives, there is a growing need to understand how it may affect the way companies and their brands are represented.

Research Problem

The rapid use of generative AI in everyday practice is reshaping the conditions under which brands are constructed, interpreted and communicated. Within strategic communication, existing studies have primarily examined AI as a tool used by organizations to strengthen branding efforts, for example through AI-driven customer service, automated content production and personalization. This previous research focus on how companies use AI to influence customer perception and improve their brand communication. However, a significant research gap remains. Much less attention has been paid to situations where AI is not primarily a corporate tool, but rather a user intermediary that customers actively consult to obtain information about organizations. As generative AI systems increasingly function as everyday information intermediaries, they may play a growing role in shaping how brands are represented and understood, often outside the direct control of the company itself.

To date there has been limited studies, both in academics and work industry, on AI's adoption, received role and impact in the field of strategic communication (Sutherland, 2025, p. 47). Research has not sufficiently explored how AI-generated descriptions of companies may reinterpret, filter, or reconstruct intended brand identity. Also, it is not studied how communication professionals perceive this emerging dynamic, or what implications it may have for brand management and strategic communication. Therefore, it is a need to study

generative AI not only as a branding tool used by organizations, but as an independent communicative actor that mediates brand meaning for audiences. Understanding this is important because AI systems increasingly participate in the construction of brand and corporate reputation. This thesis therefore addresses the emerging gap by studying how generative AI contributes to the construction and representation of a company's brand from the user interaction perspective, and how these AI-generated brand images align with or diverge from the organizations' intended brand communication.

Aim

The aim of this thesis is to explore how generative AI may affect the brand image of a company by examining how the company is described when users ask AI systems about the organization. More specifically, the study investigates how AI-generated descriptions align with, reinterpret or diverge from Mannheimer Swartling's, a law firm, intended brand communication. The legal industry is used as the empirical context because it is currently strongly associated with debates about AI and the future role of lawyers. This makes law firms a particularly relevant case for studying how AI may influence external perceptions of professional brands. The choice of a law firm is also connected to my own professional background in communication within the legal sector, which has shaped my interest in how brand identity is communicated and potentially transformed through new digital technologies. By analyzing AI-generated responses and interviewing communication professionals the study seeks to understand which aspects of brand communication are taken up by AI and which are excluded, transformed, or amplified. In doing so, the thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of AI as an emerging actor in strategic communication and brand identity, and how it can influence the brand image.

Research Question

How do generative AI descriptions align with, contribute to, or deviate from a company's intended corporate brand image and brand identity?

Disposition

The study begins with an introduction to the topic and presents the research problem, aim, and research questions. The literature review and theoretical framework outlines previous research in the field and introduces brand co-creation and computers are social actors' framework. After this, the methodology chapter presents the research paradigm, research design, case study approach, methods for data collection and analysis, as well as ethical considerations and methodological limitations. The empirical findings are then presented in the analysis and discussion chapter and interpreted in relation to the study's literature review and research question and connected to broader questions about communication and technology. Finally, the thesis ends with a conclusion summarizing the main insights, future research and the study's limitations, followed by references and appendices.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the literature review and theoretical framework of the study by introducing research that frame the analysis and discussion. The review is structured around brand and branding, corporate brand, brand identity, brand image, brand reputation, followed by Brand Co-Creation as a theoretical framework. After that research in Artificial Intelligence is introduced and how AI is used in strategic communication today. Lastly, the Computers as a social actor framework is presented as a theoretical framework.

Brand and Branding

A brand is more than a name or a physical product. It adds an additional layer to what is being offered by combining functionality with meaning and associations that go beyond the product itself (Jones, 2017, p. 16). One common way of defining a brand is as a set of identifiable elements, such as a name, symbol, or design, that distinguish one company's goods or services from those of its competitors (West et al., 2018, p. 322). Through these elements, a brand communicates what a company or product represents, encompassing both how it defines itself and how it is perceived by others, often described as identity and image (Jones, 2017, pp. 17, 19). In competitive markets, strong brands stand out because they are trusted, relatable, and perceived as offering greater value, and how a brand is perceived can have a direct impact on its overall success (Wheeler & Meyerson, 2024, p. 2).

Branding, in contrast, refers to the deliberate actions taken by an organization to build and shape its brand. It includes the methods and activities used to ensure that a product or organization stands for something specific in the minds of consumers (Jones, 2017, p. 22). Through branding, companies manage what they communicate and how they behave to influence how people think, feel, and act, ultimately creating commercial or social value (Jones, 2017, p. 23). Branding is

therefore an ongoing process that involves building awareness, attracting new audiences, and strengthening long-term relationships with existing customers (Wheeler & Meyerson, 2024, p. 4).

When a brand is strong, it often forms an emotional connection with consumers and becomes embedded in their everyday lives (Aggarwal & Commuri, 2024, p. 10). Such brands also benefit organizations internally, for example by attracting talent more efficiently and encouraging employees to commit for longer periods, which can reduce recruitment and retention costs (Aggarwal & Commuri, 2024, p. 11). Beyond these relational benefits, brands function as strategic intangible assets that generate economic value by supporting revenue growth and helping to lower costs, thereby directly influencing business performance (Aggarwal & Commuri, 2024, p. 13). However, while individuals can contribute to shaping a brand, achieving a strong and consistent brand ultimately requires alignment across the entire organization, rather than isolated efforts (Kingsley, 2025, p. 134).

Corporate Brand

Corporate branding focuses on the values, reputation, and relationships an organization builds with its stakeholders. Rather than being tied to specific products, it reflects the more emotional and intangible dimensions of the organization (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 19). Through corporate branding, organizations communicate their core values, which helps differentiate them from competitors and strengthens stakeholders' trust, loyalty, and overall perception of the company (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 19). In this sense, the corporate brand functions as an overarching expression of the organization's identity and signals its long-term commitment to those it engages with (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 27).

Digital touchpoints, such as corporate websites and social media platforms, play a central role in communicating the corporate brand to external audiences and supporting its ongoing development and visibility (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 19). At the same time, employees are key contributors to corporate branding. By recruiting individuals who share the organization's values and investing in their development, companies enable employees to act as brand ambassadors who represent the organization both internally and externally (Hamzah et al., 2026, p.

19). At its core, a corporate brand can therefore be understood as a promise of value that extends beyond quality and performance to also include values, ethics, and organizational purpose (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 28).

Brand Identity

Brand identity describes how an organization aims to define and present itself (Nandan, 2005, p. 265). It includes tangible elements that appeal to the senses and support recognition, differentiation, and meaning making, helping audiences identify and understand what the brand stands for (Wheeler & Meyerson, 2024, p. 6). Brand identity is expressed through a set of visual and verbal elements that communicate what the brand represents. These elements include components such as logos, color schemes, typography, and taglines (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 108). In addition, brand identity consists of several interconnected components, including brand vision, brand culture, positioning, personality, relationships, and presentation. Brand vision captures the purpose and values that guide the brand, while brand culture reflects how these values are embedded within the organization. Together, they provide overall direction and coherence for the brand (Nandan, 2005, p. 266). Positioning is the attributes that distinguish the brand from others, personality refers to the emotional characteristics associated with the brand, and presentation encompasses the visual and communicative expressions used to convey the brand identity (Nandan, 2005, p. 266).

Brand identity can also be understood through abstract meanings that make a brand distinctive and that emerge from a combination of product features and the organization's efforts to assign meaning to them (Nandan, 2005, p. 266). Brand concepts are shaped by the types of consumers needs a brand seeks to address, which are commonly categorized as functional, symbolic, and experiential. Functional brand concepts relate to practical and problem-solving needs, symbolic concepts address consumers' desires connected to identity, group belonging, or self-expression, and experiential concepts focus on sensory stimulation and the enjoyment associated with consuming the brand (Nandan, 2005, p. 266).

Corporate identity focuses on how an organization presents who it is and what it represents. Core elements such as the company name and logo often form the foundation of the corporate brand, as they are easily recognized and help

distinguish the organization from others (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 108). For a corporate brand to be effective, these elements need to be applied consistently across all touchpoints, including marketing materials, packaging, digital platforms, and physical work environments (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 108). Beyond visual symbols, corporate identity also reflects what the organization stands for, how it operates, and how it engages with stakeholders and the wider environment. This includes aspects such as corporate behavior, culture, communication, design, governance, and overall brand orientation (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 108). To maintain a coherent corporate identity, organizations must communicate their messages clearly and consistently across platforms, using both verbal and visual expressions (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 108).

Brand Image

Brand image refers to how a brand is perceived by consumers and the beliefs they associate with it (Nandan, 2005, p. 266). It is shaped by the range of impressions consumers encounter through different sources, which together contribute to how the brand is understood and characterized. These accumulated impressions form a mental representation of the brand, often described as its personality, and exist in the minds of consumers rather than being fully controlled by the organization (Nandan, 2005, pp. 266–267). Based on their individual experiences and associations, consumers attribute certain qualities or personas to a brand, resulting in subjective interpretations of what the brand represents (Nandan, 2005, p. 267). Closely related to brand image are brand attitudes, which describe consumers' overall evaluations of a brand. These attitudes consist of three interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive component relates to what consumers know or believe about the brand, while the affective component reflects the emotions and feelings associated with it. The conative component concerns consumers' intentions or tendencies to act in certain ways in relation to the brand, such as purchasing or recommending it (Nandan, 2005, p. 267).

Brand Reputation

Reputation can be understood as a long-term social evaluation that influences how individuals, groups, and organizations are perceived over time (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 109). In a branding context, brand reputation plays an important role in building consumer trust and often influences considerations prior to purchase (Afzal et al., 2010, p. 45). A brand that is widely sought after is typically associated with a positive reputation in the minds of consumers. Brand reputation is shaped by consumers' opinions, comments, expectations, and beliefs, which together form their overall assessment of the brand (Afzal et al., 2010, p. 45). Organizations can actively influence reputation through various communication efforts, such as advertising, public relations activities, and customer-driven word-of-mouth (Afzal et al., 2010, p. 45).

Corporate reputation, more broadly, reflects the accumulation of multiple images of an organization that develop over time (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 109). It emerges from the organization's identity initiatives, its performance, and its behavior in different contexts. As such, corporate reputation represents the collective perception and overall image of the company as viewed by its stakeholders (Hamzah et al., 2026, p. 109).

Brand Co-Creation

The concept of brand co-creation refers to the idea that brands are created through collaborative efforts among multiple stakeholders via interactive processes. This perspective is applicable to several brand related areas, including brand value, identity, meaning, experience, strategy, and authenticity (Markovic et al., 2022, p. xxiv). Brand experience is more than sensations, feelings, and cognitions, it is also a socially constructed phenomenon that depends on interactions (Mangió et al., 2022, p. 195). Today, brand co-creation has become an increasingly significant area of research, as studies often explore how greater customer involvement can create new possibilities for brands (France et al., 2015, p. 848). The customer is no longer viewed as a passive purchaser, but rather as an active participant who can influence and shape brand experiences. All encounters with a brand can affect its meaning, whether they are initiated by the organization itself or by other sources (France et al., 2015, p. 849). The literature highlights not only the impact

of brand value, but also how co-creation emerges through advertising, new product development, social media, and word-of-mouth (France et al., 2015, p. 849).

Recent research also discusses the influence of external brand communications, as well as the role of technological development and the increasingly interactive nature of brands (France et al., 2015, p. 850). One specific actor that has received limited attention in this context is artificial intelligence (Mangió et al., 2022, p. 195). As AI functions both as a technological context and a technological actor, it can play a pivotal role in shaping brand experiences, particularly due to its interactive, adaptive, contextual, and user-sensitive characteristics (Mangió et al., 2022, pp. 195-197). Despite this potential, there is still a shortage of literature addressing the relationship between brand co-creation and AI, even though AI can support and enhance brand experiences and help companies deliver on their brand promises to target audiences (Mangió et al., 2022, p. 200).

AI can foster value co-creation processes by enabling active interaction and knowledge sharing through ongoing communication (Mangió et al. 2022, p. 201). AI is no longer merely a tool or application designed to improve and streamline consumer-brand interactions, instead it acts as an active participant that transforms these interactions into consumer-brand-technology relationships (Mangió et al., 2022, p. 201). Today, AI can shape consumer experiences in several ways, for example, by using personal data to deliver personalized content through algorithms, by classifying consumers into specific segments, by performing tasks on behalf of consumers, or by acting as an agent, such as in customer service contexts (Mangió et al., 2022, p. 201). However, if decision-making is fully outsourced and delegated to AI, key sources of consumer value may disappear. At the same time, the interactive and experiential essence of AI-driven interactions can be predicted or influenced by AI itself (Mangió et al., 2022, p. 202).

This highlights how brand co-creation has evolved from a focus on human interactions to increasingly include technological actors. As brands become more interactive and digitally mediated, AI emerges as a key participant in shaping brand experiences and value co-creation processes. Although existing literature remains limited, the growing role of AI suggests a shift in how brand experiences

are created, negotiated, and controlled. This underlines the relevance of further exploring AI as an active actor in brand co-creation and provides a foundation for the focus of this study.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been discussed and defined for decades. One of the earliest definitions, from 1955, describes AI as “the science and engineering of making intelligent machines” (Sutherland, 2025, p. 4). At the same time, AI has long been a concept surrounded by misunderstanding. AI is often misunderstood because of extensive and frequently unintelligible publicity (Gunkel, 2024, p. 12).

In recent years, AI has developed from being a buzzword into becoming a critical part of business strategy (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2025, p. xiv). This development is particularly relevant in the field of communication. Communication is described as a necessary condition of artificial intelligence (Gunkel, 2024, p. 5). Since communication is embedded in the very idea of AI, developments in AI have direct consequences not only for everyday understandings of communication, but also for communication industries and communication professionals (Gunkel, 2024, p. 7).

AI also offers advanced tools and methodologies for addressing complex tasks that were previously considered to belong exclusively to human cognition and labor (Grobelnik, 2026, p. 2). Although the early ambitions of AI to achieve human-level intelligence were largely not fulfilled during its formative years, the field made significant progress after 2015 through the rapid development of generative AI, a transformative subfield of artificial intelligence (Grobelnik, 2026, p. 2). A decisive moment in public awareness came in November 2022 with the release of ChatGPT, a chatbot system that demonstrated unprecedented ability in text understanding and interaction. This launch accelerated the development of generative AI technologies across several domains, including text, speech, image, and video processing (Grobelnik, 2026, p. 2). This development continued at a rapid pace through 2025, with generative AI continuously expanding the complexity of the tasks that machines can perform (Grobelnik, 2026, p. 2).

Despite these advances and opportunities, the use of AI also raises important concerns. AI models have been shown to contain bias, for example by

underrepresenting consumer groups based on skin color, gender, or disabilities (Behnke, 2025, p. 238). This bias is connected to the fact that AI systems are trained on human-produced content, which itself often contains bias (Behnke, 2025, p. 238). For companies and brands, such bias can have serious consequences, including long-lasting negative effects on brand reputation (Behnke, 2025, p. 238). Therefore, while AI presents substantial opportunities for organizations and marketers, its implementation also requires caution.

Natural Language Processing

Natural language processing (NLP) refers to the use of computer technology to assist with or carry out tasks that involve understanding and working with human language, such as processing, categorizing, analyzing or interpreting meaning (Rafail & Freitas, 2020, p.2). The complexity of NLP systems can vary widely. At one end, there are relatively simple methods, such as pattern matching using regular expressions. At the other end, there are more advanced systems based on artificial neural networks, which can, for example, translate between different languages (Zhang & Teng, 2021, p. 3). NLP offers efficient and practical solutions for many languages related tasks. For instance, identifying keywords, replacing words, or analyzing the sentiment of a text are all well-established processes commonly used by researchers working with NLP (Rafail & Freitas, 2020, p. 2). Through these capabilities, NLP allows artificial intelligence to take part in communication, acting as a sender, a receiver and sometimes both (Gunkel, 2024, p. 8).

The field of NLP emerged in the 1950s as an important part of artificial intelligence research, focusing on how machines can automatically understand and generate human language (Zhang & Teng, 2021, p. 3). Since then, its capabilities have steadily improved. Today, applications such as chatbots and digital assistants like Siri and Alexa can interact with users in increasingly natural ways (Gunkel, 2024, p. 8). NLP has now become a key part of both business and everyday life. For example, search engines process vast amounts of online information, learning from it and responding to user queries based on their understanding of language (Zhang & Teng, 2021, p. 3).

Large Language Model

Large language models (LLMs) have become a central development within natural language processing and mark a significant shift in how machines generate and interact with language (Gunkel, 2024, p. 9). Unlike earlier chatbots or digital assistants that rely on predefined conversational patterns, LLMs are now trained on vast amounts of human generated texts to see patterns in data. This allows them to generate coherent responses while also sometimes producing inaccurate or fabricated information (Gunkel, 2024, p. 9).

The development of LLMs involves extensive training and refinement processes. During initial training, models are exposed to large datasets, enabling them to learn linguistic structures, patterns in speech, and grammatical rules. This allows them to generate contextually relevant and cohesive text across a wide range of domains (Balasubramaniam et al., 2024, p. 11). In practice, LLMs are often used to create personalized and engaging content. For example, they can generate tailored product descriptions, recommendations and advertisements based on individual user preferences, thereby enhancing user engagement and satisfaction (Balasubramaniam et al., 2024, p. 14). However, despite their capabilities, LLMs also raise important ethical concerns. Since they are trained on large datasets, they can inherit and reproduce biases present in the data, potentially reinforcing discrimination or inequality. Addressing these biases and ensuring fairness is therefore a critical aspect of responsible AI development (Balasubramaniam et al., 2024, p. 15). Overall, LLMs represent a major milestone in the evolution of artificial intelligence. Their ability to process, analyze, and generate language at an unprecedented scale has opened new possibilities for how information is created and used (Balasubramaniam et al., 2024, pp. 18-19).

Search Engine Optimization

When the World Wide Web was introduced, it quickly became clear that traditional browsing methods were not enough for users to find the information they were looking for online. This created the need for search engines, which were developed to help users locate relevant content more easily (Davis, 2021, p. 1). Over time, search engines became more advanced and started judging how relevant different websites were based on what users searched for. They also

began taking different website characteristics and metrics into account, using complex algorithms to decide the value and relevance of a website (Davis, 2021, p. 3).

As more websites were indexed by search engines and competition for the top spots in search results increased, search engine optimization (SEO) became more important (Davis, 2021, p. 3). SEO refers to a set of strategies used to improve a website's visibility on search engine results pages. In general, the higher and more often a website appears in search results, the more likely it is to attract visitors through search engines (Davis, 2021, p. 1). Since search engines now play a major role in how content is spread online, SEO has become an important part of digital visibility (Davis, 2021, p. 1).

At the same time, SEO has changed a lot over the years. The focus has moved away from only traditional ranking factors and toward broader evaluations that also consider things like quality, different types of content, and social signals (Davis, 2021, p. 1). One example of an SEO strategy is the use of keywords. For keywords to work effectively, they need to match the content of the website, which can help the site rank higher in search results for relevant searches (Davis, 2021, p. 5).

Generative Engine Optimization

Due to the success of large language models, conventional search engines are now combined with generative models. Generative engines retrieve information from the internet and use large language models to generate a response grounded on the sources, also giving a way for the user to verify the information (Aggarwal et al, 2024, p. 5). Today, users access information faster and more accurately than before. However, generative engines disadvantage website and content creators (Aggarwal et al, 2024, p. 5). Unlike traditional search engines, generative engines are not limited to keyword matching, and the use of language models when ingesting sources is more nuanced of understanding text and the users query (Aggarwal et al, 2024, p. 7). Therefore, content creators must make changes to their website content, they must use Generative engine optimization (GEO) (Aggarwal et al, 2024, p. 8). GEO modifications can range from simple stylistic alternations to incorporating new content in structured format (Aggarwal et al,

2024, p. 8). Not only does GEO have to present information good but also its content (Aggarwal et al, 2024, p. 10).

The Usage of AI in Strategic Communication Today

Artificial intelligence has become an increasingly central component of strategic communication and branding practices, making its understanding and integration essential (Hue & Hung, 2025, p.2). Companies that fail to adapt their traditional business models risk falling behind competitors that actively adopt and experiment with these emerging technologies (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 166). AI-driven trends are not only transforming internal workflows but are also redefining customer expectations and perceived value, creating both new opportunities and new requirements across industries (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 166). A further challenge is that many marketing and communication professionals lack a technical background and are therefore not fully aware of how emerging technologies can be aligned with organizational goals (West et al., 2018, p. 328). Within branding in particular, AI introduces possibilities for personalization and customization, more responsive customer service, automated and creative content production, advanced data analysis, and support in everyday operational tasks. Despite its growing relevance and the rising scholarly interest in AI and branding, existing research remains limited. The following section provides an overview of how AI is currently used in strategic communication, as reflected in the existing literature.

Personalization and Customization

Research shows that AI's ability to produce highly personalized communication is its greatest contribution to branding (Behnke, 2025, p. 229). The use of AI for customization and personalization is very common in strategic communication, for example, it can create content tailored to individual consumers, such as in targeted advertising. In other words, AI enables the customization and personalization of customer experiences (Sutherland, 2025, pp. 12-13). Additionally, AI can analyze customer data and subsequently provide product recommendations based on interests and behaviors, which engages consumers on a deeper, more personal level (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 167). Overall, AI is

transforming how brands interact with consumers and enhancing customer experiences (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 172).

Today, successful brands are those that have distinct personalities and strong relationships with their customers (West et al., 2018, p. 327). Branding increasingly relies on AI to influence consumer choices, as it drives loyalty and improves customer experiences (Hue & Hung, 2025, p. 2). One example is Starbucks, which used AI for a customization program. The company applied AI algorithms to track and analyze customer behavior based on location, dayparts, seasons, and weather patterns. This allowed Starbucks to manage staffing needs and customize offers according to seasonal or regional preferences. However, the implementation also negatively affected in-store service capabilities, leading to longer waiting times and dissatisfied customers. As a result, customer loyalty decreased and sales declined (Behnke, 2025, p. 234).

Customer Service

Research agrees that AI chatbots, virtual assistants, and customer service systems are among the most common uses of AI in strategic communication (Sutherland, 2025, p. 13). These technologies make it possible to enhance customer communication, refine marketing strategies, and deliver personalized offers (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 165). Such AI tools act as brand representatives and contribute to an improved customer experience (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 168). In addition, AI chatbots are increasingly used in crisis communication situations to provide publics and stakeholders with essential information (Sutherland, 2025, p. 13).

Research also agrees that customer service is essential to the functioning of any modern brand (West et al., 2018, p. 326). While the use of AI in customer service can enhance the customer experience, it does not in itself provide a sustained source of brand differentiation. Customer service is only one capability that organizations must possess to remain competitive (West et al., 2018, p. 326). On the other hand, some researchers argue that because AI tools engage customers through personalized dialogues, they can add greater meaning to interactions and may help create a more memorable brand experience (Behnke, 2025, p. 232).

Research have also studied humans trust in AI, and how we can trust AI when its acting on behalf of a brand. It is common that when AI has a slightest change when interacting and seeming alive it can throw us into the uncanny valley. On the other hand, when AI does something useful these feelings change and disappears (Kingsley, 2025, p. 128). For a company, it is not good to hide whether an AI agent (customer service) is AI or not. In 2024, Lippincott Brand Aperture reported that 46% of respondents would not trust a brand if they used AI to seem or act as a human (Kingsley, 2025, p. 128). However, today we interact with AI assistants every day, whether we know it or not, suggesting that AI will be as accepted as the computer (Kingsley, 2025, p. 130). In addition, there are legislations like GDPR which protects humans' integrity and personal information. Some AI tools today can pull data from behind firewalls, breaching the security we might have today. Therefore, AI usage must be regulated by legislations and followed to maintain brand trust (Kingsley, 2025, p. 144).

Content Creation

Today, brands can use AI to create content such as text, images, and videos (Sutherland, 2025, p. 14). The benefit of using AI for this purpose is that it not only ensures consistency and quality in the company's communication, but also strengthens the brand voice, making it more engaging for its audience (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 168). Also, AI offers the possibility for anyone to produce perfect content regardless of if they have previous experience or not (Kingsley, 2025, p. 114). It is also common for graphic designers to use AI, not only does it enable more design possibilities, but it also improves productivity (Behnke, 2025, p. 230).

On the other hand, AI-generated designs often lack the emotional value and subtle sensitivity that human designers possess (Behnke, 2025, p. 230). Furthermore, AI lacks the psychological dimensions needed for effective branding. While AI can provide basic design options as a starting point, humans are ultimately needed to complete and refine the work (Behnke, 2025, p. 230). In addition, AI can be a helpful tool when creating brand messaging and visual identity by assisting with target distinctiveness, such as identifying trends in color

and design, which allows brands to better target their audiences (Behnke, 2025, p. 233).

However, while AI as a tool can support content creation and generate more ideas, ethical considerations must also be considered. A key question concerns how transparent a brand should be about its use of AI when generating brand content. If handled incorrectly, it may lower purchase intentions, as consumers perceive it negatively (Behnke, 2025, p. 232).

Use of AI to Analyze Data

AI is a tool that is frequently used to analyze large datasets and provide in-depth insights. Strategic communication professionals use AI to target audiences (Sutherland, 2025, pp. 13-14). The ability of AI to analyze vast amounts of data can lead to more informed decisions that better resonate with target audiences (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 166). This data is not limited to the internet, it also includes other sources such as credit card data, search engines, and social media platforms (Behnke, 2025, p. 231). In addition, using data to train AI tools before applying them to create and develop strategies and content that align with a company's brand and brand voice is highly important (Sutherland, 2025, p. 127).

AI applications are frequently used for predictive analytics and preference analysis. With the help of AI and data in branding, consumer preferences can be identified (Behnke, 2025, p. 234). In this way, business decisions become more reliable because they are supported by concrete data and facts. This not only allows brands to adapt their product and service offerings, but also to optimize brand image, messaging tonality, and SEO keyword strategies, for example (Behnke, 2025, p. 234). Predictive analytics covers several branding and marketing functions and empowers brands to design proactive marketing programs. It provides insights that help improve target distinctiveness and engagement in brand messaging, as well as assist brands in identifying and selecting consumers who are most likely to become loyal users over time and, in the long run, brand ambassadors (Behnke, 2025, p. 235). It is also used in the fashion industry to identify trends and forecast sales (Behnke, 2025, p. 235).

Sentiment analysis is another branding activity that relies on AI. By using data and AI, this type of analysis helps companies understand how their target

audiences feel about a particular brand, product, or service offering. Sentiment analysis draws on data from sources such as social media, forums, surveys, and reviews to provide insights into public opinion (Behnke, 2025, p. 236). This enables brands to tailor their messaging with greater emotional relevance and engage their target audiences more effectively (Behnke, 2025, p. 237).

AI in Daily Tasks

Looking to the future, the integration of AI into strategic communication is not only promising, but also crucial. Since the release of ChatGPT in 2022, it has demonstrated significant increases in operational efficiency and decision-making capabilities. Communication professionals have integrated AI into their daily routines, where it helps optimize everyday tasks (Turlacu et al., 2025, p. 167). Every job has tasks that are repetitive and time-consuming, for example transcribing, reviewing documents and reordering data. These tasks are now something AI can do instead (Kingsley, 2025, p. 74). Examples of strategic communication activities that can be powered by AI include outreach and publicity, storytelling, workflow management, decision support, research, evaluation, and event planning (Sutherland, 2025, pp. 13-14).

AI has the potential to substantially improve an organization's operational efficiency, which in turn can strengthen the consistency with which it delivers its brand promise (West et al., 2018, p. 325). AI makes life easier and create possibilities to focus on social relations and optimize labor (Kingsley, 2025, p. 34). The use of AI for internal communication has also been investigated, revealing that while AI enhances efficiency, information flow, listening capabilities, and employee experience, it also presents challenges. These include employees' lack of AI knowledge, fears regarding job security, potential bias, and concerns about the loss of authenticity (Sutherland, 2025, p. 13).

Computers Are Social Actors Framework

Computers are Social Actors (CASA) theoretical framework by Nass, Steuer and Tauber (1994, p. 77) demonstrates that users apply social rules when interacting with computers, making them social actors. In addition, users apply social norms to computers and interact with them automatically and unconscious, which is a

natural response to social situations (Nass et al, 1994, p. 77). Nass et al. (1994, p. 77) also points out that these social responses are “easy to generate, commonplace, and incurable”, meaning that the human-computer relationship is fundamentally social. The framework suggests that individuals assign personalities and traits to these computers and responds emotionally to them, even when they are aware that they are interacting with computers and some even think these interactions are inappropriate (Nass et al, 1994, p. 77).

Users’ social responses to technologies are shaped by social perceptions and attitudes. These social cues include, but are not limited to, language, voice, human faces, emotions, interactivity, engagement, autonomy, and unpredictability. In addition, CASA research has focused on how social signals influence social responses (Xu et al., 2022, p. 2). These social signals reflect the human-like characteristics that users attribute to technology (Xu et al., 2022, p. 2). For example, users perceive a computer that shares their preferences as friendlier (Seok et al., 2025, p. 11438). Similarly, when computers interact in ways that align with human conversational norms, people are more likely to share private information with them (Oh & Ki, 2026, p. 193).

As early as 1950 Turing predicted that computers would possess human-like abilities, not just thinking abilities (Seok et al, 2025, p. 1143). Several experimental studies have strongly supported the CASA framework. One example is how people did not perceive a difference between humans and bots on Twitter and found no difference in perceptions of source credibility, communication skills, or interaction intentions (Seok et al, 2025, p. 11438). In addition, users feel closer to computers that provide personalized services and exhibit cooperation and engagement (Seok et al, 2025, p. 11438). Today, researchers are also examining the possibility of a “AIs are Social Actors” (AASA) framework to examine the intention to use generative AI chatbots and its emotional aspects with users (Seok et al, 2025, p. 11438). This framework shows that AI powered tools can facilitate communication and build relationships in ways comparable to humans (Oh & Ki, 2026, p. 193).

There are two main explanations for why social responses to technology occur: mindlessness and anthropomorphism. Mindlessness refers to an automatic, involuntary, and spontaneous psychological process in which repeated exposure to social cues in interpersonal communication leads people to apply social rules to

human-computer interaction (Xu et al., 2022, pp. 1-2). Anthropomorphism, by contrast, is the process through which individuals attribute human mental or emotional qualities to non-human agents to interpret their actions (Xu et al., 2022, p. 1). These two explanations remain the subject of ongoing debate, as researchers have sought to determine which of them primarily drives users' social responses to technology.

However, some studies challenge the CASA framework, arguing that users respond to computers differently, particularly when they are aware that the one responding is automated by algorithms (Oh & Ki, 2026, pp. 193-194). For example, research shows that individuals assign greater credibility to human-written articles in journalism than articles produced by computers. Similarly, it is found that content created by a human is perceived as higher in quality compared to that produced by AI (Oh & Ki, 2026, pp. 193-194).

To conclude, the CASA framework shows that human-computer interaction is fundamentally social, as users tend to apply social norms, expectations and emotional responses to technology. Research has demonstrated that social cues and human-like characteristics can make computers and AI-powered tools appear more relatable, trustworthy, and engaging. However, the framework also has its limitations, since some studies show that people respond differently when they know the interaction is automated. This suggests that even though human-technology interaction is strongly shaped by social factors, people's responses also depend on the context and on how they view the technology itself.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate how generative AI contributes to the construction and representation of a company's brand from a user interaction perspective. Responding to the identified research gap the thesis examines AI not only as a corporate tool but as an emerging communicative intermediary that may shape a brand outside the organization's direct control. This study adopts a qualitative case study design, with prompt-based data harvesting from AI and semi-structured interviews. The prompt-based data harvesting is used to explore how AI systems describe Mannheimer Swartling and how these descriptions may influence the firm's brand image. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with professionals involved in strategic decisions related to Mannheimer Swartling's brand, to capture their perspectives on the responses generated by AI. To strengthen the depth and consistency of the methodological approach, the study applies triangulation. By examining different dimensions of the same phenomenon, the study aims to produce more well-grounded findings (Flick, 2023, p. 291).

Research Paradigm

This research is grounded in the paradigm of social constructionism. From this perspective, knowledge is not seen as straightforward reflection of reality, but rather as something produced through social processes (Burr, 2015, p. 2). Rather than seeing knowledge as fixed or given, social constructionism emphasizes that our understanding of the world is constructed through everyday interactions. It is within social life that shared meanings are formed and negotiated, making language and communication central areas of interest (Burr, 2015, pp. 4-5). What is regarded as the truth is therefore not universal or stable, but varies across historical and cultural contexts, reflecting dominant ways of understanding at a given time (Burr, 2015, pp. 4-5).

From this perspective, knowledge cannot be understood as a direct perception of reality. Instead, reality is constructed collectively within societies, meaning that

what we take as facts are always shaped by social processes (Burr, 2015, p. 9). Our ways of making sense of the world are influenced by others, both past and present. Individuals are born into already existing systems of meaning, where categories, concepts, and frameworks are socially produced and embedded in language (Burr, 2015, p. 10). All forms of social constructionism highlight the central role of language in constructing meaning. Therefore, the analysis of language and other symbolic forms becomes a key methodological focus within this paradigm (Burr, 2015, p. 28).

Research Design

Qualitative research aims to explore social relations (Flick, 2023, p. 41). In line with this, the purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between people and AI in the context of branding. The research design combines prompt-based data harvesting and semi-structured interviews with communication professionals at Mannheimer Swartling. Together these methods form a coherent and complementary design that enables a multifaceted examination of the case. This research design makes it possible to capture how AI technically interprets and presents Mannheimer Swartling and the brand image it communicates to users, how this representation aligns with or diverges from the perspectives of communication professionals. By connecting these elements, the design provides a holistic understanding of how brand and brand identity is constructed, mediated, and interpreted through AI.

In this study, AI is not treated as an authoritative source of knowledge or as a producer of objective truths. Instead, AI-generated responses are understood as empirical material that reflects how large language models interpret and reproduce publicly available information. The responses generated through prompt-based data harvesting are therefore treated as data, rather than as factual claims about Mannheimer Swartling or its brand. AI functions both as an analytical object and as a methodological tool, this to examine how AI frames and represents Mannheimer Swartling, and as it produces material that can be analyzed and compared with the semi-structured interviews. The AI-generated responses are assessed but in terms of meaning and representation, allowing the study to explore AI's role as an actor in brand communication.

Case Study

The case study selected for this research connects closely to both my professional background and interest in artificial intelligence. In addition, the current discussions often frame artificial intelligence as a potential threat to legal work, which gives this case an extra relevant layer. Previous work conducted at the firm also indicates that this area is becoming increasingly relevant in a digitally driven society. Case studies are well suited for generating insights and practical implications that can be valuable to a specific audience, in this case an organization that can directly benefit from the analysis (Lim, 2025, pp. 130-131). The findings of this study are therefore intended to support Mannheimer Swartling's ongoing and future communication work, especially in relation to the strategic use of AI. The study was conducted with the consent of Mannheimer Swartling.

The purpose of a case study is to enable an in-depth exploration of a particular phenomenon within its real-life social context (Lim, 2025, pp. 128-129), which aligns with the aim of this research. While Mannheimer Swartling operates within the legal sector and can be considered a niche organization, this is not central to the study's relevance. The focus lies on how AI can influence branding, with the case serving as a concrete context through which this relationship can be examined and illustrated. For this reason, the study is limited to Mannheimer Swartling's brand and branding practices, rather than its legal services. As previously noted, triangulation is applied within the case study design, which further strengthens the validity of the research (Lim, 2025, p. 130).

Mannheimer Swartling is a law firm focusing on business law. The law firm have clients all over the world, and they have offices in Sweden, Belgium, Singapore and USA. Mannheimer Swartling offers all areas of business law, across all industries and sectors, some of the areas are for example dispute resolutions, real estate, environment, mergers and acquisition, banking and finance, corporate compliance and risk, insurance and intellectual property, marketing and media. Now the firm have 93 partners, 650 employees of which 430 are lawyers. Last year, 2025, the firm celebrated 150 years as a law firm, since it was founded in 1875 (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.).

Mannheimer Swartling positions itself as a leading premium business law firm, on their website they state their ambition to be "the go-to law firm in the

premium business law segment” (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.). The law firm’s corporate brand is built around their full-service capability, deep specialization and international reach. Mannheimer Swartling communicates a unified partnership model, “Pure Lockstep”, where assignments are treated as the responsibility of the entire firm. This model reinforces the brand promise of seamless service and collective expertise (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.). The corporate narrative underlines quality, business focus and team spirit as core elements of the firm’s positioning (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.).

Mannheimer Swartling’s brand identity is strongly anchored to the three recurring themes of quality, team spirit and business focus. The firm states on their website that they have an ambition to “deliver the highest quality in everything we do and develop a business that adapts to meet the evolving needs of our clients”, indicating that excellence is central to what they do (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.). Another important identity component is societal responsibility. The firm highlights sustainability work, pro bono activities and engagement in issues such as climate, human rights and social development (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.). This suggests an identity that extends beyond commercial legal advice toward responsible corporate citizenship. Visually and rhetorically, the brand identity aligns with typical premium professional service branding: restrained, corporate, expertise-driven, and international in outlook. They have black, white and beige as their main colors and a logo and typography that you quickly recognize and gives off a corporate and exclusive feel.

Mannheimer Swartling is frequently described as Sweden’s largest law firm and leading adviser in the premium business law segment, and they regularly top both Swedish and international rankings (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.). These perceptions reinforce an image of the firm as highly competent, business-oriented, and dependable in complex transactions. The firm also cultivates an employer brand image. Swedish law students have repeatedly voted it the most attractive employer in the legal profession, which strengthens perceptions of prestige and desirability (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.). This also strengthens the idea that Mannheimer Swartling possess an elite professional reputation.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study is conducted through semi-structured interviews and prompt-based data harvesting. In the following text how, where and why will be answered of how this data collection is conducted.

Prompt-based Data Harvesting

Prompt-based data harvesting is used to generate textual material through repeated interactions with different language models. Previous research compares generative AI tools under similar controlled conditions. For example, one study compares outputs from the free versions of six generative AI chatbots: ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Claude, Perplexity and HuggingChat. The same five questions were submitted to each chatbot, and the responses were examined in terms of length, tone and additional features such as citations, web links and helpful follow-up questions (Okamoto, 2025, p. 42). This shows that its relevant to compare AI tools based on the communicative outputs users receive. Another study use persona prompting, which is which is increasingly used in LLM research to condition model outputs according to specific persona characteristics. This enables researchers to simulate responses that reflect the perspectives, roles or information needs of groups (Lutz et al., 2025, p. 23212). This is relevant because it demonstrates how a persona prompt can significantly influence the output.

In this study, persona-based prompting is used to collect the output from different generative AI tools. The selection of the AI tools is based on the twenty most used AI platforms globally in 2025 and in Europe 2025 (Statcounter, n.d.; Explodingtopics, n.d., TechBehemoths, n.d.). In addition to this they also require to be operating within Natural Language Processing and retrieve and process external information related to more evidence-based communication, and not used for entertainment related interactions. Based on these criteria, the following tools are included: ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepSeek, Perplexity AI, Grok, Claude, Microsoft Copilot, and Mistral (Le Chat). Only the free versions are used to have comparability and consistency between each tool. Several of these tools offer different response modes, for example, reasoning-focused or quick-answer modes. Where available in the free version, these variants are tested to identify potential

differences in output and to reflect typical everyday use. Because users may encounter any of these versions in practice, including them strengthens the representativeness of the findings.

The persona-based prompts used is created to simulate realistic user interactions and will represent key stakeholder groups that may seek information about Mannheimer Swartling. The selected personas are a student, law firms outside of Sweden, an IT company, an industry company, and a financial institution. The student persona is chosen because Mannheimer Swartling places significant emphasis on students as potential future employees. The law firm outside of Sweden is chosen because they usually do business together with local firms. The remaining personas represent typical client segments of the law firm and reflect core areas of legal practice. Each persona asks a structured set of questions designed to mirror realistic information needs. The full persona and question guide is provided in *Persona Question Guide*. The same personas and questions are used across all AI tools and search engines to ensure consistency and comparability.

All interactions with the AI tools are conducted within the timeframe of 28th of March to 29th of March 2026 to minimize variation due to model updates or changing data conditions. Each question is asked once per tool under standardized conditions. The resulting outputs are saved locally to ensure data retention, as AI conversation histories may otherwise be altered or deleted. To further enhance consistency, only free versions of the tools are used, and all sessions are initiated without prior conversation history that could influence the responses.

This data collection approach has certain limitations. AI systems lack lived experience and therefore cannot fully represent the richness of Mannheimer Swartling's brand. In addition, AI outputs may reflect biases present in training data and underlying algorithms, which can influence how information is interpreted and presented.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with four communication professionals working in the Business Development and Communications department at Mannheimer Swartling. The purpose of these interviews is to examine whether

AI-generated presentations of Mannheimer Swartling's brand align with or diverge from the experts' own understanding of the firm's brand. Semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable for this purpose because they allow flexibility, encourage discussion, and enable the exploration of more nuanced perspectives (Tracy, 2020, p. 158). They combine guided questioning with a conversational format, giving both the interviewer and the participants room to elaborate on relevant insights (Lim, 2025, p. 118). Since the aim is to capture informed professional reflections from multiple viewpoints, this interview format is considered appropriate.

An interview guide is used to ensure that key topics are consistently covered across all interviews. At the same time, the semi-structured format allows the conversation to develop naturally and makes it possible to follow up on emerging themes while remaining focused on the research topic (Lim, 2025, p. 118). The interview guide consisted of 25 questions, and the interviews lasted approximately 25 to 45 minutes. The interview guide used in the interviews is the *Interview Guide in Swedish*, but there is also a translated *Interview Guide in English*. The interviews are conducted in Swedish to ensure a natural and fluent discussion, as this is the participants' primary working language. Depending on participant location, interviews take place either via Microsoft Teams or in person, since the interviewees are based in Stockholm and Gothenburg. All interviews are audio-recorded with consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

The selected participants each have more than five years of experience working with Mannheimer Swartling's communication and brand-related activities. They are chosen because their roles are closely connected to the firm's brand, culture, and employer branding efforts. Conducting four interviews is considered sufficient to provide informed professional perspectives while maintaining a manageable and focused qualitative analysis. Below is a table showing the interviews and at what date they are conducted. The interviewees will not be more specified with for examples roles, ages, gender to keep anonymity.

Interviewee 1	1 April 2026, 10:00
Interviewee 2	2 April 2026, 10:00
Interviewee 3	8 April 2026, 10:00

Interviewee 4	9 April 2026, 13:30
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Data Analysis

This study applies a thematic analysis of the data, which is “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Flick, 2023, p. 699). Themes represent patterned meanings within the data set. The aim of the analysis is either to provide a rich description of the entire data set or a detailed analysis of a particular aspect of it (Flick, 2023, p. 677). This study employs an inductive thematic analysis, meaning that codes and themes will be developed from the data rather than being guided by pre-existing theory (Flick, 2023, p. 677). The analysis is conducted at a semantic level, focusing on explicit meanings in the data. The analysis will follow the six phases recommended by Flick: “(1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report” (Flick, 2023, p. 678). To enhance analytical rigor, coding is conducted iteratively and documented throughout the process.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to established research ethics principles concerning informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, responsible use of generative AI, and research integrity. Given the study’s focus on AI mediated representations of corporate branding, particular attention is also paid to the ethical implications and known risks associated with generative AI systems.

Ethical research practice requires that participation is based on informed consent. This means that consent must be provided by individuals who can make the decision, who have received sufficient information about the study, and who agree to participate voluntarily (Flick, 2023, p. 214). In this study, all interview participants are informed about the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement, how the collected data would be used, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Prior to the interviews, each participant receives written information outlining these conditions and subsequently provide their

informed consent. Participation is entirely voluntary, and no incentives are offered that can influence the decision to participate. These measures are taken to support informed and autonomous participation. Additionally, the study was conducted with the consent of Mannheimer Swartling.

Data protection is also an important consideration, particularly in relation to GDPR. Anonymization involves removing or transforming personal identifiers so that individuals cannot be readily identified in the data (Flick, 2023, p. 219). In interview-based research, it is therefore recommended to avoid including specific details that could reveal the identity of participants or third parties (Flick, 2023, p. 218). In this study, steps are taken to safeguard participant privacy and maintain confidentiality. Interviewees are not named in the thesis, instead, their contributions are presented in anonymized form. Audio recordings and transcripts are stored securely and are accessible only to the researcher. While the participants are employees of Mannheimer Swartling and may be indirectly recognizable due to their specialized roles, careful consideration has been given to how quotations are presented to reduce this risk. The handling of all data complies with applicable data protection regulations and relevant ethical guidelines.

When working with AI-generated material, it is important to acknowledge the ethical considerations and potential risks involved. AI systems may be affected by several forms of bias, including perception bias (arising from incomplete or unrepresentative input data), technical bias (linked to the design of algorithms), and activation bias (related to how AI systems interact with and influence their external environment) (Grobelnik, 2026, pp. 16-17). These potential biases have been considered in the interpretation and analysis of the AI-generated material in this study. At the same time, although steps can be taken to reduce the impact of such biases, they cannot be fully eliminated. This limitation is therefore acknowledged as an inherent condition when working with AI-based data (Grobelnik, 2026, pp. 16-17).

An additional important source of biases and mistakes in generative AI algorithms is hallucinations, an inherent characteristic of these systems. Hallucinations occur when content generation algorithms, which select the next micro piece of content (called a token) step by step, choose an incorrect branch of possibilities due to lack of proper contextual understanding. This can affect various forms of content, including text, audio, images, and video. Currently,

there is no reliable method to eliminate hallucinations from generative AI (Grobelnik, 2026, p. 17). Considering this, AI outputs in the study are treated as representations rather than verified facts.

Methodological Limitations

Despite the systematic design and the use of triangulation, several methodological limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. The study is based on a single case focusing exclusively on Mannheimer Swartling. While the case study enables an in-depth and contextual grounded analysis, it limits the transferability of the findings to other organizations, sectors or national contexts. The legal industry is characterized by specific communication norms and reputational dynamics, and Mannheimer Swartling represents a large and established firm. The results should therefore be understood as analytically informative rather than statistically generalizable.

Secondly, the empirical material from the semi-structured interviews is based on a small and relatively homogeneous sample consisting of four communication professionals within the same organization. Although the participants possess an expertise and direct involvement in the firm's brand and communication work, the limited number of interviewees may restrict the diversity of perspectives captured. Their organizational proximity may also contribute to a degree of alignment in viewpoints. The study therefore prioritizes depth of insight over breadth of representation.

AI-generated outputs may change over time due to model updates, evolving training data and shifting retrieval mechanisms. Although data collection is conducted within a defined and relatively short time frame to enhance consistency, the findings represent a bit of AI-generated representations rather than fixed and timeless outputs. This affects the replicability of the study and should be considered when interpreting the results. Also, the prompt-based data harvesting represents a simulation rather than naturally user behavior. Real users may formulate queries differently, have follow-up questions and interact with AI systems in a more dynamic way. The validity of the interaction setting is therefore somewhat limited.

These limitations do not undermine the analytical value of the study but rather clarifies the scope within which the findings should be interpreted. Also, if this study were to be replicated these points are good to keep in mind. The study should be understood as an exploratory and context-sensitive examination of AI's emerging role in corporate brand communication.

Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study in an integrated way. The analysis is structured around six main themes that emerged from the empirical material: AI's alignment with the intended corporate brand, brand reconstruction through external sources, persona-dependent brand reconstruction, stereotypes and gap-filling, hallucinations and errors, and exclusion from AI-generated responses. Together, these themes are analyzed in relation to the study's research question, literature review and theoretical framework.

AI's Alignment with Intended Corporate Brand

The communication professionals at Mannheimer Swartling ("MSA") describes the law firm's brand as well-known, classic, strong, credible and premium. It is a brand that stands out in the legal market and industry due to its high-end brand association, professionalism and that they are full-service (meaning that they offer legal help across many different areas of law). Interviewee 4 state that it should be clear that Mannheimer Swartling "can handle everything on the market within the legal sphere". Interviewee 1 says that "no one doubts that Mannheimer Swartling is the best at law".

All the interviewees underline the importance of the firm's core values; quality, business focus and team spirit, and how it should be reflected in their communication. Interviewee 2 states that "quality is very important part of who we are, and that also needs to be evident in the way we communicate" meaning that the communication should always be of high standard. Interviewee 3 follows the same line and mentions how this high standard "may sound basic, but it is important: no spelling mistakes, correct language, consistently high quality in everything we publish. It does not become any less important just because it is fundamental." This focus is about maintaining the firm's tone of voice, it should sound like Mannheimer Swartling, and they want to be perceived the way they want.

Another part of the firm's corporate brand is to be authentic, and the communication must be clear and consistent. Interviewee 1 state that "Mannheimer Swartling should not look at what others are doing, because that is not relevant to the industry or to clients. It is most attractive when the brand has weight and feels authentic." The firm also have softer values that comes into play when communicating with law students, future employees, which is to focus on team spirit and how the firm is a community. Here the term "Pure Lockstep" is of importance, which is "a unique model with no individual financial incentive, only common goals. Business earnings are shared equally between partners, and associates with the same amount of experience are paid the same salary" (Mannheimer Swartling, n.d.).

Mannheimer Swartling's corporate brand is replicated throughout all AI tools in some way or another. Below are three comments from AI tools that replicate this view of Mannheimer Swartling:

ChatGPT: "MSA prioritizes teamwork & collaboration, high quality and business focus, diversity and inclusion, curiosity & growth, reliability and professionalism, cultural fit from its employees."

Gemini: "Generally considered the most prestigious and largest firm in Sweden. It is a full-service powerhouse known for a "pure lockstep" model that fosters high collaboration. They have a massive international reach and specific outposts in New York, Brussels, and Singapore."

DeepSeek: "MSA is full-service, and strong all-around choice if you need a large team for major projects."

These quotes suggest that AI can reinforce and reproduce Mannheimer Swartling's intended corporate brand in ways that support a strong and coherent brand image. AI reproduces key elements of Mannheimer Swartling's corporate brand in a way that is consistent with the firm's own communication. This is significant because it suggests that AI can function as an actor in which a desired brand image is reinforced.

This is important from a branding perspective because brand image is not something that fully exists within the firm's control, but in the minds of stake-

holders. Even if Mannheimer Swartling formulates its corporate brand through values such as quality, business focus, team spirit, authenticity, and professionalism, the success of that branding depends on whether these meanings are perceived by external audiences. In this case, the AI-generated descriptions indicate that the firm's intended identity is being translated into a corresponding brand image. This creates good conditions for the brand, since stakeholders receiving these AI responses are likely to get impressions that are close to how Mannheimer Swartling wants to be understood.

This can also be interpreted through the computers are social actors framework, AI-generated brand descriptions may carry weight into shaping perception. The conversational form, confident tone and socially responsive character of AI answers can make these portrayals feel credible. In that sense, AI becomes a social actor that does not only communicate information about the firm but helps picture the brand through socially meaningful cues. When these cues align with Mannheimer Swartling's intended corporate brand, AI contributes to the creation of a strong and accurate stakeholder perception.

However, the findings also imply that this accurate reproduction depends on the aspects of the brand that are most visible to AI systems. AI seems especially effective at reproducing established, widely recognized, and externally validated traits of the firm, such as prestige and full-service capability. This may mean that the strongest and most institutionalized parts of the corporate brand are the ones most easily transferred into AI-generated representations. In that sense, AI may help consolidate a dominant brand image that is already well established in the market.

Brand Reconstruction Through External Sources

The AI's tools use external sources other than Mannheimer Swartling's website, for example media, Wikipedia and rankings institutions such as Chambers, Legal500 and IFLR1000. One example of this is ChatGPT that states:

"Compensation structures (linked to lockstep) mean there's no direct bonus based on individual output, which some see as a positive for collegiality but less motivating for monetary recognition."

This is taken from a website called Glassdoor, which according to themselves is a page dedicated to make work life better through giving people “an inside look at companies and careers, so they can find the right job and workplace for them” (Glassdoor, n.d.). At Glassdoor employees can “leave reviews, search and post salaries, and join candid conversations about life at work” (Glassdoor, n.d.). This means that AI draws on information beyond Mannheimer Swartling’s own brand communication, reducing organizational control. The interviewees states concerns related to this as the firm cannot control these interpretations or know what is going to be written, meaning that they partly lose control over how the picture of them is shaped, which is a risk.

AI also uses media as a source. For example, Perplexity AI uses articles on LinkedIn and from TT (a Swedish news agency). Interviewee 1 expresses that Mannheimer Swartling has previously been fairly restrained about being seen in Media, and states:

“We think of ourselves as a fantastic company, which we are, but at the same time we are not a huge business. We have around 650 employees and we know the law. I do not think we should ever start paying for editorial content just because AI is reading more and more. It would not be credible. There is a risk of becoming trend driven. I do not think that is necessary. It could just as easily backfire. It is relevant to be visible when it is relevant to what we actually do, but we should not start inserting ourselves into bigger issues just to take up space.”

Here a balance between being credible and being seen is shown. As previous stated, Mannheimer Swartling want their brand to be credible and authentic, which is more important than trying to comply to what information AI might find and use.

On the other hand, a lot of the information that AI takes are from Mannheimer Swartling’s own website. For example, ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity AI and Microsoft Copilot show clearly the sources they have used, which is to an extent Mannheimer Swartling’s website. Interviewee 1 says that “we can only do our small part by making sure that what is on the website and what is said in the media is accurate”. So even though there are all these other sources you cannot forget the most important, which is their own website.

One issue that was brought up during the interview with interviewee 1 was how AI can collect information from all time and everywhere. Before AI the information or picture you got was often tied to what was current. Now if something negative about a brand were to appear that could linger for a long time. It becomes much more sensitive. In the past something like that might have blown over in a week. Now there is a risk that such things remain for much longer. In addition to this, interviewee 2 underlines that monitoring the outside world becomes even more important now, “keeping track of what is being written about us, what is out there, and which images of us are circulating”.

This suggests that Mannheimer Swartling’s brand image is increasingly shaped not only by the firm’s own communication, but also by the external sources that AI systems draw upon. Since generative AI tools combine information from different sources the brand becomes constructed through a broader network of actors. This means that the corporate brand is no longer produced solely by the organization itself, but through the combined influence of AI and external digital sources. From a brand co-creation perspective, this can be understood as a collaborative process in which AI and online content together shape how stakeholders experience and interpret the brand. And that AI is an entirely different actor that shapes the brand identity.

Interviewee 2 describe concern over the fact that Mannheimer Swartling cannot fully influence what these external sources say or how AI systems select and present them. This is significant because even if the law firm communicates one version of itself through its own website and official channels, AI may assemble a different picture by combining this with interpretations from other actors which they can’t control. In that sense, brand image becomes less stable and less controllable, as it is formed in an environment where many voices contribute to what appears to be a coherent answer. At the same time, the findings show that this does not mean the firm’s own communication becomes irrelevant. On the contrary, Mannheimer Swartling’s website remains one of the most important sources used by several AI tools. This suggests that the law firm can still influence AI mediated brand representations, but only to an extent. The website becomes one input among many, rather than the dominant source of meaning.

As mentioned, the interviews also raise a more long-term branding challenge that AI does not only reflect what is currently visible but can draw on information

from many different points in time. This means that past representations, including negative or outdated ones, may continue to shape present perceptions of the brand. This makes brand image more difficult to change, since AI can continue to reproduce old impressions even when the organization has evolved. From this perspective, AI not only co-creates brand meaning in the present, but may also contribute to a kind of historical lock-in, where earlier representations continue to affect current stakeholder perceptions and the brand image.

Persona Dependent Brand Reconstruction

The prompt-based data harvesting was, as mentioned previously, conducted through persona-based prompts. The personas are student, law firm outside of Sweden, IT-company, industry, and financial institution. AI's portrayals shifts depending on the user persona and prompt context. For the student persona culture, teamwork, development, prestige, employability is in focus, but also workload and compensation. For the law firm outside of Sweden the focus is on rankings institutions, cross-border strength, premium positioning and market leadership. Innovation, AI regulation, digital capability but also conservatism and lack of agility is the focus for an IT-company. Industry-persona gets a brand portrayal of the firm as having reliability, breadth, Sustainability and ESG focus, but also expensive and institutional heaviness. Lastly, the financial intuition portrayal is focusing on how the firm is very good for legal advice in this area but underlines the issues of conflicts of interest and premium pricing.

Interviewee 1 and 2 sees the shift in the context depending on the user as very reasonable, because that is exactly what the firm is doing as well. Interviewee 1 says:

“We write texts differently depending on which page of the website you are on. We adapt content for Instagram versus LinkedIn. It would be strange if everyone received exactly the same answer, since we do not communicate in the same way with all target groups.”

Interviewee 3 expresses that it is very reasonable if what comes through is representative, they don't see any problem with different target groups receiving slightly different answers. In addition, they also state that it gives the law firm more

opportunities to market the brand in a way that is relevant and appealing to different target groups.

However, this can also be seen as an issue as AI can easily produce a skewed picture. Interviewee 2 state:

“If you are a student, you may actually also want to understand which clients we work with or what kind of business law firm we are. But instead, you are presented with a picture that focuses heavily on softer values. The result may then be that you come away thinking that quality, client work, and expertise are not as central - that the focus is instead on having fun at work. That is part of the picture, of course, but not the whole of it.”

Interviewee 2 continue to express how this may apply similarly to clients too, that AI only portrays our work but not the softer values that may also be relevant. This means that AI has already made an interpretation of what the user wants to know. AI determines that some values will not be relevant for the user even if they might be.

It is also expressed in interview 4 that “it would be reassuring to be able to ensure that certain things are always included”, meaning certain things of Mannheimer Swartling’s brand. It’s also expressed that AI can be a useful tool, because you quickly get an indication of whether what you are looking for is included. Interviewee 4 states that the law firm then needs to have the right keywords and the right content in place but sees an issue with that you do not know exactly what others are searching for or how they phrase things. Interviewee 4 gives one example of that you do not know what other people are searching for “is how in the Swedish context, many people who do not work at a law firm say legal consultancy (“juristbyrå”) instead of law firm (“advokatbyrå”), do we show up for the ones searching for a legal consultant or how does AI interpret that?” On the other hand, interviewee 4 then concludes with saying that there are “of course both advantages and disadvantages to this persona brand reconstruction”.

Mannheimer Swartling’s corporate brand and identity is reconstructed differently depending on who asks the question. This suggests that AI actively tailors brand meaning to what it assumes each stakeholder group finds relevant. Rather than offering one stable representation of the brand, AI produces multiple versions of it. From a brand co-creation perspective, this means that AI acts as an im-

portant co-creator of brand meaning by selecting, emphasizing, and interpreting different aspects of the firm for different audiences. On the other hand, as interviewee 1 and 2 point out, Mannheimer Swartling also adjusts its own communication depending on audience and platform, which is a common principle in communication. In this sense, AI is doing what communicators already do, translating the brand into forms that are more relevant for audiences.

This can also be understood through the computers are social actors' framework. If users respond to computers as social actors, personalized AI responses may feel especially relevant, helpful, and trustworthy. In other words, personalization does not only make the information more useful but may also make the AI's interpretation of the brand feel more credible. This makes AI's role in branding more powerful, since it is not simply repeating information but presenting it in a way that feels socially responsive and individually meaningful. AI as a tool for personalization has already been used by communication professionals for making better branding and marketing efforts, so why can't AI use it for the same purpose? Personalization helps to shape AI into a trustworthy actor by giving a personalized experience for the users.

At the same time, AI driven personalization introduces new risks. Unlike corporate brand communication, where the sender has intentional control over what is emphasized, AI makes its own interpretation of what the user wants to know. This means that certain aspects of the brand may be overemphasized while others are left out. As stated in the interviews, this is illustrated clearly and viewed as an issue. If stakeholders are presented with different and partial versions of Mannheimer Swartling, the overall image of the firm may become fragmented. Different audiences may develop different brand images of what the firm is, what it values, and what it offers. While some variation is expected in branding, the challenge here is that the AI-generated version may become the stakeholder's first and most influential impression. This means that AI helps shape the brand experience before any direct contact with the firm has taken place. If that experience is too narrow or skewed, it may influence expectations, trust, and later evaluations of the organization.

The findings also point to a strategic challenge connected to search behavior and language. Interviewee 4 notes that the firm cannot fully know what terms users employ or how AI interprets them, such as whether someone searches for "law

firm” or “legal consultant.” This highlights that AI personalization is closely tied to how it identifies user preferences, context, and probable intent. As previous research on AI personalization suggests, these systems are designed to predict relevance based on user framing. However, that also means that organizations lose some control over how their brand is matched to stakeholder needs, because the logic of adaptation is partly hidden within the AI system itself.

Stereotypes and Generalizations

AI tend to use generalizations about law firm, professionalism or target groups when information is incomplete or unavailable. One example of this is from Gemini that mentions that the firm’s model “Pure Lockstep” can be good for a supportive environment but can make the firm seem slower and less agile. As a response to this interviewee 3 says that Mannheimer Swartling do not say themselves that there is a risk with Pure Lockstep, so there is a question of where AI got this from, and that the firm of course want to portrait Pure Lockstep as the best model. Interviewee 2 says that Mannheimer Swartling wants to highlight that “you gain access to the competence and expertise of the entire firm, that Pure Lockstep is a strength, not something that makes us less agile”.

Interviewee 1 raised the question of if there might be an issue with the word or concept itself; “it may carry a particular meaning within the legal industry, but a different and broader meaning more generally, one that is not as positive.” Interviewee 2 questions whether this other meaning could be layered into our description by AI, and how “it becomes more of an interpretation of its own than a reflection of how our model actually works.” Both agree on that this interpretation do not match the reality, and that it feels as if AI is drawing its own conclusion. Interviewee 3 gets the sense that AI fills in the gaps on its own, and “that is a risk, especially since many people today take AI answers as the truth. If someone asks how pure lockstep works and get this answer, they also come away with that conclusion which they might not have drawn if they had only read our own description.”

Another issue is how AI might take some reality, or stereotypes and make statements. One quote from the AI system DeepSeek is the following:

“The biggest complaint is the lack of work-life balance. The “nice” people you work with are also the people you see more than your family and friends during a busy period. The environment is perfectionistic. Making a mistake can be stressful not because someone will yell at you, but because the standards are so uniformly high. This creates a culture that is friendly but not necessarily “relaxed.””

Interviewee 1 says that this is not specific to only Mannheimer Swartling, it sounds like something you could say about all large law firms as well, “there is truth in it as you cannot work in business law and make mistakes, and the demands are high because the work you do must be correct”.

All the interviewees believe that it sounds like a stereotypical image of a business law firm. However, “the biggest complaint is the lack of work-life balance” makes it sound as though this were an established fact among all employees at the firm, but according to whom? Interviewee 2 says that it feels as though AI is attaching that classic image of the law firm as harsh, elitist, and high-pressure, and how it feels like “AI is trying to meet the user’s concerns and therefore produces an answer that fits that image, rather than offering a nuanced description”. It is also brought up that work-life balance can be a puzzle, but that it’s something people talk about across the entire industry, and not only law firms but consulting business in general, especially when you work closely with clients’ needs.

Interviewee 3 comments on how “it almost sounds like a review from a someone who was not entirely satisfied” and wants to know whether it is based on something real or if AI is simply hallucinating. Interviewees 3 and 4 are disappointed and that the comment feels harsh since this is something the firm has worked a great deal to counteract exactly this issue, for example by creating a good working environment and making parental leave and wellbeing possible and better. It is stated that it feels a bit “Suits-like” and quite American and cliché how the culture is described as tense and perfectionistic.

In addition to this, interviewee 4 underlines that there are rules from the Swedish Bar Association that mean a lawyer must always be available, so there is also a structural dimension to this. There is also a wish that it would have been good if AI could describe this issue in a more neutral or transparent way, that it can be intense during certain periods, why that is the case, and that Mannheimer Swartling is actively working on the issue. This would make it both fairer and more useful

for the user since “clients want both accessible legal advice and to know that the people they work with have a sustainable workplace”. Also, Mannheimer Swartling is according to interviewee 4 “one of the softer environments to work in, even though it can of course be stressful and involve a lot of work at times. What we really do have is team spirit and a sense of family – you do not leave anyone in the lurch. At other firms, there can be much more elbowing for positions. Here, there is a different culture, and I do not think that comes through in AI answers like these.”

This suggests that AI-generated generalizations and stereotypical interpretations can have important consequences for Mannheimer Swartling’s brand image and brand reputation. When AI fills in missing information with assumptions about what a large business law firm is typically like, it risks producing a portrayal that is partly detached from the firm’s actual brand identity. This matters because reputation is closely tied to trust. If stakeholders encounter descriptions that sound plausible but are not nuanced or fair, AI may co-create a version of the brand that shapes expectations in misleading ways.

This also highlights a central issue of control. Interviewee 4 points out that Mannheimer Swartling can carefully shape its own communication by adjusting tone, message and emphasis on its own materials, but it is much harder to influence how external AI systems describe the firm in response to someone else’s question. In this sense, AI becomes a powerful actor for the brand that the firm cannot fully control. From a branding perspective, this is significant because the firm’s identity is no longer shaped by the firm itself, but also interpreted and reformulated by AI systems outside its control.

Applying the computers are social actors framework, if users tend to treat computers as social actors, AI-generated answers may be received as credible, neutral and authoritative, even when they are based on stereotypes or incomplete information. This makes the issue more serious than a simple factual error. AI is not only misrepresenting isolated details but can actively reproduce simplified cultural narratives about elite law firms, such as being rigid, harsh or highly pressured, or lacking work-life balance. When such descriptions are presented in a confident and human-like way, users may accept that as truthful rather than recognizing them as interpretations.

AI's application of stereotypes of a business law firm to Mannheimer Swartling is problematic as some elements may contain a degree of truth, such as high standards or periods of intense work, but the overall framing becomes stereotypical. The problem is therefore not only whether individual statements are correct but how they are assembled into a broader narrative. As stated, the description becomes kind of "suits-like", Americanized and somewhat cliché, rather than grounded in the specific culture of Mannheimer Swartling. In this way, AI co-created a brand identity that may reflect wider industry stereotypes more than Mannheimer Swartling's actual organizational reality, and it does not help the firm's brand if it's not true.

Another important issue with this is how AI not only adds its own interpretations, but also leaves out contextual information that could make the brand portrayal more balanced. For example, the structural conditions created by the Swedish Bar Association's rules, or the firm's own efforts to improve wellbeing, parental leave, team spirit, and long-term work-life balance are not included. This absence matters because left out information can be just as influential as false information. By excluding these nuances, AI produces a skewed image in which demanding work is emphasized while the firm's efforts to create a supportive culture remains invisible. In the end this also creates a skewed brand image for the firm, as potential employees may approach the firm with an overly negative or simplified image of what it is like to work there, while clients may associate the brand with a harsher and less sustainable work culture than in reality. If stakeholders later encounter a different reality, trust may be weakened, but even before that, such portrayals can influence whether they choose to engage with the firm at all. AI therefore shapes the brand experience before any direct interaction takes place, which strengthens its role as a co-creator of brand meaning.

The results from the prompt-based data harvesting also suggests that AI tends to resolve uncertainty by relying on familiar narratives. When concepts such as "Pure lockstep" are not fully understood in context, AI may interpret them through broader and sometimes more negative meanings rather than reflecting how the firm itself explains them. This creates a gap between intended brand identity and AI mediated brand image. Instead of communicating "Pure lockstep" as a strength that gives clients access to the competence of the whole firm, AI may present it as a sign of rigidity or reduced agility. The result is that AI does not

simply repeat available information but transforms it into something more stereotypical and easier to explain though less accurate.

The findings indicate the AI can become a social actor that reproduces stereotypes and fills gaps with assumptions, thereby co-creating a version of Mannheimer Swartling's brand that is not fully aligned with the firm's intended identity. This creates risks for both brand image and reputation, particularly if stakeholders trust AI answers as objective descriptions. The challenge is therefore not only to correct factual inaccuracies, but also to address the broader issue that AI may frame the firm through generalized cultural assumptions than through its specific values, practices and context.

Hallucinations, Errors, and Instability

When AI answers there can sometimes be errors, meaning incorrect information. Also, AI can start to hallucinate which is when an AI system generates information that sounds convincing but is incorrect, made up, or not grounded in real data. In simple terms, AI is confidently guessing instead of truly knowing. These errors and hallucinations, and all kinds of technical limitations can distort the brand and create unreliable representations. Three examples of these are the following, the first two from DeepSeek and the last one from Mistral:

"The environment includes high-quality amenities to keep you there: excellent coffee machines, fruit, sandwiches in the afternoon, and well-stocked fridge for after-work beer on Fridays."

"They have unparalleled presence in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö as well as offices in New York, London, and Hong Kong to support international clients."

"Mannheimer Swartling have no global offices."

All interviewees think this is a bit problematic, some think it is more problematic than others. Interviewee 1 thinks that if there are ten errors, then it could become a problem and depends on how wrong it is.

Interviewee 1 also says that AI is just the new way of receiving information:

“In the past, you might have asked a friend about a restaurant or something else, to get confirmation and avoid wasting time. Now you can ask AI instead. The answer is not always right, but then again, it is not certain that your friend would have given the right answer either.”

This is particularly interesting aspect as this reflects the idea of how people respond to computers as if they were social actor. Even if AI is understood to sometimes be wrong, it can still be treated as a familiar and trusted conversational partner. This makes AI's role in branding especially significant. Just as a friend can shape how a person perceives a company, AI can also influence that perception. In line with brand co-creation theory, AI is not only transmitting information about Mannheimer Swartling but participating in the construction of what the brand means to stakeholders.

During the interviews it is underlined how the first comment from DeepSeek almost feels unsettling, that the phrase “to keep you there” makes it sound like a completely different company, and gives a strange impression of Mannheimer Swartling, as the aim were to keep people around with food and drinks. This is an example of when AI becomes a risk for the brand. Interviewee 3 expresses a worry of how they “don't know where the information comes from or how AI has constructed these answers, and that also makes it difficult to do anything about it.” According to interviewee 3 the fruit, coffee machines and after-work beer is not negative, but the way it is expressed is wrong. It is not how Mannheimer Swartling expresses themselves. Their focus is more on a good work environment, a strong sense of team spirit, not food and drinks. Also, it might put some people off, if one wonders why Mannheimer Swartling focuses so much on beers and not what matters, then you end up creating the wrong impression.

Interviewee 2 underlines how it can be problematic for the brand if AI gets things wrong if AI becomes the new place where people go to seek information. If people are used to often getting correct answers from AI, it is easy for them to assume that this is true as well. In addition to this, interviewee 2 says that “it can become odd if someone first reads something in AI and then goes to the website and sees that it is not accurate. In that case, the person may think that the information on the website is outdated, or that we communicate unclearly”. Also, interviewee 4 says that if “someone wants help in London and gets the impression

that we do have an office there on incorrect grounds, that can have direct consequences. It may lead them to choose a competitor, or to form a completely inaccurate picture of us as a workplace or business partner”.

Inaccurate AI-generated information can shape both Mannheimer Swartling’s brand image and brand reputation. When AI presents incorrect or hallucinated claims about the firm, it risks creating representations that are convincing but misleading. This becomes important because such descriptions may influence how potential employees, clients and other stakeholders perceive the firm before any direct interaction has taken place. If these expectations are later contradicted, the results may be disappointment, confusion or reduced trust. The issue is not only factual inaccuracy, but also tone and framing. The description of amenities “to keep you there” was considered unsettling because it gave the impression of a company identity that does not align with how Mannheimer Swartling wants to present itself. Even if parts of the content are not negative in themselves, the wording creates a different brand image by emphasizing the wrong values. This suggests that AI-generated errors can distort not only what stakeholders know about the firm, but also how they emotionally interpret it. In addition to this, a part of Mannheimer Swartling’s brand is to not have any errors, and this part of the AI responses does the exact opposite of this, affecting the corporate brand and how it is perceived.

If stakeholders trust AI-generated answers, as the computers are social actors framework suggests they may, and what the communication professionals are worried about, these distortions become even more problematic. Incorrect information about offices, work environment, or firm culture may lead potential clients to choose competitors or potential employees to form unrealistic expectations. In that sense, AI affects not only awareness of the brand, but also the brand experience that emerges before any actual contact with the firm. This reinforces the idea that AI should be understood as a powerful co-creator of brand meaning, with the capacity to shape perceptions in ways that may not reflect the organization’s intended corporate identity and the brand image of the firm for stakeholders.

Exclusion from AI-generated Responses

In the responses received from ChatGPT, DeepSeek and Microsoft Copilot Mannheimer Swartling is not included as an option for legal advice to an IT-company. According to Claude Mannheimer Swartling is not the top recommended option and Grok only recommends the firm if the company needs full-service, otherwise not. Such exclusion is significant because brand visibility depends on not only on how organizations are represented, but also on whether they are included in the user's set of perceived alternatives.

All the interviewees express surprise and says that this is an interesting phenomenon. Interviewees 1 and 2 believe the reason behind this can be that Mannheimer Swartling is a full-service firm and not a specialist firm, and that it might be easier for niche firms to be associated with that expertise and appear in contexts where IT law is mentioned specifically. Interviewee 2 says that since the law firm has such broad expertise, there may be a risk that the overall picture becomes so broad that their more specific expertise gets lost, which is problematic. Interviewee 1 underlines the issue with that everyone takes the answers they get as truth, you take the answer and move on, which that alone can be enough for a future client to contact another firm instead of Mannheimer Swartling.

Mannheimer Swartling have started working more actively with GEO and SEO to improve and optimize their website, for this reason. However, the pages about the firm's expertise are not entirely up to date and that becomes quite clear in searches like these. Interviewee 3 says that "you can quite clearly see in searches like these, especially when smaller firms appear, who have put more effort into being picked up by AI" but is not entirely concerned since they are fully aware of why it looks this way, but it is a basic requirement that the firm should appear in contexts like these. For the firm "it signals that we are up there among the leading firms, so this is not something we can simply overlook", interviewee 3 says.

There is also a view of AI moving very fast, that in a month from now this phenomenon could be hugely important. Interviewee 4 is very aware of how AI is becoming a sales and search tool in the same way that Google has been, people will search, get a few options, and then click through them, just as they click on products in e-commerce. Here it is clear why it is a negative development in the

long term if Mannheimer Swartling are not visible, they “need to stay at the forefront here as well”.

This indicates that exclusion from generative AI responses may have important consequences for Mannheimer Swartling’s brand image, brand reputation and future client acquisition. When the firm is absent from AI-generated recommendations concerning legal advice for IT companies, this does not only reduce visibility, but also risks shaping perceptions of the firm’s competence in this area. In this sense, not appearing becomes meaningful, since stakeholders may interpret it as evidence that Mannheimer Swartling is not relevant or leading option for IT law, even if this does not reflect the firm’s actual expertise.

This is particularly important in relation to Mannheimer Swartling’s corporate brand as a full-service firm. On one hand, it is reasonable that AI associates the firm with breadth, wide competence and the ability to assist across many legal areas, since this is central to its brand identity. On the other hand, the findings suggest that this full-service positioning may overshadow more niche specializations in AI mediated searches. When the overall corporate brand becomes too dominant, more specific expertise such as IT law risks becoming less visible. This points to a strategic tension in the brand, the same identity that strengthens Mannheimer Swartling’s market position may also make it harder for AI systems to recognize and recommend the firm in more specialized contexts.

At the same time, this issue is especially sensitive because Mannheimer Swartling’s corporate brand is not only about being full-service, but also about being among the leading firms in every area in which it operates. From that perspective, absence from AI recommendations is not simply a visibility problem, but also a challenge to the firm’s intended brand identity. If AI does not include Mannheimer Swartling among the leading options in a specialized area, this may weaken the perception that the firm is “top tier” across the board. AI therefore does not only distribute information about the brand but can also act as a co-creator of brand meaning by influencing which firms are seen as credible, relevant, and leading in different legal fields.

The interviews also suggest that AI is increasingly functioning as a sales tool. If this becomes a more dominant way of finding legal services, not appearing in the results may mean not being considered at all. The issue is therefore not only reputational, but also strategic and economic. Visibility in AI-generated responses

may become crucial for gaining new clients, particularly if stakeholders begin to rely on AI as their primary entry point to professional services.

This also points to a broader challenge for full-service law firms in AI driven environments. While broad expertise is traditionally a strength, niche firms may be easier for AI systems to categorize and connect to specific legal issues. This means that specialist competence within a full-service brand risk being overlooked unless it is clearly visible in the firm's digital presence. From this perspective, Mannheimer Swartling's work with GEO and SEO becomes not only a technical adjustment, but a strategic branding effort aimed at ensuring that both the breadth and the depth of the brand are legible in AI mediated environments. In that sense, the challenge is not to choose between being full-service and specialized, but to make sure AI can recognize both at the same time.

Conclusion

Generative AI descriptions both align with and deviate from a company's intended corporate brand image and brand identity, while also contributing to how that brand is constructed. In this study, brand identity refers to how Mannheimer Swartling intends to present itself, while brand image refers to how stakeholders may come to perceive the firm through AI generated descriptions. The findings show that AI operates in between these two, sometimes translating intended identity into a similar brand image, and sometimes reconstructing or distorting it. Generative AI should therefore be understood not only as a communication channel, but also as an active co-creator of brands.

First, the findings show that AI can align with the firm's intended corporate brand. AI reproduces the most visible and institutionalized parts of Mannheimer Swartling's identity, particularly prestige, full-service capability, professionalism, quality and collaboration. These are well-established and externally validated parts of the firm's brand, which makes them easier for AI systems to pick up and reproduce. In this sense, AI can reinforce a strong and coherent brand image that is close to how the firm wants to be understood.

At the same time, AI deviates from the intended brand identity. This happens not only through factual errors and hallucinations, but also through stereotypes, exclusion from recommendations and AI's own interpretations. AI may fill in gaps with stereotypes and generalized assumptions about business law firms, emphasize certain qualities while leaving out others, or present a narrower version of the brand depending on the user persona or prompt. As a result, the brand can become fragmented, less stable and clear, and not as controllable than in the firm's own communication.

Finally, generative AI also contributes to the construction of the brand in a broader sense. Since AI actively selects, combines and frames information from both Mannheimer Swartling's own communication and external sources, it participates in shaping how stakeholders understand the brand. This also means that the

firm has less control, since its own website becomes one source among many. In addition, visibility in AI-generated responses becomes a branding issue, because not being included or recommended can also shape brand meaning and imply a lack of relevance of expertise, even when it is inaccurate. AI-generated descriptions may therefore influence stakeholder perceptions before any direct contact with the firm has taken place, which makes AI important for reputation as well as for attracting clients and future employees.

To conclude, the study highlights a central tension of how generative AI can both strengthen and weaken brand image and brand identity. It strengthens the brand when it reflects the intended identity, but weakens it when it introduces instability, only fragments of the brand, and include outside interpretations. AI has therefore become an important actor and co-creator when shaping how corporate brands are understood in digital environments.

Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on one single company, Mannheimer Swartling, which gives it depth and makes it possible to analyze the relationship between AI and corporate branding in a detailed way. At the same time, this limits how far the findings can be generalized. A large law firm has a very specific brand position, and AI may describe it differently than it would other types of organizations. This means that the findings are most useful as an in-depth case rather than something that can be directly applied to all organizations.

Another limitation is that the study is based on a limited number of AI tools and personas. Since AI responses can vary depending on platform, model version, phrasing, language, and time of use, the results reflect only a specific set of conditions. If the same prompts had been asked at another time, in another version of the tools, or with slightly different wording, the results may have looked different. AI systems are also dynamic, meaning that their answers can change over time as models are updated, source availability changes, and search-based systems draw on shifting online environments. The study should therefore be understood as context-specific rather than permanent. In addition, some AI tools do not clearly show their sources, which makes certain responses more difficult to trace. As a result, it is not always possible to know exactly where particular descriptions come from,

whether they reflect training data, retrieved sources, or the model's own interpretation.

Lastly, the study examines AI-generated descriptions rather than actual stakeholder interpretations. In other words, it analyzes how AI presents the brand, not how real users receive, interpret, or act on those descriptions. This means that the study says more about AI's potential influence on brand image than about its actual effects on stakeholders in practice. The study also partly relies on communication professionals' interpretations of whether AI descriptions align with or deviate from the intended brand. This means that the analysis is shaped by an internal organizational perspective, and their judgments may be influenced by how they want the brand to be understood.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could further examine how generative AI contributes to the construction and representation of corporate brands across different organizational industry contexts. Since this study is based on a single case study within the legal industry, future studies could investigate whether similar patterns appear in other types of organizations, such as smaller law firms, public organizations, consumer brands, or companies operating in other markets. This would make it possible to compare whether generative AI aligns with, reconstructs or deviates from intended brand identity in similar or different ways depending on industry, company size, market position and communication style and efforts.

Another important direction for future research would be to study how stakeholders interpret AI-generated brand descriptions. While this study examines how AI describes a brand and how communication professionals perceive AI-generated descriptions of Mannheimer Swartling, future research could focus on the audiences who may use generative AI as a source of information. For example, studies could research how potential clients, employees, students or other stakeholders respond to AI-generated descriptions of an organization, whether they trust these descriptions, and how such responses influence their perceptions, expectations and decision making. This would contribute to a better understanding of how AI-generated brand images may affect brand image, brand reputation and a company's stakeholder relationship.

A third alternative for future research could be to explore how organizations respond to AI's representations of their brand. As generative AI systems increasingly mediate information about companies, organizations may need to consider how their digital presence influences AI-generated representations. Future studies could therefore examine how companies work with website content, search engine optimization, generative engine optimization, media visibility and external marketing analysis to influence how they are represented in generative AI systems. Comparative studies could also research whether organizations differ in how they monitor or adapt their communication for AI-generated brand representations.

Finally, future research could examine how AI-generated brand descriptions change over time. Since generative AI outputs may vary due to model updates, changing retrieval mechanisms and updated online information, future studies could collect AI responses at multiple points in time. This would make it possible to research whether AI-generated brand images become more accurate, more standardized or decline over time. Such research would be valuable for understanding generative AI not only as a current branding challenge, but as an ongoing factor in corporate brand communication. This could also be combined with the third option for future studies, to see how a company's information put out externally affects AI systems over time.

Together these directions would contribute to a broader understanding of generative AI as an emerging actor in strategic communication. They would also help clarify how organizations can understand, monitor and respond to AI-generated representations and descriptions of their brands in an increasingly AI affected communication environment.

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Appendices

Persona Question Guide

Persona 1: Student

Interested in us as a future workplace. Focus on culture, values, work environment, and development opportunities.

Questions:

- “I am a law student in Sweden considering a career at a business law firm. What law firms does students apply to and why?”
- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. How do employees typically describe the social environment at Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. What is the typical work environment like at Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. How does Mannheimer Swartling’s career development compare to other law firms in Sweden?”
- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. What are the pros and cons of starting your career at Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. What should a student know before applying to Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. What kind of people tend to thrive at Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. What does Mannheimer Swartling prioritize the most in its employees?”

- “I am a law student in Sweden considering applying to Mannheimer Swartling. Describe Mannheimer Swartling with three words.”

Persona 2: Law firm outside of Sweden

Interested in knowing the best law firm in Sweden to do business with, their prices, rankings in market research and their overall status.

Questions:

- “I work at a law firm outside of Sweden looking for a Swedish firm for cross-border work. What law firms are considered the most prestigious law firms in Sweden?”
- “I work at a law firm outside of Sweden looking for a Swedish firm for cross-border work. How strong is Mannheimer Swartling’s position in the Swedish legal market?”
- “I work at a law firm outside of Sweden looking for a Swedish firm for cross-border work. What types of clients typically hire Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I work at a law firm outside of Sweden looking for a Swedish firm for cross-border work. How would international clients typically experience working with Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I work at a law firm outside of Sweden looking for a Swedish firm for cross-border work. What are Mannheimer Swartling’s main strengths?”
- “I work at a law firm outside of Sweden looking for a Swedish firm for cross-border work. What are potential weaknesses of Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I work at a law firm outside of Sweden looking for a Swedish firm for cross-border work. Describe Mannheimer Swartling with three words”.

Persona 3: IT-company

Interested in legal expertise regarding data privacy, digital compliance, IT, technology, AI, media, and intellectual property.

Questions:

- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. We need legal expertise in data privacy, digital compliance, IT,

technology, AI, media and intellectual property. What law firm would be best for this?”

- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. Is Mannheimer Swartling considered innovative in technology and digital law?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. What kind of clients does Mannheimer Swartling typically represent in the technology sector?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. What are potential limitations of working with Mannheimer Swartling as an IT-company?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. How experienced is Mannheimer Swartling in legal issues related to generative AI?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. How well positioned is Mannheimer Swartling to advise on future tech regulation?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. Would Mannheimer Swartling feel like a traditional or modern law firm to work with?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. How entrepreneurial is Mannheimer Swartling?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. What are potential weaknesses of Mannheimer Swartling when it comes to IT and technology?”
- “I work at an IT company in Sweden and are looking for a Swedish law firm. Describe Mannheimer Swartling with three words”.

Persona 4: Industry

Interested in legal expertise regarding defense and security, dispute resolution, industry, real estate, environment, energy, sustainability, and infrastructure.

Questions:

- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. We need legal expertise regarding defense and security, dispute resolution, industry, real estate, environment, energy, sustainability, and infrastructure. What law firm would be best for this?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. How does Mannheimer Swartling position itself in relation to sustainability and ESG?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. Is Mannheimer Swartling considered specialized in environmental law?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. What kind of clients does Mannheimer Swartling typically represent in the industry sector?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. What are potential limitations of working with Mannheimer Swartling as an industry-company?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. How experienced is Mannheimer Swartling in legal issues related to defense and security?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. How well positioned is Mannheimer Swartling to advise on future energy regulations?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. Is Mannheimer Swartling the safest choice for high-stake industrial matters?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. What are potential weaknesses of Mannheimer Swartling when it comes to industry related matters?”
- “I work at an industrial company looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. Describe Mannheimer Swartling with three words”.

Persona 5: Financial institution

Interested in legal expertise regarding banking and finance, fintech, funds and investments, mergers and acquisitions (M&A), and private equity.

Questions:

- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. We need legal expertise in banking and finance, fintech, funds and investments, mergers and acquisitions (M&A), and private equity. What law firm would be best for this?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. How does Mannheimer Swartling position itself in relation to fintech?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. Is Mannheimer Swartling considered specialized in private equity?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. What kind of clients does Mannheimer Swartling typically represent for financial institutions?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. What are potential limitations of working with Mannheimer Swartling as an financial institution?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. How experienced is Mannheimer Swartling in legal issues related to banking and finance?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. How well positioned is Mannheimer Swartling to advise on future M&A regulations?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. Is Mannheimer Swartling the safest choice for high-stake financial matters?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. What are potential weaknesses of Mannheimer Swartling when it comes to financial matters?”
- “I work at a financial institution looking for legal advice from a Swedish Law firm. Describe Mannheimer Swartling with three words”.

Interview Guide in Swedish

1. Hur skulle du beskriva Mannheimer Swartlings varumärke?
2. Vilka aspekter av byråns varumärke och identitet uppfattar du som särskilt viktiga att kommunicera externt?
3. Finns det några delar av varumärket som du anser är särskilt centrala att bevara konsekvent, oavsett målgrupp eller kanal?

Visa ordmolnet.

4. Här är de orden som AI använder för att beskriva Mannheimer Swartling. De största orden användes mest. Vad är din spontana reaktion när du ser detta ord?
5. Vilka ord upplever du som särskilt träffande, och vilka upplever du som mindre träffande eller missvisande?
6. Är det något du tycker saknas i denna bild av byrån?



Visa tabellen med ord och frekvenser. Jag har sökt på ord som byrån ofta använder i olika syften för att visa kulturen och varumärket, och sedan sökt hur ofta de nämns i AI-svaren jag fått.

7. *Vad tänker du när du ser vilka begrepp som förekommer ofta respektive sällan i AI-svaren?*
8. *Vad säger detta, enligt dig, om vilka av byråns identitet som AI verkar fånga upp?*
9. *Vad tycker du att denna fördelning signalerar?*

Full-service	283
Quality (generellt ord)	253
Pure Lockstep	156
Team spirit	77
MSA Innovation	74
PDP (Professional Development Programme)	57
Diversity	49
Business focus	41
Inclusion	24
MSA Academy	10
Pro Bono	9
MSA Wellness	9
MSA Arts	2

Visa citatet.

“Mannheimer Swartling is one of Sweden’s leading business law firms, known for high-quality advice, strong teamwork, and deep expertise in complex transactions and regulatory matters.”

10. Upplever du att detta är hur du skulle beskriva byrån?

11. Vad tycker du att den här beskrivningen fångar väl, och vad saknas?

12. AI tenderar att beskriva Mannheimer Swartling på olika sätt beroende på vem användaren är eller vilken typ av fråga som ställs. Hur ser du på det?

AI använder sig av andra källor än byråns hemsida, exempelvis från media, Wikipedia och olika rankingsinstitut.

13. Vad tänker du om det ur ett varumärkesperspektiv?

14. Vilka möjligheter och utmaningar ser du i att AI sammanför och om-
tolkar information från många olika källor samtidigt?

Visa citat.

“The firm’s collaborative culture and lockstep model create a supportive environment, but may also make it appear less agile and more process-heavy than smaller competitors.”

15. Vad är din spontana reaktion på denna AI-beskrivning?

16. Vad tycker du om att AI här drar en mer tolkande slutsats?

Jag har frågat AI vilka advokatbyråer som är mest passande att ge juridisk rådgivning till ett IT-företag. Här händer det att Mannheimer Swartling inte finns med bland svaren alls.

17. Hur reagerar du på det?

18. Vilken betydelse kan sådan frånvaro ha för hur varumärket uppfattas?

Visa citat. Här är 3 citat från de AI svar som jag har fått.

”The environment includes high-quality amenities to keep you there: excellent coffee machines, fruit, sandwiches in the afternoon, and well-stocked fridge for after-work beer on Fridays.”

“They have unparalleled presence in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö as well as offices in New York, London, and Hong Kong to support international clients.”

“Mannheimer Swartling have no global offices.”

19. Vad tänker du när du ser dessa beskrivningar?

20. Hur skulle du bedöma betydelsen av sådana fel ur ett varumärkesperspektiv?

Visa citat.

“The biggest complaint is the lack of work-life balance. The “nice” people you work with are also the people you see more than your family and friends during a busy period. The environment is perfectionistic. Making a mistake can be stressful not because someone will yell at you, but because the standards are so uniformly high. This creates a culture that is friendly but not necessarily “relaxed.””

21. Hur upplever du denna typ av beskrivning av byrå?
 22. Tycker du att AI återger något verkligt, eller snarare förstärker stereotyper och generaliseringar?
-
23. Vilka övergripande möjligheter ser du med att generativ AI beskriver och förmedlar bilden av byrå?
 24. Tror du att generativ AI förändrar förutsättningarna för hur ett varumärke som Mannheimer Swartling formas och uppfattas? På vilket sätt?
 25. Är det något ytterligare du vill lyfta när det gäller AI-genererade beskrivningar av Mannheimer Swartling och relationen till byråns avsedda varumärke?

Interview Guide in English

1. How would you describe Mannheimer Swartling's brand?
2. Which aspects on the firm's brand and identity do you perceive as particularly important to communicate externally?
3. Are there any parts of the brand that you consider especially important to preserve consistently, regardless of target audience or channel?

Show the word cloud. These are the words AI uses to describe Mannheimer Swartling. The largest words were used most frequently.

4. What is your immediate reaction when you see this word cloud?
5. Which words do you feel are particularly accurate, and which do you find less accurate or misleading?
6. Is there anything you think is missing from this picture of the firm?

“Mannheimer Swartling is one of Sweden’s leading business law firms, known for high-quality advice, strong teamwork, and deep expertise in complex transactions and regulatory matters.”

10. Do you feel that this is how you would describe the firm?

11. What do you think this description captures well, and what is missing?

12. AI tends to describe Mannheimer Swartling in different ways depending on who the user is or what type of questions is being asked. What is your view on that?

AI uses sources other than the firm’s website, for example media, Wikipedia, and various rankings institutions.

13. What are your thoughts on that from a branding perspective?

14. What opportunities and challenges do you see in AI combining and reinterpreting information from many different sources at the same time?

Show the quote. “The firm’s collaborative culture and lockstep model create a supportive environment, but may also make it appear less agile and more process-heavy than smaller competitors.”

15. What is your immediate reaction to this AI-generated description?

16. What do you think about AI drawing a more interpretive conclusion here?

I asked AI which law firms are most suitable for providing legal advice to an IT company. In some cases, Mannheimer Swartling is not included in the responses at all.

17. How do you react to that?

18. What significance might such absence have for how the brand is perceived?

Show the quote.

Here are three quotes from the AI responses I received.

”The environment includes high-quality amenities to keep you there: excellent coffee machines, fruit, sandwiches in the afternoon, and well-stocked fridge for after-work beer on Fridays.”

“They have unparalleled presence in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö as well as offices in New York, London, and Hong Kong to support international clients.”

“Mannheimer Swartling have no global offices.”

19. What do you think when you see these descriptions?
20. How would you assess the significance of such errors from a branding perspective?

Show the quote.

“The biggest complaint is the lack of work-life balance. The “nice” people you work with are also the people you see more than your family and friends during a busy period. The environment is perfectionistic. Making a mistake can be stressful not because someone will yell at you, but because the standards are so uniformly high. This creates a culture that is friendly but not necessarily “relaxed.””

21. How do you perceive this type of descriptions of the firm?
22. Do you think AI is reflecting something real, or rather reinforcing stereotypes and generalizations?

-
23. What overall opportunities do you see in generative AI describing and conveying the image of the firm?
 24. Do you think generative AI changes the conditions for how a brand like Mannheimer Swartling is shaped and perceived? In what way?
 25. Is there anything else you would like to highlight regarding AI-generated descriptions of Mannheimer Swartling and the relationship to the firm’s intended brand?