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Branding Technical Services
- a case study on SWECO's brand

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Abstract

The economical structure has faced a great change during the last decades; the service industry has grown into a dominant force in the developed countries. Therefore, the concept of services marketing is relatively new. Although more and more service companies are realizing the importance of marketing and branding, there are still technical service companies that has not adapted the concept. The consultancy firm SWECO, which will serve as a case study, is one of them.

The purpose with this essay is to examine the importance of branding for technical service firms and how they do to improve their image and brand. The research issue has been studied with the assistance of electronic surveys. As further assistance, three theoretical models has been used as instruments for the analysis.

The study shows that SWECO is a relatively unknown company. Although the company is operating in an international arena, it has not developed a marketing strategy. The conclusions attained demonstrate the importance of creating strong brands for technical service companies since the 7 P's of services are insufficient as marketing tools. The highly perceived quality of the company's services and their financial strength give the company good prerequisites for marketing their brand internationally.

Sammanfattning

Den ekonomiska strukturen har under de sista decennierna genomgått en stor förändring. Service sektorn har vuxit till att bli en drivande kraft i de utvecklade länderna. Därför är konceptet med tjänstemarknadsföring relativt nytt. Fastän fler och fler tjänsteföretag är numera medvetna om hur viktigt det är att marknadsföra sitt företag och dess varumärke, finns det fortfarande många tekniska tjänsteföretag som inte har tillämpat konceptet. Det svenska konsultföretaget SWECO, som kommer att användas som fallstudie i uppsatsen, är en av dem.

Syftet med denna uppsats är att undersöka hur viktigt det är för tekniska tjänsteföretag att marknadsföra sitt varumärke och hur de kan förbättra sin image samt sitt varumärke. Undersökningen har tillämpats med hjälp av elektroniska enkäter. Som ytterligare förstärkning, har tre teorier använts som analysverktyg.

Studien visar att SWECO är ett relativt okänt företag. Trots att företaget agerar på ett internationellt plan, så har det inte utvecklat en marknadsföringsstrategi. De slutsatser som kunde dras demonstrerar att ett starkt varumärke för tekniska tjänsteföretag är väldigt viktigt eftersom de 7 p:na för tjänster anses vara otillräckliga som marknadsföringsmedel. Den högt upplevda kvaliteten av företagets tjänster samt deras finansiella styrka ger företaget goda förutsättningar för att marknadsföra sitt varumärke internationellt.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter, the background will present an introductory insight into the service sector and the concept of branding. Thereafter, the problem formulation of this essay will be identified, followed by a purpose.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Palmer & Hartley (2002) divide the structure of economy into three main sectors, the first being the primary sector which is concerned with the extraction and production of basic raw materials from agriculture and mining. This is followed by the secondary sector which transforms the outputs from the primary sector into goods and products. The third category is the service sector, which has become a dominant force in the economy of many western countries and has created a wealth of new jobs. The growth of the service sector is a trend foremost in the OECD countries, and it accounts for about three-quarters of all employment in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. The European Union has reportedly created 1.3 million new jobs per year between 1980-1992 (Eurostat, 1995).

Not all parts of the service sector have expanded though. It is, primarily, the knowledge- and information intensive (technical) services whose importance has increased. Yet, it was not until the 80s that emphasis was put on services marketing whose primary objective is to build and develop customer relations (Arnerup-Cooper, 1998). Grönroos (1990) concludes that "marketing is the business task of establishing, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with customers and other parties defined as stakeholders at a profit so that the objectives of all parties involved are met". Echeverri and Edvardsson (2002) establish that services marketing has become a well-known area and that the subject has matured into a central and growing part of marketing among enterprises and organizations.

A relation oriented view on marketing puts emphasize on a long-term time perspective. The importance of price decreases as customer loyalty is accentuated by creating an added value.

The decision-making criterion of the buyer has, first and foremost, its foundation in the long-term value of the buyer-seller relationship (Arnerup-Cooper, 1998), with other words building customer loyalty. Simões and Dibb (2001) clarify that increased loyalty to the company is a benefit appreciated due to corporate brands, among other benefits such as communicating brand values and differentiation from competitors, while Calderón, Cervera and Mollá (1997) argue that brands are the best asset a firm can posses as added value and long-term association can be achieved by a company with its customers. Grönroos (2000) defines brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's product or service as distinct from those of other sellers", and Doyle[1] supplements the definition with "having a sustainable differential advantage". Furthermore, "a brand is a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer."[2] Cooper (1999) explains that brands "are not just simple measurable "things", but "balances" of complementary features which meet consumers' rational, emotional, social and cultural needs".

It was not until a century ago the first brands in a modern sense were developed. Branding and brands became central issues in marketing during the second half of the 20th century, and during the last ten years awareness of the importance of creating service brands has emerged. Nowadays branding is a very important issue for service companies. Establishing brand awareness and a positive brand image in consumer's minds produces the knowledge structures that can affect consumer response and generate customer-based brand equity (Keller, 2003). Kotler (2002) acknowledges that a brand with a atrong brand equity is a valuable asset.

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                    │    Brand     │
                    │    Equity    │
                    └──────┬───────┘
         ┌─────────────┬───┴───┬─────────────┐
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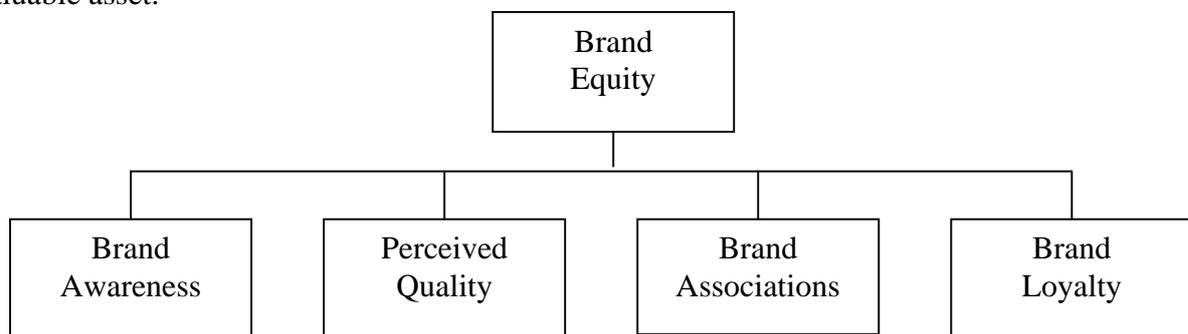
FIGURE 1.1 Brand equity. Source: Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000)

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[1] Summer issue 1989, *Journal of Marketing Management.* Peter Doyle
[2] http://www.buildingbrands.com/definitions/02_brand_definition.php (2006-12-05)

However, Aaker (1996) suggests that the brand is a "mental box" and defines brand equity as "a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds (or subtracts) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers". These assets are identified as four: brand name awareness; it refers to the strengths of a brand's presence in the consumer's mind, brand loyalty; true brand loyalty exists when customers have a high relative attitude toward the brand which is then exhibited through repurchase behavior (Dick and Basu 1994), perceived quality; the overall perceptions of quality and image attributed to a good or a service[3], and brand associations; anything that connects the customer to the brand (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000).

According to Davis (2002), a brand is as valuable to a company as the human and financial resources, and that a brand requires continual development and fostering in order to meet consumer expectations. Branding, according to Fatt (1997), is a message that identifies competence, standard and image to consumers. He expresses that branding conveys a knowing and trust to consumers. A brands image is the image of the good or service, which is formed in the customer's mind (Echevarri and Edvardsson, 2002), and a reputable and established brand image can be considered a treasured benefit, involving tactical and competitive advantages for the company (Porter and Claycomb, 1997).

A large part of the service sector has adapted the concept of marketing and branding very successfully. Accounting firms, recruiting agencies and hotels/restaurants have successfully created strong brands with which they compete on the market. Equipment leasing firms and technical service companies such as consultancy firms have been more discrete with their marketing. They have not marketed their brand to a greater extent; they might be recognized by other companies and professionals in the trade, but they are relatively unknown outside their industry. The consultancy firm SWECO can be set as an example; although the company is the leading technical consulting firm in Scandinavia and a significant actor in, primarily Eastern Europe, they have a modest reputation and brand.

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[3] http://www.aegis-marketing.com/BrandEquity.htm (2006-12-08)

1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION

As highlighted above, the knowledge and information intensive and technical services' sector has been through a great expansion; according to Lovelock *et al*. (1999) the service sector accounts for over two-thirds of developed economies' GDP. De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) explain that even though there is much published about the differences between products and services, it is not to a great value when attaining to successfully develop services brand.

The uniqueness with services are their relative intangibility – services cannot be touched, stored or acquired - which often is used to distinguish services from goods with a physical presence. Branding culture is not strongly embedded in service firms (Kapferer, 1992) and, therefore, branding is not widely used in services marketing as in the marketing for more tangible items (Dibb and Simkin, 1993). However, as Doyle (1989) stated regarding building successful brands, "service is perhaps the most sustainable differential advantage". While products easily can be copied by competitors, services are much harder to copy since they are highly depending on the culture of the company and the training and attitudes of its employees (Doyle, 1989).

Nelson (1970) and Darby and Karni (1973) mention a three-fold classification of goods which has been accepted as a discipline of services marketing (Moorthi, 2002). Accordingly, these three classifications of goods are:

1. search goods;
2. experience goods;
3. credence goods.

While products have more search properties, Zeithmal and Bitner (1996) argue that services have more experience and credence properties. In the further discussions, only the differences between search goods and credence goods will be highlighted. Since this essay deals with technical and information intensive services (credence goods), experience goods (services provided by e.g. restaurants, hotels and airlines) will be mentioned briefly.

Having clarified the diversity of goods and services, the 7Ps of services marketing is to be highlighted, since the traditional four Ps of McCarthy – product, price, place, promotion – are insufficient considerations when marketing services and services business. A service's marketing mix consists of 7Ps (product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, process and people) (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004).

When purchasing a product, the customer goes through a lot of information search; this information is highly measurable and, therefore, the brand promise becomes explicit. For experience and credence goods on the other hand, due to their degree of intangibility, the brand promise to a customer is implicit. A credence good (e.g. consultant) is therefore primarily chosen for its reputation (Moorthi, 2002).

It is easy to price a search good since the costs that go into producing it are known. Regarding credence goods however, pricing becomes much more difficult. These services, legal and consultant services per se, are decidedly customized (Lovelock, 1992) and it is rarely possible to make an estimation of the price in advance. Additionally, in credence goods, the customer is primarily concerned with quality. Zeithaml (1982) confirms that the customer will look to price as a surrogate for quality regarding credence goods and the high level of risk involved.

Moorthi (2002) furtherly emphasizes the disparity of the importance governing the physical location. While a search good should be as close as possible to the customer, for credence goods the customer is willing to travel any distance. Therefore the physical distance dimension becomes progressively less important to the customer, as one move from search goods to credence goods.

Also the communication needs of the three types of goods differ from one to another. The communication needs of a search good should be designed to provide as much information as possible since, as Cave (1985) puts it, information remedies are likely to be efficient. For credence goods on the other hand, information alone will not serve the purpose and, hence, Ekelund *et al*. (1995) explains that word-of-mouth communication becomes more important.

Ellwood (2002) acknowledges that a company's utmost asset is its employees and that, especially in the service sector, it can be enormously beneficial for the business if they can be encouraged to express the brand at all levels. There is a direct company-customer contact-based relationship in services business; as the service is imparted, generally the customer deals directly – and often face-to-face – with the representatives of the firm. The provided credence goods of a consultancy are, therefore, highly related to the consultants; the prospects of gaining or loosing a high value client are in a high degree depended on the consultants (Moorthi, 2002).

When buying a search good, the consumer follows certain well-known steps (Engel *et al.*, 1994), thus the requirements of the customers can be standardized through approaches like mass-customization (Wright, 2000). Professional services (credence goods), on the other hand, demand a lot more variation (Moorthi, 2002) and more customization (Lovelock, 1992).

Customers use information to increase certainty and lower risk they associate with a purchase. Research in the area of services marketing has demonstrated empirically that the perception of uncertainty, and, therefore, risk, is higher for products that are less tangible such as services (Desphande and Zaltman, 1987; Murray and Schlachter, 1990). Thus, when consumers are uncertain about product attributes, firms may use brands to inform consumers about product positions and to ensure that their product claims are credible; brands may signal product positions credibly (Erdem and Swait, 1998). In the investigation of how firms use branding to lower the risk, the consultancy firm SWECO will serve as a case study. This leads to the questions put below.

1.3 QUESTIONS AT ISSUE

It is primarily relevant to examine how SWECO's brand is perceived, thus the question:

- Does SWECO have a strong brand?

Thereafter, the main question of the essay follows:

- Could SWECO, as an international technical service company, create a strong brand name abroad?

1.4 PURPOSE

The purpose with this paper is to examine whether a strong brand is important for businesses within the technical service industry, and how companies proceed to create a valuable brand during their internationalisation process.

1.5 DEMARCATION

Since this essay will be dealing with SWECO as a starting point, the main focus will lie on their customers who mainly are companies in branches such as construction, transportation, energy and infrastructure. A further delimitation will be carried out regarding the survey, where focus will lie on the customers within the environment industry. As an international company, the customers of SWECO can be found all around the world. The company addresses also to private persons who also will be taken into consideration in the proceedings of this essay.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The essay consists of six chapters and the contents of each chapter will briefly be explained. Chapter one begins with the background, followed by the problem discussion that presents the research area and the research questions. This chapter concludes with the demarcations of the study. Chapter two illustrates the methodology that will guideline the proceedings of this study. Chapter three describes the theories which are associated with the research question. Chapter four presents the empirical data collected which then is analysed and connected to the theories presented in the previous chapter. In chapter five, the findings and the implications are highlighted. The last chapter of the essay enlightens the final discussions and ends with a critical review of the approaches and the conclusions. The outline of the thesis is shown in figure 1.2.
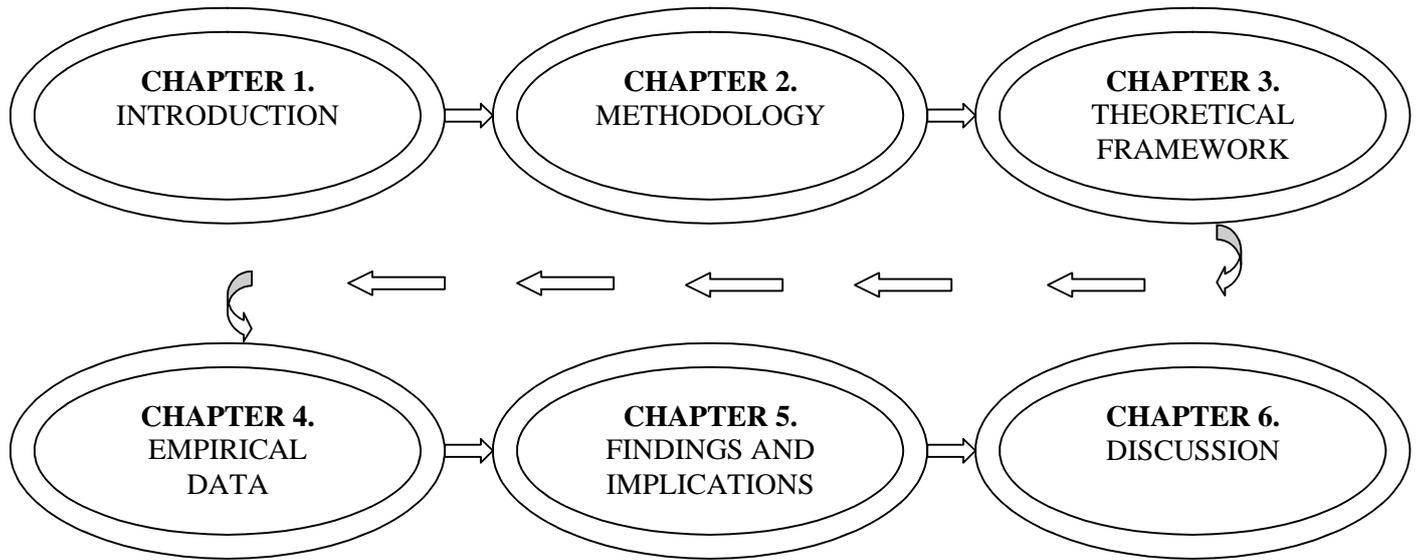
FIGURE 1.2 Outline of the thesis

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter will present the theoretical concepts of methodology. As an introduction, the two most common approaches will be discussed, followed by the different sampling methods. The chapter will be ended with a discussion on the validity and reliability of a study.

2.1 POSITIVISM versus HERMENEUTICS

August Comte, a 19th century sociologist, stated that "the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge, and that such knowledge can only come from positive affirmation of theories through strict scientific method"[4]. Baran and Ryan (2003) suggest that reality for a positivist is objective- things are true or actual in fact, and that truth is not influenced by factors such as society, culture or interaction with human cognition. Denscombe (2004) describes the positivism as an approach within the society research that intends to apply a scientific research method when examining social phenomena.

Ryan and Baran (2003) explain that positivist studies are primarily quantitative in nature (although qualitative positivist case studies are possible). Empirical science exemplifies the positivist methods, and knowledge is built through a process of inductive logic- hypothesis are developed and tested with experiments and observations and as more and more facts accumulate, they lay a profound in the construction of general explanatory theories (Chalmers, 1999).
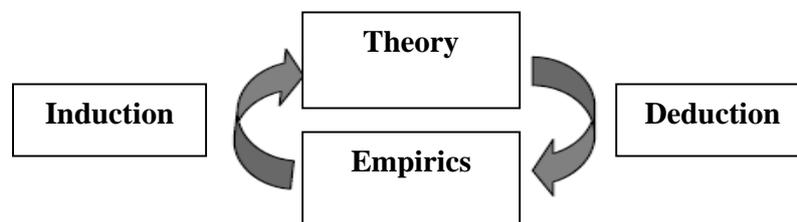

FIGURE 2.1 Induction and Deduction. Source: Arbnor & Bjerke (1994)

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[4] Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (Internet)

On the contrary to the inductive method, a deductive reasoning works from the more general to the more specific. Available general theories are used as basis for describing some specific situations and phenomena (Trochim, 1999).

Hermeneutics is defined as the theory and practice of interpretation. Hermeneutic interpretation proceeds by what is known as the "hermeneutic circle". Central to this idea is the impossibility of understanding a whole without understanding the parts, and vice-versa. Within this system, there is never a final answer. Understanding moves around the circle, deepening with each revolution (Baran and Ryan, 2003).

While positivism aims to be objective and scientific, hermeneutics has at its core the idea that objectivity is impossible. The hermeneutic interpretation is influenced by the situation of the individual researcher. That person´s history, culture and prejudices cannot be transcended; they will color the nature of his or her interpretation. Thus, there is the probablity of different truths emerging from the same phenomena, since different investigators will bring different perspectives to their inquiry (Baran and Ryan, 2003).

2.1.1 Research Strategy

The positivist approach is applicable in this essay since it will be dealing with a scientific view on the issue rather than interpretation. The case study will be handled objectively and scientifically in accordance with the positivism approach. Existing theories will serve as starting point in the deductive reasoning; theories on branding will be applied on the corporate brand strategy.

2.2 SAMPLING METHODS

In some cases, when wanting to analyse a population, it is useful and fully achievable to delimit the studies to a sample. Samples are utilised when determining who or what to interview or observe, and are depended on what practically is possible and available (Lundahl, 1999). Sometimes, the entire population will be sufficiently small, making it possible to conduct a census study. Alternatively, a sample that will represent the total population will be studied. Sampling is less costly and demands lesser time.

An important criterion when sampling is whether the sample can be regarded as representative. According to Tufte (2003) the entire decisive principle for creating a representative sample is the hazard. Hence, there are some modes for creating such representative samples:

- Random sampling is the purest form of probability sampling. Each member of the population has an equal and known chance of being selected. When there are very large populations, it is often difficult or impossible to identify every member of the population, so the pool of available subjects becomes biased.
- Systematic sampling is often used instead of random sampling. Its only advantage over the random sampling technique is simplicity. Systematic sampling is frequently used to select a specified number of records from a computer file.
- Stratified sampling is a commonly used probability method that is superior to random sampling because it reduces sampling error. A stratum is a subset of the population that share at least one common characteristic.
- Convenience sampling is used in exploratory research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth. As the name implies, the sample is selected because they are convenient. This nonprobability method is often used during preliminary research efforts to get a gross estimate of the results, without incurring the cost or time required to select a random sample.

Trochim (1999) acknowledges that the difference between probability and nonprobabilty is that probability sampling involves random selection while nonprobability does not. Although some researchers favour probabilistic sampling methods over the nonprobabilistic ones, there are some circumstances where it is impossible to convey a random sampling. It may be considered impossible to include a sufficiently large sample in the study, or the lack of adequate data on the population to conduct a probability sampling (Denscombe, 2000).

2.2.1 Selection of Sampling Method

A nonprobalistic census study will be conducted, since the population that is the object of the study is to be found abroad. The possibility of accomplishing a census study is due to the small size of the population (43 persons) and access to the necessary data of the population provided by the company. Due to the complexity of reaching foreign respondents, former customers of SWECO will serve as the target group.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data is divided into primary and secondary data. Secondary data is available data and previous researches, while primary data is defined as data generated by the researcher himself (Dahmström, 2000).

2.3.1 Primary Data

The primary data collected for this study is provided from a survey and an interview. The survey, constituted by eleven questions, was to be filled out on the internet. A short, semi-structured interview with one of the company's employee will also serve as primary data. By doing so, both a qualitative and a quantitative approach will be used to obtain the necessary information.

2.3.2 Secondary Data

The secondary data used for this essay are available previous researches scientific literature and articles. Even significant information from the internet has come into hand.

2.4 RELIABILITY

It is important to know how reliable a study's data is; what data is being used and how it is being used (Johannesen and Tufte, 2003). The idea with reliability is build on quantitative studies, on measuring. The situation shall in all ways be standardized to have high reliability (Trost, 2001). There are different ways of testing data's reliability. One way is to repeat the same study on the same group at two different points of time. If the results are the same, then the study has high reliability. This is a "test-retest-reliability". A second way of testing data's reliability is when several researcher independent from each other examine the same phenomenon. If the majority of the researcher comes to the same conclusion ,the data has a high reliability. This is called "inter-rate-reliability" (Johannesen and Tufte, 2003).

2.4.1 Application of Reliability

To achieve high reliability, a standardized questionnaire is sent by e-mail to the respondents. There will not be time to prove the test-retest-reliability or the inter-rate-reliability in this study, but the fact that it is a census study increases the reliability.

2.5 VALIDITY

It is important to use relevant questions in a survey, otherwise the collected data is not valid. Validity is how good, or relevant, data represent the phenomenon at issue. There are different forms of validity: conception validity, internal validity and external validity.

Conception validity concerns the relation between the general phenomenon to be examined and concrete data. Sometimes it can be difficult to decide if the data is valid or not, in some

cases it is all about using face validity. Validity is a qualities demand and can not be understood as something absolute, as if data is valid or not (Johannesen and Tufte, 2003). The term internal validity can be used to show us that it do not give any, or a very limited, possibility to prove causal connection. High internal validity is when an experiment has been practiced in a way that it is possible to say that there is a connection between two variables is a possible cause connection. External validity is something that concern the generalization from selection to population. It is good to know if the selection is representative for the population. The best way of controlling external validity is to carry out the same study in different contexts and at different moments (Johannesen and Tufte, 2003).

2.5.1 Application of Validity

External validity is the form that best represents this essay. Since a census study is carried out, there is no room for questioning that it is a representative selection. However, there is no time to carry out the same study at different times.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a theoretical outline. Different theories on building brands will be overviewed and explained. Firstly, service quality will be explained followed by a theory on brand leadership and brand equity.

3.1 SERVICE QUALITY

Grönroos (2001) explains that often, improvement of quality is contemplated as an internal objective without any given definitions of what service quality is, and mentioning quality without defining it, how it is perceived by customers and how to improve it is not of a great value. He adds that "quality of a particular product or service is *whatever the customer perceives it to be*" and that the quality of a service basically has two dimensions; namely a technical or outcome dimension and a functional or process-related dimension. While the technical dimension deals with what the customers receive (e.g. the client of a business consultant may get a new organization scheme) in their interactions with a firm, the functional dimension deals with how the customers experience the simultaneous production and consumption process.

The technical quality of an outcome is what the customer is left with when the service production process and its buyer-seller interactions are over. Mostly, this dimension can be evaluated objectively by the customers because of its characteristic as a technical solution to a problem. The customer is also influenced by the way in which the technical quality – the outcome or end result of the process – is transferred to him.

The functional quality of an outcome, on the other hand, is experienced subjectively. The customer is influenced by how he receives the service and how he experiences the concurrent production and consumption process.
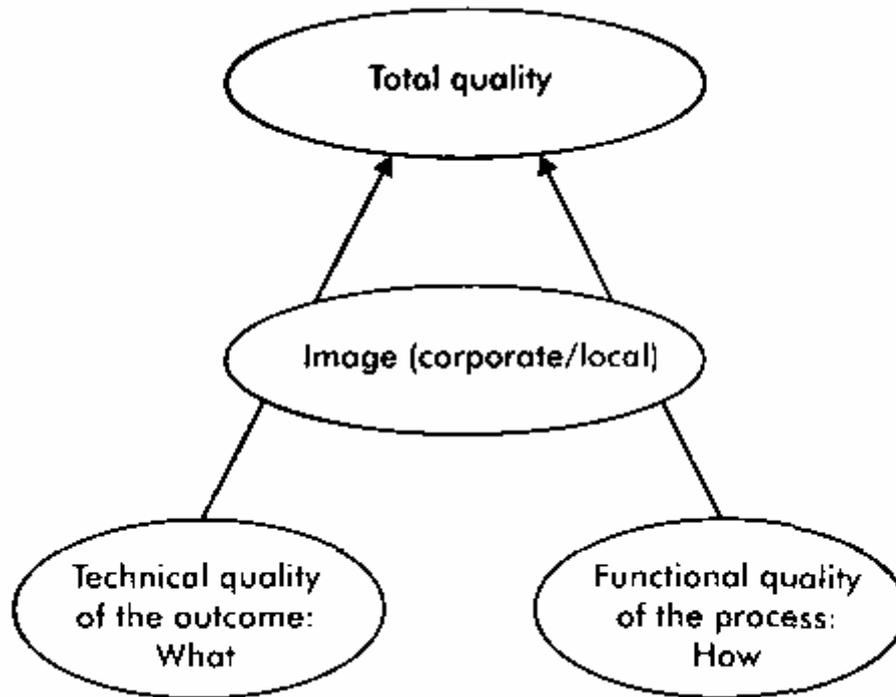
FIGURE 3.1 Two service quality dimensions. Source: Grönroos (2001)

The corporate image has an utmost importance to most services since the firm, its resources and its operating methods are visible to the customers. It can affect the experience of the quality perceived in various manners. With a favourable image, the minor mistakes of the firm may be treated with indulgence by its customers. However, errors occurring repeatedly will of course damage the corporate image. For a firm with a negative image, the consequences of a small mistake will have a greater impact than it otherwise would be.

The technical respectively the functional quality together with the corporate image convey the total quality of a service perceived to the customer. The quality of supplied products and services is regarded as a competitive advantage for the company.

Figure shows how the experience of quality is connected to the traditional marketing activities. This results in a perceived service quality; good perceived quality is obtained when the experienced quality corresponds to the expected quality. The level of the total perceived quality is not only determined by the technical and the functional quality but rather by the gap between the expected and the experienced quality.
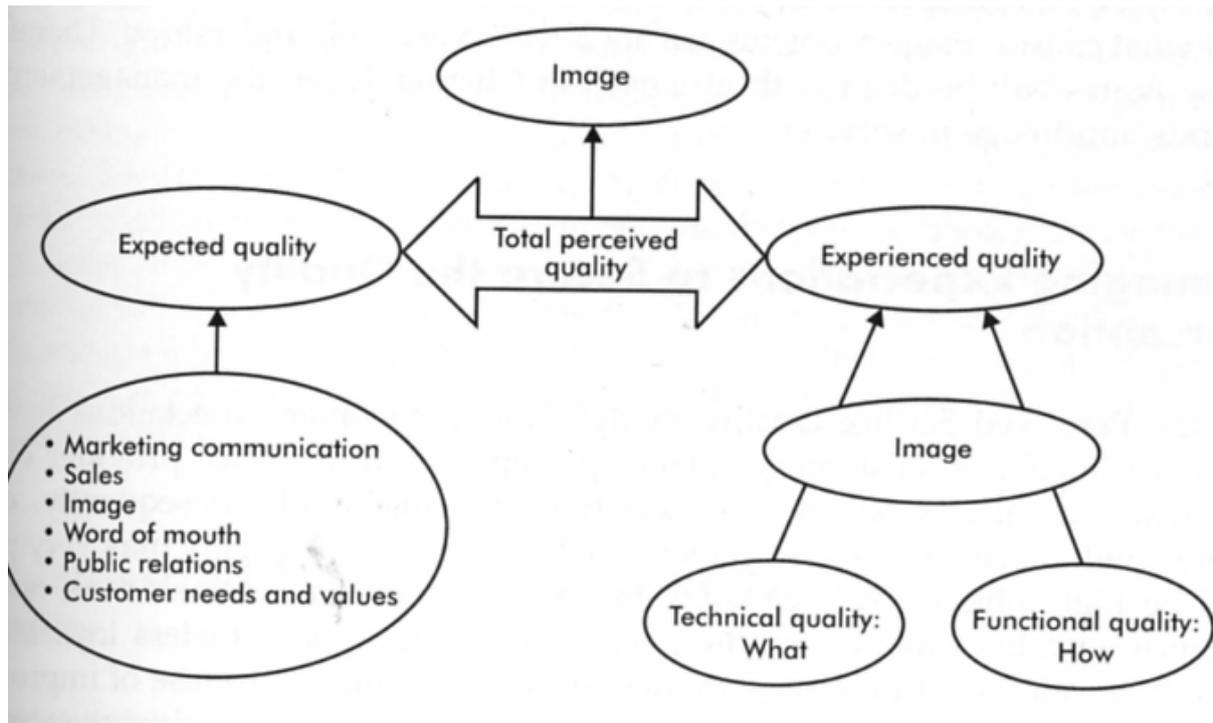
FIGURE 3.2 Total perceived quality. Source: Grönroos (2001)

During the past two decades there have been thorough examinations of factors affecting the total perceived quality. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) initiated a study on the service quality determinants and how the customers evaluate the quality services based on the Perceived Service Quality concept. The summary of these 10 service quality determinants are to be observed in table 3.1.

3.2 BRAND JUDGEMENTS

Brand judgments involve the manners in which customers summarize all the different performance and imagery associations of the brand to form different kinds of opinions. Keller (2003) highlights four types of summary brand judgements in terms of creating a strong brand: quality, credibility, consideration and superiority.

3.2.1 Brand Quality

Keller (2003) states that the most important attitude a customer may hold to a brand relates to the perceived quality of the brand. He defines brand attitudes in terms of consumers' overall evaluations of the brand, and highlights the importance of brand attitudes since they often

1. Reliablity involves consistency of performance and dependability:
   - the firm performs the service right the first time
   - accuracy in billing
   - keeping records correctly
   - performing the service at the designated time
2. Responsiveness concerns the willingness or readiness of employees to provide service:
   - timeliness of service
   - mailing transaction slips immediately
   - calling the customer back quickly
   - giving prompt service
3. Competence means possession of required skills and knowledge:
   - knowledge and skills of the contact employees
   - knowledge and skills of operational support personnel
   - research capability of the organization
4. Access involves approachability and ease of contact:
   - the service is easily accessible by telephone
   - waiting time to receive service is not extensive
   - convenient location of service facility
5. Courtesy involves politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel:
   - consideration for the consumer's property
   - clean and neat appearance of contact personnel
6. Communication means keeping customers informed in language they can understand and listening to them:
   - explaining the service itself
   - explaining how much the service will cost
   - explaining the trade-offs between service and cost
   - assuring the consumers that a problem will be handled
7. Credibility involves trustworthiness, believability, honesty and having the customer's best interests at heart:
   - company name
   - company reputation
   - personal characteristics of the contact personnel
   - the degree of hard sell involved in interactions
8. Security is the freedom from danger, risk or doubt:
   - physical safety
   - financial security
   - confidentiality
9. Understanding/Knowing the Customer involves making the effort to understand the customer's needs:
   - learning the customer's specific requirements
   - providing individualized attention
   - recognizing regular customers
10. Tangibles include physical evidence of the service:
    - physical facilities
    - appearance of personnel
    - tools or equipment used to provide the service
    - physical representations of the service (cards, etc.)
    - other customers in the service facility

TABLE 3.1:Determinants of perceived service quality. Source: Grönroos (2002)

create a basis for actions and behaviour that consumers take with the brand (e.g. brand choice). These attitudes generally depend on specific considerations regarding the attributes and benefits of the brand. Perceptions of value and satisfaction are also attitudes related to quality.

3.2.2 Brand Credibility

Brand credibility refers to the extent to which the brand as a whole is seen as credible in terms of three dimensions: perceived expertise, trustworthiness and likeability. Perceived expertise refers to whether the brand is regarded as competent, innovative and a market leader. Brand trustworthiness deals with dependability and keeping customer interests in mind, and brand likeability is simply if the customers find the brand fun, interesting and worth spending time with.

3.2.3. Brand Consideration

Brand consideration deals primarily with the likelihood that customers will include the brand in the set of possible options of brands they might buy or use. It also depends in part on how personally customers find the brand, that is, the extent to which customers view the brand as being appropriate and meaningful to themselves. Brand consideration is regarded as a crucial filter in terms of building brand equity.

3.2.4 Brand Superiority

Brand superiority simply relates to the extent to which customers view the brand as unique as and better than other brands, and if the customers believe that the brand offers advantages that other brands cannot. Superiority is very important when building intense and active relationships with customers, and it depends very much on the brand associations that make up the brand image.

3.3 BRAND LEADERSHIP

A part of the core identity for especially corporate brands is leadership. A leadership brand provides, for some customers, reassurance and for others the implication of quality and/or innovation. There are different kinds of leadership according to Aaker (2000), some are mentioned below;

- A *component* leader with superior management skills
- An *authoritative* leader who gets things done by edict
- A *supportive* leader who encourages with positive reinforcement
- A *coach* who provides the tools and techniques to accomplish tasks
- An *innovative,* cutting-edge leader who pushes the technology boundaries
- A *successful* leader with a large market share
- A *quality* leader who sets standards for excellence
- An *inspiring* leader who articulates values and mission

According to Aaker (2000), the brand leadership model is an important tool for companies to use when building strong brands. As shown in figure below, the four pillars of creating strong brands are;

1. brand identity
2. brand architecture
3. brand-building programs, and
4. organizational structure and processes

Organizational Structure and Processes
- Responsibility for brand strategy
- Management processes

Brand Architecture
- Brands/subbrands/endorsed brands
- Roles of brands/subbrands

Brand Leadership

Brand-Building Programs
- Accessing multiple media
- Achieving brilliance
- Integrating the communication
- Measuring the results

Brand Identity/Position
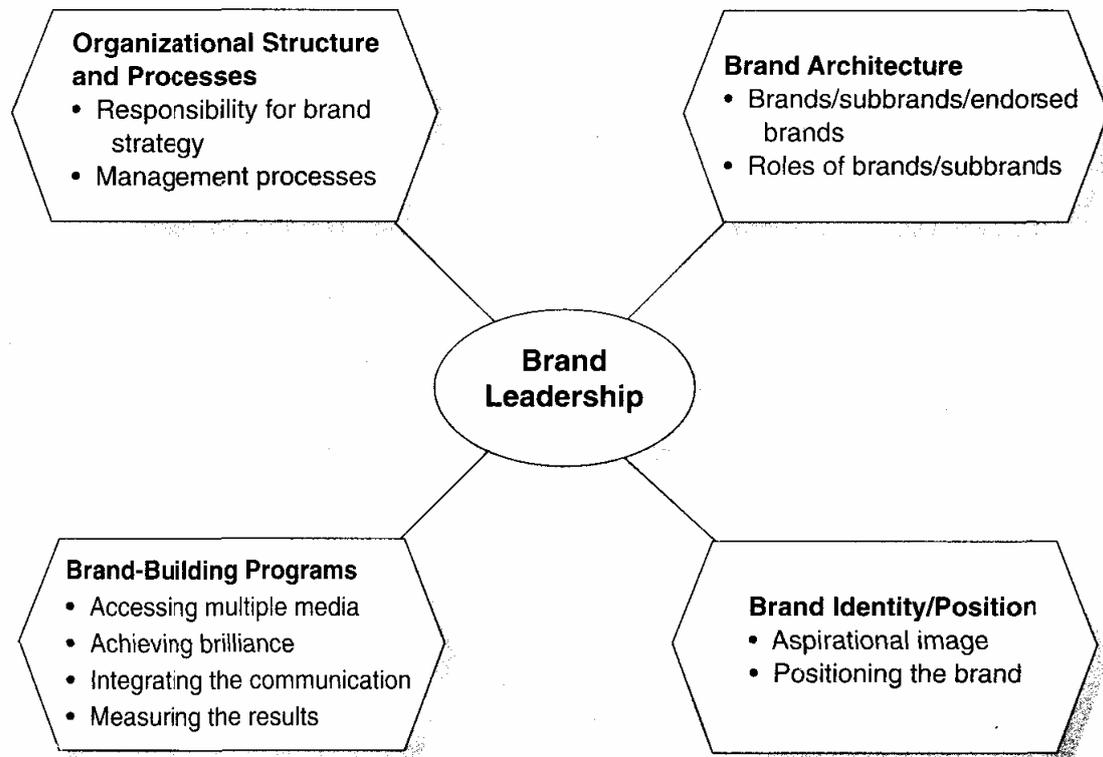- Aspirational image
- Positioning the brand

FIGURE 3.3 The brand leadership tasks. Source: Aaker (2000)

The first challenge is to create a brand-building organization. The second one is to develop a comprehensive brand architecture, that provide strategic direction. Followed by the development of a brand strategy for the key brands including, not only a motivating brand identity, but also a differentiated brand position, and resonates with customers. The last challenge within the brand leadership tasks of creating strong brands is to develop efficient and effective brand-building programs together with a system to track the results (Aaker 2000).

3.3.1 The Organizational Challenge

To build strong brands it is important to create an organizational structure and process, then a person or a group of persons need to be in charge so that those who have long-term interest in the brand can make the decisions. When the brand has many markets and/or countries it is good that each one of the markets and/or countries have its own manager. Therefore the

organizational process must provide a regular set of inputs, outputs and vocabulary for everyone to use. The communication system would lead to insights, experience and brand-building initiatives (Aaker 2000).

3.3.2 The Brand Architecture Challenge

Through the brand architecture challenge a company can identify the brand and its role. To get a clarity in customer offerings, real synergies in the brands and their communication programs and an ability to leverage brand assets, a company will need an effective, well-conceived architecture. Service firms are very suspect to brand proliferation without the guidance and discipline of any brand policy or plan.

When creating an effective brand architecture a firm need to consider these facts;

- when it is appropriate to stretch the existing brand,
- when to employ a new brand,
- when to use an endorsed brand, and
- when to use a subbrand.

A key element of brand architecture is the role of each brand in the portfolio. The most important brands for a firms future are strategic brands. Strategic brands should receive adequate resources to succeed (Aaker 2000).

Brand architecture is an on organizing structure of the brand portfolio. The brand portfolios job is to specify the brand roles and the relationships among brands and different product-market brand contexts. The prime goal is to create an effective and powerful brand impact. Aaker (2000), defines brand architecture through five dimensions, which are;

1. the brand portfolio,
2. portfolio roles,
3. product-market context roles,
4. the portfolio structure, and
5. portfolio graphics

As shown in the figure 3.4, the six objectives of brand architecture are also essential to achieving brand leadership. The six objectives are;

1. Create effective and powerful brands
2. Allocate brand-building resources
3. Create synergy
4. Achieve clarity of product offerings
5. Leverage brand equity
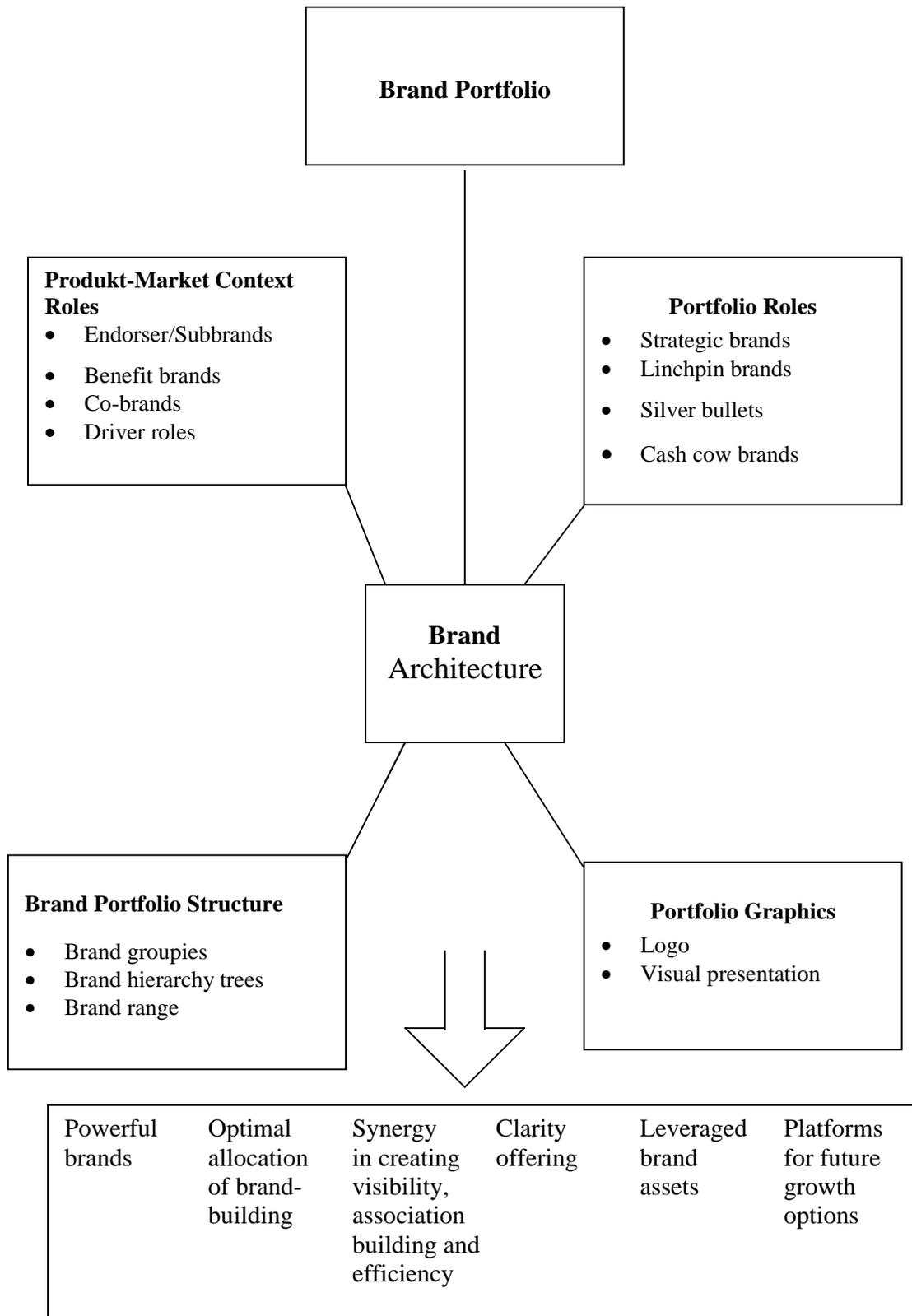6. Provide a platform for future growth options

FIGURE 3.4 Brand architecture. Source: Aaker (2000)

3.3.3 The Brand-Building Program Challenge

To realize the brand identity a firm must have brand-building programs, they implement and help define the brand identity. Through advertising execution or sponsorship clarity can be brought to a brand identity. Brilliant execution that creates a growing impact over time, is a key to build strong brands.

A firms challenge is;

- to get noticed,
- to be remembered,
- to change perceptions,
- to reinforce attitudes, and
- to create deep customer relationships.

The right communication tools are needed to get brilliant execution, such as the understanding and the use of interactive media, direct response and promotions. Another tool could be advertising, but it does not play a big role in the success of brand building. Another key is to learn managing the resulting communication program. Successful management involves measurement. To measure on an effective way as possible is through indicators that tap all dimensions of brand equity, such as brand awareness, perceived quality, customer loyalty and associations including brand personality, organizational and attribute association (Aaker 2000).

3.3.4 The Brand Identity and Position Challenge

A brand identity is needed for each actively managed brand. A firm need to have a vision of how that brand should be perceived by its target group. Since the brand identity guides and inspires the brand-building program, it is the heart of the brand leadership model. To build effective brands, the brand identity must be clear and not confused or ambiguous, by setting forth the communication objectives. In short; what message will best differentiate the brand? (Aaker 2000).
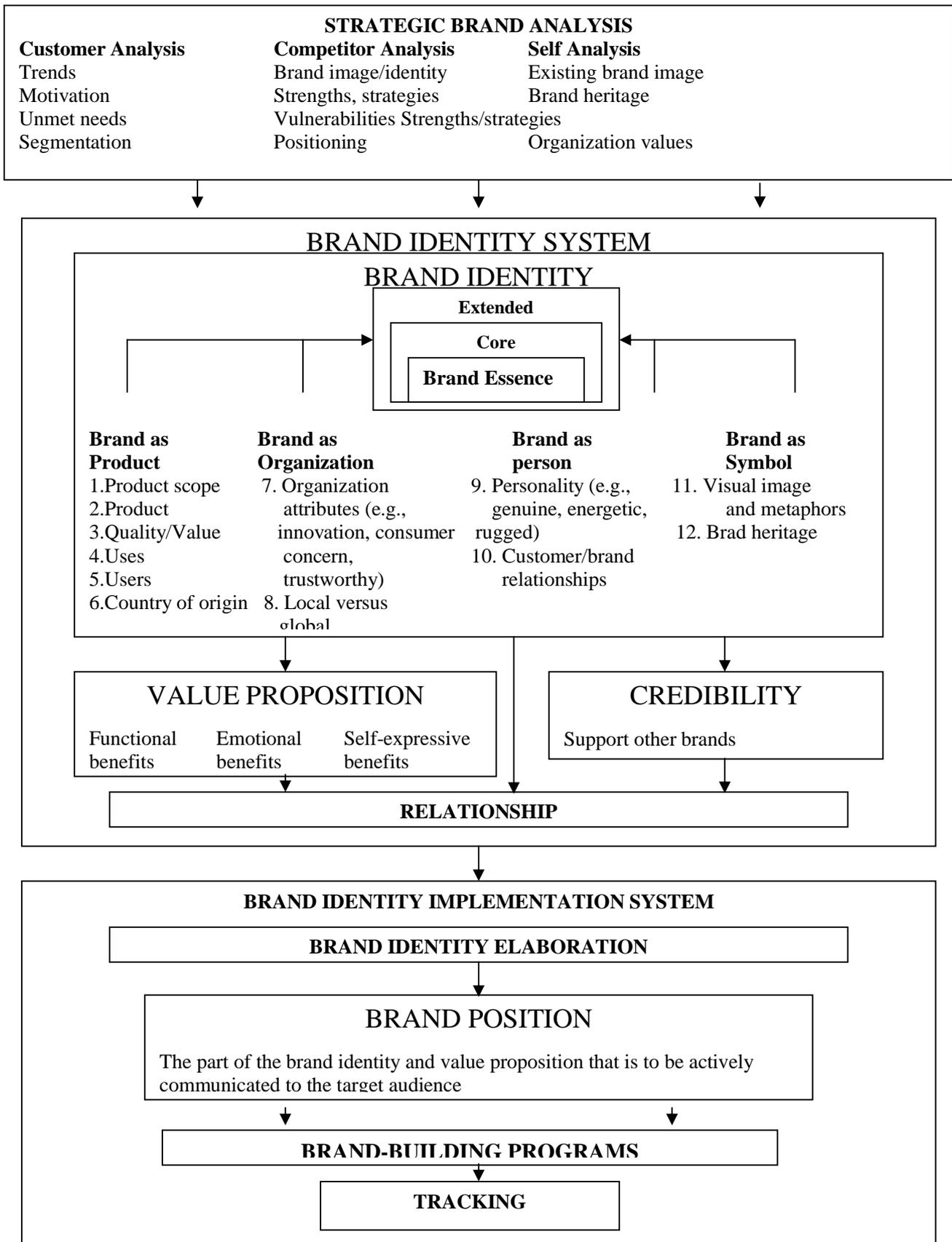
STRATEGIC BRAND ANALYSIS

Customer Analysis	**Competitor Analysis**	**Self Analysis**
Trends	Brand image/identity	Existing brand image
Motivation	Strengths, strategies	Brand heritage
Unmet needs	Vulnerabilities Strengths/strategies	
Segmentation	Positioning	Organization values

BRAND IDENTITY SYSTEM

BRAND IDENTITY

Extended

Core

Brand Essence

Brand as Product	**Brand as Organization**	**Brand as person**	**Brand as Symbol**
1.Product scope	7. Organization attributes (e.g.,	9. Personality (e.g., genuine, energetic,	11. Visual image and metaphors
2.Product	innovation, consumer	rugged)	12. Brad heritage
3.Quality/Value	concern,	10. Customer/brand	
4.Uses	trustworthy)	relationships	
5.Users	8. Local versus		
6.Country of origin	global		

VALUE PROPOSITION

Functional benefits	Emotional benefits	Self-expressive benefits

CREDIBILITY

Support other brands

RELATIONSHIP

BRAND IDENTITY IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM

BRAND IDENTITY ELABORATION

BRAND POSITION

The part of the brand identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience

BRAND-BUILDING PROGRAMS

TRACKING

FIGURE 3.5 Brand identity planning model. Source Aaker (2000)

Aaker (1996), defines brand identity as *"a unique setoff brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members".*

The brand identity should help establish a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition potentially involving functional, emotional, or selfexpressive benefits or by providing credibility for endorsed brands (Aaker 2000).

Aaker (1996), imply that a firm should consider its brand as;

- a product,
- an organization,
- a person, and
- a symbol

It should help ensure that the brand identity has texture and depth. The four factors aim to help the strategist consider different brand elements and patterns that can help clarify, enrich and differentiate an identity.

There are twelve categories of brand identity in Figure 3.5 elements organized around the four perspectives. No brand has associations in all twelve categories, but each category has relevance for some brands (Aaker 2000).

A basis for organizations to have a durable advantage is through brands (Aaker, 1996). Aaker (1996) states that brands do not just happen; brands are a result of closely control, committed organizations and brilliant executions. He further describes ten guidelines for building strong brands.[5]

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[5] See Appendix 5 p. 55

3.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Kaikati (2003) describes the rebranding procedure of the international consulting firm Accenture in *Lessons from Accenture's 3Rs: rebranding, restructuring and repositioning*. The American firm Accenture is world leading in providing management and technology consulting services. The international company employs approximately 75,000 professionals in 47 countries and the annual revenue garners $10 billions from its clients.

3.4.1 Historical Overview

In 1913, two accountant colleagues established the public accounting firm Andersen, Delany & Co. The company was later rebranded Arthur Andersen & Co. (later Andersen Consulting), and in the 1950s the firm was dabbled in management consulting by giving advice to its clients in how to run their businesses more efficiently. This became a starting point for the company's consulting practice which grew to account for a great share of the firm's business. Since the consulting business has become so lucrative, a decision on separation was put forward from the consultants in the 1980s. The final separation took place in 2000, where an international arbitrator ruled in favour of Andersen Consulting which now was formally separated from the Swiss "umbrella" organization Andersen Worldwide Socie´te´ Cooperative (AWSC). Andersen Consulting was, thereby, obliged to adopt a new name.

3.4.2 The Rebranding Process

A rebranding campaign was started consisting of selecting a new name and launching it worldwide via an intensive promotion campaign (the name selecting process will be excluded in the continuation since it is not relevant in this essay).

The first step became to spread the new brand message internally. Thereafter, an insistent campaign of promoting the Accenture brand took place in every country in which the company operates. Through a combination of traditional advertising means and special events, the firm carried out their promotion strategies across 47 countries simultaneously.

The firm implemented both push and pull promotion strategies. To alert their clients, 40,000 packages that provided descriptive messages about Accenture arrived at the client's desks. The purpose with this aggressive push strategy was to make the clients aware of the new brand. In addition to this, an intensive pull strategy was implemented involving massive global advertising. Through these strategies the firm also managed to transfer the remarkable brand equity from Andersen Consulting to Accenture.

4. EMPIRICAL DATA

This chapter will begin with a brief outline on the company at issue. Thereafter, a compilation of the results from the survey will be presented with different charts. These results will, as a final part of this chapter, be analysed and linked to chapter three, the theoretical framework.

4.1 SWECO

The Swedish company SWECO is Scandinavia's leading consultant firm with approximately 6000 customers. These customers require different services such as architecture services, building service systems, water and environment, transport, energy and civil engineering, project management, energy systems, industrial engineering, information systems and structural engineering.[6]

SWECO's services are highly sought after in many areas, for example:

- the pharmaceutical industry
- the process industry
- the food industry
- the pulp and paper industries
- the offshore industry
- the construction and real estate sector
- the energy sector and
- the transportation sector.

Scandinavia is SWECO´s home-market, but the company has also an extensive and growing international business corresponding to 41% of the company's turnover. SWECO's consulting services has a high level of demand in eastern and central Europe, mostly in Russia, Baltic

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[6] www.sweco.se

area and the new EU-members. The services are also required in Asia, Africa, Middle East and South America.[7]

SWECO's vision is to be one of Europe's leading knowledge companies within technology, environment and architecture. The company's business concept is to create value for their customers, shareholders and co-workers through the delivering of qualified services with high knowledge to the community and business-world.[8]

With SWECO´s 3 600 consultants and architectures, the concern is one of de larger actors in Europe and market leader in Scandinavia within several activity areas. All companies in the concern have in-depth competency and long experience in their various disciplines. Several companies in the Group were founded more than 100 years ago and have since then served as a driving force for technological development in their core areas.[9]

Although the company has been in the business for a century, they have only recently developed a marketing strategy. During the last three years they have launched advertises in Sweden with the purpose to make their brand more familiar. There is no international marketing strategy yet; they have not put efforts in marketing their name internationally.[10]

4.2 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

All figures presented in the results below are to be found in appendix 2, p. 50.

Since the survey was delimited to the environment industry, all the respondents are in this industry and they have all participated in work-shops and conferences arranged by SWECO. The respondents were primarily asked what factors they emphasized when seeking to collaborate with a company. As chart 4.1 reveals, the most important factor is the price.

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[7] www.sweco.se
[8] Ibid
[9] Ibid
[10] See appendix 3, p.53

According to 42 % of the respondents price is determining. 37 % consider image to be the most important factor, while aspects such as accessibility and size were less decisive for the respondents in their request for cooperation. A comparatively large percentage (9%) regards none of these factors to be important features for the company with which they want to work. They would put emphasize on other factors.
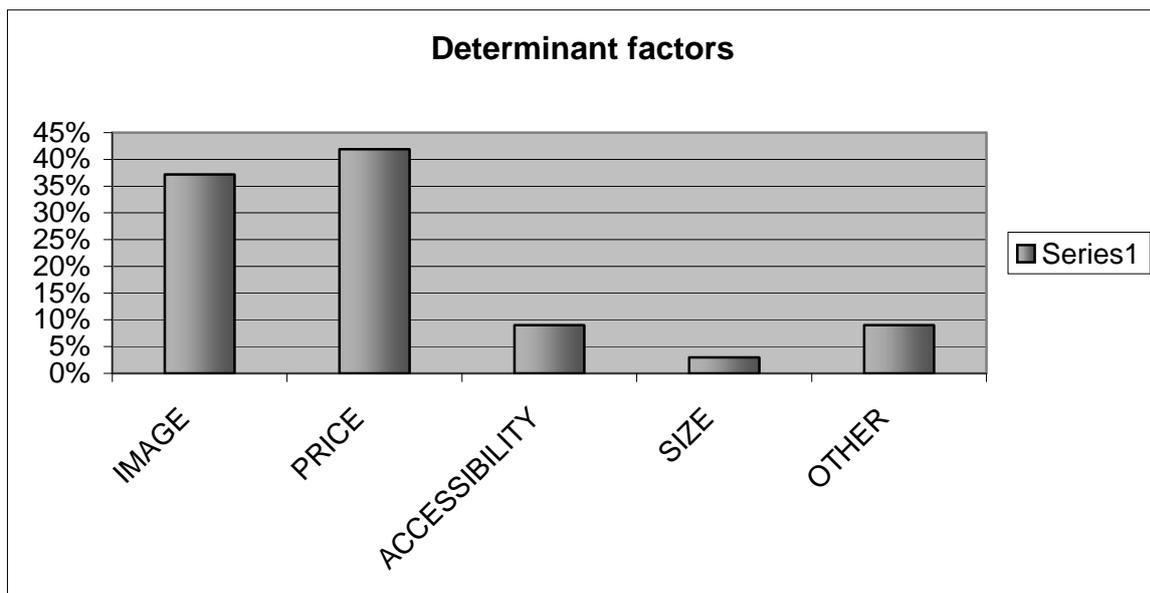

CHART 4.1 Determinant factors.

A significant question to examine is whether it is important for service companies to operate with a strong brand name. The majority of the respondents, namely 86 %, deem that service companies should have strong brands. Only 2 % estimate a strong brand as non-important, while 12 % were uncertain.

Is it important for service companies to have strong brands?

Yes
No
Unceirtan
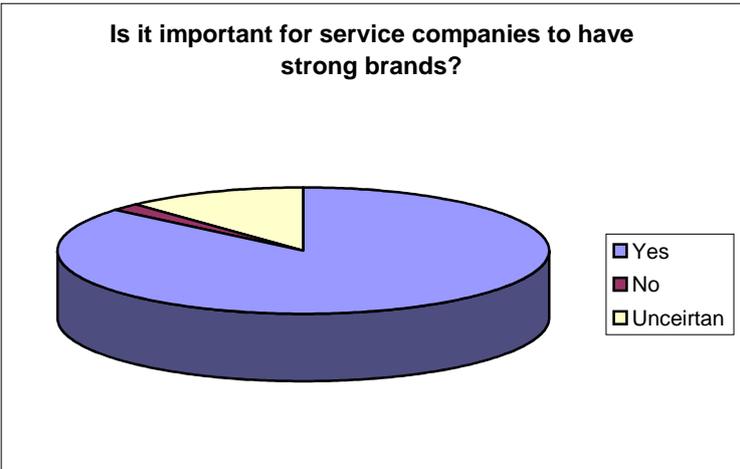
CHART 4.2 Is it important for service companies to have strong brands?

After determining whether it is important or not to have a strong brand, the respondents were asked about what they associate with a strong brand. The replies are to be regarded in Chart 4.3. Among the alternatives to choose from in the survey, quality was the strongest factor associated with a valuable brand. 58 %, to be more precisely, selected quality, in comparison with the 35 % who firstly associated a brand with knowledge and know-how. Loyalty and comfort were two factors that the respondents did not directly associate with a strong brand. Only 2 % accentuate loyalty, none of the respondents relate comfort to strong brands while 5 % would not communicate any of these factors to brands.

Brand Associations

Series1

Loyalty | Knowledge/ Know-how | Quality | Comfort/ Convenience | Other Factors

CHART 4.3 Brand Association

To examine how the potential customers of SWECO heard about the companies' services, the respondents were asked to answer how they were informed about the company. 33 % of those asked were enlightened about SWECO through the company itself. This is to be differed from those 9 % that were informed through the company's marketing communications. The other information channels play a significant role. As many as one-third of the asked illustrate some other forms through which they heard about the company.
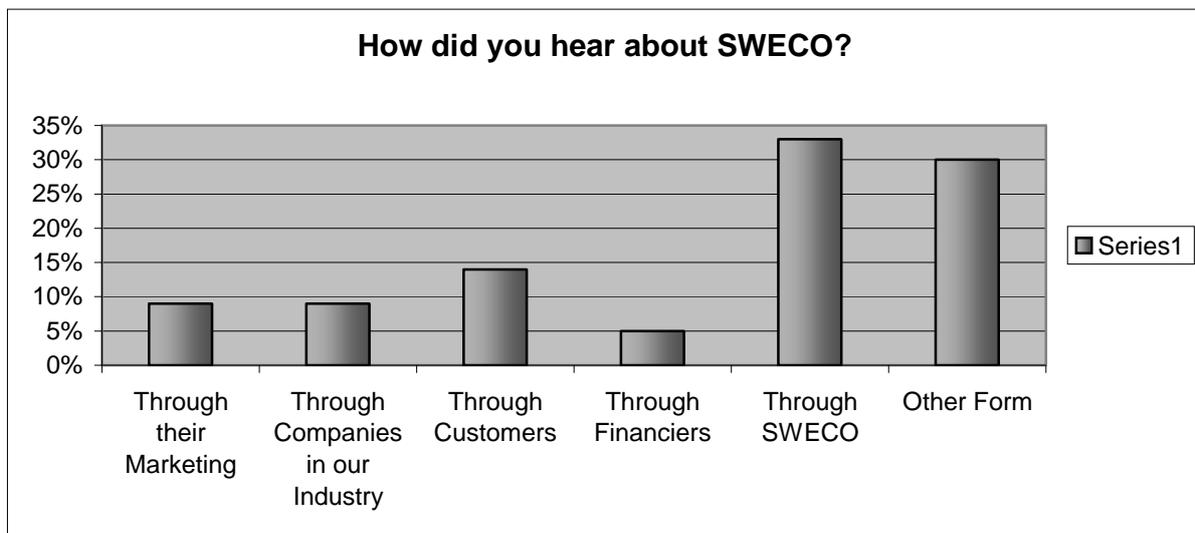
How did you hear about SWECO?

CHART 4.4 How did you hear about SWECO?

As visualized in Chart 4.4, SWECO occasionally initiate a first contact with their potential customers; 26 % of their customers were contacted by the company for a cooperation. However, a great majority of the customers (39 %) initiate the contact themselves.

In Chart 4.3 the importance of having a strong brand in the service industry was stated, and, consequently, nearly the same percentage - 86 % compared with 88 % - emphasized the importance for SWECO to create a strong brand. As shown, the brand of SWECO is regarded as average among the majority, but as many as 30 % classify the brand as strong. Then there are 16 % who regard the brand as very strong, while the rest 12 % consider it to be weak. None of the respondents would grade it as very weak.
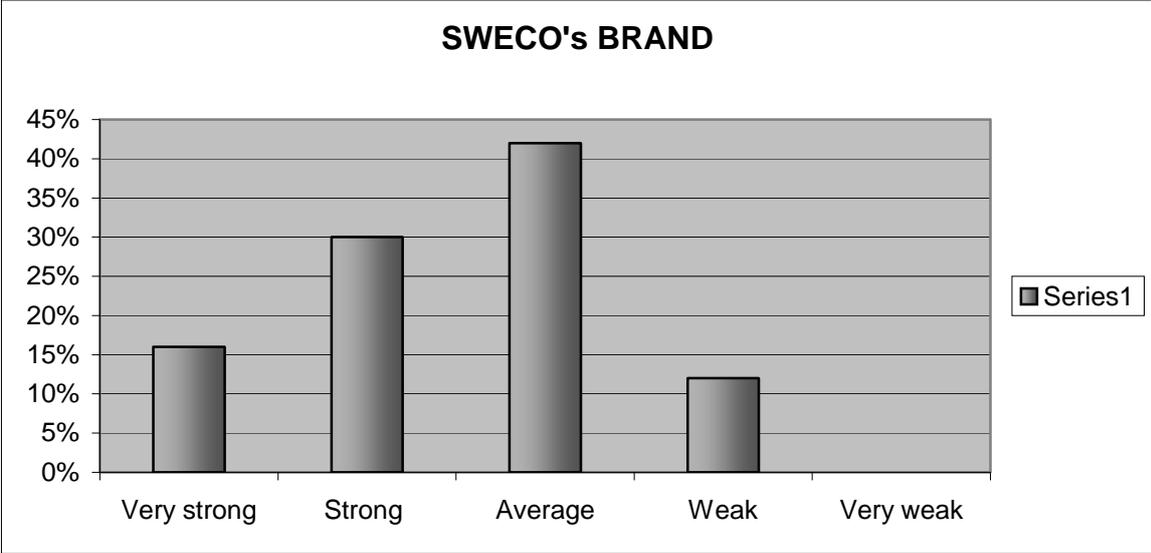
SWECO's BRAND

CHART 4.5 SWECO's Brand

The respondents were also asked about other service companies that provide the same services as SWECO. 81 % were familiar with competitive companies, and 21 % of these respondents had become familiar with these competitive companies through their marketing communications.

4.3 ANALYSIS

4.3.1 Analysis of Technical and Practical Services

In the comparison between technical services and practical services, a more developed marketing strategy and communication is discerned within the latter mentioned. While companies that provide services in the hotel and restaurant industry, recruiting agencies and accounting firms have developed strategies and actively worked with their marketing to improve their image and brand, the technical service firms have not taken into account the importance of branding. When analysing companies in these sectors (recruiting firms, accounting agencies etc.), branding has proven to be a factor for success. These companies are practically living on their brands and are publicly known which gives them a great competitive advantage. The technical service companies on the other hand, due to the lack of familiarity, losses this competitive advantage and the opportunity to gain more market shares.

When analysing the manners of how the clients of SWECO became familiar with the company, it demonstrated that it was not through SWECO's marketing tools. Other firms were proven to be more familiar due to their marketing tools as the figures in the previous section show. SWECO became known to 9 % of the respondents through marketing communication while the corresponding figure for other firms landed on 21 %.

4.3.2 Analysis of Image

When selecting a consultant service, or a technical service firm, the image has an effect on the consumer's choice of company. Consumers would rather seek a service at a company with a good image than a company with for example better accessibility. 37 % emphasized image to be the determining factor in their search for service, which is a rather high percentage compared to the other factors. As many as 42 % regarded price to be the main factor when seeking a service, which is an unexpected result because technical services are in many cases difficult to price in advance. Additionally, technical service purchasers requires good results

and are less demanding when it comes to the price. Therefore should this result be regarded as inconsequential.

4.3.3 Analysis of Quality

A factor that is very much linked to the brand is quality. A service with high quality affects the brand in a positive way and strengthens the brand in the consumers' perceptions. Quality of a service can objectively be evaluated by the consumers, which is why 58 % consider quality as a determining factor. Even knowledge and know-how can be related to the quality perceived. A personnel that conveys knowledge will increase the service quality in the customers' perceptions.

4.3.4 Analysis of SWECO's Brand Leadership

There is a clear demand for service companies to have strong brands. This can be due to the nature of services; since service are intangible in its nature, there is a uncertainty and risk associated with a purchase. Thus, the brand may serve as information and familiarity with the service which lowers the uncertainty among the consumers. In the case of SWECO, where its brand is deemed not as very strong but mediocre, the reassurance which a leadership brand provides is not made use of. One kind of leadership is being a successful leader with a large market share, which SWECO already has, but which is not taken advantage of in their marketing strategy. The company uses a pull promotion strategy in their marketing in Sweden, yet the company does not have a marketing strategy abroad.

4.3.5 Analysis of Accenture's Brand Promotion

The case study on Accenture's marketing strategy demonstrates the company's successful brand promotion. Through the different promotion campaigns, they managed to maintain their strong position within the business using their new brand name.

5. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter will refer to the problem discussion in chapter one, and the research questions will be answered. A conclusion of the analysis from chapter four will then be presented. Thereafter, a critical review will bring this chapter to an end.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Taken all in all, the service sector has, and still is, in expansion. Service companies are becoming more and more aware of the importance of marketing their services and strengthen their brands. Branding as a marketing signal has proven to be very beneficial for service companies.

5.1.1 Technical Services' Price-inelasticy

Regarding technical services, the concept of the 7 P's of services are to be viewed as insufficient as marketing tools:

- For this kind of technical services (e.g. consultants), price is not the decisive factor. The consumers seek quality primarily. These kind of services are of high relevance and the consumers want to see a good and satisfying result, thus they are prepared to compromise with the price. Since the customers are prepared to pay more for services with good quality and image, they become price-inelastic.
- The importance of the physical nearness and accessibility is diminished regarding technical service. The consumers are willing to seek services with good image and reputation even if there is a large physical distance in-between.
- Since services are intangible – the service is experienced concurrently as it is consumed - the consumers are primarily choosing services for their reputation.
- In the communicating process of services, word-of-mouth communication becomes more important; even here reputation plays a significant part.

- The employees of a company constitute a valuable asset, and since the customers often deals face-to-face with the representatives of the firm, the quality they convey can be measured and have an effect on the image of the company.

Conclusively, it can be stated that technical companies cannot use the 7 P's as marketing tools due to the points highlighted above. Thus branding becomes an unique option for technical service companies in their marketing strategy. These points are also to be regarded as advantages for brands since they are factors that are appreciated in brand strategies.

5.1.2 International Marketing Strategy

SWECO has only recently developed a strategy for its marketing communication in Sweden, and has no corresponding strategy abroad. Therefore, the company is not well known internationally; the corporate brand is not strong. SWECO has many prerequisites to create a strong name abroad.

- The services that SWECO provides are of high quality, which is widely acknowledged among their existing international clients.
- They are market leaders in Scandinavia and have financial resources.
- There are similar consultancy firms that have managed to successfully create strong international brands.

Having stated these prerequisites, SWECO can successfully strengthen their brand internationally by emulating the aggressive promotion strategies used by Accenture. By supplementing the pull promotion strategy already used in Sweden with the push promotion strategy, SWECO can manage to create a strong brand internationally.

6. DISCUSSION

This final chapter will provide a critical review of the essay. Firstly, the restrictions of the conclusions will be discussed followed by a critical review of the reliability and validity will be presented. Finally, some ideas on further researches will be put forward.

6.1 CRITICAL REVIEW

The restrictions of the conclusions presented in the previous chapter is that every corporate is unique. There are organizational, financial and cultural differences which of course affects the view on marketing approaches. The fact that some companies have successful international marketing strategies does not signify that other companies can be as successful if they emulate the strategy of the latter.

6.1.1 Critical Review of Reliability

The reliability of this essay is limited because of the sample selection that provided the quantitative data. The census study was restricted to former customers of the company, thus the objectivity of answers might be questioned. Even the fact that they already were familiar with the company effects the results. A more varying target group would increase the reliability.

6.1.2 Critical Review of Validity

In order to collect more valid data, it would have been better if the questionnaire was sent in a later stage. New and relevant questions have arisen during the proceedings of this essay, which have remained unanswered. The lack of open questions is also a validity diminishing factor

6.2 FURTHER RESEARCH

During the writing process of this essay several new questions emerged which can be interesting for further researches:

- How do technical service companies differentiate in their marketing in comparison with other service companies?
- Why are technical service companies being modest with their brand marketing?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:   SURVEY

Welcome...	Hosting Manager
Welcome to the home page of Suleyman Serhanoglu and Caroline Bozkurt! We are two students who are working with our bachelor thesis in business administration at Södertörn University College in Stockholm, Sweden. Our bachelor thesis will deal with the importance of companies operating in the service industry to have a strong brand. We will be focusing on the swedish company SWECO which is a consulting firm working in a range of areas. The purpose with this home page is for our respondents to answer the survey that will be helping us in our work.	We would appreciate if You could participate in our survey before the 28th of november.
The Survey	**Website Publishing**

In which industry do You work?
- ○ Transportation
- ○ Environment
- ○ Energy
- ○ Architecture
- ○ Construction

When selecting a company for a project, which is the determinant factor for choosing it?
- ☐ Image
- ☐ Price
- ☐ Accessibility
- ☐ Size
- ☐ Other

Is it important for a company in the service industry to have a strong brand?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Uncertain

What is associated with a strong brand?
- ○ Loyalty
- ○ Knowledge/Know-how
- ○ Quality
- ○ Comfort/Convenience
- ○ Other factors

How did You hear about SWECO?	○ Through their marketing ○ Through other companies in our industry ○ Through their customers ○ Through financiers ○ Through SWECO itself ○ Other form
How did You come in contact with SWECO	○ They contacted us ○ We contacted them ○ Other form
What kind of relationship do You have with SWECO?	○ Customer ○ Former customer ○ Co-working partners ○ Participation in workshops/conferences arranged by SWECO ○ Other forms
Is it important for SWECO, as a service company, to create a strong brand?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Uncertain
Do You think that SWECO has a strong brand name?	○ Very strong ○ Strong ○ Avarage ○ Weak ○ Very weak
Do You know other international companies that provide the same services as SWECO?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Uncertain
If yes in the previous	○ Through their marketing

question, how did You hear about them?	○ Through other companies in our industry ○ Through their customers ○ Through financiers ○ Other forms
Email Address:	
	Submit Form

APPENDIX 2:   THE COMPILATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

1. In which industry do You work?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Transportation	0	0%
Environment	41	96%
Energy	2	4%
Architecture	0	0%
Construction	0	0%

2. When selecting a company for a project, which is the determinant factor for choosing it?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Image	16	37%
Price	18	42%
Accessibility	4	9%
Size	1	3%
Other	4	9%

3. Is it important for a company in the service industry to have a strong brand?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Yes	37	86%
No	1	2%
Uncertain	5	12%

4. What is associated with a strong brand?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Loyalty	1	2%
Knowledge/Know-how	15	35%
Quality	25	58%
Comfort/Convenience	0	0%
Other factors	2	5%

5. How did You hear about SWECO?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Through their marketing	4	9%
Through other companies in our industry	4	9%
Through their customers	6	14%
Through financiers	2	5%
Through SWECO itself	14	33%
Other form	13	30%

6. How did You come in contact with SWECO?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
They contacted us	11	26%
We contacted them	17	39%
Other form	15	35%

7. What kind of relationship do You have with SWECO?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Customer	0	0%
Former customer	0	0%
Co-working partners	0	0%
Participation in workshops/conferences arranged by SWECO	41	96%
Other forms	2	4%

8. Is it important for SWECO, as a service company, to create a strong brand?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Yes	38	88%
No	0	0%
Uncertain	5	12%

9. Do You think that SWECO has a strong brand name?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Very strong	7	16%
Strong	13	30%
Average	18	42%
Weak	5	12%
Very weak	0	0%

10. Do You know other international companies that provide the same services as SWECO?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Yes	35	82%
No	7	16%
Uncertain	1	2%

11. If yes in the previous question, how did You hear about them?

Answer:	Quantity:	Percentage:
Through their marketing	10	28%
Through other companies in our industry	6	17%
Through their customers	6	17%
Through financiers	2	6%
Other forms	11	32%

The percentage points are rounded off.

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW – ENGLISH

Interview with a consultant at SWECO, 18th October, 2006

Conducter: What does SWECO do?

Interviewee: SWECO is a consultancy firm, actually the leading consultancy firm in Scandinavia. We provide consultant services to firms who are operating in industries such as architecture, environment, transportation and energy among a few. Some of our customers are also private persons. We stay with our customers throughout the whole project and a while after the operation. We are also involved and helping our customers in a possible shutdown.

Conducter: Do you think that it is important for service companies to have a strong brand?

Interviewee: As a matter of fact I do. At SWECO we think that it is very important with a strong brand name. These past three years we have been putting work into building our brand. Partly due to the increasing competitive but mostly because we want to increase our market shares.

Conducter: How do you plan to market your brand?

Interviewee: We want to change our profile. We want to move from being seen as a concrete firm to a company of knowledge. We want to be associated with quality, knowledge and added value. In Sweden, we have launched commercial campaigns and advertises.

Conducter: Are you marketing your brand abroad?

Interviewee: Well, not really.

Conducter: How come, since you are an international company?

Interviewee: We are an international company; we have a great deal of projects abroad. As an international, we want to be close to the markets we are operating in. We have many subsidiaries, mostly through acquisitions.

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW – SWEDISH

Intervju med en konsult på SWECO, 18 oktober 2006.

Intervjuare: Vad gör SWECO?

Respondent: SWECO är ett konsultföretag som faktiskt är ledande i Norden. Vi tillhandahåller konsulttjänster till företag som jobbar inom olika industrier, till exempel inom miljö, arkitektur, energi och transport. Vissa av våra kunder är också privatpersoner. Vi är med våra kunder genom hela projektet och ett tag efter driften. Vi är även där för kunderna vid en eventuell avveckling.

Intervjuare: Tycker du att det är viktigt för tjänsteföretag att ha ett starkt varumärke?

Respondent: Det tycker jag faktiskt. På SWECO tycker vi att det är jätte viktigt att ha ett starkt varumärke. Under de tre senaste åren har vi lagt ner arbete på att förstärka vårt märke. Delvis beror det på den ökade konkurrens som råder, men mestadels för att vi vill utöka våra marknadsandelar.

Intervjuare: Hur planerar ni att marknadsföra ert varumärke?

Respondent: Vi vill förändra vår profil. Vi vill, från att vara betraktade som ett konkret företag, positionera oss till att vara ett kunskapsföretag. Vi vill bli associerade med kvalité, kunskap och mervärde. I Sverige har vi lanserat reklamkampanjer och annonser.

Intervjuare: Marknadsför ni ert varumärke utomlands?

Respondent: Nej, inte direkt.

Intervjuare: Hur kommer det sig med tanke på att ni är ett företag som opererar internationellt?

Respondent: Vi är ett internationellt företag; vi har många projekt utomlands. Som ett internationellt företag, vill vi vara nära de marknader som vi arbetar på. Vi har många dotterbolag, mestadels genom förvärv.

APPENDIX 5:   TEN GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING STRONG BRANDS

TEN GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING STRONG BRANDS

1. *Brand identity.* Have an identity for each brand. Consider the perspectives of the brand-as-person, brand-as-organization, and brand-as-symbol, as well as the brand-as-product. Identify the core identity. Modify the identity as needed for different market segments and products. Remember that an image is how you are perceived, and an identity is how you aspire to be achieved.

2. *Values proposition.* Know the value proposition for each brand that has a driver role. Consider emotional and self-expressive benefits. Know how endorser brands will provide credibility. Understand the brand-customer relationship.

3. *Brand position.* For each brand, have a brand position that will provide clear guidance to those implementing a communication program. Recall that a position is the part of the identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated.

4. *Execution.* Execute the communication program so that it not only is on target with the identity and position but achieves brilliance and durability.

5. *Consistency over time.* Have as goal a consistent identity, position, and execution over time. Maintain symbols, imagery, and metaphors that work. Understand and resist organizational biases toward changing the identity, position, and execution.

6. *Brand system.* Make sure the brands in the portfolio are consistent and synergistic. Know their roles. Have or develop silver bullets to help support brand identities and positions. Exploit branded features and services. Use subbrands to clarify and modify. Know the strategic brands.

7. *Brand leverage.* Extend brands and develop co-branding programs only if the brand identity will be both used and reinforced. Identify range brands and, for each, develop an identity and specify how that identity will be different in disparate product contexts. If a brand is moved up or down, take care to manage the integrity of the resulting brand identities.

8. *Tracking brand equity.* Track brand equity over time, including awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and especially brand associations. Have specific communication objectives. Especially note areas where the brand identity and position are not reflected in the brand image.

9. *Brand responsibility.* Have someone in charge of the brand who will create the identity and position and coordinate the execution over organizational units, media, and markets.

10. *Invest in brands.* Continue investing in brands even when the financial goals are not being met.