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Internal Brand Pilgrimage

A conceptualization of how brands with a heritage use corporate museums internally

by

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Abstract

Title: Internal Brand Pilgrimage – A conceptualization of how brands with a heritage use corporate museums internally

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Key words: internal brand pilgrimage, corporate museums, internal branding, corporate heritage brands, corporate storytelling

Purpose: The purpose is to explore the phenomenon of utilizing corporate museums in internal branding, in order to understand what they are, how they are used and why in the context of strategic brand management in general and brands with a heritage in particular.

Methodology: A qualitative multiple case study with a constructionist and inductive approach has been executed. The case companies represent four Swedish brands with a heritage; Absolut Vodka, Hästens, IKEA and Volvo Cars.

Theoretical Perspective: In order to develop theory and establish a new conceptual framework, the fields of corporate museums, internal branding and corporate heritage brands function as the three theoretical realms.

Empirical Data: The empirical data consists of six observations of corporate museums, eight semi-structured interviews with managers and six unstructured discussions with tour guides and employees during the observations, as well as secondary data in terms of brochures, catalogues and corporate materials.

Conclusions: Internal Brand Pilgrimage is an organized journey for corporate stakeholders, organized in the sense that there are internal branding motives for going to a corporate museum and that the content of brand heritage is communicated through live storytelling. The framework consists of five elements, representing Place, Journey, Pilgrims, Content and Motives.

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Johan Lehmann

Axel Åkerlund

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1 Introduction

This very first chapter presents the three research fields that the thesis is based upon, namely corporate museums, internal branding and brand heritage. Key studies that are particularly relevant for the purpose of this research are briefly presented. In the following section the positioning of the research is presented, which leads to the study's defined purpose. Building upon this, the research questions as well as the aim and objectives of this study are presented, followed by limitations and an argumentation of the potential value of this research in terms of both theoretical contributions and managerial implications. The chapter is concluded with a final section that provides a structural outline that the thesis will follow.

1.1 Background and Problematization

Corporate museums can be found all over the world today and international companies following this trend include BMW, Coca-Cola and Motorola (Nissley & Casey, 2002; Piatkowska, 2013), just to name a few. According to Danilov, (1992, cited in Nissley & Casey, 2002, p.35), the definition of a corporate museum is a "corporate facility with tangible objects and/or exhibits, displayed in a museum-like setting, that communicates the history, operations, and/or interests of a company to employees, guests, customers, and/or the public". The importance of these museums can be illustrated by looking in the rear view. It was usually the company's public relations staff that managed the corporate museums, but since the museums today have more to do with brand management, they are often operated by marketing executives (McKay, 2007). One of the reasons for the popularity of corporate museums is that they, although related with a huge investment, are inexpensive in the long run. Instead of sponsoring events, the same amount of money can be used for a dedicated spot that only focuses specifically on the company (Quantanilla, 1998). But it is not just about revenue and the bottom line. Instead, employee engagement and increased customer loyalty are more common goals among corporate museums (Seligson, 2010). Yet, despite their popularity, corporate museums as a research field have barely been explored (Bonti, 2014; Lehman & Byrom, 2007; Nissley and Casey, 2002).

Krister Asplund, recent long-term VP Operations at Swedish spirit manufacturer The Absolut Company, mentions in an article that one challenge today is the limitations in telling the history of the brand. Current VP Operations Anna Schreil adds that there is a great interest for the products origin and its history and that there is a general trend in the hospitality industry, where many want to search for the source of what they consume. Moreover, Schreil states that they are proud of their origin and it is important for Absolut to give everybody that is interested in the brand the ability to experience it in an engaging manner, in line with the core values that the brand represents (Kristianstads kommun, 2016). In central Åhus, Sweden, where all Absolut bottles are produced, the company will therefore open up a new visitor center right next to their liquor factory (Sandberg, 2016). The spirit company already welcomes around 6000 visitors every year in their Experience Centre, approximately 1000 of which are stakeholders such as employees, bartenders, and resellers (Kristianstads kommun, 2016). Absolut are now planning to increase that number considerably by opening the new center that will be ready during summer 2017, aiming for 15 000 visitors per year. According to Anna Schreil, the new real estate will create completely new opportunities for receiving visitors, as well as showing their business and history (Sandberg, 2016). What Absolut is doing then, is that they are utilizing corporate museums (Nissley & Casey, 2002) in the context of brand management.

When it comes to brand management today, many would probably agree that a brand is more than just a logo and an image. There is a growing field within brand management claiming that a brand, just like a person, needs a consistent and credible identity in order to resonate with consumers (Aaker, 1996; de Chernatony, 1999; Kapferer, 2012). This approach, called identity-based brand management, argues for an inside-out strategy through which the essence and character of the brand are emphasized over the externally perceived image, as illustrated by Kapferer (2012, p.151); "in terms of brand management, identity precedes image". For such a strategy to be successful it is argued, logically, that the brand identity components need to be consistent (Kapferer, 2012). Such consistency will ensure that the gaps between the desired and actual brand identity and the outside perception of the brand remain as small as possible (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). The following study is based upon this particular brand management approach.

Congruent with the inside-out approach, is the acknowledgement that not only does the company need a clear brand identity, it also needs to ensure a consistent customer brand experience across all customer-brand touchpoints (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). As many of these touchpoints will naturally be controlled or influenced by the company's employees - not only the marketing department but indeed any employee who directly or indirectly contribute to the brands product, service or brand communication - it is vital that all of them understand the brand identity concept and are committed to live the brand internally and externally (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). However, a Gallup Poll from 2012 shows that out of 3000 randomly selected workers, only 37 percent of non-executive employees and 60 percent of the executives had an understanding of what their brand actually stands for (Fleming & Witters, 2012). Therefore, in addition to the external brand management, an institutionalized internal brand management is needed if employees are not to undermine the advertising-driven expectations of a brand (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). The problem is that there are few studies that investigate how such internal branding can be done, and what the aims are, from the management perspective of those who actually do it, leaving an important research gap (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014; Saleem & Iglesias, 2016).

Furthermore, internal branding is most often studied in the context of service firms, with the logic being that these firms have more customer-brand touchpoints controlled by employees, making internal branding more urgent (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014; Sirianni, Bitner, Brown & Mandel, 2013). However, in line with researchers Burmann and Zeplin (2005) and Ind (2003), this study has as its starting-point that internal branding might be just as important in other contexts. As such, the context in which this research is placed is that of brands with a heritage, which are those brands that not only have a history but also has made the past relevant for contemporary purposes (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). The reason for the chosen context is that such companies, in our opinion, have an interesting balancing problem in terms of internally making their employees understand the heritage aspect of the brand identity while still remaining innovative and up-to-date. For example, American entertainment giant Disney has experienced the problem of creating an internal brand that respects its heritage while still resonating with a global range of employees, as illustrated in an interview with VP of Employee Communication Heater Rim: "it is critical to define an internal brand that is authentic, and to 'tell a story' but at the same time remaining 'relevant'" (Babcock, 2008).

Based on the apparent possibility of using corporate museums for brand communication, the mentioned gap within internal branding research and the challenge of communicating heritage internally, our research will investigate the intersection of these three fields. In other words, we are interested in how and why corporate museums are used, from a managerial perspective, for internal branding purposes within the context of brands with a heritage.

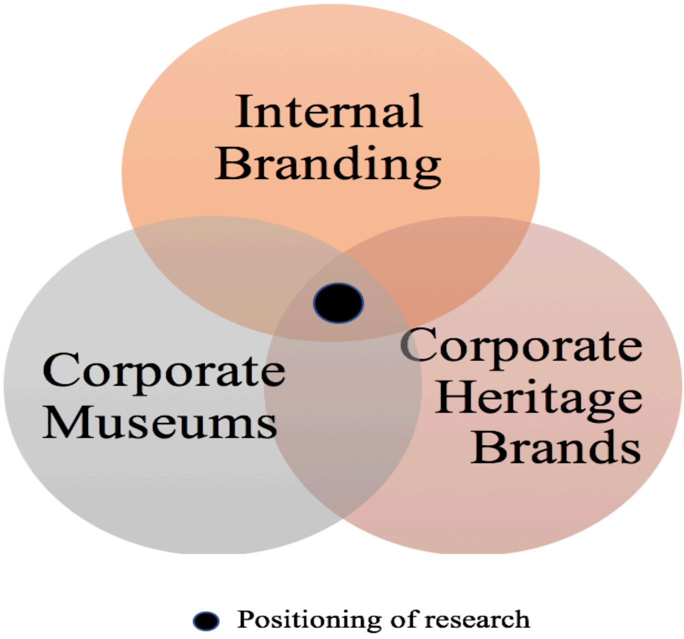

Figure 1. Positioning of research

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose is to explore the phenomenon of utilizing corporate museums in internal branding, in order to understand what they are, how they are used and why in the context of strategic brand management in general and brands with a heritage in particular. The following three research questions are thus formulated:

RQ 1: What is the internal role of corporate museums?
RQ 2: How are corporate museums used to communicate brand heritage internally?
RQ 3: Why are managers using corporate museums for internal branding purposes?

The aim is to develop novel theory at the intersection of the three research fields of corporate museums, internal branding, and brand heritage. The main objective is to propose a framework through which the phenomenon of using corporate museums when internally communicating brand heritage can be understood. Although heritage will be the main focus, the communication of other aspects of brand identity is also of interest.

1.3 Research Limitations and Contributions

As we are exploring the internal role of corporate museums, the study is delimited to exclude the obvious external use of the museums, such as attracting tourists and consumers. In other words, it should be stressed that this research is not related to Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), in which the consumer is in focus. A corporate museum can very well function externally and attract consumers, but again this is not the focus of the research. Instead, the study is positioned towards internal usage and is addressed toward managers, hence taking a corporate, managerial and strategic perspective.

To address the purpose and the research questions, the research fields of corporate museums, internal branding and brand heritage need to be further detailed. As such, we aim to contribute theoretically and practically to these three research fields. For the managerial implications, the study mainly aims to contribute with inspiration to Internal Brand Managers or Human Resource (HR) Specialists in their quest of making employees understand the brand better and provide insight into how corporate museums can be used to communicate the brand identity internally. In terms of intended theoretical contributions, we aim to develop a framework that merges the three above mentioned research fields, which to our knowledge would be the first attempt to do so.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

The study is divided into seven main chapters and the outline of the thesis follows the above-mentioned research purpose and questions, in order to develop a new framework at the intersection of corporate museums, internal branding and corporate heritage.

Chapter 1: provides a background and introduction of the research topic and presents the study's purpose, problem formulations, research questions as well as presents the practical and theoretical importance of the research.

Chapter 2: discusses the methodological considerations and choices, elaborating on the followed research philosophy, strategy, design, data collection and limitations.

Chapter 3: presents a literature review focusing on corporate heritage brands, internal branding and corporate museums.

Chapter 4: introduces the case companies Absolut, Hästens, IKEA and Volvo, and presents the empirical results based mainly on interviews and observations.

Chapter 5: analyses the main empirical results and initiate the main finding which is the Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework.

Chapter 6: discusses and elaborates the findings and framework in a broader context, while relating the framework and findings to previous literature.

Chapter 7: concludes the thesis by revisiting the study's purpose, research questions, aim and objective, and lastly presents theoretical contributions, managerial implications as well as research limitations and suggestions for future research.

2 Methodology

The methodology chapter will elaborate upon the choices of research philosophy, approach, design and methods used to gather data and reach the purpose of the thesis. First, the underlying research philosophy will be presented as a starting point where the constructivism paradigm guides the study. Next, choices of a qualitative research design and inductive approach are argued for. A multiple case study design is discussed and presented, as well as the qualitative research methods and data collection used to gather the data needed. Last, the chapter scrutinizes sampling, data analysis, and concludes by discussing validity, reliability, access and ethical considerations.

2.1 Research Philosophy

Guba and Lincoln (1994) stress that before a researcher conducts any inquiry, the paradigm that informs and guides the researcher's approach must be clear. A paradigm can be described as a set of basic beliefs that deals with first principles. It embodies a worldview that defines the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the variety of possible relationships to that world and its parts, just as theologies and cosmologies do (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used properly in any research paradigm (Guba, 1992; Guba & Lincoln; 1994). Questions of method are subordinate to questions of paradigm, which guides the researcher in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. The central beliefs that define inquiry paradigms can be compiled by the answers given by advocates of any given paradigm to three essential and interrelated questions, meaning that an answer given to any question constrains how the others can be answered (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The first question is the ontological question, which aims to answer, "what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108). This thesis will follow a relativist ontology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), meaning that we believe that there are many perspectives on the issue and not a single reality that can somehow be discovered. A relativist position also accepts that different observers can have different viewpoints and that what counts as truth can vary from time to time as well as from place to place (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

Secondly, the epistemological question is "what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108). As stated above, not just any relationship can be assumed here, since the answer to this question is constrained by the answer previously given to the ontological question. When a constructivism paradigm is followed, a transactional and subjectivist epistemology is suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.111), which mean that "the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds". Eastery-Smith, Torpe and Jackson (2015) mainly distinguish epistemology in terms of positivism and social constructionism. We identify with social constructionism since we believe that several aspects of social reality are not determined by objective and external factors, but rather by people (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The emphasis should therefore be on what people, collectively and individually, are thinking and feeling. This is done by paying attention to how they communicate with each other, both verbally and non-verbally. A social scientist's task is then to appreciate different meanings and constructions that people place upon their experience, and appreciate their differences rather than searching for fundamental laws and external causes to explain behavior. Again, we assume that there can be many different realities, which leads to the fact that the we need to collect the experiences and views of diverse individuals by using a mixture of qualitative methods, also known as triangulation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

The third and last question is the methodological question of "how can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108). Since the answer given to this question is once more constrained by the answers already presented to the first two questions, not just any methodology is appropriate. It is suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1994) to follow a hermeneutical and dialectical methodology because of the choices already mentioned, meaning that "individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.111). It is also noted that the methodological question cannot be reduced to a question of methods, instead the methods must be adapted to a prearranged methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). After having answered the three fundamental questions, it should be clear that this study is guided by what Guba and Lincoln (1994) would call a constructivism paradigm.

In terms of the relationship between researchers and the object of study, an engaged style of research is followed. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) argue that when studying social systems, such as complex organizations, there is positive value in getting closer to the things that are being studied. Additionally, an engaged constructionist follows the thought that "the key point is that any meaning structures must come from the lived experience of individuals" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p.61), which is very much in line with the purpose of the thesis.

Finally, it is important to be aware of not only the strengths of social constructionism, such as the ability to understand people's meanings and contribute to new theory, but also the flaws. The weaknesses consist of that data collection is demanding both in terms of time and resources. In addition, interpretation and analysis can be very challenging, since they depend on the researcher's tacit knowledge (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Relativism has received some criticism, such as that it should be avoided because it can be based on nothing else than 'rank subjectivity' (Guba, 1992). However, Guba (1992) defend relativism and claim that some degree of subjectivity is basically unavoidable. Given the research questions and purpose, the ontological and epistemological positions just described are what we believe to be the most suitable to fulfil the aim of this study. We also argue that by being aware of the various downsides could strengthens the thesis, as mentioned by Easterby-Smith, Thrope and Jackson (2015, p.47) "awareness of philosophical assumptions can both increase the quality of research and contribute to the creativity of the researcher."

2.2 Research Strategy

Qualitative Research Strategy

Just as the paradigm informing the researcher should be clear before conducting any research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), the researcher must also be aware of which research strategy that is most applicable. The most frequently used strategies are qualitative and quantitative, which are also possible to combine (Landrum & Garza, 2015). However, Greener (2011) claims that using mixed-methods research can create a terrible mess, since the different methods usually lead to the construction of different kinds of knowledge, and utilizing more data of various kinds does not always lead to better research.

Since the purpose of the thesis is to explore the phenomenon of utilizing corporate museums in internal branding, and given the data required to be gathered to answer the research questions, a qualitative research design was preferred. In addition, the epistemological and ontological orientations presented above supports a qualitative design (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). More specifically, we argue that the data needed required close interactions with the research participants, implying a setting where qualitative research methods function better compared to quantitative research. The methods used provided the granular detail that quantitative research cannot offer, since it is often concerned with large data sets crossing several sites (Greener, 2011). As this research was based on in-depth understandings, arguments and gathering of rich data, rather than on data centric quantifications and statistical correlations, it is once more emphasized to follow a qualitative research design and not a quantitative one (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree, 2014). Finally, many previous studies within internal branding have executed a quantitative design (Burmann, Zeplin & Riley, 2009; Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015; King, 2010; King & Grace, 2008; 2009; 2012). Hence, the research field would only improve with minor incremental steps from another quantitative study, while a qualitative inquiry would at least according to us be more welcome and evoke novel results.

Inductive Approach

In business research, there are two main research approaches that are used in order to relate research and theory, namely deductive and inductive (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). As the study will be inspired of the ideas of how to build theory from cases as proposed by Eisenhardt (1989; 1991) and Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), an inductive approach will be followed. An inductive approach means that the researcher collects data and develop theory as a result of the data analysis, compared to deduction which is usually connected to scientific research and testing theory (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). An inductive approach can be understood as a 'bottom up' approach to generating theoretical insight (Greener, 2011).

One of the strengths connected with the inductive approach is that it is more concerned with understandings and explanations, while a deductive approach usually constructs a rigid methodology that does not allow alternative explanations of what is going on. Inductive research is usually specifically interested in the context which events take place. As a consequence, the sample is usually smaller compared to a deductive approach where large numbers are more common. Lastly, researchers within the inductive tradition are more probable to work with qualitative data and employ several methods to collect these data, to establish different views of phenomena (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). This view is also supported by Greener (2011) who describes that inductive researchers usually employ a qualitative research strategy because they prefer to be close to their participants and data by gathering it themselves. Lastly, inductive researchers also approach their participants in such a way that any theory they generate is built up from data observation, instead of being forced upon their data from already existing theory (Greener, 2011).

2.3 Research Design

Since the aim is to develop novel theory at the intersection of the three research fields of corporate museums, internal branding, and brand heritage, it is stressed that a multiple case study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) would be the most suitable design, as they describe how theory is built from case study research. However, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) claim that much of the texts about case method originate from the positivist end, but that the method also can be designed in ways consistent with relativist and constructionist perspectives. Promoters of multiple cases usually fit the more positivist epistemology, while advocates of single cases typically identify with constructionism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). However, Eisenhardt stands between these two camps, by having developed an intermediate position (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), which draws inspiration from both constructivist and positivist positions. Her standpoint recommends the usage of multiple methods, within case and across case analysis as well as building theory from case-based research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

Using multiple cases will also help us to avoid being too descriptive and narrow compared to only focusing on a single case, as being argued by Miles and Huberman (1994, p.172), "one aim of studying multiple cases is to increase generalizability, reassuring yourself that the events and processes in one well-described setting are not wholly idiosyncratic." The outcome of multiple cases on a deeper level is to develop more powerful explanations and descriptions that are more sophisticated (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In terms of coherence, it is argued by (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) that a relativism ontology and constructionism epistemology usually starts with a question, which happened during this thesis, namely the question how managers of brands with a heritage can communicate their heritage internally.

The question is then followed by a case design aiming at theory generation, which is analyzed and interpreted by triangulation as well as comparisons.

Generally, a case study look in depth at one or a small number of organizations (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) and it is a suitable design for the thesis since it allows for profound exploration of certain theoretical insights (Knights & McCabe, 1997), in our case internal branding, heritage brands and corporate museums. The research design is especially applicable for studies trying to answer questions of 'how' or 'why', meaning that it seeks explanations rather than incidence questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Eisenhardt, 2007; Yin, 2014). By contrast, the research strategy is not applicable when aiming to address questions such as 'how often', and 'how many' (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Multiple case studies and Eisenhardt's (1991) work have also attracted some criticism that we kept in mind before executing the research. Dyer and Wilkins (1991) mention for instance that it is important to be cautious when executing a multiple case study, since there is a risk that the researcher only focus on how the cases differ and relate to each other, instead of considering the context.

2.4 Sampling

2.4.1 Sampling of Cases

Case selection is a frequent challenge to theory building from cases, as Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) argue that many readers faulty make the assumption that the cases should be representative of some population. However, the aim of this study is to develop theory, not to test it, meaning that a theoretical sampling is appropriate. This means that the cases are chosen because they are particularly suitable for highlighting and extending relationships and logic among constructs (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The theoretical sampling of this study combines the requirements and fixed criterion that the brands must be Swedish brands with a heritage that operate internationally and utilize corporate museums. The brands should also be strong and recognized; since we believe that it is then more likely that the brands have something of value to transfer to their employees.

Single-case studies can describe the existence of a phenomenon in detail (Siggelkow, 2007), while multiple-case studies usually contribute to a more robust base for theory building (Yin, 2014), since they are more intensely grounded in mixed empirical evidence. Case numbers are typically small, meaning that a few additional cases can affect the quality of the emergent theory. To illustrate, adding three cases to a single-case study does not mean much in terms of numbers, but it enables four times the analytic power (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

In practical terms, we chose the cases of Absolut Vodka (Absolut), Hästens, IKEA and Volvo Cars (Volvo), see sample overview below, as they are all at least brands with a heritage (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007) according to us. To strengthen our argument, the same authors state in their article that Volvo and IKEA are brands with a heritage. In addition, Balmer, Greyser and Urde (2006) mention Hästens as an example of a manufacturer with a royal warrant, which also applies to IKEA (Kungliga Hovleverantörsföreningen, 2016), which may incline a strong heritage. As for Absolut, the brand has roots dating back to 1879 and the bottle is inspired by an 18th century apothecary bottle (Pernod Ricard, 2017). Hence, the brand puts much emphasis on its history and is a suitable company to include in the sample. In terms of the brand's recognition, all four case companies are appreciated as some of Sweden's strongest brands (Brand Index, 2016; Signumpriset, n.d.; Sustainable Brand Index, 2017; Sweden, 2017; Swedish Brand Award, 2016). To conclude the heritage aspect, we once more emphasize that the important aspect to why we chose the companies is that heritage is part of the brands' positioning and offering, which we argue is relevant for all four companies. Other companies that we considered for the sample were for instance Clas Ohlson, Kosta Boda and Mackmyra, but they were omitted because of rejection and the fact that we quickly got access to the four prevailing cases. Lastly, all four brands have at least one corporate museum (Nissley & Casey, 2002), meaning that they are relevant for developing theory in terms of internal branding, corporate heritage brands and corporate museums. To conclude the case selection, it should be clear that because of the heritage and corporate museum aspects, the four companies were chosen and functioned as a good starting point for observing a new phenomenon.

2.4.2 Sampling of Respondents

The focal question dealing with the selection and sampling of respondents relates to if the sample will generate sufficient insight and data that will address and cover the research questions (Mason, 2002). However, there is no specific answer concerning how large the sample should be (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Mason, 2002). To get some indications, we followed the concept of information power, which can be used in qualitative studies to guide adequate sample size. Basically, information power suggests that the more information the sample holds that is relevant for the study, the lower number of participants is needed (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016). Since we gained access to both knowledgeable and relevant managers and directors, we argue that we reached saturation quickly, meaning that adding another interview from the sample company would not give us more needed information.

Generally, a minimum of two interviews were held with each company, preferably managers and directors, who obtained the knowledge needed to answer the research questions. Since the research questions have a strategic and managerial focus, only managers and not entry-level employees were interviewed. The positions of the interviewees could vary greatly depending on the organizational structure. For instance, one IKEA respondent worked as a HR Specialist meanwhile one of the Absolut respondents worked as an Internal Brand Manager, because Absolut's HR department is not as involved in the internal branding activities. Relevant areas were covered during the interviews, such as internal branding, internal communication, heritage and corporate museums. The sampling strategy used could best be described as a snowball strategy (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), since we asked our network and initial contact persons to recommend a person at the specific company that could best answer and fulfil the aim of the study. Usually, the first person our contacts stated provided us with a new contact in turn, that was more suitable for the study.

Table 1. Overview of the sample

Company / Category	**Absolut Vodka**	**Hästens**	**IKEA**	**Volvo**
Founded	Established 1879, introduced globally 1979	1852	1943	1927
Corporate museum(s)	- Absolut Atelier - Experience Center - The Factory (Spritan) - Visitor Centre -	- The Dream Factory - Hästens Flagshipstore Köping	- IKEA Museum - IKEA Tillsammans	- Factory Tour - Volvo Cars Brand Experience Centre - Volvo Cars Demo Centre - Volvo Museum
Interview(s) & unstructured discussions	- PR Director - Internal Brand Manager - Brand Manager Atelier	- Communications Specialist - HR Manager - Master Craftsmen - Concept Store Manager	- HR Specialist - Museum Guide - Museum Supervisor	- Director of Visitor Centre - Supervisor of Visitor Centre - Tour guides
Observation(s)	- Absolut Atelier - Absolut Experience Center	- The Dream Factory - Hästens Flagshipstore Köping	- IKEA Museum	- Volvo Cars Brand Experience Centre

2.5 Data Collection

It is suitable to use several methods in management research to avoid too much of a dependence on any single approach (Denzin, 1978; Yin, 1981). Within case study research, it is argued that using multiple data sources is a hallmark and a strategy to enhance the data credibility (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014). Eisenhardt (1989) argues that researchers who aim to build theory usually combine multiple data collection methods, where interviews, observations, and archival sources are the most commonly used.

In coherence with this reasoning, semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers at the chosen companies presented below under sampling. This was done so that we could investigate how the heritage, identity and importance of the brand is transferred from the management to the employees, for instance when on-boarding new employees or in training. Moreover, the interviews were complemented with on-site observations with at least one corporate museum visit per case company. This enabled the thesis to be more holistic and reduced the risk of only portraying the internal branding from the management point of view, who are already hired and therefore could have established loyalty and commitment to their brand. Lastly, both internal and external documentation were also used to complement our findings, such as brand books, history over the company and other relevant branding documents. This was done to again see if the companies communicated a coherent picture of their internal branding and heritage, both in terms of live experiences and in written documentation. Next, the different data collection methods and techniques used will be elaborated upon.

2.5.1 Qualitative Interviews as Primary Data

Qualitative interviews are generally appropriate when it is necessary to gain understanding from the respondent's perspective, which includes both what their viewpoint is and why they hold this specific viewpoint. The aim of a qualitative interview should therefore be to gather information that captures the meaning and interpretation of a phenomenon in relation to the respondent's worldview. A superficial exchange of information may be the result if this fails, which might have been better achieved through a semi-structured questionnaire (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The two main types of qualitative interviews are semi-structured and unstructured. During an unstructured interview, one single question can sometimes be asked (Bryman & Bell, 2015), which was not considered to be enough because of the research's scope and character, meaning that it could not deliver the kind of information and data needed.

Instead, semi-structured interviews were suitable since specific topics had to be covered with the help of a general interview guide, while a flexible process was encouraged at the same time (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The topic guide was used to facilitate a more explorative interview, compared to a strict question catalogue, which is usually used within more structured types of interviews (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Bryman and Bell (2015) argue that when following a qualitative method, it is allowed to deviate from the interview guide and ask follow-up questions, which was preferred in this study. These types of deviations are not allowed in quantitative interviews, because the standardization and replication can be jeopardized. Qualitative interviews could then be characterized as more flexible, as unintended questions can be elaborated upon which was desirable to us. The adaptable process meant that the interviewees had great opportunities to design their answer in their own way, and the interview could take different directions based upon which fields the respondents had the most knowledge within and what they considered to be relevant. Another reason to why semi-structured qualitative interviews were chosen was because we sought exhaustive and detailed answers. In other words, we wanted to understand the manager's reasoning in-depth and not just scratch the surface by collecting quick answer that a quantitative interview can generate better (Bryman & Bell, 2013).

It can be argued that the quality of the collected data was strengthened by utilizing semi-structured interviews, since the interviewees could come up with relevant issues that probably would have been ignored or undiscovered with a more structured interview. As we wanted to generate rich and precise information from the interviewees, laddering up and down questions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) were used. In particular, laddering was used to provoke answers that were more than just descriptive explanation of certain processes or superficial answers, and instead get more precise examples from the respondents.

The interviews were conducted via telephone because of its advantages associated with flexibility, speed and lower cost (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Every interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes and followed an interview guide. Before every interview started, we briefly described why we chose the specific company and that we were interested in the internal aspects of communication and brand building within brands with a heritage. We did not explain the study's purpose and research questions, since we did not want to influence the respondents too much and instead let them speak freely. To ensure that the interviewees felt comfortable and to reduce any potential language barriers, the interviews were held in Swedish. In harmony with the thoughts of Bryman and Bell (2015), the interviews were recorded so that the interviewer would not be distracted by taking notes. The recordings were then translated and transcribed after the interviews, to increase the reliability and to facilitate the discussion and analysis.

In order to get a strategic perspective on internal branding, the managers sometimes recommended their superiors as valuable interviewees for the thesis. We did still interview all the respondents separately, because there was a risk that the answers otherwise could have been biased if a subordinate were interviewed together with their superior or any colleague for that matter. A focus group was also excluded, since for instance Byers and Wilcox (1991) stress that a shortcoming of a focus groups is that the respondents tries to answer alike, because of what is acceptable and according to the norm of the group.

The interview guide (see Appendix A) was mainly used to follow the study's research questions and purpose. The language was adjusted according to the interviewees and the questions were not leading. When developing the guide, we looked at the problematization, research questions and aim, and followed the advice of Bryman and Bell (2015) who state that one should ask 'what it is that we need to know in order to answer the research question?'. After answering that question, we also adjusted the questions based upon what we considered to give us enough coverage. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) suggest that the researcher also should ensure that the order of questions used is in a logical order. Since the aim of the thesis is to develop theory, we covered the theoretical areas that we believe needed to be enhanced, specifically the fields of internal branding, corporate heritage brands and corporate museum.

2.5.2 Observations

A somewhat ignored aspect of research is observations, which still can be rewarding and add substantially to the richness of the research data. If the research questions and objectives of the study are concerned with what people do, then to watch them do it is an obvious alternative (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Observations are normally used for the purpose of discovering accounts that might not have been accessed by other methods, such as interviews. Many consider the two concepts of participant observation as a method and ethnography as a research strategy as synonymous. However, there is a clear distinction since participant observation can function as a method for just a couple of hours to answer a very specific research question. Ethnography on the other hand, usually indicates to the in-depth and long-term use of participant observation, usually in combination with other methods, to understand an entire social system or culture (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). There are four different types of stances that a researcher can pursue when conducting observational research, ranging from complete observer to complete participants (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Gill & Johnson, 2002). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) describe participant observation as a qualitative approach that highlights the discovery of meanings that people attach to their actions, which implies a high level of immersion by the researcher. On the other end, more structured observations are quantitative and usually deal with the frequency of those actions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Following our qualitative approach, participant observations were executed as the study deals with understanding and reasoning, compared to frequency and causal relationships.

As being described by Gill and Johnson (2002, p.144), a participant observation occurs when "the researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and thus become a member of their group, organization or community. This enables researchers to share their experiences by not merely observing what is happening but also feeling it". During participant observations, it is not likely that formal interviewing take place. Instead, the 'interviewing' that occurs could best be described as informal discussions, where questions are asked to informants to clarify the observed situations.

How the data is recorded will depend on which role the researcher play as a participant observer, meaning that if the researcher takes an 'open' role, then notes can be taken at the time the event is being observed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Sometimes video and audio recordings are used to record the observations, but the most common procedure is to make some initial scribblings in a notebook, and then return to the notebook later in the day to reconstruct the notes and scribblings into extensive written accounts (Easterby-Smith, Thrope & Jackson, 2015). The golden rule used to minimize the risk of forgetting valuable data is that the recordings need to take place on the very same day as the fieldwork is being performed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

In total, we did six observations at the four case companies; two at Absolut, two at Hästens, one at IKEA and one at Volvo. Since we gained access to for example Volvo's Brand Experience Centre from one of the interviewees at Volvo, the intention of the research was not concealed since the company already knew our intentions of the visit. In addition, we were also received as participants being led by tour guides and employees, which made it natural to interact with the staff, by talking and asking questions. However, even if the participants and guides were informed of our research, they acted normal and as if we did not interfere with what they were doing. Hence, we argue that we managed to capture their behavior in a naturalistic way, which indicates that we got an accurate representation of the site, just as if an employee would participate in an on-boarding program.

2.5.3 Secondary Data

Within the business and management research field, secondary data can provide useful insights to answer or partly answer the research questions, and it is commonly used as part of a case study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Secondary data could broadly be described as data that has been collected by researchers who have not been involved in the initial collection, meaning that it most likely has been collected for a different purpose (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Usually, secondary data is used to compliment primary data sources and there are plenty of secondary data sources, as for instance government or company reports, articles and books, advertisements, as well as archival data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Generally, one of the main advantages of using secondary data can be the immense savings in resources, especially in terms of time and money (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005). However, since the data has been collected for another specific purpose, it is not sure that the information will be current or even match the need of the new researcher. Since another researcher collects the data, control is lost over the quality, hence the data sources need to be evaluated carefully and with the same caution as any primary data collected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

For this thesis, several types of secondary data were gathered to complement the primary data. Naturally, numerous of academic journals and books were used to for instance build the theoretical framework and to guide this methodology chapter. To get a holistic picture over the selected companies' history and internal communication, company information was used to a great extent. Some sources were publicly accessible, such as websites and annual reports with the help of Lund University Library Databases, meanwhile other reports and documents for internal use where shared with us by the interviewees. As previously mentioned, it is important to be cautious when evaluating data that has been created for another purpose and by other parties. Specifically, we reviewed the external documents with critical eyes and aimed for confirming as much as possible through multiple techniques, such as the interviews and observations.

2.6 Data Analysis

2.6.1 Structure of Empirical Results

When structuring the findings, the idea was to treat the data as objectively as possible to avoid preconceptions and instead create the framework as a result of the actual analysis, since we wanted to slowly develop a coherent framework rather than imposing one from the start (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, there was still a need to come up with a rich and descriptive story that had to be structured somehow, and Miles (1979) suggests working with a rough frame to be coherent and relevant. In order to do so, the realm of journalism figured as inspiration. When training journalists, Pöttker (2003, pp.501-502) argue that “the most comprehensively taught genre is ‘hard news’, which attacks the selectivity of perception by expressly placing the most important information at the beginning of the story, thus circumventing the reader’s decision whether to continue or stop the reception. ‘Hard news’ is commonly considered an especially objective form of reporting events.” He then continues to stress that the most essential information is compiled in the so-called ‘lead sentence’ which, according to standard practice, must answer four or five ‘w-questions’, who? when? where? what? and why? (Pöttker, 2003). To conclude, these five w-questions were used to structure our findings, as they are holistic and can cover a potential phenomenon in an overarching manner.

2.6.2 Analyzing Qualitative Data

Qualitative research does usually not follow a strict linear structure of data collection, analysis and theory construction. Especially the process of data analysis and interpretation often overlap (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), which also applies for this study. However, it is crucial to convince the reader that the findings are not an outcome of biased subjectivity, but instead of professional work throughout the entire research (Kvale, 1994). Constructionist research designs need to be believable and transparent to support the quality and validity of its results (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). It is also argued that “analyzing data is the heart of building theory from case studies, but it is both the most difficult and the least codified part of the process” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.539). Therefore, the following paragraphs will provide the reader with a transparent overview of the data analysis process.

According to Eisenhardt (1989), the data in case study research that builds theory should be analyzed in two ways; both within-case analysis and cross-case pattern search using different techniques. A within-case analysis usually consists of thorough case study write-ups for each site, which often are basically pure descriptions that are central to the generation of insight. However, they help the researcher to handle the enormous volume of data early in the analysis process. Even though there are no standardized formats for such analysis, the general idea is to become intimately familiar with each case as a stand-alone entity. This procedure allows the unique patterns of every case to emerge before the researchers push to generalize patterns across cases (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Next, cross-case analysis forces the researchers to look beyond initial impressions and view the evidence using different lenses. This should be done because people are particularly poor processors of information (Eisenhardt, 1989), since they for instance jump to conclusions based on limited data (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973), their ability to understand the world is flawed, particularly when using intuitive, as opposed to analytical, thinking (Tversky, & Kahneman, 1974) and are overly influenced by more elite respondents (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In other words, there is a danger that the researchers may reach false and premature conclusions, meaning that the key to good cross-case comparison is to scrutinize the data in many different ways (Eisenhardt, 1989).

There are three strategies to do this as argued by Eisenhardt (1989), where the first is to select dimensions or categories and then look for within-group similarities connected to intergroup differences. These dimensions can be suggested by existing literature, the research problem or dimensions chosen by the researchers. In this study, we chose dimensions with the help of a metaphor, which will be presented below. She also suggests a second tactic, where pairs of cases are selected and the similarities and differences are listed. The reason is that "the juxtaposition of seemingly similar cases by a researcher looking for differences can break simplistic frames. In the same way, the search for similarity in a seemingly different pair also can lead to more sophisticated understanding" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.541). Again, this tactic was used when all the data was gathered, as a way to treat the material honestly. It also functioned as a way to open our eyes, since for instance Absolut and Hästens seemed fairly similar on the surface, but the differences awoke when the cases were scrutinized. The third strategy suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) that was followed is to divide the data by data source. The tactic exploits the unique insights possible from the various types of data collection and it makes the findings stronger and more grounded if a pattern from one data source is supported by another. If the evidence should conflict, the researcher can more easily reconcile the evidence through deeper analysis of the meaning of the dissimilarities (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Another aim of the data analysis was the systematic reduction of the empirical data through an organized identification of relevant themes. The identification of themes followed a certain structure provided by Ryan and Bernard (2003), who argue that there are different techniques to identify themes. Following their reasoning, the data analysis was based on four different steps. The first step deals with the identification of certain themes and subthemes. The second deals with the reduction of themes to a feasible amount by taking into consideration its relevance in regard to the research questions. Third, organizing the remaining themes in a hierarchical order that considers again its relevance to the research questions. Fourth, linking the themes to each other and compare them to the theory (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). When identifying themes and subthemes, certain terms and expressions were repeated often among all cases, such as live experience, emotions, storytelling and history, which indicated certain patterns, such as for instance 'content'. When reviewing the research questions, themes that were not applicable were omitted, as for instance tourists and other external stakeholders that were not included in the internal branding efforts, in order to sharpen the research focus. Following the third technique, the themes where ordered, starting with 'Place' as a foundation, moving towards the end goal, which is 'Motives'. Lastly, after our analysis was completed it was matched against theory to see if the existing theory that needed to be expanded supported or rejected our findings.

2.6.3 Using Metaphors to Stimulate Creativity

After having read extensive literature within internal branding, we noted that what we had observed at the companies' corporate museums and what the managers told us during the interviews, was not present and caught up in the literature. Hence, we searched for a suitable metaphor, "a figure of speech in which a name or descriptive word or phrase is transferred to an object or action different from, but analogous to, that to which it is literally applicable" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017) to describe the phenomenon. Furthermore, Rennstam (2017) has argued that analogies could be used to broaden the relevance of a theory or concept and to see something new in a field of study, which was relevant to our study.

From reading through the material over and over again, as well as engaging with it (Rennstam, 2017), we saw a common pattern in all four cases consisting of organized journeys, which reminded of some sort of pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is according to Vukonic (1996, cited in Belhassen, Caton & Stewart, 2008, p.678) "an organized visit or journey, organized at least in the sense that there are religious motives for going to a place and that the contents of that place include religious rituals". Hence, the idea of 'Internal Brand Pilgrimage' was born, where the term 'religious' were exchanged for the more suitable 'corporate'. In addition, we also studied how metaphors were used in research to gain inspiration, and noted that Urde and Koch (2014) stated that metaphors can function as a central role in refining knowledge by stimulating creativity and vitality (Davies & Chun, 2003; Hunt & Menon, 1995; MacInnis, 2011; Stern, 2006; Tsoukas, 1991). Lastly, as a word of caution we want to emphasize that we did not use the definition of the metaphor prior to the thorough analysis, meaning that it still was coined after the familiarity with the data, after which we looked beyond initial impressions and saw evidence through multiple lenses (Eisenhardt, 1989). Before it was decided to use the pilgrimage metaphor, other metaphors that could have been relevant were also discussed. However, after lengthy considerations, the pilgrimage metaphor was chosen since we believe that it captures the phenomenon in question in the best possible way.

2.7 Validity and Reliability

No methodology or research strategy is flawless; hence the limitations and general criteria concerning business and management research will be discussed. There are three main evaluation criteria used in business research, consisting of replication, reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, since qualitative research lack the measurement aspect, the relevance of the three mentioned criteria have been discussed. Instead, Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose that trustworthiness and authenticity should be used as criterions when evaluating qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2015), which we will follow when discussing the weaknesses of this study.

Trustworthiness in turn consists of four criteria; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, where each has an equivalent criterion in quantitative research. Starting with credibility, which is related to internal validity in quantitative research, the criterion deals with how plausible the study's findings are and stress multiple accounts of social reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Since we used triangulation to verify the results of our findings and not only relied on the manager's arguments, we believe that the credibility was increased. Particularly important was the use of observations, which evoked emotions in a way that is not possible through only conducting interviews. Moreover, as for instance Absolut and Volvo have several corporate museums and put much emphasis on them, we also argue that the companies represent plausible leaders within internal branding and physical places.

Next, transferability parallels to external validity (Bryman & Bell, 2015) will be discussed. Transferability is needed since qualitative research usually involves the intensive study of a small group in a unique context (Bryman & Bell, 2015), creating a need for thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973), which provide others with "a database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other milieux" (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p.402). A weakness here is that the group was indeed small, since only four companies were selected. However, these four companies represented completely different industries, such as automotive, global furniture, luxury goods, and alcohol, which increase the transferability. Once again, the observations were helpful and contributed to the thick descriptions.

Dependability corresponds to the quantitative reliability and it evaluates how trustworthy the study is. It aims to ensure that complete records are kept throughout the whole research process, as for example interview transcripts, selection of research participants and fieldwork notes, in an accessible manner (Bryman & Bell, 2015). As previously mentioned, this study relied on semi-structured interviews, observations and documentations, which of course in total generate vast amounts of data. We always transcribed directly after the interviews and stored the Word file and audio files on our computers as well as on Google Drive, to secure that we did not lost any valuable data. The same procedure was used for our field notes and observations.

Finally, the last criterion of trustworthiness, which is confirmability, parallels objectivity in quantitative research. It recognizes that complete objectivity is impossible in business research, but aims to ensure that the researcher have acted in good faith and not allowed for personal values or theoretical preferences to influence the research and the findings derived from it (Bryman & Bell, 2015). What can be criticized here is that we already have conducted a pilot study and tried the research with a slightly different approach, which might have influenced us and what literature we used. However, it can also be seen as something positive that we already are familiar with the streams of internal branding, which made it possible to explore the domain even more. Concerning the interviews, one major flaw was that they were conducted over the telephone, which lack the immediate contextualization, depth and non-verbal communication compared to face-to-face interviews (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In this case, we chose to accept the flaws, because based on dimensions as time and place, it might not have been able to complete the study in ten weeks if we would conduct face-to-face interviews.

When discussing authenticity, the criteria include a wider set of concerns relating to the political impact of the research, such as fairness in including different viewpoints (Bryman & Bell, 2015). There are possible weaknesses relating to the fact that only a few managers where interviewed and that they mostly where senior managers. The study could have benefited from including more entry-level managers, at least to hear their view on the matter. It could also be interesting to interview new-recruits who just had completed an on-boarding program at one of the chosen companies. However, as the purpose was to apply a managerial perspective and the fact that we needed experts within the field, it was natural to interview the managers with the most knowledge. In addition, apart from following a snowball sampling strategy (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), we also selected cases on fixed selection criteria that related to our research purpose.

2.7.1 Source Criticism

The respondents' veracity can always and should be discussed. A narrative source has a greater ability to reproduce a correct view of the matter the closer in time and space the respondent has to the event. This closeness is however not a sufficient criterion to decide if the respondents' answer is true or not. If several independent sources portray a similar story, then the likelihood of truth increases (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999). When it comes to the closeness aspect, we interviewed managers who work with the communication and transfer of brand identity on a daily basis, which according to us strengthens their arguments. In order to verify this ourselves, we also used triangulation as we also observed the corporate museum and their internal communication as well as corporate websites, to see if the companies portrayed a similar picture. Since we used a snowball sampling strategy, we believe that the quality and knowledge of the respondents' answers improved, compared to for instance a convenience sample that are based on ease of access. Still, the sample is relatively small, which reduces the generalizability. Based on our research philosophy, it should also be mentioned that we do not strive for a complete and objective truth, but rather an understanding and interpretation of how the managers work with their corporate museums on a daily basis.

When gathering and analyzing secondary sources, we were aware that the sources could be biased and incomplete (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999). The authenticity can be questioned when it comes to journals, because it can be difficult to judge and evaluate the author's perspective and knowledge about the topic (Bryman & Bell, 2015). When it comes to scientific journals, we used peer-reviewed articles and strived for well-cited authors in reputable journals. Books were also used to a lesser extent, where it sometimes can be difficult to evaluate the credibility of the source since a book usually lack the peer reviewing system. However, we argue that the books used shared the same view of the phenomenon, as for instance in terms of describing qualitative methods, which would make it more trustworthy. Lastly, the Lund University Library was used to find useful books and the online databases were used to find e-books.

2.7.2 Ethics in Research

Ethical issues in marketing research stems from the researcher's relations with the parties involved in the research process, which for instance include respondents and the general public. Researchers has the responsibility to treat respondents justly by being truthful about the purpose and nature of the study and still gather accurate and reliable data (Akaah & Riordan, 1989). Bell and Bryman (2007) suggest that management researchers deal with different ethical issues of a different nature compared to those most frequently faced by other social science researchers, since management research takes places in contexts that require specific consideration. The authors argue that ethics in management research is not only a matter of protecting individuals from possible allegations of misconduct in a research context. Instead, reciprocity is key, as it defines the relationship between the researcher and the society being studied, by drawing attention to its moral aspect (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Bell and Bryman (2007) conducted a content analysis of nine professional associations in the social science's ethical principles. Ten principles of ethical practice were identified, where the first six principles deal with protecting the interest of the informants or research subjects, and the last four with the integrity of the research community by ensuring lack of bias and accuracy in the research results (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). These aspects were taken into consideration when conducting the study. Since the thesis deals with large corporations and their internal strategies, we made sure to treat the respondents with dignity by for instance protecting the privacy of the research participants. Before each interview, we got the participants' consents for participation and a clear and transparent presentation of the research area was given.

2.7.3 Being Reflexive

A reflexive approach was present during the whole research process, which according to Alvesson (2003) is characterized by a consistent and conscious effort to view the subject matter from different angles. We believe that what Alvesson (2003) proposes as reflexive pragmatism is particularly useful, which concerns epistemological awareness rather than philosophical rigor. It is argued that it is not impossible to vary and widen one's horizon, by looking self-critically at favored assumptions and lines of inquiry. Moreover, reflexivity encourages an interaction between producing interpretation and challenging them, by exploring more than one set of meanings and allowing ambiguity in the phenomena. Many regard the interview as an excellent technique to drain the subject's knowledge about their experiences and social practices. However, it is often neglected that the interview situation is both a linguistically and socially complex situation. This means that the interview situation should not be idealized or simplified, by assuming that the interviewee is a competent and moral truth teller. Instead, using interviews calls for a theoretical understanding or rather a reflexive approach, where different theoretical viewpoints can be considered and applied when needed. Without any theoretical understanding, the use of interview material risks being naïve and the interpretation of it will then rest on unstable ground (Alvesson, 2003). Finally, reflexivity could also inspire creativity through opening up for new perspectives and reference points (Alvesson, Hardy & Harley, 2008).

2.7.4 Access and Politics

As briefly mentioned above by Bell and Bryman (2007) that management research is different from other types of social and psychological research is also shared by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015). They argue that the important difference is that the research usually must be carried out in an organizational context. Access to organizations must typically be negotiated through managers, who in turn are accountable for influencing, structuring and controlling the awareness and actions of others, which is a political process. Another comparison with the wider social sciences worth noting is that the work is carried out on members of society who usually are less powerful than the researchers. This is one explanation to why studies more often are conducted on members of an organization's staff, and less often on the senior management team. The important difference is that the subjects of research are usually more powerful than the researchers themselves when conducting research within business and management. Not to mention that most organization are strictly controlled and structured, meaning that gaining access to a corporate boardroom for instance, is especially difficult. This means that the managers employ such a position where they can simply decline to provide the researchers with any information (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

To get access to IKEA, Volvo and Absolut, we relied on our network and approached people that we know work at the companies mentioned. We then pitched our research idea and asked for competent and relevant managers to interview. The only exception was Hästens, where we did not have any contacts and instead found contact details through their website. Even if the Volvo Brand Experience Centre is not only used internally but open for the public as well, it is reserved for companies, organizations and schools (Volvo Cars, 2017a). However, the Director of the Experience Centres that we interviewed granted us access as individuals. Hästens' Dream Factory is another example of a facility that we gained access to because of our interviewee, since it is normally reserved for education of employees and resellers.

3 Literature Review

This theoretical chapter mainly elaborates upon three different research areas, since the thesis' aim is to merge these fields through a conceptual framework. First, corporate heritage brands are presented since it figures as a context for all four case companies. Next, the field of internal branding is presented and discussed in detail, as the study takes a particular interest in internal branding efforts. The final research area consists of the nascent field of corporate museums, and more prominently how these corporate facilities can be used for internal branding purposes. In the empirical findings presented in chapter 4, the use of storytelling was mentioned frequently. Therefore, theory concerning corporate storytelling was added as a minor part of the literature review.

3.1 Corporate Heritage Brands

There are differences between product and corporate brands that are worth noting, where for instance the product brand community is mainly customer focused (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), whereas the corporate brand community has a wider focus (Balmer, 2005). Moreover, product brands are emphasized by marketing communications, while corporate brands are dependent upon corporate communications. Since corporate brands has an organization-wide approach, the responsibility for the corporate brand can be argued to reside with all employees with ultimate brand custodianship, meaning not only the CEO. Hence, it has been stressed that while product brands are unarguably part of the marketing's realm, corporate brands are a fundamental part of an organization's corporate strategy. This is due to their organization-wide impact and importance to an array of stakeholder groups (Balmer 1995; Hatch & Schultz, 2001).

The corporate branding literature can be described as a nascent field (Balmer & Burghausen, 2015) even though it is beginning to flourish in Europe and North America (Aaker, 2004; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000a; Balmer & Gray, 2003; Davies & Chun, 2002). It is evident that the researchers are progressively viewing corporate brands as worthy of explication and scrutiny (Balmer, 2008). This has developed during the period when brands are increasingly being understood in terms of their associations with core values (Urde, 1999), compared to their traditional approach in terms of graphic design (Aaker, 1991). Balmer (2001) has argued that corporate brands can contribute as an effective lens through which key features of an organization can be understood.

3.1.1 Corporate Brands with Heritage

Corporate heritage brands are recognized as a special category of corporate brands (Cooper, Merrilees & Miller, 2015). In opposition to retro-branding (Brown, Kozinets & Sherry, 2003) nostalgia (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003) and heritage marketing (Misiura, 2006), which all concentrate on a specific time-period in the past, brand heritage means that things passed are preserved so that they are also relevant today and tomorrow, "pressing forwards with the past" (Balmer, 2011, p.520). Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) wrote an article discussing the construct of corporate heritage brands and it is argued that from a strategic perspective, it is advantageous if a company's brand is infused with a heritage, particularly in global markets. Heritage can dwell in many diverse organizations, but to generate value as part of corporate marketing, it must be controlled and employed as a strategic resource (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007).

It is important to distinguish between a heritage brand and a brand with a heritage. A heritage brand base its value proposition and positioning on its heritage. Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) illustrate this by mentioning the watch industry, where both Patek Philippe and Tag Heuer can be considered brands with heritage. However, Patek Philippe is a heritage brand, since the company has chosen to stress its history as an essential element of its positioning and brand identity. Tag Heuer on the other hand, does not, and is hence seen as a brand with a heritage, although not a heritage brand. In other words, it is a strategic decision to activate the heritage, and make it part of the brand's value proposition (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007).

3.1.2 Differentiating Between History and Heritage

The difference between heritage and history might seem trivial on the surface (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). However, history explains and explores what is usually a blurred past, while heritage clarifies and makes the past relevant for contemporary purposes and contexts. The same applies for brands when viewed through the lens of heritage compared to that of history, meaning that heritage helps make a brand relevant to both the present and the anticipated future. In other words, it is the temporal dimension that makes the key difference between the perspectives of history and heritage in corporate branding contexts (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). Corporate heritage brands embrace three timeframes: the past, the present and the future (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). Therefore, when articulating the kernel of a heritage brand, Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) developed the view that a brand's unique and historical traits have been invested with meaning that offer benefits to brand communities of today and tomorrow, just as in previous epochs. In essence, the brand's traditions are of importance for the present, where value is still being invested in the brand and extracted from it. Heritage brands are specific in that "they are both about history and history in the making" (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007, p.7).

3.1.3 Defining the Heritage Quotient

Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) state that all brands have a history and some brands have a heritage. A few brands have made their heritage an important corporate asset. Understanding the heritage in a brand can be a route to decipher its value for the organization, by allowing the brand's past and present to enhance its future. The authors found five key elements that specify if and how much heritage might be present or possibly found in a brand, which together defines the brand's heritage quotient (HQ). The more there are and the more intense the elements are, the higher the brand's HQ (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). As seen in figure 2 below, the elements surround 'brand stewardship', which is argued to be a fundamental management mind-set for developing, preserving and safeguarding the heritage brand (Cooper, Merrilees & Miller, 2015). Next, these five main elements will be briefly presented and elaborated upon.

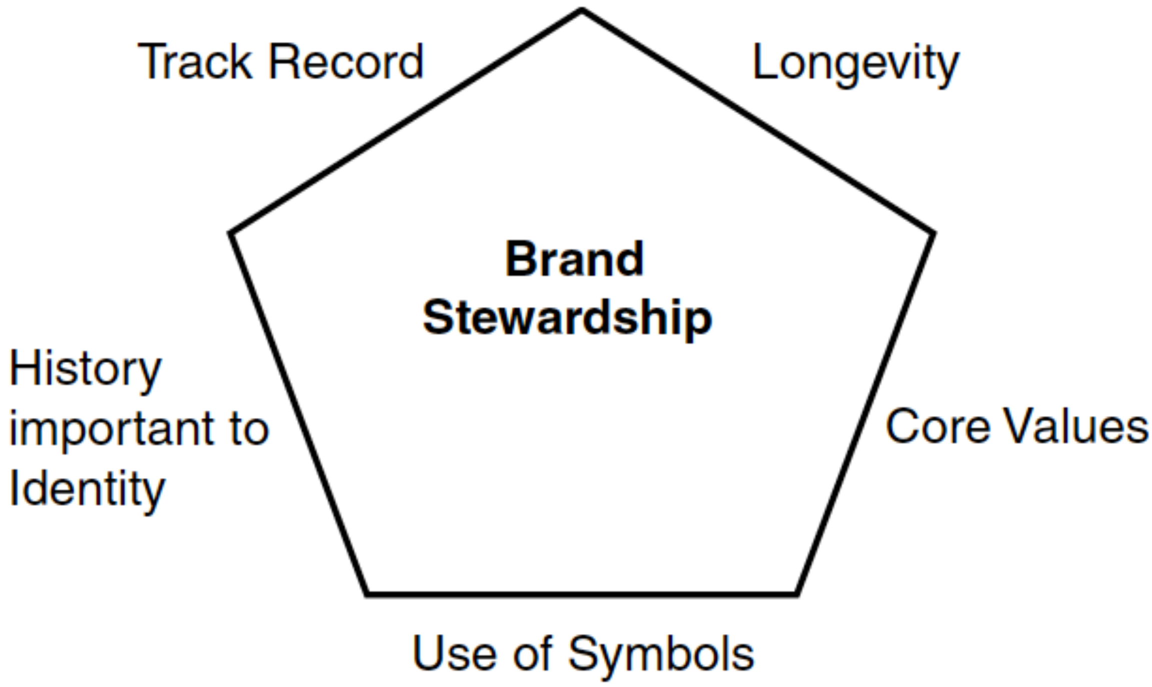

Figure 2. Elements of brand heritage (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007)

Track Record to Deliver Value Over a Long Time

By track record, Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) imply demonstrated performance that the company has lived up to its promises and values over time. This makes accumulated credibility and trust typical parts of a heritage brand. To illustrate track record, the authors mention that Volvo is constantly synonymous with safety.

Longevity and Business

Longevity by itself does not guarantee a heritage brand, but it might be an important element. This becomes particularly evident for massive multi-generational family-owned corporations, as for instance Ford and Anheuser Busch. Even though heritage brands usually have been running for many years, Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) found it possible for a company to meet the criteria as a heritage brand in a period of a generation or two. However, it is still problematic to measure longevity accurately. The authors discuss that longevity "reflects a consistent demonstration of other heritage elements (especially track record and the use of history) under many CEOs, such that one can believe they are ingrained in the organization's culture" (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007, p.10).

Core Values as Guidance

Consistency of core values can guide and help to define a company's corporate strategy, as they become part of the heritage. Core values that are long-kept advise behavior and actions as mind-set internally, and form the foundation for positioning expressed as a commitment in external communication. When the core values accomplish their role as tenets that the brand attempts to live up to, they become an essential part of the brand identity and ultimately the brand's heritage (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007).

Use of Symbols in Communications

Great examples of institutions that use symbols to express its meaning and heritage are monarchies, as argued by Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007). It could be anything from the royal guards, the Crown or the monarch's motto. A globally acknowledged symbol that both identifies the company and signals what it stands for is Nike's 'Swoosh'. In other words, one dimension of heritage brands is the meaningful use of symbols in communication. Such symbols can be found in logos as just mentioned, and in design such as the Burberry pattern. If a brand has a high HQ, these symbols can periodically reach an identity of their own and represent the brand. One example of a symbol that have acquired a deeper meaning is the five rings of the Olympics (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007).

The Importance of History and Identity

History is important to some companies' identity, because it represents who and what they are. In terms of heritage brands, the history can persuade how the brand functions today and in the future. Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) mention that history is an important component internally at IKEA, even though it is not essential in terms of their external communications. The authors continue by stating that 'since 1839' is a fundamental part of Patek Philippe's communications, since the company's positioning consists of a value proposition based on heritage.

Finally, Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) conclude their review by stating that the more these five elements are present in a brand, the higher its HQ will be. In these high HQ companies, heritage is central to the organization internally, while it is also relevant and valuable externally to customers and stakeholders.

3.1.4 How to Understand and Use Heritage

It is important to note that having a heritage alone is not enough to create value, just the opportunity to do so. Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) see no contradiction for a company to be up to date and modern, and at the same time use and express heritage. Instead, there are several reasons to how companies should use its heritage. More specifically, heritage can offer a foundation for distinctiveness in positioning, which may lead to competitive advantages and result in higher margins. Looking at the internal aspects, heritage can also build internal commitment and pride, since the employees can be part of a brand 'bigger than oneself'. Lastly, Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) argue that heritage can make it easier to recruit and retain executives and employees.

3.2 Internal Branding

The retail researchers Berry, Hensel and Burke (1976) were among the first to introduce the idea of treating employees as internal customers, which would later develop into the field of internal branding and internal brand management. Their aim was to explore how different company efforts, which they at the time named internal marketing, could satisfy the needs of employees in order to increase their capability to then satisfy the needs of the customers (Berry, Hensel & Burke, 1976). In other words, it was very much influenced by the market-oriented approach of the time that focused on fulfilling customer needs. The concept of internal marketing was further developed by service-marketing pioneer Grönroos (1984), who strongly emphasized that all employees need to be both motivated and sales oriented. Building on these previous contributions to the field, Rafiq and Ahmed (1993, p.222) proposed the first clear definition of internal marketing as a "planned effort to […] align, motivate and integrate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies".

The next phase in the development of the internal marketing concept saw researchers focusing on several new aspects that would prove to be highly valuable for the subsequent internal branding field in general and this paper in particular. Firstly, the importance of internal marketing efforts to be considered as a management philosophy rather than a short-lived campaign was introduced (Varey, 1995). Secondly, several authors during the 1990s stressed that in the same way emotions play a vital role in the external market, so are they crucial internally as well (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015). Thirdly, the idea of how employees internalize the concept and values of a company's service offering and how it affects their ability to consistently and effectively deliver the service to customers was explored (Berry, 2000). Lastly, Kotler, Jain and Maesincee (2002) drew attention to the overall significance of internal marketing when he stated that it must precede external marketing in importance, arguing that it makes little sense to advertise great service if the employees do not deliver it. These aspects laid the foundation upon which the more focused concept of internal branding could be developed, as detailed below.

3.2.1 The Evolution of the Internal Branding Concept

The idea of internal branding was born when researchers became interested in how a company could ensure intellectual and emotional employee buy-in into a specific brand personality, as compared to the previous focus on buy-in of the corporate culture and overall service offering (Mahnhert & Torres, 2007). In other words, this is similar to the theory of identity-based brand management (Kapferer, 2012). Brand management literature has often since highlighted how employees can influence customers and other stakeholders brand perceptions through effectively conveying the brand values (de Chernatony, 2002). As a result of this, the concepts of employer branding and internal branding were, relatively recently, introduced to the branding literature. In contrast to employer branding however, which deals with company branding efforts focusing on the attraction and recruiting of new employees, internal branding only focus on those already employed (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010).

When outlining how the field of internal branding has developed, it is beneficial to divide the literature into three parts, each describing either aims, processes and/or outcomes of internal branding: 1. The importance of a multi-directional application, 2. Employee identification and internalization of brand values and 3. Employee delivery of the brand promise. The first element highlights the need of alignment within the organization, especially between the HR and marketing departments, in order for internal branding efforts to be successful in the first place (Mahnhert & Torres, 2007; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Kahn (2009, p.30) further emphasized this point, describing successful internal branding companies: “Their approach to internal branding crosses all functions – from corporate communications to human resources to the business units. All functions that speak to employees speak with a unified voice”.

The next core element is brought forward by studies describing how employees identify with and internalize the brand and why managers want them to. These studies argue that companies actively engage in internal branding activities as a way of educating and communicating the brand values to employees, and that the goal is to enhance their intellectual and emotional engagement with the brand (de Chernatony, 2002; Drake, Gulman & Roberts 2005; Thomson, de Chernatony, Arganbright & Khan, 1999; Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). Most of the literature on internal branding has been putting emphasis on such internalization of brand values by employees as a way of managing customer experience (Morhart, Herzog & Tomczak, 2009; Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014) give further substance to this element of internal branding through drawing upon the classical social identity theory, organizational identification theory and organizational commitment theory. These theories suggest, respectively, that internal branding can function as a vehicle for enhancing employee identification with the brand, that employees who identify with the organization will actively strive to accomplish the brand strategy and that employees accept the brand values they are more likely to emotionally attach to the brand. LePla (2013) built on this, arguing that employees do not want to separate their own beliefs and values from the social group they work for. Thus, reconciling them with the corporate brand will foster positive emotional resonance that directly leads to increased motivation to work for the brand and its customers.

The third core element that has been key in developing the current understanding of how valuable internal branding can be was developed when studies explored its correlation to brand promise delivery. The idea is that if employees fully understand and feel connected to the brand, they can naturally deliver the brand promise externally (Mosley, 2007; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). This part of the internal branding literature, which is more focused on the outcomes, is further described in an article by Saleem and Iglesias (2016). The authors state that previous research on the function of internal branding has resulted in the identification of three internal branding outcomes; brand identification, brand commitment, and brand citizenship behavior, defined as the "consistent behavior that goes above and beyond required organizational behavior and is internally and externally targeted, subsequently giving the brand life" (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016, p.44).

Despite the development of the three core elements, the literature is not fully consistent in explaining the aims, methods and outcomes of internal branding, which is in part a result of the differing conceptualizations (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015; Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). Therefore, the next section of our literature review will explore which components of internal branding that has been mentioned in the literature.

3.2.2 Components of Internal Branding

There have been two major issues with the understanding of internal branding in previous research; namely the scope of the concept as well as deciding which components constitute it. Some researchers, like King and Grace (2008) and Kahn (2009), have leaned more towards the internal HR perspective emphasizing the employee's own experience as the primary outcome, whereas others have emphasized the external perspective through the employee interaction with customers as the main goal (Asha & Jyothi, 2013; Aurand, Gorchels & Bishop, 2005; Löhndorf & Diamantopoulous, 2014). This has led to a fragmentation within the field of internal branding. Naturally then, the opinions concerning which components that constitute internal branding, how it is conceptualized, have also differed between researchers in a similar fashion.

The conceptualization that has been most prominently used among researchers is a model by Burmann and Zeplin (2005) that identifies three levers of internal branding; brand-centered HR activities, brand communication and brand leadership (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015, Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). The holistic model (see figure 3) aims to show how to achieve successful internal branding and how it can lead to brand strength. This model is a behavioral approach to internal brand management, dealing with how the organization positively can influence employee's behaviors for the good of the brand. The idea here is that the identity-based brand management approach is true, meaning that a brand needs a "consistent and continuous identity" (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005, p.279) in order to achieve credibility. Thus, fostering internal branding and brand identity internalization among employees as defined above, leads to brand strength (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

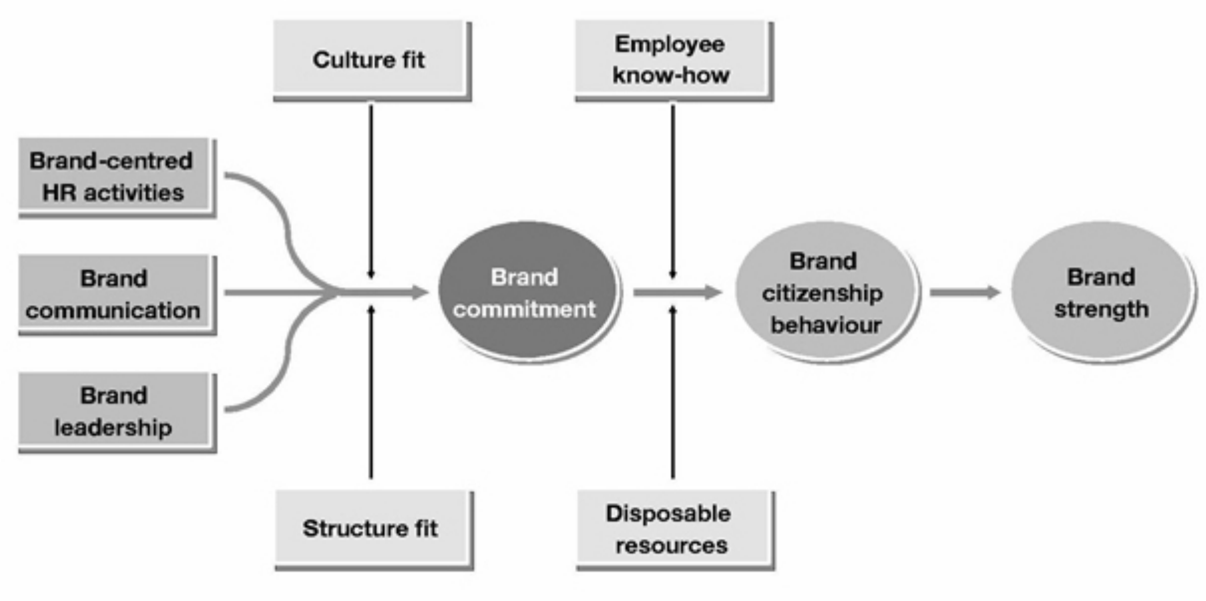

Figure 3. A holistic model of internal brand management (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005)

There are also more recent, emerging components such as brand ideologies (Ind, 2003; King, 2010) and internal brand communities (Devasagayam, Buff, Aurand & Judson, 2010) that has been added to the concept. In summary, there are hence five components of internal branding that have been prominent in previous literature according to Saleem and Iglesias (2016);

1. brand ideologies,
2. brand leadership,
3. brand-centered HRM,
4. internal brand communication and
5. internal brand communities

Each of these components are further detailed and explained below, apart from internal brand communities that will be omitted because of its irrelevance for the thesis. It is important to note that although not all researchers have explicitly used these terms in their studies, their respective concepts fit within these five components (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016).

Brand Ideologies

According to Ind (2003), the best way to provide focus for employees from the management perspective is to have a consistent and clear brand ideology. This is the component that incorporates the mission, vision, goals, norms and shared values of a brand (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). As such, it is similar to the concept of brand identity as defined by Kapferer (2012) and is therefore the component where heritage, as a possible part of identity, is relevant. de Chernatony & Segal-Horn (2003) adds that the positioning of the brand, and indeed the actual role of the employee, both need to be clearly based on a common ideology in order to foster strong shared values among the employees. However, the concept of brand ideology stretches beyond only having a clear identity on paper as it also takes into account the company culture that employees are exposed to, and interact within, everyday. It is vital that this culture is supportive and in line with the positioning and promise of the brand if it is to have a positive effect on the brand commitment among employees (King, 2010; King & Grace, 2008).

Brand Leadership

This component deals with the potential that different types of leaders within a company have in the internal branding process. According to Saleem and Iglesias (2016, p.48) brand leadership has to do with "transformational leaders working alongside staff who disseminate a clear brand ideology and facilitate a positive shared understanding of the brand". It is important to note that such brand leadership needs to be shown by leaders in multiple levels within the organization. The dual importance of the CEO and executive board on the macro level on the one hand, and the other organizational executives on the micro level on the other hand, is therefore stressed. In addition, the lower-level executives who fit the brand should be empowered to work on a micro-level with the internal management of the brand (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Some researchers even go so far as to claim that employees will only be positively affected by internal branding efforts if they are supported by the words and actions of the CEO, and as a consequence internal branding needs to "start at the top by convincing the CEO and the executive board of the brand relevance and the brand identity concept, so that they act as role models" (Rolke, 2004 cited in Burmann & Zeplin, 2005, p.292).

Brand Centered HR Management (HRM)

As previously explained, the role of the HR department in the execution of internal branding efforts has seen a lot of attention from researchers. It is indeed only natural that HRM has a role to play when discussing any effort that involves a company's employees. The role can, however, be very different from company to company as it includes "a diverse set of policies and practices that include, among others, recruiting, training and rewarding employees" (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016, p.49).

An interesting part of the HRM component, when compared to the other components of internal branding, is the "recruiting" part, as this refers to an effort made before a person is an actual employee. According to Burmann and Zeplin (2005), the HR team needs to make sure that the personal identity of the persons employed are in line with the brand identity, as such employees will require less internal branding efforts to internalize the brand. They also argue that the alignment between HR and brand management is often neglected, but that the companies that realize it have much to win. Such thinking is also stressed by Ind (1998) who regards the recruitment process as a branding exercise and thus an essential part of the management of the corporate brand.

The other main opportunity for the HRM to have a positive effect on the brand identity internalization among employees is when they have just been hired and are to be phased in to the company. As it is the initial socialization process, this orientation training is absolutely crucial to immediately convey to employees the brand identity, its heritage, vision and values. Such training should also be complemented in a later stage by either a repetition by the phasing in orientation, executive programs or social events through which the brand identity is conveyed. There have been several studies that have shown that such institutionalized socialization will positively affect the generation of commitment to the organization among employees (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

Internal Brand Communication

According to Du Preez and Bendixen (2015), internal brand communication is the single most important component of internal branding. It is the actual verbalization and communication of the brand identity concept and should therefore incorporate all aspects of the brand identity while at the same time be convincing for all stakeholders. In other words, two requirements have to be met: on the one hand, it needs to represent all aspects of the brand and on the other hand it has to be communicated in a way so that employees actually remember it. This might be quite hard to successfully achieve. For example, a brand book might accurately describe a brand identity but it is not very likely that employees will memorize it. A brand value statement is easy to remember but will not cover the whole brand identity concept (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Judson, Aurand, Gorchels and Gordon (2008) argue that if a company wants to build a commonly shared understanding of their brand, it is absolutely essential to have an effective brand verbalization, both in terms of content and the means of communicating it.

The second issue with internal brand communication is the question of which communication media to use. In addition to formal rules and guidelines, the brand identity concept "needs an emotional appeal in order to generate internal brand commitment" (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005, p.290). Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006, p.776) also emphasize that "employees, just as consumers, want to be engaged in experiences that let them 'touch and feel' the brand". There are three forms of communication media that should be aligned if the internal branding is to be successful. Central communication incorporates written materials, the company intranet and thirdly the more interactive approach of hosting centrally organized events where employees can take part. Cascade communication is similar to central but more hierarchical in nature, as it emphasizes the passing down of communication from top to bottom. Lateral Communication in contrast describes the transmission of information between employees regardless of position and level. It is argued to be the most effective to convince brand sceptics, because such information from peers is usually more trustworthy and memorable. Naturally, this type of communication is hard to control from the manager perspective which has led to an approach called organizational storytelling through which a collective sense of the brand identity can be developed (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

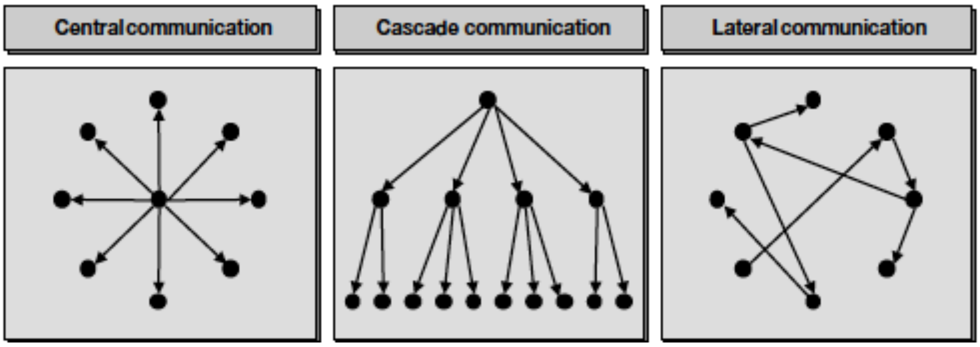

Figure 4. Three forms of internal communication (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005)

One approach to internal brand communication, proposed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000b), even disregard written statements and brand books in favor of what they call internal role models that they believe can fully capture the emotion of the brand. These role models can be stories, programs, policies, events or people, a strong CEO or other personalities, that the company management has agreed perfectly represent the brand identity. However, the more common view is that all three types of communication is necessary and needs to be aligned for internal communication to be successful. Lastly, it is noted that patience is necessary as it usually takes several communication efforts before the brand message is actually understood by employees (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

3.2.3 Aims and Results of Internal Branding

As a result of a fully integrated internal branding, employees can develop two behaviors successively, described as brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior. In the model presented above by Burmann and Zeplin (2005), brand commitment is defined as "the extent of psychological attachment of employees to the brand, which influences their willingness to exert extra effort towards reaching the brand goals — in other words, to exert brand citizenship behavior" (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005, p.284). There are three psychological constructs behind this behavior according to Burmann and Zeplin (2005). One, compliance with the organization's structure, rules and incentives system, two, identification with the organization which leads to the perception of self being intertwined with the company's fate, as explained by social-identity theories (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014), and three, internalization of core brand values into one's self-concept as guiding principles for one's actions (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

It is through those three psychological mechanisms that brand commitment leads to brand citizenship behavior, defined as "individual voluntary behaviors outside of role expectations" (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005, p.282). Furthermore, it should be noted that internalization and identification have stronger influence on behaviors than compliance (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005) since they represent internal motivations according to the social identity approach, as opposed to the mechanical urge to comply with rules, which represents an external motivation (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014).

3.3 Corporate Museums

Despite its long track record, the research field of corporate museums has hardly been studied (Bonti, 2014; Lehman & Byrom, 2007; Nissley & Casey, 2002). The history of corporate museums date back over 100 years, starting with the United Shoe Machinery Company museum in Boston, opening in 1901. During the 1960s, corporate museums could be found in practically every industry, from telephones, trains, to furnishings and dinnerware (Lane, 1993). The starting point for corporate museums was that companies started to save memorabilia, product samples and other materials that was related to the industry and work of the company (Nissley & Casey, 2002), focusing on collection, care and preservation (Brandon & Wilson, 2005). The United States experienced a boom in corporate museums during the latter part of the twentieth century, where the majority of the existing corporate museums today were established in the 1970s and 1980s. In the beginning, corporate museums focused on company history, recognizing key individuals such as the founders, exhibiting photographs and other documents of the past. Nowadays, the focus has shifted towards marketing, public relations and educational advertising (Nissley & Casey, 2002). The meaning of corporate museum has been expanded partly by the work of Nissley and Casey (2002), to embrace organizational memory that organizations strategically can use to develop the corporate brand identity and image (Carù, Ostillio, & Leone, 2017).

3.3.1 Definition of Corporate Museums

There are various definitions of the corporate museum and there is an absence of a uniquely shared definition (Montella, 2014). Generally speaking, they are owned and managed by either a privately held or a publicly traded company. These facilities that are exhibit-based usually serves roles within marketing and public relations, and can be identified as museums, factory tours, exhibit halls, visitor centers and information centers (Nissley & Casey, 2002). According to Danilov (1992 cited in Nissley & Casey, 2002, p.35), the definition of a corporate museum is a "corporate facility with tangible objects and/or exhibits, displayed in a museum-like setting, that communicates the history, operations, and/or interests of a company to employees, guests, customers, and/or the public". Bonti (2014) claims that corporate museums consist of physical constructions where the company history and memory are communicated. Moreover, they let the visitors reminisce the corporate's past and present from both social and strategic point of views. Finally, Lehman and Byrom (2007) stresses that corporate museums target current and potential consumers, while public museums focus on the general public. Regarding the management of corporate museums, it involves typical museum management concerns (Carù, Ostillio, & Leone, 2017; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014), due to the growing complexity of institutional missions and their relevance for different audiences (Suarez & Tsutui, 2004).

3.3.2 Purpose and Strategic Asset

Four main objectives have been identified for corporate museums by Danilov (1992, cited in Nissley & Casey, 2002). Except for the purposes regarding preserving the company's history and influencing the public opinion, the corporate museum plays an important role when it comes to establish and improve the employees pride and identification with the organization. The final important aspect is to enlighten both customers and guests about the company (Nissley & Casey, 2002). These objectives are also in line with the more recent article of Carù, Ostillio and Leone (2017) who also state that the mission of a corporate museum can be to conserve a collection in a particular context, educating visitors and presenting exhibitions.

A corporate museum can also be interpreted as a strategic asset that can be used in order to influence the company's actions (Nissley & Casey, 2002) and it is emphasized that the corporate museum functions as a powerful tool for complementing the brand management decisions and transferring brand identity. To highlight the brand's source of value and convey its heritage, the corporate museum should always have its main emphasis on the brand (Carù, Ostillio & Leone, 2017).

Again, the objectives of a corporate museum are directly connected to building organizational image and identity. Coca-Cola, Ford and Motorola have for instance established their museums for the strategic purpose of employee-training, to enhance their public relations and employee relation strategies. It has also been suggested that a corporate museum can function as the company's soul (Griffiths, 1999 cited in Nissley & Casey, 2002). This means that corporations use their museum as a place for on boarding new employees and educate personnel, and thus create their identity. With that being said, it is argued that the corporate museum is a managerial tool, supporting the manager when it comes to shaping the corporate identity and image (Nissley & Casey, 2002). Montella (2014) also highlight that a corporate museum can be used for both external and internal corporate marketing purposes, such as spreading image and strengthening loyalty. This could be illustrated by looking at the yearly visitor numbers for the Martini & Rossi Visitor Centre in Italy, where 23 percent were corporate employees and 30 percent were business operators.

According to Piatkowska (2013), the corporate museum can also function as a new marketing device, especially when it comes to develop corporate identity strategies and establishing market advantages. One reason for this is that the museums are inviting the visitors into a social, and perhaps more importantly, branded space. This space is devoted to one particular company that can focus the consumer's attention on a thoughtful marketing message. Generally, corporate museums are placed near the factories where the brand products are manufactured (Piatkowska, 2013) or next to the corporate headquarters (Bonti, 2014). This is done to maintain credibility with the brand's past and philosophy. Another important aspect is the museum's unique architecture, which must match the quality of the brand's products as well as be identified with the brand itself (Piatkowska, 2013).

3.3.3 Past, Present, Future and Heritage

As previously mentioned, heritage brands focus on the past, present and future (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006). These three time dimensions are also applicable to corporate museums, according to a recent article by Carù, Ostillio and Leone (2017), who studied the corporate museum of the Italian luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo. The authors argue that a corporate museum functions not only as a celebration of a brand's history, but also as a bridge between the past and the future of the brand. This is illustrated by a quote from the brand management, stating that "the museum has to go beyond the story of what the founder has created and not always stress the same aspects, but highlight the style and the production processes that continue today. The museum should not only be a showcase of the past, but ought to show what has been done after the founder's death, communicating the brand. This could also support the brand's evolution in the future" (Carù, Ostillio & Leone, 2017, p.38).

When linking the company's past and present together with the brand's development, the corporate museum highlights authenticity as a distinctive characteristic while promoting consistency and continuity. To illustrate, a corporate museum can offer the visitors a discovery that covers the brand's values and simultaneously support to justify the brand, as it progresses according to the company's heritage and roots. This enables the corporate museum to function as a value generator, which cooperatively supports the company and underline the brand's core through its evolution. Finally, to convey and enrich the brand's authenticity, the museum should not only exhibit objects from the past, but also tell a story built on the spirit and heritage of the brand (Carù, Ostillio & Leone (2017).

3.4 Corporate Storytelling

Corporate storytelling is advised to help demonstrating the prominence of the corporate brand to both external and internal stakeholders, and thereby assist the organization to connect with its employees and to create a position for the company against competitors (Roper & Fill, 2012). The corporate reputation is defined as a stakeholder's perception of the organization (Brown, Dacin, Pratt & Whetten, 2006) and Dowling (2006, p.96) advocates that "if the story causes stakeholders to perceive the company as more authentic, distinctive, expert, sincere, powerful, and likeable, then it is likely that this will enhance the overall reputation of the company".

3.4.1 Definition of Corporate Stories

Before scrutinizing corporate stories, it is first needed to reflect over what constitutes a story (Roper & Spear, 2013). The literature is arguing over the terms "story" and "narrative", where stories are proposed to have internal temporality and coherence, while narratives do not necessarily have coherent plotlines or characters (Cunliffe, Luhman, & Boje, 2004). Forster (1963, cited in Roper & Spear, 2013) claims that stories are a series of logically and chronologically related events. Jameson (2001) defines an event as something that happens, instead of something that just exists. This reminds of the definition by Martin, Feldman, Hatch and Sitkin (1983) of an organizational story as one that focuses on a single, unified sequence of events apparently drawn from the organization's history. It is also suggested by Gabriel (1991) that some corporate stories are "myths", which includes villains, heroes, sacrifices, courage, and ordeals. On the other hand, Rowlinson and Procter (1999) highlight that mythical events are considered imaginary, which indicates that mythical corporate stores may represent events that did not actually occur.

3.4.2 Themes and elements

The starting point for developing corporate stories is according to van Riel and Fombrun (2007, cited in Roper & Spear, 2013) a core reputation platform, where a good corporate story should emphasize those characteristics that drive the organization's reputation. The authors recognize three reputational platform themes; benefits, emotion, and activities. Several authors have further suggested other elements of corporate stories, such as internal and external benefits, accomplishments, and conflict (Baker & Boyle, 2009; Janssen, Van Dalfsen, Van Hoof & Van Vuuren, 2012; Wilkins & Thompson, 1991; Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008). It is argued that different story elements could drive specific aspects of the corporate reputation (Roper & Spear, 2013). Another important aspect of corporate stories brought up in the literature is to include strategic elements, such as the organization's vision, mission, and values (Dowling, 2006; Driscoll & McKee, 2007; Marshall & Adamic, 2010), which suggest that strategy may be another theme of corporate stories.

Dowling (2006) stress that emotion can keep employees motivated and engage customers, meaning that a corporate story should construct an emotional bond with stakeholders in order to help nurture their support and trust. The corporate story is also suggested to communicate the company's strategy, by including the corporate mission, vision and values (Marzec, 2007). The associations to strategy are important as Suvatjis, de Chernatony and Halikias (2012) explain that there must be synergy between the corporate brand and the corporate strategy.

3.4.3 Channels of Communication

There are several mediums where the stories can be communicated, as for instance through web sites, intranets, speeches, press releases, and annual reports (Roper & Fill, 2012), recruitment and development, management decisions, and community stewardship (Marzec, 2007). Nevertheless, Dowling (2006) underscore that the corporate story must resonate inside the company; otherwise it will not be represented by employees in their meetings with external stakeholders. In addition, the elements of a story must also fit together, or it might be contested, ignored, or even mocked. Heugens (2002) has a similar reasoning and states that in order to reduce the risk of failure to gain credibility, the corporate stories communicated as part of corporate branding must be based on the truth. Then again, there are also mythical stories that are less likely to be entirely true, hence Gabriel (1991) argue that the public might not always trust some corporate stories.

3.4.4 Advantages of Expressing Corporate Stories

It is suggested that storytelling aids in terms of knowledge transfer, by helping people to organize, understand and remember information (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010; Morgan & Dennehy, 1997; Woodside, 2010), since it is likely to relate the story to experience already in memory (Woodside, 2010). Stories can also evoke emotion (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997) and develop emotional relations with a brand (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). Various authors have raised the importance of emotional brand communications, where for instance Urde (2009) argue that the corporate brand identity should represent emotional, functional and symbolic dimensions. Hence, the corporate brand covenant in the center of the corporate brand identity could be improved by storytelling (Balmer, 2012). When reviewing the internal aspects of organizational storytelling, it is claimed by Driscoll and McKee (2007) to be an efficient method of internal communication, since a manager can utilize stories to engage with their employees, while Marzec (2007) suggests that the story also can make employees value their role within the organization. The corporate story can also function as a vehicle for communicating values to the employees (de Chernatony, Cottam & Segal-Horn, 2006), as well as inform and influence the personnel about the corporate culture (Smith & Keyton, 2001).

To conclude, these suggested advantages of using stories as a way of communication show that corporate storytelling may be useful in corporate branding, by “reaching audiences on a rational level (aiding understanding, storage and memory of information), and emotional level (through generating an emotional connection)” (Roper & Spear, 2013, p.493).

4 Empirical Results

To give the reader a comprehensive overview of the four chosen cases, each company will initially be briefly presented individually. First, general corporate history will be presented, followed by the company's corporate museums and internal branding efforts. After introducing the company profiles, the empirical findings and results from the research is presented. As mentioned previously in the methodology chapter, this section will be structured with the help of five w-questions, in order to present the data holistically.

4.1 Company Profiles

4.1.1 Absolut Vodka

The idea behind Absolut Vodka started already in 1879. L.O. Smith was an entrepreneur who thought that Sweden was in need of a new vodka. Accordingly, Absolut Rent Brännvin (Absolut Pure Vodka) appeared for the first time and became known for its pure and smooth taste. This very business later became the foundation for Sweden's government monopoly Vin & Sprit (Wine & Spirits), founded in 1917. A century after its creation, the Absolut Vodka that we are familiar with today was launched internationally in 1979, known among many things for its creative design and marketing. In 2008, the Swedish government sold Vin & Sprit to the French company Pernod Ricard. Having a decentralized culture within Pernod Ricard, Absolut Vodka remained in Sweden, managed by The Absolut Company in Stockholm. The product is still being produced in a small town in Sweden called Åhus. From Åhus, 99 percent of the Absolut Vodka is later sold overseas, which makes it Sweden's largest export product when it comes to the food category (The Absolut Company, n.d.a).

Absolut has its own studio in a building from the early 1900s in Stockholm, called Atelier. The idea behind Atelier is that inviting people to your home is the best way to get people to know you, so Absolut created their own brand home. Here, the brand is portrayed as a person, not as a vodka, which enables one to share equal beliefs and experience aspects such as a person's lifestyle. Atelier tries to communicate with all the senses, being described as embodiment of what the Absolut brand stands for. The 800-square meter apartment consists the personality of the brand in terms of images, fabrics, sound, and even smells. There is also a bar, stated as the heart of Absolut. In the building's cellar, the heritage room is located, which is the conceptual room of Åhus (Absolut, n.d; StudioNoc, n.d). Absolut also offers free tours at their factory in Åhus, where half a million bottles are produced every day. The tours run six times daily on weekdays during the summer (Lonely Planet, 2016) and they are often used for internal use as well, mainly in terms of training. The guided tours are free of charge and are held in both Swedish and English (Absolut, 2016). Apart from joining the tour, one can watch a show about the Absolut phenomenon and hear stories about how the local vodka became a premier brand (Visit Skåne, n.d.).

At Absolut, it is the Brand Advocacy team that is responsible for the internal branding of Absolut within Pernod Ricard, which is done by educating them. The Internal Brand Manager explained that "*I work within the 'Brand Advocacy and Trade Experience' team. My job is therefore to educate employees from each market company within Pernod Ricard on the Absolut Brand – its heritage, identity and values*". In other words, the job entails employee training as a means of securing brand identification. Absolut also host a brand education experience, which is called Absolut Akademi. When the PR Director was asked about Akademi, he answered:

> It is an absolutely essential part of our internal branding process. Especially for those who start out in the marketing department, but also for other employees, to learn about the 'one source' and the heritage of Absolut. They have to go through the Akademi to actually understand it all. Our history and pride. We become really proud when we see everything we done in the past and what we are still doing. The Akademi is the most central part. It is an immersive experience in Åhus.

4.1.2 Hästens

Hästens is Sweden's oldest manufacturer of beds and originated as a saddler in 1852. Master saddlers were then also upholsterers, dedicated to equestrian goods and beds using horsetail hair. With time, the automobile reduced the need for saddlery which resulted in that Hästens shifted focus and concentrated more and more on beds. Natural materials such as horsetail hair, cotton, wool and flax play a fundamental role within the company and the tradition of hand craftsmanship is deeply rooted. Hästens follow a Spirit of Excellence, which is an ideology and founding principle that advises the work of the master craftsmen (Hästens, 2017a). The heritage of Hästens can be illustrated by the words of Jan Ryde, fifth-generation owner and executive chairman: "*Before Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, before Graham Bell made his first phone call and before Henry Ford put the world on wheels, my great-great-grandfather founded Hästens*" (Hästens, 2017b).

Hästens has also been a purveyor to the Swedish Royal Court since 1952, meaning that the company has been serving as the official supplier for three generations and managed to meet the rigid requirements for being appointed (Hästens, 2017c). The iconic Blue Check pattern was introduced in 1978 and it function as a standard, means of communication and quality-assurance tool, while being protected as a trademark worldwide (2017d). Today, Hästens is managed by the fifth generation (Hästens, 2017e) and the beds are mainly sold through a network of distributors across 40 markets and through 15 Hästens stores in Europe and North America (Hästens, 2015). The company employs 232 people, including 67 employees who work outside of Sweden. The tagline 'fulfilling dreams since 1852' guides the work at Hästens, according to Hästens Communication Specialist.

During the 1940s, Hästen outgrew its production site and started to look for a new home, a Dream Factory (Hästens, 2017e). Hästens third generation leader had high ambitions for the new properties, as he wanted it to be more than an assembly line hangar. Instead, there had to be a soul and a place that ignited the senses. The relatively unknown architect Ralph Erskine was commissioned for the task and the result was a building unlike any conventional utility spaces at the time (Hästens, 2017f). Since the demand for Hästens beds continuously increased, it was decided in 1998 to extend the factory once again. 50 years after designing the first dream factory, Ralph Erskine, now a well-renowned architect, returned to Köping to design the factory extensions (Hästens, 2017e). However, even if it is called a factory, there are no robots or big machinery chomping, instead it is the craftsmen who work quietly with traditional techniques (Hästens, 2017f).

Hästens offer educational programs as the Communication Specialist told us:

> We have a department that works with education, 'Hästens Academy'. There, it is included that you visit Köping, to take part of the education which is about our production and manufacturing process, so that you can see it live, on the spot. We have something that we call 'Tour of Passion' where you walk through the factory, from beginning the end, to take part of everything that has to do with Hästens. From our history to our traditions and how we work with our product. You will see every different department and we also have a test station, where you can try to do certain moments of the production. Just to get the feeling that it looks so simple when others who have done this for a long time does it. When you try it yourself, you will actually see how it is done. It is usually very appreciated to do the tour, because you will get the whole picture.

4.1.3 IKEA

The story of the furniture retailer IKEA begins already in 1926 when the founder Ingvar Kamprad was born in southern Sweden. Ingvar was selling matches to his neighbors already at the age of five (IKEA, 2016a), and IKEA was founded in 1943 when he was 17 (IKEA, 2016b). IKEA's vision is to create a better everyday life for the many people, meaning that the company's business idea is to offer a wide range of well-designed and functional home furnishing products at affordable prices, so that as many as possible can afford them (IKEA Group, 2016). In 2016, IKEA employed 183 000 people, operated 389 stores in 28 countries which resulted in 915 000 000 store visits (IKEA, 2017a). There are seven core values that guide IKEA globally, which covers humbleness and willpower, leadership by example, daring to be different, togetherness and enthusiasm, cost-consciousness, constant desire for renewal, and lastly accept and delegate responsibility (IKEA, 2016c). Another fundamental document was written by Ingvar Kamprad in 1976, called 'The Testament of a Furniture Dealer', where Kamprad describe that the essence of IKEA is the product range and price philosophy, by noting that "they also describe the rules and methods that we have worked out over the years as cornerstones of the framework of ideas that have made and will continue to make IKEA a unique company" (IKEA, 2013, p.3).

The IKEA Museum opened recently in 2016, located in the original building that housed the very first IKEA store, which opened in 1958 in Älmhult, Sweden. The museum tells the story of how IKEA was founded in the southern parts of Sweden to create "a better everyday life for the many people”, where the visitors can discover the societal forces that shaped IKEA and the people behind it, as well as what IKEA might be tomorrow. The museum features a main exhibition in three parts and a temporary exhibition (IKEA Group, 2016). The main exhibition cover three themes; Our roots portrays society and living conditions and spirit that prevailed in Sweden and fostered Ingvar Kamprad, Our story emphasize reflections, ideas and the many things that have shaped and continue to drive IKEA forward, and lastly Your story exhibit how people at home use IKEA products in many different ways (IKEA Museum, 2017). Apart from the Museum, IKEA also utilize IKEA Learning Centres and IKEA Tillsammans, with the aim to maintain and transfer knowledge about IKEA values and the IKEA culture to IKEA employees (IKEA, 2017b). During our IKEA Museum observation, a guide told us that the museum complement the Learning Centres, which are more theoretical, by focusing on culture, values and history at the Museum. He also said that there is an equal share of internal and external visitors at the IKEA Museum, with 150 000 total visitors yearly.

4.1.4 Volvo

Volvo Car Corporation (Volvo) was founded in 1927, the same year as the first car rolled off the production line in Gothenburg, Sweden, where the headquarter is located. In 2016, the company employed about 30 000 people and more than 534 000 cars were sold through 2 300 dealers in over 100 countries around the world (Volvo Cars, 2017a; Volvo Car Group, 2016). The mission of Volvo “is to be the world’s most progressive and desired premium car company and to make people’s lives less complicated” (Volvo Car Group, 2016, p.15), while the three core values focus on safety, quality and care for the environment (Volvo Cars, 2017b). Volvo is constantly synonymous with safety (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007) which can be illustrated by the vision that “no one should be seriously injured or killed in a new Volvo car by 2020” (Volvo Car Group, 2016, p.14). In addition, Volvo states that the company started making cars because no other car manufacturer was making cars strong enough or safe enough for Swedish roads. The company values its heritage and states that looking back helps the company to look forward (Volvo Cars, 2017c). In terms of heritage, Volvo introduced the three-point safety belt in 1959, estimated to have saved over one million lives due to Volvo waiving its patent rights so that the market could benefit from the innovation (Volvo Cars, 2017d).

Volvo offer a range of opportunities for employees, customers, organizations, schools and the general public to interact with the brand physically and get ‘dipped in blue’ in Gothenburg (Volvo Cars, 2017e). For instance, the Volvo Museum portrays the history and heritage of the brand (Volvo Museum, n.d.). At the Brand Experience Centre, guided tours show Volvo’s vision in areas such as environment, safety, design and connectivity. There is also an opportunity to test drive up to 20 different cars on a purpose-built track at the Volvo Cars Demo Centre. Lastly, the car company welcome 20 000 visitors yearly on their factory tours in Gothenburg, where a guide takes the visitor through the whole production process, from rolls of sheet metal to assembled cars (Volvo Cars, 2017f). We were told that:

> the Volvo Museum represent the historical part. The Factory represents the present; what we actually produce today. The Brand Experience Centre is very much related to

> the future, because we talk a lot about what kind of strategy we have and where we are heading" (Director Visitor Centre).

4.2 The Five W-questions – Findings and Results

4.2.1 Where?

By where, we mean for instance where is the corporate museums located and where does the internal branding activities take place? Our observations and interviews showed that each and every one of the four case companies have some sort of facility located near the birthplace of the company, all open for internal visits as IKEA's HR Specialist state:

> Here in Älmhult, we have a lot of internal visits, where people come to Älmhult every year. I would guess that we have 50 000 visitors yearly, from all over the world, which is a lot.

During our Volvo observation at Torslandaverken, a cluster of corporate facilities was noted and we were told that "*the four activities that my unit offer here in Gothenburg consist of the Visitor Centre, Demo Centre, Brand Experience Centre and the Volvo Hall*" (Director Visitor Centre).

Absolut sometimes emphasize the birthplace more depending on the employee's role, as the Internal Brand Manager illustrates: "*especially if you start working with marketing, then it is very important to know where Absolut was born, and Absolut was born in Åhus and lives in bars*."

Absolut, Hästens and Volvo have production in respective hometown, and use their facilities to bring employees over to their sites. Hästen states for instance that:

> We only have production at one single place in the world, which is Köping, Sweden. Every employee at us comes to Köping to learn about our production and our brand. And no matter if we hire in Sweden or internationally, everybody will come to Köping to spend time in the manufacturing. […] We see it as very important to actually bring people to Köping. We have tried different variants during the years, both to have trainings out in the stores, which we also have from time to time, we are not only bringing people to Köping, instead we are using a combination (Communication Specialist).

There are however differences between the companies. For instance, both IKEA and Volvo have dedicated museums, located in Älmhult and Gothenburg. The IKEA Museum guide told us that it was obvious for the museum to be located in the same building as the first ever IKEA store, since Älmhult is the heart of IKEA. However, even if all four companies bring employees to the companies' birthplace, IKEA and Hästens also expand beyond that. For IKEA, this means that:

> There is an opportunity to join what we call 'front weeks', which means that the employees spend one week at a department store, somewhere in Sweden. This is so that they can try to work with our products and with our customers, which is highly appreciated. It is very important for us, to stay true and not get lost." (HR Specialist).

Hästens on the other hand stated that: *"[we] sometimes fly sellers to for instance a small town in Germany and train three employees at a small store*." (HR Manager).

4.2.2 When?

When illustrates the time and frequency aspects, as in when does the activities take place, and how often?

Absolut invites employees and external stakeholders such as bartenders from all around the globe every year. It is the previously mentioned Absolut Akademi, known as the brand education experience, who receives over 1000 guests from the network of Pernod Ricard. The visitors spend three days in Åhus to learn more about for instance the brand, manufacturing as well as food and drink culture. The Internal Brand Manager describes Absolut Akademi:

> When we hire new employees, then it is a long recruitment process. When we finally have that person, then they have to learn to organizational structure, who they are working with and who does what at the office. […] And to understand the bridge between our product and where it lives in Åhus, we have something called Akademi which is a three days long experience with the brand that takes part fully from Åhus, from seed to bottle, as we use to call it: 'from seed, to bottle, to sip'.

One of the major differences concerning 'when' dealt with if the companies had a mandatory on-boarding program or not. Absolut and Hästens use on-boarding, while IKEA and Volvo does not. To illustrate, the Director of Volvo Visitor Centres expressed that:

> There is no generic introduction program or internal brand education for every new recruit at Volvo, and definitely not one on a global basis. That is up to every local department to decide. We have of course commonly shared documents here, which are used all over the world, and they can be found in our intranet. And once every now and then, we create a 'Brand Bible', that everyone should read.

IKEA focused on values early on instead of on-boarding programs, which the following quote demonstrate:

> IKEA is a value driven company, so culture and values are extremely important to us. We start as early as possible to ensure that the employees appreciate to work with the culture and values at IKEA, already during our interviews. We work with value-based interviews when we are hiring, and not competency based interviews. So we are mainly interested in the person behind the CV, what motivates that person and similar. The competences are of course also important and depend on the job applied for, but we are first and foremost looking at the person's values. It is crucial for us and it is where everything begins. […] We do not have a certain process after each recruitment,

> that you must join a value-training to get the right values. Instead you already bring the right values with you, from the start. So it is very important to know from the beginning, who the person actually is. But, we also have a lot of internal trainings, for instance we have 'Culture weeks' and similar." (HR Specialist).

As a contrast, Hästens use their Dream Factory both after hiring employees and for meetings:

> Hästens has an on boarding program for every newly employed, which can differ a bit depending on which role you have. But every one of our employees spends time at our manufacturing, to learn the product because it is such a central part in everything we do. The bed is always in focus. To get the right feeling, you need to have been in the manufacturing, to see how it works and get understanding for the materials and what we do, so that our pride and love for the craftsmanship and products can be passed on. […] We have regularly meetings in the factory, mainly the sales team who are working internationally. They go to Köping approximately once a month to get the special feeling that only exists in Köping. We also have regularly webinars once a month, both for the stores and our employees all around the world" (Communication Specialist).

In addition, the HR Manager of Hästens told us that "*we would like to see that our employees pass Stage 1, 2 and 3 of our Academy, which is much easier to control compared to 'forcing' an external salesperson to come back to Köping and fulfil the education*."

Another distinction relate to that IKEA's HR Specialist stated that "*we do not have any continuous update for the employees that they must go to*", while the scope of the Hästens Academy and trainings can differ in both time and frequency:

> The Academy has several different programs, which can be for instance product training but also leadership exercises. The programs cover different aspects and vary in time. But we do this several times during the year and continuously, and we like to see our resellers return every so often, to stay updated regarding what is going on and new developments. So that you stay up to date and are able to mediate the right message to the end consumer." (Communication Specialist).

4.2.3 Who?

The question 'who' deals with for instance the aspect of who joins the internal branding process or who visits the corporate museum? It does not include the part of who trains or communicate the brand's heritage, as that will be covered under the why question below.

Every company uses their corporate museum for internal purposes, apart from the on-boarding processes mentioned above. The differences where instead prominent when it comes to which other stakeholders who visited and joined the corporate facilities, even though they all worked together with external visitors as well. The Internal Brand Manager of Absolut said that:

> I could for instance be working directly internally with marketers, or with brand experiences to educate the trade, which covers those who are working in bars as well as those who sell Absolut in any way in a market. It could also be that I sometimes work with an advertising agency that needs to learn more about Absolut, then we use an educational platform that works really well to do it live.

Hästens focus on both employees and external companies such as resellers:

> Everybody has to visit the manufacturing and see how it all works. If you work as a salesman for instance, then you will spend even more time in the manufacturing, to really embrace all the details. But everybody get the feeling for how we do things, by spending time at the manufacturing facilities. […] Except for the on-boarding program that applies to our employees, we also have a department that works with education, 'Hästens Academy', and those programs are open for all our stores and also our own employees (Communication Specialist).

Hästens were asked for how long they have used the Academy, and answered *"in one way, the educations have always been there, more or less. Then we have of course developed and expanded the program gradually, so that they are becoming bigger and bigger*" (Communication Specialist).

At IKEA, the Museum Guide shared his views and told us that all sorts of employees visit them, for instance IKEA Industry who manufactures the PAX wardrobes, suppliers and other external companies who are curious about IKEA. However, the HR Specialist once more emphasized that

> We do not bring every single employee by plane all the way to Älmhult. Our values and culture are very important and instead control and functions as a corner-stone, and it is present throughout the organization. It is not worth having values if people do not comply with them. The most important thing is actually that the values are complied with, otherwise they will be hollowed.

When answering to if IKEA invited suppliers to Älmhult to experience the brand, the answer was that "*we have a bit over 900 suppliers all around the globe. And all of those get certified in what we call IWAY, which is our codes of conduct for our suppliers*."

At Volvo, the different departments had much to say when it comes to who would visit their facilities:

> If you look at R&D, then they are very structured in terms of their recruitment process. They have big programs that every new employee shall fulfill. And one part of this program is that you should take part of all the activities that we offer at the Visitor Centres. If you take the manufacturing, then they have an on-boarding program with very big groups simultaneously, with parts of what you can do at the Visitor Centres. So it all depends on what the different department has decided.

When managers had not worked at Volvo before, the Visitor Centre Director stated that *"it can be so that some senior managers and directors get 'sent down' [laughter] to us at the*

Brand Experience Centre." Absolut also told us that "*executives from Pernod Ricard, our owners, visit us in Åhus from time to time*".

During our observation at Volvo, the supervisor told us that the three main groups that visit the Brand Experience Centre are internal staff, resellers and customers. We noted the resellers when the tour started, as we joined a group of 30 guests, which consisted of resellers from Norway and sheet-metal workers.

4.2.4 What?

Through our observations at the corporate museums as well as our interviews with company representatives, we could identify which aspects of their respective brands that they want to portray in their facilities. In other words, what is communicated in the corporate museums and hence what is communicated to the employees when brought to these facilities? The aspects that were most prominently observed by us and mentioned in the interviews were the brands role in the different time aspects of History, Present and Future as well as the emphasis on The Product and The Production Process.

History

A common theme across all cases was the emphasis on the company history when teaching employees about the brand. At Absolut, this is illustrated by the PR Director while describing their internal branding efforts (1) and by the Internal Brand Manager, describing Absolut Atelier in Stockholm (2):

> 1: For internal branding, it is about telling the story about the history of Absolut, about the 'one source' of our product. Tell the story about the pride of how we produce our product, which we can do today in our facilities in Åhus. This will be even more emphasized when the new Visitor Centre is completed.
>
> 2: It is an apartment of 800 square meters, and it is furnished as if Absolut would be a person and live there. It tells everything from production to brand, and all that has happened for us in the marketing history, from our launch to cocktail history and so on. We are using Atelier very much internally.

During our observation of Absolut Atelier, we noted that each room is dedicated to a different aspect of the Absolut Brand. As such, there was one room dedicated solely to the history of the brand.

According to a communication specialist at Hästens, they also value the company history when describing the brand: "*History is a large part of our brand, absolutely. Hästens is a family business, today it is actually the sixth generation who are working with Hästens!*". This was also observed during our visit at the Hästens factory in Köping, where timelines, old articles and photos, pictures of the founding family, and other relics could be found in basically every room. The brand taglines, "Fulfilling dreams since 1852" and "Crafting sleep since 1852" can also be observed on every bed, employee clothing, walls, and communication material. However, when describing how the history is actually communicated internally to the employees, the same Communication Specialist explains:

> For us, we do not have a history what we have 'made up' from the outside world and that we then bring inside internally. Instead, everything is done the other way around; from the inside out. We do not have to tell and push our employees with information, but instead it is our employees who create the story that we mediate to the outside world.

IKEA is also a company that puts emphasis on its history in its corporate museums. During our observation at the IKEA museum in Älmhult, we noted that two out of four floors were dedicated to the history of the company as well as the history of Sweden in general and the province of Småland in particular. We also observed that the person Ingvar Kamprad was a prominent part of the museum as well, with a huge picture of him being the first thing that you see when you enter. The brochure about the museum summarizes what these two different floors dedicated to history are about:

> Our origins in the province of Småland have formed the foundation for our corporate culture. Find out what everyday life was like in Småland in the late 1800s. Learn how Swedish society was transformed during the 1900s. We also present a young man, Ingvar Kamprad, and his trading company IKEA. Join us on our journey from the first IKEA store in 1958 and out into the world.

The importance of history in the IKEA Museum, both with regards to the company itself but also the context it was developed within, is further illustrated by an HR specialist while describing the museum:

> We have a museum, where the history is extremely important. And it is not only about our company's history, but also much about how Sweden was before and is today. So it is very important. And storytelling is always fun. There are fun stories, as well as good and bad stories. The most important is however that one learn from stories, and hopefully we still do.

During our observation at the Volvo Experience Center in Göteborg, we noted that the introduction movie first shown during the tour portrayed the company history to a large extent, with their 'Director of Volvo Cars Heritage' prominently featured throughout the movie. However, out of all their corporate museums it is the actual 'Volvo Museum' that focuses most on history, as described by the Director of Visitor Centres: "*We use the museum for the historical part*". The same director also describes an example of history important to Volvo, with regards to the safety belt invention:

> Volvo actually had a patent that we released free to the market in 1959. And it is the safety invention in cars that have saved the most lives. There is no other individual development in the cars that have saved more lives than the three-point safety belt has done. Then we of course tell the story of Nils Bohlin and how we reasoned around the patent and similar, which we combine with opportunity to try and test to crash in seven kilometers per hour.

Present and Future

In addition to history, in some of the cases the corporate museums also highlighted the company's role in the present and future, as described in the IKEA museum brochure:

> The IKEA Museum is the story of IKEA. In the past, in the present and into the future. Join us on our journey from our beginning in Älmhult and out into the world. Weave between period room settings from the 1960s onwards.

This could be observed at the museum, where the main exhibition was structured around a timeline that enable visitors to clearly follow IKEA through the different time frames.

Volvo emphasizes the present and future in their corporate museums through being open with their goals, which we observed at the experience center, and which is also explained by the Director of Visitor Centres:

> The factory represents the present; what we actually produce today. The Brand Experience Centre is very much related to the future, because we talk a lot about what kinds of strategy we have and where we are heading. We have for instance a goal year 2020 that nobody should die or get seriously injured in a new Volvo car. We will start with Autonomous Cars at the year 2021, for real and not the minor project that we are doing right now in Gothenburg; we are going to sell Autonomous cars. 2025 is the year when we shall have put 1 million electric cars on the road. All these goals are something that we talk about at the Brand Experience Center.

The Product and The Production Process

The other aspect that we could both observe at the corporate museums and that was repeatedly mentioned during the interviews was the demonstration of the product and production process, which was expressed in terms of tangible factors such as quality, design, materials, safety and the actual process. At Absolut Vodka, showing their employees that the product is real with regards to the whole production chain is one part of the Absolut Akademi, as described by the Internal Brand Manager:

> The first day starts with something called the "One source tour", because Absolut is only produced in Åhus, so it is our "One source". It is a philosophy that we have that no other vodka producer in our size has, which is very unique. The first day, we start with second breakfast, which comes from that every farmer wakes up 5:00 and eats breakfast, do their duties at the farm, and then come back at 9 or 10 for a second breakfast. That is what we give our guests at the morning. It has nothing to do with vodka, but it is the first thing that they will see. So we are sitting in a barn, with a floor made of straw, and there we eat egg, bacon and a pretzel. Here, we talk about the raw material that Absolut are being produced of, so which water, which seed, which area we are coming from.

At Hästens, the quality of the product and the materials from which it is made is very much in focus, both in general and when teaching employees about the brand and the product. When asked about the core values of Hästens, their communication specialist answered:

> Except for making the world's best beds [laughter], so is craftsmanship and natural materials extremely important, just as quality in the manufacturing of our beds. So our craftsmanship and the special spirit that is present at Hästens, it is there naturally and has always been. Everything from us is built around craftsmanship and natural materials. Every one of our employees spends time in our manufacturing, to learn the product because it is such a central part in everything we do.

This could also be observed during our visit in Köping, where the production of the beds is almost completely made by hand and almost the same way it has been for decades, according to a 'Master Craftsman' we asked about the production. We could also observe that both the factory and the concept store highlighted the use of natural materials in the beds through pictures, paintings and descriptions of such material on the walls. During the factory tour, we also observed that the guide encouraged us to touch and feel the different natural materials.

Through our observations at the IKEA museum we especially noted the how open through richness in detail that the exhibitions in the museum were. There were for instance old documents and personal belongings of Ingvar Kamprad, descriptions of mistakes the company has made, and information about the company's effect on the environment. That being said, quality and design in the production process are also aspects that are emphasized in the museum, as can be read in the brochure: "*Discover how IKEA achieves the impossible by successfully combining good design and quality with low prices*". There was also one floor fully dedicated to the design of the products.

At Volvo, the quality of the product and the production process is demonstrated during the factory tours, as described by the Director of Visitor Centres:

> When it comes to the factory tours, it is usually very focused on quality. Because it is an extremely logistically complex process industry that works with extreme precision all the time. That makes us talk a lot about quality, and also about working environment and similar.

An observation that we made during our visit at the Volvo Experience center was that the safety aspect of the cars was demonstrated openly. For example, at one stop along the tour there was a Volvo car that had been in a very serious accident. The guide then explained how the accident had occurred and showed the different variables that determine the outcome of a crash. At the same station, a movie was shown in which the real-life driver of the car gave his account of the accident.

4.2.5 Why?

This section will explore the reasons as to why the different case companies use corporate museums during their internal branding efforts, as explained by company representatives. The reasons that were brought up in the interviews are categorized into four different topics; Emotions and feelings, Authenticity, One-on-one communication and Actual Effects and Results.

Emotions and Feelings

When asked about the reasons why Absolut does the Akademi and why they want to bring all their employees, bartenders and other stakeholders to Åhus, the Internal Brand Manager answered:

> Just to give them a PowerPoint or a PDF will only bring you "this far", but to be able to show it first-hand, is worth so much more and it is way more powerful. To experience the brand is always better than to just read about it. So that is the thought, if people are experiencing and you get them to feel a feeling, then people will remember what they feel. If they feel love for Absolut, then they will hopefully feel that when they get back to their markets, and then we have won.

The emphasis on the emotions and feelings as a reason for why they use live experiences as a way of communicating the brand internally is further illustrated by the PR director:

> A physical, interactive experience triggers your senses to actually take in information and feel something. We talk about a total brand immersion. We want people to do it with passion and enthusiasm. You cannot put on a movie and then leave the room. It is about physical energy, the whole thing. It is just like an amusement park, you cannot enjoy it through watching a movie, you have to be there and experience it physically.

As previously described, the product and the production process plays an important role in the internal branding efforts at Hästens, where every employee needs to spend time in the manufacturing and brand stakeholders are taken through the factory tour. The reasons as to why is illustrated below:

> To get the right feeling, you need to have been in the manufacturing, to see how it works and get understanding for the materials and what we do, so that our pride and love for the craftsmanship and products can be passed on (HR Manager).

The communication specialist further elaborates on the role of feelings as a reason to why they bring internal stakeholders to the Dream Factory in Köping:

> When we get visits, from stores for instance, then we often get a 'wow' experience, because they do not expect that the reality is what it actually is. It is easy to read about things externally, but when you actually get here and experiences how things are, then many are surprised. So we are not trying to

> 'push in this feeling' in our employees, because this feeling already exist at us. We use what we already have internally, and bring that out to the end customer when we tell about how things get done at us at Hästens, every day.

At Volvo, the creation of emotions is also a reason behind the use of corporate museums for communication purposes:

> I think that for you to embrace all the facts, you have to create an emotion of some sort, which can be laughter, anger or whatever. When you create a specific emotion, then you will also embrace the fact. If you are just exposed to a lot of facts, then you will not remember anything. But if you break it up every now and then and anchor it on stuff that is easier to relate to (Director of Visitor Centres).

The point is further illustrated by the Supervisor of the Volvo Experience Center when asked why they use storytelling and interactive elements in the museums;

> As a visitor, you experience some facts and some storytelling. When we show the collision for instance, we talk about this guy Samir. Just before that, the visitors have passed stations where they can test different things themselves and you always hear laughter, and then you get to the station where you will see Samir and his accident, and everybody becomes completely silent. Then people start to think about friends that have been involved in a car accident, or perhaps themselves. You create emotions that allow you to bring the message in a completely different way.

Authenticity

Another reason that was mentioned by some of the company representatives was that the use of corporate museums gives a higher degree of authenticity or 'realness' to the communication of the brand. At Absolut Vodka, one reason why the Akademi is placed in Åhus is:

> Because it is many who come to us that have never been outside their own country or never been outside Europe. So it is a good way of showing where Scania and Åhus is located on the map, and that our product is the real deal. Brand experiences, most often it is a party or something similar, but for us, it is about experiences that makes them feel more loyalty to the brand. And love for the brand rather than it was a fun party that you visited for three hours. You should feel that this is more than a vodka bottle, it is so much more (Internal Brand Manager).

The emphasis on the real-life experience is further elaborated on by the PR director at Absolut, who describes the reasons behind the live experiences as a "*counter trend of people wanting to see things in real life again. You want to feel, touch, experience it first-hand*". This is somewhat similar to the reasoning at Hästens, as illustrated by the HR manager explanation of the reasons behind why their factory tour is so important: "*When they get to feel the natural materials in their hands, that is when they actually realize why Hästens is different*".

Another aspect of authenticity as a reason for the use of museums was brought when we visited the IKEA museum, namely the idea of openness and transparency towards employees, as explained by a Tour Guide:

> The museum is also about the idea of being open towards our employees about what we stand for, and customers as well of course. Before, IKEA was a fairly closed company. Now, with the museum, there is more transparency, especially with the focus on sustainability.

The Director of Volvos Visitor Centers also states that being real and authentic is an important reason, when asked about why they use corporate museums:

> It is extremely important for us to be transparent and authentic […]. I will try to not involve my own personal opinions, I have worked here for over 30 years, so I have a decent understanding of where we are and what we stand for [...]. But authenticity is extremely important, it is very important for us to be 'real'. It is very important that you should not feel that you have come to us and gone through a marketing campaign.

One-on-one Communication

The third reason behind the use of physical places for internal communication purposes that became clear during our interviews was that it allows for the use of face-to-face communication by real persons. An IKEA Museum supervisor explains:

> The guides are our foremost mode of communication. They represent not only the museum but the whole IKEA brand. We usually say that the guides stand for 99 percent of the whole experience at the museum.

The explanation continues with an explanation of why the behavior of the guides is important for communication purposes:

> What the guide tells you, you do not necessarily remember. But you will remember how the guide is as a person. We repeatedly get feedback internally about how nice our guides are, regardless of if people remembered what they said or not. So if the guide can personify the IKEA brand, then we have succeeded to communicate it.

At the Volvo experience center, the importance of the guides as communicators of the brand is also highlighted:

> In my business, we talk a lot about what the guides should convey. One of the things we stress very much is to inspire trust and confidence. All our guides are highly educated Volvo Employees. So you can have a dialogue with anybody in the group about a lot of things. Genuine knowledge is important, not things like 'I have learnt the manuscript so that I can answer these four questions'. I think that everything that Volvo does, not only for us but […]. It should be for real. That permeates everything we do (Supervisor, Volvo Experience Center).

In addition to having guides as communicators, we learned that a reason why Hästens bring employees and internal stakeholders to Köping is because they want to use their factory ‘craftsmen’ as communicators:

> In many of our departments, it is the employees who actually work with the products who are happy and eager to show the visitors how they are working. This makes our craftsmen a part of these tours to a very high degree, even if there is a person responsible for the whole tour, we are of course inviting craftsmen to tell specific details of our work. There are many of our craftsmen who think that is very fun and amusing to tell and pass on their stories and knowledge. It is a big passion for them, and of course also pride in their profession. For them to show others how things get done is important (Communication Specialist).

At Absolut, meeting some of the persons that are key to the actual production of the vodka is also mentioned as a reason:

> If you do not get to meet Thomas, the chemist, or Dick, who is our process engineer, if you do not meet them who are actually working with this every day, and who are so unbelievably passionate in what they do, then I think that you will never get that feeling in your body (Internal Brand Manager).

Actual Effects and Results

Lastly, for some of the case companies, a strong reason behind using corporate museums internally is that they, according to themselves, actually see results and positive effects from it. The HR Manager at Hästens shared that *“when one of our stores has sent their sales personnel here [Köping] to go through the academy, usually we can see an increase in their sales afterwards”*. This was the only case where such a direct sales increase was mentioned though. However, the communication specialist at Hästens also mentioned another benefit:

> But to embrace the brand core of Hästens, then it gives a completely different effect when we bring our visitors to Köping, instead of having us visit them to tell our story. It is a totally different experience to be here and see things here at us. To be here and experience the whole context and not only parts of it. We can see a big difference, especially that people get a better understanding and experience of our brand, if they can experience in person.

At Volvo;

> It is very important that they get the foundation of what the brand is and what it stands for. The easiest way to achieve this is actually to go through our activities. That is why we call it to get ‘dipped in blue’ because you will leave the Experience Centre with ‘Volvo blood in your veins’ (Director of Visitor Centres).

At Absolut, they mention effects and results in terms of the extraordinary behavior among employees with regards to the brand, as explained by the Internal Brand Manager with two examples:

> 1: The other day, it was a girl at the office that worn a jacket with the shape of the bottle with rivets on the back, and everyone at the office commented on Instagram and asked how they could get it. We become manic within our own world, to get a hold of these things.
>
> 2: A former colleague of mine had a cocktail class with Absolut drinks the other day with his new team, and he does not even work for Absolut anymore! It is a very strong culture, with love for the brand, more than just walking to your desk and do your job. In every part that we can get, from Facebook to everything we do, we want to share it. And that is something that is not in our job description, but we still do it.

When asked if they believe that there is a link between the live experiences within the Absolut Akademi and the type of behavior mentioned above, the PR director (1) and the Internal Brand Manager (2) answered:

> 1: Things you have experienced, that made you feel something, will make you remember. For us it is self-explanatory. We want people to leave with a feeling, which will make them remember. If you want people to do that you need to invite them to the trip, not only tell them about it, so to say. For us, it is clear that this leads to stronger commitment to the brand.
>
> 2: Absolutely, it would have never been able without the experiences. I do not believe that you can get the same feeling in your body, the same loyalty and love towards the brand, by reading something or see a PowerPoint or a movie. You have to experience it first-hand, you have to meet the people behind the production. You must feel the wheat, touch the wheat field, and you have to experience it as tangible as possible. And together with a group that’s there for the same reason. So to create that feeling and experience first-hand, I definitely think that there is no other way to do it.

Table 2. Overview of the five w-questions

Company / Question	Absolut	Hästens	IKEA	Volvo
Where?	Åhus: Experience Centre Visitor Centre The Factory (Spritan) Stockholm: Atelier	Köping: The Dream Factory Concept Stores	Älmhult: IKEA Museum IKEA Tillsammans	Gothenburg: Volvo Museum Visitor Centre Demo Centre Brand Experience Centre Volvo Hall
When?	Absolut Akademi, a three days long experience with the brand that takes part fully from Åhus, 'from seed, to bottle, to sip'."	On-boarding program for every newly employed, Hästens Academy, regularly meetings in the factory	No certain process after each recruitment, that you must join a value-training to get the right values. Instead focus on hiring the right values the start.	No generic introduction program or internal brand education for every new recruit. Up to every local department to decide.
Who?	Employees Bartenders Resellers Advertising agencies	Employees Stores Partners	Employees IKEA Industry Suppliers External companies	Employees Resellers Partners Customers
What?	History Product origin	History Production process, Quality, Natural materials	History Quality Design Present Future	Quality Authenticity History Innovations Present Future
Why?	Feelings Authenticity Brand commitment One-on-one Communication	Emotions Authenticity Brand understanding One-on-one Communication	One-on-one Communication Transparency	Emotions Feelings Authenticity 'Brand dip' One-on-one Communication

5 Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to establish and define the conceptual framework as a result of analyzing the previously presented empirical data. After scrutinizing all relevant data, the framework termed Internal Brand Pilgrimage is portrayed, consisting of five separate elements, namely Place, Journey, Pilgrims, Content and Motives. The framework is initially presented, followed by a detailed exploration of every element, and the chapter is concluded by stating the frameworks definition to ensure that the Internal Brand Pilgrimage concept is complete. The definition is proposed as an organized journey for corporate stakeholders, organized in the sense that there are internal branding motives for going to a corporate museum and that the content of brand heritage is communicated through live storytelling.

5.1 The Internal Brand Pilgrimage Framework

The five w-questions were suitable for presenting the empirical data in a structured and holistic manner to describe a potential phenomenon, so that the intended framework could grow from the material rather than from predetermined ideas and elements. After scrutinizing the material, certain patterns and components were discovered, which made it possible to translate the results of the five w-questions into elements of a pilgrimage. As presented in the methodology chapter, Vukonic (1996, cited in Belhassen, Caton & Stewart, 2008, p.678) argue that a pilgrimage is "an organized visit or journey, organized at least in the sense that there are religious motives for going to a place and that the contents of that place include religious rituals". Once again, the term 'religious' can according to us be thought of and exchanged for the more suitable term 'corporate'. For our metaphor to cover all aspects of our research, we added 'Pilgrims' as it was not included in the definition above. Lastly, 'Rituals was omitted from the original pilgrimage definition, since it is already part of 'Content' and the Internal Brand Pilgrimage as a whole.

Table 3. Translation of the five w-questions into a pilgrimage metaphor

Five w-questions	Pilgrimage metaphor
Where?	Place
When?	Journey
Who?	Pilgrims
What?	Content
Why?	Motives

As can be seen below in figure 5, the Internal Brand Pilgrimage is illustrated as a pentagon, with the pilgrimage in the very center encompassed by five elements. Following the purpose presented in chapter 1, the idea is not to determine if any element is more important than the others, explore how they are related or if they all must be present. Instead, the framework is the result of first hand our interviews and observations and what we have found to be important elements to consider when conducting an Internal Brand Pilgrimage.

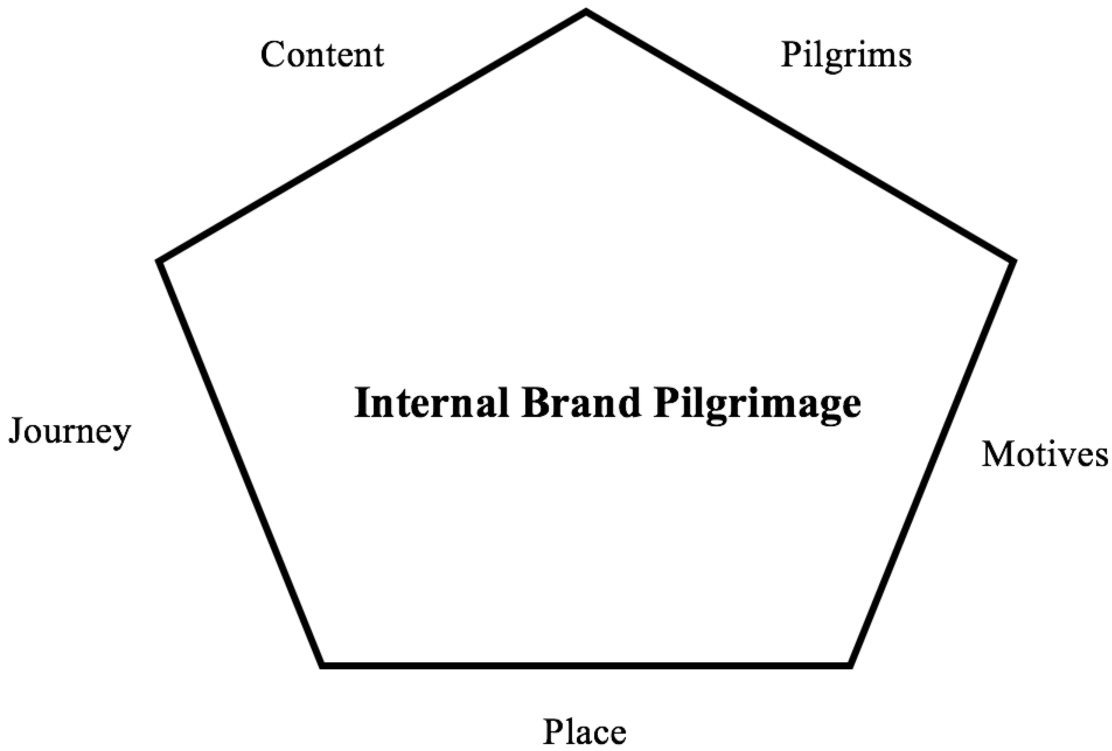

Figure 5. The Internal Brand Pilgrimage Framework

5.2 Place

A fundamental aspect of a pilgrimage is the place, meaning the intended destination of the journey. Even though it might seem obvious, every company focused much on the brand's origin with corporate museums in respective birthplace. However, the place can also be located outside of the brand's birthplace, as Absolut Atelier and IKEA's front weeks.

When observing the corporate museums, it was recorded that every company had at least one corporate museum in the brand's birthplace, which was perhaps best illustrated by Absolut where it was claimed that "*it is very important to know where Absolut was born, and Absolut was born in Åhus and lives in bars*." This reasoning is much in line with the theoretical field of corporate museum, where for instance Piatkowska (2013) argues that these facilities often are located near the factories where the brand products are manufactured. The corporate museum's design varied across the cases, as Hästens' Dream Factory for instance was dated and rustic, Absolut Atelier is located in an old building while having a contemporary inside, and Volvo's localities are inspired by scale and production industry. Piatkowska (2013) means that the corporate museum's architecture must match the brand's identity and quality, which seems to be correct in the four presented cases. For instance, even though Absolut has a long heritage, it is still contemporary since the vodka is consumed at bars and in nightclubs, which was clearly observable when visiting Atelier. Another illustrative example is IKEA Museum, which is situated in the first ever IKEA store's facilities, which creates an authentic and credible reasoning with the brand's past and philosophy, just as mentioned by Piatkowska (2013).

Absolut, Hästens and Volvo bring their visitors to their factories, where even meetings can be held, right in the heart of the brand. Another observation was the bundle of corporate museums often located near the brand's birthplace, especially when it comes to Volvo, but also IKEA and Hästens, which mean that the argument proposed by Bonti (2014) that corporate museums usually can be found next to the corporate headquarters can be confirmed. However, the headquarter of Absolut is located in Stockholm, and not in Åhus, which is an interesting aspect since the company still put very much emphasis on the brand's birthplace. Apart from the headquarter and factory aspect, IKEA use their many stores as a pilgrimage destination during their front weeks, which means that they emphasize places other than their corporate museums.

When it comes to the layout and intention of the corporate museums, a wide range of different functions could be noted, as for instance visitor centers, brand experience centers, factory tours, concept stores and plain museums. Once again, it is a coherent picture with the theory, where Nissley and Casey (2002) demonstrate that the facilities can serve many roles, just as the previous given examples. In terms of layout, Hästens' blue check pattern is something that was visible several times during our visits, both in the factory but also when visiting the Flagshipstore in Köping, where internal trainings are held. Every office chair was lined in their iconic pattern and were used by employees and others taking part of their educational programs. Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007) discuss that the use of symbols in communication is important for heritage brands and mention Burberry's pattern in terms of design, where the blue check pattern would be Hästens equivalent to Burberry's widely recognized pattern.

5.3 Journey

When the place is set, the next step to be analyzed is when the pilgrimage journey occurs. According to our findings, the journey can take place during different periods of time as well as with various frequencies.

As mentioned earlier, Absolut and Hästens use onboarding programs as a means to use visit their corporate museums in order to get a comprehensive view and feeling of the brand. For instance, it was stated that *"Hästens has an onboarding program for every newly employed […] To get the right feeling, you need to have been in the manufacturing, to see how it works and get understanding for the materials […] so that our pride and love for the craftsmanship and products can be passed on."* When reviewing the corporate museum realm, Nissley and Casey (2002) mention that big corporations such as Ford and Coca-Cola also utilize their museums for employee-training. They claim that a corporate museum is a suitable place for educating employees, since it can function as the brand's soul, which was reflected in the quote above in terms of Hästens' materials and craftsmanship. Nevertheless, Volvo and IKEA did not use their museums for any generic onboarding programs, but still used them for other more specialized internal training efforts.

The journey element is interesting to study from an internal branding perspective, and then perhaps mainly from brand centred HRM, since the management deals with for instance recruitment and training of employees (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). IKEA emphasized many times that the company is value driven and *"work with value-based interviews when we are hiring […] we are mainly interested in the person behind the CV, what motivates that person".* This could perhaps indicate that their particular journey starts even earlier than the three other companies. IKEA's logic seems to correspond well to the ideas of Burmann and Zeplin (2005), who stress that the HR team must ensure that the personal identity is in line with the brand's identity, because those employees will require less effort to internalize the brand. Both Absolut and Hästens use their Academies for such purposes as internalization, which occurs after being hired. Their approach could instead be described as what Burmann and Zeplin (2005) would call phasing in to the company, which can be complemented with repetition in a later stage. This process is vital to convey the brand's heritage, values and identity, as being described by Absolut: *"Akademi […] is a three days long experience with the brand that takes part fully from Åhus, […] 'from seed, to bottle, to sip'."* In contrast, Hästens divided their Academy into different stages, which is important according to Burmann and Zeplin (2005), since it typically takes many communication efforts before the employees actually understand the brand message. Hästens handle this by making the sales team spend more time in the manufacturing compared to other employees, since they will have a direct contact with their customers and need to know specific details about their beds. Another way to control this repetitiveness is illustrated by Volvo, by creating and updating their 'Brand Bible' that everyone should read, which might result in better alignment and understanding of the brand.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter when discussing sampling of respondents, the HR department at Absolut is not involved in any internal branding activities and focus instead solely on hiring of new employees. The Internal Brand Manager emphasized this during the interview, when describing her duties. Within the theoretical field of internal branding, it is claimed that the alignment between brand management is often neglected (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005), which is the case here. However, it is also stressed that the companies that realize this misalignment have much to win (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005) and the recruitment process is regarded as a branding exercise and part of the corporate brand management (Ind, 1998). Even though Absolut has 'outsourced' much of this branding exercise from the HR department to their Brand Management team, we noted that they were still a successful company with much to win.

5.4 Pilgrims

One element that was not covered in the pilgrimage definition above deals with who actually joins the pilgrimage, which we chose to phrase ‘pilgrims’. There can be many different types of pilgrims, most frequently employees, employees of brand partners such as suppliers, customers, and other interested stakeholders, according to our findings.

Every company offered some sort of pilgrimage for their employees, who could range from newly employed to executives high up in the chain of command, as illustrated by Volvo’s phrasing “*senior managers and directors get ‘sent down’ […] to us at the Brand Experience Centre*.” Absolut also stated that their French owners visited Åhus and their localities every now and then, where their corporate museums function as a branded territory, suitable for meetings and conferences.

Apart from the employees, many external stakeholders were also mentioned and invited, as bartenders and advertising agencies for Absolut, meanwhile IKEA mentioned suppliers and other companies that were interested in IKEA. It is worth mentioning that a brand should not only focus on the already hired, but also expand their view and invite external partners for a controlled opportunity in terms of brand familiarization and brand internalization. This is somewhat highlighted in the corporate museum literature, where Montella (2014) discuss that a corporate museum can be used for both internal and external corporate marketing purposes, such as strengthening loyalty and convey the brand image, which turned out to be meaningful for all four case companies. The internal branding field also discuss this under the term brand partners, where it is elaborated that the value of a brand can be created among several different stakeholders, such as employees of a brand’s partners, and not only during the direct interaction between employees and customers (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016).

5.5 Content

A fundamental aspect of a religious pilgrimage is the content that the pilgrim is exposed to during the visit at the place of value. Through our empirical study, we identified that the content in each company’s corporate museums are, albeit in varying degree and form, mainly about the timeframes of past, present, future. As such, this is the content that the internal stakeholders, the pilgrims, at each company will be exposed to when completing their pilgrimage. This section will explore how our findings regarding the content relate to the theories about corporate museums and brand heritage.

The aspect that is most prominent in all four cases, as demonstrated in our findings, is the emphasis on company history, the past, in the corporate museums. This is perhaps not very surprising as it is congruent with Danilov’s (1992 cited in Nissley & Casey, 2002) definition of a corporate museum as a facility that communicates the history of a company and Bonti’s (2014) study which claims that corporate museums usually consist of physical constructions where the company history and memory are communicated. The use of history in this way indicates its importance to the overall brand identity of the four brands in question, one of the key elements of brand heritage (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). There were, however, differences between the cases with regards to the type of history that was presented in the corporate museums. Absolut Vodka and IKEA are the two companies that, except for their own history, also use their facilities to explore the history of the region (Scania and Småland) and country (Sweden) to a larger extent. For Hästens and Volvo, the focus is more on the history of the actual companies.

Another interesting difference in content within the corporate museums, across the four case companies, is to which extent they emphasize the present and future in addition to history. Carù, Ostillio and Leone (2017) argue that a key function of corporate museums is to, not only show the history of the brand, but to act as a bridge between the past and the future. IKEA and Volvo were the two most prominent cases here, clearly illustrated by the descriptions *"The IKEA Museum is the story of IKEA. In the past present and into the future"* and *"The Volvo Museum represent the historical part. The factory represents the present [...] The Brand Experience Center is very much related to the future"*. Absolut Vodka did mention, in line with Carù, Ostillio and Leone's (2017) argument, that their Akademi functions as such a bridge between the past and where they are now, and the Hästens factory tour featured timelines that connected then and now, but neither was as explicit in terms of past, present, and future as IKEA and Volvo.

As was explored through our empirical study however, the content within the corporate museums contribute to the bridging of the timeframes in less explicit ways as well, namely through the demonstration of core values. At Hästens, for example, most of the content exposed during the factory tours is related to their core values of craftsmanship, which is *"there naturally and always has been"*, and natural materials that have been the same for decades, and innovation. Similarly, Absolut Vodka constantly highlights the 'One-source' aspect of the brand through their content, that the vodka has always been produced in Åhus, still is and always will be, and what it means in terms of quality, raw materials and production. This is consistent with Carù, Ostillio and Leone (2017) argument that corporate museums also need to highlight the style and production process that continue today as a way of bridging the gap between past, present and future. In addition, Volvo also displays their core values of quality, safety and environment in regards to time, while the IKEA Museum showcased quality and design through the decades. According to Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007), when the core values accomplish their role as tenets that the brand attempts to live up to, they become an essential part of the brand identity and ultimately the brand's heritage. It could therefore be argued that the cases differ in how explicit the content is, but that they all somehow display brand heritage in the sense of embracing the three timeframes of past, present and future (Balmer, Greyser & Urde, 2006), and not only history.

5.6 Motives

Just as there are motives behind a religious pilgrimage, to increase commitment to the religion and induce a spiritual awakening within the pilgrims, so too are there motives behind why managers want their employees and other stakeholders to complete an internal brand pilgrimage. Through our empirical study, we identified the main reasons as to why corporate museums are used for internal branding to be; emotions and feelings, authenticity, one-on-one communication and actual effects. This section will explore how these reasons relate to the theories about corporate museums and internal branding.

As was clear through our empirical study, the most reoccurring reason mentioned by company representatives as to why they use corporate museums for internal branding is that they want to trigger feelings and emotions through live experiences. This is stressed at Absolut; "*a physical, interactive experience triggers your senses to actually take in information and feel something*". At Hästens; "*to get the right feeling, you need to have been in the manufacturing*" and at Volvo; *"You create emotions that allow you to bring the message in a completely different way"*. This reasoning is congruent with Vallaster and de Chernatony's (2006, p.776) argument that "employees, just as consumers, want to be engaged in experiences that let them 'touch and feel' the brand". Burmann and Zeplin (2005) also argue, while describing the internal brand communication component of their model, that employee participation, such as is facilitated through live, interactive experiences, will generate a stronger internal brand commitment through identification and internalization. In addition, they state that "the brand identity concept needs an emotional appeal" (Burmann & Zeplin, 2015, p.290) if it is to generate such commitment.

To be able to actually trigger these emotions within employees, the company representatives mentioned the communication method of storytelling, sometimes complemented by internal communicators, as reasons why they use corporate museums. IKEA writes blatantly in their museum brochure "The IKEA Museum is the story of IKEA" and mentions that *"storytelling is always fun [...] But we need to learn from stories"*. As mentioned before, Absolut Atelier's focus is on "*brand history and storytelling, so it tells everything from production to brand*", in this case therefore communicated mainly through the layout of the building itself. The same goes for the IKEA museum where one can "weave through period room settings from the 1960's and onwards" and at the Volvo Experience Center, where visitors "*experience some facts and some storytelling*", they present the story of Nils Bohlin and the safety belt invention. These stories are all connected to the past in some aspect, and is therefore consistent with Martin et al's (1983) definition of organizational stories a focusing on a single, unified sequence of events apparently drawn from the organization's history. The triggering of emotions as an underlying motive to storytelling is supported by Dowling (2006), who claims that corporate stories should construct an emotional bond with stakeholders in order to help nurture their support and trust.

It is evident from our study that storytelling is also complemented by the use of internal communicators to communicate the brand identity and core values. For IKEA, the main motive behind using the museum is that "*if the guide can personify the IKEA brand, then we* *have succeeded to communicate it*". In other words, they use internal communicators, in this case guides, to help communicate the story and identity of IKEA. Such transmission of information between employees, regardless of position in the company, is an example of what Burmann and Zeplin (2005) refers to as lateral communication, argued to be the most effective form of internal brand communication as it is usually deemed more trustworthy and memorable. Volvo also believes in this form of communication, putting emphasis on their guides to "*inspire trust and confidence*" and to have "*genuine knowledge*", possibly because safety and quality is two of their core values. Hästens also regard their internal communicators, most prominently the craftsmen, as an absolutely vital part of the internal communication, and Absolut claims that a key factor in triggering emotions is that the employees get to meet "*Thomas the chemist*" and "*Dick, our process engineer*".

There are some authors who argue that if storytelling is to be successful it needs to be based on the truth (Heugens, 2002) and on authenticity (Dowling, 2006) in order to be credible. Carú, Ostillio and Leone (2017) argue that corporate museums functions as a support mechanism for such authenticity, as it links the company's past and present together. Demonstrating authenticity in their corporate museums is a key motive for using them both at Absolut, as expressed by "*it is a good way of showing that our product is the real deal*" and at Volvo; "*you should not feel that you have come to us [the visitor centres] and gone through a marketing campaign [...]. It should be for real.*". At Hästens, although not as explicitly stated, authenticity in the sense of getting to actually feel the natural materials in your hands while hearing the story about it, is a key part of the factory tour. At IKEA, authenticity is an essential motive behind the museum as well, in terms of being fully transparent when telling the story of the brand.

Regardless of which motive is most prominent, in all cases the companies seem to think that utilizing stories and real people within the context of corporate museums is an effective way of internally communicating the brand identity. Both Hästens and Volvo motivates bringing internal stakeholders to Köping and Gothenburg with arguments such as "*people get a better understanding and experience of our brand if they can experience it in person*" (Hästens) and *"You will leave the Experience Centres with 'Volvo blood in your veins"* (Volvo), referring to how well visitors understand the Volvo brand after a visit. Their reasoning is therefore in many ways congruent with Aaker and Joachimsthaler's (2000b) argument that internal role models, be it stories, programs, events or people, is the best way of fully capturing the emotion of the brand.

The case in which the representatives seem most convinced of the effectiveness of corporate museums for internal branding purposes is Absolut, even stating that "*there is no other way to do it*" and that "*for us, it is clear that it leads to stronger commitment to the brand*". They in turn argue that the emotions they trigger through the Akademi in turn leads to extraordinary behavior among employees where they go beyond their job description. Such behavior is defined by Burmann & Zeplin (2005, p.282) as Brand Citizenship behavior, or "individual voluntary behavior outside of role expectations", which in their model leads to increased brand strength. The reasoning at Absolut is in line with Nissey and Casey's (2002) argument that corporate museums play an important role in improving employee pride and identification with the organization, and as such can be a support function for managers when shaping the corporate identity.

5.7 Defining the Internal Brand Pilgrimage Framework

After having presented the new framework and analyzed the elements systematically, the Internal Brand Pilgrimage definition will now be introduced. First, a table summarizes the five elements of the pilgrimage to remind the reader, before the definition is presented for the very first time.

Table 4. Overview of the analysis

Place	Journey	Pilgrims	Content	Motives
Corporate Museums: Brand Experience Centers Factory Tours Museums	*Organized Journey:* Employee & Executive training Onboarding	*Corporate Stakeholders* Employees Brand Partners Owners	*Brand Heritage* Past, present, future	*Storytelling* Emotions Live Experience Authenticity

As presented in the methodology chapter, metaphors can function as a central role in refining knowledge by stimulating creativity and vitality (Davies & Chun, 2003; Hunt & Menon, 1995; MacInnis, 2011; Stern, 2006; Tsoukas, 1991). Hence, we used a pilgrimage metaphor in order to develop and coin the new phenomenon of internal brand pilgrimage. Vukonic (1996, cited in Belhassen, Caton & Stewart, 2008, p.678) argues that a pilgrimage is "an organized visit or journey, organized at least in the sense that there are religious motives for going to a place and that the contents of that place include religious rituals". Using this definition as a metaphor, we propose our definition of internal brand pilgrimage:

> Internal Brand Pilgrimage is an organized journey for corporate stakeholders, organized in the sense that there are internal branding motives for going to a corporate museum and that the content of brand heritage is communicated through live storytelling.

6 Discussion

This chapter will discuss, reflect and elaborate the key findings of the thesis, and in particular the Internal Branding Pilgrimage framework, in a more abstract context before the thesis is concluded in the next chapter. The framework and the main findings will also be related to previous literature.

Now that the Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework has been presented and defined, it is interesting to discuss the model's extremes. When looking back at the results, it should be clear that they are based on brands with a heritage, which is a conscious choice. However, more recently established companies would also be interesting to consider. For instance, could the framework be applied to a brand without a yet clear heritage, such as Spotify? Having one or several corporate museums is of course associated with heavy investments, which would probably be out of reach for a new company without the same scalability as a stable brand with longevity and track record (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). However, the brand and its pilgrims could still visit other places than a traditional corporate museum, where the office could figure as a suitable choice of destination. Spotify already offer their employees several activities, including concerts (De Maine, 2016), which corresponds well with the brand's identity and image. This could mean that the pilgrimage is not only about the corporate museum as such, or even heritage, but instead rather on live experiences and brand immersion regardless of where it takes place. Nevertheless, for a potential Spotify pilgrimage to be successful, we believe that it would still need to be thought through in terms of the five elements, consisting of Place, Journey, Pilgrims, Content and Motives.

The previous views of corporate museum include those of using it as a new marketing component (Piatkowska, 2014) and as a method to conserve a collection in a particular context, educating visitors and presenting exhibitions (Carù, Ostillio & Leone, 2017). Based on the previously presented cases, we build on the idea of the corporate museum as a strategic asset (Nissley & Cases, 2002) and propose to rather see it as a more complex and important phenomenon compared to what the field has previously identified. This is illustrated by the brand pilgrimage metaphor that embraces aspects such as including employees as well as brand partners, and crucial emotional motives behind the pilgrimage. Another aspect that is supported through our pilgrimage metaphor and the theoretical fields of heritage brands and corporate museums is the weight of the past present and future (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). From the empirical study, it became evident that the corporate museums can function as a powerful tool to cover all three timeframes, just as argued by Carù, Ostillio and Leone (2017).

We would also like to take the opportunity to stress that the Internal Brand Pilgrimage is just one method for managers to communicate the brand internally, and it should not be considered as some sort of best practice or be done in a vacuum for that matter. This is important since for instance Burmann and Zeplin (2005) discuss that it takes many communication efforts before the employees indeed understand the brand identity concept. Hence, we argue that a combination of communication methods is probably necessary to communicate the brand's identity to employees in a favorable manner. For instance, brand books (or Volvo's suitable term 'Brand Bible') should not be omitted, since they can fulfill the important frequency aspect. This is perhaps especially relevant in today's society where advertising messages are being communicated in abundance, which could result in many being over fed with too many messages with distinct meanings. A variation of communication methods, focusing on relevant and different techniques such as experience and emotions could according to us be employed successfully. Corporate museums and storytelling may also be a good way of concretizing more abstract elements, such as heritage and core values, which sometimes can be a difficult task. Hästens' tagline 'fulfilling dreams since 1852' might not say that much to an employee, before they actually go to the Dream Factory and see how the brand values tradition, natural materials and get to talk to one of the master craftsmen.

The study has dealt much with the importance of authenticity, where many managers argued that their corporate museums serve a role as being true and real, as for instance when offering tours in the factories. However, a corporate museum offers an excellent opportunity to 'rewrite history' and portray the brand favorably, and the managers must decide if unappealing aspects should be part of the corporate exhibitions or not. Again, several managers mentioned that a visitor should not leave the corporate museum and think that they had went through a marketing campaign. At the same time, it could be argued that the very essence of marketing and branding is to more or less embellish the company, meaning that exaggerations might be just as present at the corporate website, in brand books and marketing material, as it would be at a corporate museum.

One finding that we did not expect to discover when initiating the research was the importance and relevance of including other stakeholders than only internal employees in a pilgrimage. So called brand partners (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016), as for instance employees of suppliers and resellers, are just as important to be part of a pilgrimage. This is rather logical, as the idea is that for instance a bartender working across the globe should be able to motivate and briefly describe to a customer what makes Absolut unique, and perhaps explain their 'one source' philosophy. For this to be fruitful, we believe that the bartender has better chances to succeed if he or she has joined the Absolut Akademi. Therefore, it is utterly important for managers to not exclude and overlook brand partners, as they might have a tremendous impact on the end customer or other relevant stakeholders, perhaps sometimes even more than the brand's own employees. Theoretically, the findings indicate and confirm the ideas of Saleem and Iglesias (2016) who argued for further exploration of brand partners within internal branding, where this study demonstrated the importance of including and educating for instance resellers. Still, this prominence of also focusing the branding and educational efforts on brand partners could not be found in the corporate museum literature to the same extent as this research shows, meaning that we add knowledge to the field.

7 Conclusions

The final concluding chapter will summarize and revisit the purpose, research questions, aim and objective, to see if every aspect of the thesis was fulfilled in a successful manner. In addition, theoretical contributions and managerial implications will be discussed as a result of the research. Lastly, limitations of the study and recommended future research will also be suggested.

As presented in the very first chapter, the purpose of the thesis was to explore the phenomenon of utilizing corporate museums in internal branding, in order to understand what they are, how they are used and why in the context of strategic brand management in general and brands with a heritage in particular. The aim was to develop theory at the intersection of corporate museums, internal branding and corporate heritage brands, with the explicit objective of developing a framework through which the phenomenon of using corporate museums when internally communicating brand heritage could be understood. Hence, the three following research questions were used to guide the study:

> RQ 1: What is the internal role of corporate museums?
> RQ 2: How are corporate museums used to communicate brand heritage internally?
> RQ 3: Why are managers using corporate museums for internal branding purposes?

As a result of thorough analysis of the rich data consisting mainly of interviews and observations, we presented the Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework, defined as an organized journey for corporate stakeholders, organized in the sense that there are internal branding motives for going to a corporate museum and that the content of brand heritage is communicated through live storytelling. This new framework consists of five elements, namely Place, Journey, Pilgrims, Content and Motives, which are all important aspects for a manager to consider when planning an internal pilgrimage.

Based on the framework, we can now conclude and answer our three research questions. Regarding the internal role of corporate museums, we propose that they can help illustrate the bridge between the company's past, present and future to employees and brand partners, thus contributing to the activation of brand heritage internally. In relation to the second question, corporate museums can be used within an internal brand pilgrimage to consolidate a range of communication media within a physical space, facilitating a more institutionalized, holistic and authentic internal communication of brand heritage. Answering the third question, managers use corporate museums because it enables them to utilize storytelling and live experiences, through which emotions are triggered that help corporate stakeholders understand and remember what the brand stands for. We argue that the aim of developing new theory was achieved by introducing the Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework, which combines the three fields of corporate museums, internal branding and corporate heritage brands, meaning that the objective was succeeded as well.

Next, we will present four theoretical contributions and four managerial implications, as a result of considering the thesis as a whole.

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

The first and most principal theoretical contribution of the thesis was the introduction of the new Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework. According to Eisenhardt (1989), one strength of theory building from cases is its likelihood of generating novel theory, which we would argue is relevant for this thesis since this research, at least to our knowledge, was the first attempt to merge the realms of corporate museums, internal branding, and corporate heritage brands. The study has thus added richness and creativity to all three fields. This will hopefully shed light and inspire more researchers to elaborate and build upon the presented findings and framework, especially the nascent areas of corporate heritage brands (Balmer & Burghausen, 2015) and corporate museums (Nissley & Casey, 2002). Hence, we positioned our research and enriched the three mentioned domains by our Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework and definition. The phenomenon is defined as an organized journey for corporate stakeholders, organized in the sense that there are internal branding motives for going to a corporate museum and that the content of brand heritage is communicated through live storytelling. After a detailed analysis, the framework's five elements emerged as Place, Journey, Pilgrims, Content and Motives. In other words, we have holistically added a new phenomenon to the three research fields.

The second contribution is tied with the research field of internal branding. As stated in the introduction, Löhndorf and Diamantopolous (2014) and Saleem and Iglesias (2016) argued that there is an inconsistency in the literature regarding the aims of internal branding efforts as well as a lack of empirical research about how these aims can be achieved. Our research showed that from a manager perspective, internal branding is done with the aim of transferring information to employees and brand partners about what the brand stands for. More specifically, we contributed to internal branding by showing that the aim of an internal brand pilgrimage is to evoke emotions within the employees in order to transfer the information in a memorable way. Regarding the lack of studies about how the aims are achieved, our main contribution to the internal branding field was that we found that corporate storytelling is regarded as an effective method by managers in all four cases. As explained in the analysis, the ability to use storytelling in an engaging manner is the main motive behind the use of corporate museums as a tool for internal branding. Obviously, we do not claim that this is objectively true from a positivist stance, but we rather contributed with an understanding of how and why storytelling is used from the managerial perspective. We also contributed with empirical data regarding the use of what Burmann and Zeplin (2005) call lateral communication through our findings that all four cases use internal communicators, such as guides and craftsmen. Internal branding research has moreover called for the exploration of how managers can influence not only their own employees but also the employees of their brand partners (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). Our study contributed with such research, as the 'Pilgrim' component of our framework incorporates such brand partners, mainly in the form of resellers and suppliers.

Thirdly, the theoretical contribution addressed toward the area of corporate heritage brands extended and elaborated upon how a brand could activate heritage, which is a strategic decision (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007). The study showed that a corporate museum could function as a vehicle for activation and may in addition be suitable for expressing the brand's past, present and future in a memorable and authentic way, especially when live experiences were employed so that feelings and emotions were evoked. One of the underlying reasons to why the corporate museum is a solid method for activation could be that it has been argued that a corporate museum can function as a strategic asset used to shape the organization's identity (Nissley & Casey). Moreover, the research field of heritage brands clearly emphasizes the importance of the three timeframes past, present and future (Cooper, Merrilees & Miller, 2015), where the thesis could confirm this prominence and demonstrate how managers actively portrayed the brand's past, engaged with the present and envisioned the future. As a way to do this, some companies even had different corporate museums specialized and related to for instance past, as IKEA Museum and Volvo Museum, whereas Volvo's Brand Experience Centre mainly dealt with the future aspects of the brand.

Lastly, the fourth contribution related to the corporate museum definition. After both interviewing managers and conducting observations, we argue that the corporate museums definition needs to be adjusted a bit, and perhaps modernized. Danilov (1992 cited in Nissley & Casey, 2002, p.35) stated that a corporate museum is a "corporate facility with tangible objects […] communicates the history, operations, and/or interests of a company […]". What needs to be adjusted is mainly the fact that all corporate museums that we visited dealt with much more than just tangible objects. Since a brand is intangible, every company focused much on for instance transparency, openness, heritage and authenticity, and not only on what they produced. This could perhaps be a result of the increased interest in brands lately, in relation to when Danilov coined the definition. We noted that the tangible objects were still highly important, but rather worked in symbiosis with the intangible values and identity of the brand.

7.2 Managerial Implications

Even if it is a strategic decision to activate heritage (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007), brand pilgrimage is still potentially interesting for many companies, organizations and institutions. Still, the Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework can be especially helpful for managers of brands with a heritage, to think in the lines of a pilgrimage in order to concretize internal branding. In particular, three managerial implications are addressed to internal brand managers, HR managers, and for instance Key Account Managers. In addition, senior executives with more strategic positions should also take note, due to the above-mentioned fact that it is a strategic decision to activate heritage and make it part of the brand's identity. Lastly, the fourth implication consists of seven compiled suggestions for managers to consider if they are implementing or executing an internal brand pilgrimage.

The first managerial implication is the finding that corporate museums can be used to facilitate the activation of a brand's heritage. This is because the corporate museum enables the brand heritage to be communicated in a more unique and memorable way, which could be difficult to achieve by using a PowerPoint or a brand book. For example, it might be easier to demonstrate important artefacts, company turning points and evoke emotions if done in real-life in corporate museums, as compared to written in plain text. For a brand manager of a brand with a heritage, this finding is indeed relevant, especially if the management and board aim for developing and investing in transforming the brand into a heritage brand, since the corporate museum could ease the process by making it more concrete and purposeful. There are probably many brands today that have a compelling heritage, but have not found a reasonable method to consolidate and manifest it. For those brands, the corporate museums could function as a steppingstone toward the future transformation into a heritage brand.

Secondly, an implication that is particularly directed toward Internal Brand Managers, the Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework can be helpful in terms of inspiration and motivation. Just like many branding and onboarding efforts, it can be somewhat difficult to see any results if an internal branding method is successful or not. However, since many managers from the four case companies Absolut, Hästens, IKEA and Volvo claim that they see results from utilizing internal brand pilgrimage, then it might be an indicator that their investments are beneficial. Hence, it is advised that internal brand managers consider eventual routes for an internal brand pilgrimage, since it at least to our study seems to be a fruitful way to convey brand heritage. In terms of inspiration, we also advise these managers to engage with their network of fellow colleagues to see if, how and why their business contacts employ an internal brand pilgrimage.

The third implication relates to the fact that the study's findings are both important and applicable to other managers apart from those who are working internally. As an example, Key Account Managers and Customer Success Managers might be just as relevant to involve when launching an internal brand pilgrimage. The reason for this is that internal brand pilgrimage is not only about the employees, as the element Pilgrims has demonstrated, which it might easily be mistaken for. Brand partners and other stakeholders are just as important, when for instance an external Hästens reseller should motivate for a customer why one of their beds cost over one million SEK. Then, the concerned salesperson must truly know much about Hästen's heritage, craftsmanship, natural materials and similar, and what differentiate a Hästens bed from the competition. If not, that employee would fail to operate as an authentic salesperson. The same goes for Absolut, when inviting bartenders to Åhus so that they can take part of the Absolut Akademi. These companies have realized that the company does not operate in a bubble, which means that it is not only the employees who are an important asset to the company and engage with customers. Hence, our advice for managers dealing with other than internal stakeholders, is to invite important resellers, suppliers and customers, so that the brand will be conveyed in a unified way, no matter who the final customer meet.

To conclude the managerial implications, we wish to end the fourth and final implication with seven compiled and forthright suggestions for managers who plan to execute or perhaps implement an internal brand pilgrimage. These seven recommendations should not be seen as an exhaustive list, but rather as summary with tips and ideas based on what we have observed during these ten weeks.

- First of all, one or several of the corporate museums used in the pilgrimage should incorporate the brand's past, present and future, where corporate history, traditions and heritage are mixed together with the company's role today and its vision and mission for the future.
- Secondly, for the pilgrims to take part and remember the brand communication for as long as possible, it is important that the messages are conveyed in an interactive manner that focus on live experiences. This will hopefully trigger emotions that can contribute to making the message more memorable.
- Third, several managers that we interviewed made it clear that the message and the entire pilgrimage must be authentic. This means that the pilgrims should not experience some sort of marketing campaign; instead it should be based on true events and genuine knowledge.
- Fourth, the way the information is transferred during a pilgrimage is very important. A live storytelling setting is suggested for the communication to be effective, which can be achieved by using a guide in the role as a storyteller. Related to authenticity, the guide should possess a profound knowledge about the brand and hence be able to answer various questions, and not only rehearsed and expected ones.
- Fifth, we suggest that the pilgrimage should not be limited to only employees and executives, but also include brand partners such as resellers, suppliers, owners or anyone who works with the brand.
- Sixth, an internal brand pilgrimage is not something that is over within a couple of hours or days, nor should it be. For the information to sink in completely, it should be an extensive and immersive experience, where repetition, various stages and the opportunity to repeat it is appreciated and encouraged.
- Finally, the seventh fundamental advice is related to the place. Even if the pilgrimage might not necessarily take place at a corporate museum, the management must still be particularly carefully when planning where it should be done. The brand might be able to be conveyed anywhere in the world, but for the heritage to be really remembered and relatable, the birthplace of the company is advisable.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study has defined and conceptualized Internal Brand Pilgrimage, using brand management as a starting point. After analyzing the empirical data and concept, five fundamental elements were identified. However, since this inquiry is first of its kind and includes a set of intrinsic limitations, this last section will first present these limitations and then declare a number of suggestions of avenues for future research.

One of the study's major limitations is that the chosen companies were few and could all be considered to be at least brands with a heritage, even though we are well aware of this narrow selection since it was a part of the theoretical sampling. This means that the study is limited in terms of varying and novel companies, which could have led to different results and perhaps another sort of framework. Following the chosen constructionist approach, more managers could have been interviewed within each case, particularly when it comes to managers from different departments and with different viewpoints, such as HR, employer branding, internal branding and managers from the corporate museums. Another limitation is that we did not join any actual pilgrimage, since we were not granted access to for instance Absolut Akademi and instead did the observations as good as we could. However, the closest we came to a pilgrimage was during the Volvo observation, where for instance resellers and sheet metal workers joined, which could be categorized as brand partners.

Future research can arise in various ways, as for instance from new fields of particular interest, which emerged during the study or from the need for validation and further exploration of certain contributions. After the development and definition of a new phenomenon, Internal Brand Pilgrimage, it would of course be interesting as well as needed to further test the framework both qualitatively and quantitatively. In terms of quantitative studies, this could be done to see if there are any specific correlations between the framework's different elements, and it would also be stimulating to find out if the five elements are weighted equally or if some aspect is more important than other when executing an internal brand pilgrimage. Continuing on quantitative studies, other variables to test would be to see if there are any correlations between heritage brands with a corporate museum and brand citizenship behavior, or for instance employee satisfaction and turnover. Another avenue would be to deductively apply the Internal Brand Pilgrimage framework in another context than within heritage brands, as for instance service brands or B2B-brands. As elaborated upon in the discussion chapter, can the framework be applied to for instance start-ups or fairly new companies, such as Spotify?

The thesis could also benefit from further qualitative studies, where it would be interesting to explore more companies as well as to include the employees more and not only focus on the management perspectives. As an example, suitable research from an employee perspective could be to interview employees about their pilgrimage experiences and see if they understand the brand better after completing a program. The researcher could also conduct an ethnographic study in order to really get familiar with the pilgrimage and the brand, to see if the heritage is expressed in a memorable and effective manner. Building on the previously mentioned limitations, it is suggested that future researchers get access to and join a complete pilgrimage, which could be studied both from a managerial and employee perspective. How is the event coordinated and thought through in terms of conveying brand identity? How does the employees experience an immersive pilgrimage and why or why is it not successful?

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Appendix A – Interview Guide

Introduction

What is your role at [the company] and for how long have you worked there?

What are your responsibilities within [the company]?

Brand & core values

How do you define [the company's] brand?

- Which are the most important aspects of the brand?
- Does [the company] have any core values?
- If yes, how are these core values communicated internally?

Brand education

When it comes to employees, do you have any certain process for teaching them about the brand?

- Do these activities take place at any specific location?
- Is there any difference in terms of international employment?
- Do you have a process for educating your existing employees? For instance in terms of brand identity?
- Do these activities take place at any specific location?

Final questions

- Is there anything particular that we have not discussed that you would like to add?
- Is there anybody else that you could recommend for us to talk to, in order to get other perspectives and insights on what we have just discussed?