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Branding the Individual

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Abstract
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BRANDING THE INDIVIDUAL

Research purpose and objectives

This thesis is conducted in order to shed more light on the phenomenon of human individuals as brands. The study takes a strategic, brand owner and managerial perspective into investigating the peculiarities of people as brands and tries to identify their key differences compared other brands. The objective is to build a general understanding about branded individuals based on existing academic literature and find insight about branding individuals from interviewing marketing professionals.

Methodology

The empirical part of the study is based on a qualitative interview study. The interviews were carried out with marketing professionals mainly in London, United Kingdom. The people chosen for interviews were representatives on large or medium size advertising agencies as well as a music industry expert.

Findings

People can be regarded as brands just as other products and services. People brands do have their own peculiarities to be taken into account in the process of branding. As people brands are more volatile than other brands and at the same time hold more media interest they are more easily subjected to negative publicity. Therefore the assumption of the interviews was that a crisis plan is justified as long as it does not become public.

Another finding was that the brand of the individual should always be based on the truth. Some aspects and features of the brand can always be emphasised and other suppressed, but the core of the brand has to be based on the true brand identity of the individual. Generally this vast and growing interest in branding an individual rises from the huge amounts of monetary value possessed in the brand names of these celebrities. The assumption is that this industry of branding the individual has only just awakened.

Keywords

Branded individual, human brands, celebrity branding, reverse image transfer

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Tutkielman tavoitteet

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli valoittaa ihmisyksilöiden brandausta ilmiönä. Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan ihmisbrandien erityisiä ominaispiirteitä sekä yritetään tunnistaa suurimmat erot verrattuna muihin brandeihin pääasiallisesti strategisesta, branding omistajan sekä brandin johtajan näkökulmasta. Tavoitteena on rakentaa laajempi ymmärrys brandatuista yksilöistä perustuen olemassaolevaan kirjallisuuteen sekä markkinoinnin asiantuntijoiden haastatteluihin.

Tutkimusmenetelmät

Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa perustuu kvalitatiiviseen haastattelututkimukseen. Markkinoinnin asiantuntijoiden haastattelut suoritettiin pääasiassa Lontoossa, Iso Britanniassa. Haastateltaviksi valitut henkilöt edustivat suuria ja keskisuuria mainostoimistoja sekä lisäksi yksi asiantuntijoista edusti musiikkialaa.

Tutkimustulokset

Ihmisten voidaan katsoa olevan brandeja avian kuten muidenkin tuotteiden tai palveluiden. Ihmisbrandeilla on tosin omat erikoisuutensa, jotka tulisi huomioida brandaysprosessissa. Koska ihmiset brandeina ovat häilyvämpiä kuin muut brandit sekä samanaikaisesti myös mediaa kiinnostavampia, ovat he herkemmin uhattuina negatiiviselle julkisuudelle. Kriisisuunnitelman luonti on täten haastatteluihin pohjautuen perusteltua, kunhan sitä ei saateta julki.

Yksilön brandi tulisi aina perustaa totuudelle oli toinen keskeisistä päätelmistä. Joitain asioita tai ominaisuuksia voidaan toki korostaa sekä toisia vaimentaa, mutta brandin ydin täytyisi perustaa yksilön brandin todelliselle identiteetille. Yleisesti ottaen laaja ja alati kasvava kiinnostus yksilön brandaykseen kumpuaa näiden julkisuuden henkilöiden brandiminiin sisäänkirjoitettuun valtavaan rahalliseen arvoon. Päätelyn tuloksena tämä yksilön brandayksen ala on vielä alkutekijöissään.

Avainsanat

Brandatty yksilö, ihmis brandays, julkisuuden henkilön brandays, imagon takaisin siirtyminen

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	6
1.1	Background to the Study	7
1.2	Justification and Need for the Study	8
1.3	Research Objectives	9
1.3.1	Research Questions	9
1.3.2	Research Scope.....	10
1.4	Research Design.....	10
1.4.1	Central Terminology	11
1.4.2	Celebrities Named in the Study	13
2	Branding	16
2.1	The Concept of a Brand	16
2.2	The Founding Elements of a Brand	18
2.2.1	Brand Identity	18
2.2.2	Brand Image.....	19
2.2.3	Brand Reputation	21
2.2.4	Brand Personality	22
2.2.5	Brand Equity.....	22
2.3	Individuals as Brands	23
2.4	Identity Management Process	23
3	Celebrityhood.....	26
3.1	The Phenomenon of Being Famous – A Celebrity	26
3.2	Being a Celebrity in Order to Be Branded.....	28
3.3	Professions that Offer Celebrity	29
3.3.1	Entertainers.....	29
3.3.2	Sport Athletes.....	30
3.3.3	Politicians	30
3.3.4	Business leaders	31
3.3.5	Prestigious Families	32
3.3.6	Other Paths to Celebrity	32
3.4	Brand Equity of Celebrity	33
4	Today's Media Centred Societies.....	35
4.1	The Need for Media	35
4.2	Let Us Entertain You	36
4.2.1	The Dot-Com Era	37
4.2.2	Media and Globalisation	38
4.2.3	Current Trends and the Future of Entertainment	38
4.3	Media Offer Constant Access to the Celebrity	39
4.4	The Power of Media	40
4.5	Negative Celebrity Information	40
4.6	Without Media There Is No Brand.....	42
5	The Celebrity Product	43
5.1	The Product from the View Point of the Celebrity	43
5.2	The Celebrity Product from the View Point of the Consumer	44
5.2.1	Human Brands Help to Fulfil Various Consumer Needs	45
5.2.2	Human Brands Offer Parasocial Relationships.....	45
5.2.3	Products Reinforce Consumers' Self Esteem and Are Part of Their Social Identity	46
5.2.4	Consumers Form Attachments to Human Brands.....	47
5.3	The Celebrity Product From the View Point of Other Stakeholders.....	47
5.4	Endorsers in Advertising.....	49

5.4.1	Meaning Transfer in Endorsement.....	50
5.4.2	Reverse Image Transfer.....	53
5.5	The Means of Capitalising on the Consumer Need.....	54
5.6	Links to Other Product Types.....	54
6	The Importance of the Brand to the Person.....	56
6.1	Brands Represent Vehicles for Delivering Meaning.....	56
6.2	Why Are Brands So Important?.....	56
6.3	Brands Represent Financial Muscle and Vaccinate Against Future Problems.....	57
6.4	Person Brands as Intangible and Conditional Assets.....	58
6.5	Image Rights.....	58
6.6	Brand Meaning and Equity in Changing Times.....	59
6.7	The Brand Without a Person; Becoming Immortal - A Legend.....	60
6.8	Summarising the Theoretical Part of the Study.....	60
7	Empirical Research.....	62
7.1	Empirical Research Focus.....	62
7.2	Choosing the Research Methods.....	63
7.3	Empirical Research Design.....	63
7.3.1	Interviews.....	64
7.3.2	Questionnaires.....	65
7.3.3	Empirical Data Analysis.....	66
7.4	Quality of the Study.....	66
7.4.1	Reliability and Validity.....	67
8	Research results.....	69
8.1	People Too Can Be Brands.....	69
8.2	Differences Between People as Brands and Other More Common Brands.....	69
8.3	Negative Publicity's Effect on a Person Brand.....	71
8.4	Buffer Effect of Celebrity.....	72
8.5	How does Branding of People Work?.....	73
8.6	The Role of the External Party in the Branding Process.....	74
8.7	Using Marketing Research as a Tool in the Branding Process.....	76
8.8	Hiding or Lying About Some Elements of Personality For Better Sales.....	76
8.9	Anyone Can Be Branded.....	78
8.10	Types of People Interested in Being Branded.....	79
8.11	Prevalence of Managing People Brands.....	79
8.12	The Benefits of Being Branded.....	81
8.13	Too Much Publicity Can Turn Against the Person Brand.....	82
8.14	Product Line Extensions.....	83
8.15	Celebrity Endorsement Contracts and Reverse Image Transfer.....	84
9	Conclusions.....	86
9.1	Meeting the Objectives of the Study.....	86
9.2	Theoretical Contribution.....	87
9.3	Managerial Implications.....	88
9.4	Suggestions for Future Research.....	89
10	References.....	90
11	Appendix.....	97

Figures

Figure 1:	Identity management process.....	24
Figure 2:	The commercialisation the human brand.....	48
Figure 3:	Meaning transfer model.....	51
Figure 4:	Research question diagram and main findings.....	87

Tables

Table 1:	The founding concepts of a brand.....	18
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1 Introduction

We are living in a world where image rules and perception is everything. Companies that try to be successful in our consuming and materialistic society need to convey a positive image in order to grab the attention of consumers and increase sales. In today's modern over busy societies there is an ever-growing need for aiding consumer choice by brand image offerings. As well as companies, celebrities too are anxious to project the right kind of "persona", which will maintain their celebrity status and popularity and in turn increase their marketability and bank balances. This is achieved through branding, whose importance cannot be over emphasised. As York (2001 cited in Blackshaw and Siekmann 2005) puts it "It is the brand that people buy, not the products."

Branding has been around for centuries as a means to distinguish goods and products from each other. The brand's strategic importance has been a focus among many marketing practitioners for more than a decade. A growing number of firms and other organisations have come to realise that one of their most valuable assets is the brand name associated with their products. Brands can be seen more and more as strategic resources that determine companies' success. The brand image nowadays is a critical part of generating economic value.

A product may be a physical good, service, retail store, organisation, place or a person etc. (Keller 2003, 4). Every year billions of euros are spent on celebrity endorsement contracts. This illustrates the value within the names and images of many celebrities. These famous people that live constantly under the public eye can also be seen as brands – products of the entertainment industry. Celebrities of different industries are very aware of their image creation. They are actively building a recognisable look, name and style – a brand. Actors (e.g. Brad Pitt), sports athletes (e.g. David Beckham), pop stars (e.g. Madonna), business men/women (e.g. Bill Gates) and politicians (e.g. Tony Blair) all have different images in the consumer's eyes (Schlecht 2003). These images can be seen as brands that have to be actively managed and are economically valuable for the subjects themselves and for others.

1.1 Background to the Study

The literature on branding individual people is manifold. There has been a lot of research around the topic, but as to literature solely on people as brand, the field is still in its infancy.

There is little academic literature on individuals as a special case of brands. Yet some articles do address the issue of celebrities or artists as brands themselves. For example Charbonneau and Garland (2004) as well as Till (2001) have studied the effects of product images upon the athlete endorsers image that is reverse image transfer. These studies provide a valuable background as they acknowledge the brand image of the celebrity in its own right.

A lot of interest in the celebrity image and brands has focused on sports athletes. David Beckham is probably one of the most cited examples of branded individuals. With the growing phenomenon of fat sporting contracts comes the issue of immaterial rights (e.g. Madow 1993, London 2003 and Grady 2004). A very interesting book *Sports Image Rights in Europe* has been written on the subject (Blackshaw and Siekmann 2005) and gives insight of sport celebrity brands and the industry.

There has been substantial interest on political images (e.g. Smith 2001) as they are directly linked to the success or failure of a politician or a party in attracting votes. Many researchers in this field are reluctant to link marketing and brands to politics and other not for profit goals, because of its commercial nature. There is nevertheless an undisputable link between political images and brands even if they are only used to sell politicians to the voters. In addition to the view of political brands Schroeder (2005) has studied the individual brands in the case of artists for example Andy Warhol.

Most of the research in the field of celebrities and branding has been focusing on celebrity endorsement (e.g. Till and Shimp 1998 and Keller 2003) as to how the positive image of celebrities can be used to promote a product and its brand. Even though the focus of these studies is not exactly similar to the focal point at hand, they will offer some useful background information on the topic.

All these different perspectives of branding individual persons serve as a base for this study. Because the research on the topic is still very limited this study aims to give a better understanding of the field and conceptualise some of the underlying issues. As the literature on the area of interest is somewhat scattered, there is a need to merge pieces of the puzzle into some kind of a base for future studies.

1.2 Justification and Need for the Study

The world of branding people is on the verge of break through. As the power of media is rising and the number of multimillion euro celebrity brands mounts, the need to take a detailed look at this interesting phenomenon is justified. Celebrities with notorious names have existed for a long time now. Presumably they have always been interested in their own stage persona and public image. Even the alteration and steering of the image to the right direction has existed right from the very start of celebrityhood. This has however for long been a phenomenon without a name or classification.

As the number of people in the public eye as well as the amount of different areas of life where the public image managements role is coming paramount, there arises a clear need of clarification and discussion about the topic. The image of a person is not much different from an image of a product, service or a company. Therefore a famous person can be easily be classified as a brand among many other things. In the terminology of marketing a famous person can also be seen as a brand.

The research carried out in the field of branding people has not yet fully emerged. Also due to the lack of clear cut definitions the literature in this field is somewhat scattered around many different topics. Therefore the need to make a move towards opening this discussion of branded people from the view point of marketing is justified.

This research intends to serve as an elementary glance into this fascinating world of branding people. It will serve as a basis for future studies in this field. The goal is to arouse discussion and positive debate around the subject and inspire more

researchers into studying the branded individuals, especially as brands of their own right.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to understand the core of branding living persons and to identify main differences between people brands and other more commonly known brands. The main interest is to get a view about how advertising and marketing professionals view this area of branding and how much are they actually involved in the process. Also one interesting point is to see, what is the state of branding individuals in the eyes of marketing professionals and who really are the people behind the scenes? These goals will be tackled from the viewpoint of the marketer that is the owner of the brand – the individual. Therefore the focus of the research will be on all the different institutions that actually are involved in building the brands. This means that there will be an emphasis on both the individual branded and the whole marketing machinery behind the scenes.

1.3.1 Research Questions

The main research question and subordinate questions are listed below.

What are the peculiarities of branding individuals in the opinion of advertising and marketing experts?

- Which factors help individuals to become brands?
- What are the special characteristics of people as brands?
- Are advertising agencies usually involved in the process of branding people?
- What are the main benefits of branding individuals?

1.3.2 Research Scope

The research was carried out during years 2006 to 2007. It will naturally reflect the views and practises of this specific era. The Interviews used as material were conducted mainly in London United Kingdom but also in Helsinki Finland and therefore are somewhat bound to these specific geographical and cultural areas.

This thesis will not but indirectly touch upon branding the individual from the view point of the consumer. Nor will the focus be on celebrity endorsement even though there is a strong natural link between the two subjects. These topics might still be of some interest in order to get a better understanding of the core subject matter.

1.4 Research Design

The research method applied in this study is mainly qualitative. A qualitative approach was chosen, because of the founding and explanatory nature of this thesis. There was a call for insight on the practice of using basic concepts of marketing in branding public persons.

A questionnaire was sent out to the main advertising agencies and public relations offices in the London area (UK). This aimed to find out how much these agencies were actually involved in the processes behind actively branded people in the United Kingdom. The secondary aim of the questionnaire was to arouse interest in the research and thereby acquire contact details for later interviews. A total of 45 Questionnaires were sent out to the main advertising and PR agencies in the London area by post. Altogether 13 of these questionnaires were fully completed and returned. Subsequently 5 personal interviews were conducted with marketing / branding professionals to give more insight to the subject.

Structure of the Research

The first Chapter introduces the subject and research objectives briefly and tries to convince that there is a need for this study. It lists the research questions at hand and provides with the elementary terminology and knowledge to understand this study.

Chapters 2-6 wade through the abundant literature in the field to explain the phenomenon of people brands. These chapters cover the topic through a review of the existing literature in the field of marketing and branding, social sciences psychology, law and other relevant field of interest. Due to many possible viewpoints to the subjects this paper tries to look at the phenomenon from different angles not only marketing.

In chapter 2 the focus is on understanding the brand and how it is traditionally constructed in marketing terms. From there the review moves on to celebrityhood as a phenomenon in chapter 3. In order to understand the field and the vehicle of people becoming important and accessible to the consumers the field of entertainment and media is looked upon in chapter 4. In chapter 5 the celebrity product is established and explained in more detail. In the end of the literature view part, in chapter 6 the different parts are merged and understanding of the importance of branding persons is emphasised.

In chapters 7-8 we move to the empirical part of this study. Chapter 7 explains the field of this study and unfolds the methods used to get to the results reported in chapter 8. This chapter 8 is the main point of interest in this paper as it eventually explains the results of the research. In chapter 9 the whole paper is tried to pull together in a coherent summary of both the literature and the empirical part. In the end (chapter 10) the references used through out this study are listed in alphabetical order.

1.4.1 Central Terminology

Entertainment industry = large number of industries devoted to provide entertainment.

Leisure time = time not spent at work.

Stakeholder = any individual, group or organisation having a valid interest in a field or matter.

Reverse image transfer = the influence of the pre-existing product brand image upon the image of a celebrity brand

Buffer effect = capability to reduce a shock e.g. negative publicity or form a barrier between adversaries

A brand = the symbolic embodiment of all the information connected with a product or service. A brand typically includes a name, logo, and other visual elements such as images or symbols.

Celebrity = a character who enjoys wide public recognition.

Celebrity endorser = an individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement

Human Brand = Person brand = Individual brand = Celebrity brand
→ in this study no distinction should be made between these terms.

Discretionary income = income remaining after deduction of taxes, social security charges, and basic living costs

1.4.2 Celebrities Named in the Study

50-Cent

Curtis James Jackson III (born July 6, 1975) - American rapper

Alistair Campbell

Alastair John Campbell (born May 25, 1957) - served as Director of Communications and Strategy for the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997 to 2003

Bill Clinton

William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton (born August 19, 1946) - 42nd President of the United States, serving from 1993 to 2001

Bill Gates

William Henry Gates III (born October 28, 1955) - American business magnate, philanthropist, the world's third richest man (as of 2008), and chairman of software company Microsoft

Brad Pitt

William Bradley "Brad" Pitt (born December 18, 1963) - American actor, film producer, and social activist

Britney Spears

Britney Jean Spears (born December 2, 1981) - American pop singer

David Beckham and wife Victoria Beckham

David Robert Joseph Beckham (born May 2, 1975) - English professional footballer

Victoria Caroline Beckham (née Adams; born April 17, 1974) - English pop singer, songwriter, dancer, turned fashion designer, author, businesswoman, and occasional actress

Diego Maradona

Diego Armando Maradona (born October 30, 1960) - Argentinean former professional footballer

James Bond

James Bond 007 is a fictional character created in 1953 by writer Ian Fleming

Jamie Oliver

James Trevor "Jamie" Oliver (born May 27, 1975) - English celebrity chef

Jennifer Lopez / J.Lo

Jennifer Lynn Lopez (born July 24, 1969) - American actress, singer, songwriter, record producer, dancer, fashion designer, and television producer

JFK

John Fitzgerald "Jack" Kennedy (May 29, 1917 - November 22, 1963) - the thirty-fifth President of the United States, serving from 1961 until his assassination in 1963

José Manuel Barroso

José Manuel Durão Barroso (born March 23, 1956) - Portuguese politician and the 11th President of the European Commission

Kate Moss

Katherine Ann Moss (born January 16, 1974) - an iconic English supermodel

Kylie Minogue

Kylie Ann Minogue (born May 28, 1968) - Australian pop singer, songwriter and actress

Madonna

Madonna Louise Ciccone Ritchie (born August 16, 1958) – singer songwriter, dancer, musician, record producer and actress

Marilyn Monroe

Norma Jeane Mortenson (June 1, 1926 – August 5, 1962) - American actress, singer, model, Hollywood icon, film executive and sex symbol

Paris Hilton and grandfather Conrad Hilton

Paris Whitney Hilton (born February 17, 1981) - American celebrity, singer, actress, model, and businesswoman

Conrad Nicholson Hilton, Sr. (December 25, 1887 – January 3, 1979) - American hotelier and founder of the Hilton Hotel chain

Prince Charles

Charles Philip Arthur George (born November 14, 1948) - Prince of Wales, the eldest son of Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Heir Apparent to the thrones of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms

Princess Diana

Diana Frances; née Spencer (July 1, 1961 – August 31, 1997) - Princess of Wales, was the first wife of Charles, Prince of Wales

Puff Daddy / P. Diddy

Sean John Combs (born November 4, 1969) - American rapper, record producer, actor, clothing designer, and entrepreneur

René Lacoste

Jean René Lacoste (July 2, 1904 - October 12, 1996) – was a French tennis player and businessman, nicknamed "the Crocodile", introduced the famous piqué cotton tennis shirt under brand name Lacoste in 1929

Sean Connery

Sir Thomas Sean Connery (born August 25, 1930) - award-winning Scottish actor and producer who is perhaps best known for starring in seven Bond films

The Queen

Elizabeth Alexandra Mary (born April 21, 1926) - Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms

Tony Blair

Anthony Charles Lynton "Tony" Blair (born May 6, 1953) - British politician and former Prime Minister

Zinedine Zidane

Zinedine Yazid Zidane (born June 23, 1972) - French former professional footballer

2 Branding

In this chapter 2 we jump into the amazing world of branding. This grounding analysis of a brand and branding as a concept are the basis of this whole research. Without determining what it is we are talking about in brands and branding it would be hard to later discuss about the concept of a person brand.

2.1 The Concept of a Brand

Brands are everywhere. Sometimes it feels like brands would rule this borderless world we live in. At times it seem like hardly anything goes unbranded. Despite the keen interest in branding, it still is a fairly new concept, and grey areas in academic studies exist. Especially in the field of branding individuals there is still a lot a research to be done. Although the phenomenon is acknowledged by many authors, not a lot of exact studies on its peculiarities have been executed.

Through the years brands have been defined in various ways. The American Marketing Association defines brands as follows: "a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors." But brands are more than just names and symbols. A brand denotes values that go beyond mere physical attributes and product labelling. Brands represent consumers' perceptions and feelings about a product and its performance – everything that a product means to consumers. (Kotler and Armstrong 2006, 249) According to Keller (1998 cited in Kapferer 2004, 10) "a brand is a set of mental association, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service".

From another point of view a brand is a collection of brand owner's promises given to a stakeholder. The brand is a kind of stamped guarantee to the stakeholder of expected value. These promises include functional attributes that answer a need as well as emotional attributes that fulfil social and personal wants. So the meaning of a brand is to ease the decision making process by offering a promise of quality and guarantee of functionality. (Cooke and Ryan

2000) A widely accepted view of brands is that they are clusters of functional and emotional values (De Chernatony et al. 2004).

Powerful brands make strong image statements and stakeholders choose them not only for their quality but also because of the image they project. The best brands are able to develop trust and loyalty among their stakeholders as well as create awareness and interest among new stakeholders (Rao and Ruekert 1994). A successful brand enables to maintain a high level of consumer acceptance, often in the face of considerable competition. When used effectively any brand is binding, creates loyalty, enhances reputation and boosts the income stream with a premium margin.

A brand is more than just a product; it is a combination of a physical and perceptual entity. The physical part of the brand (the product and its packaging) is mostly static and finite. However, the perceptual part of a brand exists in psychological space – in the consumers mind and is dynamic and malleable". (Randazzo 1995 cited in Grassi 1999)

Celebrities appear to be in one way quite similar to other brands. They are designed and managed to communicate a core set of values with the goal of creating long-term relationships (Zimmerman and Ayoob 2004).

Often, product brands may need to appeal to a limited group of stakeholders, usually those who buy and use the product. The person brands on the other hand, need to appeal to numerous quite different stakeholder groups, like for example potential future employers (record company, movie producers, political party leaders, sport managers etc.) sponsors, marketing industry and media representatives as well as the end customers that is the general public. All these different stakeholders may hold a different view of the brand in question.

The importance of branding certain people should not be overlooked for many reasons, particularly for their potential to generate profits. In order to stay competitive, celebrities should be interested in creating brands, which satisfy the rational and emotional needs of all their stakeholders. They should be committed to maintaining the quality and values of their brands in the long run. It is not

enough to just create a brand; it must be actively managed and developed through the course of time.

2.2 The Founding Elements of a Brand

By reading literature and research about brands you cannot avoid coming across terms like brand personality, identity, image and equity. These are all ways of going deeper in to the founding concepts of a brand. In the next few pages these important aspects of a brand are briefly defined and looked upon. Table 1, below clearly illustrates in short all these terms.

Table 1: The founding concepts of a brand

BRAND PERSONALITY	BRAND IDENTITY	BRAND IMAGE → BRAND REPUTATION	BRAND EQUITY
What are the real brand characteristics?	How the brand is wanted to be perceived?	How the brand is been perceived?	What is the value of the brand?

(Aaker 1996, 71)

2.2.1 Brand Identity

According to the *Collins English Dictionary* the word “identity” refers to “the individual characteristic by which a person or thing is recognised”. In this sense identity refers to individuality, a means by which others can differentiate one person from another. This differentiation can be influenced by use of visual cues, for example the choices of clothes, gestures and hairstyle, to name but a few. However, the use of visual cues alone can be misleading and in order that we understand the individual at a deeper level, we rely on other cues such as speech behaviour and mannerisms. Identity at the individual level is concerned with aspects of identification and recognition. (Markwick and Fill 1997)

Identity is a unique collection of associations attached to the brand that are created and wanted to maintain. It expresses what are the end goals and vision, culture and values, as well as what are the meaningful symbols. These symbols,

physical evidence, appearance, graphics etc. should be founded on the brand's inner essence. (Kapferer 1998, 90-95)

Brand identity can be perceived as the means to distinguish a brand from competition and a way to present the brand to its various stakeholders (Markwick and Fill 1997). It poses a question of: "Who am I / What do I stand for?" Through brand identity, a branded individual seeks to convey his/her individuality and distinctiveness to all relevant publics. (Nandan 2005)

According to Margulies (1977) brand identity means the sum of all the ways a chosen to present oneself to all relevant publics – the community, customers, the press, present and potential stakeholders and media. Image on the other hand, is the perception of the brand by these publics.

Brand identity includes a desired set of associations and images that are wished the numerous stakeholders would hold. This desired brand identity usually refers to the specific objectives set for the brand (Balmer and Soenen 1999). For an individual the desired brand is the way the individual would like to be perceived. The characteristics that an individual chooses to communicate – whether real or imagined, functional or symbolic – form the intended brand identity. The actual identity, on the other hand, refers to what the person really is (Balmer, 1998). It is essential to look for a fit between the actual and the desired brand identity. Congruency between these two is crucial, since it determines the basis and effectiveness of brand communication. (van Rekom 1997)

2.2.2 Brand Image

Brand image is a total impression of the brand in the mind of a stakeholder. Brand image is a stakeholder constructed notion of the brand. Stakeholders link an image to the brand based on their own subjective perceptions and the set of associations that they have about the brand. (Nandan 2005) Image is what various stakeholders believe or feel about the brand from their experiences and observations. Image is a collection of perceptions, attitudes and assumptions the stakeholders have about the brand. (Markwick and Fill 1997)

The way stakeholders perceive brand identity cues, shapes an image which is formed in their minds. This image will naturally vary and will never be single, uniform and consistent in the minds of different stakeholders. Brand image exists in the mind of each stakeholder and cannot be managed directly but through managing the source identity. By presenting orchestrated cues, images may be repositioned or altered in the minds of recipients. A brand image is what stakeholders perceive the brand to be. (ibid)

Image reflects current perceptions of the brand by the stakeholders. Image is the picture of the brand that one has created by combining various pieces of information about the brand. It is a subjective picture of the brand. This image is based on the stakeholder perceptions, views and opinions gained about the brand. So the brand image is what the stakeholder believes the brand to stand for, not necessarily what it really is.

A brand image is projected to the stakeholders using a variety of cues and represents how the individual would like to be perceived. These planned communication cues can be orchestrated so that premeditated messages are delivered to the target audiences in order to achieve set objectives. Some of these planned cues will form the brands visual identity and self-expression. Other cues will focus on behaviour, the actions and other forms of communication. At the same time unintentional messages can also be sent out and they might counteract and have an impact on any deliberate cues. (ibid)

The subjective evaluation of brands results in a brand image being born in the mind of the consumer. It is therefore, important that the brand message is conveyed clearly. According to the basic communications model, the product (source) encodes and sends a message to the consumer (receiver), who decodes the message based on his or her frame of reference. A communication gap may exist if there is a discrepancy between the sent and the received message. The communication between the brand and its stakeholders can be described in terms of brand identity and brand image. (Nandan 2005)

Brand identity and image are both important elements in branding. However many times the main concern is to create a positive brand image. Many

authors have come to stress the importance of brand identity. Brand identity and brand image are related concepts but identity always precedes brand image. In order to build and maintain strong brands it is imperative that these two be in harmony. In an over-communicated marketing environment it is very easy for brand identity and brand image to be out of sync. When this happens, consumers will move on. They live in a world of multiple options – there are countless other competitive brands waiting to allure the consumers with their own intriguing messages. Strengthening the identity – image linkage is the only way to create value for the consumer and enhance brand loyalty. (Nandan 2005 and Aaker 1996, 87-88)

2.2.3 Brand Reputation

The term reputation is often used synonymously with image which can lead to misunderstandings. Reputation is a reflection of the historical, accumulated reflections of previous identity cues or projections of image. Consequently reputations are more durable than images and may represent a relatively consistent store of goodwill. Images may be altered relatively quickly, whereas reputation requires image consistency and nurturing over time. (Markwick and Fill 1997)

Fombrun and Rindova (1998) see brand reputation as a collective representation of a brand's past actions and results that describes the brand's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. Brand reputation is more stable than brand image and represents the merge of several images created over time.

Reputation is a perceptual judgement of past actions (images) that develop and build up over time. Maintaining a good reputation is key for success since it is very hard to imitate or copy. Reputations are not built quickly, nor can they be bought or sold. Since reputation includes several evaluations, it provides a much more prominent indicator of how the brand is perceived by the general public. A true objective would be to establish a favourable reputation among all the different stakeholders.

2.2.4 Brand Personality

In branding literature there is a lot of discussion about personality or corporate personality to go along with brand identity, image, and reputation. It can be seen as the sum total of a brand's real characteristics. These characteristics can be regarded as the whole behavioural and intellectual characteristics of a brand, that are expressed in unique combination of product offering, facilities, culture, values and beliefs, capabilities and skills. (Markwick and Fill 1997)

Contrary to a corporate or product personality the personality of a human being is a build in trait that cannot just be modified when needed. Every single person is born with a given, unique personality. Nonetheless a person's personality can grow and acquire new nuances, but the basic core of one's personality will still prevail. Personality dictates what the person actually is.

2.2.5 Brand Equity

Consumers perceive brand equity as the value added to a product by associating it with a brand name and other distinctive characteristics. Customer based brand equity, then, depends on the degree to which consumers are familiar with products and hold some favourable, powerful and unique brand associations in memory (Keller 2003, 59-67).

Considering the matter from a financial perspective, companies view brand equity as the net present value of the future profit stream that can be attributed to the price premium of the brand. This conception has gained importance in several countries by the admission of brand equity as depreciable asset on balance sheets. In a managerial perspective, the equity of a brand is determined by a specific set of properties – including brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations – attached to the outward presentation of a brand by means of name, symbol, design, packaging, or delivery. (Grassi 1999)

A powerful brand has high brand equity. Brand equity is the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or service. A brand provides a visible representation of difference between products. (Nandan 2004)

According to Seno & Lukas (2007) there is a clear link between brand image and brand equity. Emerging celebrities have been able to raise their endorsement fees as their image develops favourably, which suggests that celebrity image is related positively to celebrity equity. Celebrity image is an equity driver. (ibid)

2.3 Individuals as Brands

In marketing, the term "brand" is typically applied to firms, products, and services. Human brands may be viewed as one of several embodiment of the broader concept of a brand. Celebrities can be considered brands because they have much the same features of a brand and if desired they can be professionally managed. Commonly a celebrity has intangible assets: a name, a reputation, credibility and an image. All of those attributes may be combined into something that could be called a brand. (Thomson 2006)

Within recent years the line between a person and a brand has become blurred. Celebrities have begun to apply marketing techniques usually reserved for the corporate world. This has become a more evident with active marketing of celebrities, legally protecting their names, trade marking and licensing their brand as well as launching their own product lines. By intentionally building a name and consistent reputation in a given field a person is essentially creating a brand. (McDonald and Vieceli 2004)

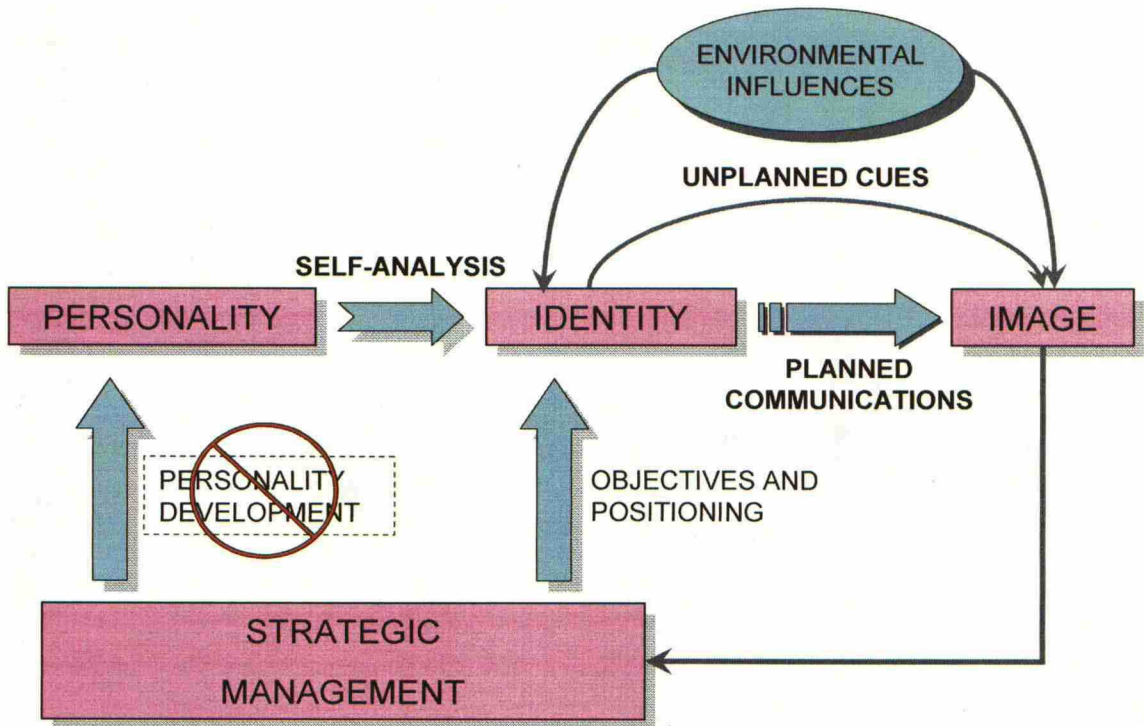
Thomson (2006) in his research illustrates how consumers develop strong feelings of attachment and love toward human brands. These are the feelings that lay at the core of all strong brand relationships. Human brands may carry strong meanings which enforce their brand equity and thus make them as commercial as any other branded goods.

2.4 Identity Management Process

To summarise this chapter a framework of identity management is presented below. It connects the different aspect of a brand together. In addition it encompasses the concept of a person brand to this identity management process

and gives the reader an idea of how brands (human or other) can be actively managed.

Figure 1: Identity management process



(Markwick and Fill 1997)

The identity management process depicted in Figure 1 was originally represented by Markwick and Fill (1997) to portray the identity management process of a corporation. In this study the interest is focused on the brand identity and image of an individual, and therefore some justified modifications have been made.

This figure highlights the links between the personality, identity and image very well. It also draws attention to possibilities of actively managing the communications to the various stakeholders of a human brand. For example strategic personality development might pose an important and interesting role for a company, but a human brand will possess very strong personality features by nature, so its resonance here has been devalued.

The picture illustrates that personality precedes identity which can be then actively communicated to form an image. Uncontrollable external factors may also play a role in altering the image or even the identity. The role of unplanned cues should be underlined when talking about person brands as they are harder to control because of their humanity. When talking about person brands the strategic management of the brand is naturally focused on the brand identity and planned communications in order to form a desired image.

3 Celebrityhood

In this chapter 3 the phenomenon of celebrity is reviewed in more detail. The focus in this study is on branding individuals especially with celebrity status. This chapter will try to illuminate why celebrityhood is often so important for branded people.

3.1 The Phenomenon of Being Famous – A Celebrity

A celebrity is a figure who is widely recognised (famous) in a society and has a high degree of public and media attention. The word “celebrity” stems from the Latin *celebritas* for “multitude” or “fame”, and from the adjective *celeber* meaning “populous,” “famous” or “celebrated.” (Boorstin 1971, 57 and Wikipedia 2006) According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* celebrity refers to “the condition/state of being known and talked about by many people; being famous.” For us “celebrity” means primarily a person (Boorstin 1971, 57).

Marshall (1997, 4-11) concurs with the previous but points out that, celebrities are public figures whose private lives are as important and widely publicised as their professional performances. Thereby the fame alone does not make a person a celebrity; rather it is the public interest in his/her character. The greatness of the celebrity is something that can be shared and celebrated loudly and with a hint of vulgar pride. It is the ultimate representation of the triumph of masses (Marshall 1997, 6).

One of the early authors in the field of celebrities as part of the contemporary culture was historian and writer Daniel Boorstin (1971, 57), who famously remarks: “The celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness.” He concludes that celebrities unlike real heroes are a vague social illusion of greatness.

According to Boorstin (*ibid*, 49-64), as it is possible to produce celebrities more rapidly than ever, they die quicker than before. Sooner than later they wear out their images. Heroes of tradition such as Jesus, Caesar, Joan of Arc, Shakespeare, and Napoleon, receded into the past becoming more heroic.

Celebrities on the other hand are creatures of gossip, public opinion, magazines, newspapers, and the short-lived images of movie and television screen. The passage of time that creates the hero destroys the celebrity. Dead heroes become immortal.

Boorstin's (ibid, 45-75) views about the Graphic Revolution and its doom in the 1960's are a rightful reflection of his time and the changes in the American society. He does not believe that today's celebrities could truly outlive their generation, as did the ancient heroes before today's graphic visualisation and fabrication of famous people. It is easy to support the idea that many of our modern celebrities are short-lived and then forgotten, but as history demonstrates, celebrities appear to have replaced heroes. Therefore the amount of fame and public clutter (what Boorstin called the pseudo-events) around them should not diminish their importance. Celebrities are the heroes, role models and demigods of contemporary society. Their real value will be truly realised only by the future generations, when all the dust has settled.

Gabler (2003) in turn describes a celebrity as "human entertainment," not a conventional entertainer but a person who, by the very process of living, provides entertainment for us. What stars are to traditional movies, celebrities are to "life movie" — a movie written in the medium of life. He concludes that popularity is the by-product of celebrity, not its source. According to Rindova et al. (2006) another important characteristic defining celebrity is that the person elicits positive emotional responses from the public.

Zimmerman and Ayoob (2004) take the concept of celebrity a step further by suggesting that celebrities should be considered characters instead of mere persons. It is not just person that can produce a long term narrative. This modified definition would include both "real" celebrities and fictional characters like for example the James Bond or the Superman characters.

For the purposes of this study the definition that a celebrity is a character who enjoys wide public recognition is adequate. It is left deliberately broad to encompass the variety of public individuals from different areas of life such as entertainment, politics, or sports, potentially interested in human branding.

3.2 Being a Celebrity in Order to Be Branded

Whereas “celebrity personas” can be entirely fabricated, resulting in “minor,” “short-lived,” or “flash in the pan” celebrities, individuals with real ability and a unique style become “stars,” “superstars,” or “cultural icons”. The extent of an individual’s celebrity affects the economic opportunities that become available to her or him. With greater celebrity, individuals attract more rent-generating opportunities, including participation in films, shows, games, and endorsement opportunities. Their participation also increases the value created through such projects. (Rindova et al. 2006)

Marketing researchers characterise a celebrity as a product of the “marriage of entertainment and fame to create and sell highly visible products called celebrities” (Rein 1987, 21 cited in Rindova et al. 2006). Celebrity is created through the mass communication of carefully selected, prearranged, and often manipulated information about an individual’s personality, talent, and style in order to create a “persona” that triggers positive emotional responses in audiences. In marketing terms creating a celebrity equals creating a brand. (Rindova et al. 2006)

Even though everyone has a personal brand of some sort in the eyes of other people, not everyone will enjoy similar allure towards the masses as do celebrities. A brand (discussed in more detail in chapter 2) is a notion or an image reflecting the product in the mind of a consumer. In fact we have images of all the people around us. In a sense these images could be seen as individual brands and deliberately trying to mould the image could be seen as personal branding.

Does one have to be a celebrity to be branded? To be actively managed as a brand one does need to possess an audience, a group of potential consumers. Without fame there is no brand image, reputation of equity to distinguish a person from the masses. Without celebrity the earning possibilities of the human brand are minimal. Therefore to be actively branded one needs some degree of

celebrity, to get different stakeholder interested. The split between a celebrity and a human brand is so insignificant that the terms are considered to be equivalent.

In this research it is vital to establish a clear line between common personal brands and actively managed person brands. In order to have monetary value, a person's brand has to be well-known to a larger number of people of certain cultural or socio-economic area. Therefore the author's conscious decision was to employ the word celebrity to equal the word person, human or an individual when talking about person brands and branding an individual. The reason for this loose employment of these words makes it easier to understand the phenomenon of branding individuals as commercial entities. The previous discussion about the term celebrity ought to clarify the concept of the kind of individuals studied in this paper.

3.3 Professions that Offer Celebrity

People can become celebrities for various reasons. Some are born with a celebrity status, some are famous for their achievements, and others are more or less manufactured celebrities. There is also a group of celebrities that try to avoid publicity and may be unwillingly sucked into the celebrity limelight. (Andrews and Jackson 2001, 2) To take a broad view, a few distinctive groups of celebrities can be identified. Groups, that includes persons who might be genuinely interested in branding their public image. The most explicit groups are described here.

3.3.1 Entertainers

Many entertainers step into the spotlight merely because of their profession. Their lives are strongly tied to people been interested in their talent. This group includes people like movie and TV actors/actresses, TV show hosts and musicians. This group is probably most affluent in producing new celebrities and also been the group having most celebrities with a strong global market.

Musicians like Madonna, Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez, Puff Daddy, 50-Cent and many others are widely recognised as celebrities of the 21st century. Many of them have also been very successful in capitalising their personal brand

through many different kinds of endeavours. Quite a few of them run multimillion euro businesses that range way beyond their talent as musicians.

3.3.2 Sport Athletes

Many sport athletes turn into celebrities through their athletic success, their exceptional talent and / or their distinctive physical appearance and style. Depending on the public interest in a specific sport, athletes can enjoy global, regional or local celebrity. For example football (soccer) is a fairly global sport and the best players can be globally acknowledged and celebrated. For example players like Diego Maradona, David Beckham and Zinedine Zidane are names globally famous regardless of place. On the contrary sport athletes in the field of cricket are well known locally in certain regions where this specific sport is a bigger phenomenon e.g. Great Britain, India or Australia.

Sport athletes enjoy a wide public interest as they are often celebrated as national heroes, after being victorious on international arenas. Their public figure usually is somehow glorified as very positive and innocent. They are made contemporary heroes. Often the public figures of many athletes are very fragile, anticipating the fall from a high pedestal after a negative incident in their upcoming life. If something bad happens, it does not necessarily mean that they would lose their celebrity status but only that their hero image may suffer and give way to something more casual.

3.3.3 Politicians

Many researchers in the field of political studies do not subscribe to the view that politicians can be seen as marketable products. The abundant literature about political marketing does to some extent recognise the need for image construction and news management. For example O'Saughnessy (2001) reminds us that the impact of marketing in politics is not directly analogous to its effectiveness in business.

Nevertheless many politicians may be interested in the concepts and implementation strategies of branding individuals, because after all many of them enjoy wide public recognition that classifies them as celebrities. Not all politically

active individuals become automatically celebrities. Usually people who hold high political positions or run for an important political office will receive a good deal of media interest and thereby emerge to larger awareness. Some of the political celebrities may not actually seek for the celebrity status, but see it as being part of the job. In our democratic societies celebrity and public exposure are means to get elected and reassure the voters. Even if many sceptics may say that marketing diminishes the quality of political debate, one must admit that the majority of voters are unable to evaluate the whole electoral product offering, and therefore choose on the basis of the overall political package, concept or image (Lock and Harris 1996).

Politicians like Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and José Manuel Barroso are all well known "celebrities". An interesting detail about political celebrities is that they seldom rise to global fame. Instead, political performances enjoy very local interest and news coverage particularly when talking about small nations. On the other hand this occurrence is very natural as common people are hardly ever interested in domestic politics of other countries. Only the noteworthy international politicians (usually foreign presidents) gain global visibility.

3.3.4 Business leaders

Business leaders are a group of people interesting to a wider audience as they get caught up with the big wheels of the economy. As the saying goes, money rules the world and therefore people turning the giant wheels of business often become of interest to the media and the wider public. As managers or owners of big businesses these men and women have the power to influence so many lives in the society. The large organisations they lead act as the employer, tax payer, business partner, environmental player, consumer, and marketer – a vital part of the local social and economic network. Because of this manifold role in the society, these entities may have (depending on their size) an important role both in influencing public opinion, political ruling and local development in the area they operate.

Because of the undisputed power of these big organisations especially in today's global world, the management usually also has to have a public face. Usually this representative of the company receives a fare share of the public interest. Thus

many business leaders become celebrities in their own right and depending on their character and personality. In the interest of their companies they ought to try to capitalise this public status and create a suitable image to go along with the company strategies.

3.3.5 Prestigious Families

Some rare individuals may also be born to celebrityhood. Usually celebrity is not a given trait which is just handed to you whether you like it or not, but something you have to for. Some prestigious families may bring their children in to a word of fame. These noble babies, written celebrity in their birth certificates, might be children of for example royal families, aristocrats or other notorious people.

The Princes and Princesses are born title-holders and therefore from early on their image is steered and their actions supervised. Also the general public will have expectations on how the royal family members should behave. In today's world these expectations and the humanity of the royalty might inflict clashes.

Also children of less worthy background might be born with media interest, because of their celebrity parent. This kind of fame for a child is often short lived as a lot the children of celebrities are intentionally kept out of the media for their protection. These children are posed the choice of either pursuing the celebrityhood even further or trying to leave a normal life.

3.3.6 Other Paths to Celebrity

There are also some other individuals that rise to celebrity for unobvious reasons. There are some rare examples that an individual has merely managed to move themselves into the celebrity spotlight and stay there. In the era of reality TV the future might hold more space for these kinds of flash in the pan celebrities. Despite the fact that these common people celebrities are usually short-lived, theoretically there is a change for them to keep up the narrative and manage to turn themselves into real brands. Longstanding celebrities can outlive the memory of their original claims to fame as being famous becomes a career in itself (Turner 2004, 8).

Just a Brand

One good example of a brand without a typical talent is the legendary great-granddaughter of Conrad Hilton. Paris Hilton has successfully capitalised on her last name to launch her career as a model, actress, businesswoman, partygoer, author and a singer. Hilton was named by Forbes magazine as one of The Celebrity 100 for 2005, as ranked by pay. As a brand Hilton markets her own perfume, jewellery, and herself netting 300 000 per appearance at various clubs, an endorsement by mere presence. Hilton is the perfect post-modern celebrity. She is a celebrity by the purest definition of the word, which is that a celebrity is someone who is well known for being well known. (Behr and Beeler-Norrholm 2006)

Fictional Characters

It is often said that cartoon characters are the best endorsers and that they as trademarks, have the most enduring goodwill: They don't age, they don't demand first-class plane tickets and deluxe hotels, and they don't kill their exes. If they're bad, it is because as Roger Rabbit's sultry wife explained, "I'm just drawn that way." (ibid)

3.4 Brand Equity of Celebrity

Celebrities evidently hold some financial value with their brand names. Looking at the Forbes Celebrity 100 list you can see that the pay checks of these named people during the last 12 months might be absurdly high. Just for the celebrity him/herself the value generated by their brand names through various different earnings is vast. When accounting all the different parties cashing in on the brand indirectly is hard to fully grasp the magnitude of this phenomenon.

Since a brand is a name with the power to influence the market, its power increases as more people know it. Brand management is a way to gain power, by making the brand concept more known, more bought and more shared. A brand is a shared desirable and exclusive idea embodied in products, services, places

and experiences. The more this idea is shared by a larger number of people, the more power the brand has. (Kapferer 2004, 13)

Celebrity's economic value derives from the heightened public attention and interest it generates. Therefore, one defining characteristic of celebrity is that a social actor attracts large scale public attention: the greater the number of people who know of and pay attention to the actor, the greater the extent and value of that actor's celebrity. Therefore celebrity truly is an intangible asset with economic value. (Rindova et al. 2006)

Celebrity resembles other intangible assets, such as reputation, status, and legitimacy, because it influences stakeholders' perceptions of and willingness to do business with the person. Individual celebrities can convert their names into valuable brands, thereby further increasing the value they can acquire from their celebrity status. (ibid)

A strong brand has brand equity that is both a financial asset and a set of favourable associations and behaviours (Seno & Lukas 2007). Consumers perceive brand equity as the value added to a product by associating it with a brand name and other distinctive characteristics (Keller 2003, 59-67). Hence many branded celebrity products hold intrinsic economic value within their names recognised and admired all over the world.

4 Today's Media Centred Societies

In this chapter 4 we discuss the role of media in today's society and its importance to celebrities and person brands. The media have an important and manifold role in the process of an individual becoming a brand. Media are an important link between the consumer and the person brand.

At the outset of the 21st Century, we live in a world familiar with the pleasures of both in- and out-of-home entertainment, surrounded by a population that has grown used to having the ability to choose among hundreds of entertainment opportunities. So, here we sit, with the entertainment and marketing volume turned to max, images and information pouring in through network TV, bus shelters, radio, online, mobile phones, direct mail, subway tunnels, sport events, music concerts, newspapers and magazines. (Lieberman 2002, xxx-xxxii)

4.1 The Need for Media

Without the attention of an audience of significant size, the brands ability to generate positive emotional responses is likely to have limited economic consequences. (Rindova et al. 2006)

Modern-day celebrities are products of mass communication (Boorstin 1961 and Rein et al. 1990, 1-31). This view draws on considerable evidence that mass media play a powerful role in setting the agenda of public discussion and directing the public's attention toward particular actors and issues. (Rindova et al. 2006)

Celebrity rests on the distribution of carefully selected information that could be either largely fabricated or well substantiated by evidence of individual achievement (Hayward et al. 2004). In either case, the supply of such information increases the attractiveness of celebrities to audiences by converting them into symbols of various individual aspirations (McCracken 1989) and shared myths about achievement and success (Rein et al. 1990, 155-193). The media play a central role in this process by broadcasting the carefully controlled content of

information about celebrities that demonstrates both the extent of their achievement and the attractiveness of their identities (Rindova et al. 2006).

4.2 Let Us Entertain You

Each year Americans spend at least 130 billion hours and more than \$260 billion on entertainment. Globally, total spending amounts to over half a trillion dollars. (Vogel 2004, xix) Entertainment today covers not only what we do with our free time, but also affects how we work, gather information, disseminate news and use our discretionary income. (Lieberman 2002, 317)

Basically, anything that stimulates, encourages, or otherwise generates a condition of enjoyable diversion could be called entertainment. It is something so universally interesting and appealing that when it does what it is supposed to do, it moves you emotionally – It touches your soul. (Vogel 2004, xix) We thrive on the opportunity the entertainment industry offers - to drop our day-to-day troubles, experience new sensations, broaden interests and learn something new. (Lieberman 2002, 322)

Leisure time, broadly defined as time not spent at work, has been increasing slowly in recent years. Entertainment has proven to be one of life's essentials, ranking just behind food, shelter and clothing in its importance to many people. When the amount of discretionary income grows, a substantial portion of it is likely to be spent on entertainment products and services. (Vogel 2004, 463-469) In a world with more time and income on its hands, the entertainment industry continues to gain momentum (Lieberman 2002, xxxi, 317 and Hjarvard 2004, 46).

The swift from an industrial economy to a more service based economy had a big impact also on the entertainment industry. As the public was fed on the ever-expanding buffet of entertainment alternatives, the appetite for inside information grew. What was once a two-inch piece of news in the back of the financial pages, or splashy story in some fanzine rag, is now the cover story of Times or Newsweek, the lead story on the business page, and a full length article in the Sunday magazine. Fanzines have become an independent media industry laying bare the lifestyles of the rich and famous celebrities in every avenue of

entertainment. Entertainment is big business and big press. (Lieberman 2002, xxxi-xxxii)

The media, a major collective source of information and entertainment, perform many functions and serve numerous personal needs. At a personal level they provide a varying sense of solidarity, a link to the wider society and indirect connections to other human beings. However, sometimes the media may also strengthen one's sense of isolation. The media provide emotional outlets evoking feelings of anger, sympathy, stress, and release, in addition to providing amusement, entertainment and distraction. At heart, media offer an experience that emerges from the interaction of our minds with the content of the communication (Harris 2004, 359).

4.2.1 The Dot-Com Era

A typical adolescent viewer of MTV lives in a 30-hour media entertainment day. By multi-tasking they surf the net, view DVDs, listen to MP3s, send instant messages, download movies, play video games, and watch TV consuming 30 hours of media per day. And these teenagers are not alone; audiences of all ages are changing the way of accessing and consuming media. An explosion of new media delivery technologies allows consumers to rapidly, on demand, access available information and entertainment. (Parker 2004)

The constant development of content and conduit creates an increasingly competitive entertainment economy, with consumers who have almost instant access to the product. There has been a lot of musing about the impact of the Internet on the world in general. This new form of communication has spread its tentacles in several different directions. Web sites act as go-betweens that tie each and every medium together. The Internet, as a kind of generalised media platform, will promote a whole new social infrastructure and thus have long term impacts on communications in the 21st Century (Hjarvard 2004, 44). But the biggest change facing the entertainment universe is digital technology, a breakthrough that offers incredible opportunity and serious challenges. (Lieberman 2002, 297-316)

4.2.2 Media and Globalisation

Entertainment is a huge and rapidly changing international business. The central features of the media globalisation of the past few decades have been larger cross-boarder media outputs, the tendency toward centralisation of media control and trans-national media corporations (TNCs), and the increase of commercialisation. Some of the diverse effects of media globalisation are the growing understanding and knowledge of different cultures, the rapid dissemination of popular culture and the emergence of some kind of a global culture. (Herman and McChesney 1997, 8-9) Any traveller to faraway destinations is struck by how cultures seem to be converging together – how people everywhere wear jeans or ties, listen to the same international artists' music, and consume the same branded products. (Lieberman 2002, 298)

Media affect our minds by providing information about the past and present that helps us develop a common culture and a system of values, tradition and ways of looking at the world. (Herman and McChesney 1997, 2-3)

The perceived reality that we create from the media often deviates substantially from the real world and is often far more heavily influenced by the media than we realise (Harris 2004, 352-353). The global media system creates a new reality, where visibility becomes crucial to social actors - whether or not something is real and can have importance depends on its presence in the global communication structure. Lack of visibility means exclusion from the social reality that is the product of media's representation. (Hjarvard 2004, 45) As Harris (2004, 370) very vividly puts it: "Life imitates art, and art imitates life. After a while, it becomes hard to tell which is which."

4.2.3 Current Trends and the Future of Entertainment

According to Herman and McChesney (1997, 205) the most evident hallmarks of the global media era have been the spread of an increasingly unfettered global capitalism, a global commercial media and communication system, and the development of revolutionary communication technologies.

We are witnessing the rise of new global infrastructures on a large scale, generating an enormous capacity for cross-border penetration. This has led to a dramatic increase in the volume, intensity and speed of communication and cultural exchange. (Kronig 2001) Current trends suggest that entertainment industries will in total continue to grow and that they will keep on integrating vertically and globally. However, no matter how large or widespread the entertainment corporations become, it is an industry that will remain dependent on the vitality and creativity of individuals. (Vogel 2004, 463-469)

4.3 Media Offer Constant Access to the Celebrity

Celebrities are the branded products of the lucrative, constantly evolving and globally uniting entertainment industry. These public figures surface due to the vain desire of the masses to be entertained and live a temporary illusion. The celebrities of our contemporary era must however face the hardships of staying afloat in the surge of the global entertainment media. The importance and eminence of media and entertainment in our societies has reached the extent that many call it "a celebrity obsessed society" where people desperately try to live according to their celebrity role models. In the wake of the growing entertainment business and internationalisation of media, also the influence and power of its public figures, the celebrities, will increase.

Celebrity is an industry that creates highly visible products that most of us buy at least occasionally and which play a significant part in our daily lives. It is also an industry that spends a lot of time masking the fact that it exists at all. The aim of publicity is to turn advertising into news or entertainment to provide free editorial coverage of an event, person or cause. Good publicists are invisible and good promotional strategies end up on the front pages of a news paper. This can be accomplished in many different ways but they must not puncture the illusion whereupon the whole game depends: that "the news" is the result of independent journalism. (Turner 2004, 26)

4.4 The Power of Media

Overall, the growth of mass communication technologies is an important factor contributing to the emergence of celebrity. The media play a central role in the process of celebrity creation because they control both the technology that publishes information to the general public and the content of this information. (Rindova et al. 2006)

Further, journalists seek to make their “breaking” stories more dramatic and newsworthy. Thus, in presenting information, journalists implicitly or overtly utilise principles of drama in order to enhance the impact of their story on audiences, as well as on fellow journalists. Journalists thus seek information that highlights change and present that information in dramatic narratives. These dramatic narratives then direct stakeholder interest in and attraction toward the celebrity they feature thereby socially amending their brand image. (ibid)

In other words the media mix “on-screen” and “off-screen” personalities, fact and fiction, pieces of luxurious lifestyles and an emphasis on professional achievement, to create a “dramatised reality” out of a celebrity’s life story. (ibid)

The media though have a huge power to depict things in the light they wish and to distort reality in order to get the story. As the person brand is hugely dependant on the media telling their story, their narrative. Brand image and reputation might shift and change depending on the silent consensus of the media image of a person. The media might have their ulterior motives that are reflecting politics, stakeholder ambitions or personal career objectives.

4.5 Negative Celebrity Information

Except for cartoon characters and posthumous celebrities, advertisers cannot control the personal lives of their endorsers, and negative publicity surfaces on occasion in the lives of some. Damage to product reputation as a function of negative celebrity information emerging after an endorsement relation has been established, represents a challenging area of investigation for advertising researchers but has received limited attention. (Money et al. 2006)

The media that make celebrities can help them unmake themselves again. It is very difficult to restore a celebrity endorser's public image once it has been tarnished. Negative information about celebrities is rather commonplace and seems to be increasing. (ibid)

Scandal, whether true or false, can destroy or ruthlessly damage a celebrity career. But the damage does not need to be permanent. Many celebrities encountering decline, hit upon counterstrategies that allow them to trace career patterns as rhythmic as a sine wave. They rise steadily to prominence, encounter a misfortune, decline to invisibility, then rise again. (Rein et al. 1990, 305)

Negative information tends to be evaluated more strongly than comparably extreme positive information. This evaluation tends to occur early in the evaluation process, as people start to categorise products into classes. Negative information gets more attention, processing, and impact than positive information depending on which type of information is presented first and which is less expected and in long-term memory, negative information is better remembered than neutral information. Negative behaviour in celebrities attracts more attention, is better encoded, and is more easily recalled than positive information although commitment of the consumer toward the brand moderates the effect of negative information about the endorser. (Money et al. 2006)

People experience something similar to a sympathy effect in learning that a well-known and much admired celebrity had experienced a misfortune. Sympathy and empathy are emotions related to the more general notion of forgiveness, which provides one way for people to cope with the stressful state of unforgiveness. Forgiveness has been defined as an emotional combination of positive emotions that serves as a coping strategy. People may become even more positive toward a celebrity due to experiencing sympathy for his troubles. (ibid)

Although drug usage by common citizens is typically viewed as a sin, actors, other entertainers, and models may get a pass from the attribution of fault and thus may be less damaged by negative news. (ibid)

All negative information is not equally negative. Celebrities may be somewhat protected from negativity perceptions to which more common people are subjected. Celebrities' images may actually benefit, rather than suffer, from some forms of negative press—namely, those behaviours that are perceived as being beyond their control and which may generate sympathetic emotions among celebrity worshipers rather than contempt. (ibid)

Advertising practitioners typically drop a celebrity from a brand endorsement contract at the slightest hint of negative news, but this may not always be necessary. If a celebrity endorser is perceived not at fault, then the negative evaluative conditioning feared by brand managers and their advertising agencies may not be justified. For example Kate Moss may not at all be damaged goods among those consumers who attribute her cocaine snorting to the pressures of a model's life and feel sympathy for her problem. (ibid)

4.6 Without Media There Is No Brand

To sustain celebrity one needs a personal real-life, or purportedly real-life, narrative, even if it is only the foundation narrative. One also needs publicity for that narrative. And last, one needs fans — an audience to appreciate the narrative and admire its star. For in the end, celebrity without someone to consume it is like a movie without someone to watch it. (Gabler 2003)

The media are an important go-between the branded person and the consumer. Media help to sustain the real life narrative thus keeping the celebrity alive. Media offer the public seeming face-to-face contacts with the celebrities. Through these published pictures and stories consumers have a chance to be and be with the celebrity (Zimmerman and Ayoob 2004). Without the media there is no celebrity brand.

5 The Celebrity Product

In this chapter 5 we concentrate on looking at the branded person from different angles. As there is no product as such, there is merely the brand this chapter will try to elaborate what actually is the product we are selling? This product may actually vary depending from which viewpoint you choose to look at it.

A person brand will have value to many different people involved. A person brand will have value to its owner the individual him/her/itself, the consumer buying the "product" as well as other stakeholders financially benefitting from the brand. Also many advertisers try to benefit from the person brand by involving the in endorsement projects together with their own brand. Interestingly also the person brand can try to take advantage of this process through reverse image transfer.

5.1 The Product from the View Point of the Celebrity

By looking around us we can see that the celebrities of today are cashing in on their names to much greater extent than those in the past (Gogoi 2006). In order to commercialise the brand image and the intrinsic economic value incorporated in the celebrity brand there has to be a product. Without something to turn into revenues, the brand is not fully capitalised.

The first thing a person can sell is their know-how. Whether one is a sportsman/woman, singer, actor, politician or business leader the core talent of an individual is usually something worth money. That is the basis of earnings. You do a job and you get paid for it. The interesting part is that the more famous the person doing their job is the more valued she or he gets at the same time. Big sports stars earn more than regular players, and it is hard to say whether it is because of their name or their sport talent. Probably it is a mixture of both. It is nevertheless natural that a big celebrity earns more for acting in a film than a no-name, as the celebrityhood of a star will inevitably guarantee better awareness and therefore returns for a film. Consequently the producers of a film are willing to pay more for this kind of person.

Secondly, on top of their core talent many celebrities have discovered ways of earning extra wages through endorsement. Many have taken part in lucrative endorsement deals which attach their brand name with another commercially marketed product. A lot of large companies are willing to use the names of celebrities as a marketing tool and pay substantially for this right. This in turn generates positive revenues for the celebrities.

A third way of cashing in on a person brand is by creating different side products or line extensions of a brand name in order to turn the intangible celebrity image to a real product. In recent years many celebrities have attached their names with numerous different products such as, perfumes, clothing, jewellery and cookware. By managing these product lines themselves they can earn a lot more than by merely licensing their name (Gogoi 2006).

Celebrities are increasingly turning themselves into brands, using their fame to succeed in business or attract lucrative advertising deals (Buckley 2004). David Beckham for example had salary as a football player of 6 million euro per year, much lower than the 20 million he earned at the same time from publicity (Blackshaw and Siekmann 2005, 261)

5.2 The Celebrity Product from the View Point of the Consumer

The celebrity product is something very vague and intangible. The person product differs from all other consumer products in one fundamental aspect – there is no palpable real product than one can witness, hear, smell, or touch for real. Or even if there is, this complete stranger is someone the consumer is never likely to meet (Andrews and Jackson 2001, 1). One might also question whether there is a person product at all. There is a person, and there is a brand. But if there is no real product why is celebrityhood still so lucrative business? What do consumers actually pay for?

What makes people characters instead of merely products is the fact that they participate in a narrative (Zimmerman and Ayoob 2004). This narrative is viewed by the general public through the media. Apparently consumers want to take part in this narrative and to develop relationships with the brand.

5.2.1 Human Brands Help to Fulfil Various Consumer Needs

Consumers turn to their goods not only as bundles of value with which to serve functions and satisfy needs, but also as bundles of meaning with which to fashion who they are and the world they live in. Celebrities are in fact highly individualised and complex bundles of cultural meaning. (McCracken 1989)

In modern, developed societies, modern Western selves are deliberately left blank so that the individual may exercise the right of choice. The freedom to choose is now also an obligation to decide and this makes us especially eager consumers of the symbolic meanings contained in celebrities and the goods they endorse. (ibid)

A person brand helps to fulfil various behavioural goals, which, in the case of celebrity, include meeting an audience's needs for gossip, fantasy, identification, status, affiliation, and attachment (Rindova et al. 2006).

5.2.2 Human Brands Offer Parasocial Relationships

From a consumer point of view the celebrity person has to be somehow turned into a "consumable product", as the consumer rarely gets the luxury of being face to face with the person. People buy glimpses of the celebrity life and fame by watching their movies, TV-shows, news appearances or music videos, by buying magazines, going to sport events or concerts, buying clothes or other accessories carrying the persons name, or buying any product only endorsed by the person / brand.

What the consumer gets from a person product is somewhat complicated to understand or explain. It is something intangible, vague and relates to the self expression of an individual and to other cultural or social aspects of our modern lives. According to Zimmerman and Ayoob (2004), consumers create celebrities by consuming the content they inhabit. People create celebrities to fulfil a human need for relationships. Celebrities offer parasocial relationship, interacting with consumers through television, radio, Internet, and print. People benefit and enjoy these relationships because they are safe, one-way relationships, where people

can select (and abandon) celebrities without fear of rejection. (Zimmerman et al. 2002)

People often experience “seeming face-to-face” relationships with human brands who are met as they were in the circle of one’s peers. In these relationships many of the same expectations, cognitions, emotions, and behaviours can be seen that operate in normal interpersonal relationships. Even to the point that a consumer might view a human brand as a pleasant companion, good friend, or romantic mate. (Thomson 2006)

5.2.3 Products Reinforce Consumers’ Self Esteem and Are Part of Their Social Identity

Products have a social and psychological nature as well as a physical one. People buy products not only for what they can do, but for what they mean, thus brands connects with, adds to, or reinforces the way people think about themselves. Recent research indicates that consumers construct their self-identity and present themselves to others through their brand choices based on the congruency between brand-user associations and self-image associations. (Escalas and Bettman 2005) A product is more likely to be used and enjoyed if there is congruity between the brand image and the actual or ideal self image of the user and if the brand makes the users feel good about themselves. (Dobni and Zinkhan 1990)

Humans are social animals, we judge ourselves on the choices we make, and that is why a large part of our social identity is build around the logos and the brands that we wear. (Kapferer, 2004, 20) Individuals tend to behave in accordance with the image that they have about themselves or that they wish to convey to others. Brands can be considered as a means to communicate these images and the connection between brands and personal identity has been conceptualised as a brand-consumer relationship (Ambroise et al. 2005).

Having conspired in the creation of this new art form as fans, we get the dispensation to watch them, to share them, to consume them, to enjoy them, to bask in their magnificence and to imagine that we might have a narrative of our own some day, allowing us to join them. It simultaneously comforts us and disturbs us, celebrating the virtue of ordinariness while holding out something to which we can desire. (Gabler 2003)

5.2.4 Consumers Form Attachments to Human Brands

Attachment strength is separable from trust, satisfaction, commitment, and a variety of other constructs, such as favourable attitudes and brand loyalty that have been linked to strong relationships. For an attachment to form, the consumer must initially be minimally attached in some way to the human brand. In other words the attachment is unlikely to develop if the starting point of the relationship is characterised by intense negative feelings of thoughts. This suggests that brand managers must introduce a human brand to the world carefully and deliberately and choose a positioning that is appealing and sustainable over time. (Thomson 2006)

Human brands that are perceived as authentic are more readily embraced. Away from their trade, human brands should not be viewed as trying to convey an image, or they risk being viewed as pretenders. Consumers can form attachments even to human brands, which lack any appreciable skills (e.g. Paris Hilton). Although consumers may like many celebrities, they will be strongly attached to only a few. Consumers that have positive feelings toward a brand are more likely to embrace a brand extension because a more automatic and direct transfer of positive effect to the affiliated product. This result occurs even when the extended brand has comparatively poor fit with the core brand. (ibid)

5.3 The Celebrity Product From the View Point of Other Stakeholders

Different stakeholders interested in this celebrity product – the person, are manifold. As the entertainment industry continues to grow through technological advances and by introducing number of new more advanced media at the same

time grows the number of celebrities. These new media such as the Internet offer a borderless global arena for celebrities to conquer. The power of the celebrities that succeed in this global entertainment world is ever greater.

At the same time the industry around the celebrity phenomenon swells. There are more bees than ever before around the honey pot – referring to the lure of a famous brand name ready to be turned into gold. This overwhelming public interest in the brand can feed a number of different stakeholders alongside with the brand owner him/herself.

These stakeholders like movie makers, media representatives, as well as fashion and advertisement industries are all willing to pay a small fortune for attaining a piece of a well-known person's brand name or image in order to increase the sales their own products. They are in a way the "subsidiary consumers" of the branded person. On the other hand without these subsidiary operators, the system would be incomplete and the pleasure passed on to the "primary consumers" that is the general public would only be partial.

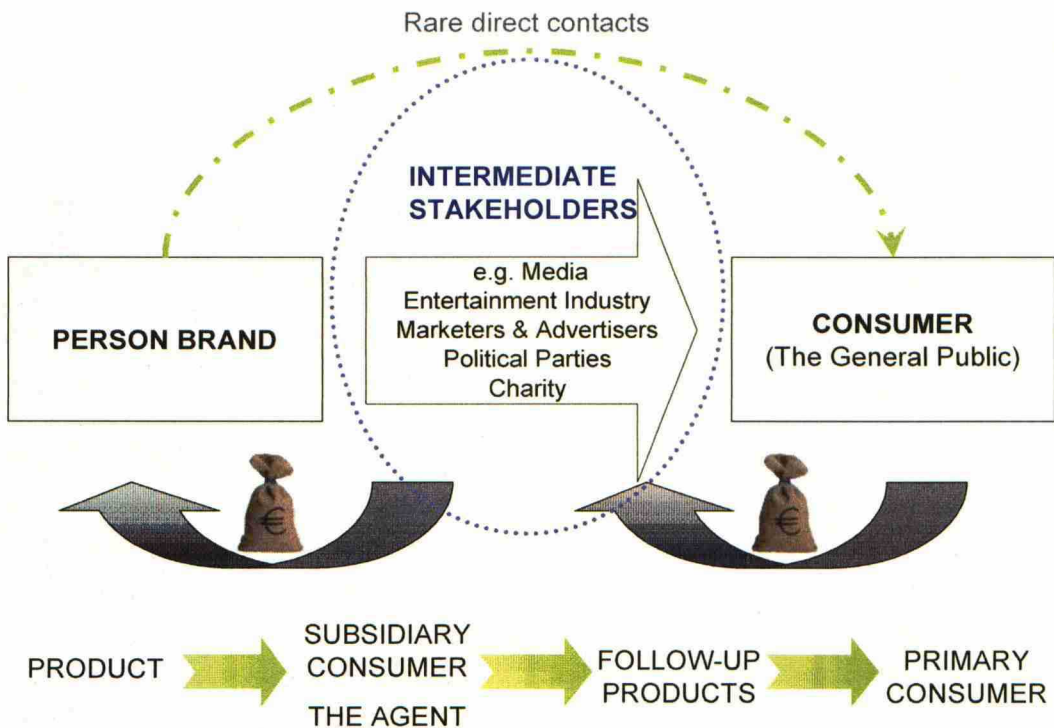


Figure 2: The commercialisation the human brand

Figure 2 illustrates how the consumer, the end customer views the person brand through the concretised visualisations of the different intermediate stakeholders. Very often the final customer never has any direct contact with the actual person. The brand of the person is thereby very dependent on the depiction of the intermediate stakeholders and how they view the product brand, because they alongside with the persons themselves will communicate the brand to the end consumer.

The “product” is consumed through different follow-up products produced by the intermediate stakeholders as well as the person him/herself. The power established in the person brand should be strong enough to carry all the other follow-up products, in order to pull in the cash through the stakeholders to the person. If the draw of the public is not powerful enough, these stakeholders will lose their interest and will not be willing to pay a premium for capitalising the person brand.

5.4 Endorsers in Advertising

Celebrity endorser: “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement” (Seno & Lukas 2007). Endorsement in advertising not only uses celebrities; it helps make them. (Boorstin 1971, 58)

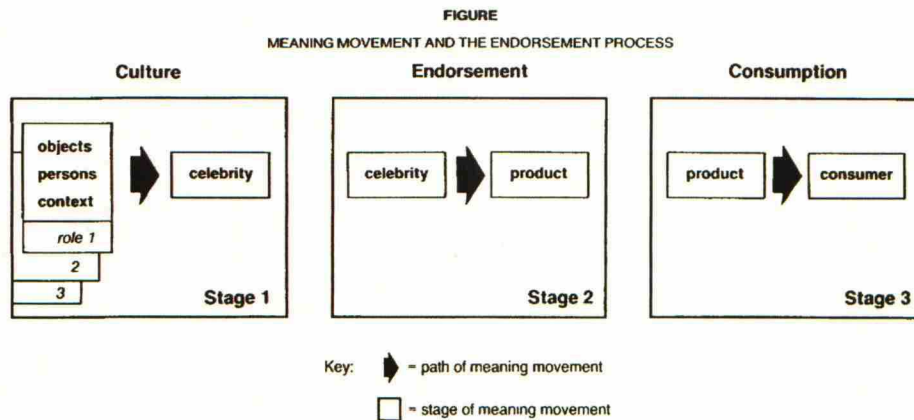
Use of celebrities as part of marketing communications strategy is a fairly common practice for majority of firms in supporting their various brand images. Companies invest also large sums of money to align their brands and themselves with endorsers. In using a celebrity endorser a company has limited control over the celebrity’s persona as they have created their public persona over the years and the celebrity endorser is not just linked to a promoted product, but with many other things. Also negative information about a celebrity endorser not just influences consumers’ perception of the celebrity, but also the endorsed product. Therefore it is important from the company point of view to choose their endorsement partners well. (Erdogan 1999)

5.4.1 *Meaning Transfer in Endorsement*

Today, virtually everything is branded, ranging from commodities such as water through to medicines and micro celebrities. One explanation for this is that brands represent the best psychological vehicles for delivering meaning and value. Brands also tap into many areas of human desires and fears. The self-image concept is important in branding, with many brands using and exploiting the various dimensions of self (real, ideal, self-esteem, fantasy). (Dalton and Croft 2003, 78-81)

Even the most heavily stereotyped celebrity represents not only one single meaning, but an interconnected set of meanings. It is precisely the meaning of the celebrity that makes him or her so useful to the endowment process. For an endorsement succeeds when an association is fashioned between the cultural meanings of the celebrity world, on one hand, and the endorsed product, on the other. The best endorsements take their power and their efficacy precisely from this: the successful transfer of meaning. Any product can carry practically whatever meaning. (McCracken 1989)

Celebrity endorsers represent one of many sources of cultural symbols from which the advertiser can choose. Though many celebrities may be attractive and credible, not all endorsers will embody a set of meaning matching with given brand's positioning. Therefore an important consideration in the choice of a celebrity endorser is the similarity between the celebrity and the brand. (Till 1993, 15-16)

Figure 3: Meaning transfer model

(McCracken 1989)

In figure 3 the meaning transfer from the celebrity to the product is illustrated. According to McCrackens (1989) theory the meanings carried by the celebrity are readily transferred to the product in an endorsement process. Some of the meanings of the celebrity are now meanings of the product. In theory also the opposite could happen that is the transfer of the meaning branded in the product to the celebrity. This presumption has still been limitedly investigated and supported.

Stage 1: Culture

Celebrities are powerful meanings, different from the anonymous models or actors who are normally used to bring meanings to the ad. Celebrities have particular configurations of meanings that cannot be found elsewhere. Audrey Hepburn delivers "elegance" much more vividly than even the most elegant model. Celebrities also "own" their meanings because they have created them on the public stage by dint of intense and repeated performance. (ibid)

Interestingly celebrities appear largely unaware of their part in the meaning transfer process. Actors say they dislike being cast repeatedly in the same role, claiming that typecasting limits their career and creative options. What they do not see is that their careers, their art form, and the endorsement process all depend upon typecasting. Without typecasting, actors are unable to bring clear and unambiguous meanings to the products they endorse. Without typecasting they have no meanings to give the transfer process. (ibid)

Stage 2: Endorsement

Choice of particular celebrities is based on the meanings they epitomise. Once a celebrity is chosen, an advertising campaign should then identify and deliver these meanings to the endorsed product. An advertising campaign can sometimes have the effect of a new dramatic role, bringing the celebrity into contact with symbolic materials that change the meanings contained in their persona. Normally, however, the ad is not trying to transform the meanings of the celebrity. Usually it seeks only to transfer them. (ibid)

Stage 3: Consumption

Celebrities have created the self. They have done so publicly. All the world has watched them take shape. Celebrities build selves well. The constructed self makes the celebrity a kind of exemplary, inspirational figure to the consumer. Consumers are themselves constantly moving symbolic properties out of consumer goods into their lives to construct aspects of self and world. Not surprisingly they admire individuals who have accomplished this task and accomplished it well. Celebrities are proof that the process works. Celebrities have been where the consumer is going. They have done in stage 1 what the consumer is labouring to do in stage 3 of the meaning process. (ibid)

When they enter the endorsement process they make these meanings available in material form to the consumer. Consumers are grateful for these meanings and keen to build a self from them. The celebrity is supplying not just an example of self-creation, but the very thing with which this difficult act is undertaken. (ibid)

Hollywood, the star system, and celebrity endorsement are all profoundly cultural enterprises and that our fascination with celebrities reflects our involvement in the meaning transfer system they accomplish. Celebrity endorsement and the marketing system are cultural undertakings in which meaning is constantly in circulation. (ibid)

This model of meaning transfer presented by McCracken (1989) in broad detail suggests how celebrity endorsement works as a process of meaning transfer. It is a review of each the three stages of the process illustrated above. It considers

how meaning moves into the celebrity and from there on to the product and finally from the product to the consumer. Celebrities are, by this description, key players in the meaning transfer process.

5.4.2 Reverse Image Transfer

The primary focus of the endorsement literature has been on the transfer of the pre-existing celebrity image onto endorsed product or brand. Few studies have investigated the influence of the pre-existing product brand image upon the image of a celebrity brand – in essence, reverse image transfer. (Charbonneau and Garland 2005)

The core of viewing celebrity product endorsement as a form of co-branding, and not simply as a product promotion are to recognise that celebrities have brand properties. Seno & Lukas (2007) in their study elevate the celebrity to the same level as the endorsed brand.

Co-branding means “Pairing of two or more brands”. This mutual beneficial partnership between the involved parties takes the form of continuing exchange, or a flow, of strategically desirable image attributes, or “meaning” and can be managed in an exclusive and dynamic process. (ibid)

As a pre-requisite celebrities can create awareness and an image of their own in consumer minds. These images are a function of the inferences that consumers make based on the knowledge that they have about the celebrity. (Keller 1998 cited in Seno & Lukas 2007) In effect celebrities can display the same ingredients that constitute a brand and, therefore, are viable co-brand partners. (Seno & Lukas 2007)

As much as celebrities can transfer meaning to a brand the reverse is also possible. To the extent that the endorsed product’s brand image has certain attributes, for example elegance or professional success, it is plausible that these attributes can be transferred back to the endorsing celebrity. The result is likely to be an amplification of the celebrity’s image. As a result, the source-based factors, credibility and attractiveness, may be affected by the co-branding. (ibid)

Charbonneau and Garland (2005) in their study found that pairing a celebrity endorser and a positive product had little or no effect on the image of a celebrity. On the contrary pairing the celebrity endorser with a negative product (cigarettes) resulted in a negative impact on perceived credibility, respectively (ibid). These findings implicate that celebrities should judge carefully the endorsement engagements they make, as these choices can have adverse effects also on their own brand.

5.5 The Means of Capitalising on the Consumer Need

Celebrity provides magazines, television, newspapers, books and increasingly the Internet with stories and stars; these media in turn provide celebrity, having no screen of its own, with an actual vehicle to reach the public. (Gabler 2003) All media channels are ready to reimburse somehow the stories and content they can acquire about the celebrity product. These stories of these celebrity products are big source of business and livelihood for them, therefore delivering celebrity stories to the audiences is key.

The more viewers the stories of the media reach the more attractive they are also toward other sources of business such as the large advertising income. The celebrities are a medium to attract the public and therefore also at the same time a medium for the advertisers to reach their target audiences through the same media. And advertisers are ready to pay large deals of their turnover to get their own messages across to the public.

Also as the general interest to a celebrity product increases the source of income for the stars increase simultaneously. There will be more opportunities to cash in on ones name. Better music, spots and movie contracts as well as sponsor and endorsement contracts.

5.6 Links to Other Product Types

Even though the celebrity product seems to be in a league of its own, there are still a lot of similarities with other product types. The intangibility aspect of the person products takes after service products that are also somewhat distant to

the consumer, as well as the fact that they are always different depending on the individual experience of the consumer (heterogeneity). The resemblance of these two might result partly from person brands being delivered through service follow-up products for example different entertainment products. Also the sought-after benefit of these person products is usually psychological, like general admiration of the object, wanting to be similar to the person, need to be with the person, or desire to belong to a certain social group. In respect of the many psychological needs that services fulfil this idea sounds just.

There are also many other points of convergence with other unconventional product types. For example person brands resemble in many ways organisational brands. The organisation behind possibly several different products acts like an umbrella over its products and the brand power of the organisation steers all the other products. In this sense a person brand acts somewhat the same way enabling the sales of different sub-products. Also a well managed organisational brand might be distant and inaccessible for most people, something big and intangible, still being positive and alluring with a distinctive personality. The organisation or the person for that matter acts like a father figure for its babies the consumable products.

For the preceding reasons and since the literature in the field of branding persons is still at an initial stage, this paper has at times also probed to the literature on branding organisations, places and services in order to get a better understanding about branding people and its peculiarities.

In addition to tangible products and services, marketers have broadened the concept of a product to include other market offerings – organisations, persons, places, and ideas. As a product, a person differs in many aspects, one major reason being their humanity. Human beings are living creatures and therefore not as stable as other branded products. People grow, age, change – evolve. Furthermore celebrity is a property of the actor's relationship with an audience rather than a characteristic of the actor him/her/itself (Rindova et al. 2006).

6 The Importance of the Brand to the Person

In this chapter 6 we bundle up all the different facets discussed earlier and try to make sense of it all. The important questions are, what actually is the meaning of a brand to the person, its financial value and also, who is the legal owner and has the right to the brand. As a brand is more than just a product or a person a specific area of interest is what happens to the brand when the person passes away.

6.1 Brands Represent Vehicles for Delivering Meaning

Markets have now become extremely segmented. Modern brands must identify and tap into consumers' emotional and psychological needs. The convergence of products has now shifted the emphasis increasingly on the intangible, abstract values of brands. As product commoditisation has increased, stakeholder perceptions have become more important as a source of differentiation. (Dalton and Croft 2003, 80)

In terms of modern exchange and trade, brands act as bundles of meaning. The psychological and emotional features of brands cannot be underestimated. Although current emphasis is focused on developing customer relationships and equity, brands are still key position for delivering meaning. It is not possible to developing customer equity unless the underlying brand exists that a consumer can connect with and desire. (Dalton and Croft 2003, 78-81)

If the market is unaware of a person there is no brand. A brand emerges when meanings and an image are attached to it. For a person brand it is important to consciously try to manage this brand and capitalise the full potential attached to it.

6.2 Why Are Brands So Important?

Practically every product or service has some form of competition and one of the problems of brands is that they are often victims of their own success. Once an innovative brand has emerged, it is soon copied and its market share reduced

over time. A new concept is often copied and any unusual features, or service offerings, are soon reproduced by competitors. (Dalton and Croft 2003, 79)

The value of a person brand lies in the fact that it cannot be copied. You can never find someone precisely the similar as another individual. People cannot be manufactured as products. The only thing competitors can imitate is a specific concept or meaning a person brand epitomises. Still it might be hard to find an individual that fits this mould of a character set by another human being. Trying to change dramatically an individual's personality or outward image is not sustainable. Therefore often most person brands emerge with an offering of their own carrying a meaning that is specific to them. The success of this "brand positioning" is dependant on the particular market and competition. Smart as well as conscious long term branding actions might hence turn out to be advantageous.

6.3 Brands Represent Financial Muscle and Vaccinate Against Future Problems

Person brands have financial value because they have created assets in the minds of consumers and other stakeholders. The assets are brand awareness, belief of exclusivity and superiority of some appreciated benefit, and emotional bonding. (Kapferer 2004, 10)

The lack of branding may result to a weak brand which cannot convey specific and relevant meanings. Therefore the publics' attachment to this kind of a brand might be faltering. Also the interest of the different stakeholders might not be as strong as this kind of person cannot offer a specific meaning to the meaning transfer process and act as a powerful brand. As a result the earning power of the person is not maximised and the means of capitalising on his/her name is only partial. In other words the equity of the brand is weak.

Also a strong brand identity and reputation can protect a person brand against potential future problems and crisis that might affect the brand. If a brand is weak, following a crisis, the brand may collapse and be destroyed within months if not weeks. (Dalton and Croft 2003, 81-82)

6.4 Person Brands as Intangible and Conditional Assets

Brands are intangible assets as well as conditional assets. An asset is an element that is capable of producing benefits over a long period of time. Brands are conditional assets because in order to deliver their benefits, they need to work together with other material assets. There are no brands without products or services to bear them. The products and services become effectively embodiments of the person brand, by which the brand becomes real. (Kapferer, 2004, 10-11)

Without benefits there is no brand value. No matter what the level of its "consumer based assets" (brand awareness, brand image, brand attachment, brand preference), a brand unable to produce benefits has no financial value. It may have enormous potential as measured by associations evoked in consumers' minds, but this potential needs a profitable economic equation to become reality. (ibid)

6.5 Image Rights

As there are several different benefits and in particular financial value associated with the person brand, who actually has the legal ownership to use the brand? The person born with the name is the primary owner of his/her name. Still in many situations the use of the brand name is not that clear-cut. Therefore it is often wise to consider trade marking the name and getting some legal protection for the brand. (Blackshaw and Siekmann, 2005)

Image rights have a dual nature. On one hand, they are based on a very personal right – inherent in human nature – that is, self image. On the other hand, since an image is capable of creating a series of benefits to its owner, image rights are of a proprietary nature and need to be regulated as such. (ibid)

From a legal point of view the image rights are divided in two important fundamental rights: the right of publicity against the right of privacy. Legal order has divided up the economic value associated with modern celebrity, enabling

celebrities to capture and monopolise some of them. Thus celebrity personas may be freely appropriated for what are deemed to be primary informational and entertainment purposes. No permission is though needed, nor payment made, for use of celebrity's name or likeness in news report, novel, play, film or biography. Under current US law, the life stories of celebrities are, for all intents and purposes, common property – available to be told and retold at the pleasure, and profit of the teller. (Madow 1993)

6.6 Brand Meaning and Equity in Changing Times

Because of the humanity of a person brand it is often useless to fight overtly against the passage of time. Aging is the natural process that we cannot avoid even though plastic surgery has developed a considerable number of treatments to slow down its ruthless power. This aging process is something that should not be forgotten when branding individuals.

For product and other brands it is easier to fight the passage of time. If wished, they can stay young forever by just evolving according to different decades. For person this change might prove to be more difficult. Human brands can in theory keep all of their other traits but youngness. They can stay cool, cheerful, funny, passionate or even beautiful, but they cannot stay young. This idea offers an interesting insight as it also reflects the fact that when branded individuals get older they all the time have to adjust their image to a certain age.

For all brands it is wise to sustain some values which De Chernatony et al. (2004) call the "core values" instead of the so called "peripheral values". For a person brand the age related values will always be part of the peripheral values and should not even tried to keep. On the other hand a person can have a solid set of core values that will still distinguish the brand as who they are. Sustaining core values gives the brand continuity and facilitates routine response behaviour. It is very important for a brand to remain consistent, but without change with the times it will fossilise and lose its relevance. (ibid)

Once core brand values have been identified and found to be attractive to consumers, they should be tried to be sustained for the future. Peripheral brand

values should be assessed regularly and amended when needed. This way the essence of the brand can be kept while still allowing it to adapt and evolve. (ibid)

6.7 The Brand Without a Person; Becoming Immortal - A Legend

Boorstin (1971), looking at the lack of achievement in celebrity, saw all celebrity as perishable. Once the publicity is withdrawn, so is the celebrity since there is nothing, presumably, left behind. But celebrities do not perish because the publicity is withdrawn. The publicity is withdrawn because they cease to provide a narrative that is worth writing about or broadcasting, or from the audience's point of view, worth watching or reading about.

Other authors regardless have seen the potential of person brand to outlive the human being carrying the name. The ability of some brands to achieve iconic status is mostly due to their skill at communicating myth and typical notions about a product that connects at a much deeper unconscious level within the mind of the consumer. People need to identify with mythology as witnessed by our fascination with celebrity icons, such as Marilyn Monroe, Princess Diana and JFK. They have all been able to obtain cultural iconic status. (Dalton and Croft 2003, 76)

According to Behr and Beeler-Norrholm (2006) those celebrities who keep their lives in order can go to an afterlife as fully formed trademarks, marks that the public later forgets were ever someone's name (e.g. René Lacoste).

6.8 Summarising the Theoretical Part of the Study

In today's world of media centred societies, branded people are becoming a phenomenon that should not be overlooked. Marketing has long been focused on the concept of branding but mainly branding of products. In recent years the concept of branding has slowly opened up to other product categories such as services, organisations and even places. It ought to be time to add people as a specific category of branding, as frankly the same rules and peculiarities of branding exist within taking advantage of the publicity of an individual.

A person needs to have wide public recognition in order to be distinguished as a brand of real monetary value. In general this means that people brands can also be defined as celebrities. A celebrity can merge for many different areas of life not only the entertainment industry which seems to be often predominant. Also people of sports, politics, business as well as other areas are more and more aware of the value encrypted in their names.

Celebrities offer the general public meanings that they behold as well as para-social relationships to hold on to. The consumers build their self by the meanings that these public figures offer. The celebrity brands offer the consumer different psychological benefits and therefore are important products on the media.

For the media and other stakeholders, celebrities offer earning power. To the media by offering a self powered narrative and to the other stakeholders by offering attachments to their powerful brands. This in turn profits the person owning the brand with lucrative contracts and earnings.

In celebrity branding the key is to monitor the marketplace and public expectations and to be prepared to pull or modify your campaign on a moment's notice if need to be. Celebrities will continue to remain all too human, which is really part of the fun. (Behr and Beeler-Norrholm 2006)

7 Empirical Research

In this chapter 7 we move from the theory part to the empirical part of the study. In this chapter the research methods are presented and explained. Also there is some deeper analysis on the chosen research methods and their functionality.

7.1 Empirical Research Focus

The empirical part of this study seeks to understand the phenomenon of branding people through attitudes and information held about the subject by key marketing professionals in the advertising and branding industry. They were a natural choice as research subjects as they are the experts in branding in general, if only more traditional products, companies or services. They are the ones who understand the insights of branding. The aim was to have their opinions about the current situation on the market, and to find out whether they had had contacts or requests for branding individuals in advertising agencies. What was the current state of branding people in the advertising agencies currently? Also the target was to hear the experts' views about how they would go about to brand people if so needed.

To remind us about the targets of this study the main research question and subordinate questions are listed again below (originally in chapter 1.3.1.).

What are the peculiarities of branding individuals in the opinion of advertising and marketing experts?

- Which factors help individuals to become brands?
- What are the special characteristics of people as brands?
- Are advertising agencies usually involved in the process of branding people?
- What are the main benefits of branding individuals?

7.2 Choosing the Research Methods

The research design provides the basic directions for carrying out a research project. Many different research designs can be used to study business problems. Research designs can be generally grouped into three categories: (1) exploratory, (2) descriptive, and (3) causal design. (Hair et al. 2003, 57-64)

An exploratory research project is useful when the research questions are roughly defined or when there is only little theory existing to guide predictions. Exploratory research is used to explain and to develop a better understanding. Descriptive research on the other hand describes a situation. Generally things are described by offering measures of an event or activity. Often, descriptive research achieves this by using descriptive statistics. These include frequency counts, measures of central tendency like the mean or mode, or a measure of variation such as the standard deviation. Causal research designs are often the most complex. They are designed to test whether one event causes another that is if there is a causal relationship. (ibid)

As the scope of this research is to provide insight in to the world of branding individuals it is justified to use an exploratory research design. The aim is to understand this phenomenon more in-depth. Both qualitative and quantitative research can be seen exploratory in nature. (Malhotra and Birks 1999, 62-63)

Qualitative research encompasses a variety of methods that can be applied in a flexible manner, to enable respondents to reflect upon and express their views or to observe their behaviour. Qualitative and quantitative research should be viewed as complementary. (ibid, 133-153)

7.3 Empirical Research Design

In this research the main focus was on using qualitative methods to acquire more in-depth information from the professionals of images and branding. For this reason five personal depth interviews were conducted. Four of the respondents were practitioners from four major advertising agencies in London, United Kingdom. One extra interview was conducted in Espoo, Finland with an expert

from the music industry with expertise especially about the meaning of branding for celebrities in the music industry.

All of the interviewees had strong knowledge about the question at hand. They were mainly experts of branding and advertising, but had some prior knowledge also to branding people. As the field of branding people and the organisation of different instances involved in the process is not yet fully developed, they served as a base to see where this phenomenon of branding people stands at currently. It was justified to argue that these experts of branding should in some future stage be involved in the processes of branding also individuals on top of products, companies or services.

In order to get a more precise view of the actual branding process of a celebrity, a music business expert was added to the list of interviewees. The aim was to gain a sharper knowledge of the whole process of branding people not only from the brand experts but also the management agency closer to the celebrities.

In addition to the depth interviews a short expert mail survey was used to gain access to potential interviewees. 45 questionnaires were sent out to medium and large advertising agencies in London (U.K.). A total of 13 questionnaires were returned of which the 4 personal interviewees were identified. As the sample of these questionnaires stayed relatively low, the results cannot serve as a base for in-depth nor statistical analysis. Their role is kept as more explanatory and subjective to the source.

Questionnaires can contain both closed-ended and open-ended questions, which yield numeric and narrative data (Hair et al. 2003, 132-143). The multiple open ended questions added to the questionnaire used in this study feed material to a more or less qualitative analysis. Thereby the answers of these 13 experts provide us with valuable information about the topic at hand on top of the 5 personal interviews conducted.

7.3.1 Interviews

An interview is the interaction between an interviewer and interviewee in through face to face dialogue. The nature of the discussion can range from highly

unstructured to highly structured. In both cases care must be taken to avoid biases and inconsistencies in the data collected. (Hair et al. 2003, 132-143)

All depth interviews were conducted by using a semi-structured questioning approach. The semi-structured interviews were the source of primary data. With semi-structured interviews the themes of questioning are defined beforehand but exact form or order of questions is not defined (Saunders et al. 1997, 212). This means that the researcher can omit some questions in a particular interview, but at the same time making sure that all areas of interest are touched. The order of questions may also vary depending on the flow of conversation. On the other hand additional questions may be required or be of specific interest in order to explore fully the research questions and the objectives given.

Each interview took from 45 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes depending on the person interviewed. The respondents were encouraged to speak widely around the topic at hand and if new areas of interest were aroused they were taken into account and questioned even further. The intention was to use as much as possible the technique of probing that is the "why, why, why" technique (Hair et al. 2003, 132-143).

Most of the interview took place at the offices of the respondents. All on them (except one, at the request of the interviewee) were recorded. After the interviews the tapes were decoded as a transcript as soon as possible in order to assure accuracy.

7.3.2 Questionnaires

A short mail survey was sent to the management of 45 large or medium size advertising agencies in the London metropolitan area. The questionnaire was accompanied with a pre-paid envelope to make it easier for the recipient to respond. Also a follow-up reminder was sent by e-mail in order to increase the amount of responses.

The questionnaire was designed to arouse interest in the topic researched and to provide easier access to the top management of the advertising agencies. At the

same time it was seen as a possibility to gain preliminary data about the subject at hand and introduce the possible interviewees to the subject.

7.3.3 Empirical Data Analysis

Each interview was recorded on to a micro-cassette from which the interview was then transcribed to written text. Each interview contained valuable information on its own, but putting them together subject by subject gave a more thorough view and helped to understand each issue as a bigger concept. All specific subjects and questions were analysed comparing the different answers together and similarities as well as disparities were sought. The ideas of all respondent were many times very much in line with each other which made the analysis more clear cut.

The survey questions with open ended responses were also written down and analysed as a separate section of the research. The answers on questions which recurred also as subjects in the interviews were analysed and added to the total material about a certain topic. No sophisticated mathematical analysis on the survey data was performed as the limitation in the number of respondents and raw material. Rough estimates and medians of the data could be calculated but their value would be marginal and not in any way extrapolated.

Both the interview and the questionnaire data are incorporated and analysed as a whole always when possible. The aim of reorganising the data under specific themes is to find and assort the essentials of the research regarding the research questions and to analyse the data subject to the theory.

7.4 Quality of the Study

Good research reflects a sincere desire to determine what is overall true, based on all available information. It carefully evaluates different information sources. It recognises possible errors, limitations and ambiguous evidence. Good research is cautious about drawing conclusions, careful to spot uncertainties and avoids exaggerated claims. It demands several forms of evidence to prove a point. It does not presume that association proves causation. Good research may use anecdotal evidence (examples selected to demonstrate a concept), but does not

rely on them to draw conclusions, because well selected examples can prove almost anything. More statistically-valid analysing methods are usually required for reliable proof. (Litman 2007)

In this research all the above stated has been tried to be incorporated both in the methodology and the analysis of the study.

7.4.1 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are the two basic characters of empirical measurements. Reliability concerns the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields similar results on repeated trials. Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Reliability is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for validity. (Malhotra and Birks 1999, 767-770)

Qualitative research has often been criticised about the absence of standard means of assuring validity, such as quantitative measurement, explicit controls for various validity threats, and the formal testing of prior hypotheses. Therefore Maxwell (2002, 37-39) argues that understanding is a more fundamental concept for qualitative research than validity.

The aim of this study was to target as good reliability and validity as possible. But baring in mind the limits in duplicating the study because of the time and personalisation of this specific study, there are some acknowledged shortfalls.

A quantitative study is rarely possible to be duplicated identically, because it is always linked with the time, place and persons studied. Also the results will always only provide a subjective view of the research question at hand and reflect a view of the outside world people project at a certain moment in time. This means that the results of also this study are hard to replicate in a new study. Moreover the results of this study stand on their own to justify certain important views of the question at hand in this moment of time. That is why there has been a certain desire to precisely describe the methods used, the questions asked, the interview tactics, the time and place of the interviews and the analysing methods

used, as well as other factors affecting the execution of the empirical part of this research.

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the measures. Reliability of the study seeks to demonstrate that the operations of a study, such as the data collection, can be repeated, with similar or same results. The reliability is addressed in this study by using the same structured theme topics and questions for each interviewee. It is also increased by having only one interviewer to conduct the whole research as well as analyse the results and draw the conclusions. Of course personal biases exist to some extent since the experience of the researcher affects the analysis. Even though one would use the same protocol in a future study they might end up with different results.

Validity is about whether a measure actually measures what it is supposed to measure. Validity can be divided into several different types but most commonly it is divided to internal and external validity.

Internal validity of a study is important when the study is explanatory or causal that is to say it tries to establish causal relationships, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to another. Internal validity cannot be addressed when the study is descriptive or exploratory. This study aims to describe the curiosities of branded people and how familiar marketing professionals are with the phenomenon. For this study internal validity is gratuitous and therefore not addressed.

External validity refers to the link of a sample to a population. If the data is not representative then the results of the measurement are not valid outside the sample and cannot be generalised. This is to say that prescriptions derived from a qualitative study like this at hand should be called implications rather than conclusions. Some reservation should be brought forward about the external validity of these research results as the evaluation lies largely on intuition and also because the sample is not fully representative, nor has quantitative analysis been performed on the ideas raised.

8 Research results

In this chapter 8 the research results are shown and analysed. In many questions also the questionnaire answers are commonly integrated into the analysis. Moreover the theory part is summoned up especially in interesting points of comparison.

8.1 People Too Can Be Brands

The big theme accompanying this whole research has been the question of whether people really can be branded. All of the interviewees thought they could. Also all respondent of the survey answered yes to this question except for one. This one person thought that people could not be classified as brands as "people change and brands evolve". This same respondent also noted that "human behaviour cannot be predicted or planned" and therefore in his eyes it cannot be classified as a brand.

The other notions to this question on the contrary clearly saw the value of certain persons also as brands.

- A person can be a set of values and beliefs creating a set of associations just like a brand.
- Famous people are brands. They are reference points for ideas and values.
- An individual can offer a "brand promise" in the eyes of consumers.
- Some individuals represent certain values, qualities & attributes like non-individual brands.

8.2 Differences Between People as Brands and Other More Common Brands

Most interviewees saw that there were clear differences between people as brands comparing to other more commonly branded things as products, companies or services. According to one interviewee there are tremendous differences between these two. He sums it up with saying that traditional products are difficult but certain and the role of marketers is limited to "buying the right

media". For people you do not have to buy media time. He adds: "people are more difficult to manage because of change where as products are what they are."

Another respondent notes that the principles of branding are exactly the same and that there are not a lot of differences between people as brands and other brands. Still he concludes that people as brand are not as stable as the non-living brands: "Someone who was cool when they were fifteen ...it is pretty hard when they are seventy that they are to be appealing to the same market." People can also be more volatile. "Things that happen in the personal lives of people and how they react and present themselves cannot be always controlled in ways that perhaps products could."

For services the conclusion was that they are not really that different from people. As a lot of services are thought of in terms of personality anyway. There are a lot of similarities that arise from the intangibility of the two. "With services you have issues about consistency as you have with the way a person behaves". With services you would "work to understand their values and define them and think about how they touch their audience, their market and it is really no different at all to dealing with a person."

Traditional products like for example chocolate bars are straighter forward whereas "a person brand is a complex entity, which might be harder to handle, but still it does not differ as a commodity from a chocolate bar."

Another very remarkable point of interest was raised in the survey answers to the same question. Branded people cannot be taken home as normal products can. "You can (usually) take the real (or fake) brand home with you if it is a consumer product. - unless you are Victoria Beckham then you get the real brand at home." This a significant difference between the people brand and other more convenient brands and goes back to what was discussed earlier, about people brands needing a "vehicle" to get to the consumer. It is also part of the intangibility of the person brand.

Other differences that came across in the responses considering people to have emotions and personalities opposite to marketers constantly try to create these same attributes for products brands to make them more appealing. Also person brands age, which again means that they cannot naturally stay the same over time. If a product brand needs to stay the same over time it can choose to do that but often the brand marketers need to generate change over time so that the product evolves over time and stays interesting. Accordingly the natural aging and change of a human being can be considered both an advantage and a disadvantage for staying on top of the market. "Individuals naturally mature at a similar rate while consumer brands need deliberate change management. For example it is hard to now brand Sean Connery as young and cool but Pepsi can maintain this image."

8.3 Negative Publicity's Effect on a Person Brand

All respondents thought that in a way or another negative publicity can work in favour of the person. This is because as one respondent views it: "a brand is a story and you have to keep the story moving."

"In itself negative publicity is not good, but you might have the chance to turn to story over and get something good in the end, depending how you react to the situation, how you come out in the end." The same person also notes that: "In this people are more flexible" (in turning things round).

Also a concern was raised that negative publicity's effects depend on what is the public image of how the brand is positioned. "I suppose if you try to present yourself as a clean living individual and you get caught doing something...like taking drugs... or having sex publicly, or ...if you were trying to brand manage, say a conservative politician or a religious leader that would be a big problem. But if you want to have someone who is a bit wild or a bit cutting edge that could actually work in their favour."

It was also remarked that people brands evoke feelings in their audiences and these feelings might also sometimes be negative. Even the negative feelings

reflected affect the audience and they have some sort of a meaning. It is much more dangerous if a person brand does not evoke feelings at all.

In the review of literature we saw that the negative information about a person is a misfortune to be taken into account when branding individuals. The media that make celebrities can help them unmake them again. It is very difficult to restore a celebrity's public image once it has been tarnished. Negative information about celebrities is rather commonplace and seems to be increasing. (Money et al. 2006)

Scandal, whether true or false, can destroy or ruthlessly damage a celebrity career. But the damage does not need to be permanent. Many celebrities encountering decline, hit upon counterstrategies that allow them to trace career patterns as rhythmic as a sine wave. They rise steadily to prominence, encounter a misfortune, decline to invisibility, then rise again. (Rein et al. 1990, 305) This view is in line with the views of our interviewees. Negative information does not always have to be just a misfortune, by intelligent brand management these rare incidents can often be turned to the benefit of the brand.

8.4 Buffer Effect of Celebrity

Many of the interviewees saw that celebrity could offer a buffer effect to harmful negative publicity. "When people get to a certain stage it is hard to harm them." Regarding normal products this kind of buffer is nonexistent.

The buffer effect depends on the strength of the brand and how loyal their audience is. For example "Madonna who has been building a fan base for years and years. It is just going to be a blip if something happens." This means that many celebrities and branded people enjoy a wider freedom of doing what they want depending on their buffer created by continuous and coherent brand building during many years. In fact their brands have transformed to be more flexible a sort of safety net against future negative tabloid news. "People can forgive more easily if they have that loyalty already."

One of the interviewees sees it as the history and future of each brand. "Depending on how strong and vivid the history of the brand is the more it can take bruises and blemish."

8.5 How does Branding of People Work?

The next area of interest was to know if the interviewees had in fact themselves been involved in a branding process of an individual.

Over half of the interviewees had actually taken part in some sort of person branding exercise. There was a consensus on where to start the branding process of an individual. The starting point should always lie in the real person. "You start building on what they are first". The person will always have certain traits you might wish to amplify or hide.

After establishing more or less who the person is you are branding you start working on constructing the imaginary of what you would like the person to be. Seeing who the person is, is mostly based on intuition and no grounding research is done to determine this. "Next you work out what they could be or would need to be." The final step is rather logical. "You should work out what needs to be done in order to achieve the objectives set." More or less there should be an action plan for the branding process taking into account where you are today, where you want to be tomorrow and the actions needed to get there.

The respondents believed that it is "important that the so called authenticity of the person is kept, because that is something you cannot create by adding on or styling and if it is lost the public will discover ones false nature." The driving force of a branded person is in the continuous work of emphasising some features of the person in the communications and other publicity. "It is important to recognise what the brand is about and to convert it to a message. The genuineness of the person remains when you communicate about the right things and it is founded on something."

One of the respondents involved in these branding processes noted that "After the starting point identification and positioning the aim is to take the brand within

a 10% framework to the target position. And after attaining the target position, check if the brand really is where you planned. From there on you keep on communicating and refining your message.”

8.6 The Role of the External Party in the Branding Process

According to the discussions with the interviewees, the active designing, adapting and managing of the brand is readily given to the external body. The branded person him/herself is given a more passive role. They should be what they are – they are the brand. Together with the artist the communication is then modified to be more in line with what is the target image for the person.

Generally the external manager steers the media attention, released PR statements, amount of media coverage. Behind the scenes there might be a very wide range of different people helping to manage the image of one individual. These could be producers, directors, art directors, marketing managers, stylists, hair and make-up artists, personal trainers etc. There is a small factory of people working for a celebrity – making up the celebrity enterprise.

“An external body can help dramatically, but they need to be somewhat unobvious. They have to be invisible and in the back ground. If they come to light it can actually harm the brand’s integrity that is to say the image of the brand.” Many of the interviewees referred to Tony Blair and how “the spin doctor became a story”.

The role of the external party can also be portrayed as: “making sure the right pitches are getting to the right publications or that the right spin is put on events in their lives or their outspoken comments are reaching the media ...or whatever it takes.”

“Behind the scenes there is a whole team managing that brand. There has to be a strategy and the people you do not want to think of. It is got to be like makeup making you look like you are not wearing makeup; it is got to be invisible. So if these people behind come to the public it might be a bad thing for the image. I mean politics; it might be a drastic example... Tony Blair, the whole Alastair

Campbell - Tony Blair relationship and this word spin. That is, the word spin is basically a criticism of branding.”

A lot of uncertainties are seen in the whole process of actively branding someone. The person him/herself has a tremendous say on how he/she will be portrayed, even if the external body would like to do something “people do not always do what you want” contrary to the “chocolate bar that will obey”. The role of media was also raised. The power that the media has on portraying a person in a certain light is outstanding. A stroke of a pen can elevate one to a pedestal or bring a person stumbling down overnight. “...there is an element of whatever the media wants to portray at the end is their choice.” However you would like to control the media and public image illustrated through the media “...there is going to be stories and images that are not part of the strategy.”

For example Rindova et al. (2006) remind us that journalists often seek information that highlights change and present that information in dramatic narratives. These dramatic narratives then direct stakeholder interest in and attraction toward the celebrity they and socially amend their brand image. As the journalists are writing their stories about the celebrities they sometimes distort reality or try to find sensitive information about the celebrity's private life. When these kinds of stories cover the fanzine rags it will for sure shape the image of a person brand. These stories cannot be planned nor controlled and that is what makes it so challenging.

In addition many of the respondents pointed out that it might be wise for a person brand to have a crisis management plan put up. This plan would help to manage possible crisis or bad publicity if or when it emerges. A crisis management plan could make the person to be more ready to deal with negative publicity and help to avoid harm caused by it. “If this person is a proposition that is commercial, then you have to have that in place.” But at the same time it is important to notice that “you do not want people to find out you have got a crisis planned”.

8.7 Using Marketing Research as a Tool in the Branding Process

Many of the interviewees think that using marketing research may serve as an advantage also in people branding but this question also raised some doubts in part of the respondents. Marketing research should “only be used to validate what we already know. It is more or less still based on intuition, which in fact is the role of a marketing professional.” Another comment regarding this same topic was that the external body involved in the branding process should have a strong vision, you should be able to see and read the codes of popular culture and trends, to be able make your decisions. This is very important as “the essence of person branding is to create something new – the surprise element.”

One of the interviewees thinks marketing research is not used or even needed as the market creates itself. “I guess with people, what usually happens is that they have their own intrinsic values and the market emerges and makes itself known. The reason the marketing and the branding would be needed, would be to make the most of the market that has already presented itself.”

In general the opinion was that marketing research in the process of branding an individual might be useful but not at all necessary. Branding a person through rigid market analysis would probably produce a predictable outcome and that is something which would probably turn people off, especially if it would stink at all of the spin doctor.

8.8 Hiding or Lying About Some Elements of Personality For Better Sales

It is obvious that one might start to question how much of the person brand is based on the truth. If there are some negative aspects of the person would it be clever to try to hide them? The experts see it as a two way street. Almost all commented that lying and hiding parts of the truth is always an option, but as in any branding the truth is a good basis for communication. Over promising is widely known in marketing as an easy solution, that will probably in some stage backfire. Yes, persons can lie about themselves to hide some attributes in order

to sell better, "but personally I believe reality is better" commented one of the interviewees. He adds that the brand image does not have to always be based on the truth, but he believes "it needs to have truth in the hearth of it". And adds: "it is much trickier if it is not and also riskier."

Another respondent commented on the same topic like this: "I suppose it is not so much lying as choosing to amplify some elements. I think any brand has to have integrity that runs through it, as there is no point in advertising an orange juice, just to say it is freshly squished and actually it is just sugar. It has to deliver!"

One of the respondents thought that false reality was not actually such a bad thing after all. He comments: "yeah totally (you can lie about or hide some traits)...I mean the same way that you can lie about a product, you can lie about an individual. Perception is reality. Whatever people will believe that is whatever it is seen to be." To the question about: what if something goes wrong and you get caught in the act? He replies: "Well then you would have to patch over it quickly, or change your image, or use it to your advantage, like Bill Clinton did. I think after he was caught lying to his wife and the general population, he came out and apologised, and soon after his ratings amongst for example female population went higher than before. So, yeah you can turn it around."

Another way of looking at it is: "Of course people can lie about themselves or hide some attributes. I depend on what line of communication do you choose." It might be worth leaving out some things in your communication and not to emphasise them if it is not what the public expects. "Most importantly the person brand has to be natural and in terms with the role played. You cannot force a certain role on a person if they do not like it."

It is interesting to take a look back to the two central elements of branding theory: brand image and brand identity. These basic elements of a brand represent the idea of what a person truly is (identity) and what is wanted to be communicated as the brand (image). Many times the main concern is to create a positive brand image regardless of what the person really represents. Many authors have underlined the importance of brand identity. In order to build and maintain a

strong brand it is imperative that brand image and identity are in harmony. (Nandan 2005 and Aaker 1996, 87-88)

It is very easy for brand identity and brand image to be out of sync. When this happens, consumers will move on. They live in a world of multiple options – there are countless other competitive brands waiting to allure the consumers with their own intriguing messages. Strengthening the identity – image linkage is the only way to create value for the consumer and enhance brand loyalty. (ibid)

Thomson (2006) looks at the same issue from another point of view but remarks that human brands which are perceived as authentic are more readily embraced by the consumers. Away from their trade, human brands should not be viewed as trying to convey an image, or they risk being viewed as pretenders.

The views presented above all conclude by emphasising the importance of keeping the brand communication about a person based on the truth. It might be though possible to highlight and emphasise some aspects of the brand differently, but the core of the brand, its brand identity, should always be kept clear in mind.

8.9 Anyone Can Be Branded

When asking about who the respondents thought could be branded the answer commonly was that anyone can be branded. “To some degree anyone can be branded.” One respondent remarks “I think everybody has a brand and manages their own brand because it is simply on a very basic level about your image and your reputation and your personality.”

On the other hand it is beneficial to have some sort of celebrity status to be branded. As one respondent remarks that “what celebrity is in the language of marketing is awareness. It is not positive or negative, it is just about awareness.” The point of this comment clearly demonstrates that to be branded there needs to be an audience to perceive you. Without an audience there is no-one to communicate to. The bigger the audience is the better the money generating possibilities. “Ideally you are involved in something that the press is already

associated and interested in. So, the obvious examples are politics, sport stars and so forth.”

The answer to this question depends largely on the definition of the word branding. In this study it was not strictly defined and the interviewees could express their opinion on this issue freely. “One way or another you can communicate about anyone, if branding is considered to strengthening of certain messages and signals.”

8.10 Types of People Interested in Being Branded

Compared to the previous question and its vague openness in regard to a specific definition this question provoked interesting ideas about who would benefit the most of this kind of branding exercise. People who ought to think about this kind of person branding are the people who have the most to gain. “People in the public eye” commented one respondent. This means that yes, it is in the end the people of celebrity status that are probably most interested in this kind of people branding, because their livelihood depends so much on the fact. “People who have celebrity have to manage it and realise that they have this, it is about limiting damage.”

The interest in being branded was also linked to some sort of benefit. So primarily people interested in branding would have a “financial or some sort of status gain”.

“Of course people who are involved in celebrity and see a chance to sell something. They can sell their own product or a product attached to their brand name. So when there is this kind of selling aspect then you can also add this kind of professional aspect of branding. These persons could be some sort of celebrities like actors, sports athletes, musicians for example, or politicians to help their careers, or business leaders who have to have public communications.”

8.11 Prevalence of Managing People Brands

The respondents felt that the branding of people actively was still in its infancy and the industry in managing these people brands had not yet been fully

developed. In the future even more need was seen for this kind of expertise. "Definitely it will become much more common. Actually it is also defining a name to a phenomenon that has existed for a long time. Now it is made concrete, given a name and made it more professional."

People manage their brands "...increasingly. I mean that is the trend. Just thinking in terms of what happened in politics over the last 20 years. Politicians are now marketed much more and they understand how they can communicate with their audience using different channels. They are also concerned about their image and their presentation skills."

Not all of the respondents fully subscribed to the view that it is very common to actively manage people brands. Most of the respondents thought it depended a lot on what was their "value" as brands. Even though many did not consciously categorise the phenomenon in a so theoretical way. The answers strongly reflected the measure of how famous these people were. And of course the fame equals somewhat to the value of the brand to the person, explicitly brand equity.

One apt remark about actively branding people was that: "it depends, depends on the level. I think par example in sport at the very top level. Politics – yes, absolutely. In the celebrity circles one hundred percent of the time. All celebrities really are brands. Mostly they are not offering a particular talent that we are interested in, that is an image we are interested in."

As we saw in the literature review the image of a person brand offer people (consumers) ways of expressing themselves. Brands are a way for consumers to satisfy needs and they also act as bundles of meaning with which to fashion who they are and the world they live in. Celebrities are highly individualised and complex bundles of cultural meaning. In today's societies, modern selves are deliberately left blank so that the individual can exercise the right of choice. The symbolic meanings contained in celebrities and the goods they endorse leave the consumer with the freedom to choose. (McCracken 1989)

A person brand helps to fulfil various behavioural goals, which, in the case of celebrity, include meeting an audience's needs for gossip, fantasy, identification, status, affiliation, and attachment (Rindova et al. 2006).

Even though branded individuals serve a apt need in the consumer behaviour the interest in branding seems to also depend on the profession of the subjects. "Politicians – absolutely. Even the way that a politician would choose the tie colour, or the open neck or closed neck shirt. Or you know if they are going to go out and visit someone on a farm, they would wear a farmer's hat or whatever. That is straight out marketing to the audience."

One of the respondent thought that it actually is not very common that people actively manage their brands "no, not at the moment". One could conclude the thoughts of the interviewees by saying that branding of people is still developing and it is not yet very common, except in certain circles where one's brand has intrinsic value.

8.12 The Benefits of Being Branded

There are different beliefs of the benefits of being branded. All respondents found something positive in this topic. On a general level branding was seen to offer "a lot longer careers, getting a wider audience that is being known to a larger group of people as well as deeper rooted fame."

In general the field of possible benefits is very broad "it could be about awareness, bringing whatever it is you do, whatever your thing is, bringing that to a larger number of people. It could be about changing your image. So it could be about like when Kylie wanted to move away from Stock, Aitken & Waterman saying "I want to be more edgy", so it might be repositioning. It might be about not just increasing awareness but changing the market that you are selling to, so maybe a growing up market. I mean it could be all sort of things."

Through branding one might establish a profession and in the end "it can turn out to be a significant source of income." Another interviewee though reminded that "it is not just for money". In his/her opinion "it depends what you are trying to do

with your brand. If you are politician you get votes, or if you are a sports man you get sponsorship. Rather branding can protect you. It may not gain you anything extra from where you are at the moment, but might protect you from down sides.”

8.13 Too Much Publicity Can Turn Against the Person Brand

All respondents agree that there is a certain limit of exposure that can be managed, but sometimes you can over do it. “People, the public, do get bored of people and it is like “I have seen you in my face too much”, and then they just, start to pick away. There is always going to be ups and downs and the media is going to love you and then it can just change.”

When asking specifically about 50-Cent as an example one interviewee encapsulates: “He is everywhere ...it depends again on what you are trying to do... I think someone like 50-Cent should go to maximum exposure now while he can, because, frankly, he probably will not be around for that much longer. You know people can get bored of single brands, when you see the same guy like 50-Cent on all billboard etc. - you get bored. You want someone fresh. So, depends on what you think the life expectancy is of an individual in the media.”

“Well, take the Queen for example she is stage managed quite well and she acts the part personally quite well, so it is not that hard to manage her, where as her son is much more difficult to manage and yet you do not really see that much of her. I know she has a high position any way, but he (Prince Charles) inherited the same advantages and yet trough his actions and frankly poor publicity management, he has not enjoyed the same sort of ratings I guess in the public eye.”

“Of course it can become part of everyday life. Sometimes the amount of public exposure if consciously limited. Being away from the public eye for a while ads freshness. You might notice that some celebrities come out in publicity just as their new movie is published. That is when they start appearing in paparazzi photos. That is what is called administered publicity.”

8.14 Product Line Extensions

One interesting topic discussed with the interviewees, was about product line extensions – producing, designing and creating products bearing the same brand name for distribution. This might include selling things that are not always in lined with the person's actual core talent for example a sportsman's name on a perfume or a singers name on a line clothing.

Most of the respondents recognised this as an existing and interesting phenomenon. "Yeah, I think it is growing. Like Jamie Oliver having his own cookware. I mean that links are really not that followed a lot of the time. For example this one individual celebrity that had like a range of food, and yes he has a connection with food, but he is not a chef, you know there is not even the possibility that he invented the recipes for this food. You know he is just a name endorsing it. Or for example David Beckham having his own after shave or something. Or a lot of celebrities having these perfumes."

"Yeah, yeah like Beckham is selling after shave and if he was selling football boots it would make sense, but... Well, it is a proof really that the brand sells and that people associate an individual brand with more than, I guess, fact should play out. David Beckham is a great example, he is clearly a great footballer so for him to sell anything else but football is some sort of brand management, and the good things that he has associated with himself clearly can be branded on to other things. So it is a fantastic endorsement. I do not know how well the product is selling, but the fact that people even try just goes to show that people believe that there is a strong brand there. I suppose it echoes non people brands, it echoes other things we have got, you know like you get BMW branded jackets and caps that have nothing to do with the cars."

This comment demonstrates that when you have a strong brand whether it is a product or a person or whatever it is easier to move it down to other products, even if they are not similar to the mother brand. But when you think of the person brand you realise that there is no tangible product as such. There is only the image of the person carrying a name and for some reason the general public that want to be established with this brand. The loyal fans show their support by wanting to get a piece of their hero. Also in today's societies people have learned

to express themselves through multidimensional clues of different logos and mixtures of them. It is logical that an industry of side products carrying the person brands name have sprung up. It is a natural way of turning the immaterial to something more tangible, so that the public can wear their brand.

Also the literature in this field recognises the need for consumers to build their self from with the symbols of modern societies – the brands. In developed societies, modern Western selves are deliberately left blank so that the individual may exercise the right of choice. The freedom to choose is now also an obligation to decide and this makes us especially eager consumers of the symbolic meanings contained in celebrities and the goods they endorse. (McCracken 1989) A person brand helps to fulfil various behavioural goals, which, in the case of celebrity, include meeting an audience's needs for gossip, fantasy, identification, status, affiliation, and attachment (Rindova et al. 2006).

8.15 Celebrity Endorsement Contracts and Reverse Image Transfer

The consensus on the issue of reverse image transfer was that it may take place and therefore people brands should choose their endorsement parties carefully. Also the strength of the celebrity brand versus the strength of the endorsed brand might affect the risk of altering the brand image.

“Usually when endorsement is used the product in itself is weak and that is why a person is used to enhance or create a stronger or better brand image, that is give the product an image. Usually the person is then as a brand stronger.” Taking a different view another interviewee adds: “of course it is always a risk, but if you look for example the co-operation of Madonna and Hennes&Mauritz you can see that they both have very strong brands already, and probably so solid too that no negative associations are probable, but it is always a risk.”

“Yes, the fit between the person and the product, it is going to be crucial for both ends. People, celebrities have to be very selective so they do not get associated with the wrong products, because it can really cheapen their image, and destroy their credibility.” On top the brand endorsement will also affect the interest if other

possible business parties, they will always judge the person through the previous engagements “Yeah, and it can affect other commercial relationships because of conflict of interests. So if Jamie Oliver does too much for Sainsbury’s, if he becomes their complete voice, then he cannot continue having TV programs on the BBC because they are just going to Sainsbury’s adverts. The whole program is going to be a Sainsbury’s advert. Yeah, it will affect those other relationships. ...They have to make the right selections.”

But still one of the respondents was not sure that the endorsement of a product could really alter the image of the person. The assumption was that this link between the product and the person was not that strong. Still he/she believes celebrities should be careful of what brands they choose to endorse. “Yeah, they should be careful, but I do not think it is a life or death situation for the brand.”

Even though the theory in the field of reverse image transfer is still scarce there are some interesting insights in the area. For example Seno & Lukas (2007) remark that as much as celebrities can transfer meaning to a brand the reverse is also possible. To the extent that the endorsed product’s brand image has certain attributes, for example elegance or professional success, it is plausible that these attributes can be transferred to the endorsing celebrity. The result is likely to be an amplification of the celebrity’s image. (Seno & Lukas 2007)

As a result the celebrity should select the products endorsed carefully and also remember to evaluate the product brands possible effects on the persons own brand. These effects could be either positive or negative. The important aspect to think through is, whether the two brands are in line with each other and what the consequences of co-branding on long-term are.

9 Conclusions

This study proposes that branding individuals is a growing phenomenon. Branded people have probably existed long before the concept of brands first existed. From the marketing point of view many celebrities can easily be seen as brands just as many other products and services. In today's world we can see that hardly anything goes without branding. As soon as we have a product with substantial monetary value attached to its public image from marketing point of view see it as a brand.

People can be regarded as brands just as other products and services. People brands do have their own peculiarities to be taken into account in the process of branding. As people brands are more volatile than other brands and at the same time hold more media interest they are more easily subjected to negative publicity. Therefore the assumption of the interviews was that a crisis plan is justified as long as it does not become public.

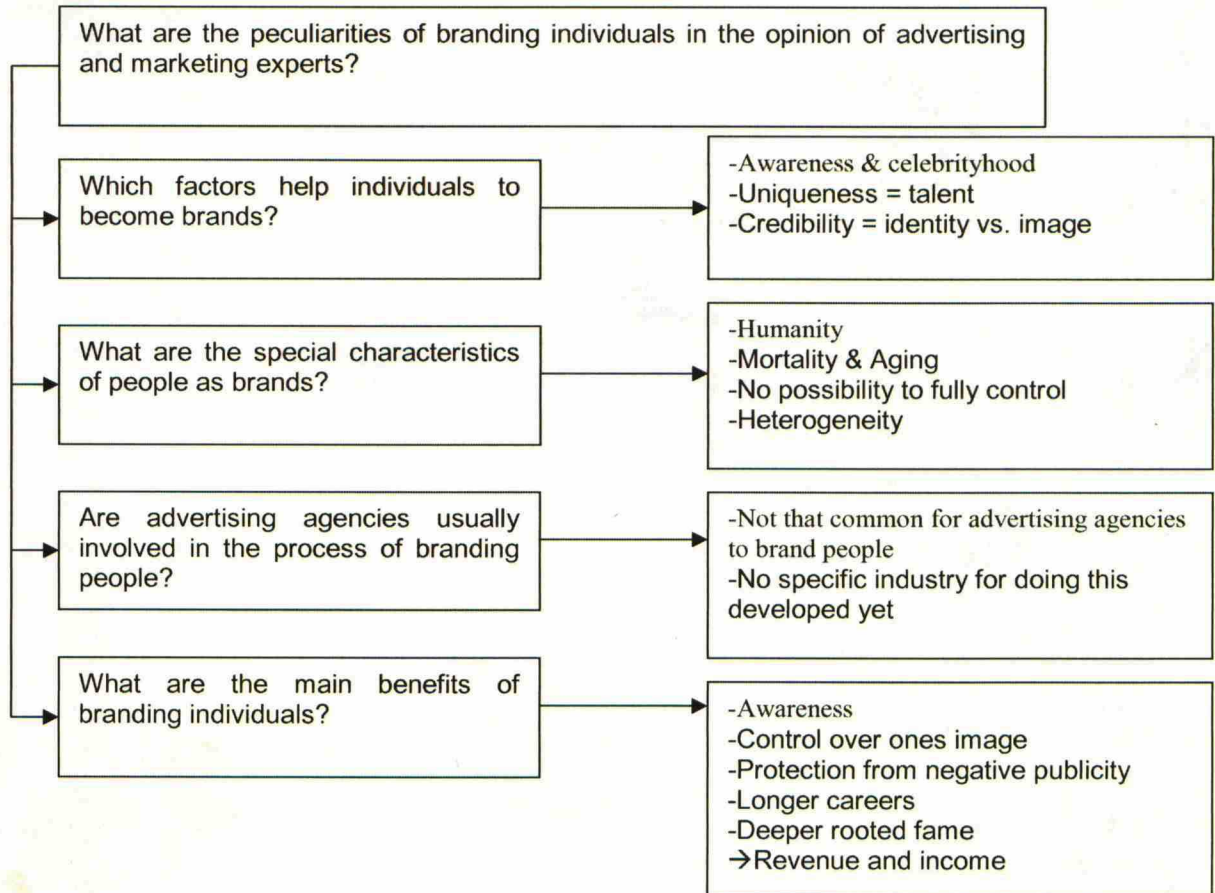
Another finding was that the brand of the individual should always be based on the truth. Some aspects and features of the brand can always be emphasised and other suppressed, but the core of the brand has to be based on the true brand identity of the individual. Generally this vast and growing interest in branding an individual rises from the huge amounts of monetary value possessed in the brand names of these celebrities. The assumption is that this industry of branding the individual has only just awakened.

9.1 Meeting the Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to understand the core of branding living persons and to identify main differences between people brands and other more commonly known brands. The main interest is to get a view about how advertising and marketing professionals view this area of branding and how much are they actually involved in the process. These goals were tackled from the viewpoint of the marketer that is the owner of the brand – the individual. There was a clear emphasis on both the individual branded and the whole marketing machinery behind the scenes. To show that research objectives were achieved,

the research question diagram, including the main research problem and subordinate questions with main findings, is presented in the following.

Figure 4: Research question diagram and main findings



To answer the principal research question, the phenomenon of branding the individual was studied empirically through the opinions and views of the marketing professionals involved with brands and branding

9.2 Theoretical Contribution

Over all this study has contributed to the academically somewhat under researched area of seeing people as brand in their own right. This study has aimed to widen the perspective of the theory in the field and to take into consideration also other academic areas of interest on top of marketing. This work has been at the same time a road-trip into the world of marketing, sociology,

law, psychology, sport, entertainment industry and celebrityhood. All these different areas of academics may study the individual brand from their own specific viewpoint but a lively discussion between all these academics would be most valuable and offer deeper insight.

9.3 Managerial Implications

People can be seen as brands just as any other product or service. The industry working with building brands of individuals has not yet fully emerged, but marketing professionals clearly see the need that this field is to be established in the near future. Advertising agencies are maybe not the best place to brand people as they do not feel they have the needed expertise. At the time of this study there was no clear industry in place for branding individuals. But the role of branded individuals and the need for this kind of new sector has already been recognised.

Based on this study people brands are a growing phenomenon and also a growing interest for many people in different industries. As we have discussed in this study there are clear benefits for an individual to be branded once a certain level of fame has been attained. Celebrities find many benefits in actively managing their brands but also with having professional brand managers behind the scenes to help them in this endeavour.

Branding an individual does not differ from a normal product as such in the basics of branding, but there are some differences that might make it a bit more challenging to be working with a living and thinking human being. People cannot be moulded or shaped in a way R&D can shape normal products. People do not also always do or say what you would like them to. Also the constant change of an individual and also the expectation of the market make it challenging to keep up with the market. But as the respondents remarked all these special curiosities are all part of the fun.

9.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The whole field of human branding needs more focus and attention among the researchers in the field of marketing. Even though the branded celebrities are in the crossroads of many interesting fields of academic research the understanding of brands and branding should be combined to this field of individuals especially with celebrity. This understanding of brands that the marketers have may help to see these public individuals as more than just entertainers, sports women/men, politicians or celebrities. Rather than psychological beings these individuals also possess product like features that over live the human mortality of the initial brands. Some brand names of these celebrities will live beyond the human beings carrying the names. These celebrity products offer economic value and are brand in their own right.

This research has served as an introduction to branding people from the viewpoint of marketing. Further research is still needed to fully grasp this multidimensional and interesting world of celebrities as branded individuals. As a qualitative study the interviews presented in this paper function as an opening for a larger discussion in this area. In the future also quantitative research should be conducted in order to quantify some of the central issues of human branding.

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11 Appendix

Appendix 1 Questionnaire



HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (HSE)
Department of Marketing and Management
Masters Thesis Research, Spring 2006

Branding Survey for Marketing Professionals

SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

A product may be a physical good, service, retail store, organisation, place or a person etc. Every year billions of pounds are spent on celebrity endorsement contracts. This illustrates the value within the names and images of many celebrities. Famous people that live constantly under the public eye can also be seen as brands – products of the entertainment industry. Celebrities of different industries are very aware of their image creation. They are actively building a recognisable look, name and style – a brand. Actors (e.g. Brad Pitt), sports athletes (e.g. David Beckham), pop stars (e.g. Madonna), business men/women (e.g. Bill Gates) and politicians (e.g. Tony Blair) all have different images in the consumer's eyes. Some researchers suggest that these images can be seen as brands that have to be actively managed and are economically valuable for the subjects themselves and for others.

QUESTIONS

1. There has been some controversy about whether an individual can be seen as a brand. Do you believe that certain people could be classified as brands?

Yes
No
Not sure

Why? _____

2. Do you think a person's brand can be actively managed?

Yes
No
Not sure

Why? _____

3. Do you think normal rules of branding apply also to people?

Yes
No
Not sure

Why? _____

4. Which might be the key differences between branding an individual versus branding other consumer products?



5. Which in your opinion are the main marketing communications tools that are/should be used in branding people i.e. creating a favourable image in the mind of a customer?
(You may tick as many as you feel appropriate)

Advertising (paid) e.g.		Internet/interactive marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sales promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal selling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Packaging	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public relations (non paid) e.g.		Other	
Publicity/news	<input type="checkbox"/>	Computer games	<input type="checkbox"/>
Events/sponsorship	<input type="checkbox"/>	Music videos/movies/TV shows	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charity/fund-raising	<input type="checkbox"/>	Product placement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____			

6. What makes a person become a brand?
→ Identify importance (5 point Likert-scale)

	Not at all important	Not so important	Neutral	Important	Very important
Commercial/market value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amount of fame	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distinctive features	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leader/mentor/idol qualities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Likeability/dislikeability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Image responds to reality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beauty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fitness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Have you or your company been involved in branding people?

Yes
No
Not sure

8. Do you have an idea about who are the main people/organisations involved in branding people?

Marketing agencies
Public Relations agencies
Private consultants
I don't know

Other (please specify) _____



HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (HSE)
 Department of Marketing and Management
 Masters Thesis Research, Spring 2006

Branding Survey for Marketing Professionals

9. Do you have specific information of any people that you know have been consciously branded? Please specify who.

10. Other valuable comments?

DEMOGRAPHICS

11. Your gender?

Female Male

12. Your age?

Under 25 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 or over

13. Your profession? _____

14. Number of people working for your company?

In the UK

Under 10 10-24 25-49 50-99 100-199 200-349 350 or over

Globally

Under 10 10-24 25-49 50-99 100-199 200-349
 350-599 600-1000 1000-1999 2000 or over

Appendix 2 Interview questions

Date: _____

Interviewee:

- **Name** _____
- **Job title** _____
- **Company** _____
- **Job profile** _____

Do you believe a person can be branded?

Themes:

A) Branding product vs. branding people

1. What are the key differences between people as brands and other more commonly branded products?
2. What issues might make branding people more difficult?
3. Negative publicity might sometimes work in a products favour, what about the affect on a persons image e.g. Kate Moss
 - Is there a buffer effect on the celebrity status of the person i.e. how famous and liked they are beforehand?

B) Insight to how branding of people would work

1. Have you ever been involved in branding a person?
 - who?

If yes:

2. How do you get contacted?
3. What happens next?

General:

4. How much is it to the person itself to maintain his/her brand and how much can an external body/manager help in this process?
 - What is the marketing/PR agency's role in this process?
5. Should/is marketing research used also in branding people?
6. Can persons lie about themselves, or hide some attributes, so that they would sell better?
 - Does the brand image always have to be based on the truth?

C) Frequency – Who would benefit?

1. Who do you think can be branded?
2. Can everybody be branded or do you need a certain celebrity status to be branded?
3. What kind of people might be interested in being branded?
4. Do you think it's common that people actively manage their brands?
5. What kind of benefit could they get from this versus the money spent?
6. How much can a celebrity gain from branding them selves?
7. Better marketing (endorsement contracts), better movie contracts, revenue from side products?
8. Can too much of publicity/exposure turn against you e.g. 50 Cent?

D) Extras

1. Product line extensions
 - Producing, designing and creating products for distribution
2. Celebrity endorsement contracts
 - Reverse image transfer
 - Brand image of the celebrity