

English Summary - Corporate Branding i et Modtagerperspektiv

The English translation of this dissertation is: “Corporate Branding - senders and receivers.”

The dissertation deals with the subject of corporate branding and the relationship between the senders of communication and the receivers of communication.

The aim of the dissertation is to come to a higher understanding of the phenomenon and its implications, especially why corporate branding have been so widely adopted as a way of communication through the mid- and late nineties. The dissertation comprises of two major parts.

In the first part we will account for the changes in branding-strategies in the realm of business and how the value of a brand can be “measured” as equity. In the dissertation we argue that these changes are influenced by the changes in consumer culture. This also means reaching a fundamental understanding of why costumers consume and how we deal with the construction of identity through the display of physical objects of immaterial concepts.

It’s inconceivable, that corporate communication in the shape of corporate branding is received without any filters or personal bias, so in the dissertation we present a multi-sided theoretical framework for understanding the bias of cognitive processes, through which any communication has to pass, and how cognitive processes influence our perception of the world.

In the second part we examine the relationship between the intentions and realities behind the corporate branding-strategy of Bang & Olufsen. In order to “measure” the relationship between the communicative intentions of the sender and the actual results of the corporate branding, we measure the perceived corporate image as expressed by the participants in 3 different focusgroups comprising of 18 persons, both B&O costumers and non-costumers.

The study found that non-costumers have far more negative perceptions of B&O than costumers, and the participants regardless of their status as costumer/non-costumer tend to go through several phases of selective perception in order to maintain a status quo and uphold their dominant view of the world. Thus the study indicate, that perceptions are more important than reality. The study also clearly indicates that the cognitive structures as expressed in perception of image only change slowly. This means that new communicative strategies risk a total failure, because the receivers have some resistance in acknowledging the new communication as valid picture of their perception

of the company. In other words it's important to know how you are perceived as a company by your costumers before commencing new communication strategies or you might risk disappointing or enraging the costumers if they are unable to match the new communication with the images they hold.

The study also shows a clearly identifiable tendency for the participants to discuss and express their perceptions of B&O in the same areas but with opposite interpretations of the values attached. This means that B&O-costumers will praise the design while non-costumers insinuate that there might be cheap electronics inside. "Exclusive" turns to "Posh", "Classic" turns to "Boring" and so on. What we have is an inversion of the values of the corporate brand. The participants are basically discussing the same things, but it seems that it's the intpretation of it, that makes a difference. This indicates that corporate branding over time can be very succesful in depositing consistent concepts in the minds of the receivers, but less useful in controlling the interpretation of these concepts.

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