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Creating a Branding Process Model for Living Area Brands

- Developing and managing a new living area brand

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Abstract

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The objective of this thesis is to understand how to create and develop a successful place brand and how to manage it systematically. The thesis thoroughly explains the phenomenon of place brands and place branding and presents different sub-categories of place branding.

The theoretical part of the thesis provides a wide overview on the prevailing literature of place branding, place brand development and place brand management, which forms the basis of the thesis' theoretical framework. The theoretical evidence is gathered from a case living area. The living area is developed by one construction company, which has a significant role in the construction industry in Finland. The empirical evidence is gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews by interviewing the new living area's carefully selected stakeholder groups. Afterwards the empirical data is analyzed and reflected to the theoretical

findings. After examining the case living area, the thesis will present a new living area branding process model based on prevailing theories and empirical findings.

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Tämän tutkielman tavoite on saavuttaa kokonaiskäsitys siitä, kuinka luoda ja kehittää menestyksenkäs aluebrändi rakennettavalle asuinalueelle ja kuinka johtaa kehittyvää brändiä onnistuneesti. Tutkielmassa keskitytään paikkabrändien ja paikkabrändäämisen olemukseen. Paikkabrändäystä on esitelty kattavasti, ja syitä ja tarvetta sen olemassaololle on tutkittu.

Paikan brändäys, paikkabrändin luominen ja sen johtaminen muodostavat tutkimuksen teoreettisen viitekehyksen. Empiirinen aineisto perustuu case -asuinalueeseen, jota kehittää kansainvälisestäkin tunnettu rakennusyritys. Empiirinen aineisto on kerätty tarkasti valikoiduilta sidosryhmiltä, jotka liittyvät tutkielmassa käytettyyn case -asuinalueeseen. Empirian tutkimusote on kvalitatiivinen ja tutkimusaineisto on kerätty puolistrukturoiduin haastatteluin. Asuinalueen tarkastelun jälkeen tutkimuksessa on esitetty asuinaluebrändäysprosessimalli, joka perustuu tutkielman teoreettiseen ja empiiriseen osaan.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of branding has gained more and more attention during the past few decades and branding has become one of the most important tools in marketing strategy (Feire 2005). The slogan “innovate or die trying” would better suit the modern day with a slogan: “brand or die trying.” Branding has been traditionally associated with branding products or services, but as the trend evolves, branding has deployed to other areas as well such as personal branding, employer branding and lastly, place branding in many forms.

This study focuses on a fresh topic, living area branding. Due to the increasing competitiveness between geographical locations there is a need for places to differentiate themselves from others (Kerr & Johnson 2005). Place branding is a relatively new field of study and the research has focused on branding cities, vacation destinations and urban areas, but not living areas. This thesis will unveil the concept of living area branding, study the forces behind the concept and take part in the discussion on how to build a new living area brand. The study is made for a large multinational construction company that develops new living areas.

The study searches answers to questions such as what elements creates a successful brand, which elements brings the most value to the stakeholders and ultimately lead to a valuable living area brand and brings competitive advantage to the company. In the thesis, brand stakeholders are interviewed to gain a deeper level of understanding of the possible valuable elements. Also, the company represents are interviewed to achieve a holistic comprehension of the mindset, the resources and the potential to create a successful living area brand.

The thesis will culminate to a living area branding process model.

1.1. Background of the study

Branding has become a top management priority during the 21st century after companies have acknowledged the value the brands possess – brands can be described as the most valuable intangible asset a company has (Farhana 2012). Through different levels of branding a company differentiates itself from its competitors and seeks for competitive advantage. In competitive markets, brands are the strongest and they possess the potential to carry on a longer life cycle than even the products they may represent (Calderón 1997). According to Kaplan (2008), a strong place brand offers an important tool in the struggle with competitors and generates other benefits to its stakeholders.

Place branding has come to the attention of academia through practitioners. Since place branding has been taken under further investigation in the academic setting, it's been noted that place branding differs from traditional product branding remarkably (Kavaratzis 2009). Place branding differs from branding conventional products and services due to both, it's complex and multiple shareholder nature and to the fact that a marketer cannot start from zero when branding a place, because even before developing a place towards a new direction, the piece of land, regardless of whether it was a city, a country or a living area to be, has been there before and at least the local people and therefore potential future stakeholders have formed an idea of that specific place. (Harrison-Walker 2012) Therefore the marketer in creation process of a place brand starts the efforts by changing some of the perceptions, instead of offering completely new elements for audience to be perceived. (Hankinson 2004b; Harrison-Walker 2012)

Place branding is been executed throughout the world at the moment and the focus is changing especially from place marketing to place branding (Kavaratzis 2009), but in the specific field of living area branding, academic literature falls into a research gap. Practitioners have gotten a

head start on living area branding by concentrating on branding when developing new living areas. The topic of this research is current and not only due the statement that Finland has said to be 10-15 years behind in place branding (Ikonen 2013).

On the contrary how Hankinson (2004) argues that place branding can only be a coordinated process, this thesis researches the possibilities for place branding to be a systematically managed and successful process when the right stakeholders and executers are in the center of development. The suggestion is based on the difference between city branding and living area branding; a developing living area brand has a clear brand steerer, whereas city branding is conducted by city officials and multiple stakeholders and the process does not have a clear authority.

Even though the academic participation for living area branding is still vague, there are some examples of successful places that have been systematically branded in Finland, like Sipoonranta in Helsinki area. An example of an ongoing branding process in Finland is Jätkäsaari, a residential area in Helsinki, Kuninkaantammi in the capitol region and a successful living area branding has been Lutakko in Jyväskylä. From the branding point of view, success can be evaluated by some aspects, such as how popular the area has been among incoming residents, how the prices have developed in ratio to other living areas within a city and how desired the living area is seen through the eyes of the current residents.

This study's starting point is the presumption that a living area brand will eventually be created even though it wouldn't be systematically managed. (Rainisto 2003). This thought is supported by Yin (2005) who remarks in a place brand research concerning nations that a nation brand and nation branding are two different concepts: "a nation has a brand image with or without nation branding." The people living in a specific area, the house design and the area's services will set an image for a place. In this thesis

it's argued that a company can affect this developing brand by its choices and lead the brand creation onto a desired path.

According to Hanna and Rowley (2011) places are in a rising competition with each other needing to offer a platform that satisfies the need of growing economic, residential and commercial activity. Therefore the question is not whether to brand, but how to brand.

1.2. Literature Review

Place branding has been under the academic scope during the past two decades. The phenomenon rose from the concept of place marketing and was separated as an individual topic in the 1990's and therefore can be said to be a relatively young phenomenon (Lucarelli & Brorström 2013). Place branding gained the scholars' attention in 1998 when an English researcher Steven Anholt released an article *Nation Brands of the 21st century*. The article was considered later on as a turning point for place branding. In his acclaimed to be ground-breaking research paper it was suggested that even emerging countries had the potential to brand themselves successfully, using Brazil as an example and examining the country-of-origin effect to different brands. (Anholt 1998; Gertner 2011)

Place branding has been studied as a phenomenon itself, but different parts of it have grown to be independent disciplines. After Anholt's research paper, nation branding gained more attention (Gilmore 2002; Gnoth 2002). After the thought of country branding spread widely among scholars, also city branding grew to be a popular topic of research (Lucarelli & Berg 2011; Parkerson & Saunders 2004; Braun et al. 2013). Place branding literature has developed from tourism, since place branding as a concept has consisted widely of destination and tourism place branding literature. Most of the place branding literature has been

done from the 'brands as perceptual entities' point of view (Hankinson 2004).

Being such a new area of discipline, scholars and practitioners still debate on the concept's definition that has lead to confusion over place branding's true essence. Lucarelli and Berg (2011) and Kavaratzis (2005) have highlighted that there should be a more clear distinction between place branding and place marketing approach. The Swedish academics point out that the terms 'city marketing' and 'place marketing' are disappearing slowly from the literature and starting to be replaced by 'place branding' (Lucarelli & Berg 2013; Lucarelli & Brorström 2013). Companies have been more aware of branding in any of its form recently and therefore this shift towards a branding perspective is also understandable.

Place branding literature has some shortcomings when it comes to developing a theoretical basis for the discipline (Hankinson 2004; Lucarelli & Berg 2011; Lucarelli & Brorström 2013; Rainisto 2008). There is also a research gap on place branding processes and outcomes (Kerr & Johnson 2005). However, a few models suggesting a process flow for place branding exist (Cai 2002; Gaggiotti et al. 2007; Hankinson 2004; Hanna & Rowley 2011; Kavaratzis 2004). A research done on place branding literature during 1990-2009 implies that the majority of place branding articles and conference papers have been "subjective, in essay-form, based on unique case examples and are mostly qualitative by nature rather than based on theoretical information, generalizable outcomes and quantitative studies that could be renewed" (Gertner 2011). This lack of generalizable, widely adopted frameworks has been claimed to be limiting place brand literature's development (Hankinson 2004; Kavaratzis 2004) and also the young age of the phenomenon leads to the lack of proper academic research of the topic (Freire 2005).

Place branding articles can be mostly found from two main journals: *Place Branding* (founded in 2004) and *Public Diplomacy* and *Journal of Place*

Management and Development (founded in 2008) that are both published by Palgrave-MacMillan. The founding years of these journals back up the claim of place branding being both, a relatively new phenomenon and an independent field of research.

In 2004, Graham Hankinson released an article covering the relational network brands. He introduced a conceptual model of place brands that has later on gained great attention among scholars, both critical and approving, and lead to more integrated frameworks (Hanna & Rowley 2011; Harrison-Walker 2012). The relational network approach argued that a brand should be considered as relationships with different stakeholders rather than a perceptual entities or images. (Gertner 2011; Hankinson 2004) Academics agree place branding to be different from branding traditional products due to various reasons, but the theme occurring most often is the stakeholder perspective. (Morgan et al. 2003)

Although there is extensive literature about place branding and place branding's subcategories, as acknowledged, there's a clear lack of literature handling living area branding. Living area branding is a logic continuum for the discussion of branding countries, cities and destinations, but still there isn't a distinct field of research that would have been developed for living area branding. The existing place branding literature starts from the assumption that place branding is a marketing act performed by city official or another represent of the public sector (Kavaratzis 2009), whereas in living area branding the brand steerer and project owner is from the private sector and like in this study, a construction company that aims both indirectly and directly to financial benefits through creating a desirable living area brand.

This study will rely on the theory done about place branding and one of its goals is to solve, whether there is room to deeply scrutinize the discipline of living area branding. However, place branding literature has been said to develop from practitioners to scholars, so that will most likely be the life

cycle of living area branding as well in the near future. (Gertner 2011)

Academics seem to agree that place branding is a very complex field of branding due to its various stakeholders. Kavaratzis (2009) states that place branding research is lacking a common language that prevents from achieving a clear theoretical clarification. This study is in the quest of declaring a more solid theoretical base.

1.3. Research Problems

Research problems are in the core of the thesis. They constitute the basis on which the theoretical part will build around and the empirical part will seek answers to. In a thesis where such a broad subject is covered, it is meaningful to pose research questions that will guide the research of the phenomenon onto a desired path. The questions are:

1. How to create a living area brand?

- **What is living area branding and how does it differ from classical branding?**

1.a. How to develop a living area brand?

- **What strategic decisions must be made when developing a living area brand?**
- **What kinds of development processes exist?**

1.b. How to manage a living area brand?

- **Who are the stakeholders of a living area brand and what is their role in living area branding?**

These research questions guide the thesis' path. All of the questions are built around the first and main research question: how to create a living area brand. This study aims firstly to seek answers to this wide research problem. The sub-questions are designed to help to seek answers to the first question. Through the main research question, living area branding is scrutinized through place branding literature and conclusions about the topic are made. The first sub-question guides the thesis onto examining how developing a place brand differs from conventional product's branding and which attributes are valid especially in a place brand setting. Different development models are to be examined in order to get a clear view of place brand development. The second sub-question is about managing a living area brand. Since branding is an ongoing process, the management phase is very important in a place brand's success. These research questions will be represented in the conclusions chapter, in which specific answers are given in order to ensure that all the questions are answered in the thesis.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

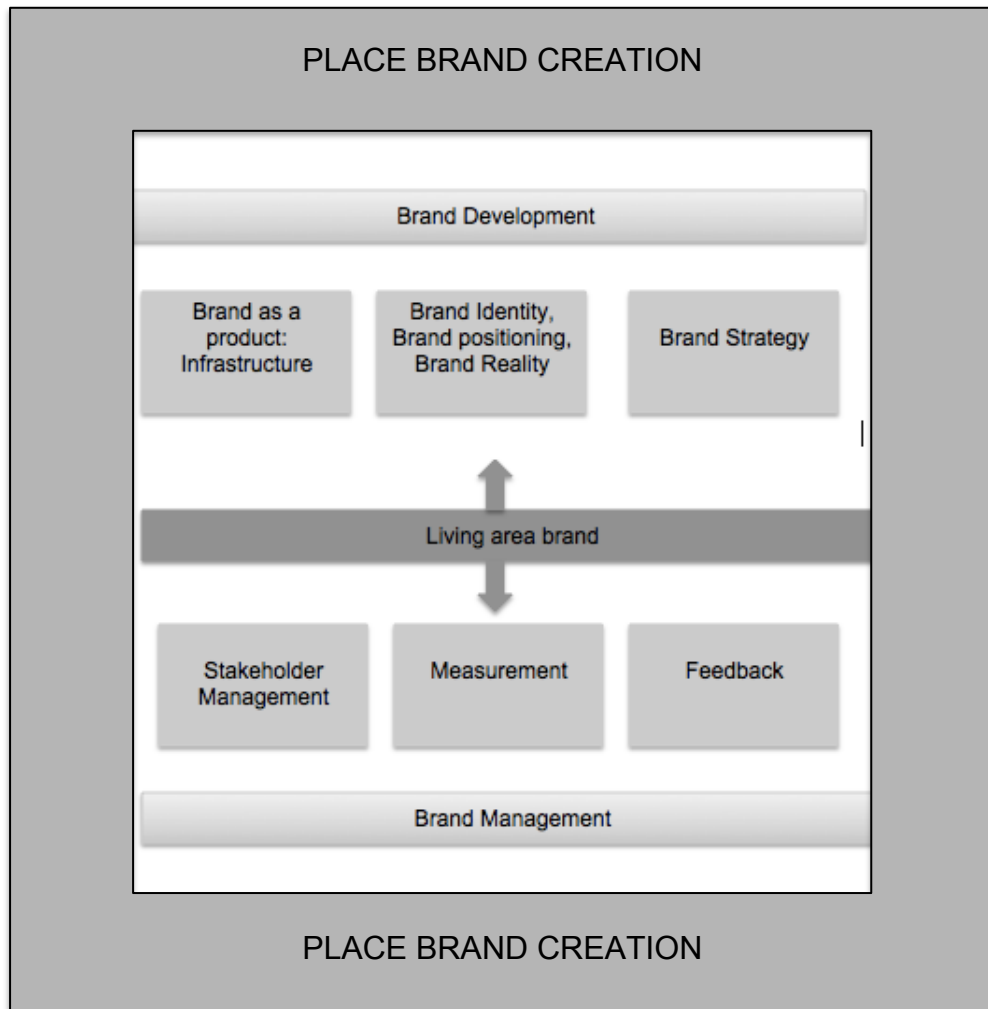


Figure 1. The theoretical framework of the study

The theoretical framework of this study is based on brand development and management literature. The main context is brand creation. Instead of a linear process, brand creation is an ongoing process that includes parts of brand development and brand management. The iterative natures of these branding activities have been taken into consideration when formulating the framework. Brand creation is a complex exercise that involves processes from many models.

The context of this thesis is place branding and more specifically, living area branding. Since there is no previous widely spread academic literature on living area branding, the thesis will formulate the theoretical basis by combining place branding discussion and classical branding literature together. Hierarchically, living area branding is a form of place branding. The concept of place branding can be seen as having also other sub-fields such as destination branding, country branding and city branding. These sub-fields have also an input to the thesis' theoretical structure.

The most important contributors to the thesis' theoretical framework are from the area of city branding. Hanna & Rowley (2011), Hankinson (2004), Kavartzis (2009, 2012) and Rainisto (2003) offer insights on brand management processes. Also authors such as Kotler and Keller will be included in the theoretical part.

The theoretical framework expresses, that within brand creation, many different processes occur. In order to create a successful brand, brand development and brand development need to be managed carefully. In creating a place brand, the brand creation process is dissimilar to a tangible product's brand creation and is more complex. Stakeholder management reflects on every aspect of place branding and poses challenges for a place brand's creation. A place brand's audience is more fractioned and therefore the communication needs to be more planned. The measurement of a place brand differs from other brands' follow-up and when successful, can assist in strategy revision over time.

The time frame for place brands is different than with other brands; the product creation can take even up to 20 years. This setting poses a wide theoretical framework for the thesis. All the aspects mentioned in the framework will be covered in the thesis' theoretical part. The empirical part has an individual framework.

1.5. Delimitations

This study focuses on a specific living area's branding process. It is not straightly applicable to any other living area's branding or developing purposes, since every living area and living area brands have their own unique attraction factors. It is a research made from the construction company's perspective in being the creative force in brand building. Public sector or city officials are not taken under scrutiny. In this thesis the studied brand stakeholder sector consists of the current and potential residents in the developing area. Noteworthy is that due to the decision-making processes and situational power this study's results are partly applicable to situations in which a construction company is the sole creator of a living area.

1.6. Key Definitions

In this sub-chapter, the key concepts of the study are briefly explained in order to set the tone for the study and ensure that the reader is familiarized with the most important concepts of the study from the start.

Brand

A brand is a concept whose definition has had nouveau nuances over the decades when the research has developed. Essentially the best definition for a brand is: elements whose goal is to differentiate a product from its competitors. Such elements are a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these. (Kotler 1991, p. 442) A brand, however, cannot be created on the manager's desks, because a brand lies in the customers' minds. A marketer can affect the messages that are sent about the brand, but the final decision about the brand is made by the consumer. When

enough people agree on the perceptions the brand is, then a brand has been born (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009).

Place Branding

Place branding is a form of branding that was first recognized by practitioners in the 1970's and afterwards spread and was approved to academic literature and discussion. Place branding is based on classical branding strategy, in which other techniques and disciplines are applied to. (Harrison-Walker 2012). The term is often confused with urban marketing and place promotion and is also separated from destination branding since the term 'destination' refers more to travel and tourism whereas 'place branding' has been adopted more widely by business and branding publications. Place branding is an umbrella term that holds different subcategories under it. Such categories of place branding are city branding, nation branding and destination branding. (Hanna & Rowley 2008; Lucarelli & Brorström 2013; Stockholm Programme of Place Branding 2013)

Brand Equity

Brand Equity is a complex concept developed in the 1990's to measure the equity a brand has. It was firstly created to better understand the financial value for which a brand is accountable to a company and secondly to better understand marketing productivity. (Keller 1993) Brand equity cannot be calculated with clear numbers, but it is more similar to an estimate. Brand equity measures the positive attributes that the brand has created for the product or a service. (Aaker 1992, Keller 1993)

Classical Branding

Classical branding refers to branding in its purest form; branding of goods and products. The pioneers of classical branding are Kevin Lane Keller

and David Aaker. Classical branding's terminology and theoretical frameworks are widely applied to branding's sub categories.

1.7. Research Methodology

This thesis will be conducted in a qualitative method through semi-structured in-depth interviews in order to better grasp the nature of a new living area brand. The research questions are posed in such a way that they require data that has more quality than quantity in them. Brand can be, in its most simple way, described as the same than what a person thinks of it – the concept and value of the brand lies in the customers' minds (Keller 2003). Therefore in the essence of this thesis, carefully collected, in-depth answers are desired.

Since creating a perceivable brand is at least a two-way relation (Hankinson 2004), the interviewees are gathered from different stakeholder groups. This thesis is focused on a region situated in Tampere called Härmälänranta, which is a new, up and coming living area on the shore of Pyhäjärvi. When creating a place brand, the important stakeholder groups are:

- Residents
- Services and businesses in the living area
- The company's key personnel for the project

The stakeholder groups' answers will be later on reflected to the theory in order to draw conclusions on the issues. Since living area branding is a novel phenomenon, the study turns into experts' consultation. The hoped interviews will be conducted with a qualitative approach, with open questions in order to get the best results from the experts. The thesis will try to get a hold of two experts:

- A published Finnish place branding pioneer; an academic approach

- A marketer that has been involved with a living area branding project before; a practitioner approach

1.8. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three conceptual parts that are divided onto five main chapters. The first one is the introductory chapter that explains through the research setting from the topic to research methods, presentation of the theoretical framework that the study will follow and the objectives of the study.

The second part presents the theoretical evidence of the study that is presented in three different chapters. The chapters are divided logically so that the second chapter presents the essence of place branding and the important concepts are showcased. The third chapter focuses on brand development and presents different place brand management models from the prevailing literature. In the end of chapter three conclusions from the presented models are drawn and a framework for living area branding is presented.

The third and final part represents the empirical part of the study and is divided onto two different chapters. The fifth chapter of the thesis presents the empirical evidence and justifies, how and why such data was collected. In the chapter, key findings are presented and conclusions from them are drawn. The sixth chapter is dedicated for the final conclusions of the thesis. That chapter will present all the key findings, both theoretical and empirical, and it will summarize the thesis' findings and theoretical and managerial implications. In the final conclusions, the thesis' research questions will be answered straightforwardly.

2. PLACE BRANDING

This chapter provides the concepts of branding and presents place branding as a form of branding. Emphasis is given to the branding concept's adaptation to place branding context. After reading the chapter the reader should be able to understand the fundamental concepts of branding and understand the tenets of place branding. The chapter is divided in four different subchapters. The first subchapter presents concepts that are connected to branding and that are in a key position when forming the basis for a place brand. The second subchapter discusses on strategic decisions connected to brand development phase. Some of the presented elements are applicable only in a place brand setting. The third subchapter presents a phenomenon that is extremely important and unique in a place brand setting; stakeholder participation. In that subchapter the theoretical information's usage is justified. The fourth subchapter is dedicated to the tangible and intangible elements of a place brand that form the core of a place as a product. Some of the concepts and elements presented in the chapter 2 is more thoroughly discussed on chapter 3, wherein different place brand management models are presented and analyzed. In such an order, the basic concepts are presented before proceeding to the models itself.

2.1. Elements of branding

In this sub-chapter, basic elements and concepts from the field of branding are introduced. The aim of this chapter is to offer a clear review on the basic conceptualizations, benefits and possible outcomes of branding, reflecting the theoretical information to place brand setting when possible.

2.1.1. Brand

A brand is a complex entity that has most often been described through the definition by AMA, the American Marketing Association as follows: “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. Another widely spread definition comes from Kotler (2000) who defines that a brand is: “the name, associated with one or more items in the product line, which is used to identify the source of character of the item”. Branding has its origins in marking the ownership of cattle; it was simply a statement to differentiate generic animals from each other in the early years. (Aaker 1991) Later on branding has become an important means of differentiation in the economic world. It is hard to find products that have not been branded at all. Examples can be found from very generic products – even products that would be first thought of being unable to brand, can be and are branded. Eg. Chiquita bananas differ from other bananas in the customers’ minds, even though the product is very similar to other products in its product category. Drinking water is another example of a generic product that has been successfully branded by many companies like Evian, Veen and Bling H2O.

To some practitioners, the concept of a brand may still be vague. A brand may be confused with simply the visual elements of the brand: the name, the logo and other visual expressions. These elements form a vital component to a brand, though it needs to be acknowledged that if a product or a company just has visual elements on top of it, this doesn’t count as a brand yet. A brand cannot be established solely through marketing managers’ marketing activity, since a brand is created in the customers’ minds (Moilanen 2014). A brand is born when enough people think of the brand in the same way. Another fact to consider is that a brand is not equal to a product. A physical product differs from a brand: the product is a part of the brand. When examined through value-creation, a

brand is more likely to create more value to the customer than the product itself. (Calderón 1997).

2.1.2. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a widely used concept in branding literature and is closely connected to buying behaviour. Brand awareness refers to the customer's ability to identify a brand in its product category (Kotler & Keller 2006, 543). Brand awareness can be divided onto two different types: brand recognition and brand recall that can be identified on the basis, which one occurs first in the customer's mind; category need or brand awareness. (Percy & Rossiter 1992) If a customer recognized a brand first and after that realizes the need for a product in the brand's product category, this is called brand awareness decision. In brand recall, a category need is identified first, after which a customer starts a decision-making process on which brand to choose that would most likely to fulfil his needs. (Percy & Rossiter 1992) Brand recognition can be more easily achieved than brand recall, because it is more likely for a customer to identify a product brand in-store than recall the brand outside the store (Kotler & Keller 2006, 543).

An example of brand recall can be given through grocery shopping. When a customer makes a list of food needed to be bought, instead of writing down food brands, product categories are written down. This means that the customer does the choice of brand in the store, where he decides, which brands best fulfil his needs in the given restrictions. (Percy & Rossiter 1992) Kotler & Keller (2006, 543) remark that brand recall is more important outside the store and brand recognition is more important in-store.

Though presented in a product-brand perspective, brand awareness is also important in service and place brands. It's noteworthy to realize, that

in place brand context, brand recognition is more important because different living areas do not have similar physical shelf-space or a store where the customers could objectively examine and compare and try out the different living areas. Therefore place branding activities should focus on achieving strong brand awareness.

2.1.3. Brand Personality

Brand personality research draws on consumer behavior research. Brand personality is defined to be “the set of human characteristics associated to a brand”. Consumers have a tendency to attach human-like attributes to brands what means that one brand can be experienced as hip and cool whereas another can be perceived as reliable and old. (Aaker 1997) For example, Apple Computer’s brand personality is hip and cool whereas Campbell’s soup brand personality is reliable and traditional. It is possible for marketers to leverage on these perceptions and use the existing brand personality as an asset or try to affect it. It can also be used as a tool to analyze consumer brand choices. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 182) It’s been studied that customers will more likely choose a brand that reflects values that they appreciate themselves, and that are in line with their own actual self-concept, ie. how the customers view themselves, want to view themselves, or want other people to view themselves. (Kaplan et al. 2008; Kotler & Keller 2006, 183). Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) conclude the thought by stating that brand personality plays a role in choosing between products when the brand personality seems to be an extension of their own values and beliefs. Aaker (1997) mentions that the human tendency to connect personality traits to brands enables the symbolic use of them. Practitioners strengthen these associations by using marketing strategies such as anthropomorphization, personification and the creation of user imagery (Aaker 1997).

Jennifer Aaker released an article in 1997 in which brand personality dimensions were introduced. The dimensions were partially congruent to the “Big Five” personality traits from the field of psychology. The article turned out to be ground breaking since many scholars referred to it and it evoked discussion. The dimensions received some critique over applicability and validity to other extensions of brand personality. However, the dimensions were adopted widely to use in brand personality research. (Aaker 1997, Kaplan et al. 2008) The brand personality scale was originally developed for traditional consumer goods’ purposes, and therefore the adaptability of the framework for other disciplines have been questioned (Hosany et al. 2006). Aaker’s 5 brand personality dimensions (1997) are: 1) Sincerity 2) Excitement 3) Competence 4) Sophistication and 5) Ruggedness.

Hosany et al. (2006) suggest that Aaker’s (1997) brand personality dimensions, originally developed for consumer goods’ purposes, do not completely fit place brand personality functions. Three new dimensions were introduced, that are 1) *sincerity* 2) *excitement* and 3) *conviviality* that follow the argument that place brand personalities could only be described by using a few dimensions to achieve best results. Hosany et al. (2006) studied the place brand personality from destination branding point of view – therefore restrictions of the study must be acknowledged before applying the framework to another place branding setting. Kaplan et al. (2008) argued that place brands can be defined with personality traits like conventional product brands. They have developed a new set of place brand personality traits more suitable to the wider concept of place branding. These 6 dimensions are: 1) Excitement 2) malignancy 3) peacefulness 4) competence 5) conservatism and 6) ruggedness.

Both, brand personality and place brand personality are without an exception culturally bound and therefore the context needs to be taken into consideration.

2.1.4. Brand identity

Brand identity is described to be “the unique set of brand associations that represent what the brand stands for and promises to customers.” (Kotler & Keller 2008, 279) Broadly explained, brand identity refers to the way that the brand owner wants or hopes the brand to be perceived by the audience (Pryor & Grossbart 2007). According to Gaggiotti et al. (2008) the development of brand identity is achieved through an analysis of the place’s strengths and weaknesses. Brand identity is a very important concept in building brand equity and according to Keller (1998) brand identity is communicated through the various elements of the brand (Kotler & Keller 2008, 279). Aaker (1991) suggest that brand identity consists of 12 different dimensions that are categorized to four different groups that are: 1) brand-as-product 2) brand-as-organization 3) brand-as-person 4) brand-as-symbol. According to Pryor and Grossbart (2007), in place branding context it’s challenging to create a widely accepted brand identity, due to the many stakeholders that possess different points of views and don’t necessarily share opinions. Hanna & Rowley (2011) conclude that shareholders’ various motives may cause difficulties for the brand managers to make decisions that would please all the parties involved. Due to this important role in place branding, stakeholders are co-producing the brand identity along with the project owner through two types of elements – marketplace symbols that include elements of the infrastructure, such as sculptures, benches and decorations – and through the spreading of the rituals, that are sales events, ceremonies and cultural events. (Hanna & Rowley 2011)

2.1.5. Brand Experience

Brand experience can be stated as the link that the customer connects to the brand with. Depending on how their experiences are and which emotions the encounter evokes, customers form brand perceptions and

lead their conclusions about the brand setting; brand identity and brand image (Hanna & Rowley 2011). Brand experience consists of both, the intangible and the tangible elements of the brand. It is a conclusion of all the elements building a place brand that at the same time poses a strategically challenging position for marketers whom have to be able to systematically manage the changing elements of a place brand. Creation of a place brand differs from creating a product brand. Places as products are complex, service-oriented and multi-dimensional entities that are produced by many different actors (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009). Therefore the management of brand experience is more obstructed.

2.2. Place as a Product

This sub-chapter focuses on concepts that are unique for place brand setting and explains why these factors are necessary to understand in developing and managing a place brand.

2.2.1. Attraction factors

Attraction factors are the intangible or tangible elements of a place that lure different stakeholder groups to the living area. (Rainisto 2003) Whereas a product brand needs to address its strengths and its positive features, a living area brand needs to market its carefully selected attraction factors to different audiences. These factors can be identified through continuously assessing a living area's strengths and weaknesses in order to perform well in the quick-paced competition that exists between places (Rainisto 2003). According to Kotler (2009) attraction factors can be divided into two categories: hard and soft attraction factors. Hard factors include economic stability, productivity, costs, property concept, local support services and networks, communication infrastructure, strategic location and incentive schemes and programs. Soft factors include niche development, quality of life, professional and workforce competencies, culture, personal relationships, management style,

flexibility and dynamism, professionalism in contact with the market and entrepreneurship.

When developing a living area brand, a brand steerer will first concentrate on the hard attraction factors due to the nature of place brands; hard attraction factors form the physical core of the place as product. After getting the infrastructural factors in order, a marketer needs to decide on which soft factors to emphasize (Rainisto 2003). The soft attraction factors offer a more flexible chance for a brand to differentiate itself from others because a customer expects all living areas to have certain amenities such as good quality housing, outdoor possibilities, parking space and security. Since the customers are becoming more demanding, it creates new pressure for the place brand creators, as awareness of the factors a place can offer increases and the competition is harder among places than before. The strengthening of the attraction factors improves the brand image and gives the brand identity credibility (Rainisto 2008).

Communicating the attraction factors poses another kind of challenge. Fragmented audience requires the message to be consistent over different stakeholder groups marketing can fall into a gap of generic marketing. By this it's meant that place brands are often communicated with generic slogans and restrained coloring aiming at pleasing multiple groups simultaneously. (Moilanen 2014) However, this kind of communication strategy may lead to an indifferent brand that doesn't appeal to a customer's emotions at any level. A noteworthy acknowledgement is that a brand cannot be everything to everyone: despite of the fragmented audience, a place brand should choose its target groups as precisely as possible and aim at appealing specifically to those groups.

2.2.2. Infrastructure (regeneration)

As illustrated below, the infrastructure of the place branding process consists of two elements: tangible and intangible attributes (vs. hard and

soft by Kotler 2009). Tangible elements represent the functional attributes, that are infrastructure strategies (regeneration) and landscape strategies (Kavaratzis 2002). Tangible elements include the built environment; architecture, house design, green spaces etc. Intangible elements represent the symbolic traits that are culture and services. These elements will occur after the tangible elements are completed. The whole infrastructure component is dependent on stakeholder engagement. Both of these components; stakeholder engagement and infrastructure are vital for the delivery of brand experience. (Hanna & Rowley 2011) In order to fully deliver the brand experience, investments to the infrastructure elements must be made. Hanna & Rowley's (2011) model exclude Hankinson's (2004) representation of brands' infrastructure relationships.

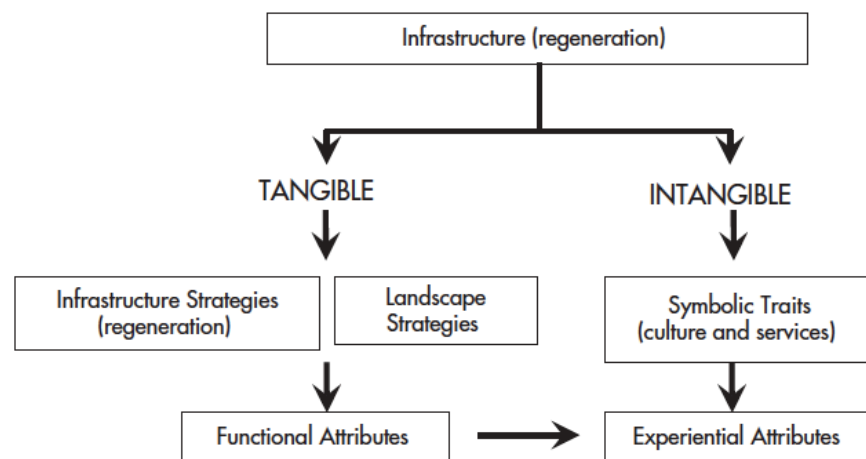


Figure 2. . Infrastructure (Regeneration) (Hanna & Rowley 2011)

2.2.3. Functional and Symbolic Attributes

According to Hankinson (2004), brand personality consists of three key attribute categories that are: 1) functional attributes 2) symbolic attributes and 3) experiential attributes. Two of the first ones; functional and symbolic attributes form a holistic attribute combination that together will answer questions concerning the emotions towards the place. Functional attributes are tangible and can be, when regarding place branding, for

example public spaces, museums, transport infrastructure and access. Symbolic attributes are intangible and concern the shareholder's questions of self-esteem, personal expression and need for social approval. Symbolic attributes can be said to be, for example, character of the local residents, the quality of service provided by the personnel. Experiential attributes are connected to the customer's feelings and will answer questions about the feelings to the place in question. (Hankinson 2004; Harrison-Walker 2012) These attributes are also connected to the soft and hard attraction factors presented by Kotler and also to the tangible and intangible elements presented by Hanna & Rowley (2011).

Any direct or indirect contact that consumer has with the brand, will form and affect the perceptions of brand personality traits. Brand personality is also influenced by the consumers encounter with the brand and by those who are somehow connected to the brand. According to Wee (2004) corporate communications and customer reactions are added intentionally and unintentionally to the factors that create the brand personality.

2.2.4. Sense of place

Participatory perspective ie. developing a place brand together with different stakeholders can bring the brand closer to the sense of place. (Kavaratzis 2012) 'Sense of place' refers to the unique features that form an individual's perception of a place. (Durie et al. 2005) Sense of place is an experience between a person and a place and its roots are in humanistic geography (Rainisto 2003). According to Durie et al. (2005), the sense of place is created through distinctive features and that distinctiveness concludes to an identity that forms the base of a brand identity. Therefore, the concept of sense of place could be positioned in the brand identity-forming phase of place brand development. As the name suggests, the concept includes those place's dimensions that are possible for a human to sense. Four of the five human senses are

commonly used when discussing about sense of place: hearing, sight, feel and touch. Sense of place has been studied under different names in multiple academic drifts. In geography, sense of place is known as *topophilia*, in anthropology the phenomenon is called *place attachment* and *spirit of place* in environmental psychology. (Cross 2001) According to Durie et al. (2005), many destination brands are using their history and given physical elements as a base for their brand creation and they argue that these factors can form a believable and an interesting place brand. An area's history is not the only aspect with which it's possible to create a sense of place, though Durie et al. write on history usage's behalf. The concept of sense of place has been studied from the perspective of destination branding, but it could be extended to living area branding as well. On emotional level, a living area has an important meaning to its residents. Therefore it could be stated that also living areas could benefit from the highlighting of historical evidence and through communicating those factors, the sense of place can be stronger and the possibility for a living area to form a stronger emotional bind with its residents, is more likely.

2.3. Place Brand Development

In this sub-chapter elements requiring managerial decision-making in the brand development phase, are introduced. The concepts are modified to and sought after from such sources that best fit the place brand setting.

2.3.1. Place Brand Positioning

Positioning is a result of careful strategic consideration for a brand to occupy a specific and desired space from the target market's mind (Harrison-Walker 2012). A clear statement of positioning is vital to a place brand because positioning is by nature, communicating a brand's points of difference and points of parity to the selected audience (Keller & Kotler 2006, 183). According to Janiszewska & Insch (2012), brand positioning is

the basis for achieving competitive advantage among rivals. A brand has to highlight its similarities with respect to other competing products in order to belong to the same category and therefore be able to compete in the same field and of the same desired customers but also, at the same time it is important to point out the differences with other competing brands in order to gain competitive advantage. For example, it is important for Pepsi to belong to the same product category as Coca-Cola (Coladrinks) in order to be perceived as belonging to the same category, but as Coca-Cola positions itself as American and traditional, Pepsi positions it as young and energetic. (Hankinson 2004; Keller & Kotler 2006, 183; Harrison-Walker 2012)

Positioning is considered as being a core branding activity (Harrison-Walker 2012). In place branding context, positioning becomes extremely important. It is easy to recognize the positioning of many living areas: when thinking about examples in the Finnish context, Kruununhaka in Helsinki is positioned as a high-end living area with prestigious history, Jalkaranta in Lahti is positioned as a safe and valued neighborhood with expensive houses. The price is strongly connected with the place brand positioning: if a living area is positioned similarly as in eg. Jakomäki in Helsinki, it is hard to find logical reason for an apartment to be sold at a better price than the neighboring houses even if the interior would be of good quality. The positioning of the living area is of great importance when trying to reach a valuable brand that will lead to valuable houses in the markets. According to Harrison-Walker (2012) positioning is a branding strategy decision and when successful, can lead on to the hoped outcomes in captivating the desired spot in the audience's minds. The counterpart for positioning, which is an activity, is position. Position is the element the target audience will perceive, and positioning aims to create a good position for the brand (Harrison-Walker 2012). Aaker (1991) describes the characteristics of a good position to be: 1) perceived uniqueness 2) prevalence and 3) the strength. Perceived uniqueness refers to the fact that how the brand is different from the competitors,

prevalence means that what is the level of recognition of the brand; ie. how many customers are aware of it. In place branding, perceived uniqueness is highly desired factor since it helps to create a sense of place and helps forming a well-understood positioning in the market. In the housing markets this can be achieved by a contractor buying an area that has unique features in it such as a view of the lake, shore, proximity of a historic site, eg. an old factory or other historically important site. This leads to a challenge construction companies face: winning the bids when a city is selling a piece of land.

2.3.2. Brand Architecture

Brand architecture refers to the relationship order that place brand and its sub-brands have with each other and especially in place branding, brand architecture also addresses the potential conflicts and contradictions between the different brands (Hanna & Rowley 2011). Brand architecture is used to manage the brand portfolio, making sure that each brand has its purpose, relevance and clarity within the portfolio (Dooley & Bowie 2005). Though brand architecture was developed for the conventional product branding setting (Dooley & Bowie 2005), the concept of sub-brand is to be perceived differently in the context of place branding than in conventional product branding since the nominator for the differentiation is ownership: when a company owns a product brand or a corporate brand, it has an inherent and legislative control also over the sub-brands (Hanna & Rowley 2011).

The nature of place brand architecture is dissimilar, since place brand's sub-brands are services and products or smaller geographical locations that are connected to the brand geographically but that are not necessarily owned by the same instance. Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) propose four different strategies to be used in brand architecture: the house of brands, endorsed brand, branded house and sub-brands. Sub-brands in place

branding context can be of different services (brand managed possibly by another company), schools or kindergartens (community services) and other organizations or local authorities that can also use the name of the living area as a part of their company's name (Hanna & Rowley 2011).

The complex brand architecture creates a challenge that sources to the question of control; place branding literature scrutinizes the branding process from the stand-point of the project owner being a public sector represent or the process being managed by multiple owners sharing the same mind-set and goal for a developing place brand. However, when studying the phenomenon from one brand-steerer's or project owner's perspective, it seems that the control indeed is the issue: the brand owner must retain good relations with other stakeholders managing the naturally given sub-brands in order to avoid conflicts and share a common vision to develop the place on to a strong place brand. When facing a conflict, negotiations may be needed and be tricky, if the power positioning proposed by the brand architecture cannot be backed up by legislation or other similar demonstration of the power relationship. In general, this means that may there be a service creating bad reputation and therefore negative brand equity, the place brand steerer doesn't necessarily have the position to start actions to correct the situation. (Hanna & Rowley 2011)

2.3.3. Brand Articulation

Brand articulation refers to the place brand's visual and verbal identity that are presented in the front of the brand, or, differently put, are the first elements that a customer confronts in the brand and represent the level the brand is expressed at: choice of design, logos, colors, photographs and finally, the place name. In branding, it is vital to create positive associations around the product that reflects wider social and psychological characters (Klijn et al. 2012) – in creating such attributes, brand articulation is on the forefront of those perceptions. Therefore it is to

be considered in the many levels of branding, namely in both; strategic and tactical levels. Brand articulation found in place branding literature has some advice on the use of visual and verbal elements of the brand. (Hanna & Rowley 2011) Hanna and Rowley (2011) suggest brand articulation as a function of the SPBM model and it's a unique feature of their framework when compared to the six other place branding process flows their model originally is a synthesis of.

2.3.4. Brand Communications

Brand communications go hand in hand with brand articulation. The objective of brand communication is to send out a message of coherent brand identity. In every place branding frameworks published in 2000 and after consider brand communications as an important element of the place branding process. (Hanna & Rowley 2011) According to Rainisto (2008) the emphasis of brand communications should be on what the brand stands for the customer, and not what the brand physically represents. Rainisto (2003) aims to discuss the importance of communicating the brand perceptions, feels and value added for the customer. It is argued that the sustainability of the brand is related to the degree that the message includes shared meanings; not only to the messages that are communicated to the customer (Hanna & Rowley 2011). Generally speaking, brand communications –element refers to the way the message is composed and what is the message that is delivered for the customer. The most important notion is to focus on other than the infrastructural elements, in particular to the potential value-added it creates to the customer. (Hanna & Rowley 2011) As an example, if the physical place offers many schools and lots of kindergartens, the message to the customer can emphasize that the area is safe and child-friendly instead of focusing to the fact that these services lie in the district.

2.3.5. Word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth refers to different audiences sharing their comments and notions towards a phenomenon unofficially. Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2007) describes word-of-mouth as being uncontrollable by the brand owner since it WOM generates informally, usually through informal routes such as from person to person in real life or in social media. Word-of-mouth originally gets its start from the effect, image or emotion – in other words, how the brand is experienced by the consumer. WOM is considered as a reliable or, at least notable channel of reference because the commentator is thought of being genuine and objective to the brand. Generation of positive word-of-mouth can be vital to the brand owner. All branding actions generally aim at creating positive word-of-mouth. Like gossip, WOM also travels fast. (Hanna & Rowley 2011) WOM can be affected through various ways in branding process.

2.3.6. Brand Reality

Place branding is a combination of imaginative marketing efforts and reality. Brand personality and brand positioning must be based on reality (Hankinson 2004). In order to deliver the promised brand experience, the brand must be communicated in a way that both excites but also gives a truthful image about the brand reality. May a conflict with the communicated brand and the actual setting occur, ie. the place brand the customer perceives is different from the reality, this will harm the brand as the customer can feel himself betrayed. (Hankinson 2004)

2.4. Stakeholders

In this chapter, elements especially important for place brand management are introduced. Management isn't equal to leadership, but concentrates on the control of different branding activities.

2.4.1. Stakeholder Management

Stakeholders' involvement has recognized as being a top success factor for a place brand's success (Rainisto 2003). Much evidence has been presented on behalf of the shared development of a place brand with its stakeholders. Though academics argue on many levels when it comes to place branding and its independent field of studies, they do agree on one thing – stakeholders' importance in creating a sustainable place brand. This sub-chapter justifies the stakeholders' inclusion in place branding process, identifies the different stakeholder groups and discusses the stakeholder-relation management.

2.4.2. Stakeholder perspective

Place brands that are developed without stakeholder participation and that do not reach different stakeholders will fail (Baker 2007). Klijn et al. (2012) continue the argument by stating that place branding is not a series of actions where the brand is first created and then communicated to the customers, but that it is in fact a governance process where many other parties are also in a key position in the success of the brand. Consequently, when examining studies suggesting different place branding process models, stakeholder engagement is recognized as being a highlighted element of the place brand development. Hanna and Rowley (2011) position stakeholder engagement in the beginning of place branding process, whereas Hankinson (2004) sees place branding as a set of different relationships and puts the stakeholder relationships in the core of the brand and therefore these relations are the basis for the whole model. Aitken and Compelo (2011) offer a framework of 4 R's of place branding that are: *rights*, *roles*, *responsibilities* and *relationships*. These four dimensions are not to be executed in a process as a direct continuum but as an open ended question. In Aitken and Compelo's (2011) model it can be also noticed that the relationships are represented in the model's

core phrases. Braun et al. (2010) discuss the different roles of stakeholders in a place brand. Since place brands have effects on many stakeholder groups, these groups are logically in the core of place branding process. This stakeholder presence empowers the different groups to influence the place brand differently than in other brands and they possess a great amount of power. This leads to the acknowledgement that these groups cannot be handled as any other target groups used in marketing, but they need to be taken seriously involved in the process (Houghton & Stevens 2011). When failing to empower stakeholder groups as a part of the brand developing process, serious damages to the brand can occur.

Without a doubt, an important stakeholder group for a place brand is the residents, since they are described to be the most visible group of the place brand. (Braun et al. 2010) Roles of the residents can be divided into three categories: “1) an integrated part of place brands through their characteristics and behavior 2) ambassadors for their place brand who grant credibility to any communicated message and 3) citizens and voters who are vital for the political legitimization of place branding” (Braun et al. 2010). According to Braun et al. (2010) these three roles put place’s residents to the most important role in being the place brand’s target market that requires the most attention. Stakeholders can be also found at governmental, national, regional and local levels (Kerr & Johnson 2005). These groups include also citizens, potential citizens and investors. Zenker & Martin (2011) have identified different stakeholder groups that are presented in the figure 3.

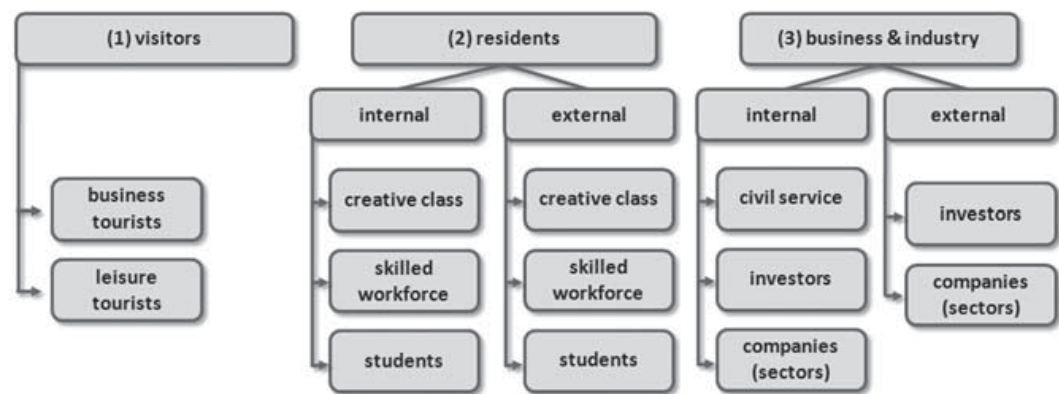


Figure 3. Different target groups for place marketing. (Zenker & Martin 2011)

Zenker & Martin (2011) have identified three main categories in their study that focuses on place branding, not living area branding. However, also the latter form of area usage attracts visitors, though mainly through social connections. Living area's visitors can also act as brand ambassadors of the area as mentioned by Braun et al. (2010). Depending on the living area, business tourists can be a rare sight if a living area is a dormitory town, i.e. that the area doesn't have services in them. However, if a living area has services and businesses within, business tourists can also be a significant and potential brand ambassador group. The second group identified by Zenker & Martin (2011); residents, is especially in a living area setting the most important stakeholder group. One of the groups refer to creative class that is a group identified by Richard Florida's article Rise. Creative class is a term used to describe people working in the creative industries (IT, music, movies etc.) who work behind titles such as copywriter, development manager and AD, and are under their 40's. Florida's first thought was to frame the class by education, but it was noticed that many of the people that were successful in startups and creative industries, had dropped out of their college education. Therefore the study was done through occupations. The reason why creative class gained great attention among scholars and even in city officials was that Florida stated that talent attracts capital – not the other way around. The basic idea was that places that offer cultural attractions are tolerant and that offer working possibilities, attracts members of the creative class. It

was then stated that capital and investments follow creative people. (Florida 2014)

Stakeholders can also be divided into different categories based on their influencing capability on the place brand. There are two dimensions that can be used to categorize them: the *amount of influence* stakeholders put in the brand's use and the *interest* the stakeholders show towards the project (Kavaratzis 2012). For a developing place brand, these categorizations are important to identify. However, in their capitalization great cautiousness is to be exercised: according to Kavaratzis (2012), prioritizing the resident groups that show both power and interest can lead to elitism which refers to the phenomenon that place brand developers take only the high-powered stakeholder groups' opinions into account. This kind of action can falsely strengthen the high-powered groups' feel of ownership and power and simultaneously weaken the other groups' emotional attachment to the brand.

Letting different stakeholders to be a part of the branding process is not without its challenges – multiple different groups have different opinions that are not necessarily congruent with the brand developer's idea of the development process. However, through these debates, new ideas and perspectives can be found to improve the developing place brand. (Kavaratzis 2012) When conducted properly, participatory branding of places will more likely lead to a successful place brand (Aitken & Compelo 2012). Kavaratzis (2012) stresses that place branding is perceived as a linear process that evolves step by step after managerial decision-making. However, place branding should be perceived as an ongoing process that is exposed to changing conditions, much due to the stakeholders' opinions, wishes and actions. The role of stakeholders change this scenery, because when following this unwanted scenario painted by Kavaratzis, the place branding process will fall into failure described earlier in this chapter by Baker (2007). In fact, it is suggested that place branding is a 'collective exercise' in the definition of what the place actually means to its stakeholders (Kavaratzis 2012).

Kavaratzis (2012) suggests that in order for place brands to bloom, stakeholder participation is a necessity. Place brands are developed by co-creation with the different stakeholder groups and also co-managed with them. This co-creation and co-managing will lead inevitably to the fact that the brand ownership will change. Both, internal and external audiences will in the best-case scenario feel that they also possess ownership of the brand. Marketers don't just communicate the developed brand to the stakeholders, but they are together creating the brand, which will potentially lead to positive outcomes such as that the citizens will perform willingly as brand endorsing brand ambassadors and create a positive buzz around the brand through positive word-of-mouth (Kavaratzis 2012).

In participatory branding view marketing managers are not the ones that make all the decisions, but contribute to the decision making together with other parties. This role differentiates a place brand manager from a brand manager, since it's necessary for them to pull back from the center of the decision-making and redefine the authority towards the other stakeholder groups in order to gain benefits for the brand (Kavaratzis 2012).

2.4.3. Stakeholder engagement (management)

Stakeholder engagement is in the very beginning of the branding process. Before continuing other branding efforts, the project manager must take all stakeholder groups in to consideration and especially put their strategic orientation to focus. The odds for succeeding in the process are better if all the stakeholder groups share similar opinions of the process' development. This kind of a shareholder consensus cannot be highlighted enough by its importance in the branding process. Contradictory views can harm the branding process, since stakeholders possess relational power and can choose to use that power against the project, also. (Hanna & Rowley 2011)

2.4.4. Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships refer to the political aspect of place brands. The objective of public-private partnerships (PPPs) is to achieve social goals by combining governmental resources partnering with private sector (Rossi & Civitillo 2014), ie. to cooperate with each other putting their assets to the common use for greater good (Rainisto 2003) and therefore aims at achieving more value-for-money and synergy-effect (Ng & Wong 2006). This cooperation enables more critical mass and new governance. For instance, private sector's representatives can possess more up-to-date knowledge of marketing, whereas the private sector can offer facilities for meetings or similar (Rainisto 2003). The reason why PPPs are endeared is that especially the public sector is usually under restricted budgets regardless of the country in question and through these partnerships, it's possible to achieve more by reorganizing the power relations by PPPs (Ng & Wong 2006). As well as the low-cost opportunity, the partners can also benefit from the learning aspect; the two different parties can educate one another in a partnership (Rainisto 2003). In his doctoral dissertation Rainisto (2003) includes the good management of PPPs as one success factor of place marketing.

In place development, public-private partnerships are a necessity since place branding requires participation also from the public sector, which is also one of place branding process' stakeholders. The cooperation can strengthen the developing place brand, since both of the parties bring their own knowledge and existing relationships to the table (Rainisto 2003). The process flow in PPPs usually goes in a way that the private sector partner first builds and operates the facility in question and afterwards gives the control of the facility to the public sector (Ng & Wong 2006). This model also fits living area development since once the private sector representative (construction company) has developed the area by building

the infrastructure and sold the apartments, the company draws back from the area and afterwards the city or a municipality becomes the highest authority towards the living area.

2.5. Managing a Place Brand

Branding in any of its forms is an ongoing process. Managing phase of place branding actually means that the place brand is still developing in the management stage. In order to succeed, a place brand needs to be managed like any other brand. According to Kerr & Johnson (2005) if left unattended, a place brand can be changed from the intended or damaged through various modern communication channels.

In order to make informed decisions, a place brand manager needs to have reliable and measurable data on the place brand. Very often, though, brand measurement is poorly managed or not conducted at all. In this chapter, different means of measurement are presented for brand management purposes.

2.5.1. Brand Audit

Brand audit is a mechanism often used by marketers that aims to analyze the present status of the brand (Kotler & Keller 2006, 289) and to evaluate the health of the brand (Keller 2000). Through brand audit a company can monitor the sources of its brand equity (Keller 2000). Brand audit consists of different procedures of which the goal is to get knowledge of the brand's health, the sources of brand equity and through the feedback of these elements' status, identify the possible ways to improve needed factors and leverage its equity. Through brand audit, strategic direction can be set to the brand and for the composing of marketing plans by exploring, what has been done before and how that has affected the current brand. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 289)

The time to conduct a brand audit is when there are changes in the strategic direction due to market changes or internal changes within the company that can potentially affect the brand. It is recommended to execute brand audits on regular basis in order to get comparable results and evaluate the development of the brand. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 289) Brand audit consists of brand inventory and of brand exploratory (Keller 2000).

For conducting a brand audit, it's necessary to understand the sources of brand equity from both ends; from the company's and from the customer's point of view. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 289) The more knowledge and information the company possesses about its products and brands; and in living area brand setting, about the place and the place brand, the better. Brand audit is an important tool for understanding the way the company's offering is marketed to the consumers and possibly even, how the brand is perceived by the customers. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 289)

2.5.2. Brand Equity

Brand equity expresses the value and properties of a brand (Lucarelli 2012). According to Lucarelli (2012), brand equity is generally understood as "the inherent and associated value of elements that constitute a brand and its evaluation, measurement, or both." Yoo et al. (2000) describe brand equity by an example as being the difference in the behavior in consumer choice, when choosing between two products that possess same kind of attributes but the other is branded and other is unbranded. When customers choose the branded product over the unbranded, the brand has equity in their minds. This kind of a choice favoring the branded product generates from the assumption that the brand brings certain images to customers' minds and these favorable perceptions conclude to the choice of the branded product versus the unbranded. (Yoo et al. 2000)

Through brand equity it's possible to achieve strategic advantage (Farhana 2012) and according to Keller (2000), strong brand equity can lead to customer loyalty and through that, to profits.

As the figure 4 illustrates, a company can affect the dimensions of brand equity through marketing efforts. Through these dimensions, brand equity will eventually be affected and by strengthening the dimensions, it is possible to generate more brand equity both to the customer and through that, for the company as well. (Yoo et al. 2000)

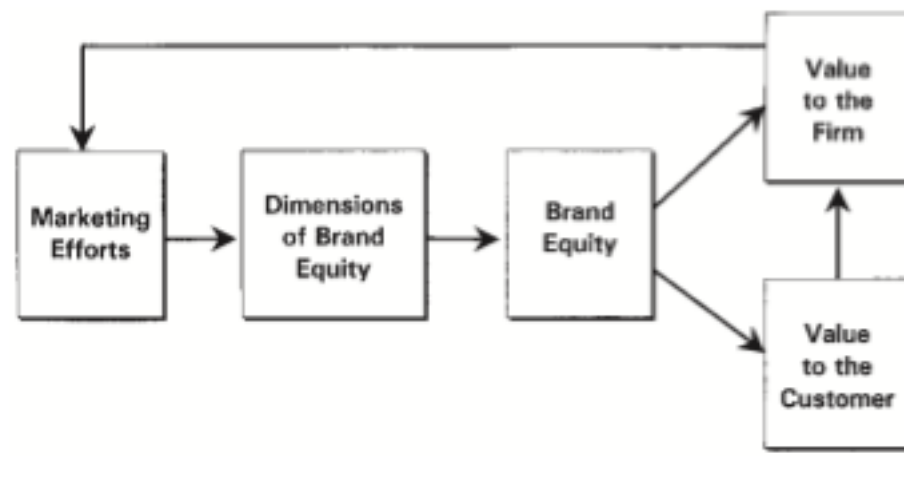


Figure 4. A conceptual Framework of Brand Equity (Yoo et al. 2000)

2.5.3. Place Brand Equity

As opposed to brand equity, the study of place brand equity is still vague (Martin & Zenker 2011). Place brand equity is possible to examine through non-monetary metrics by concentrating on measuring determined brand value drivers. A company can decide which brand value drivers to measure, but the important thing is to measure them on a regular basis in order to see the change in the customer perception and to examine the

interdependencies between the different drivers (Martin & Zenker 2011). Such drivers can be place brand awareness and place brand image.

Zenker (2009) proposed a model for the measurement of place brand equity. The model tries to put monetary indicator for place brand equity by measuring the percentage of wage a person is willing to give up to be able to live in their preferred choice of area (Zenker & Martin 2012). However, this model will not be more thoroughly addressed due to its poor generalizability and poor fit for a member of the private sector to undergo.

2.5.4. Internal Branding

Internal branding is an important role in any branding process, but is especially important in a place brand setting. Briefly, internal branding stands for communicating the brand to the personnel. Many of the aforementioned branding activities take on an external approach to branding but in some cases, one of the most important stakeholder groups are underestimated and the brand is not communicated thoroughly enough to the employees. (Keller 2003, 156) If the key messages, brand identity and brand image are not explained and educated to the in-house audience, the communication of the brand message can be harmed. Often, with the focus being on the external audiences, importance of the in-house branding is neglected.

2.5.5. Brand Evaluation

Brand evaluation is a measurement process of the stakeholders connected to a certain brand. Brand evaluation aims at receiving feedback on brand image and brand experience. (Hanna and Rowley 2011) The brand evaluation phase is a crucial stage of any branding process, and especially in a place branding process that includes various stakeholders. Based on the evaluation, it's possible to adjust brand components so that

they will be positioned to achieve the best outcomes that means a coherent and well-perceived brand experience.

2.6. Living Area Branding

This sub-chapter summarizes the presented theoretical evidence and draws conclusions about place branding as a phenomenon and living area branding.

2.6.1. Understanding Place Branding

Place branding refers to a process in which additional attraction is added to a place by different marketing means, especially focusing on the development of the place brand identity (Rainisto 2003). These branding operations are needed because places are in fast-growing competition with each other (Hanna & Rowley 2011) by competing over investors, residents, businesses, tourists and inhabitants (Kotler 2009). Place brands communicate selected functional, physical and emotional attributes of the place in question and give the place a specific meaning (Klijn et al. 2012). These attributes; attraction factors, are communicated to the different audiences through different channels.

According to Kavaratzis and Hatch (2012), the role of place branding is three-folded:

- “1) To define a single place identity
- 2) to identify ways in which the defined identity is relevant to several audiences and
- 3) to attempt to convince these audiences that the place brand is relevant for.”

When reflecting place branding's objects (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2012) to product brandings objectives, the difference seems invisible at first.

However, when scrutinizing the subject more closely, for place brand it's more vital to be relevant to its many stakeholders. For any brand owner, the aim of place branding is to create a sustainable brand and avoid the development of an artificial place brand that doesn't connect with the stakeholders (Kavaratzis 2012). Therefore, the stakeholders possess an important role in place branding and should be involved in the brand creation process from the beginning. This kind of involvement is called participatory branding which means that the focus is shifting away from branding being something coming from the marketer to customer, and changing more on to a service-dominant logic; listening and answering to the internal audience's opinions. (Kavaratzis 2012)

The ultimate goal of place branding is to attract residents, businesses and investors to the place (Klijn et al. 2012), but achieving that goal can be challenging due to its complex nature (Hankinson 2004; Kavaratzis 2009). Places as products form a complex entity, ie. they operate in different spatial levels. Spatial levels refers to the phenomenon that the place can be experienced differently depending on which stakeholder group is experiencing it (Hankinson 2004). In other words, to its many stakeholders, a place can mean very different things. Also, it's noteworthy that these groups may have different expectations for the place and its development strategy. Emotional attachment can be greater towards a place and especially towards a living area than to a conventional product. This can also lead to misunderstood messages from the marketers to the customer (Kavaratzis 2009). Hankinson (2004) remarks that the marketer has little control over how the customer will perceive the place brand due to many factors, such as various stakeholder groups and therefore scattered target groups and due to the spatial levels.

Hankinson (2004) argues that place branding, instead of managed activity, becomes just as a coordinated process because of the various audiences. According to Rainisto (2003), it must be acknowledged that creating value for the place's stakeholders is challenging and that it requires a good

development system for the place-oriented value-added to be made somewhat tangible. Hankinson (2004) concludes that often the role of a coordinator falls into local authorities whose budgets are limited and mindset not necessarily a perfect fit for branding a place. However, Hankinson (2004) among other scholars in the place branding field (Hanna & Rowley 2011; Kavartzis 2012), haven't taken privately owned projects into consideration when researching the phenomenon. This kind of a change in ownership and a clear statement of authority lead to the possibility to manage the place branding project systematically. Following Hankinson's (2004) statement of local authorities not being the best fit for place branding process, it then could be stated, that the role of a construction company as a branding project owner would be ideal based on the notion that Hankinson (2004) points out: that local authorities have too many decision-making units making the project managing more challenging.

2.6.2. Living Area Branding

Living area branding differs from previously studied place branding. In place branding research, stakeholders have been recognized to be an important part of place brand development, but especially in living areas, the role of the most important stakeholder group, residents, is more highlighted. The reason for this highlighted role is the size of the group. When comparing to other places being branded such as cities and regions, the stakeholder groups are bigger and more versatile whereas the residents of a certain living area are smaller as a group. This smaller group size makes the stakeholder group more homogenous. This recognition is important to take in notice when developing a living area brand: when a living area has fewer residents than a city, it's possible that the residents will reach a consensus over things regarding the area development and its branding. If not managed properly, the stakeholders can use their power against the living area and activities around it.

Especially the small size of the group enables the opinions and word-of-mouth to travel faster. Therefore this specific stakeholder group needs to be taken into consideration very thoughtfully, when planning actions within the area. Communication is in a key position in managing the resident relations. By good communication, it is possible for the brand developer to come across as reliable and open.

The comparatively small size of the group can also be a good thing. It is important and needed for a construction company to spread the brand quicker from the beginning in order to benefit from the developing brand when they are still operating in the area. Brand development is not a project, is a long-lasting process that evolves over time (Kavaratzis 2009). In place branding, including living area branding, participatory branding is needed. In the case of a construction company, it needs to motivate, inspire and empower the residents to act as positive word-of-mouth generators and get this specific stakeholder group to spread the message around for both, the construction company and for themselves. This motivating is easier to do when the audience is smaller. Therefore a living area brand development can benefit from the fact that the most crucial potential brand ambassadors, residents, are a smaller group when compared to other areas being branded.

2.6.3. Finnish Place Branding – cities and living areas

In practice, when place brand managers face the realities of the diverse potential audiences, their power and need for the place brand to be relevant for its stakeholders and last but not least, the place brand needs to reflect the company's own values as well, a real challenge is thrown. Often it can be seen that this challenging situation leads to very generic place brands and cautiousness with the brand's visual elements and slogans. Examples can be found from Finland's cities' branding by presenting some cities' slogans: "Kemi – home in the city", "Lieto – we

have everything”, “Merijärvi – a good place to live” and “Oripää – a child-friendly entrepreneur municipality”. These slogans are neither catchy, nor appealing and don’t present the city’s points of differences in a memorable light. When reflecting these to the concept of brand awareness, these slogans only proves that all of the above belong to the same product category, but do not differentiate themselves from it. According to Moilanen (2014) if a place is desired to differ from other places, it needs to take risks.

By risk-taking a non-generic approach is recommended which means that both cities and living areas should think about bold branding strategies with clear marketing communications. A developing brand must first concentrate on creating brand awareness and brand recognition in order to be in the customers’ “shopping cart” (Rainisto 2003). This is best achieved by concentrating on the points of difference. One Finnish dream is to live near a lake, close to the city and in ones own peace and quiet surroundings. From branding perspective, communicating the physical elements is not enough, if a sustainable brand is desired for that will create value-added for its customers. The highlighting of points-of-difference is one step in the iterative process of brand development. In the next chapter, brand development will be scrutinized more thoroughly.

3. DEVELOPING A LIVING AREA BRAND

There are a few models in place branding literature that guide the path of place brand's development. This chapter covers four of the models best suitable for living area branding and presents one of the models more thoroughly. First of the models is Hankinson's (2004) Relational Network Relations theory, the second is Kavaratzis' (2009) model for place branding and the third one is Hanna and Rowley's (2011) Strategic place brand management (SPBM) model. The fourth model is from a Finnish author, Seppo Rainisto (2003), who has done the first doctoral dissertation about place branding in Finland.

3.1. Relational Network Theory

Hankinson (2004) identifies four types of brand conceptualizations that are not independent of each other. These four main streams of brand conceptualizations are: brands as communicators, brands as perceptual entities, brands as value enhancers and brands as relationships. Brands as communicators can be classified as an input orientation to branding and represents the view that brands are most commonly seen as (Hankinson 2004). In this conceptualization, brands are seen as the communicator for a company's beliefs and vision that are communicated from the company to the customers by brands. Brands as perceptual entities view draws on consumer behavior research and this approach is seen as an output orientation to branding. (Hankinson 2004) Perceptual entities conceptualization views brands as a set of attributes and associations from which the customers take in a collective set, ie. they choose some perceptions that appeal to their senses, reasons and emotions. (Hankinson 2004) The role of a brand as a value enhancer indicates that brands are thought of bringing additional value to a company. From this thought, the concept of brand equity has started to

grow from. This line of thinking is also the basis for the strategic management for brands. (Hankinson 2004) Finally, the conceptualization Hankinson focuses on, is the view of seeing brands as relationships. This relationship approach starts from the presumption that in the core of the brand there's a personality that empowers the brand to have relationships with the consumers and therefore puts the brand in the center of all marketing activities (Hankinson 2004). Since customers will most likely choose brands that reflect their personal values and beliefs (Kaplan et al. 2008), the brand-consumer fit is important. Brands as relationships approach offers a possibility to develop the brand with the consumers whom have a relationship with the brand. This conceptualization is very common among service products (Hankinson 2004). The relationship approach views that value is created through the relationships with all the stakeholder groups the brand has; not just with consumers, and therefore differs from the other brand conceptualizations. Hankinson (2004) remarks that the traditional thinking of competition being something happening between companies, is dated and suggests a new kind of thinking by stating that the markets consist of complex network of relationships and the competition happens within the network. According to Hankinson, this kind of relationship thinking suits the place branding context best, since place brands consist of complex constructs and stakeholders, ie. relationships are in the very nature of place brands.

Hankinson (2004) combines three theories in the relational network theory: classical branding theory, the relational exchange paradigm and the network paradigm (Harrison-Walker 2012). According to Hankinson (2004) the core brand consists of three different concepts: brand personality, brand positioning and brand reality. A place brand has four different types of relationships. These relationships are divided into following categories:

1. *Primary Service Relationships*, which refer to the relationships in the core of the brands, such as retailers, events and leisure or hotels.

2. *Brand Infrastructure Relationships*, which is access to services, brandscape or built environment, various facilities.
3. *Media Relationships*, organic and marketing communications
4. *Consumer Relationships*; residents and employees, internal customers, managed relationships from the top

These relationships are connected to the core brand. Hankinson (2004) suggests that the core brand, mainly consisting of three different dimensions is in a relationship with all of the four different groups. These 4 stakeholder groups are dynamic which means that they change and evolve over time: it is impossible to manage relationships as they were static. In Hankinson's model the core of the brand represents the brand identity consisting of three parts, which is the blueprint for the brand's development.

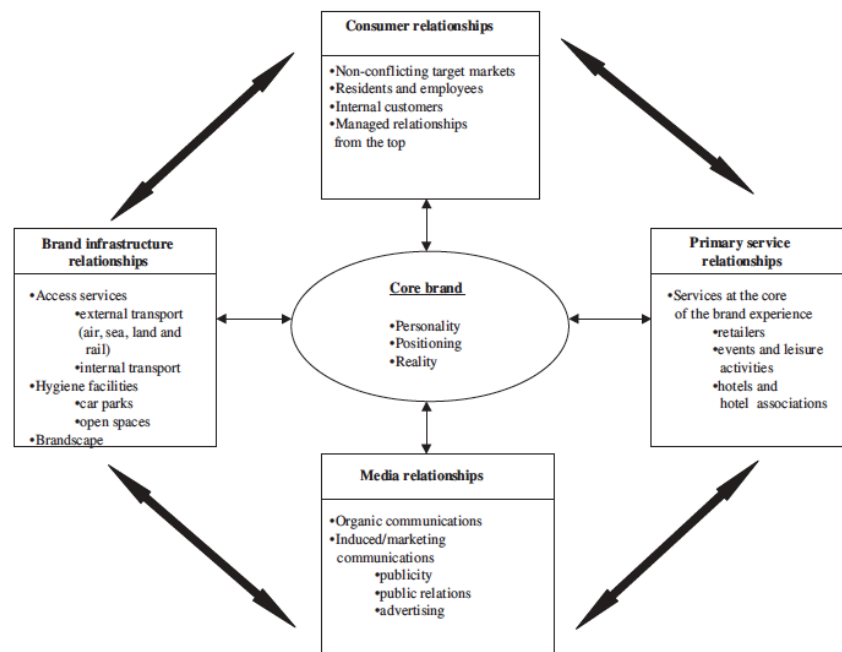


Figure 5. Relational Network Theory (Hankinson 2004)

Though Hankinson's previously introduced model does not offer a clear development line that could be easily adopted by the practitioners, it offers important take-outs for understanding the direction place brands should be

developed towards. The model captures the essence of place branding by putting emphasis on the relational approach and categorizing them onto different groups.

3.2. Place Brand Management Model

Kavaratzis (2009) studies the similarities between place branding and corporate branding. As being a logical continuum for branding itself, corporate branding has been studied more thoroughly than place branding and a consensus on the models, frameworks and definitions occur. It is declared that place branding differs notably from the branding of conventional products and services (Kavaratzis 2009). On that note, however, some similarities with place branding can be found with corporate branding since both fields of branding differ significantly from classical branding. Balmer and Greyser's (2006) marketing mix and its components are said to be relevant to the place branding setting better than the 4P's that are suitable for traditional products' marketing. The marketing mix in question has been done for corporate branding purposes.

Kavaratzis (2009) and Gertner (2011) stress that place branding research is lacking of a common language. By this it's meant that different frameworks in the field of research occurs, definitions vary from research to research and a synthesis of the field of branding is missing. This absence of consensus amongst the academics rises from many studies that have been made with a case-by-case approach – a synthesis is hard to achieve, when every study has their own limitations sourcing from the unique places the studies have concerned. There are some frameworks that guide the city branding process (Rainisto 2003; Kavaratzis 2005; Hankinson 2004) but none of the models have yet reached the status of a widely spread theory. Kavaratzis (2009) proposes an integrated model of city branding theories. In the integrated models similarities of three

different frameworks are gathered into one and divided onto 8 different categories that are:

- 1) Vision and Strategy
- 2) Internal Culture
- 3) Local Communities
- 4) Synergies
- 5) Infrastructure
- 6) Cityscape and Gateways
- 7) Opportunities
- 8) Communications

Kavaratzis's (2009) integrated framework illustrates a path for city branding process and includes similarities from few place branding processes. It is pointed out that there are two things to be highlighted when conducting place branding that are: external and internal research before launching any place branding efforts and it is also important throughout the process. Continuous research helps to avoid pitfalls and will guide informed decision-making. Another thing to consider is leadership. According to Kavaratzis (2012), strong leadership is very important for the place branding process's consistency and effectiveness.

Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) remark that too often place branding executed by practitioners is thought of being equal to promotion, although branding should be perceived as a wholesome and continuing process that is in links with other marketing actions. This study doesn't cover more of Kavaratzis's (2009) model due to the strong city branding context that isn't purposeful to living area brand context without an adjustment, but seeks for a more suitable framework as progressing.

Corporate Brand	Place Brand
Single component product/service	Multiple component product/service
Cohesive stakeholder relationships	Fragmented stakeholder relationships
Lower organizational complexity	Higher organizational complexity
Functional	Experiential/hedonic
Individual orientation	Collective orientation
Sub-brand coherence	Sub-brand inequality & rivalry
Private enterprise	Public/private partnerships
Lack of overt government role	Overt government role
Product attributes consistent	Product attributes subject to seasonality
Flexibility of product offering	Inflexibility of product offering

Allen. 2003

Table 1. The differences between a corporate brand and a place brand (Allen 2007)

3.3. SPBM Model

In place branding literature, there are a few models suggesting a path to guide the place branding process. Relying on the judgement of Hanna and Rowley (2011), only six researchers have released holistic frameworks for place branding management. These are Hankinson's Relational Network Theory (2004), city image communication (Kavaratzis 2004), a model of destination branding (Cai 2002), destination branding process (Laws 2002), the 7A destination branding model (Baker 2007) and city brand management (Gaggiotti et al. 2007)

According to Hanna and Rowley (2011) a widely adopted model for strategic place brand management-model is missing from the literature. They strive towards an integrated model that would work as both, a framework for contextualizing various research trends in the literature and as a supporter for the place brand practitioners. The model addresses issues in place branding impacts and evaluations with a holistic view and the basis for the model can be found from the existing literature since it's

an integrated framework from six different sources mentioned above. SPBM framework aims at capturing the complex essence of place branding and offers a way to manage the impact of different branding processes by evaluating the effects and impacts with benchmarking (Lucarelli 2012).

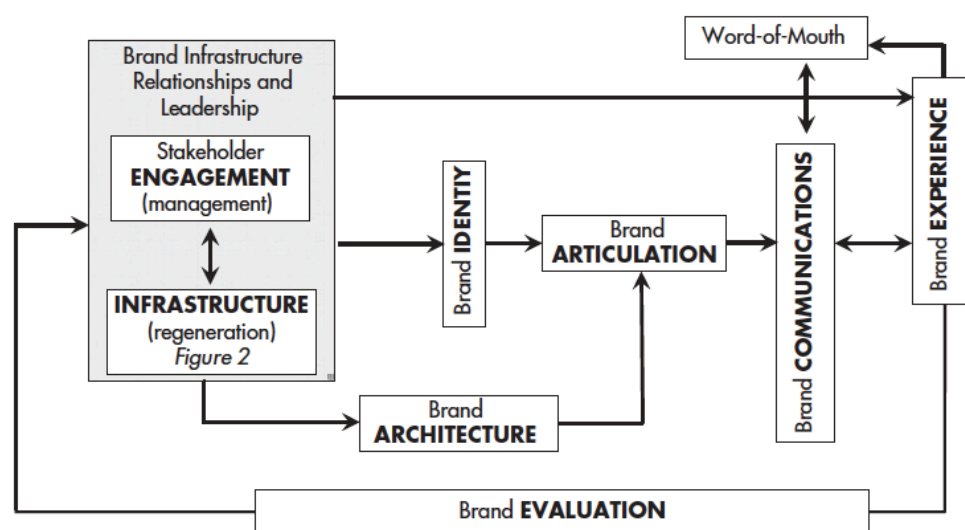


Figure 6. The SPBM Model (Hanna & Rowley 2011)

The key components in the model are brand evaluation, stakeholder engagement (management), infrastructure (regeneration), brand identity, brand architecture, brand articulation, marketing communications, brand experience, and word of mouth (Hanna and Rowley 2011). Consistent to the essence of place brand's creation; a place brand will be created even if not systematically managed (Kavaratzis 2004), also these aforementioned SPBM processes occur whether they are taken into consideration by the brand management or not (Hanna and Rowley 2011). The SPBM model suggests that the hoped outcomes of the branding process guided by the framework are coherent brand identity, positive word-of-mouth and creating satisfying brand experiences. Like in other

frameworks, the arrows in the model stand for influence relationships: stakeholder engagement and infrastructure influence the brand identity, which again influences the brand articulation.

The SPBM model is a synthesis of the six models presented in the place branding literature before the year 2011. The model integrates processes from each of the models, presenting an overarching view of branding process.

3.4. City's Development as a Brand

The final model to be considered in this thesis is a Finnish author's, Rainisto's (2003) city branding process model. The process model is developed for city branding purposes and is based on his dissertation from the year 2001, in which he makes conclusions on which success factors are the most vital in a city branding context. Rainisto presents a clear process model that will then be evaluated for the adequacy for this study's purposes. Rainisto's model provides clear instructions for operation for city branding and the model has been done practitioners in mind, which has lead to a comprehensible framework.

Rainisto's model starts with the formation of a designing group. It is clearly emphasized that solely for branding's purposes, a group needs to be formed. The greatest object of this designing group is to ensure that the brand creation process is professionally managed and that enough substance know-how is available. In order to succeed, the design group also requires participation and support from the political sector (city officials). (Rainisto 2008)

The carrying idea behind Rainisto's model is that a place is to be perceived as a set of services. Through marketing, this entity can be profiled as attraction factors and through marketing communications these

attraction factors can be profiled as the wanted place image. Rainisto emphasizes the importance of strategic thinking and capable planning group. Rainisto (2008) proposes following process model:

1. Planning group
2. Analysis and vision
3. Strategic analysis
4. Operation planning
5. Identity factors
6. City marketing
7. Image

Rainisto adds four dimensions to surround these steps that are: political unity, global competition, professional managing and local development. In the model, the process is presented as being linear and straightforward but it needs to be understood that between these different development stages iteration occurs and retrospective scrutiny will take place.

3.5. Conclusion of the models

All the four models presented before in this chapter are developed in city branding context. To evaluate their compatibility to living area brands, the differences between city brands and living area brands must be acknowledged. As presented before in this chapter, the size of the stakeholder groups is different in cities and in living areas but also the ownership of the branding process is different. When in city branding context the decision making team consists of reprsents of different stakeholder groups that all possess the same amount of power, in living area branding there's one decision maker that is, in many cases, the construction company. Though this study acknowledges that a place brand is created with multiple stakeholders and by crowdsourcing through a specific crowd, the decision-making power lies with the financing party –

the financial risk of the living area is on the construction company. They have the power to choose external stakeholders, by which marketing or branding agencies are referred to.

The possession of power is the nominating difference between city branding and living area branding. With this being said, it needs to be taken into consideration that most of the place branding models are developed for city branding purposes and therefore aren't straightly applicable to living area branding purposes. Examples of area development done by one authority can be found in the skiing resorts in North America where the whole area is developed by one actor though there are a number of different business units in an area aiming at mutual benefits (Moilanen 2014). Academic research on the subject is missing, but practitioner input can be examined for further insights on living area branding.

The most suitable place branding model of the before presented is Rainisto's (2003) city's development as a brand which will be the starting point for Skanska's living area branding process model. The branding process will have elements of each of the aforementioned models, which are justified by theoretical information and later on the suitability is tested for Skanska by key staff interviews and the evolving model will be reflected to the audit of the branding process model that has earlier been in Skanska's use. At the moment Skanska relies on living area design (LAD) method, which has been developed for the company. LAD includes elements of branding process models but does not fully include the whole branding process. The Living Area Design model will be thoroughly reviewed in the empirical part of the thesis.

3.6. Living Area Branding Process Model (LAB)

Now the composing of a Living Area Branding model begins. First, the model is justified through available theoretical information, after which more precise, practitioner-emphasized operational instructions are suggested in the empirical part of the thesis. As can be acknowledged through the previously introduced models, all of the models are composed in three different stages that are: planning, developing and management. Some of the models have included feedback and evaluation as a part of the models, but measurement and feedback are not common in those models. Living Area Branding Process Model will follow Rainisto's (2003) city as a brand model since it has the most practical diction of all the presented models and it provides a clear process flow as opposed to e.g. Hankinson's (2004) Relational network theory. Another clear model to follow is Kotler et al.'s (2002) strategic marketing planning model to which the proceeding steps are reflected on. More academic input is presented while proceeding with the upcoming framework.

The LAB model will be divided into six parts: 1) intra-organizational actions 2) analysis 3) vision and objects 4) strategy 5) implementation and 6) measurement

Kotler et al. (2002) suggest a strategic market planning in five steps that are: 1) Place-Audit (SWOT). In this phase, the right questions need to be asked in order to reveal the place's core identity and possibilities. 2) Vision and goals. This phase is important for stating the goals and naming them out loud. This phase also ensures that the planning group has shared goals and expectations towards the place branding process. 3) Strategy formation. In this phase, strategies are sought for that could best fulfill the aforementioned process objects. 4) Action plan. This plan refers to implementation strategy; in this phase actions that could best help the planning group to achieving the process goals. 5) Implementation and control. In this phase, feedback from the process is gathered and the

process will be evaluated in order to perform well, and there is also a learning aspect. Kotler et al.'s (2002) vision follows the thought of many other place brand management processes and has been a basis for some models (e.g. Rainisto 2003). As the model captures the most important phases of brand development process, it will also work as the basis for the *Living Area Branding* model.

Stage 1 - Intra-organizational actions

As we can gather from the four previously introduced models, the branding process starts with careful considerations concerning the area in many different levels. Kavaratzis (2009) highlights the importance of external and internal analysis and strong leadership, whereas Rainisto (2003) expresses that a branding process should be started with gathering a planning group. The creation of planning group has two forms: an intra-organizational planning group and a planning group where stakeholders are present. Following Kavaratzis' statement (2009) about strong leadership, it is also needed in the intra-organizational planning group. The group needs to have a designated authority that can act as a project leader. When taking input from other planning models, Kotler et al. (2002) suggest a five-step strategic market planning model in which the first step is a place-audit (SWOT). In this phase, the right questions need to be asked in order to reveal the place's core identity and possibilities. However, going back to Rainisto's (2003) thought, before getting into an analysis suggested by Kavaratzis (2012) and Kotler et al. (2002), a planning group, ie. the decision-making unit, needs to be gathered.

According to Rainisto (2003), an intra-organizational planning group should consist of employees having different backgrounds: representatives from marketing, engineering, management, design and sales are required to give their input in the branding process. A planning group will also have participants outside the organization that are members of the surrounding business life, political members (city officials)

and residents. Rainisto (2003) remarks, that a European model is to bring an outside expert to the planning group, but since there are many different stakeholder represents present already when talking about place branding that can be seen as outside experts already. Potentially dissenting opinions of the strategic direction will ensure the comprehensive processing of the subject. The participants should be selected in a way that the stability of the planning group could be ensured. If there's unnecessary rotation within the group from the start, the information's uneven division could damage the branding process. The planning group's responsibilities are analyzing the place's status, developing a long-term vision and composing an action plan for investment and transformation. (Kotler et al. 1999) This planning group is also responsible for the management of stakeholder relations that are in the center of any place branding process. Both Kavaratzis (2009) and Rainisto (2003) put emphasis on strong leadership of the whole branding process, which starts with the strong leadership of the planning group. Rainisto (2003) has argued that a strong leadership can overcome some shortcomings in the place and the place brand can still be successful, if lead properly.

In his model, Kavaratzis (2009) suggests that a place branding process starts with a city official conversing over the vision of the place and the possible brand strategies that could best fulfill the stated vision. Kavaratzis does not give emphasis on the planning group's importance, whereas Rainisto (2003) and Rainisto and Moilanen (2009) put the formation of a planning group in the beginning of the model and sees the planning group as an important component in a place brand's success.

Stage 2 – Analysis

When the intra-organizational planning group has been composed, it is meaningful to start an in-depth analysis of the place. In Kotler et al.'s (2002) strategic market planning model, the analysis phase is referred as place audit. In Levine's (2008) Four Stages of the Place Branding Process

the analysis phase is in the beginning of the model and is called discovery stage. According to Rainisto (2003) the object of analysis stage is to compile a SWOT analysis of the place, undergo an analysis of the competing areas and most importantly, achieve an understanding of what makes the place in question unique. The differentiating factors are one of the key issues in branding a living area. In the analysis it is also important to clarify, what aspects of these differentiating factors would benefit and attract different stakeholders to the area, understand how the local people see the area, understand how the local people and closest stakeholders relates to the area and what kind of an image they have of the present area and finally, making sure that all of the information is correct and sufficient to be used in the decision-making process (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009). Both Kotler et al. (2002) and Levine (2008) suggest that analysis is carried out by in-depth interviews, phone interviews and focus groups with external executives and local experts. In their SPBM model, Hanna & Rowley (2011) suggest that stakeholder engagement and infrastructural elements are in the beginning of the place branding process. These two are components that are also under analysis of the planning group because according to Rainisto (2003), infrastructural elements are key elements in brand identity. Two of the previously introduced stages – intra-organizational actions and analysis are excluded from Kavaratzis's (2009) place brand management model, but in this thesis are considered as important steps according to other available academic information.

Stage 3 – Vision and objects

With an appropriately compiled vision the branding process is easier to manage, since the vision acts as the leading thought in the branding process (Kotler et al. 2002). In the vision-setting stage the place's brand identity, value proposition and brand positioning are composed. Hanna & Rowley (2011) suggest in their SPBM model that brand identity derives from the wholesome analysis of the place's infrastructure and stakeholder engagement. Infrastructure compiles of both, intangible and tangible

elements of the place. (Kotler et al. 2006) According to Rainisto (2003) a place's identity is composed of three elements: 1) infrastructural elements 2) attraction factors and 3) residents and the quality of life in the area. Though the tangible elements by nature can be easily named, in the vision-formation stage the question is more about highlighting the elements that the planning group decides to focus on and not naming all the seeable elements of the place. Vision is made through careful analysis that includes also the opinions of different stakeholders. Kavaratzis (2012) proposes that participatory branding can lead a place brand towards a sense of place. Sense of place is a relationship between an individual and the place and has proofed to have positive outcomes, when strong. Therefore Durie et al. (2005) suggest that sense of place would be taken into consideration when formulating an identity and image for a place brand.

Brand image is derived from both, brand identity and its core values. Once these elements are decided on, visual elements can be built. A living area brand should have an intra-organizational image and visual image. Marketing communications together with these images will create a wholesome brand image for the living area. (Rainisto 2008) Visual image must support the brand identity in order to be well perceived and accepted by the audience. (Levine 2008)

If necessary input is not given to the stating of these elements in the vision stage, the place branding process will become more harder to manage and will reflect to the decisions. (Rainisto 2008) After the vision has been set, objects can be stated. The objects should be realistic, scheduled well and be achievable with the given resources. (Kotler et al. 2002).

Stage 4 – Strategy

The fourth stage of the living area branding model is strategy formation. In this stage, strategies that could best fulfill the before-stated vision need to

be formulated. (Kotler et al. 2002) According to Moilanen and Rainisto (2009) strategic decisions consist of creative concept, the structure of the brand, organization and distribution of work and finally, financing. When formulating a strategy for a developing living area brand, it is important that it is built upon available resources and based on a realistic timetable (Kotler et al. 2002). A brand strategy is at it's best, a guideline that answers questions when proceeding with the execution of branding actions. In living area branding, a strategy should include all of the stakeholders and keep their relationship management in mind, including communication strategy. In such a broad process like living area branding, it may be worthwhile to consider over time, whether new additional strategies need to be adopted to adjust changes in the branding process. Strategy covers all branding related aspects; which kinds of elements are used in achieving brand awareness, like events, promotions and brand endorsers or brand ambassadors.

Stage 5 – Action Plan

An action plan ensures that a strategy can be fulfilled. An action plan is important in a branding process that by nature is a long and ameba-like process. It would be best, if action plan would be easily accessible to all of the people involved in the planning group, both intra-organizational and outside of the organization. (Rainisto 2008) Action plan is a list of every action that needs to be executed in order to follow the strategy. Additionally, the plan should also include the person responsible for every stated action, strategy for implementing the actions, costs and deadlines (Kotler et al. 2002). If, for example, a strategy includes branding by events, the action plan should cover aforementioned factors event by event. Also, it should be taken into consideration that every action should be planned in a way that they support the formulated strategy; events should be in line with the living area brand's core values and brand identity.

Stage 6 – Implementing and measurement

Implementing stage is an important step in living area branding. Implementing refers to putting all plans into action. Noteworthy in living area branding is the multiplicity of stakeholders and different responsible people executing the action plan. Hanna & Rowley (2011) acknowledge the importance of feedback in their SPBM model and highlight brand evaluation. The audience's brand experience generates feedback that is a useful tool in brand evaluation. According to Kotler et al. (2002), successful brand requires control and feedback over the developing brand. A brand developer can decide on, which measures to use in gathering feedback and which indicators to follow. Often, in practice, follow-up can be forgotten which leads to ignorance on how the place brand is perceived and a chance of improvement and future development can be missed. In living area branding, good measures could be the amount of people coming to see the houses, the amount of sold houses during a certain time period, the residents' contentment (many different measuring possibilities), the companies' willingness to relocate in the area, brand awareness and so on. Which indicators are chosen to be measured the measuring should be executed regularly.

This is the basis for the Living Area Branding model. Now the thesis will move on to the empirical part in which the model will be reflected on to the empirical evidence from a case living area. After getting acquainted with the findings, the model will be reviewed and corrected through new evidence.

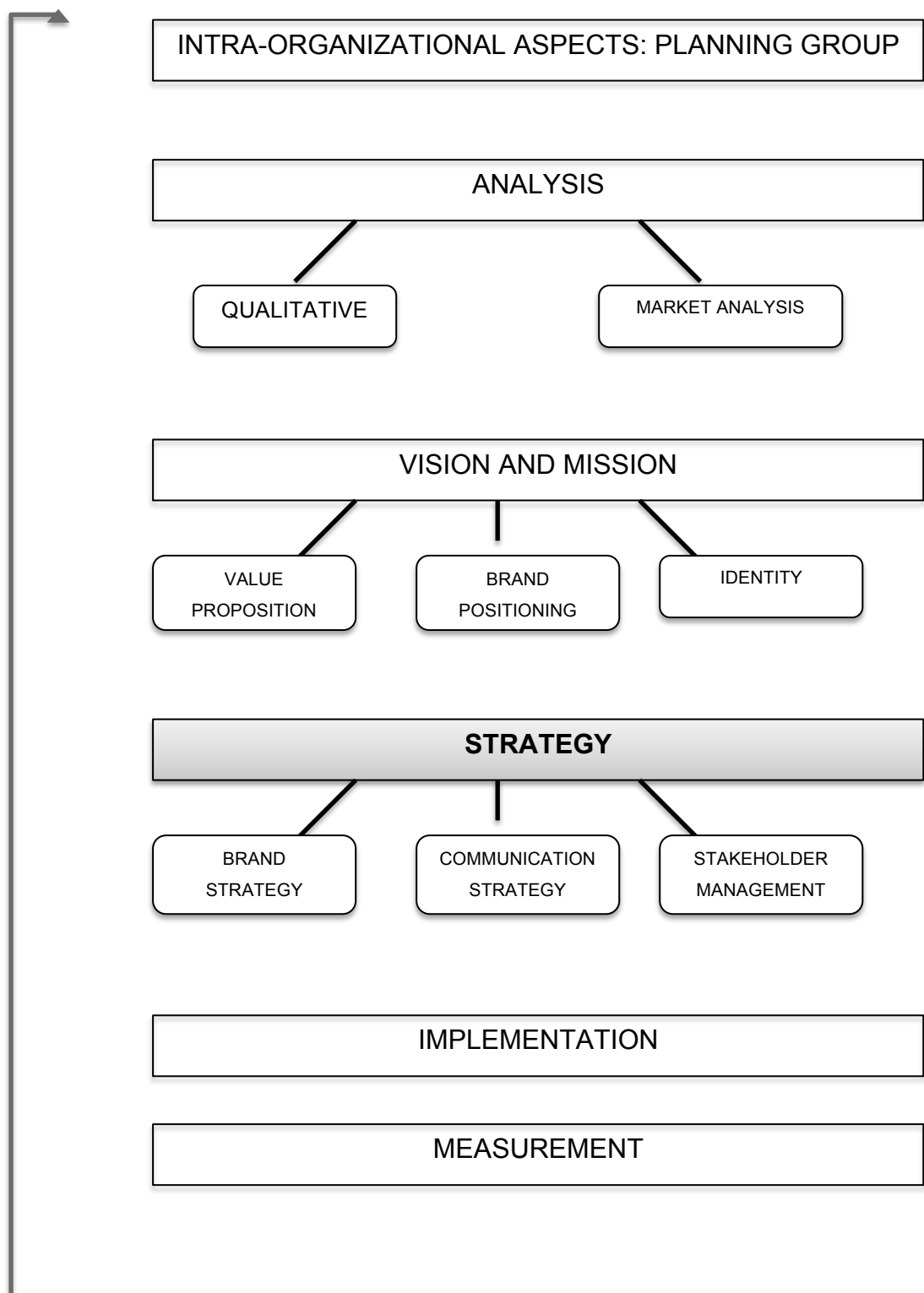


Figure 7. Living Area Branding Model

4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF A DEVELOPING LIVING AREA BRAND

Now the empirical section of the study begins. In this section, the theories discussed in the previous section are reflected to the empirical evidence and through this process with comparing theoretical and practical information the goal is to better understand the phenomenon of living area branding and conclude to a branding process model. The residents, company's key personnel, companies in the area and an expert in the field of area are interviewed in order to shed light in the matter. These rather wide ranges of interviewees are taken in to the study to best understand living area branding and consider all the important stakeholders and their points of view. In this chapter, the research methods are covered, the interviewees are more thoroughly introduced and the key findings are presented and later on reflected to the theory findings.

This empirical part is two-folded because two entities is focused on in the study: How does the construction company execute living area branding at the moment and what is the result of their living area development process; case living area Härmälänranta perceived by its residents. The first empirical research questions guides the thesis into understanding, which areas could benefit from improvement and if the current conditions for living area branding are sufficient. The second empirical research question entity gives insights on how the product of the development process is perceived by its key stakeholders. These two research questions will now be presented along with the sub-questions.

Empirical part's research questions:

Part 1: Current analysis of area development at Skanska

What is the living area branding process like at the moment at Skanska?

1. How is the project group gathered?
2. Who is in the lead of the branding process?
3. How are the branding outcomes measured?
4. What is the general atmosphere towards branding within the company?
5. What are the most valued attraction factors in the living area according to the company?
6. How is the branding of the case living area organized?
 - a. What is the living area like
 - b. What are Härmälänranta's key components

Part 2: Härmälänranta living area brand

How do the residents perceive the living area?

1. What is the resident's brand experience?
2. What would they change both in their living area and in the stakeholder relations handled by Skanska?
3. What are the most valued attraction factors in the area?

What kind of a business environment is the living area?

1. How do the businesses see the living area?
2. What are the most valued attraction factors according to the businesses?
3. What is the living area's value proposition to the businesses lured to the area?

Interview group	Number of interviewees	Research method	Answers the question	Contribution to the research
Residents	7	Qualitative	Attraction factors, brand perception, brand experience, overall happiness	Brand experience; suggestions for area development, evaluation of LAB's current status
Businesses in the area	1		Attraction factors, area as a business environment	Brand experience; suggestions for area development, evaluation of LAB's current status
Company's personnel	5		Process model description, vision of brand experience, living area brand status, practitioner view	Info about current living area branding process and envisioned brand experience
Expert	1		Academic approach, examples of LAB, recommendations	Suggestions for living area branding process model development

Table 2. Summary of interviews

4.1. Research methods

This study's objective is to conclude on to a living area branding process model. Since similar process models do not yet occur and the academic field of study remains still unstudied, it's purposeful to lead the following empirical studies in a qualitative way. Through qualitative method, it

becomes possible to get in to the root of the problem since examples are easier to gather from the interviewees and answers can be further specified in qualitative interviews. (Metsämuuronen 2006, 113) Qualitative research method fits best in to researching processes and functions; phenomena from the real life. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008) According to Aaker et al. (1995, 174) qualitative research methods are less structured and more thorough than quantitative-based interviews. This enables a better relationship with the interviewees and thus gives a bigger potential for getting new insights and perspective on the studied matter. Therefore, when exploring a new field of research qualitative research best fits the purpose of this study.

Exploratory research aims at understanding a certain phenomenon and through such a way, it's possible to study current topics that have not yet been under the academic scope. In exploratory research, the problem definition is more in detail, and fits in studies where new products, service concepts or problems solutions or processes are generated. (Aaker et al. 1995, 174)

Qualitative approach was selected for this study, because in-depth answers were hoped for. When aiming at a clear understanding about a certain topic, the study can evolve through empirical findings and answers of the informants can give the study new perspective that can potentially lead the study closer to the truth. As typical for qualitative research method, the empirical data was gathered through qualitative one-on-one semi-structured interviews that were carried out in a way that the interviewees were put in a situation where they had enough time to answer the questions. Information was also gathered in non-formal discussions with the company staff and residents.

4.2. Choosing the informants

The empirical part's structure is two-stepped. Informants were chosen carefully for both parts of the chapter. First, Skanska's key personnel were interviewed by one-on-one discussions, through phone interviews and through informal discussions to understand, how living area branding is currently being executed in the company. Also, emphasis was given on the prevailing conditions and attitudes towards branding and the know-how within the company. From the basis of these interviews along with secondary data collection, an analysis of the current situation is given to which following conclusions are based on. Skanska employees were interviewed for two different purposes: firstly, a process audit concerning the branding activities previously made and secondly, the brand of Härmälänranta was evaluated in terms of the intended message and what the company envisions the brand experience to be.

In place branding, stakeholders are a vital component of the brand creation. Therefore, when selecting the participants for interviews, careful consideration was used. Two of the most important stakeholder groups were chosen under further examination. These groups were:

1. Residents
2. Businesses in the area

The aim of interviewing these groups was to gather information firstly about the Härmälänranta living area brand. Residents were expected to share their opinions on brand experience, review on brand communications and of the attraction factors. The main goal of all of these 3 groups was to see, how each of the groups viewed the existing brand. The study projected to see differences on the brand experience, depending on which group was interviewed. In the nature of brand development, it was acknowledged in the study that naturally three different groups perceive a brand differently, because brand exists in the

customers' minds. However, much weight was given to the point if the brand experience was very different from what the company intended.

The residents were chosen using some beforehand stated criterion. Because the study explored, how the residents perceive their living area, it benefitted the most of interviewees that had lived in the area for over a year. Like in many other living areas, in Härmälänranta it is also possible to either rent or own an apartment. Due to the construction company perspective, the interviews were targeted to apartment owners in the Härmälänranta area, because they belong to Skanska's clientele.

Therefore a profile of a suitable candidate for interview was a person, that is between the ages of 50-70, has lived in the area for over a year's period and who owns an apartment in the area. Gender wasn't specified, but to ensure valid results, 4 men and 3 women were interviewed.

The second informant group, businesses in the area, was interviewed because the study benefitted from another stakeholder groups' opinions as well. Residents and businesses are lured to an area by different attraction factors and the relocating process is different, whether it's a personal decision or a business decision to move in to an area. In the living area there aren't many services and businesses yet, since it's a developing place, nor are there many released deals, and therefore one company represent was interviewed. Businesses that are planning to locating in the area were framed out from the research scope since the answers would have not been comparable, since they would have not had the evidence on brand experience or how their image has changed after moving to the area.

Since there isn't a widely spread discussion about living area branding, academic comments were desired for. Therefore, a professor, Doctor of Science; Business, Teemu Moilanen, gave an expert interview for the research's purposes. Expert comments give the phenomenon of living

area branding more depth and due to the nature of the interview which was more of a pondering discussion of the status of living area branding, the comments are not analyzed as an independent entity, but is discussed along the empirical section, when appropriate.

4.3. Data collection

Altogether the study's empirical data consists of 14 different interviews. 7 of these were conducted with the first stakeholder group; residents. These interviews were semi-structured, ie. the questions are not posed in a way that they could be answered "yes" or "no", or with numbers indicating a scalable answer. The questions were posed in a way that allowed the answerers to ponder their comments and guide the conversation on to new paths as well. Some of the interviews gave new insights on matters that would have not otherwise been on this study's research scope. The interviews lasted between 0.5-1.5 hours per interview and they were conducted face-to-face or by telephone. The interviews were taped and transcribed. Business represents were interviewed on telephone. The Skanska employee interviews were done face-to-face in Helsinki and in Tampere and by telephone. Employees were interviewed from two cities to also get a sense whether the thoughts of and take on branding were seen as the same regardless of what branch office in question.

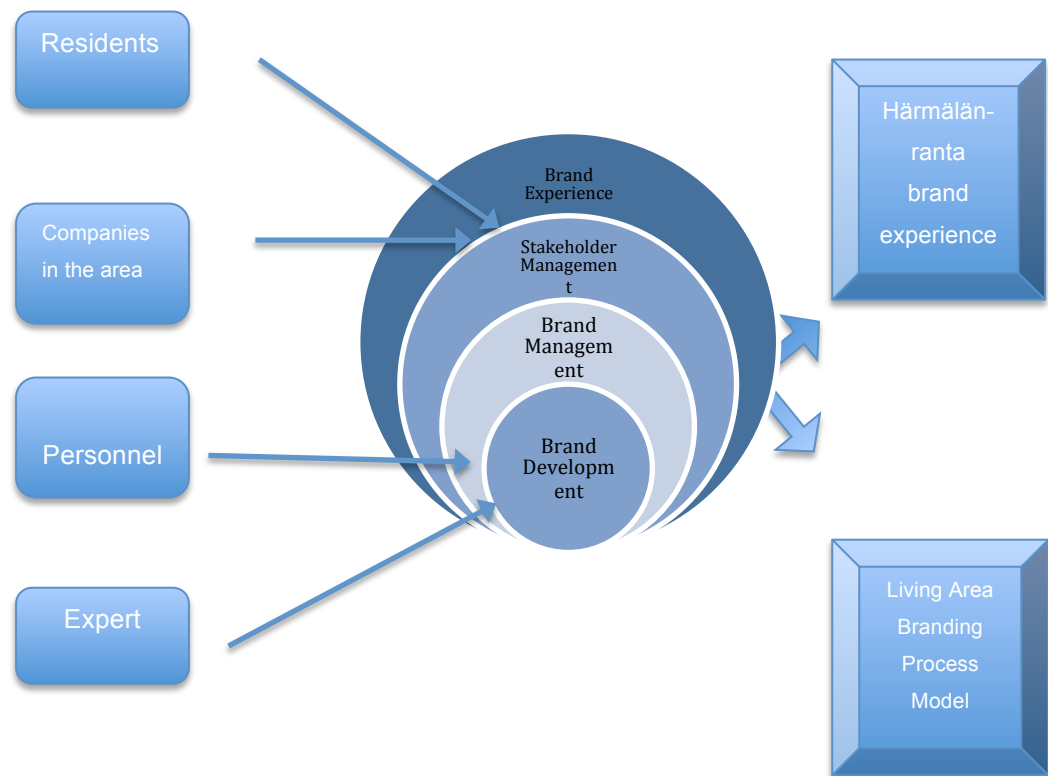


Figure 8. Empirical part's research design

To best clarify the structure of the empirical part of the study, the framework above has been constructed. As illustrated in the figure, interviews will give insights on different layers of the brand construct. The structure of the empirical part can be described as being two-folded due to the hoped dual outcomes. The study aims at both, making a status update or an audit on the case living area and finally, creating a living area branding process model for the company's purposes.

4.4. Skanska's living area branding – current situation analysis

In this sub-chapter, Skanska's current actions towards living area development and branding are presented and analyzed. Afterwards, the case living area will be presented.

4.4.1. Presentation of LAD – Living Area Design process

Living area design (later to be referred as LAD) is a concept developed by Skanska and that is currently being used in developing living areas within the company. It is a process that is executed starting from the land area purchase decision and is carried out after the living area constructs are finished. The LAD process has some resemblance to different place brand management models but branding is in the chronological center of the model combined with the notion of marketing, rather than being a leading thought in the model. LAD process's aim is to create and develop an area's identity (Skanska 2011). In Skanska's materials, the term identity is explained as being the area's features and soul.

LAD puts emphasis on the stakeholders' opinions and their hoped outcomes of the living area and ensures that living area development is consistent regardless of the place of action, since Skanska operates in many cities in Finland. In the next paragraph, the Living Area Design process will be explained. All of the information for the process is gathered through employees' interviews and from the company's classified material. Hence, straight references are not added to the text.

LAD process starts with a careful consideration of an area purchase within the company. Pros and cons are weighed and the prominence of the area in question is examined through various comments and accessible information. Careful market analysis is conducted by seasoned analytics from Skanska personnel. Area's features are taken into consideration and after that, target market group for a developing area is created. A project group including both, intra-organizational members and stakeholders will then be created. Intra-organizational participation consists usually of representatives from different departments such as an architect, a market-analytic, a project manager, marketing specialist and a person representing the sales department. The group often includes employees from different offices, mostly because e.g. marketing is mostly centered in

the Helsinki office. Stakeholders are often taken into the LAD process, such as area planners and designers and if necessary, residents and specialists are brought to the development. (Skanska 2011, Skanska 2014)

LAD process consists of different workshops that aim at a quality program handbook. This program guides the development process from the beginning until after the area is finished. In Härmälänranta's case, the quality program is composed for the years 2012-2020. Quality program is aimed at personnel working in the area development project and its purpose is to present the area, its core values, history, and the vision and identity for the area. Mainly the focus is put on structural elements of the area; architecture, lighting, infrastructural elements such as parking and routes to the area. A quality program handbook is a helpful tool mainly for project managers managing the construction work and designing side of the project management. Consequently, it can be noticed that the headings for 'marketing', 'branding' or 'place promotion' are missing from the document, which is a clear sign of the branding's unidentified role in place development within the company.

According to Skanska (2011) living area design process is a manual for area planning, helps at finding the right audiences in marketing and helps taking care of the living area. After the right participants have been chosen to the LAD group, a workshop will take place. A workshop's aim is to identify an area's core values through examining the area's attributes, physical setting and potential. These core values form the basis of the planning work. Another workshop will be held after the first one, in which the core values are developed into project features that are services – traffic, parking, commercial services, lightning and outside activities. Different services are emphasized on the basis of the core values – if an area's core value has designed as being child-friendly, it is congruent with the values to offer kindergarten services and playgrounds in the area. (Skanska 2011) Workshops that are held are a start for stakeholder

participation. In the open workshops the residents and potential residents are invited to participate and give their opinions of the area's development. By acting so, Skanska already enables healthy interaction between the most important stakeholder groups and prevents negative word-of-mouth by being open communication-wise.

When the two LAD workshops have been held, the construction work can begin and the communication process' planning can be commenced. The timeframe can be a couple of years before the construction work can be started.

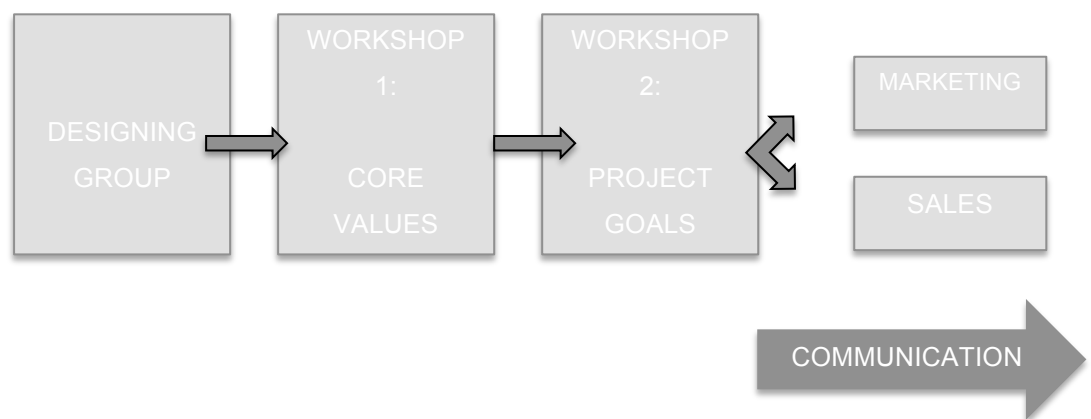


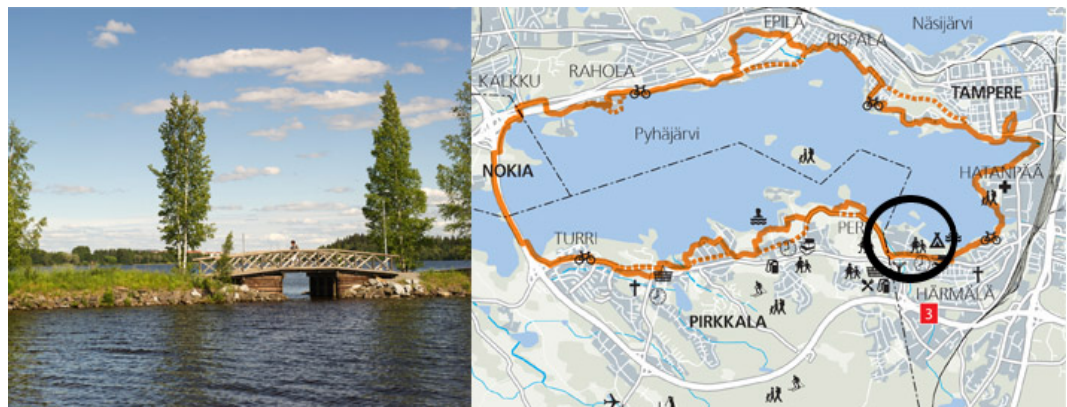
Figure 9. Living area design (LAD) process

4.5. Brand audit of the case living area brand, Härmälänranta

In this chapter a case living area and its development will be presented to demonstrate, how Skanska utilizes the LAD process in a real life case and what kind of core values, vision and action strategies the company has made and how the different stakeholders react to the final product; living area brand. The object is to evaluate, how the brand is experienced by two different stakeholder groups and compare those experiences to Skanska's vision about the living area brand. Through this comparative analysis, it becomes possible to evaluate how Skanska's branding activities have succeeded and to examine, whether there's room for improvement.

4.5.1. Presentation of the area

Härmälänranta is a new developing living area in the shore of Pyhäjärvi. The area is situated 5 kilometer from the Tampere city center and is near Pirkkala, the neighboring municipality. Skanska has planned to build almost 3000 apartments in the area. Since construction work takes time, the living area has projected to be fully finished during the next 10-15 years. The area was bought from Cargotec in 2006 and plans for a new living area were prepared.



Picture 1. *The location of Härmälänranta (Skanska 2013)*

Before the purchase Härmälänranta was a gated factory area accessible only to the area's employees. Since the area was restricted from other than the factory employees before, Skanska has had some market education to do: few people have realized that the area has lakeshore, since outsiders haven't had the possibility to visit the site before. (Skanska 2013) The area itself possesses great amount of historical equity that is reflected on the architecture in the living area. Due to the different factories, the most visible one being an old airplane factory, there's some reminders of the old function of the area, such as old buildings, an old airplane, a statue, the mansion of the former factory manager and a big red-tiled factory pipe. Skanska has envisioned the area as being a place fulfilling a concept called *new urban living*.



Picture 2. History in the Härmälänranta area (Skanska 2013)

4.5.2. Company's vision of the living area brand

In order to compare the different visions of the living area brand, four members of Skanska staff were interviewed. The interviewees consisted of marketing director, area director, services manager and development director. These employees were chosen for interviewing due to their participation to the Härmälänranta area development project and were thought of possessing the most implicit and explicit information concerning the specific living area. Company's vision is presented using the interviews and also the secondary material provided by the company. This vision has been constructed by following the Living Area Design –process.

4.5.3. Attraction factors

According to Skanska, the main attraction factor of the area is the lakeshore. Finland is said to be a country of thousands of lakes and according to research, Finnish people prefer to live near water but still have the services and proximity of a city. Finnish people also appreciate the feeling of community. Therefore the house design and placement is possible to pose in such a way that the streets are aligned to resemble

more boulevards than ordinary streets with cars. Härmälänranta possesses these three main attraction factors that the Finnish people are drawn to when making a decision in a living area:

1. The lake
2. Services and good transportation, and
3. House design and house placement.

Through these attraction factors, Skanska has created the core values for the area. These core values are:

1. Sincere and active human
2. Home-like feeling
3. Peacefulness
4. The proximity of the lakeside

Through these values, eight principles have been conducted that have guided the path for living area design. According to Skanska, these principles are: location at the lakeshore, identity and attributes, public and private, old and new, integration, nature, the defined shapes of the buildings and finally, sustainable development. (Skanska 2012)

Through these values, a main theme has been chosen for the living area, that is a *city of presence*. (in Finnish; läsnäolon kaupunki). The communication strategy has been constructed upon this thought. .

When examining these values through a branding perspective, attention focuses firstly on the many principles presented beforehand. According to Keller (2008), place brands should be simple in order to be easily perceived. When the place brand is easily adopted, the brand awareness – brand recall or brand recognition will become easier for the potential customer to achieve. The message is that the more simple the communicated message, the more likely the brand recall.

4.5.4. Visible elements of the living area brand

According to Kotler (1991, 442) a brand is consisted through elements such as a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these. In this chapter, these elements are evaluated in Härmälänranta's case.

Name

The living area's name, Härmälänranta, gives a clear definition of two important factors: Härmälä implies that the area is situated near Härmä region that is clearly connected with the Pirkanmaa province. The Finnish word *ranta* means a shore that describes the living area's most important attraction factor. This is a good thing since it clearly communicates that there's a shore near the living area which automatically adds positive perceptions to the area, whether a person had ever heard of the area before or not. It can be debated on, how the use of Scandinavian letters (ä, ö) together with a Finnish "r" will affect the international businesses or inhabitants.

Slogan

Härmälänranta has many slogans supporting its communication strategy. Examples of these are (translated into English by the thesis writer)

"Tomorrow's city today"

"Let's do history together"

"City of presence"

These slogans are clearly built upon the attraction factors identified in the area and they are congruent with each other. However, due to the various different slogans, none of them clearly stands out and therefore the brand awareness can be diluted. According to Keller (1991), a brand cannot be everything to everyone and the more simple the brand is, the easier it is to

perceive. Therefore it would be recommended to narrow down the many slogans and fuse them into one recognizable slogan that would be repeated in many channels.

Visual interpretation of the living area brand

Härmälänranta's logo gathers the area's principles well into a visual interpretation. The logo especially supports one of the key messages: "Let's do it together", since the visual appearance looks like it came out of a drawing board and it is easy to replicate by hand. The logo also gives out an impression of quality since it is clearly been made by marketing professionals.



Picture 3. The Härmälänranta logo

4.6. Living area brand perceived by residents

The residents formed the second interviewee group. In order to grasp the current status of the living area brand among the residents, interviews were qualitative and semi-structured. In the designing phase of the study, 10 interviews were planned to undergo, but as the interviews proceeded, the saturation point was reached by the time of the 6th interview. As verification of saturation, three examples of the questions and answers are presented:

Section 4, question 21: (full list of questions as an appendix)

Which factors affected the buying decision to purchase an apartment from the living area?

This question aimed at exploring which attraction factors appealed the most to the residents. This question was presented in different forms to all of the three interviewed groups and was meaningful to ask in order to clarify which factors come first into the interviewees' minds. The question was asked as an open-ended question rather than a ready prepared, scalable answer sheet that the respondents could have chosen their answers from. This kind of a method ensured that the answers were genuine and gave the interviewees many possibilities to answer. Answers 1-6 all indicated that the proximity of the lake and nature were in the greatest role when choosing a new living area.

"The lake was the first thing that got me thinking about getting this apartment after hearing about the new living area."

"The water. That was the reason why I came here."

Section 3, question 16:

How long have you planned on living in the living area?

The objective of the question was to ensure, whether the interviewees had some subconscious, possibly negative associations towards the living area or the living area brand that would make them consider moving out of the area and that would have not otherwise been exposed when interviewing the residents. Answers 1-6 indicated that none of the residents had planned to change their living area due to their happiness towards the area. Straight quotes from the interviews:

“I see no reason to move out. The only way I’m leaving is when they carry me out feet first.”

“If we change our apartment, we will still stay in the living area.”

Section 1, question 1:

Do you feel like you may contribute to the brand development?

The logic behind this question was to evoke the interviewees first to ponder about the brand development and afterwards think, whether they feel they are a part of it or are given the possibility to contribute to the brand development. Answers 1-6 all indicated that the interviewees experience that they have the possibility to contribute. This question also set the tone for the rest of the interview. A straight quote from an interview:

“Skanska has given many opportunities to affect the area development by arranging workshops. This has made me feel that the value the residents’ opinions.”

“I feel that the things we (residents) tell them (Skanska), are listened to.”

After providing background information about the presented saturation point, the study will now move on to further analysis of the stakeholder group 2, residents’ interviews. The interviewees were presented 30 questions that were categorized onto 6 different sections that are:

- 1) Stakeholder involvement
- 2) Living area and living area brand
- 3) Brand Experience
- 4) Attraction Factors
- 5) Brand Reality
- 6) Marketing activities’ impact

These aforementioned categories will provide the structure for this section's analysis.

4.6.1. Stakeholder involvement

The residents are under the positive impression that they have had the opportunity to affect the living area development. The interviewees have recognized that the company has put effort into co-creation, which is appreciated. Every interviewee was aware of the meetings in which the area residents were welcomed in the designing phase of the living area and common approach to the meetings was positive. The overall feeling towards the construction company was also positive and residents felt that both the residents and the company share values and objectives towards the area development. Though the common feedback is positive, some of the residents felt that even though they have been given the possibility to co-create the living area, they still question, whether their opinions will be truly appreciated in the future. A slight doubt among the interviewees was that a possibility is given to the residents to speak their minds about the living area development, but the fact that whether the company will act on the propositions or not, was pondered.

When interviewed about the possibilities that the company has created in order to co-create the brand, residents identified the meetings that the company has moderated and also the operation of residents' association that was especially appreciated among the interviewees. The residents were content that they have been given a chance to affect the area development through formal channels.

"I feel like Skanska is listening to what we have to say"

"Residents' association gives additional voice to the residents. After all, we are the ones that stay here (in the area) when the

construction work is finished and when Skanska draws back from the area. I think this improves our chances to affect things in the area.”

The residents acknowledge the construction company's complex situation due to the multiple roles the company has in the area. Skanska is present in the area in many forms since a site office presides in the area: construction workers naturally operates in the living area, sales staff is an every-week sight there and project management personnel also visits the area frequently. All of these employee groups operate under the same corporate brand and therefore form the image of the company in the residents' minds. It needs to be taken into consideration that every employee level impacts the Skanska brand in the living area and therefore also sculpts the perceptions of Skanska as a co-creator of the brand. This situation can occur as a double-edged sword – when interviewed about the co-creation and stakeholder engagement aspect, some respondents disclosed the issue of the negative overall appearance of unfinished construction sites in the area. Even though the matter is not necessarily congruent with the question, if the residents are considered in to the co-creation together with the company, still this matter affected their image of the company and their role as a living area brand developer in the area.

Interviewees were asked about the brand ownership. This question was designed to explore if they had adopted the brand as their own and whether they felt that the co-creation had lead to a feeling of ownership of the brand. The majority of the respondents felt that Skanska is the owner of the brand at this phase of area development. The company was recognized as the primus motor of the area development and that was not seen as a negative thing. However, the respondents felt that the situation is going to change naturally in the near future as the construction work progresses and the construction sites are finishing. The residents seemed to want to have ownership of the living area brand and according to their answers, were eager to take a bigger role in the area development in the

future. The residents also acknowledge that the development of the area is only the first phase of the living area's life span.

Since the residents acknowledged that they were given various possibilities to affect the area development, they were interviewed on the aspect, that whether they feel that the participation genuinely has an affect. All of the respondents felt that their participation is worthwhile and every respondent had taken part to a meeting or a workshop operated by Skanska. The respondents pointed out that they would like to take part more in the development process, but when asked "how?" answers concerned more individual participation rather than that they would have meant that they needed more channels for participation.

As a conclusion, the residents were content that they were given the opportunity to affect the living area's development. None of the residents addressed issues such as elitism among different stakeholder groups but pointed out that communication from the company to the residents could be more frequent and even if there were no news about new services, they would appreciate that information too. According to the residents, services affect highly to the overall happiness in the area and new services would be appreciated. Therefore having precise knowledge of the schedule would increase their contentment towards their living area.

4.6.2. Living Area and Living Area Brand

The living area related questions were designed to shed light on matters such as how the residents feel about the living area, what aspects they find the most valuable and what kind of things they would like to include to the area in the future. The questions did not restrict the residents to answer into specified categories, but were given the opportunity to answer whatever came in to their minds including infrastructural, socio-economical and brand-related elements.

First the residents were interviewed on their preferred vision for the living area. They were asked to describe, what kind of a living area they hoped that Härmälänranta is going to be when finished. The answers varied but all followed the same leading thought. Quotes from the interviews are presented:

“I would like the area to be homey: People would talk to each other and know each other. This can be affected through many efforts”

Through “many efforts” refers to house design, their positioning within the area and emphasizing the importance of the residents’ association.

“I hope and want the living area to be safe.”

Safety was ranked very high among the respondents. The feeling of safety is a result of number of factors one of which, according to the respondents, being sufficient lighting, which had a great role in the respondents’ answers. Together with lightning, feeling of safeness was thought of consisting of the fact that neighbors know each other. When asked, whether the interviewees felt that the area was safe or not, everyone replied positively.

Interpreting the interviewees’ answers, however, the most emphasis was given to the fact that people would know each other. In many occasions, apartment building living leads to people not knowing their neighbor and being lonely in their primary location. The residents felt that Härmälänranta differs from other living areas in that matter, due to both: Skanska’s encouragement and their own attitude atmosphere. One of the interviewees shared his example that in their house the residents have spontaneously shared their contact information and got to know each other. This may partly be caused by the fact that some of the residents are

already in their pension and have a clear intent to familiarize themselves with neighbors.

Skanska would have an intriguing opportunity to more clearly act as a middleman in acquainting the people with each other. If a culture of knowing ones neighbor clearly spreads widely in Härmälänranta, Skanska could take benefit from it and start to use it in its brand communication. After all, loneliness is one of our time's biggest fears among elder citizens.

The residents were interviewed on the fact that what kind of people they would want to move to the living area. This question was very informative and through that it was wanted to find out, whether slightly elder citizens with some capital to use would want to have rental houses on the area. However, almost all of the answers indicated that the current residents wished for diversity in the area's population instead of a feeling of a gated area with only rich elderly people in it. There was one trend that presented itself from the answers:

"Kids. I would like to have more kids moving in the living area since they bring the spirit of life with them."

4.6.3. Brand Experience

The object of the questionnaire's third part was to explore, how the residents experienced the living area brand. As in other parts, the questions were posed as open-ended, except for a question, in which the residents were asked to give a grade for their living area, in the scale of 4-10. It was made clear to the interviewees that the grade was to be given to the living area's current status and not based as the future's expectations. Answers varied between 7 and 8, the average being 7.5. Some of the interviewees analyzed the given grade further and explained that the rather low grades were given due to the incompleteness of the area.

Incompleteness included the ongoing construction sites in the area and the area's services. However, the residents were all well aware that targeted services are planned to the area and forgave for the incompleteness.

"I'm giving an eight to the living area. There still is room for improvement. But on the other hand, I highly appreciate the area's potential and that is the reason I have stayed here."

After the residents graded the living area, more detailed questions were posed in order to gather more in-depth data and which would possibly reveal other justifications for the living area's grading than the outspoken reasoning. In spite of the acknowledged incompleteness, the area was experienced as attractive and the residents were willing to recommend their living area to their friends and family and some of the interviewees had already done so in the past. The living area's attractiveness can be also seen in the residents' answers, in which all of the respondents state that they are content with the living area since they haven't been planning to move out from the living area.

Brand experience is affected by the expected brand experience. As mentioned in the study before, the marketed brand needs to be in line with reality in order to avoid disappointments. A negative brand experience can occur if the company communicates an airbrushed vision of the product reality that can lead to negative word-of-mouth and eventually harm the developing brand. According to the interviewees, the overall brand experience was positive. The residents trust the area's growing value potential and therefore are willing to forgive the area not having sufficient services yet. However, although the insufficient services are forgiven, their absence is still present in all of the interviewees' answers.

It's noteworthy to acknowledge that the residents have high expectations towards the future services in the area, since some of them have been

waiting for them for quite some time now. Skanska should address this issue by informing the residents about the coming changes in the area in advance. Communication is in the key issue when managing brand experience. It is a powerful tool that can lead to success when managing stakeholder relations but when managed poorly, can lead to anxiety among the residents. In the interviews, suggestions were made by some interviewees for the company to improve their communication concerning the schedule about when the services will come to the area. The interviewees pointed out that uncertainty about the services' coming to the area will lead to bad word-of-mouth among the residents which then again can affect the attitudes towards the company and the living area.

4.6.4. Attraction factors

For a living area brand, attraction factors form the core of the brand and brand identity (Hankinson 2004). Attraction factors consist of both; hard and soft factors (Kotler 1999) and they can also be referred to as brand attributes. They are subjective by nature and therefore different target groups perceive them differently. Attraction factors that are seen as valuable to the residents can be different from what the company initially intended to emphasize. In the interviews, the most often mentioned attraction factor of the living area was the surrounding lake. Residents appreciated the lake's presence in the area and also the surrounding nature, as expected. Härmälänranta as a living area differs from many other living areas consisting of apartment buildings especially because of the lakeside and the residents were aware and appreciated the living area's uniqueness. All of the interviewees had previously lived in a town house in the suburbs or in the proximity of the city center and had thought about moving to a apartment building due to the changed family situations such as children moving away or they had too much space or the services might have been further away than they would have wanted. According to the interviewees, Härmälänranta was a potential area option because of

the lakeside, services and safety. As expected, the residents valued nature-related features of the area. However, when more deeply scrutinizing the value-adding attraction factors, also the area's history was identified as a factor that the residents had learned to appreciate while living in the area. The residents felt that by highlighting the emotional benefits of the history's presence in the area would have been an additional attraction factor when making the purchase decision since other living area candidates would not necessarily have had same kind of attribute and sense of place in them. Therefore, drawn from the interviews, the history element could be more emphasized and would work as a good point-of-difference.

Attraction factors affecting the purchase behavior (prior moving in)	Attraction factors experienced invaluable while living in the area	Factors decreasing the overall happiness of the living area
The lake and the surrounding nature	The lake and the surrounding nature	Unfinished living area
Good quality housing	History of the area	Constant construction work in the living area although paid a price premium when buying in from the area
Location within the city	Location	Uncertainty over which services will move to the area
The potential value increase of the apartments	Sense of community, "knowing your neighbour"	The schedule of the coming services to the area

Table 3. Summary of residents' interview's key findings on attraction factors

4.6.5. Marketing Activities' Impact

When the product is a living area, there are some restrictions to its marketing. The communication is optimally targeted to the right buyer candidates through an effective marketing mix. The residents were briefly interviewed on how they best received information on Härmälänranta in order to gain an understanding on which channels are the most effective ones in promoting a living area. Most of the current residents had learned about the living area through printed media advertising in housing sections and later gained information from Skanska's website. Minor of the residents had first heard about the living area after they had contacted Skanska spontaneously. In these cases, it can be said that the corporate brand image guided the potential customer towards a certain living area. A customer had already made a decision to actively search an apartment and had made the decision to buy it from Skanska.

4.7. Living area brand perceived by local business life

In order to get a holistic view on the living area's present brand, local businesses were both interviewed and also informal discussion was undergone about the living area as a business environment. The answers were analyzed through following categories:

- 1) Stakeholder involvement
- 2) Living area and living area brand and attraction factors
- 3) Brand Experience and Brand Reality
- 4) Marketing Activities' impact

4.7.1. Stakeholder Involvement

The businesses were under the opinion that they have been taken into consideration when developing the living area. They felt that the living area brand is owned by Skanska and that it has the ruling authority

towards everything happening with and to the living area brand. The businesses acknowledge that they have some power over the living area brand and they feel like their opinions are listened to. The businesses are aware that Skanska is developing the area through co-creation, but there is a slight concern over the fact, whether they are truly heard.

4.7.2. Living area and living area brand

When interviewing the businesses about the living area, the object was to find out, which features of the area create the most value for them and mutually, which features were seen as indifferent. As opposed to the residents, the nature and proximity of the lake was not seen as such a big attraction. This is, of course, a matter of opinion, but it was seen as it really doesn't matter that much to the businesses. The businesses seemed to value the possible proximity of other businesses that would both, bring more customers to the area and form a more solid business environment to the living area. The most important attraction factor from the businesses' viewpoint was the logistic side: the location was experienced as one the area's biggest attraction factors since the area is located near to all the city's exit routes. Parking space was also experienced as sufficient, that is an important factor for different kinds of companies. Härmälänranta was seen as a living area with a potential for growth and the area was seen as a prestigious living area, that will most likely to be more valued and recognized in the future in Tampere region.

4.7.3. Brand Experience and Brand Reality

The brand experience was positive. Härmälänranta had mostly turned out to be as projected before locating in the area. The area's and neighboring area's residents were seen as a sufficient customer base for a service-based company which makes the brand experience positive. The logistic side of the area had also proved to be as valuable as expected before

locating in the area. Härmälänranta was seen as an area that could be recommended to other companies without conditions or remarks.

4.7.4. Marketing Activities' Impact

Although the marketing material communicated by Skanska is primarily targeted to private customers and not to businesses, they still have an effect on companies thinking about the area. Businesses were interviewed on their opinions about the marketing activities concerning the living area and if they had had an affect to the decision to locate to the area. Specific answers were not received but it could have been stated that marketing activities had reached the business sector's represents as well as private customers. The biggest role of living area's marketing was experienced as being the growing of brand awareness.

Factors affecting positively in local businesses when making moving decision	Less important factors to local businesses
Location; main roads' proximity	The age of the residents
The quantity of residents in the area	Sense of community
The events in the area	Area is still under construction

Table 4. Summary of the local businesses key findings on the area's attraction factors.

4.8. Conclusions from the interviews

Skanska's vision of the living area brand is partly congruent with the residents' brand experience. Both parties experience the lake and nature as being the most valuable attraction factor, same as safety of the area. Some differences occur – the residents seem to appreciate more the area's history than what the company has emphasized in the area's

marketing. The physical historical elements bring added value to the residents in everyday life and they are important also on an emotional level. Noteworthy is that different stakeholder groups appreciate different attraction factors from the area: similar elements do not give same value to both residents and companies. The surroundings seem to be the biggest differentiator in resident and company interviews. As Hanna & Rowley (2011) have mentioned, places are in a rising competition with each other for luring workforce, residents, businesses and investments into the area. This can be also stated from the thesis' interviews: different expectations pose demands on the company's strategic brand choices.

When examining the living area brand of Härmälänranta, overall the brand experience is positive among the residents but there are some factors that the residents would want to highlight. The informational symmetry would be highly appreciated, since the residents want to know better, how their living area is going to change. A clear message from some of the interviewees was that they would like to have a better access to the information on the forthcoming changes of the area. The information would be important in making housing-related decisions: to sell or not to sell the apartment, and when it would be most beneficial investment-wise. Since services are an element of wellbeing, information about the services' moving schedule to the area would help the residents shape their plans regarding their service usage beforehand: in practical level, if a gym is coming to the area, it would be good to know sooner, so that whether the residents would prefer a service near their home, they could change their current service provider without having to pay double fees on long-term contracts. Informing the residents could be done on regular basis. It's good to remember that even if there weren't news on area's construction work finishing dates or services contract situation, informing the residents about the "no news" situation is still information that can be passed on. Lack of information can cause frustration among the residents and different stakeholders, which then again can cause negative word-of-mouth. This can easily be avoided with communicating consistently with

the area's key stakeholders. The businesses of the area would also benefit from this kind of formal communication.

All of the interviewed stakeholders expected Härmälänranta to be a valued living area in the near future. It was acknowledged that the living area is still unknown to people outside the neighborhood but it was expected to be changing in the near future. The residents felt that Härmälänranta has some unique features (the lake, history of the area) that will last long.

Härmälänranta is a place that is valued by its residents and its businesses. Skanska has succeeded in many parts of the branding initiatives together with an outside branding agency. Some factors would require more strategic consistency in-house that could polish the living area brand.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMPANY

In this chapter, recommendations for the case company are presented that will be based on the key findings from the interviews' results. The recommendations part is divided on to three different sub-chapters that represent the three individual thematic entities studied in the thesis. The entities are: 1) theoretical and methodological (in-house management), 2) practical (stakeholder management) and 3) area-specific recommendations. First, the company's analysis of the current situation presented in the chapter 4 will be reflected on to the Living area brand management model presented earlier in the thesis, in the end of chapter three. By acting accordingly, the shortcomings of the current method used at the company can be better identified and recommendations are more logical to present. In the second sub-chapter, the study draws conclusions on the stakeholder participation and management by further analyzing the empirical evidence. Thirdly, the study proposes suggestions for the living area branding and living area marketing for the case area. After the fifth chapter, the thesis will culminate on to the final conclusions.

5.1. Evaluation of LAD – Living Area Design Process

The aforementioned LAB – Living Area Branding model in the chapter 3 is divided into six parts: 1) intra-organizational actions 2) analysis 3) vision and objects 4) strategy 5) implementation and 6) measurement. Since these parts are recognized as being important steps in place brand management through theoretical evidence, they will be the basis that Skanska's LAD process will be reflected on and compared to. Through such a review, the pitfalls of the Living Area Design process from branding perspective can better be identified. In this sub-chapter the proceeding order is as follows: first the evaluation of LAD will be presented, after which possible problems are identified. After the identification phase

solutions and recommendations based on both, theoretical and empirical evidence are presented.

5.1.1. Intra-organizational actions

The LAD process has been in the company's use for 4-5 years. (Skanska 2014) It has gained positive feedback from the employees and the process itself has been adopted for the company's use. LAD is experienced as being a helpful tool rather than a mandatory exercise. However, the employees acknowledge that the process may not be followed in every living area's development at Skanska due to the small size of some areas under development. The process has been used in most big scale living areas' development at the company.

While observing the process, it can be noticed that LAD process does not guide the preliminary development steps in detail after the composing of the planning group. Therefore issues such as confusion about an area's indefinite possibilities and many possibilities for area's core values can cause distress among the planning group. In discussions and interviewees with the employees concerns towards the area branding were, in fact recognized. The most difficult part seemed to be the starting of the living area design process. LAD process model guides at selecting a sufficient group and guides at viewing the area's potential, but in practice, some anxiety was experienced with stating guidelines for the brand. Possibilities are somewhat boundless when stating a new living area's core values and attraction factors to highlight – finding the right strategic line. Pressure of succeeding with the guidelines was recognized from the group participants.

Participants for the planning group are gathered on the basis of the employees' willingness to participate, their geographical location in relation to the developing area and the area of expertise they represent within the

organization. The planning group is a group of experts that may, and often do locate in different offices in Finland.

Rainisto (2003) remarks that a place should focus on the existing substance it has. If stretching a brand too far from what the physical aspects support the brand to be, it is possible to fail because the customers will not experience the brand as reliable or truthful. Following Rainisto's thought, it would be beneficial for the planning group to thoroughly examine the area before plunging into brainstorming sessions. According to Hanna & Rowley (2011), in the preliminary steps of place brand development, the stakeholder needs and the limitations of the place need to be taken into consideration, when formulating the brand. Answers can also be found from Gaggiotti et al.'s (2008) City Brand Management model that can also be adapted to living area brand context. In the CBM model, the first step is described by a question that the planning group can present: "what we are now". Through this question an analysis can be done in order to help the group participants to decide on important factors; vision, identity and core values. In the first developing stages of a living area brand, it is very important to brainstorm different ideas and possible scenarios for the area brand. This brainstorming should be based on available information on the market situation, a careful analysis of the area and knowledge of other successful living area brands. Rainisto (2003) adds that poorly executed SWOT may harm a developing living area brand. This remark is a good reminder of the fact that the preliminary steps in place branding are vital and they need to be focused on.

When viewing back on the LAD process's recommended participants: an architect, a market-analytic, a project manager, marketing specialist and a person representing the sales department, it can be seen that a branding specialist is not required. It is worthwhile to notice, that a marketing person does not necessarily equate to a brand specialist. While the participants are experts in their own fields, place branding is an independent field of expertise, also. Therefore in this thesis, two-stepped approach is

recommended in order to make the first steps in place branding to be easily managed: 1) Educate the planning group about place branding, the possibilities of branding and the financial benefits of successful place branding and 2) take an intra-organizational branding specialist in to the planning group.

According to Calderón (1997), brands can carry on a longer life cycle than the products that they present. Brands are proved to be both directly and indirectly valuable assets to a company, when lead systematically (Keller 2003). Therefore, when creating a living area brand, it has the potential to become a widely known brand that brings value-added to the company developing the brand both during the development project by making it possible to increase housing prices and after the area has been developed, as a reference to the company. When acknowledging these theses, it can be agreed on that branding is an act that needs to be taken seriously. Therefore, it would be beneficial to educate the planning group before making decisions about a new brand. Education should occur after the planning group has been chosen, but before any developing decisions will be made.

Another thing to consider is hiring a branding specialist focused on area branding projects at Skanska. In Härmälänranta's case, Skanska has relied heavily to the help and know-how of a Finnish branding agency that has been a key developer in the living area's brand. While this cooperation has been fruitful and resources have been allocated well, it could be pondered on, whether it would be helpful to have an in-house living area branding specialist focusing especially in living areas' branding. If having a branding professional within the intra-organizational group, the person could guide the group's decision-making onto a desired path right from the process's start. This would have positive implications on two things: firstly, fasten the group's decision-making in the start of the process and ensuring that the decisions that are made regarding the brand development, seem logical from branding perspective and secondly, the know-how would stay

within the company and the learning curve could be used as an advantage in future area development projects.

5.1.2 Analysis

As Skanska is a significant actor in the construction business, it has a professional analytics team located in the Helsinki office. While living area development projects are financially considerable and bind also other resources, a thorough analysis must be made. Skanska uses professionals to analyze the potential target markets. (Skanska 2013) A potential niche will be identified, area's prominence and potential will be analyzed and the information will be passed on to the executives and to the planning group. Through theoretical scrutiny, Skanska's eagerness and professionalism follows Rainisto's (2008) and Keller's (2003) instructions about the importance of thorough analysis. It needs to be made sure, that when the information given by the analysis team is passed on to the planning group, the information is gone through together with the group and it is ensured that all of the participants master the analytical data given.

Along with the market analysis, field analysis must be conducted. Levine (2008) proposes in a place brand management model, that phase 1, as it is presented in the model as a discovery phase, would consist of qualitative interviews with the external executives and location advisers, face-to-face interviews with local leaders and encourages to make a review of key reports and marketing materials. As it can be noticed, in place brand management external executives and local authorities reference to the place's many stakeholders. It can be then gathered that the stakeholder management phase starts as early as in the analysis phase, as it is advocated in Hanna & Rowley's (2011) place brand management model. Therefore, when conducting informal and formal qualitative analysis among the place's stakeholders, the planning group

and the analysis team need to file a stakeholder management plan before dismounting to the field.

As a field-analysis method, Skanska uses the workshops described in the LAD process. Workshops operate as an effective forum to gather information from local authorities and local residents. Some of these workshops are open for any audience, and some are meant for in-house participation only. The workshops also operate as a communication channel between the stakeholders and the company and according to the interviewed residents they send out a positive message about the company's attitude on the stakeholders. Therefore an analysis method can also operate as a communication channel.

5.1.3. Vision and Objectives

Vision and objectives are determined by the planning group in the LAD model. More precisely analyzed, the vision and mission statement presented in the LAB model can be found from the "stating the core values and identity" phase in the LAD model. The planning group makes the decisions on the basis of the information gathered in the analysis phase. The vision and objectives phase is one of the most crucial stages of brand development process. According to Levine (2008), in this stage the value promise of the living area brand needs to be created. Gaggiotti et al. (2008) mention in their city brand management model that along with Levine's mentioning about brand promise, also the possibilities of the brand need to be identified and the brand positioning needs to be decided on. A helpful way of deciding these aspects is for the planning group to ask themselves questions: "what our opinions are" and "who we want to be". (Gaggiotti et al. 2008) In the SPBM model, vision and objectives statement are divided onto independent components, but still together they form an entity that can be described as being congruent with Kotler's (2003) vision and objectives –stage of strategic planning. Hanna &

Rowley's (2011) SPBM model's previously mentioned components are: brand identity, brand articulation and brand communications.

5.1.4. Strategy formation and implementation

In Skanska's LAD model, strategy formation phase in Härmälänranta's case has been done together with a branding agency outside of the organization. Strategy has partly been incorporated to the quality handbook presented before in this thesis. According to the employee interviews, knowledge of an existing brand strategy seems vague. It is acknowledged that the guidelines for a strategy exists but the strategy's implementation could benefit from more distinctive guidance. The strategy is used in a more holistic level and the within the organization, the core values and vision of the developing area is recognized. When examining the strategy usage in a more tactical level, operation changes more ad-hoc. Gaggiotti et al. (2008) propose a 4-staged model for place brand strategy formation. All of the four phases are named with easily understandable questions that are: 1) What are we now 2) What our opinions are 3) What we want to be and finally, 4) What we need to do.

According to Rainisto (2003) a place must prepare for a long-periodic, systematic and unified working together – the strategy must also serve under these realizations. When talking about development that lasts for a long period of time, Skanska could benefit from a more detailed year-plan that would need to be derived from the holistic strategy. Compiling such a tactical plan, that would really reflect the available resources, could aid the decision-making unit with their questions in developing the brand.

5.1.5. Measurement

According to Rainisto (2003) measuring a place brand is a crucial activity in place brand management – “the results are what is decided to measure”. In place branding literature, brand measurement is either briefly

discussed on or then it is handled as feedback, brand experience and word-of-mouth (Gaggiotti et al. 2008; Hankinson 2004; Hanna & Rowley 2011; Kavaratzis 2012; Levine 2008). However, some literature can be found specifically about place brand management and measurement of place brand equity (Kavaratzis 2012). Assessing Skanska's LAD model, measurement is put onto a separate silo under management. According to the employee interviews, the knowledge of how the living area brand has been measured was vague. This can be due to the indirect communication between different branch offices. However, when the planning group's size is small, it would be vital that all the process steps would be clear to the participants. This calls for attention in three different factors: project management, education and communication.

A clear indicator of the living area's success are the apartments' square prices and their development over time, residents' happiness and overall and the ratio of residents moving in and moving out per year.

5.1.6. Other notions from branding perspective

Leadership and silent information

When the LAD process has been started, a member of the planning group is designated as the project leader and that information will be also written in the process' quality handbook. However, as it has been stated earlier in the thesis, living area branding process will last decades. Therefore it is understandable that the members within the planning group will be changed over time due to employee turnover and rotation. This realization has two issues that need to be taken into consideration: leadership changes and the preservation of information and know-how the group members have created during their time in the project. As Kavaratzis (2012) and Hanna & Rowley (2011) have stated, a strong leadership is a vital component for a successful place brand. According to the employee interviews at Skanska, there was a slight confusion over the fact that who was the designated leader at each time. Each of the interviewees could

name 2-3 people that have been very active in the project, but clearly, stating a strong leader from the project group was challenging. In other words, strong and manifested leadership was actually missing from the project. This causes confusion - within the planning group of which members have also changed during time and within the organization. Benefits of strong leadership would help the living area brand's development.

Another concern was the continuum of the process group due to employee turnover. When living area development can last 10-20 years and in modern day careers paths are more versatile and employees can switch jobs in every 2-3 years, people change in the group. The project know-how can be compromised if data is not saved systematically and new group members need to be briefed. This could be easily be fixed by actively passing on information on a regular basis of to the new members of the group. Intra-organizational communication about the living area development would be in order.

The know-how of the planning group's participants increases through continuous learning as the project evolves. Therefore if a member leaves the project, it would be beneficial to brief the next candidate or the other group members about tacit knowledge possessed. Going back to the quality handbook or the project, in which it is manifested that the book will not be updated as the process progresses, it could, in fact, be beneficial if the handbook would be updated at regular intervals. This update could be bind together time-wise with the regular measurement of the brand.

Stakeholder management

The LAD process includes the stakeholders in the development process by inviting the most important stakeholder groups to the workshops held prior to the area's finishing. The objective of these workshops is to envision together, what kind of an area would create the most value to all

of the stakeholders and to obtain implicit knowledge. This part of LAD is congruent with Hankinson's (2009) notion about stakeholders in which it is said that stakeholder participation offers tools for understanding better, what kind of aspects a place has to offer, regarding especially the information that only the residents can have –attitudes towards the area, talent, mentality and diversity.

5.2. Living Area Branding Model

After weighing the empirical evidence gathered, the previously presented Living Area Branding model requires reviewing. As stated in the chapter 5.1.1., after creating the planning group for branding, education of the group is required. This component is not greatly highlighted in any of the presented place branding models (Hanna & Rowley 2011; Hankinson 2014; Kavaratzis 2012). However, a small step such as educating the planning group and evoking the right mindset for the importance of branding, can turn out to be vital. Especially in an engineer-focused company, focal points are often in more tangible things such as housing, lighting and parking lots. It is also suggested from the basis of the interviews that the group will include an in-house branding professional who will stay at the project from the beginning until the end, even though the people behind the title would change.

Another important addition regards revisiting the strategy. Place brands face a turbulent environment and they need to shift over time (Kavaratzis 2012). This requires actions from the management group. In the construction company's case, the document stating the strategy is a quality handbook created for over a decade. In order for the document to stay relevant and the planning and management group to stay informed of the strategy, it needs to be revised and remodeled over time.

Measurement and follow up often fall into the role of a necessary evil and its importance can be diluted in everyday life of brand management.

However, it is a very important part of any branding process. Therefore, there should be a regular cycle for measurement and it should be communicated to everyone of the management group in order to do corrective action.

The revised living area branding model can be seen in the figure 10. As it can be noticed, the figure 10 differs from previously introduced figure 7. Education and branding perspective modules have been added to the revised Living Area Branding model. Also, strategy review module has been added under the strategy step of the model. Finally, as it can be seen, under measurement, regularly and communication module has been brought to the model in order to highlight the importance of measurement. It is both; important to a current living area process and a company's future branding projects to gain insights on what to improve and where.

When evaluating the theoretical and empirical data presented in this thesis, it becomes evident that changes must be made in place branding process models and in practitioner approach. This model is suggested as a pathway for living area branding process. In being such a wide area that has been the topic of this study, it is been the goal to study the process as an entity. Therefore the model does not suggest specific practitioner friendly, straightly implementable pathways, since the aim is to create a holistic view on best practices of living area branding. Future studies can be made focusing on smaller entities of the model, such as the process flow for optimized education for a planning group.

This model is an adapted model based on place branding, city branding, destination branding and country branding and strategic product branding combined with empirical evidence of four different stakeholder groups of a case living area brand: residents, a company's key personnel, local businesses and an it has also gotten insights from a branding expert.

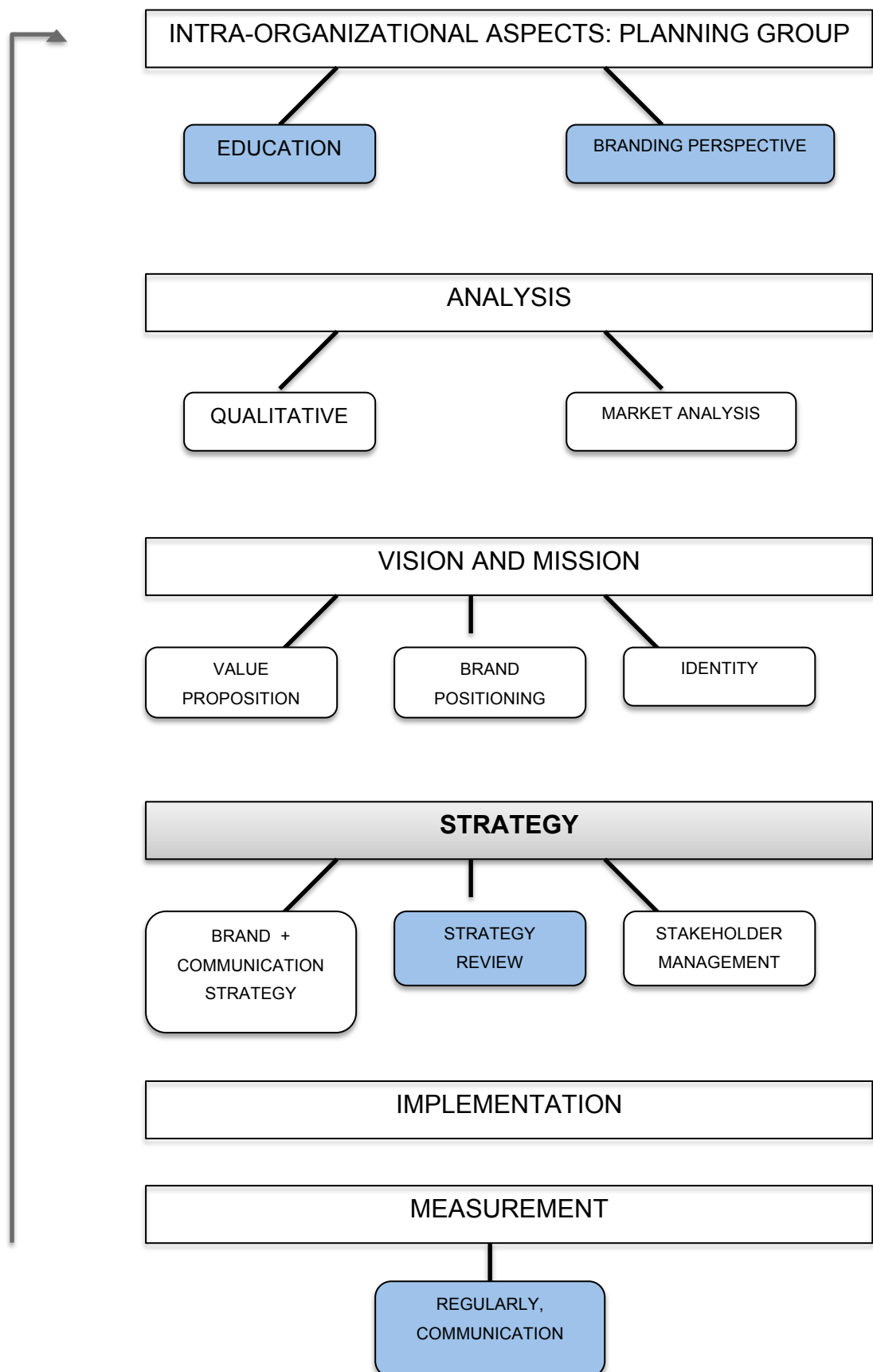


Figure 10. Living area branding model, revised

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter of the thesis will summarize the key findings based on the empirical evidence and theoretical foundation of the study. The objective is to answer the research questions stated in the first chapter. In order to ensure that these questions will be fully covered, they conclusions will be presented in the research questions' initial order.

6.1. Conclusions

How to create a living area brand? – What is living area branding; what kind of a product a living area brand is?

Living area branding is a complex form of branding. It is a new area of branding that has very few articles written specifically about the subject. In Finland, researchers Rainisto and Moilanen have started study the subject and Rainisto has done a doctoral dissertation as well other publications on living area branding. It is recognized in the thesis that living area branding differs from classical branding mainly due to its multiple shareholders and complex nature. From place branding the phenomenon differs by the distinctive features in project leadership – living area branding is lead by a private sector party, which often is a construction company. In some cases an area can be developed by two or three different construction companies, but in that case also, the project is lead together with these parties; by private sector. In city branding, the project is lead by city officials and the funding system is different due to the fact that governmental funds are then being used and the stakeholders are less emotionally attached to city branding efforts. In living area branding, there is less bureaucracy in branding decisions and due to the smaller size of the target group, they residents are more involved in the development and can be more motivated in helping the project since the effects of the branding efforts are more immediate to their own lives.

In the resident interviews it became clear that the attitudes towards living area branding and the constructor were very positive. Living area branding was seen as a joint venture together with the construction company. Outcomes seen in the case living area was a growing feeling of community, greater feeling of ownership of the area and the possibility to affect the prices of their apartment investment that is, in many cases, the biggest investment of average peoples' lives. Successful living area branding also polishes the brand of the construction company. Residents associated the living area's accomplishments and success with the construction company's efforts. It can be concluded that when the efforts are successful in living area branding, corporate brand will also benefit and present as believable and positive in the stakeholders' minds.

In the key personnel's interviews it was clear that a successful living area brand was a wanted outcome that the employees were ready to pursue. Benefits of a healthy brand were recognized and the attitudes towards branding were positive. Questions towards brand creation arose, especially towards the primary steps of the branding process.

Living area branding does not have a widely spread framework or process flow. In place branding, some models have been presented in the past 10 years but even in that, relatively older field of research, does not have a dominant theory since the area of expertise is still growing. Therefore, in order to answer the research question "how to create a living area brand", answers were searched from city branding, nation branding, tourism branding and from classical branding. Similarities between some theories could be seen and a conclusion of the models was constructed. The main take-outs were the importance of the first steps in the branding process. Being such a new area of discipline, it became clear in the key personnel interviews that in-house education in the beginning would be a key success factor for the branding process. It was then suggested in the thesis that a construction company would hire a branding professional to

the planning group so that the learning curve could be capitalized on in other similar projects as well. Strategy's updating and branding process follow-up and measurement were also suggested to be improved. Overall, the biggest take-out was the personnel's mindset towards branding. A place brand will be created eventually even if it wasn't consistently built – the importance of living area branding lies in the possibilities to affect the associations stakeholders have with the brand and by that, develop the area's possibilities through those.

How to develop and manage a living area brand? Who are the stakeholders of a living area brand and what is their role? What kinds of living area branding models exist?

Developing a living area brand is an ongoing exercise. It is debated that place brand management cannot be put aside in a separate silo but needs to be a wholesome thought behind the process' life cycle. As discussed earlier, living area branding is participatory by nature, which derives from the different stakeholders. The development of a living area brand needs to be done together with different stakeholders. Different identifications for stakeholder groups exist in the literature, but based on academic articles and the empirical evidence, the most important stakeholder groups are area residents and their immediate social cycles, businesses in the area, city officials, company personnel and visitors in the area. Residents whom have invested in the living area by buying houses within it, form the most crucial group. A challenge for the brand developer is to include that group to the decision-making, enabling them to have power in the development process and keeping them satisfied by sufficient communication, participation forums and active branding efforts.

In the literature, relations with stakeholders have gained much attention in the place brand management discussion. In this study, various articles and publications were introduced about the place branding, but the most input were gathered from Hanna & Rowley (2011), Hankinson (2004), Kavaratzis (2009) and Rainisto (2003). The discussion from Gaggiotti et

al. (2008) was also taken into consideration to form a reliable base for the thesis' theoretical part. The existing branding models were more thoroughly introduced in the chapter 3.

Living area branding has proofed to be a noteworthy subject of study. Living areas affect to many people and while the population continues to move to the big growth centers, new areas will develop even more. While the real-estate market has heated up, apartments are seen as a reliable and profitable option investment-wise by the public. Living area branding enables the investors to join the development and by that, gives them a possibility to ever grow their investment. Using the term living area branding instead of marketing, branding is a more collective exercise and puts the developers' mindset onto a right path from the start. Branding encourages the living area to have a brand image and a brand personality, that can be used in the living area's positioning and when communicating the brand to different audiences.

6.2. Managerial Implications

The essence of living area branding

A successful living area brand relies on a thorough brand management process that starts from gathering a planning group. After a careful consideration of a planning group's composition, analysis must be made of the place's strengths and weaknesses. When a careful analysis is undergone with the input of different stakeholder groups, brand identity can be started to formulate. In order to fulfill the brand positioning and brand identity, an action plan needs to be made. A good action plan is realistic and formulated on the basis of the available resources.

Living area brand management is a holistic and ongoing process that calls for strong leadership. A place brand has multiple stakeholder groups that all require systematic management in order for the living area brand to succeed. For proper stakeholder management, the key audiences must be

identified and the relations must be managed in an organized way so that all parties will benefit. Stakeholder presence is a nominating difference in place branding when compared to conventional products' branding and poses requirements to a place brand manager. An important factor in place brand management is following some predetermined indicators for measuring purposes. A living area brand affects many stakeholders and therefore it is important that the most important indicators are decided on and feedback is gathered and used as a tool for future decision-making.

Employee education

As stated in the thesis, branding is a wholesome process, not a linear decision-making process. Though branding is not a new phenomenon nowadays, the definition of branding and its meaning can still be vague to many practitioners. Branding can be falsely equated as marketing activities or the visual elements of a brand – logo, symbols and visual interpretation of the brand. (Keller 2003) However, it has been stated that branding will anyhow commit resources and therefore it would be worthwhile to educate the key employees of the true meaning of branding in order to ensure that all members especially of the planning group understand what branding is, what its goals are and why it is important.

Outsourcing branding and brand communications

Companies that are not specialized in branding, often turn to branding agencies for special input. However, there is a danger in outsourcing branding to an outside party. When using a professional branding agency, the outside consultants possess the most information regarding branding and the power relations can turn upside down and this can, in some cases, threaten the leadership of the branding process. A situation that should be avoided is that a branding agency comes up with the brand identity, the brand positioning and the value proposition. Should a similar situation arise, the power of the brand steerer shifts on to the branding agency. It

must be acknowledged that a branding agency should work under the guidelines of the construction company. Another thing to regard is the learning within a project – if branding activities and decisions are outsourced to a third party, the know-how will not stay entirely within the company and therefore in every project, a new agency must be hired.

Internal Branding

Once the living area's brand identity is decided and the differentiating factors that will be highlighted are selected, it is important to send the message to the employees, even though not involved daily with the project. Employees are the biggest word-of-mouth spreaders and it would be beneficial if they understood the living area's uniqueness and point of differences. Internal branding is often forgotten, though it is a key to make the personnel understand the branding activities better, educate employees and ensuring the managers that branding investments are not done in vain. Attitudes towards branding in an organization can set the tone either pro branding or contra branding. Therefore it would be beneficial to aim at positive attitudes and help the employees understand, what does a living area stand for, what are its selling points and why it is a worthwhile project. This can also cause surprising synergy affects.

Leadership and data saving

Branding process is a complex process that evolves over time and the results can be only after a long period of time. When examining living area branding, the results can realistically be seen in decades, although some evidence of a good living area brand may be noticeable before (price of the apartments, positive word-of-mouth, willingness to move to the area). Due to these realizations, it is understandable that the key personnel will change over time.

Intra-organizational planning group is the driving force of living area branding process and represents the decision-making unit. It is important

that the planning group has a strong leader that guides the branding process, ensures that all of the group understands the tenets of branding and the possible positive outcomes and benefits of a strong living area brand. Especially, when the planning group consists of represents of different educations and intra-organizational functions, it is vital for the process that there is a strong leader who overcomes barriers, whether they rise from employee turnover or physical distance of the planning group's members. Due to employee turnover, decent data saving must be undergone. In long projects like living area development, emphasis must be given to proper reporting standards. Justifications for branding decisions, pictures and planning reports on events, feedback forms and measurement results would need to be available for everyone entering the project even if the area development would have started 10 years ago. This will ensure the brand evolvement and stability over time, even if people change in the project.

Many audiences, many opinions

Living area has multiple stakeholders. When forming a brand identity and deciding on the communicated attraction factors and value drivers, the decisions must be made carefully. They need to be observed from many viewpoints to ensure that the area will offer truthful brand reality to those who decide to move to the area on the basis of the brand image and communicated brand. The area needs to redeem the promises made by the marketer in order to avoid disappointment and bad word-of-mouth (or word-of-web) and eventually the decrease of apartment prices.

Generic brand vs. staying relevant

When examining city and living area brands particularly, it can be seen that the trend seems to be the generic the better. Places with slogans like "a good place to live" already exist. To differ is to bloom. A living area can assess its options if it could be a brand that would create memorable

images to its stakeholders. Radicalness is surely not the only option, but it seems that different audiences respond well if a place brand stands for something other than “a good place to try and to be and entrepreneur”. It needs to be understood, that whatever the punch line may be, the reality must stand behind that image. If a living area wants to brand themselves as a “the most rocking living area of the city”, it needs to be backed up with seeable evidence such as a yearly rock festival, black benches in the park and an exhibit of leather jackets and maybe a local rock star living in the area.

Stakeholder communication

Going back to the notion from the stakeholder interviews about insufficient communication about the forthcoming changes in the area, a closer look is in order. Scrutinizing the communication more thoroughly through branding perspective, communication relates to the management part of brand development, and brand management requires planning, preparation and organizing, which all lead back to systematical implementing and strong leadership, which Kavaratzis (2012) calls for in place brand management. Communicating the brand and about the brand needs to be carefully decided on during the preliminary steps in the brand development process. Systematical communication schedules and guidelines need to be decided on before the brand gets in to the stage where the biggest stakeholder group; residents, are already present and living in the area. By concentrating on decent and sufficient communication, much of the factors that can harm the developing brand, can be avoided. Also, the residents must be valued after they have made their purchase in the area. They are the ones that live in a developing scenery possibly filled with construction workers and construction noise. In such a case, good communication becomes vital. It is important to inform, when the construction work will be finished and when services are moving to the area. By good communication, unnecessary unhappiness can be

avoided and residents can feel themselves appreciated and they can be on the construction company's side, not against them.

6.3. Theoretical Implications

The academic literature falls into a research gap when it comes to living area branding. The subject has gotten some attention over the past years through practitioner input. In this thesis, theoretical evidence has been gathered from similar fields of study such as living area branding, since there is no published articles on the matter. Information has been searched from destination branding, nation branding and city branding. Classical product branding has offered insights into the theoretical part, as well. In this thesis it has been proved that living area branding is a rising field of study, both from academic and practitioner view. It is stated in this study that living area branding clearly has features that occur only in living areas that are not similar to other place branding fields. A precise process model for living area branding is missing from the literature, though practitioners are undergoing living area branding around the country.

Theoretically, living area's stakeholders differ from any other place branding form's stakeholders. They are more emotionally attached to their living area than they are to their city's or country's brand, nevertheless a destination's brand. In living area branding, the stakeholders are more likely to give more input in the brand's development because it involves them more than any other place brand – it is their biggest investment.

From the company's point of view, developing living areas is a big investment and there is no possibility to fail due to the large scale projects' costs. More thorough input from the academia would interest the practitioners highly. It is clear that there is a lot of space for future investigation in the subject that will be more thoroughly discussed in the next sub-chapter.

6.4. Limitations of the study and future research

In the final sub-chapter of the thesis, limitations occurring during the thesis and in the findings' future usage will be discussed. Also, suggestions for future research topics will be presented.

During the thesis, a great limitation was the lack of suitable academic information. Due to the novelty of the subject, no straightforwardly applicable academic input was found. This affected the study in a way that the thesis needed to apply findings from other fields and made the thesis exploratory by nature. It needs to be acknowledged that the empirical evidence is gathered from one case example and therefore the findings are not straightly applicable to other companies' usage, though can be mirrored in other companies. The empirical part described the current state of a specific construction company, which also shaped the focal points of recommendations and discussion. When aiming at more applicable and generalizable outcomes, more case examples would be needed.

For future research, this study unveiled many possible research gaps and research topics. An interesting study would be the comparison of living area branding and e.g. skiing resort branding or other service-oriented business bundle that work under the same name and benefits from a strong unifying place brand. Stakeholder management left many interesting aspects to be covered. In the borderline of psychology and marketing, it would be intriguing to study the emotional aspects between residents and their living area and the residents and their home city and compare those results together more thoroughly. Especially intriguing would be if a model could be developed for evaluating different branding activities' monetary impact on a living area brand.

Living area branding is an exciting form of place branding that will gain more and more attention during the next decades. After all, the question is not whether to brand but how brand.

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APPENDIX

Haastattelukysymykset // Stakeholder Group 1: asukkaat

Osa 1: Sidosryhmien vaikutusmahdollisuudet brändin kehittämiseen

1. Tunnetko, että sinulla on mahdollisuus vaikuttaa alueella tapahtuvaan kehitykseen?
2. Haluatko vaikuttaa alueen kehitykseen?
3. Kuka mielestäsi omistaa Härmälänrannan brändin?
4. Kuka on mielestäsi brändin kehittäjä?
5. Oletko osallistunut itse asuinalueen ja sen brändin kehitykseen? Millä tavalla?
6. Haluaisitko mahdollisuuden osallistua aktiivisemmin alueen kehitykseen? Millä tavalla?
7. Koetko, että oma osallistumisesi vaikuttaa alueen kehitykseen ja brändiin?

Osa 2: Asuinalueeseen ja asuinaluebrändiin liittyvät kysymykset.

8. Minkälaisen asuinalueen haluaisit itse Härmälänrannasta? (adjektiiveja)
9. Minkälaisia ihmisiä haluaisit alueella asuvan?

10. Minkälaisia tai minkä tyyppisiä ihmisiä koet alueella asuvan?
11. Minkälaisia palveluita ja yrityksiä haluaisit saada Härmälänrantaan?
12. Mitä piirteitä arvostat Härmälänrannassa? (esim. Helppo liikkuvuus kaupunkiin, veden läheisyys, etc.?)
13. Millaisena koet Härmälänrannan brändin tällä hetkellä?
14. Millaisen toivot brändin olevan 20 vuoden kuluttua?
15. Koetko, että asuinalueen brändi voi vaikuttaa alueen neliöhintaan?

Osa 3: Asukkaiden henkilökohtaiset suunnitelmat

16. Kauanko olet suunnitellut asuvasi alueella?
17. Koetko alueen turvalliseksi?
18. Koetko alueen houkuttelevaksi?
19. Millaisena pidät alueen palveluita? Koulut, kaupat, liikkuminen kaupunkiin?
20. Minkä arvosanan antaisit omalle asuinalueellesi kouluasteikolla 4-10?

Osa 4: Asuinalueen valinta

21. Mitkä tekijät vaikuttivat siihen, että ostit asunnon Härmälänrannasta?: Miksi ostit asunnon Härmälänrannasta?
22. Mitä tekijöitä arvostat eniten asuinpaikassasi?
23. Mitä tekijöitä muuttaisit, jos sinulla olisi siihen mahdollisuus?
24. Mitä tekijöitä luulet, että muut alueella asuvat muuttaisivat alueella, jos heillä olisi siihen mahdollisuus?

Osa 5: Brand Experience / Reality

25. Mainitsitko kaksi vetovoimatekijää, joiden koit vaikuttavan eniten ostopäätökseesi?
26. Koetko nämä tekijät vielä arvokkaiksi, nyt kun asut alueella?
27. Oletko tyytyväinen siihen, että ostit asunnon Härmälänrannasta?
28. Olisitko valmis suosittelemaan Härmälänrantaa tuttavillesi ja sukulaisillesi asuinalueena?
29. Onko alue osoittautunut sellaiseksi, jonka sen ostovaiheessa ajattelit olevan?

Osa 6: Markkinoinnin kohdentaminen

30. Mistä sait tietää Härmälänrannassa myytävistä olevista asunnoista?
31. Muistatko, mitä markkinointikanavaa pitkin viesti tavoitti sinut parhaiten? (Lehti, tv-mainos, tapahtumat, internet)
32. Osallistuitko Härmälänrannan Venetsialaisiin elokuussa 2013? Tahtoisitko lisää tällaisia tapahtumia alueellenne?
33. Miten itse lisäisit tietoutta Härmälänrannasta ja kasvattaisit bränditunnettuutta?

Haastattelukysymykset: Stakeholder group 2: Alueella olevat palvelut (businesses)

Osa 1: Sidosryhmien vaikutusmahdollisuudet brändin kehittämiseen

1. Koetko, että olet saanut vaikuttaa alueen kehittämiseen?
2. Tahdotko vaikuttaa alueen kehittämiseen?

Osa 2: Alueen vetovoimatekijät yritysten silmin

1. Minkä takia halusitte alkaa toimimaan Härmälänrannan alueella?
2. Mistä syistä pidätte aluetta hyvänä toimintaympäristönä?
3. Mitä asioita mielestänne alueella pitäisi kehittää, jotta yrityksellänne olisi siellä paremmat toimintamahdollisuudet?
4. Minkälaisia muita yrityksiä tahtoisit alueelle tulevan?
5. Minkälainen alue on teille toimintaympäristönä ihanteellinen?
6. Missä muualla teillä on toimintaa?
7. Millaisia piirteitä arvostat Härmälänrannassa? (Asiakkaat, ympäristö, muut palvelut, liikkumismahdollisuudet, sijainti?)

Osa 3: Yrityksen omat suunnitelmat

8. Minkälaisia tulevaisuudensuunnitelmia yrityksellänne on toimipaikan suhteen?

Osa 4: Brand Experience / Reality

9. Oletteko kokeneet Härmälänrannan sellaiseksi toimintaympäristöksi, jota ennen alueelle muuttamista ajattelitte sen olevan?
10. Koetko muuttopäätökseesi vaikuttaneet tekijät vielä relevanteiksi nyt, kun jo toimitte alueella?
11. Olisitko valmis suosittelemaan Härmälänrantaa alueena muille yritykselle?
12. Jos voisit muuttaa jotain alueella, mitä se olisi?

Osa 5: Markkinoinnin kohdentaminen

13. Mitä kautta sait tietoa Härmälänrannan alueesta?

14. Miksi päättelet, että Härmälänranta olisi hyvä toimintaympäristö yrityksellenne?

15. Miten itse lisäisit Härmälänrannan tunnettuutta yritysten keskuudessa? Miten levittäisit tietoa muille yrityksille Härmälänrannasta?

Haastattelukysymykset: Stakeholder group 3: rakennuttaja / markkinointinäkökulma

Osa 1: Sidosryhmien vaikutusmahdollisuudet brändin kehittämiseen

1. Millaiset vaikutusmahdollisuudet koet eri sidosryhmillä olevan Härmälänrannan brändin ja alueen kehittämiseen?
2. Uskotko, että sidosryhmien osallistuminen alueen kehitykseen tulee vaikuttamaan asuinaluebrändiin?
3. Millä tavalla?

Osa 2: Target groups

1. Mille ostajaryhmälle kohdennatte alueen markkinoinnin?
2. Mikä on Härmälänrannan asukkaan keskimääräinen profiili? (ikä, tuloluokka, perheet / sinkut / vanhemmat ostajat?) Brand personality
3. Mitä kanavia hyödynnätte Härmälänrannan alueen markkinoinnissa?
4. Millä tavoin päätätte yleensä alueidenne tavoiteryhmät?

Osa 3: Asuinaluebrändiin ja alueen kehittämiseen liittyvät kysymykset:

5. Mitkä koette Härmälänrannan tärkeimmiksi vetovoimatekijöiksi?
6. Mitä piirteitä koette asukkaiden ja yritysten arvostavan Härmälänrannassa?
7. Millaisena koet Härmälänrannan brändin tällä hetkellä?
8. Koetko, että asuinalueen brändi voi vaikuttaa alueen neliöhintaan?
9. Minkälaisen palveluiden (yritykset) näet sopivan Härmälänrannan alueelle? Minkälaisia yrityksiä haluatte alueelle?
10. Miksi luulet yritysten haluavan siirtyä Härmälänrantaan?
11. Miksi luulet asunnonostajien valitsevan Härmälänrannan alueen asuinalueekseen, eikä jotain muuta aluetta Tampereen sisältä?
12. Mitkä asuinalueet koet kilpailijaksi Härmälänrannalle?

Osa 4: Brändin kehitys

1. Millä tavalla olette kehittäneet Härmälänrannan brändiä tähän mennessä?
2. Minkälaisena näet Härmälänrannan brändin parhaimmillaan?
3. Mitä etuja näet olevat vahvasta aluebrändistä Skanskalle?
4. Koetko, että brändin kehitys on avainasemassa yrityksessänne uutta asuinaluetta luodessa?
5. Mitä etuja näet siinä, että brändinkehitykseen keskitytään ja siihen investoidaan?
6. Koetko brändinrakentamisen kannattavana rakennuttajan näkökulmasta?
7. Osaisitko selittää omin sanoin brändinluontiprosessinne? – Mitkä tahot ovat mukana kehittämässä brändiä alusta asti yrityksen sisällä? (markkinointitoimisto, yrityksen markkinointiosasto, kaupungin viranomaiset etc etc.)

8. Onko yrityksessänne olemassa selvä ohjeistus brändin luomiseen? Keskityttekö kaikissa uusissa asuinalueenrakennusprojekteissanne brändin luomiseen?

Osa 5: Yrityksen toimintatavat alueen kehittämistyössä

1. Miten kuvailisit itse tämänhetkistä aluekehitysprosessianne?
2. Kuka projektia johtaa?
3. Millä mittareilla toimintaa seurataan?
4. Kuvailisitko omin sanoin prosessinne alusta loppuun?
5. Millä tavoin käytössänne oleva prosessi toimii? Onko jotain, jota siinä voisi parantaa?
6. Missä roolissa näet aluebrändin rakentamisen olevan käytössänne olevassa prosessissa?