THE ALIGNMENT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL BRANDING

IN A LEADER GROUP

by

VINESSA NAIDOO

Thesis

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FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Promoters:
Prof. Willem Schurink
Prof. Jos Coetzee

April 2013
Declaration

I hereby certify that the dissertation submitted by me in fulfillment of the degree Doctorate in Philosophiae (Leadership in Performance and Change) at the Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management (IPPM), University of Johannesburg is my independent work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at another faculty or university.

Vinessa Naidoo

Date: 30 April 2013
Affidavit

AFFIDAVIT: MASTER’S AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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PREAMBLE

Dedications,
Acknowledgements
And Abstract

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG
Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to

GOD ALMIGHTY.

Father, without Your strength and favour

this dream would never have become a reality.

It is also dedicated to my mother, Ms Saro Naik,

and

to my husband, Roger, and our lovely daughters, Andrea and Jadene.

I love you all very much!
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Abstract

Many employees do not associate with their company's brand, because there is a gap between what they experience and perceive and what their company conveys about the brand. The external brand suffers as a result. Company leaders who fail to recognise the importance of internal branding and the need to align internal branding with external branding are primarily responsible for this.

An initial literature review of the phenomenon led to the question of how the concrete experiences and views of managers of an organisation with regard to branding can be explored so as to develop a model of the alignment of internal and external branding. The question was answered by means of a study of managers of a South African organisation.

The objectives were to use qualitative research to capture and unravel the experiences and views of the managers, to study the work of prominent scholars in the relevant study field in order to infer theoretical constructs and demarcate research findings that are relevant to understanding the managers' experiences and viewpoints, and finally to develop a model of branding that integrates the everyday experiences and viewpoints of the managers with the scholarly concepts.

I opted for the modernistic qualitative approach, presented my research philosophy (ontology and epistemology) and key scientific beliefs (my position as to the use of literature and theory, and research ethics), and described the key decisions I took during the research process.

The study was conducted in a leading South African motor retail company, which operates countrywide in more than 100 wholly-owned dealerships. Ten leaders of the company were interviewed, mainly during unstructured interviews, and detailed data were obtained. These data were complemented with observations, field notes, unsolicited essays and company documents. I used a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program, namely Nvivo 9, to assist me in sorting the comprehensive data set.
I analysed the data with grounded theory's open, axial and selective coding. Altogether 36 themes regarding the company's branding and brand leadership emerged during open coding. With the aid of axial coding, the 36 open codes were grouped into 15 broad themes in the first round of axial coding, and consolidated into 6 core categories in the second round of axial coding. Having identified categories, properties and themes, I moved on to selective coding so as to find the core construct of the study, namely: the importance of the role of leadership in internal and external branding.

Using Mouton and Marais's (1990) analytical "tools" to illuminate phenomena and Schutz's (1962) first-order and second-order constructs typology, I developed the Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM). More particularly, I integrated the first-order constructs (the participants' experiences and views) with the second-order constructs derived from theoretical discourse and research findings.

The study contributes to theory by proposing the LBAM. Its methodological contribution lies in the application of grounded theory to create the model, being the first attempt of this nature in this field in South Africa. The successful use of Nvivo 9 instead of Atlas pi paves the way for the use of Nvivo 9 for data ordering and analysis in qualitative and grounded theory research in this country. In terms of a practical contribution, the study reiterates the need for synergy between the human resource department and the marketing department.

The LBAM sheds light on the steps leaders should take to ensure that internal branding takes place in their organisations so as to produce satisfied customers. It also underscores that the responsibility for efficient internal organisational processes rests squarely on the shoulders of a company’s leaders.

It is recommended that the LBAM be verified both in South Africa and abroad, that employees' views on company leaders' branding performance be explored so as to determine the success of branding, and that the relationship between brand performance, company performance and time be subjected to further research to establish how length of time impacts on brand and company performance. The validity of the employee-brand link and the suggestion that a brand is internalised when organisational socialisation establishes a fit between individuals' values and brand values should also be tested by further investigation.
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# Glossary of Terms

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<tr>
<td><strong>Brand</strong></td>
<td>A name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these intended to identify the goods or services of one seller and to distinguish them from those of its competitors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brand equity</strong></td>
<td>The value of a company's brand, referring to the added value a brand provides to a product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand identity</strong></td>
<td>What an organisation stands for. Brand identity needs to be in line with customers' expectations. It differentiates the brand from the brands of competitors and signifies what the organisation will and can do over a period. There are four brand identity perspectives: the brand as a product, the brand as an organisation, the brand as a person and the brand as a symbol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand image</strong></td>
<td>This is the perception of the company’s brand by external observers such as customers and stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand leadership</strong></td>
<td>The capacity of leaders to unleash employees’ power and potential to produce a greater marketing and branding impact for the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand vision</strong></td>
<td>The future environment the brand hopes to bring about, its purpose and its values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate branding</strong></td>
<td>The systematic planned management of behaviour, communication and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td>The set of shared, taken-for-granted, implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks and reacts to its various environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee commitment</strong></td>
<td>Giving all of yourself while at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer branding</strong></td>
<td>Working towards being seen as the most admired or preferred company to work for and having the best corporate brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External brand</strong></td>
<td>The sum of organisational identity, image and aspiration.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Internal brand</strong></td>
<td>The sum of personal identity, image and aspiration embedded in an organisation's identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal branding</strong></td>
<td>The process of developing a shared brand understanding among an organisation's members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal marketing</strong></td>
<td>The task of hiring, training and motivating able employees to serve customers well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP)</strong></td>
<td>Words that were used by participants to indicate knowledge, attitude and practice. Knowledge refers to acquaintance with facts, truths or principles; attitude refers to a settled way of thinking or feeling which is typically reflected in a person's behaviour; and practice refers to habits or customs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>The capacity to influence others by unleashing their power and potential to impact the greater good.</td>
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Management  A set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly.
Contextualising the Study and the Research Methodology
CHAPTER 1

Contextualising The Study
Chapter 1
Contextualising the Study

1.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I firstly present a brief background to my study, and then justify the study and my personal interest in it. Secondly, I provide the problem statement and research question for the study. Thirdly, I formulate the aims and objectives of the study. Fourthly, I indicate the anticipated contributions of the study. Finally, I outline the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background

All the organisations that have employed me over the years have been trying avidly to market their brand as the best in the entire marketplace. Yet never once have I felt part of the brand. I often wondered why a company's corporate brand seemed so far removed from and even contradicted the experience of the employees who were supposed to market and sell the corporate brand; more importantly, what role could leaders play in making employees adopt and promote it. This phenomenon is the topic of my research thesis.

External or corporate branding has increasingly come to be regarded as essential to an organisation's long-term strategy (Davis, 2002), one of its critical assets, and one of the key instruments for achieving superior business performance. Many a company attaches much value to its brand, even to the extent of using it as a balance sheet item. However, a company's product brand and its company brand must be clearly distinguished. A product brand entails the symbols, visuals and trademarks on which the company's brand is imprinted. The company's brand, also called the corporate brand, incorporates much more than its product brand. For the purpose of this study, a company's corporate brand is taken to refer to the external brand.

Most companies regard their brand as their identity and what they stand for. Organisational identity, which underpins a company's brand, deals with the attributes
of the organisation, such as innovation, consumer concern, trustworthiness, a drive for quality and concern for the environment (Aaker, 1996). These attributes are created by the people, culture, values and programmes of the company (Aaker, 1996). According to Aaker (1996), the term "programmes" refers to a company's organisational programmes, which could include both the human resource and the marketing programmes of the company.

A company's corporate brand creates the main impression in the consumer's mind. It includes all the experiences that the consumer has with the company's products, its staff and its communication. However, while a corporate brand may be seen as the company's external brand, Ind (1997, p. 2) holds that a corporate brand is the company's people in that "what defines a brand as a corporate brand is its cohesion: the idea of people coming together and working towards a common goal".

Thus, although corporate brands are important, it is more important to look at the facilitators of the corporate brand – the employees of a company (Sartain, 2005). If they are not exposed to internal marketing, that is, an ongoing process that functionally aligns, motivates and empowers employees at all levels to consistently provide a satisfying customer experience, the external brand will suffer.

Closely linked to the concept of internal marketing is the concept of internal branding. "Internal branding" relates to how employees perceive or experience their company's brand (Oakner, 2004). The term is sometimes used interchangeably with employees' perception of their company's brand.

Akotia (2007, p. 102) states:

_Therefore, while performance management aims at getting employees to want to work as required by the organisation, internal branding ensures employees work for what the brand and customers (stakeholders) value about the organisation. It is critical to get the employees' buy-in in the brand and the alignment of the employees' values with the brand values._

However, employees are increasingly estranged from their company's brand, which seems to result in lower morale and lower retention rates (Turpin, 2003). Many employees do not "associate" with their company's brand, because there is a gap
between what they experience and perceive, and what their company conveys about the brand.

But why should there be a link between what employees feel or perceive about their company's brand and what the company says to its customers or prospective customers about the company's brand? Sartain (2005) points out that employees make or break a company's brand and, ultimately, the company's results – if employees are not committed, a company's sales will decline, and invariably its net profits too. In fact, a company that overlooks its internal brand reduces the potential impact of its external brand.

Successful organisations have come to recognise that their staff should be the embodiment of the brand. There has been a shift in their thinking about brand management: Their focus is no longer just on the external brand promise; their focus now includes the orchestration of employees to ensure their commitment to delivering on the promise. No longer is staff being recruited just because of their intellect and functional knowledge; they are also being recruited according to whether their values can be aligned with those of the organisation (Smith & Hanstead, 2004).

A company's corporate culture plays a critical role in the environment in which the external brand and the internal brand occur.

As Alloza, Conley, Prado, and Espantaleon (2004, p. 66) point out:

The vision of an integrated company, brand and corporate culture represents a guide for behaviour in an organization – a measure of consistency between 'what is said' and 'what is done' that permits the strengthening of a corporate reputation over time. It is vital for a company to strike a balance between its image and a 'reality'.

The company's culture must be consistent with the company's internal and external branding. The results of a study conducted by de Chernatony and Cottam (2008) based on the interactions between organisational cultures and corporate brands highlight the need for managers to establish congruence between the values of the organisational culture and the corporate brand, so that employees can be empowered. Hence the people, processes and products of an organisation must be
aligned with a proposition in order to realise the promise the organisation makes to customers.

Although it is imperative that an organisation displays a strong external brand, it is more important that the leaders lead the internal branding from beginning to end.

In this regard, Ulrich and Smallwood (2000, p. 2) state that:

*The brand must be imbued in each leader throughout the firm; then they communicate values that enable that brand to employees, who then sustain it with customers. The organization creates leaders who are branded, or distinct from leaders of other firms.*

When a corporate brand is clarified and defined through internal branding, organisation leaders can guide employees to better sense making (Mitchell, 2002). If leaders produce the desired results in this regard, they will produce effective brand results. Such leaders will distinguish themselves "both to employees, supervisors, and ultimately customers. These leaders make a difference not just because of what they say or who they are, but what they deliver" (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2000, p. 4).

Hattingh (2004, p. 112) emphasises the importance of having a leader who is a role model by stating the following:

*If your employees can align their own life purpose with your brand purpose, if they can proudly project themselves through the work you offer them, then they will automatically brand you as a preferred employer. But they’ll align themselves with your organisational purpose only if it is built on the kind of human people who find a higher meaning through their work. Those values are set by leadership – not in the words of a mission or vision statement, but by example. Once the brand purpose is clear to everyone, from executives to cleaners, they will automatically know how to behave – how the phone should be answered, how proposals should be presented, and how customers should be treated.*

It is imperative that management and leadership believe firmly in what they convey to the external market and their employees.
There is a tremendous body of knowledge on external branding, but very little information on the alignment between what brand leaders portray about a company's brand and what is happening within that company. Since employees are the most important facilitators and practitioners of a company's brand, their experiences and perceptions of their company's brand are vital to their company. It is mainly the responsibility of the leader group to ensure that the brand is lived by the employees.

According to Speak and Hanson (2008, p. 21), "[b]uilding a strong brand has offered the promise of transforming the way organisations encourage customer loyalty, gain sustainable competitive advantage and generate superior financial results". In order to build great brands from the inside out (Leonhardt & Faust, 2001), management must develop the competencies of employees (Ind, 1997) to develop these brands. However, as organisations grow, the value of people can get lost amid strategies and structures and financial concerns, and the fact that people management should include the management of competencies and strategies can be overlooked (Ind, 1997, p. 83).

A corporate brand stands for the relationship that an organisation has with its employees, as much as it represents the relationship that it has with its customers through its products and service offering. In order for the employees of an organisation to construct a corporate identity, they should have a common sense of goal achievement. To ensure their brand is perceived as an integrated offering, managers and leaders must ensure that staff "speak with the same voice" about the brand. Leaders must be more open with staff and provide them with more information about the brand and thus empower them. Such empowered employees will become more aligned with the brand's values and offer these to customers, and thus be more likely to present a coherent message about their brand (de Chernatony, 2001.) This will ensure a balanced perspective that looks inside and outside an organisation to satisfy stakeholders' needs.

My study is therefore aimed at exploring a leader group's experiences and perceptions of their company's brand (the internal brand), and what their company hopes to achieve externally. If the leader group's experiences and perceptions differed much from what their company was trying to achieve, its strategies could be adjusted to convey what it hoped to achieve correctly.
1.3 Justification for the study and personal interest

It emerged from a preliminary study of the current literature that although the study areas of branding and leadership are fairly extensive, they are seldom integrated. There is also immense knowledge about external branding, but little about internal branding and particularly leaders' experiences and perceptions of their company's brand. Among the few authors on internal branding, Dr Christine Vallaster and Prof. Leslie de Chernatony are pacesetters with their research in the United Kingdom. Research on leadership and internal branding has also been done in Australia (King & Grace, 2009, 2010), but in South Africa hardly any research has been done in this area. As far as could be established, a few master's dissertations on internal marketing (Botha, 2008; Strydom, 2004) and a few on internal branding (Naidoo, 2008; Scheffer, 2005) have been done, but no studies on alignment between internal branding and external branding, especially within a leader group. My study sets the scene for research on alignment between internal branding and external branding in South Africa, especially among the leader group in the corporate sphere.

As for me personally, I had always had a quest to search for what makes employees feel "part" of an organisation, and more particularly what leadership should do to ensure this. I believed that by undertaking a study on the topic, I would find the answers. I would also be able to obtain a doctoral degree, which in turn would advance my academic career, especially in the fields of leadership, marketing and human resource management.

1.4 Problem statement and research question

Based on the preceding arguments, the problem statement in this study may be formulated as follows:
There is insufficient or no alignment between a leader group's internal experiences and perceptions of their organisation's brand and what a company\(^1\) is hoping to achieve externally.

In an attempt to shed light on the problem, the following **research question** is addressed in this study:

How can we as scholars explore and describe the concrete experiences and views of managers of an organisation with regard to branding and develop a model of branding?

### 1.5 Aim and objectives of the study

The overarching aim of this study was to explore and describe the experiences and views of managers of a South African organisation with regard to branding and to develop a model of branding.

The key objectives of the study were:

- To develop a qualitative research approach to capture and unravel the experiences and views of the managers.

- To study the work of prominent scholars in the relevant study fields in order to infer theoretical constructs and demarcate research findings that are relevant to understand the managers' experiences and viewpoints regarding branding.

- To develop a model of branding integrating the everyday experiences and viewpoints of the managers with relevant scholars' theoretical concepts.

\(^1\)The company where the research was done is a South African company, and is formally introduced in Chapter 2.
1.6 Anticipated contributions of the study

In my view, this in-depth social science research on corporate branding and leadership would be invaluable by virtue of the following contributions:

- **Theoretical contribution**

  The study would derive theoretical concepts from the viewpoints and experiences of the leaders in question, which could serve as building blocks of theory (Mouton, 1995). The aim was to integrate concrete or first-order constructs (Schutz, 1962) of the leaders and their experiences with relevant theoretical constructs (second-order constructs) (Schutz, 1962). I envisaged contributing to the existing knowledge on branding and in particular leaders' experiences and views of the alignment of their company's internal brand and its external brand by developing a conceptual framework, namely a model. Since only a few studies on the alignment between a company's internal and external branding exist, this study was also aimed at adding value to scholarly research. Given that the knowledge was to be derived from the company leaders themselves, leaders' experiences and views would be laid bare.

- **Methodological contribution**

  Since very little information is available on leadership and internal branding, especially in South Africa, I opted for a qualitative approach. As for the applicability of qualitative research, "[w]hen little information exists on a topic, where variables are unknown, when a relevant theory base is inadequate or missing, a qualitative study can help define what is important and what needs to be studied" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 135).

  There has been a steady increase in qualitative studies in the fields of organisational studies and leadership in South Africa in recent years, employing more traditional to

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2Following Mouton, I opted for the term "theoretical concepts" rather than "theory" because I regard theoretical concepts as symbolic tools with which one builds a particular conceptual framework or theory.

3An explication of how qualitative research was employed in the study is provided in Chapter 2.
more radical research approaches. While grounded theory seems to have been favoured by local researchers (for example, Smith, 2004; Claassen, 2004; Nel, 2005; Burden, 2006; Benecke, 2006; Barnard, 2008; Beyleveld, 2008; Mollo, 2008), other formal analytical methods like phenomenology (Groenewald, 2003), analytical induction (for example, Tlou, 2006; and Oosthuizen, 2009) and narrative analysis (for example, Avraamides, 2007; Steinman, 2008; and Smith, 2012) have also been utilised. As far as computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is concerned, Atlas pi was used. As far as could be established, Nvivo 9, another package, has yet to be applied to local qualitative studies generally and grounded theory studies in particular.

By building on other local qualitative studies I hope to make some contribution to qualitative research in branding and leadership studies by applying Nvivo 9 as used by modernist qualitative researchers.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

In this, the first, chapter, I contextualised the study by providing a brief background, explaining the research problem, discussing the relevance and topicality of the study, and outlining its expected contributions. The rest of the thesis consists of four sections, which are outlined below.

Section A: Contextualising the study and the research methodology

Section A is divided into Chapter 1: Contextualising the study (as outlined above) and Chapter 2: The Research Methodology, in which I discuss my core philosophical positions, my application of the literature and ethical considerations, and the key decisions I took during the research process.
Section B: A grounded theory approach

Section B consists of Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. In Chapter 3, I explain how I conducted open coding, and in Chapter 4, I discuss axial and selective coding.

Section C: Reviewing the literature

Section C contains Chapter 5, the chapter in which I review the existing literature on external and internal marketing, branding and culture, as well as competitive forces. Since leadership is a huge component of this study, Chapter 5 also reviews the literature on leadership and branding.

Section D: Development of the new Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM) and concluding comments

Section D contains Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. Chapter 6 shows how the model is built and new theory emerges. Chapter 6 is a culmination of the grounded theory findings in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, and the literature review in Chapter 5. Chapter 7, which is titled "Précis, Implications and Recommendations", recaps the study, presenting an overview of the study, its key findings and their implications, significant limitations of the study as well as recommendations for both further research and the Company.
CHAPTER 2

Research Methodology
Chapter 2
Research Methodology

Keep in mind … that qualitative research is uniquely suited to discovery and exploration. You know the general destination, but the precise route you take may change (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 117).

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will firstly introduce my choice of research approach, namely qualitative research, and more specifically, a modernistic qualitative research approach. Secondly, I will discuss my key scientific beliefs with regard to the role and implications of integrating the literature and theory with the empirical research findings. Thirdly, I will state my position on research ethics, and fourthly discuss in detail my research methodology, which consists of the research setting, my entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, data collection methods used, data capturing and storage, and the data analysis. Finally, I will focus on the strategies that I used to ensure quality research, and discuss the writing up of the thesis.

At the outset it is important to note the following remarks of Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 120):

[Q]ualitative research is systematic inquiry, that is, a process of making explicit decisions about data gathering, their analysis, and their reporting. Systematic enquiry requires clarity of documentation and explication of the process so that others may see and understand the research decisions and assess their adequacy and trustworthiness. All your decisions are grounded in the conceptual framework, so it must be clear. If your framework is clear and the design decisions flow logically, the audience for your study will understand the process and see how you reached your conclusions.

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), regardless of whether quantitative or qualitative research is carried out, a good research design requires coherence between the research question and the method, to generate valid and reliable data.
But what exactly is a research design? According to Myers (2010), a research design involves deciding upon all the components of a research project: the philosophical assumptions, the research method, the data collection techniques to be used, the approach to data analysis and the approach to writing up. This chapter deals with how I employed these components of the research design.

Social research always involves an element of the unknown. Hence the flexibility of qualitative research is an advantage (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) that I used to good effect. As a result, my study design was not a rigid given from the start, but evolved in due course.

Denzin (1988) states that qualitative researchers have choices that they did not have 20 years ago. Furthermore, although qualitative research is a "form of planned and ordered" research (Shank, 2002), it entails "interpretive and naturalistic approaches" and studying things in their natural settings.

Swanson and Holton (1997, p. 94) remark that:

> Many social scientists believe in an objective world where researchers can develop and test hypotheses that yield a body of theory that represents truth" and that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

It is clear that we cannot skim the surface when we wish to interpret phenomena. We must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon we are studying. In qualitative research, we do indeed dig deep: "We collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 135). The researcher looks intensively and in a complex way to extract "rich" data. As Cresswell (2009), Eisner (1998) and Wolcott (1994) mention, objective or quantitative research is appropriate for the study of physical events (electricity, chemical reactions etc.), whereas qualitative research is appropriate in the study of people and interpersonal relationships.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 135),"[w]hen little information exists on a topic, where variables are unknown, when a relevant theory base is inadequate or
missing, a qualitative study can help define what is important and what needs to be studied”. The data gained are also much "richer" than would be the case if the research question was approached with a quantitative study.

Given that little information is available on internal branding, especially in South Africa, I opted for a qualitative approach to study people's experiences and perceptions of their company's brand.

2.2 Modernistic qualitative research

Among the various approaches to qualitative research, I chose what may be called a modernistic approach. Following Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2000), Schurink (2004a) points out that this tradition is characterised by interpreting social reality by means of formalised methods and the rigorous analysis of data. Locke (2001) holds that this paradigm continues the process started around the time of Descartes. This was when dependency on faith was replaced with reliance on reason and that the emphasis in the modernistic approach is on explanations of how the world works, which can be used for prediction and control. In following a modernistic approach, I obtained information on what the leaders of a company experienced and perceived, yet I was able to maintain a high degree of objectivity.

It is believed that in constructing quality qualitative research designs, researchers should unpack their scientific beliefs as best as possible at the outset (Mason, 1996; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Schurink, 2004a).

*At the minimum, the exploration of philosophical concepts assists you in specifying your overall research design and strategy. These will in turn set the directions for your research, how to proceed from your research questions to the conclusions. You will need to make decisions about the type of empirical data that you will collect, how you will analyse it, rules about how to interpret the analyses, and ideas of how to present your conclusions. The exploration of philosophical concepts also help you in making decisions about the issues that all have effect in your research design: what kinds of questions do you ask in your research, and in*
what ways can you answer those questions with your research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, pp. 11-12).

Let us now take a look at my research philosophy as well as my personal scientific beliefs.

2.3 Research philosophy and scientific beliefs

Potter (1996, pp. 35-36) indicates that until quite recently researchers displayed reluctance to outline their scientific beliefs in their reports. He goes on to say:

_When we enter the world of formal scholarship, it is essential that we examine the foundations of our thinking. When we do this, we discover that there exist alternative answers to each foundational question. For example, two scholars who hold different beliefs of ontology and epistemology may be interested in examining the same phenomenon, but their scientific beliefs will lead them to set up their studies differently because of their differing views of evidence, analysis, and purpose of research._

2.3.1 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with beliefs about what there is to know about the world (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). From a social research point of view, this refers to whether social reality exists independently from human conceptions and interpretations, whether there is a common, shared, social reality or just multiple context-specific realities, and whether or not social behaviour is governed by laws that can be seen as immutable or generalisable.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) further argue that social reality comprises three broad but distinct positions:

- _Realism_, which claims that there is an external reality that exists independently from people's beliefs or understanding of it.
• **Materialism**, which entails that there is a real world but only the material features of that world embrace reality. Critical theorists are considered to be neo-materialists "in that they believe that social structures based on class, race, or gender are experienced as having an external, immutable reality" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

• **Idealism**, which asserts that reality, is only knowable through the human mind and through socially constructed meanings.

I embrace idealism and believe that it is only through the experience and understanding of their social environment that individuals are able to construct meaning. In addition, they describe such meaning through their own patterning of social language. I adopt Mason's (1996) contention that ontology refers to the researcher's view on the essence and nature of the social world. With reference to my study, I regarded organisational branding as activities that employees construct. They are constantly constructing branding.

### 2.3.2 Epistemology

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), epistemology is concerned with the researcher's ways of knowing and learning about the social world, focusing on questions such as how reality can be known and what the basis for knowledge is. Hence the following issues must be considered:

• **Relationship between the researcher and the researched.** It is impossible for a qualitative researcher to stay detached and independent from his or her research participants' experiences and views, contrary to what is believed by exponents of the natural science model. In a social world people are affected by the process of being studied, and by the relationship developing between them and those studying them. The researcher and the person/s participating in the research interact.

• **Theories of "truth".** Research on the social world should be approached with inter-subjective or coherence theory. This means that reality can only
be determined in a consensual and not an absolute way. Therefore, if several reports confirm a statement, the particular reality under study may be considered a true representation of a particular socially constructed reality.

- **How knowledge is acquired.** The main approach in social science research is that of *induction* or searching for patterns and associations derived from observations of the world; in contrast, natural science makes mainly use of *deduction*, whereby propositions or hypotheses are reached.

- **Epistemology.** Dick (1999) believes that epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is a branch of philosophy concerned with a general treatment of the nature, origins, scope and limits of human knowledge, its presuppositions and basis. In short, epistemology investigates the *methods of inquiry by the knowledge that is required*. It is traditionally devoted to the study of the justification or, more generally, the evaluation of the beliefs we have on the basis of some given body of evidence. The definition of epistemology therefore reflects a tension between its autonomous and interdisciplinary conceptions.

I considered the preceding definitions of epistemology carefully as well as what I wanted to achieve with the study, and positioned myself epistemologically as follows: Since I wanted to capture the richness of people’s experiences and viewpoints, I would make use of qualitative methods, as they are best suited for this purpose.

Two other considerations closely related to research philosophy is the researcher's position as to the role of theory including literature in qualitative research, and research ethics.

### 2.3.3 The interaction between empirical research findings and theory

Qualitative researchers disagree about how theory should be applied in qualitative research:

*Examination of the most prominent…materials for wisdom about the role of theory leaves the reader with one of three different*
understandings: first, that theory has little relationship to qualitative research... second, that theory in qualitative research relates to the methodology the researcher chooses to use and the epistemologies underlying that methodology... and to a subset of this position that is related to some methodologies... and third, that theory in qualitative research is broader and more pervasive in its role than methodology.

The categories of understandings are not exclusive, and authors may lean toward more than one position (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p xix).

Using existing theoretical concepts raises the issue of deduction and induction as reasoning strategies (Schurink, 2005b) or "two logics of reasoning" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Bryman and Bell (2007) see deduction as the strategy where the researcher arrives at theory after having inferred hypotheses and ideas from theory as found in the relevant literature, whereas induction refers to the strategy where the researcher generates theory from his or her own research findings (Mahadeo, 2012). Both these strategies are to be found in qualitative research. Cresswell (2003, pp. 182-183) argues: "Although the reasoning is largely inductive, both inductive and deductive processes are at work." Therefore, as Bryman and Bell (2007) as well as Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) caution, using deduction and/or induction does not make for "clear-cut" knowledge generation (Mahadeo, 2012). Researchers can therefore use a "middle-of-the-road strategy", which is called abduction.

Many researchers use both induction and deduction in different phases of their study, which means that you move iteratively between these two during a research process. Some research methods books offer abduction as a way to combine deduction and induction in one research project. Abduction refers to the process of moving from the everyday description and meanings given by people, to categories and concepts that create the basis of an understanding or an explanation to the phenomenon described (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 23).

Following Mahadeo (2012), I applied abduction. I initially worked deductively, that is, I studied all the existing literature and theoretical views and looked at the empirical findings of previous research on branding, and then compiled my research proposal. After it was approved, I prepared for the fieldwork, by looking at researchers' views
on this captured in the literature. I followed the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (1998): "Good researchers are aware of the theoretical base and use it to help collect and analyse data. Theory helps data cohere and enables research to go beyond an aimless, unsystematic piling up of accounts." At this stage, I employed induction. I analysed official documents of the company concerned, conducted interviews with selected leaders and observed some of the interaction between them and other employees. During the months of fieldwork, I refrained from reviewing the literature. I intermittently looked at researchers' theoretical concepts and findings when I wrote field notes and tried to make sense of the research participants' (leaders') experiences and views on internal branding, as well as my own impressions. Once I concluded the fieldwork, I applied deduction again when I studied the literature intensively in order to incorporate relevant theoretical concepts and the findings of other researchers so as to make sense of my research findings and construct a new model of branding.

Two issues in particular are at stake when considering the link between theory and research: "Firstly, there is the question of what form of theory one is talking about. Secondly, there is the matter of whether data is collected to test or to build theories" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 7). Hence it is important to differentiate between substantive and formal theory.

The issue of substantive versus formal theory emerged in the course of the development of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 32) differentiate them as follows:

*By substantive theory we mean that developed for a substantive, or empirical, area of sociological inquiry, such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency, or research organizations. By formal theory, we mean that developed for a formal, or conceptual, area of sociological inquiry, such as stigma, deviant behaviour, formal organization, socialization ...*

However, when formal theory is the ultimate goal, it can only be valid if it is developed from a substantive grounding in concrete social situations. Many of the theories that we use in organisational studies, such as the theories of decision-
making and leadership, are substantive. Substantive theories may be developed for issues associated with managing contingent workers or working in virtual organisations. However, we engage formal theory when we refer to areas of inquiry that operate at high levels of generality such as systems theory (Burden, 2006).

I set out to develop a substantive theory for a particular empirical instance, or area, namely the alignment of internal and external branding in a leader group. My focus was the leader group and themes emerging from their experiences and perceptions of internal branding, and supplementing these with abstract theoretical concepts from the literature in an attempt to understand the behaviour of the leader group in respect of internal branding. I approached the research-theory relationship iteratively.

Strauss and Corbin's (1998, p. 22) definition of theory clearly indicates what I set out to do:

Theory denotes a set of well developed categories (for example: themes, concepts) that are systematically inter-related through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomena.

The literature associated with grounded theory in this regard sheds more light on how I used theory to collect and analyse my data. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) are of the opinion that good researchers are aware of their theoretical base and use it to help collect and analyse data. I found myself drawn to Strauss and Corbin's (1990) description of theoretical sensitivity because of the uniqueness of my research setting and the diversity of the participants' backgrounds.

The use of literature in qualitative research has been debated through the years. Shank (2006, cited in Mahadeo, 2012, p. 19) distinguishes between two schools of thought as to the approach to the literature in qualitative research, namely the "ignorance-is-bliss" school and the school that emphasises the need to review the literature on the research topic before collecting data.
Scholars of the "ignorance-is-bliss" school are of the opinion that qualitative researchers should treat research or field data on their own terms. One way to ensure that one's research or field data are given due credit is to set aside one's biases and let the data speak for themselves (Mahadeo, 2012).

Scholars who advocate that the existing literature must be reviewed beforehand mention that reading up on the research topic beforehand adds insight and substance to the material that one is going to explore. However, researchers need to be careful not to let the existing theory and findings of other research studies interfere with their understanding of the experiences and views of research participants (Groenewald, 2003). Nevertheless, existing theory and other research projects may help researchers to identify shortfalls they may want to fill (Schwartz, 2007).

As should be clear from the preceding, I aligned myself with the second school of thought by using the literature to guide me in collecting and analysing my data.

Let us now turn to the important aspect of research ethics.

### 2.3.4 Research ethics

My position with regard to research ethics is closely related to my research philosophy, as I had to carefully "negotiate" my research relationship with the research participants (Schwandt, 2007). As Berg (2001) and Schurink (2004a) reiterate, there will always be trade-offs between the degree of access we have to research participants and the extent of ethical risks we take.

Mouton (2001, p. 15) lists the following four rights of research participants:

- The right to privacy (including the right to refuse to participate in research);
- The right to full disclosure about the research (informed consent);
- The right to anonymity and confidentiality; and
- The right not to be harmed in any manner (physically, psychologically or emotionally).
Before each interview, I explained the nature and purpose of the study, and then read out loud the contents of the consent form to each research participant. The person was then requested to give his or her consent to take part in the study by signing a consent form, as proof of willingness to participate. I explicitly explained that their experiences and viewpoints would be treated confidentially and anonymously and that they could withdraw at any time.

I approached the interview in an open and transparent manner, requested permission to video-tape the discussions, and gave my word to the research participants that their identity as well as the information they shared with me would remain confidential.

Having outlined key philosophical concepts, my position and my values, I now turn to the key decisions I took during the research process.

2.4 Key decision-making steps in the research process

Researching the social world by studying how research participants understand it requires first and foremost a flexible methodology so as to capture the richness of the meanings they attach to their social world in their making sense of it (Mahadeo, 2012). Therefore, as Schurink (2004a) points out, in conducting qualitative research, one cannot rely on linear, well-planned consecutive phases; one essentially follows a cyclical process where the different phases overlap. The most important decision-making steps in qualitative research are: choosing a research strategy or design, selecting a research setting and research participants, choosing methods for collecting and analysing data, using strategies to capture and store data safely, and, finally, deciding how to put everything together in the research report.

2.4.1 Research strategy

The particular qualitative research design I opted for is the case study, or casing. When the predominant research approach is qualitative, a case study


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4 A copy of the informed consent form is included as Annexure 3.
strategy tends to take an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research. The case study as a research strategy is an all-encompassing method, covering the logic of design, data collection techniques as well as data analysis approaches (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) explains that case studies are not only used to formulate theory, but also to test theory.

Since almost anything can serve either as a simple or complex case, it is difficult to define a case. A case may, for example, entail an individual, a role, a small group, an organisation, a community or a nation. Following from this it is hardly surprising that there are various types of case study. Stake (1994) identifies the following three:

- **Intrinsic case study**, which is undertaken when a researcher desires a better understanding of a particular case;

- **Instrumental case study**, when the researcher examines a particular case in order to illuminate an issue or refine a construct such as theory; and

- **Collective multiple or comparative case study**, where the researcher extends the instrumental case study to cover several cases in order to learn more about the particular phenomenon.

Although Stake (1994) and Yin (1984) provide good definitions of a case study, for the purposes of my study I preferred the following comprehensive definition derived from a dictionary of sociological concepts (Theorson & Theorson, 1969). A case study is a way of studying social phenomena through analysing an individual case, which may entail a person, a group, an episode, a process, a community, a society or any other unit of social life. The researcher typically collects all data relevant to the case and organises them by interrelating a variety of facts relative to the case. The case study also allows for an intensive analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked when other approaches are applied.

Two important aspects entrenched in the preceding definition need to be highlighted: first, the explicit attempt to take care of the totality of the case as far as possible\(^5\),

\(^5\)Naturally, in practice, time and other logistics prevent an all-encompassing discussion of even a single case.
emphasising a holistic approach; and, second, the use of multiple sources of data and methods (sometimes both qualitative and quantitative).

I studied an established company by taking a look at the perceptions and experiences of its managers and directors regarding the company's branding.

2.4.2 Research setting

My research was conducted in a leading South African motor retail company, which operates countrywide in more than 100 wholly-owned dealerships. Its activities span vehicle import and distribution, new and used vehicle sales, parts and service, financial services and fleet support, vehicle auctioneering, online retailing and vehicle truck rental. The company represents most vehicle brands and is the importer and distributor of all major vehicle products in South Africa.

The brands of the company include Alfa Romeo, Audi, BMW/Mini, Cadillac, Chery, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Dodge, Fiat, Ford, Foton, Hummer, Isuzu, Jeep, Land Rover, Lexus, Mahindra, Mazda, Mercedes Benz, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Opel, Peugeot, Renault, Suzuki, Smart, Toyota, Volvo and Volkswagen. The commercial vehicle franchises consist of Mercedes-Benz Commercial Vehicles, Freightliner, Mitsubishi FUSO, Western Star Hino Trucks, Nissan Diesel Commercial Vehicles and Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles. The company's motor subsidiaries or associations consist of Autohaus Centurion (50%), Kunene (60%), McToyota Sinoville/SANTACO (74%), McCarthy Inyanga (80%), and Empangeni, Vryheid and Schus Nissan (50%).

On a corporate level, the company actively supports the communities it serves through a number of social investment initiatives. These initiatives are complemented by numerous smaller initiatives managed by individual dealerships or franchises.

2.4.3 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

Bogdan and Taylor (1976, pp. 30-37) state that the researcher normally gains access to an organisational setting by requesting the permission of those in charge. We refer to the people who have that power as "gatekeepers". The Group CEO of
the holding company was contacted for permission to do the research on the company, and this person proposed that a particular subsidiary be used for the research. After the CEO of the subsidiary was approached for this purpose, he gave his full approval to the research and notified prospective participants (his managers and directors) of the research and requested them to give me their full support. Prof. Schurink accompanied me when I met the Group CEO and later the CEO of the subsidiary (henceforth the Company).

An aspect that is related to the researcher’s role is the management of the qualitative researcher’s subjectivity. This aspect has received considerable attention among qualitative researchers, which has resulted in substantial literature.

According to Schurink (2005a), the following aspects are important for the management of subjectivity:

*Different to quantitative researchers when we study social reality qualitatively, we do not believe that we can be detached from our research in an attempt to limit, if not avoid, bias. We are convinced that we need to become immersed in people, social situations, and any social reality we study. Amongst others, we assume varying interactive social roles when we observe, interview and interact with people in order to collect and capture data, interpret them, and finally validate our reconstructions of social worlds. In our interaction with our research participants we put the main emphasis on the necessity of a skilled and properly prepared person in contrast to some instrument like a questionnaire. But how do we deal with our own experiences and viewpoints? We explicate them as far as possible, inter alia, in memoirs, project diaries or natural histories and/or auto-ethnographies. In short, we strive towards what Erickson (1973) and Mason (1996) respectively term disciplined subjectivity and reflexivity. This implies a critical self-examination of our roles as researchers throughout the entire research process (McMillan & Shumacher, 2001). (Emphasis in the original.)*
2.4.4 Sampling

Qualitative research practice requires that the data that are to be collected be rich in their description of people and places (Patton, 1990). It is therefore important to discuss the sampling technique used within a case study.

I used purposive sampling where managers and directors were easily available. However, I did not sample people only, but also their way of seeing events and processes (Maxwell, 2005).

Following the typology of qualitative sampling developed by Patton (1990), I used theoretical sampling, a category of purposive selection. According to Mason (1996, pp. 93-94), "[t]heoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position .... and ... the explanation or account which you are developing". I deliberately chose cases (participants), that is, the managers and directors of the Company, so as to gather data from them towards developing theory (Silverman, 2000). Although the Company is huge, I did qualitative research on a small set of ten middle and senior managers and directors (two intensive interviews with eight individuals and single interviews with two other individuals, totaling 18 interviews).

Since the sample was the leader group, I decided to choose two members from the top management (two directors) plus eight middle and senior managers. I continued interviewing the participants until I felt that I had reached data saturation.

2.4.5 Data collection methods

Collis and Hussey (2003) point out that there is a variety of ways in which one can collect data for research. If one applies a qualitative method, one will typically emphasise meanings and experiences related to a phenomenon. Phillips and Jorgenson (2002) state that there is no fixed procedure for the generation of data; the research design should be tailored to match the special characteristics of the project. As Schram (2006) points out, qualitative researchers employ multiple methods of data collection. In this study, interviews, human documents and participant observation were the primary data sources.
Interviews

I followed the approach described by Schurink (2004a, p. 3):

*Unstructured interviews are conducted with the use of a research schedule. The schedule is a guideline for the interviewer and contains questions and themes that are important to the research. Although the questions do not usually have to be asked in a particular sequence, they do ensure that all the relevant topics are covered during an interview.*

During the initial meetings with the participants, I described the purpose of the study in detail. Once they had agreed to take part in the research, I scheduled more meetings with each in line with their availability. Excluding the initial meetings, the interviews lasted about one and a half hours each and were conducted over a period of six months (one every two to three weeks). The interviews generally took place in the research participants' office during office hours, and also at hotels.

I conducted unstructured, but scheduled, interviews so as to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and views on the Company and its branding efforts. Neuman (2003) points out that the unstructured interview is traditionally used in exploratory qualitative research. I asked questions, listened to their accounts, and expressed my interest where appropriate. All the interviews were taped audio-visually.

While the initial interviews were largely unstructured, the subsequent ones became more focused or structured, since I had to explore subjective personal experiences and views that were confusing, unclear or particularly insightful and/or provided clues as to the participants' world. I also applied more structured interviews to establish the link between the participants' experiences and perceptions (first-order constructs) and those of scholars as contained in abstract concepts (second-order constructs).
Human documents

Today there are many forms of documents constructed by people that could be exploited by qualitative researchers: letters, minutes, official records, films, videos and photographs, to mention some salient ones (see Plummer, 2001). Bogdan and Taylor (1976) describe amongst others solicited versus unsolicited documents.

Participant observation

I employed participant observation in order to observe general behaviour in the Company (see Schurink, 2004a). Lindeman (1924) ever greened the term "participant observation", which, according to Schurink (2004b), entails that the researcher enter the social setting of the subjects to try to understand their experiences and views by observing them, asking questions, listening to them and capturing information. I spent many interesting moments while just sitting and waiting – generally before and after the interviews – observing the participants' behaviour and other employees performing their tasks. This provided the opportunity to compile field notes of observations and experiences, and compare them with those of the participants.

2.4.6 Data capturing and storage

In terms of capturing my data I used audio/videotaping, field notes, transcriptions of the audio/video tapes and my personal diary.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) offer the following advice on recording data in qualitative research:

- *Pledge to keep your data physically well organised, develop a plan about how you foresee doing it and ensure that you stick to your plan.*

- *Create a back-up system.* It is important to have hard copies of all one's recorded data put in a manual filing system to ensure that one does not
lose valuable and often irreplaceable data in the event of the computer becoming infected with a virus or dysfunctional for some other reason (Schurink, 2004a).

- **Safeguard documents.** Although there are many different types of documents that one could use to enrich one's data, one needs to ensure that one stores such documents safely.

The above advice implied that one either has to use folders and other paper products and filing cabinets, or to type or scan the documents in order to enter them in a computer file (Schurink, 2004a). All my data were stored in a logical and organised manner, and were easily retrievable.

**Audio/video recordings**

The CEO of the Company not only agreed to the research being conducted at the Company, but also allowed audio/video-taping of the participants. The video camera focused squarely on the participants, but they became so engrossed in sharing their experiences and views that, after a short while, they seemed to completely forget that they were being taped. The audio/video tapes were a great advantage, and most valuable, as not only could I listen to the interviews again, I could also observe the participants' accompanying body language. Once the interviews were transcribed, I also replayed each interview to validate the accuracy of the transcriptions.

**Field notes**

Schurink (2004a, p. 12) believes that the successful outcome of a participant observation study in particular, but other forms of qualitative research as well, rely on detailed, accurate and extensive field notes. These refer collectively to all the data collected in the course of the study, including the interview transcripts. All my interviews were captured in detailed field notes before and after each interview to
ponder my feelings, which can be equated to the coaching methodology of check-in and check-out\textsuperscript{6}.

\textit{Transcription of tapes}

Bogdan and Biklen (2003, p. 124) recommend that the very first interview, in its entirety, be transcribed to get an idea of what to transcribe in later interviews. This is precisely what I did. I obtained the services of a professional person to transcribe the interviews. From an ethical perspective and in terms of the informed consent form, I needed to ensure that all data remain confidential. Therefore the transcriber had to agree to strict confidentiality. In all subsequent interviews, as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2003), I transcribed the sections on my taped recordings that specifically addressed the concerns of the research.

In order to validate the correctness of the transcribed interviews, I printed each of them, replayed the tape recordings of the respective interviews and then verified the correctness of the transcriptions. As Huberman and Miles (2002) point out, analysis and transcription go hand in hand. Close and repeated listening, coupled with methodical transcription, leads to insights that in turn shape how we choose to represent an interview narrative in our text. I made a few changes, but most of the interviews were transcribed accurately. At all times, interviews or meetings were recorded and relevant sections were transcribed and kept as back-ups. Taped recordings were numbered clearly to ensure that the sequence of the interviews could be tracked. Hard copies of the transcriptions were made and kept in a safe place.

\textit{Personal diary and project journal}

Before and after each interview, I wrote down my feelings in my personal diary. This allowed for critical self-examination and reflexivity, and enhanced objectivity.

In addition to my diary, I also kept a project journal in which I intermittently chronicled important decisions I took during the research as well as my reflections on my ________________

\textsuperscript{6}Further details of this are given in the research story, \textit{Annexure 1}.
personal experiences of challenges and frustrations and accomplishments. Prof Schurink emphasised the importance that a second data set be generated to give insight in my process of creating knowledge already when I was developing the research proposal, and time and then reminded me of this. The entries and reflections in the diary and journal provide me with the data I used to write my research story.

2.4.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is, first and foremost, a process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorising which certainly is far removed from structured, mechanical and technical procedures to make inferences from empirical data of social life. Data analysis could be treated both as science and as art. When the emphasis is on science the analysis should be rigorous, disciplined, systematic and methodically documented as in the case of grounded theory, typological analysis and analytical induction. When data analysis is treated more like an art it does not mean that it is a less empirical procedure. But it also allows for an ambiguous, creative and fascinating process (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011, p. 399).

My data consisted of the transcriptions of the interviews and my fieldnotes on my own experiences and views. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) mention that the analysis of qualitative data entails a process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes and other materials, allowing the researcher to accumulate an understanding of the subjective experiences of those forming part of the setting or phenomenon he or she studies.

I used both formal and informal strategies to analyse the data. As for the informal strategies, I read the transcribed interviews very attentively a few times and noted similar themes regarding branding across the interviews and participants. Then I established the relationships and patterns of the common themes by coding the data

Please see Annexure 1.
and trends (Scott, 2004; Scott & Howell, 2008). I was particularly alert to the topics that emerged from these themes, as they described the themes or concepts in more detail.

With regard to the formal strategies, I used computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) to assist in sorting the voluminous data. Sophisticated organisation of the data, data linking and display, content analysis, conclusion drawing and verification, theory building and graphic mapping can all be handled rather easily using the right CAQDAS packages (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In their feature on the merits of using computer software to analyse qualitative data, Budding and Cools (2008) describe the use of the different CAQDAS packages in the literature. They regard Nvivo 9 as the most widely used package (used in 47% of the selected papers published and/or delivered at conferences), followed by Atlas/ti (38%). In the field of accounting, most research has only recently shifted from NUDIST to Nvivo 9, but the use of NUDIST in other disciplines is relatively low (8%) anyway. The Ethnograph is only used in 7% of the selected papers. Atlas/ti and Nvivo 9 seem to be dominant in most of the science domains.

I chose Nvivo 9, which, according to Muhr (2004), is a powerful workbench for the analysis of large bodies of textual, graphical, audio and video data. It provided me with access to all my data; its search tools made it possible to search for particular themes in the data; and to create and retrieve codes. In short, it provided me with a strategy to work through the data relatively fast and to arrive at a model for understanding the participants' experiences and views of branding.

In my analysis I followed a grounded theory approach, which is regarded as the most influential approach in qualitative research (Denzin, 1997) and which recently became popular in organisational and management sciences, too (Goulding, 2002). Since its introduction, grounded theory has been progressively developed in Glaser's *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978) and in Strauss's *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (1987). However, arguably the most detailed explication of grounded theory procedures is presented in Strauss and Corbin's (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research*, upgraded by Glaser (Haig, 1995; Glaser, 2001, 2003).
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Grounded theory involves the systematic generation of theory from data, using both inductive and deductive thinking (Schurink, 2004a). One goal is to formulate hypotheses based on conceptual ideas; the hypotheses are generated by constantly comparing conceptual ideas and verifying them through a number of deductive steps. Another goal is to discover the main concern of participants and how they continually try to resolve it. This the researcher achieves by repeatedly asking questions such as: "What is going on?" and "What is the main problem of the participants and how are they trying to solve it?" Questions such as these are answered during the selective stage of coding when the core variable and its sub-cores and properties eventually emerge.

It is important to note that grounded theory does not necessarily aim for the "truth", but rather at conceptualising what is going on by using empirical data. In other words, it resembles what many researchers do when retrospectively formulating new hypotheses to fit data, since preformed hypotheses are prohibited (Walker & Myrick, 2006).

In grounded theory, the unit of analysis is the incident, which contrasts with most behavioural research methods where persons are units of analysis. A single grounded theory study could result in several incidents being analysed, as every participant usually reports many incidents (Wagner, Lukassen & Mahlendorf, 2010). When comparing many incidents in a certain area, emerging concepts and their relationships are considered as probability statements. Therefore the results of grounded theory do not entail statistically significant probabilities, but a set of probability statements about the relationship between concepts, or an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses developed from empirical data (Glaser, 1992). I used grounded theory to extract emerging thoughts and patterns through the narratives shared by the participants. I classified and categorised the data according to similarities and dissimilarities, and structured these according to emerging themes. For this purpose I used Strauss and Corbin's (1990) open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

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8Selective coding is discussed in Chapter 4.
9Please see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 for a detailed description of how I applied these coding steps.
2.4.8 Ensuring quality research

Marshall and Rossman (1995, pp. 143-145) highlight the fact that all research, especially qualitative research, should adhere to the "canons" that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of a research project could be evaluated. However, there has been a highly contentious debate around the quality or trustworthiness of qualitative research (Schurink, 2006). Part of this has been the development of more and more checklists and frameworks with criteria for successful qualitative research (Flick, 2007).

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) work in this regard is regarded as a classical contribution (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delport, 2005, p. 351). They (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) match the traditional evaluation terminology of the positivist research paradigm, namely "internal validity", "external validity", "reliability" and "objectivity" to more appropriate terms that address the nature of the qualitative inquiry. These are: "credibility", "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability".

- **Credibility.** The strength of qualitative research is its internal validity or credibility, since the aim of such research is to explore a problem and describe a setting, process or group (De Vos et al., 2005, p. 351). A qualitative researcher should therefore describe the parameters of the setting, population and theoretical framework in detail.

- **Transferability.** Traditionally, external validity has been problematic in qualitative research, since the research setting is very specific. Transferability provides an alternative strategy to generalisability. Here the researcher needs to demonstrate the applicability of one research setting to the next (De Vos et al., 2005). Transferability could be enhanced by stating the theoretical parameters of the research, which is, referring other investigators to the original theoretical framework to show how data collection and analysis took place. These parameters could be used to judge to what extent the study's design allows generalisation to other possible populations.

- **Dependability.** This is an alternative for reliability, which is used in positivistic research. Since the social world is always being reconstructed,
reliability is problematic in qualitative research (De Vos et al., 2005, p. 352). Hence the insistence on dependability, which in essence implies giving a logical outline of the research process and describing how it was documented and recorded.

- **Confirmability.** De Vos et al. (2005, p. 352) state that confirmability, an alternative to objectivity, lies in the extent to which the data are shown to help confirm the findings of other researchers.

In addition to employing the preceding strategies, I also attended to the following:

- **Replicability.** Seale (1999, p. 158) is of the opinion that good practice in relation to reliability and replicability can be achieved through reflexivity, that is, "showing the audience of research studies as much as is possible of the procedures that have led to a particular set of conclusions". This enables readers to "replicate" studies imaginatively, and also helps to ensure that claims are supported by adequate evidence. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) hold that the following questions relating to the appropriate design and conduct of the research are crucial and need to be asked throughout the research process:

  (a) Is the sample design or selection without bias, representative of the target population and comprehensive of all known constituencies, and was there any known feature of non-responsiveness or attrition in the sample?

  (b) Is the fieldwork carried out consistently, and did it allow research participants sufficient opportunities to cover relevant ground and portray their experiences?

  (c) Is the analysis carried out systematically and comprehensively, and were classifications and typologies confirmed by multiple assessments?

  (d) Is the interpretation well supported by the evidence?
(e) Did the design allow equal opportunity for all perspectives to be identified or were there features that led to selective or missing coverage?

- **Triangulation.** De Vos et al. (2005, p. 352) highlight the importance of using multiple sources of data so as to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research question.

- **Member validation.** This calls for discussing the findings with some of the research participants in order to establish whether the researcher's attempts to represent and understand their social world are indeed a true reflection of this world (Goulding, 2002; Johnson & Duberly, 2000; Neuman, 1997).

Finally, as Schurink (2007) points out, it is important for qualitative researchers to keep a diary from which they can compile an internal audit or research story. As I already alluded to, I also compiled such a story\(^\text{10}\).

### 2.4.9 Writing up

Over the years the nature of qualitative research writing has received rather extensive attention (Richardson, 1990; Van Maanen, 1995; Wolcott, 2001; Sparkes, 2002). If one studies these works it is clear that qualitative and quantitative writing and research outputs differ markedly from each other. Among others, in qualitative work the researcher is present in the writing, whereas in quantitative work impersonal pronouns and the passive voice are employed in order to emphasise objectivity.

In current qualitative inquiry it is important that the reader be taken seriously and that the researcher must offer reports that are engaging. Therefore, different writing styles are found in present-day qualitative research outputs. In his *Telling tales in sport and physical activity. A qualitative journey*, Sparkes (2002) stresses that

\(^{10}\)Please see Annexure 1 for the Research Story
researchers explain to their readers what style of writing they apply in their research. This is because the style of scientific tales, realist tales, confessional tales, auto-ethnography and other genres differ from each other.

According to Sparkes (2002), scientific tales aim to be formal, logical and, where possible, mathematical; they are framed to be paradigmatic or logico-scientific in mode of thought. In contrast, the most striking characteristic of realist tales is the almost complete absence of the author from most segments of the finished text (Sparkes, 2002); only the words, actions and (presumably) thoughts of members of a study's culture are visible in the text.

He (Sparkes, 2002) holds that confessional tales are intended to show how each work came into being and to reveal the dilemmas and tensions of the process. The ubiquitous disembodied voice of the realist tale is replaced by the personal voice of the author.

Sparkes (2002, p. 76) states that "auto-ethnographies and narratives recall events from the author-as-the-researcher's life, and these events then form the core of a written narrative that facilitates interpretation from a variety of theoretical perspectives".

In this study, I used all these "tales" to some extent.

In concluding this section I need to point out that in presenting the data, I also include (1) tables and diagrams to, as Albertini (2012, p. 57) points out, "bring the data to life", and (2), in the research story, photographs and pictures to allow the reader "to experience" my journey up Mount Everest.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed my research approach. Firstly, I introduced my choice of the research approach, namely qualitative research and, more specifically, modernistic qualitative research. Secondly, I discussed my research philosophy and key scientific beliefs regarding the role of theory and literature, and research ethics.
Finally, I outlined the key decisions I took during the research process. The next chapter will introduce the data that were collected, and present the first level of coding, namely open coding.
SECTION B

A Grounded Theory Approach
CHAPTER 3

Open Coding
3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the data I collected. More particularly, I introduce the Company's official views on branding, profiles the ten participants and describe the process of open coding. I manually ordered the rich data on the participants' experiences and views on branding. With the assistance of a statistician, who is an expert in Nvivo 9, and with the aid of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, I refined the data and validated every statistical output so as to confirm the findings. Eventually 36 themes emerged.

Below I give an outline of the Company's external branding philosophy and a profile of the participants.

3.2 Company branding

The Company presents itself to customers and employees as:

- being the preferred company in its field for customers and stakeholders;
- working with the best team in an inspirational and humane environment;
- offering VIP services to customers, at competitive prices and of good value;
- offering the best technology, processes and assets at its disposal;
- forging and nurturing partnerships with the best suppliers; and
- training fair and ethical employees who take responsibility.
Regarding its employees, the Company pursues:

- mutual trust, respect, openness and transparency;
- commitment to external and internal service excellence;
- the promotion of participation, empowerment and teamwork; and
- the nurturing of accountability through rewards or warnings.

Figure 3.1: Brand leadership excellence

Source: Developed by the author

The figure illustrates that excellent and committed leadership is the main "propeller" for ensuring that employees bring service excellence to customers. This will result in committed and happy customers.

3.3 A profile of the research participants

I interviewed ten members of the Company's leader group, who consisted of three women and seven men with approximately 138 years of combined working experience in the Company. Among them were two directors, four managers and
four regional managers.

I would describe the interviews as extremely interesting, with most leaders displaying a very loyal disposition. Regardless of their diverse personalities, I observed that all the managers exuded energy. I thoroughly enjoyed my interaction with them. Below is a brief profile of each.¹¹

**Participant 1** was a Capricorn, a bit slow yet sure-footed and structured in his deeds, thoughts and words. He was generous, friendly, warm and amicable, and a little lazy by his own judgment. He was caring and good at what he did. He believed that he was an excellent coach and mentor. He loved challenges, and was innovative and futuristic. He believed in teamwork, loved being encouraged and giving encouragement, and saw himself as being inspiring.

**Participant 2** was a careerist, passionate and academically inclined. She regarded herself as being fortunate to have been around or to have been part of the Company and its culture. She was a strong and together person, ambitious and independent.

**Participant 3** saw herself as a strong communicator, an open and ethical person. She believed that she was never unfair, and treated people with respect and trust. She was always out there to help and train people, and was proud to be part of the Company.

**Participant 4** was fair and honest. Most of her family worked at the Company and she loved the Company dearly. She saw herself as having brought in many loyal customers. In her view, the Company could improve by having more or stronger structures (computers) and control systems in place; although she acknowledged that too much structure would stifle flexibility.

**Participant 5** saw herself as positive and sociable. She believed that everything she was, came about because of the Company. She seemed to have experienced it all at the Company in the course of her 27 years' tenure there and to take her work seriously. She was full of energy and seemed to have no hidden agendas. She was forthright and honest. Her impression of the Company was positive and she was

¹¹Please see Annexure 2, questions 1(a) and 1(b), where the answers to these questions are captured.
passionate about her job and the Company. She saw the Company as her family and, rather than resign, would probably retire gracefully from the Company.

Participant 6 was a warm, caring and fair person. She believed in training employees. At some stage she resigned from the Company, but then asked for her job to be given back. This was approved, and she was the happiest person in the Company and would not want to go to any other company.

Participant 7 was a quiet yet strong person. He was loyal to the Company and believed that nothing could change this loyalty.

Participant 8 saw herself as honest, transparent and loud. She was also passionate, independent, sociable and forthright. She loved the Company dearly, and saw service as her top priority. She was also a perfectionist. She felt that the Company had to do more, especially filter its brand down more often. She had many hobbies and just loved living life. She resigned from the Company at some stage but came back. She felt a wonderful sense of belonging, which most of her friends in other companies lacked. She and her colleagues all knew Rule 6 of the Company: "We work hard and we play hard."

Participant 9 soon mentioned that he was fond of the Company logo. He was quiet and loyal and believed that he was working for the Company because he wanted to. He had worked in many departments in the Company, and was happy to be where he was. He mentioned that, for him, passion came first and then commitment. He saw communication as essential in his dealings with junior staff so they could see the big picture. In his view, the Company was reflecting maturity. He would be loyal until death.

Participant 10 was a deep, private person who believed that she was passionate about and proud of the Company's brand. She saw herself as a brand ambassador. She had been working in many departments, and enjoyed the variety of the Company's tasks.

3.4 Open coding

As I indicated I applied grounded theory and, as far as analysis is concerned, specifically Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding types. These two scholars (Strauss &
Corbin, 1998, p. 101) define the first form of coding, open coding, as the "analytical process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data".

In applying Nvivo 9, the statistician and I worked through a large volume of data. It took us three months. The documents were imported, organised and explored, which resulted in the generation of keywords and phrases. In this open coding stage, manual coding and Excel were also used to extract themes, as shown below. After the open coding was completed, the themes were further broken into categories, which are the next phase, known as axial coding\(^\text{12}\).

3.4.1 Importation and organisation of the data

The documents we imported into Nvivo 9 included the transcribed interviews, key references and memos. I kept these documents in a folder titled "Resources". Each participant's interviews were merged into one document, giving a total of ten data files containing interviews.

Within Nvivo 9, I created folders for (1) sources (interviews, key references, word frequency counts and memos); (2) nodes (coded themes and relationships), classifications (source and node classifications and relationship types); (3) collections (sets, search folders, annotations and memo links); and (4) queries and query results for the various themes that emerged.

We first explored the data visually and sentence by sentence per interview. Together with the coding, this constituted the most tedious task of managing the data, as the transcribed interviews alone covered 200 pages!

Using the explore function of Nvivo 9, we did a word frequency count on all the interview texts. We programmed the software to search for all words including stemmed words and with a minimum length of two letters. This was then sorted according to frequency of occurrence, which generated 3 183 words. We used these key words, along with other text search results for particular phrases, to code the interviews into themes and categories.

\(^{12}\)Axial coding is discussed in Chapter 4.
With the aid of Nvivo 9, we next exported the frequency-tagged data into an Excel spreadsheet. Based on my knowledge of branding as well as the insights gained during the interviews and reviewing the literature on branding, I created separate themes from the Nvivo 9 keywords, using both the idea that each word communicated and the context in which it was used. This process involved going through each of the 3,183 keywords and linking them to one of the themes. This was an exhausting process and took us over a month to complete. The only words that were not linked to a theme were those that either did not meet the query criteria or those that we could not attach any clear meaning to.

Later on we reorganised the spreadsheet by using the sort function of Excel, to bring words within the same theme together. Continuing the coding process, we imported the 36 themes that emerged into Nvivo 9 and reorganised them into node hierarchies.

The preceding steps constituted open coding. In the following sections I share my insights after having open-coded the participants' data. I present the themes and the excerpts from the interviews in the order they emerged from the data. I also offer excerpts I took from the interviews at a later stage.

Table 3.1: Open code categories in frequency order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>KAP</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Reasons</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Completeness</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Options</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Competitors</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Recurrence</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Empower</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Certainty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by the author
Table 3.2: Open code categories in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Recurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certainty</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitor</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completeness</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>Place</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
<td>KAP</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>Reasons</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by the author

To ensure that each of the 36 themes were clear and consistent in meaning, we defined and linked them to appropriate excerpts from the transcriptions of the interviews. I painstakingly compared each one of the 36 themes with the relevant excerpts so as to validate the themes.

3.4.2 Themes based on keyword frequency in the transcribed interviews

Themes emerged from the coding of the words that were generated through the word frequency search in Nvivo 9. Although the themes were not mutually exclusive, all the words could be classified under at least one of the themes. Codes were first classified under themes.

In what follows, I define the themes and list the words that are related to them, regardless of whether they are good or bad examples. For illustrative purposes, I also offer a few excerpts relating to the participants’ ideas on the respective issues.
(1) The Company's external brand (how the company's brand is portrayed to customers and stakeholders):

P1 "Marketing for us is branding. We are part of an international brand. Our brand can be seen as professional. Our brand itself has personality – loads of fun yet professional."

P2 "More importantly, I think branding should come from within. I think its true branding – you cannot teach people to be nice, I think we should go back to the basics. I am very close to the brand. In wearing my uniform – that to me is brand awareness. As long as you are working here, you have to live the brand. We are in love with our corporate brand, but have to diversify it."

P3 "I am totally dedicated to and passionate about the brand. There is a fantastic brand out there. I am the brand. I feel internal branding is the buy-in of the people to the brand. There are always open communication lines. When I do presentations on my brand, I indeed feel it."

P4 "My brand runs through my veins. It is a genuine passion for the brand. When I see my company, I feel pride for my brand, my company, the symbol. You either share the characteristics or not, and we all seem to share these characteristics."

P5 "I make sure that I am in my uniform – it makes me proud of my brand, and it's a big part of the brand thing. I am so proud of the Company, and love this brand dearly. To me the Company is the brand! In terms of marketing our brand, we must stick to it."

P6 "I am ever so proud of our brand. I am the brand. I resigned and worked for the competitor and never ever felt so proud of their brand, as I do with the Company's. I am the brand. We have a sense of belonging here which you never find anywhere else."

P7 "We just have to put through to the staff the importance of the brand. We have pride in our brand. We recognise our brand but could do a lot more awareness. I am so incredibly proud of our brand."

P8 "I believe that there is a lot more that we need to do with this brand. We can filter down this brand to the staff. It is important to know the staff's perception of the
brand. Service to us is top priority. The brand evokes emotions within us – the brand is in our face so we can feel part of the brand."

P9 "Our motto, our branding runs within our company. Our branding is exactly what we feel inside our company."

P10 "We are incredibly passionate about our brand. We are very, very brand orientated. We feel so possessive about our brand – the international sales division, building international brands, the outbound brand."

(2) Words pointing to certainty (words indicating how certain participants were of what they were saying):

absolutely, always, can't, certain, definitely, exactly, fact, never, obviously, really, sure.

P2 "You got to go into people's pigeonholes, to make sure they get the necessary communication."

P6 "When she swore at my company, I said 'Absolutely not, sorry, one chance.' Throughout my life my company has always been there for me."

P10 "The philosophy about branding really made sense in my mind. He allowed every individual to really maximise who they were."

(3) Commitment (words that captured the commitment of participants):

accomplish, busy, committed, compulsory, concentrate, consistent, constantly, decided, decision, dedicated, determined, devoting, endure, energy, enjoy, enthusiasm, enthusiastic, fiercely, focus, focused, involved, must, necessary, overcoming, overtime, pact, passion, pressure, priority, resilient, resolution, stance, strive, thrive, tolerate, willing, willingness, zest.

P1 "The people here are for the love, and definitely not for the money. They are so committed."
CHAPTER 3: OPEN CODING

P4 "You commit so much at this place, that you even marry someone who is also working here."

P10 "I am passionate and committed."

(4) Competitor (words of participants that referred to competition or competitor companies):

competitor X, compete, competitions, competitors.

P4 "I worked for the competitor. They have better systems and procedures – but we are always better."

P7 "If I ever would resign, I would never ever go to the competitors."

P10 "What I see from our competitors I strongly dislike. I think I have an opposition complex. Our company is touchable and humane."

(5) Completeness (words that indicated that participants were referring to the entire set or group spoken of):

both, complete, entire, every, everybody, everyone, everything, totally, whole.

P2 "Everybody has their voice, everybody thinks the same. We got the diversity to ensure that everybody has their own checks and balances."

P6 "Everybody is there to assist you – it is an affirmation every time I see it happening – such an unspoken thing where everybody is looked after."

P9 "When I joined this company, my whole life changed."
(6) Contrast (words used by participants that captured some form of comparison or contrast):

biggest, huge, highest, greener, greatest, angrier, worst, older, better, best, easiest, most.

P5  "We may not be as big as the other competitors, but we are the best."

P6  "If we look at it – the biggest is not the best always. We are small, yet very family orientated."

P10 "We may compare and contrast ourselves to the red and blue company, but we are the most humane and touchable."

(7) Culture (words used by participants that pointed to aspects that influenced internal brand alignment or the creation and maintenance of a brand culture in the workplace):

accommodate, allegiance, association, atmosphere, belonging, caring, comfortable, culture, identity, image, loves, ourselves, party, pattern, recognition, respect, retain, reward, traditional, trust, warm, warmth.

P2  "There is a culture here of people being nice. There is a culture of humanism."

P3  "Our company is the best. There is a whole new culture out here."

P9  "There is a strong culture here. People are passionate and service driven."

(8) Direction (words that participants used to indicate some kind of ordering or the course along which someone or something moved):

appointment, back, backwards, decrease, direction, from, grew, grow, grown, growth, high, higher, history, increase, started.

P1  "I like to say I am a leader with direction, and people seem to follow."
P2  "Every company should have a sense of direction – to be a market leader, and not a market follower."

P3  "As a leader, one needs to have a vision and direction ... we've all grown up in the company, we were all young when we started."

P7  "I wanted to come back to the Company because I thought there was growth, opportunities."

P8  "With this to and fro from internal audit back into that function we decided that I must move back."

(9) Duration (words that participants used to indicate a period of time during which something or some activity existed or lasted):

days, eight, eleven, five, four, fourteen, hour, length, long, longest, minutes, months, seven, seventeen, sixteen, sixty, thirteen, thousand, three, till, twelve, week, years.

P1  "My 29 years' corporate experience and 12 years with this company make me a better person. Experience is the best teacher."

P2  "I am not long here, but do not feel that less passionate about the brand than everyone who has worked here longer. I love the Company and the brand."

P3  "I am here 18 years and loving it."

(10) Empowerment (words that indicated that participants were referring to the process of enabling or authorising an individual to think, behave, take action, control work or gain greater control over decisions or actions affecting them):

empowering, empowerment.

P1  "We empower others by enabling them to act."
"It was very innovative – empowerment of the people; whereas before it was all about empowering the individual. His big drive was empowering people to make a decision!"

We believe in empowering people through training and development, especially self-development courses. Our company spends a lot of money empowering people.

(11) Expectation (words with which participants indicated a strong belief that something would happen or be the case in the future, or with which they expressed their looking forward or anticipating):

believe, expectations, forever, hopefully, possible, short, want, wish, would.

"We are always positive here, so we expect good things to happen."

"We have a fun culture, so we expect fun."

"Our expectations are not always met – but we know we have a great company."

(12) Family (words with which participants expressed their sense of belonging to a bigger group or network of individuals):

adhesiveness, camaraderie, cohesive, colleagues, comradeship, crew, family, members, peers, relationship, socialise, together, united.

"Since day one it's been like that, I became part of a very, very big family."

"What is a family? It is really belonging. This is what we are here for at the Company."

"We've had to make do with what programmes we can put together that's going to help them to put the campaign together. We really think of the Company as a family, and in fact we are a family."
(13) Information (words with which participants expressed the idea of communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence, notice, news, reports or data):

address, answer, communication, computer, conference, conversation, correspondence, data, declared, details, discussing, document, informed, internet, letter, mails, media, message, news, newsletter, note, notice, overview, pages, phone, remarks, reply, report, requirements, respond, speaking, speech, statement, stats, summary, telephone, telex, tell, text, unspoken, version.

P1 "Information is always picked up and passed on in our organisation."

P2 "There are always different ways that information is communicated, e.g. through e-mails, SMSs, information in pigeonholes and forums."

P3 "This company always has open information lines."

(14) Internal (words that participants used that translated the idea that something was situated inside a bigger unit):

inside, internalise, logo, therein, within.

P2 "I think that branding should come from within – internally in the organisation."

P5 "People within this organisation made me stay – and I am proud of having stayed."

P10 "Love the Company and love this brand – there are always lots of internal employee campaigns."

(15) Issues (words that pointed to an important topic or problem for debate or discussion):

challenge, complaint, concerns, constraints, crisis, difficulty, dilemma, disappointed, failed, failure, fallen, gaps, incident, insurmountable, interfering, issue, loss, misinterpret, misjudged, mistakes, obstacles, outdated, overwhelmed, questions, risk, setbacks, shortage, strains, waste.
"When employees know they have overstepped the line, they are generally very cautious."

"Our company needs to be a little more structured."

"We were making a huge, huge loss … And it is a challenge because it seems … that we have huge financial constraints."

"We did it and it failed."

(16) KAP (acronym for knowledge, attitude and practice) (words that were used by participants to indicate knowledge (referring to acquaintance with facts, truths or principles, as drawn from a study or investigation); attitude (referring to a settled way of thinking or feeling, typically reflected in a person’s behaviour); and practice (referring to habits or customs):

aggression, amicable, annoys, apologise, appreciation, arrogant, ashamed, assertive, attention, attitude, balance, behaviour, belief, callous, calm, cold, comic, confidence, confidentiality, conservative, creative, empathising, experienced, flexible, friendliness, gentle, grateful, honest, honesty, horrible, humble, independent, innovative, inspirational, interesting, introvert, inventive, knowledge, lazy, miserable, moody, outgoing, overbearing, polite, possessive, practice, pride, private, racist, reaction, rigid, strict, stroppy, thinker, transparent, true, trustworthy, unapproachable, understand, value, wisdom, wise.

"I think I'm inherently lazy, I have good days and days on which I work harder than other days … Sometimes I almost feel lazy because I'm not technically involved … I have confidence in my ability."

"I compare it to the competitor culture that I worked with – turn that penny over, you knew all about it on the totally different culture, very arrogant, and you became very arrogant. Our company is more humble in their approach."

"It is an open environment, the communication lines are open everywhere and it is a pleasure to work for the Company."

"It was great when you just got to find this balance – which is when people
were not always particularly honest and direct with you."

P9 "I hate working with miserable people because I'm not a miserable person. I hate the atmosphere when people walk in all moody, because I'm not like that."

(17) Leadership (words that indicated that participants were referring to the action of leading a group of people or an organisation, or the state or position of being a leader):

lead, leader, leadership, managing.

P2 "A leader should be willing to serve — that is what we are there for. Leaders must lead by example and show respect towards others."

P3 "Managers at this company are good mentors."

P7 "We as leaders are always reminding our employees of the importance of the brand, to recognise the brand, and be good motivators to our staff."

(18) Location (words that were used by participants to indicate a particular place, locality, site, setting, spot or position):

branch, company, corporate, department, downstairs, environment, here, industry, infrastructure, local, location, nearly, office, organisation, outside, range, upstairs, room, sectors, space.

P3 "Our branch is very relaxed, yet highly productive."

P5 "We had a boss who stood by the window upstairs and kept an eye on us the whole day."

P9 "Our environment is definitely not an easy one."
(19) **Options** (words of participants that indicated that besides the idea or aspect being presented, other possibilities or choices were available):

alternatively, another, besides, choice, choose, either, else, example, kind, list, option, otherwise, rather, several, substitute, type, various, ways, whether.

P1  "People have choices and options – they are here for the love rather than the money."

P5  "When you were as young as I was, there were not too many options."

P6  "I had no other option but to join the competitor – since jobs were so scarce."

P8  "You look at socials: The various departments, you know, have their different ways of doing things."

(20) **Outcome** (words that participants used to indicate an end result or consequence or something that followed from an action or dispute or situation):

achieved, complied, contracted, contributed, excellence, feedback, finish, gained, happy, impact, improved, product, satisfaction, solution, successful, turnover.

P1  "Hard work will win the day."

P2  "All our intensive training leads to empowered employees."

P3  "And it had a huge impact. I remember the first week … It had such a huge impact that you'll never ever forget it."

P4  "A positive environment leads to happy employees."

P5  "I really believe that I have contributed enormously to my company. And the fact that I've been successful …"

P6  "I believe they quadrupled their turnover …"
(21) **People** (words that participants used for names of individuals or citizens of any country or region or in reference to humans considered as a group or in indefinite numbers):

agent, auditors, client, collector, consumer, contractor, customer, debtors, Deon, Devon, driver, employee, entrepreneur, founders, owner, passengers, people, person, renter, reps, salesman, secretary, shareholder, staff, stakeholders, stranger, subordinates, supplier, trainer, treasurer, women, worker, youngster.

P1 "You're there for the shareholder, I understand, but more importantly you're there for the stakeholders."

P2 "People here are absolutely wonderful."

P3 "I love this company and respect the people ... So it's about meeting the customer requirement."

P5 "There will always be useless people. But how do you look after people that are really good? The Company made me stay and I am so glad that they did."

P10 "We are always told that we are the Company's best – so we started to believe it – we are people that believe that they are the best!"

(22) **Perception** (words with which participants translated the ability to see, hear or otherwise sense something, or the subjective process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them):

ideas, observation, opinion, perception, realise, sense, thought, view.

P3 "You realise just how close-knit we are – there is an abundance of self-development."

P6 "I perceive the Company as having a special place in my heart. You can think about it or reflect on it – our company is the best."

P10 "It's confusing for me that that's more an internal perception. I have to be honest: I think in our own minds the brand is stronger – especially now that I'm reaching this ... I feel strongly about the Company."
(23) **Perspective (words that indicated a mental view or outlook):**

aiming, ambition, aspirations, conceptualise, dream, envisage, foresight, future, insight, need, perspective, potential, tomorrow, upfront, visions.

P1 "Hard work will win the day. That has always been my perspective."

P7 "We have different perspectives, but still work towards a better brand."

P8 "His visions were good. We understood … but he had very good visions for the Company."

P10 "We have a company perspective, a team perspective, and a philosophy about our brand."

(24) **Place (words used by participants to indicate a particular position, spot, situation, locality or location in space, or an area with definite or indefinite boundaries).**

area, camp, centre, city, facility, home, national, outdoors, overseas, place, premises, public, regions, section, sites, sub-division.

P1 "We have to ensure that this is a great place to be."

P6 "This is a great place to work – and I will never resign."

P9 "We are passionate and proud to work in this place."

(25) **Process (words of participants that communicated the idea of a series of actions, changes, functions, methods, trials or courses, or a way or state of progress bringing about a result; sequence of interdependent and linked procedures that, at every stage, consume one or more resources):**

account, allocated, audit, award, build, buying, check, collect, create, delivery, development, distribution, employ, endorsing, identified, incorporate, infiltrate, inspect, install, interview, investigative, launched, measure, perform, planning, process, procure, promotion, publish, recruitment, review, steps, track, transferred.
P1  "Hard work will win the day."

P7  "We as leaders are always reminding our employees of the importance of the brand, to recognise the brand, and be good motivators to our staff."

P8  "We needed to have an audit function in the business environment."

(26) Quantity (words in which participants communicated the idea of a specified, indefinite, determinate or estimated number or amount of anything):

abundance, amount, average, bits, bulk, bunch, double, empty, enough, fleet, full, half, less, little, lots, major, many, massive, much, only, percent, percentage, piece, small, some, sufficient, triple.

P1  "We have an enormous fleet."

P6  "There are lots of us with good attitudes."

P10 "There is sufficient passion to get us around in this company."

(27) Reasons (words that indicated that participants were giving a cause, explanation or justification for an action or event):

basis, because, causing, explain, mean, reason.

P2  "They don't have a voice because they don't have a platform."

P3  "We have respect and enthusiasm – because I think we employ attitude and personality."

P9  "We weren't too sure … because he doesn't report to me."
(28) Recurrence (words of participants that communicated the idea of things happening, coming up or showing up again or repeatedly):

always, again, continuous, daily, frequent, often, ongoing, regular, repeat, repetition, routine, subservient, twice.

| P1 | "You can see the passion in everyone again and again ... People, stakeholders – they make it happen." |
| P2 | "Continuous good service – that is all we aim for." |
| P3 | "We communicate with them on a regular basis, because mostly they don't." |
| P4 | "There are so many developments daily that we don't stay abreast." |
| P7 | "We always share information – especially the information sent by the CEO." |

(29) Resources (words that participants used to communicate the idea of an asset, material or capital that can be used to accomplish a goal (excluding persons):

asset, bakkie, billion, bond, capital, cash, euro, finance, fleet, financial, funding, income, loss, margin, million, money, paid, penny, profit, rand, resources, revenue, salary, source, stock, structures.

| P1 | "We have an enormous fleet." |
| P5 | "I get extremely stressed when our region does not make its target – it is bad for our margin." |
| P6 | "In those days, we were still running at a loss, which was not very good for us, especially being a smaller company." |
(30) Services (words of participants that referred to intangible products such as accounting, banking, cleaning, consultancy, education, insurance, expertise, medical treatment or transportation):

advert, advertising, aviation, commercial, dealerships, marketing, offer, operations, rent, rental, retail, sales, service, treats.

P3 "We are always big on service delivery and excellence."

P5 "Some people in other companies do not feel the pressure to produce; we do. We are 100% service orientated."

P10 "Our company has been around since 1968 – we are based on service, integrity and good values."

(31) State (words of participants that indicated a condition or mode of being with regard to circumstances, or the condition of a person, thing etc with regard to main attributes):

angry, away, bankrupt, belated, below, black, blue, closing, cool, covered, dead, diluted, dotted, dumb, easy, embedded, flat, fresh, frozen, green, hard, married, pregnant, pretty, rough, round, single, sitting, soft, stability, static, status, steadiness, still, tough, tranquility, unmarried, white, wooden, yellow, young.

P1 "People don't really leave their company, they really leave their bosses."

P2 "Your upbringing, your authenticity, your background as a non-white person … other people’s cultures – whether they're black, white; whether they're young; whether they're poor …"

P4 "It is just your energy from within this company, that's what it is. That is contagious, energy that is contagious."

P7 "To keep them constantly motivated and proud of what they are doing, and keep them where they are is an ongoing challenge within any company."

P9 "Ok. Unmarried, divorced, individual. I divorced when …"
(32) Subject (words of participants that pointed to a person or thing, or situation being discussed, described or dealt with):

Afrikaans, anniversary, anthology, arithmetic, army, birth, birthday, body, cancer, career, chemotherapy, childhood, Christmas, economy, education, elections, English, event, football, gardening, golf, government, jobs, language, marriage, movie, music, opportunity, pension, phenomenon, philosophy, policy, population, portfolio, pregnancy, principles, profession, project, protocol, psychology, race, religion, research, rugby, seminars, soccer, sport stars, technology, tennis, tourism, upbringing, wealth, wedding, welfare.

P2  "To be market followers by virtue of the fact that we were totally disjointed from the voting. They weren't considered being in the two presidential elections prior to his becoming the …"

P4  "When the soccer world cup was due we issued soccer shirts, and they would wear soccer shirts."

P7  "They just had their 49\textsuperscript{th} wedding anniversary, so I have been …"

P9  "Then I do my own research and I do it after hours."

P10 "We indeed work with great people."

(33) Things (words of participants that pointed to an object without life or consciousness; an inanimate object or entity or creature):

apple, badge, bags, ball, billboards, boxes, briefcase, buses, cars, chair, clothing, clutch, commodity, counter, cupboard, desk, garage, gates, instruments, logistic machine, marker, orange, pantyhose, picture, roof, shelf, shop, stool, suitcase, symbol, truck, tyres, vehicles, wheels.

P1  "There it is in my cupboard. So I shared it …"

P4  "The competitors have better systems and procedures."

P5  "We are never too shy to pull down our pantyhose and work."
P6  "I do sometimes smack my desk, not very often. I don't …"

P10  "While top management hated our orange campaign, I think it indeed made a difference."

(34) **Time** (words with which participants expressed the notions of period, age, season, epoch, hour, term, date or era):


P2  "I am working here just over the past X years, but do not feel any less loyal and committed than the rest."

P3  "I began my career here in my youth, and have no regrets."

P5  "I was doing the updates yesterday and our region did not do so well."

(35) **Training** (words of participants that communicated the idea of education, practice, exercise, schooling or drill, or an organised activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him or her attain a required level of knowledge or skill):

certification, course, degree, instructed, learn, matriculated, mentor, qualification, reinforce, scholarship, skills, studying, taught, technical, training.

P6  "We believe in empowering people through training and development, especially self-development courses. Our company spends a lot of money to empower people."

P7  "We are continuously trained at this company, on how to cope with stress, be calm, have a high emotional intelligence, which we call EQ, so we actually cope better than most people elsewhere."
P10  "I grew up in the Company and was trained at the Company."

(36) Uncertainty (words with which participants expressed the idea of incertitude, doubt, suspense and insecurity):

almost, approximately, around, chance, generally, guess, maybe, might, perhaps, probably, somehow, suggest, suppose, unknown, unless, venture, virtual, whatever, whenever, wherever, whoever, whomever.

P1  "I tell you that I'm exhausted because of the circumstances. If the leader gets shot, now what?"

P3  "If you can't grow your people, your people won't grow the organisation."

P7  "They might not agree with it, they might not agree with your plans …"

P10  "It just doesn't make sense in my mind using the competitor brand name internationally. I have huge concerns that our brand will just disappear."

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I identified concepts and their properties, and discovered the dimensions in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I imported, organised and explored all the documents with the aid of Nvivo 9 and an Excel spreadsheet to create 36 themes. I derived these themes from my knowledge of branding, the insights gained during the interviews and the literature on branding. I then linked each of the 36 themes to the relevant keywords (3183) exported by means of Nvivo 9, taking into account both the idea that each word communicated and the context in which it was used.

The 36 themes that emerged from the data set the scene for the next chapter, where, with the aid of axial and selective coding, the themes will be "churned" again.
Chapter 4
Axial and Selective Coding

4.1 Introduction

Guided by the open coding themes, I offer in this chapter a discussion of axial coding, during which categories and core categories were developed, and selective coding, during which the storyline was set up. I first turn to axial coding.

4.2 Axial coding

In an attempt to better appreciate the research participants' social construction of branding; I reconsidered each of the 36 themes I had identified by means of open coding. Hence links between them began to come to the fore. During this process I was reminded of Goulding's (2002) notion that main themes or patterns of behaviour that were previously identified may emerge again.

4.2.1 What is axial coding?

Axial coding is the process of relating codes (categories and concepts) to each other via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking. Axial coding is done by means of a "coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action and/or interactional strategies and consequences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). It is a process where new connections are made between formulated categories and their sub-categories (Priest, Roberts & Woods, 2002).

During axial coding I had to ask myself under which circumstances a particular occurrence had taken place and what had actually led to the participants' responses. I had to understand the context in which the participants provided their client service (compare Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).
4.2.2 Applying axial coding

I applied axial coding by first establishing links between the categories and combining those that had causal similarities. In the process I reconsidered each property and category and re-evaluated the terminology I used. I consulted dictionaries and the literature on internal branding to obtain clarity on the meaning of words that express branding, especially internal branding. I also grouped phrases with the same meaning to avoid duplication of the experiences and viewpoints of the participants. Secondly, I studied each of the 36 themes and their properties or concepts to examine what was going on and why it was happening. The result of this process is captured in the table below.

Table 4.1: Open code categories in alphabetical order and their description relative to the context of this study

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<tr>
<th>THEME CODE</th>
<th>THEME DESCRIPTION</th>
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Source: Developed by the author
Based on the open code categories in alphabetical order and their description relative to the context of this study in Table 4.1, Table 4.2 depicts the number of times each theme was mentioned by each participant in the study.

Table 4.2: Number of times each theme was mentioned by each participant

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<th>THEMES</th>
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</table>
4.2.3 From themes to categories

Themes that were related in terms of meanings or connotations were carefully brought together under 15 categories. Central to the identification of the categories was the use of memos. Through memo-ing I reflected on the data to make better sense of them (Locke, 2001) and "see" the relationship between categories or properties (Dick, 2007). The rationale for linking a specific theme/s to a specific category is set out below per category.
(1) Time factor

Duration: Words that were used by the participants to indicate a period of time during which something or some activity existed or lasted.

Time: Words or phrases with which the participants expressed the notion of period, age, season, epoch, hour, term, date or era.

Since both the "duration" and "time" theme referred to time or a period of time, they were grouped under the "time factor" category.

(2) Competitive forces

Brand: The brand used by the Company to promote it among customers and stakeholders – the very essence of this study – faced tremendous competition in the industry. It was thus appropriate to place the "brand" theme in the "competitive forces" category.

Competition: Words in which the participants mentioned competition or competitor companies. Thus the "competition" theme was included in the "competitive forces" category.

Contrast: Words used by the participants that referred to comparison or contrast. Usually the comparison or contrast was associated with the competitor/s.

Uncertainty: Words with which the participants expressed the idea of incertitude, doubt, suspense and insecurity. Uncertainty was also associated with the competitor/s, feelings regarding the competitor/s or pressure exerted by the competitor/s.

(3) Performance

Outcome: Words that the participants used to indicate an end result or consequence or something that followed from an action, dispute or situation. Since an outcome in the context of the Company was an end result, the
"outcome" theme was assigned to the "performance" category, whether negative or positive.

**Process:** Words of the participants that communicated the idea of a series of actions, changes, functions, methods, trials, courses or ways, or state of progress bringing about a result; sequence of interdependent and linked procedures that, at every stage, consume one or more resources. In the Company, a process usually resulted in positive or negative performance. Thus the "process" theme was linked to the "performance" category.

**Recurrence:** Words of the participants that communicated the idea of things happening, coming up, or showing up again or repeatedly. Such recurrence led to performance. Thus the "recurrence" theme was linked to the "performance" category.

**Services:** Words of the participants that referred to intangible things such as accounting, banking, cleaning, consultancy, education, insurance, expertise, medical treatment or transportation. In the Company, the main aim was to deliver impeccable services to customers. Since the "services" theme always related to performance, mainly positive, it was assigned to the "performance" category.

(4) Environmental knowledge

**Internal:** Words that the participants used to convey the idea that something was situated inside a bigger unit. Although it mainly referred to the internal environment of the Company, it also referred to the context of the "place" category. Hence the "internal" theme was linked to the "environmental knowledge" category.

**Location:** Words that were used by the participants to indicate a particular place, locality, site, setting, spot or position. Since "location" also referred to "place", it was assigned to the "environmental knowledge" category.
**Place**: Words used by the participants to indicate a particular position, spot, situation, locality or location, or an area with definite or indefinite boundaries. The use of these words was mostly associated with the Company. Therefore the "place" theme was included in the "environmental knowledge" category.

(5) **Empowerment**

*Empowerment*: Words that indicated that the participants were referring to the process of enabling or authorising an individual to think, behave, take action and control work, or gain greater control over decisions or actions affecting them.

*Information*: Words with which the participants expressed the idea of communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence, notices, news, reports or data. Since the provision of information to employees empowered them, the "information" theme was assigned to the "empowerment" category.

*Training*: Words of the participants that communicated the idea of education, practice, exercise, schooling or drill, or an organised activity aimed at imparting information, and/or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him or her attain a required level of knowledge or skill. Since training was vital for empowering the employees of the Company, the "training" theme was placed under the "empowerment" category.

(6) **Human factor**

*Certainty*: Words that translated how certain a participant was, of what he or she was saying. Since certainty or lack of certainty is a human factor, it was assigned to the "human factor" category.

*Completeness*: Words that indicated that the participant was referring to the totality of a set or group spoken of. The term "completeness" was used in relation to the other participants or other employees, so it was appropriate to place it under the "human factor" category.
**KAP** (knowledge, attitude and practice): Knowledge encompassed words that pointed to acquaintance with facts, truths or principles, as derived from an investigation; attitude encompassed words referring to a settled way of thinking or feeling, typically reflected in a person's behaviour; and practice encompassed words indicating habit or custom. Since knowledge, attitude and practice all relate to human behaviour, KAP was assigned to the "human factor" category.

**Perception:** Words with which the participants translated the ability to see, hear and become aware of something through the senses, or the subjective process by which people translated sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them. Perception relates to the psychology of humans, in this case the employees of the Company, hence its association with the "human factor" category, labeled the "H factor" by some theorists (King & Grace, 2008).

(7) **Vision**

In businesses and corporate companies, leaders share a vision or dream that other people want to share and follow.

**Direction:** Words that the participants used to indicate some kind of ordering or the course along which someone or something moves. Since someone's direction in a company is linked to a vision of the company, "direction" was placed under the "vision" category.

**Expectations:** Words with which the participants indicated a strong belief that something would happen or be the case in the future, or with which they expressed their state of looking forward or anticipating. Since expectations are part of a company's vision, this theme was allocated to the "vision" category.

**Options:** Words of the participants that indicated that the idea or aspect being presented was not the only one and that other possibilities or choices were available. Because vision entails options, the "options" theme was assigned to the "vision" category.
Perspective: Words that pointed to a mental view or outlook that gives direction. Thus the "perspective" theme was allocated to the "vision" category.

(8) Organisational socialisation

Family: Words with which the participants expressed their sense of belonging to a bigger group or network of individuals. When they spoke about a close bond or family feeling, they did so mostly with reference to their work and after-work socialisation. Since family usually implies social interaction, the "family" theme was placed in the "organisational socialisation" category.

People: Words that the participants used for individuals, citizens of a country or region, or humans considered as a group or in indefinite numbers. Since people thrive on organisational socialisation, the "people" theme was assigned to the "organisational socialisation" category.

(9) Openness

Reasons: Words indicating that the participants referred to a cause, explanation or justification for an action or event.

Subject: Words of the participants that pointed to a person, thing or situation being discussed, described or dealt with. Openness entails not holding back and saying what one needs to say. When the participants spoke about a subject with reference to a person, thing or situation, they were open about their thoughts. Hence the "subject" theme was placed in the "openness" category.

Things: Words of the participants that pointed to a material object without life or consciousness. When they spoke about "things" in this sense, they were open about them; hence the inclusion of this theme in the "openness" category.
(10) Investment

*Quantity*: Words that the participants used to communicate the idea of a specified, indefinite, determinate or estimated number or amount of anything. Using anything – especially in quantity – to advance the Company was seen as an investment.

*Resources*: Words that the participants used to communicate the idea of an asset, material or capital that can be used to accomplish a concrete goal. The Company's assets, either material or capital, were always termed an "investment".

(11) Issues

*Issues*: Words that pointed to an important topic or problem for debate or discussion. The "issues" theme was assigned to a like-named category, since it could not be placed under another category.

(12) State

*State*: Words of the participants that indicated the main attributes of a condition or a circumstance, person or thing. The "state" theme was assigned to a category by the same name, as no other relevant category was available.

(13) Culture

*Culture*: Words used by the participants that referred to aspects that influence internal brand alignment or the creation and maintenance of a brand culture in the workplace. Since the "culture" theme was so unique and important, it became a category by the same name.
(14) Commitment

*Commitment:* Words that gave an indication of the commitment of the participants. The "commitment" theme was also converted into a category by the same name, for the same reason as the "culture" theme above.

(15) Leadership

*Leadership:* Words that indicated that the participants were referring to the action of leading a group of people or an organisation, or the state or position of being a leader. Since leadership was also a unique and important component, it was converted into a category as well.

After this lengthy rationale as to why certain themes were grouped under certain categories, I summarise the outcome in Table 4.3.
Table 4.3: Theme clustering to form categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>duration</td>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brand</td>
<td>competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outcome</td>
<td>process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal</td>
<td>location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empowerment</td>
<td>information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certainty</td>
<td>completeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direction</td>
<td>expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasons</td>
<td>subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quantity</td>
<td>resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational Socialisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by the author

4.2.4 From categories to core categories

This section sets out how the logic of causal relationships and interrelatedness was used to reduce the 15 categories to 6 core categories, which is reflected in Table 4.4.
Table 4.4: Categories and their associated core categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human factor</th>
<th>HUMAN FACTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture, organisational socialisation, openness, state, issues</td>
<td>CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance, time</td>
<td>PERFORMANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership, vision, commitment, environmental knowledge, investment</td>
<td>LEADERSHIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment, information, training</td>
<td>EMPOWERMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive forces</td>
<td>COMPETITIVE FORCES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by the author

The six core categories above represent larger ideas and concepts that form nodes for related sub-categories. Their effect in the Company and the frequency with which they were mentioned by the participants are given below.

(1) Human factor: Employees bring a brand to life and are its true custodians. Their behaviour determines the values that customers attach to a company. In this study, the participants explicitly mentioned employees 152 times.

(2) Leadership: Leadership by example (meaning, living up to what you say) is one of the best forms of communication. Leaders who act as role models enable staff to adopt brand values. In this study, the participants referred directly to leadership (and management) 317 times.

(3) Empowerment: Proper communication can empower external and internal clients and can help promote the brand culture. Communication was mentioned directly by the participants 132 times.
(4) Competitive forces: Competitors, competition and competitive pressures were a great concern for the participants. They mentioned competition explicitly 121 times.

(5) Performance: The inclusion of brand values among performance criteria or basing rewards on brand values can reinforce what is done with the brand internally. In this study, the participants referred directly to processes (performance management, rewards, values, incentives) 81 times.

(6) Culture: Even though culture is something from within, it supports the creation of a powerful external brand. The participants in this study mentioned culture 47 times.

In addition to their relation to particular sub-categories, the 6 core categories were also interrelated among themselves. This is captured in the next table.

Table 4.5: The interrelatedness of core categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Human factor/employees</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Competitive forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human factor/employees</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive forces</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed by the author
The rationale for the grouping of categories under 6 core categories is set out below per core category.

(1) Human factor (employees)

In a world where everything is becoming digital and where the basic human need to connect to one another is sidelined, the human element has never been as important as it is now, especially in relation to brand building. It is a well-known fact that the brands that stand out the most are those with a strong human factor. Person-to-person interaction and a personal touch with customers pay off in that customers tend to be more forgiving of organisational mistakes. Indeed, a brand is composed of the people behind it.

The two categories that were grouped under the “human factor” core category are set out below.

Completeness and certainty

The participants made constant reference to the “entire staff” or “everybody” as if to say their ideas were not theirs alone, but also those of the rest of the staff. Moreover, their use of words such as “absolutely”, “always”, “definitely”, “exactly” and “never” showed how certain they were of what they were saying.

Knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP), and perception

In this study, the participants expressed their opinions, thoughts, feelings, minds and impressions freely. With respect to KAP, they reflected a thorough understanding of their company brand spoke eloquently about their positive and negative attitudes and gave a wealth of information on the various practices in the Company. As far as perceptions are concerned, the participants expressed their views on their corporate brand from a financial, business, marketing and customer point of view. Individual attributes such as fairness, honesty, transparency, balance, humility, integrity, generosity, modesty, empathy, calmness, creativity and interest in others were
praised, whereas negative attributes in the Company such as pride, hatred, moodiness, aggression and laziness were decried.

(2) Culture

Culture is intimately related to the human factor as far as its impact on branding is concerned. It has been defined as the cumulative concept that encompasses knowledge, beliefs, customs, practices and any other habits acquired by people as members of a society (or organisation). Consequently a brand can be perceived as the personification of organisational culture, which makes culture the personality or identity of an organisation. It provides the framework within which individuals and the group function and consequently impacts profoundly on the consumption patterns of customers.

Culture in this study encompasses organisational socialisation (family and people), openness within the Company, the state of the Company and all issues within the Company.

Family and people

The "family and people" category was linked to the "culture" core category. All the participants spoke about their colleagues and other staff members as if they formed one big family. The social interaction and networking that the participants enjoyed, drew the employees together, and the notion that they were a family seemed to be the glue that held the Company together. This was a special outcome of the study, since theorists and previous studies seldom mention it. The participants often referred to themselves as a family, and talked about other family attributes such as camaraderie, togetherness and adhesiveness. "People" related to all employees, and the participants generally linked it also to the family concept.
Issues

The term refers to words that pointed to an important topic or problem for debate or discussion. It fits within the "culture" core category.

Openness

From what the participants shared, the Company came across as a friendly environment in which members felt free to express their opinions. However, not all things said were positive. Among the negative experiences were challenges, crises, losses, accidents, blame, disappointments, devastations, feelings of being overwhelmed, failures, setbacks, misjudgments, misunderstandings, dilemmas, indulgences, resentments and interferences. In addition, the participants mentioned that there were processes that were meant to encourage the positive attributes and discourage or reduce the negative attributes, which were all part of building the brand culture. Hence the "openness" category was assigned to the "culture" core category.

State

The term refers to a condition or mode of being in particular circumstances. This can be associated with the "culture" core category.

(3) Performance

The "performance" core category consists of the "performance management" and "time factor" categories.

Performance management

The corporate brand of every organisation requires attentive management, because a brand can perform negatively and hurt the organisation or perform positively and
help it. Performance management activities do not generally focus on the performance of the corporate brand. An organisation's image and performance can be improved by paying careful attention to its brand's effectiveness and efficiency, which attributes are a measure of brand power. It has been suggested that organisations view their corporate brand as a business asset rather than as a cost. Understanding a brand in this way helps leaders to better gauge its effectiveness and potential and, consequently, manage the brand as any other asset.

Paying careful attention to the performance of the brand is also important because the brand affects internal audiences (employees, management, shareholders, partners, vendors) and external audiences (the media, prospective investors, customers and everyone else who interacts with an organisation). Brand performance is affected by the perceptions of each of these audiences and communication plays an important role in the formation of congruent perceptions.

Under the "performance management" category I included all emerging themes in which the participants discussed processes or services and their outcomes, or the notion of established patterns or sequences in the day-to-day running of their business. Processes discussed included needs identification, planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation, appraisal, career profile management, change management, grievance management, financial management, staff recruitment, exit management, absence management and information management.

**Time factor**

Time was viewed by most of the participants as a non-renewable resource that had to be managed wisely because no moment or hour that had been used could be replenished. As with most resources, there was a direct relationship between supply and demand. To ensure good performance, time had to be spent on processes and operations that were worthwhile for the Company. The participants referred to operations such as customer service, marketing, financial and commercial services, retail and advertising. These all consumed time. With respect to the outcome of these processes, the participants often used words such as "feedback", "excellence", "results", "satisfaction", "successful", "solution", "improved", "relief", "achieved" and
"finish". There were clearly established patterns in the procedures, as is evident from the use of words such as "often", "frequent", "regular", "again", "daily", "ongoing", "twice" and "routine".

(4) Leadership

Leaders have to take into consideration their own dreams as well as the aspirations and expectations of all stakeholders, including customers, employees and vendors. Leaders play an important role in the cultural constituency of an organisation. Through their vision, leaders broaden the horizons of their employees and inspire them to outdo themselves. The behaviour of leaders is the most important factor that affects the morale of employees. Leaders need to understand and personify the envisaged culture to be able to support organisational productivity and quality. Employees scrutinise the moves of leaders, so leaders need to admit their faults when these are being pointed out, while focusing on the bigger picture of brand personification if they are to succeed. The concepts "leadership" and "branding" are so similar that some authors conclude that leadership is branding.

The "leadership" core category comprises the "vision", "investment", "commitment" and "environmental knowledge" categories.

Vision

In this study, I included in the "leadership" core category all themes in which the participants expressed a forward view or the direction in which they expected things to change (vision), as well as their commitment. I also included in this category themes that showed that the participants were willing to openly discuss various options and the reasons for their actions.

The participants discussed the potential in the Company to change in the right direction as well as what they thought needed to change. They also shared their vision about the Company, were willing to learn from past successes and failures, and discussed some of the problems associated with procrastination.
**Investment**

There was a general desire and willingness to invest in the growth of the Company or to improve performance. The participants showed clearly why particular actions were taken by regularly using the word "because" and its associated explanation.

**Commitment**

Leadership was based on the concepts "family" and "commitment". Seemingly, familial adhesiveness instilled a great sense of commitment in the employees. Commitment, especially of the leadership, was apparently a vital ingredient of a greater sense of loyalty and the pursuance of excellent performance among the employees. The participants described their commitment to brand building with the use of words such as "decided", "passion", "involved", "must", "enthusiasm", "willingness" and "compulsory".

**Environmental knowledge**

The participants seemed to be people who had served in the various locations of the Company and had travelled widely throughout South Africa and other parts of the world. This exposure to settings within and outside the Company seemed to have geared them for contributing positively towards internal brand building. The concept "environmental knowledge" also entailed the influence exerted by the leaders, both internally and externally. The exposure of the leaders to the outside world probably promoted standardisation, given the cultural variety in the Company.

(5) Empowerment

The "empowerment" core category encompasses the categories "information", "training" and "empowerment".
Information

The success of a brand in a competitive market does not only depend on distinguishing products or services on the basis of their quality or functional benefits alone. It also depends, and more and more so, on supporting the brand through repeated communication on brand values.

Effective internal communication has been recognised as a crucial ingredient that ensures that people feel part of the brand and deliver on its promises. Integrated communication is necessary if the brand's potential is to be realised in the marketplace. This can be done through promotional literature (posters, corporate position statements, newsletters, written memos), direct mail, employee information (frequent dialogue sessions, notice boards), websites, digital applications and regular training.

Non-verbal communication elements such as dress codes and the ways employees are addressed are also important aspects to be considered in promoting brand values. The end result of all information and communication is empowered employees.

To achieve effective internal communication, there must be a clear distinction between a strong brand and a weak brand, consistency in the content of the brand communication and reinforcement to ensure that the messages are not only heard but remembered.

Training

In this study, I classified under the "empowerment" core category all instances in which the participants referred to training or information sharing. Their regular reference to training and skills acquisition pointed to the importance they attached to empowerment. They shared experiences of how they benefited from training and mentoring by predecessors and how they, too, were directly involved in filtering down the brand to the rest of the staff through training and regular sharing of information. Various channels of information sharing were mentioned, such as verbal
communication, conferences, the telephone, computers, the mission statement, reports, emails, newsletters, the internet and social media.

**Empowerment**

The participants made constant reference to people and the need for empowerment. It also involved themes that portrayed some individual attributes such as assertive speech. The concept "empowerment" seemed to perpetuate the Company. People and employees seemed to be an important component of the Company, and employees were normally taken into consideration.

(6) Competitive forces

Competitive forces are the forces in an organisation's environment felt by the organisation as a result of competition. These forces stem from the behaviour of members of the community, other firms that interact directly with the organisation's competitor and customers insisting on better quality and better prices.

The concept "competitive forces" relates to how much a direct competitor is investing in its marketing campaign. Failing to plan for competitive forces may lead to reactive rather than proactive moves. Competitive forces effect innovation and efficiency in most companies.

Most managers perceive competitive forces as the pressure their organisation faces as a result of the behaviour of its rivals. The pressure they experience arises from the partial overlap of their geographic or product markets. Most organisations sense pressure intuitively, but how this is managed depends on how well they understand industry competitiveness, how much overlap exists in their markets and how much they are affected by the rivalry.

In this study, the core category "competitive forces" was developed from themes in which the participants made regular reference to competing companies in the industry. These references usually took the form of favourable or unfavourable
comparisons with the competitors or led to signs of uncertainty in their opinions on their market trends.

As for comparisons, the participants referred to "biggest challenges", "biggest cost", "huge growth", "biggest frustrations", "greater assets", "greater opportunities" and "biggest operations". In statements on the ability to deliver efficiently in a competitive environment, uncertainty was usually introduced with words such as "perhaps", "maybe", "probably", "I suppose" or "I guess". With respect to the competition, one particular company kept coming up as the greatest rival and the leading company in the market. The participants placed themselves in the second position, but feared that if they did not adopt a more fierce marketing strategy, new arrivals could easily overtake them.

The 36 open coding themes guided the axial coding, that is, the identification of categories and core categories. This was done by first linking codes that had causal similarities or were related in meaning or connation. This resulted in creating 15 categories. By applying the logic of causal relationship and interrelatedness, these 15 categories were then reduced to 6 core categories.

Next I turn to selective coding.

**4.3 Selective coding**

The core categories extracted during axial coding formed the basis for selective coding, which yielded the storyline. Selective coding occurs when all other inferred themes are integrated into one theme (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) hold that selective coding is a conceptual framework of themes that builds up to a single storyline that covers all inferred themes, while Holloway and Wheeler (2002) see selective coding as the use of frequently reappearing initial codes to sort large amounts of data.

The storyline that integrates all the themes I identified by means of grounded theory reads as follows: *The importance of the influence and role of leadership in the*
success of internal and external brand alignment in organisations. The relationship between its elements is shown in Figure 4.1.

![Successful organisation diagram](unnamed.png)

**Figure 4.1: The relationship between the categories**

Source: Developed by the author

The storyline can be interpreted as follows: Committed leaders (1) who possess thorough external and internal environmental knowledge most probably will become leaders with company and brand vision. Such leaders may be willing to invest in the growth of the Company and by implication in the organisational family culture (2) where transparency is the order of the day. This most probably will result in a positive human factor or employees (3) who may feel a sense of completeness and certainty, who in turn may most probably display the correct knowledge, attitude and perception, and ultimately the correct brand knowledge, brand attitude and brand perception. This causal loop effect should result in (4) outstanding work and brand performance among employees, (5) especially in serving their customers. With such employees, the Company is quite likely to overcome competitive forces (6) and serve existing and potential customers exceptionally well, resulting in sustained excellent organisational performance. Given the conducive organisational family culture as well as happy and contented employees and a financially successful organisation,
potential employees could be expected to see the Company as one of the best companies to work for.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, with the aid of axial coding, I grouped the 36 open codes into 15 categories and described in detail why the codes were assigned to particular categories. Next I divided the 15 categories into 6 core categories, again with a detailed description of why the categories were assigned to particular core categories. I then concluded the chapter with selective coding, which resulted in a single storyline that tied the core categories together. In the next chapter I will discuss the themes and categories that emerged during the open, axial and selective coding against the background of the associated literature.
SECTION C

Reviewing the Literature
CHAPTER 5

Literature Review
Chapter 5
Literature Review

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I review theoretical concepts and research findings related to the research participants’ experiences and viewpoints. However, before discussing these constructs and findings I want to emphasise my views on theory and my application of the formal inferential approach, grounded theory\textsuperscript{13}. Any study has to be based on strong theoretical foundations, but I decided to examine these foundations last, as did the leaders of grounded theory.

I identify closely with Charmaz (1997, p.68) in this regard:

\textit{The researcher constructs theory from the data. By starting with data from the lived experience of the research participants, the researchers can, from the beginning, attend to how they construct their worlds. That lived experience shapes the researcher’s approach to data collection and analysis.}

Particularly important to me are the remarks by Glaser (1998), one of the founders of grounded theory, that researchers who do not use grounded theory applications may feel "awed out", which in turn may undermine their sense of self-worth and competence in developing new theory. In this regard Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 49) write:

\textit{It is not unusual for students to become enamoured with a previous study (or studies) either before or during their own investigations, so much so that they are nearly paralyzed in an analytical sense. It is not until they are able to let go and put trust in their abilities to generate knowledge that they finally are able to make discoveries of their own.}

\textsuperscript{13}Please see Chapter 2.
Returning to Glaser (1998), he also argues that given the unpredictable nature of grounded theory research, the literature most relevant to the research may not actually be known at the outset. Hence conducting a time-consuming, extensive review of publications in a specific area may be futile. Dick (2002) and Locke (2001) agree with this. Dunne (2011, p.113) agrees with Dey (2004) that grounded theory liberates theory from the "seductive comforts of empirical research and uninspiring variables".

Having made my position with regard to grounded theory and the application of existing knowledge clear, let us examine the scholarly work associated with the six core themes as presented in the previous chapter, namely external branding, followed by the human factor in branding (or internal branding), organisational culture and branding, competitive forces and branding, and finally leadership and branding\textsuperscript{14}.

### 5.2 The core themes

In terms of the core theme of external branding, the following aspects will be looked at: definition of “brand”, brand value, identity versus image, brand identity, corporate branding and brand vision.

#### 5.2.1 Definition of "brand"

A brand is "a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of them intended to identify the goods or services of one seller and to distinguish them from those of the competitors" (King & Grace, 2005). According to Dunn and Davis (2004) and Knapp

\textsuperscript{14} The core themes performance and empowerment were encapsulated within the concept internal branding or human factor.
(2000), a brand is more than a promise. A brand is the totality of perceptions – everything you see, hear, read, know, feel, think – about a product, service or business, and it holds a distinct position in customers’ minds based on past experiences, associations and future expectations. From these views it is clear that a brand cannot be built by merely creating some fancy advertising. If you establish the concept "brand" as a promise to your customers, it can only come to life if you consistently deliver on the promise. As clearly outlined by Drotskie and Viljoen (2011) in their study on organisational climate and culture, organisations can clearly deliver on the brand promise if their employees are engaged. Here customer experience is seen as the "differentiator" in organisations, and is a result of employee engagement (Drotskie & Viljoen, 2011).

5.2.2 Brand value

The value of a company's brand is called "brand equity" (Aaker, 1995). This concept refers to the added value a brand provides to a product. Kotler and Keller (2009, p. 275) believe that "the heart of a successful brand is a great product or service, backed by careful planning, a great deal of long-term commitment, and creatively designed and executed marketing. A strong brand commands intense consumer loyalty." Aaker (1996) holds that greater market success is achieved through a brand than through a product. Many competitors may try to copy one's product, but very few can copy one's brand. According to Spark (2004, p. 6), the "value of a brand correlates directly to the value of the business".

Organisations with a successful brand may help customers to differentiate between companies, trigger purchase intentions and add value to the organisations' bottom line profit (Cheung, Law & Kong, 2009; & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1999; Keller, 1993; King & Grace, 2006; Thompson, de Chernatony, Arganbright & Sajid (1999). Therefore, as Cheung, Law and Kong (2009) point out, it is very important for organisations to provide excellent offerings by coherently conveying a desired brand to customers.

Organisational climate is the shared attitude of employees (see Drotskie & Viljoen, 2011).
According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), brand management is the most distinctive skill and ability of professional marketers in building brands, giving a company a sense of distinction and differentiation. As a brand is essentially a promise of commitment and performance by an organisation (Campbell, 2002), successful brands are seen as consistently delivering on their promises and are supported and reinforced by the senior management of an organisation (Love & Singh, 2011). A brand has a value that, according to Rokeach (1973, p. 5), is an "enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence".

De Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley (1999) regard a brand as a cluster of functional and emotional values, the functional values being those that the customer receives, such as quality, convenience and ease of use, while the emotional values include how customers perceive the values. The final "promised experience" to the customer is the functional values and the emotional values (de Chernatony, 2001). Whereas functional values are easy to sustain, emotional values are difficult to sustain. More attention is therefore focused on sustaining emotional values. This is illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: The Brand Triangle

Source: De Chernatony (2001, p.4)
Leaders and staff must understand and agree on corporate brand values. Successful corporate brands are characterised by participative approaches, that is, senior management providing guidance about corporate brand values but also engaging staff in debates about the values so as to encourage consensus (Ind, 2001; de Chernatony, 2001).

5.2.3 Identity versus image

Baldoni (2004) describes an external brand as the sum of organisational identity, image and aspiration, while an internal brand is described as the sum of personal identity, image and aspiration embedded in an organisation's identity. External branding can refer to the external brand image or the external brand identity. Brand image and brand identity are often seen as the same thing, but they are not. The image is the perception of an external observer, while the identity is the perception of the internal observer, who is generally the employee of a company (Ind, 1997).

An employee's view of identity is determined by the overall culture of the organisation, the values of the organisation that are transmitted by the collective attitudes and behaviour, and by the communication process. (Ind, 1997, p. 46).

The organisational identity, which underpins a company's brand, deals with the attributes of the organisation, for example innovation and consumer concern, trustworthiness, a drive for quality, and concern about the environment. These attributes are created by the people, culture, values and programmes of the company (Aaker, 1996). To excel, a brand image must be well planned, nurtured, supported and vigilantly guarded (Knapp, 2000).

Since my study mainly looked at branding from the employee's perspective (an internal view), the concept "brand identity" is discussed next.
5.2.4 Brand identity

The term "brand identity", as set out by Aaker (2000) and Kapferer (2004), opened the horizon for a new type of research. The term represents what an organisation stands for. Brand identity needs to be in line with customers' expectations. This identity differentiates the brand from the brands of competitors and signifies what the organisation will and can do over a period (Aaker, 2000).

There are four brand identity perspectives: the brand as a product, the brand as an organisation, the brand as a person and the brand as a symbol (Kapferer, 2001). A product brand and an organisation brand must be clearly distinguished. A product brand entails the symbols, visuals and trademarks on which an organisation's brand is imprinted, whereas an organisation's brand, also called the corporate brand, incorporates much more than the product brand.

A key to successful brand building is to understand how to develop a brand identity – to know what the brand stands for and to effectively express that identity. A brand is a distinctive identity that differentiates a relevant, enduring and credible promise of value associated with a product, service or organisation, and indicates the source of that promise (Aaker, 1996). Burmann and Zeplin (2005, p. 281) reinforce that, "to achieve a strong brand identity the external, market oriented brand management needs to be complemented by an institutionalized internal brand management". Ultimately, an organisation should consistently exude the same brand image, which calls for corporate branding.

5.2.5 Corporate branding

Foster, Punjaisri and Cheng (2010, p. 401) summarise corporate branding by stating that it "concerns the systematic planned management of behaviour, communication, and symbolism in order to attain a favourable and positive reputation with target audiences of the organisation". This specifically refers to employee behaviour, which plays an important role in how external stakeholders perceive the corporate brand. Employees' behaviour has a huge influence on how external stakeholders perceive the corporate brand and make sense of a company's identity and image (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010).
In recent years, external or corporate branding has increasingly come to be regarded as essential to an organisation's long-term strategy (Davis, 2002), as a critical asset and as a key instrument for achieving superior business performance. According to Bick, Jacobson and Abratt (2003, p. 842), corporate branding is the "manifestation of the features that distinguish an organisation from its competitors. It is a reflection of the organisation's ability to satisfy consumers' needs, namely: trust in the company to deliver a consistent level of product/service, quality of the product/service at a reasonable price, and the reduction of risk of making an unwise purchase decision." Employees, as well as customers, like to be associated with distinctive organisations (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquil, 1994). "Corporate branding" and "employee branding" are used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, a company's corporate brand is taken to refer to the external brand.

As indicated, brands convey functional and emotional values. Since employees are the main ambassadors of a brand, interest in how a corporate brand can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage has grown (de Chernatony, 2001). According to Siso, Bick and Abratt (2009), the critical success factors in managing corporate brands include active involvement by top management, a multidisciplinary approach to corporate brand management, and knowing the importance of alignment of vision, culture and image in the organisation. Interaction with and involvement of employees and customers are also critical in the building of long-term multiple stakeholder relationships. The organisation must also portray consistent corporate communication, with continuous monitoring of the corporate brand for relevance and distinctiveness. According to Ind (1997, p. 2), "what defines a brand as a corporate brand is its cohesion: the idea of people coming together and working towards a common goal. People are the corporate brand."

As depicted in Figure 5.2 below, de Chernatony (2001) holds that four interacting elements namely vision, culture, objectives and brand sphere, influence the character of the corporate brand, or the corporate brand concept. The brand sphere consists of the macro environment within which an organisation operates, its competitors, its customers, its distributors and the organisation itself in which the corporate brand operates. If the corporate brand concept resides within an organisation with optimal performing systems and staff, this will lead to stakeholder
satisfaction. If not, then the corporate brand concept must be monitored and revisited. This is all clearly shown in Figure 5.2 below.

![Figure 5.2: Defining and enacting a corporate brand](source: De Chernatony (2001, p.8))

**5.2.6 Brand vision**

According to de Chernatony (2001), a corporate brand's vision consists of three components, namely the future environment the brand hopes to bring about, its purpose and its values. This is depicted in figure 5.3 below.
Seemingly, the values of senior management influence the purpose or vision of the corporate brand and must be in alignment with the corporate brand (Schultz & Schultz, 2000). As shown in Figure 5.4 below, vision generally interacts with an organisation's culture, and if shared and internalised by employees, and conveyed consistently, vision inevitably leads to higher brand performance (de Chernatony, 2001). Thus, a corporate brand has three interacting sources of values, namely vision (usually evoked by senior management), the organisational culture and individual employees' values.

Figure 5.3: Components of a brand vision

Source: De Chernatony (2001, p. 9)
5.3 Internal branding (human factor or employees)

This section concentrates on the following: internal marketing as a foundation for internal branding, internal brand identity versus internal brand image, internal branding, employer branding, employees in internal branding, factors leading to internal branding, and success and failure factors in internal branding.

5.3.1 Internal marketing

Internal marketing should be discussed before internal branding is discussed, since internal marketing is the foundation of internal branding. Only once a company has hired employees and trained and motivated them, in other words internal marketing has been done, will employees develop a shared understanding of their company's brand, which is referred to as "internal branding". According to Kotler and Keller (2009), internal marketing is the task of hiring, training and motivating able
employees who want to serve customers well. Companies tend to spend loads of money on marketing to customers, but often fail to budget for marketing to their staff (Burkitt & Zealley, 2006). Like external customers, internal customers are influenced by the company's brand and its future plans. Burkitt and Zealley (2006, p. 295) identify the following key concepts of internal marketing: internal marketing in the shape of continual internal "up skilling"; alignment of employee behaviour with the organisation's purpose; employees' internalisation of the core values of the organisation; motivation, and reframing and consolidating employee attitude; and retaining positivity towards all business objectives.

5.3.1.1 Hiring, motivating and training employees

No longer are employees being recruited just because of their intellect and functional knowledge. They are also being recruited according to whether their values can be aligned with those of their organisation. According to Judson, Gorchels and Aurand (2006, p. 99), "developing the brand from the inside out is particularly important for organisations within the services sector that typically face the challenge of developing the brand for an intangible and complex offering". This relates to the fact that in an era where the services sector is more import than the manufacturing sector, people's impressions of brands are more strongly influenced by the staff they interact with. Employees' behaviour, style of dress, tone of voice, beliefs and attitudes create a picture of the brand's values in consumers' minds.

Companies must ensure that their initial recruitment of employees and their induction, training and motivation are professional, effective and efficient, and depict the company's values (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Bendapudi and Bendapudi (2005, p. 24) suggest that companies should "consider employees their living brand and devote a great deal of time and energy to training and developing them so that they reflect the brand's core values".
5.3.1.2 Employees internalising the core values of the organisation

An external brand has a value, which according to Rokeach (1973, p. 5) is an "enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence". As external brands are a catalyst for change, they must communicate a company's core values and beliefs. Employees are the company's ambassadors who communicate the company's core values and beliefs.

According to Boyd and Sutherland (2006), "living the brand" of the organisation means that an employee behaves in a way that is representative of a company's brand, values and culture.

5.3.2 Internal brand image versus internal brand identity

Baldoni (2004) describes an internal brand as the sum of personal identity, image and aspiration, while Christensen (2001, p. 27) sees employee branding and identity as "including all types of value processes and organisation development processes where the management and the employees become aware of their direction and meaning of their common organisation and working life". Internal branding is about ensuring consistency between external and internal brand messages.

Once a company's internal marketing is done, its employees can develop a shared brand understanding. It now becomes appropriate to introduce the concept "internal branding".

5.3.3 Internal branding

Internal branding is the process of developing a shared brand understanding among organisational members (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). Tosti and Stotz (2001) see internal branding as the internal definition and clarification by organisations of their brands, which definition and clarification align leadership, management systems and processes with specific values and practices that deliver value to stakeholders, educate and enrol employees in brand building and, finally, through dialogue
systems, evaluate and continually improve stakeholder value delivery. According to Love and Singh (2011), internal branding or employer branding essentially allows an organisation an opportunity to distinguish itself from the competition, and develop an identity through practices that are perceived as desirable to employees and the public.

5.3.4 Employer branding

Internal branding focuses on getting employees to deliver according to the brand promise. This is achieved through developing an employer brand, that is, an organisation works towards being seen as the most admired or preferred company to work for and having the best corporate brand.

As shown in Figure 5.5 below, competitive companies are constantly searching for talented employees. By finding the best employees or "talent" in the marketplace, they boost their organisational identity and organisational culture and are better positioned to attract even more of this talent. This culminates in a loyal workforce, enhances productivity and increases output in the marketplace.

![Figure 5.5: Employer Branding – A Tool for Talent Management](source: Mandhanya and Shah (2010, p. 46))
5.3.5 Employees in internal branding

According to Boyd and Sutherland (2006, p. 9), "[g]iven the complex nature of brands and branding, many organisations often fail to consider the role that employees can play in realising a company's brand strategy". Research conducted by James (2000), Mitchell (2002), Beagrie (2003), Fram and McCarthy (2003) and Simms (2003) shows that employees can impact on customer service levels and influence stakeholder perceptions via the perceptions they have of the company's brand, all of which ultimately affect the bottom line.

Great brands are indeed built from the inside out (Leonhardt, 2001). Most management experts agree that a company's competitive advantage is its employees. "The difference between an ordinary company brand and a truly great brand is the company's employees" (Oakner, 2004). Oakner (ibid.) stresses that companies are learning that their brand stands or falls on the internal relationship with employees, as much as on the external promises to customers. According to Turpin (2003), branding is not only about products. It encompasses the whole enterprise, but first of all its people. Companies should realise that their marketing and human resource departments must become bedfellows. A successful partnership between the two departments can create a culture that is more effective at delivering business results (Smith & Hanstead, 2004). There has recently been much speculation on the importance of external brand identity, and an increasing emphasis on employees' internalisation of the external brand identity so as to create organisational success. According to Spark (2004, p. 9), "[n]o longer are brands just visible or emotional symbols. Rather, they define the relationships with all of the company's stakeholders, including employees".

As depicted in Figure 5.6 below, King and Grace (2009) set up a framework to show the impact of brand building on employees. Called "employee-based brand equity" (EBBE), the framework has employee-based brand equity dimensions. The authors tested and validated this model in 2010. Their research set the scene for organisations who wish to manage internal brand building effectively and also appreciate the employee effects and organisational benefits.
5.3.5.1 Openness

Whilst still reflecting on Figure 5.6 above, King and Grace (2009, p. 130) define EBBE as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on employees' response to their work environment". Sufficient brand knowledge is achieved through effective internal brand management, which entails information generation, knowledge dissemination, openness and the Human (H) factor. Information that is generated on the basis of the gap between existing and ideal employee brand knowledge and then disseminated in a manner that is relevant and meaningful to the employees' jobs will guide their organisational actions. In order to enhance employee performance and engagement, organisations need to treat their employees with respect and dignity, which will result in employees who are open to dialogue and an organisation that is characterised by an excellent Human (H) factor.
Employees who have brand knowledge have role clarity and brand commitment. It is important to provide employees with clear guidance and direction, and enough brand knowledge to give them role clarity. Also, when employees perceive their relationship with the organisation to be a positive one, they should have a high level of commitment to the organisation. The ultimate EBBE benefits include brand citizenship behaviour (showing positive internal and external brand behaviour), employee satisfaction, employee intention to stay and positive employee word of mouth. EBBE benefits are considered to be the foundation of enhanced customer satisfaction and financial performance (King & Grace, 2009).

5.3.6 Factors leading to internal branding

5.3.6.1 Internal marketing

As discussed previously, effective internal marketing leads to effective internal branding and is seen as the task of hiring, training and motivating able employees who want to serve customers well. Training is not the only important activity in a successful organisation. Lings and Greenley (2009) agree in that they hold that an internal marketing orientation (IMO) leads to both contented and motivated employees, with a causal effect of an external market orientation, namely, satisfied customers, and, inevitably better financial performance. This is depicted in Figure 5.7 below.

![Figure 5.7: Internal market orientation (IMO) within a nomological network](source: Lings and Greenley (2009, p. 42))
5.3.6.2 Employee empowerment through communication and training

If a company can tell its customers what makes it great, why does it not spread the message to its employees? To have a strong, unbeatable brand, a company needs employees who understand the brand and are motivated to live it daily. A company must thus implement an employee programme that enhances brand delivery. The company must articulate its brand statement clearly. Just as a company should have a single-minded message for marketing to consumers, the company should have a single-minded message for employees – this is the aftertaste that the company wants everyone to have. A company's marketing to its employees must be just as good as, or even better than its external marketing (Sartain, 2005).

Internal communication is seen as a necessity to increase an organisation's competitive advantage, since it increases employee satisfaction. According to Christensen (2002), it entails communicating to potential and existing employees what the organisation stands for. According to King and Grace (2006), an organisation's foundation must be in place, that is, systems, procedures and internal marketing must take place. This calls for internal training and communication, which align, motivate and integrate employee efforts. "Empowering employees, meaning, allowing staff more autonomy, discretion and unsupervised decision making makes responsibility more common" (De Chernatony, 2001, p. 249). Employees must also have full customer knowledge and must be empowered with unsupervised decision making, although an element of control is necessary to ensure they behave in line with the organisation's values. Lings and Greenley (2005) depict information that informs internal market orientation in Figure 5.8 below:
Hartle (1995) indicates that the goal of effective performance management is to create an organisational climate in which employees continuously strive to improve performance. A performance management system should embed acceptable behaviours and values in the way things are done in the organisation. It should therefore be developed with reference to the existing or the preferred culture (Torrington & Hall, 1998).

**Figure 5.8: Measuring internal market orientation**

Source: Lings and Greenley (2005, p. 292)
Williams (1999) emphasises that performance management has to be viewed from three perspectives, namely as a system (a) for managing organisational performance; (b) for managing employee performance; and (c) for integrating management, organisational and employee performance. When employees feel that they get support from their colleagues and management through recognition and some autonomy, they believe that they can deliver the brand promise effectively and efficiently. In turn, this enhances employees' identification with, and commitment and loyalty to the brand.

5.3.7 Outcomes of internal branding

5.3.7.1 Employee engagement

Macey and Schneider (2008, p. 3) see employee engagement as "the act of committing, pledging or engaging oneself" or "the state of being bound emotionally or intellectually to a course of action or to another person or persons". Thus engagement seems to include commitment and an employee who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work (Drotskie & Viljoen, 2011, p. 3). According to the 2008/2009 WorkUSA Report of the Watson Wyatt Worldwide, when employees are highly engaged, their companies enjoy 26 percent higher productivity, have lower turnover risk and are more likely to attract top talent. The companies concerned have also earned 13 percent higher total returns for shareholders over the past five years. Highly engaged employees are twice as likely as their less engaged peers to be top performers (Watson Wyatt's Press Release, 2009).

The relationships that employees have with their peers and leaders, their level of perceived autonomy and their perceptions of payment and reward/recognition schemes could limit the effectiveness of internal branding. The impact of internal branding on employees' attitudes and behaviour is heightened when they are contented or satisfied with their workplace (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011).
5.3.7.2 Employee commitment

Drotskie and Viljoen (2011, p. 3) view commitment as "the emotional experience of the phenomenon engagement", while Viljoen (2009) sees engaged commitment as a person’s steadfast purpose and energy, which binds the person to a decided course of action. Sartain (2005, p. 89) points out that employees make or break a company's brand, and ultimately a company's results. In fact, a company that overlooks its internal brand significantly reduces the potential impact of its external brand. According to Boyd and Sutherland (2006, p. 10), organisations that try to achieve employee commitment to living the brand of the organisation need to create an emotional connection with employees to make the brand come alive for them in order to persuade them to align their values and behaviours with the company's brand.

The importance of internal branding is emphasised by Devasagayam, Buff, Aurand and Judson (2010, p. 211): "When internal branding efforts are implemented, employees are more likely to understand the brand, take ownership in the brand, and provide evidence of the brand in their organisational responsibilities."

Employee commitment can be viewed as "giving all of yourself while at work". This means that employees should use work time constructively, pay attention to detail, put in that extra effort and accept change. They should further co-operate with others, engage in self-development, respect, trust and have pride in their abilities, seek improvement and give loyal support (Mullins, 1999).

Mullins (1999) suggests that commitment can be improved by management being clear about the organisation's direction, management's demonstration of commitment to carry out organisational goals, training and retraining of staff, providing consistent information at every level on progress and actual performance, and rewarding employees financially for success achieved by the organisation.

After their exploratory study of employees' perspective on internal branding, King and Grace (2008) came up with their employee brand commitment pyramid. This pyramid signifies that basic or rudimentary task-oriented information needs to be provided to employees. This will result in employees who are committed to their job. They should next be given brand-related information, which will help those
employees moving further up the pyramid to become committed to the brand. The more the brand information, the closer employees will feel to the brand.

5.3.7.3 Loyalty

Companies that build the brand internally first and then extend it externally to customers tend to have both employee and customer loyalty. In an internally branded organisation, every member is a customer. In addition, all internal customers must buy in to the brand values and be happy in their jobs before they can deliver value effectively to the final customer (Gronroos, 2000). Payne, Christopher, Clark and Peck (2001) hold that when organisations pursue the goal to re-orientate the entire business to face the market, this will lead to higher levels of employee brand loyalty, which they see as translating into increased sales and profits, while also differentiating the business from the competition. Fram and McCarthy (2003) also link a higher level of brand loyalty to a higher level of employee job satisfaction.

5.3.7.4 Enhanced performance

Enhanced performance entails higher performance by employees and higher performance by the brand (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky & Wilson, 2009a).

5.3.7.4.1 Higher employee performance

Causon (2004, p. 299) mentions that

… true branding goes to the very core of any organisation. It provides a powerful tool that unites and galvanises the entire organisation, and helps reinforce and promulgate the key business goal of differentiation and customer satisfaction. This happens because a cohesive internal branding programme does give power to the people, it is an enabler that releases the creativity … It equips the organisation to get things right
more of the time, and also increases efficiency and therefore productivity.

According to Boyd and Sutherland (2006), influencing employee attitudes and behaviour should be an integral part of a company’s overall branding strategy.

5.3.7.4.2 Higher brand performance

Internal branding, which encompasses brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty and employee satisfaction, has a significant effect on employees’ brand performance (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Punjaisri, Evanschitzky & Wilson, 2009a). It is thus necessary to discuss these concepts and their interrelatedness.

In their study on building brand commitment, Burmann and Zeplin (2005), as indicated in Figure 5.9 below, indicate that a brand requires a consistent and continuous identity, just like a person, to be trusted. To ensure such consistency, they developed two constructs, three key levers for generating brand commitment and four context factors.

Their first construct, brand citizenship behaviour, outlines what it means for employees to live the brand. The authors see brand citizenship behaviour as all brand-related behaviours that are evident within and outside the organisation. Brand commitment is the key driver of brand citizenship behaviour. The second construct is brand commitment. Only when employees are brand committed will they show positive brand-related information (brand citizenship behaviour) within and outside the organisation. The three key levers for generating brand commitment are brand-centered human resource management, brand communication and brand leadership. The four context factors that should be present within the organisation are culture fit, organisational structure fit, employee know-how and disposable resources. All these will be final determining factor of the brand strength. All this is shown in Figure 5.9 below.
As depicted in Figure 5.10 below, Punjaisri et al. (2009a) identify brand identification, brand commitment and brand loyalty as the outcomes of internal branding. Once the employee identifies with the company's brand, brand identification serves as a driver of brand commitment, which in turn brings about brand loyalty. The authors show that these three factors significantly affect employees' brand performance. Although internal branding affects employees' brand performance less than it affects their brand identification, the co-ordination of internal communication (marketing), namely, orientation, group meetings and briefings with ongoing training is shown to be important. All these are clearly shown in Figure 5.10 below.

Internal communication gives employees an idea what the brand is, and training "coaches and educates how to enact the espoused brand values as proposed by the brand promise" (Punjaisri et al., 2009b, p. 568). The Punjaisriet al. (2009a) study does however caution that the effect of internal branding on employees' behaviour could be dependent on the extent to which it influences employees' brand attitudes.
5.3.7.4.3 Duration

The conceptual model of Punjaisri and Wilson (2011), as shown in Figure 5.11 below, depicts the moderating effects of personal and situational factors on internal branding. Personal factors are age, educational background and length of service, while situational factors are relationships with leaders and peers, perceptions of reward and remuneration schemes, and perceived autonomy. As mentioned by Simons and Enz (1995) and confirmed by Punjaisri and Wilson (2011), in terms of personal factors, older workers tend to have higher commitment and loyalty towards their brand. Therefore, they may feel that their commitment and loyalty are less strongly influenced by internal branding.
Also, employees with a lower educational level are generally loyal no matter what internal branding was undertaken, whereas employees with a higher educational level are keen to advance their careers and need company value reinforcement to raise their loyalty to the current brand. The longer employees have been with an organisation, the greater the impact of internal branding on their brand behaviour.

Figure 5.11 above highlights the importance of internal branding for employees’ brand identification, commitment and loyalty. However, Punjaisri and Wilson (2011) also caution that management should be aware that the impact of internal branding is dependent on employees’ attitude, behaviour and satisfaction in the workplace, and that the internal work environment must be conducive to employees and their
brand values. Furthermore, personal variables such as age, education and length of service as well as situational factors in the work environment are shown to moderate the effectiveness of internal branding. In contrast to Burmann and Zeplin (2005) who see brand commitment as the culmination of brand-centred human resource activities, brand communication and brand leadership, and a conducive culture and structure fit in the organisation, King and Grace (2009) see brand commitment as the ultimate outcome of employees' brand knowledge (sum of technical information and brand-related information), and commitment to the job. This is shown in Figure 5.12 below.

![Employee brand commitment pyramid](image)

**Figure 5.12: Employee brand commitment pyramid**

Source: King and Grace (2008, p. 370)

### 5.3.8 Success and failure of internal branding

Mahnert and Torres (2007) identify various success and failure factors of internal branding. These are shown in the following table 5.1 below:
Table 5.1: Dimensions and factors of failure and success in internal branding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSION</th>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CITATIONS IN THE LITERATURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insular Thinking and Internal Competition</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Market Research</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measurement and Feedback</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific Knowledge of Brand Direction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Support</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deeds Communication</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Teams</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Multi-directional Communication</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formality of Message</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment of Internal and External Message</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constancy and Adaptation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Clutter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Alignment of Business and Brand Objectives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Employee Participation and Support</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segmentation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Legitimacy and Acceptance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Models</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mahnert and Torres (2007, p.56)
From Table 5.1 above, it is clear that the company concerned has a conducive internal market orientation, or a conducive organisational culture. Since organisational culture plays such an important role in internal branding, it is discussed next.

5.4 Organisational culture and branding

This section deals with the concepts "culture", "organisational socialisation" and "openness" within the context of organisational branding.

5.4.1 Culture

Schein (1992) defines organisational culture as the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks and reacts to its various environments. Closely related to organisational culture is organisational climate, which is the shared attitude of employees (Drotskie & Viljoen, 2011). In terms of organisational culture and internal branding, Ind (1997, p. 46) sees, "[a]n employee's view of identity is determined by the overall culture of the organisation, the values of the organisation that are transmitted by the collective attitudes and behaviour, and by the communication process". The purpose of internal branding is to ensure that employees' values are well managed by the organisation, within a conducive culture, so as to develop employees' competencies and strategies.

De Chernatony and Cottam's (2008) study shows that confusing and inconsistent organisational cultures hinder innovation. Hence the authors conclude that an organisational culture that is synchronised with societal and brand values survives. King and Grace (2006) confirm this by stating that the development of services depends on the culture of the organisation and the training and attitudes of its employees.
5.4.2 Organisational socialisation

Organisational socialisation is the extent to which an employee perceives that the organisational environment assists employees to learn and identify organisational values, beliefs and expectations (King & Grace, 2010). According to Schein (1992), organisational culture (a) is transmitted to employees through socialisation; (b) influences workplace behaviours; and (c) operates at a visible level through artifacts and observable behaviour. Thus, according to Smircich (1983), organisational culture promotes stability in a company, and helps employees make sense of their surroundings. Studies by Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) show that organisational culture is related to employee behaviour and attitude, and is formed and structured by the integration of everyone in the organisation.

Over time, the way an organisation does things, thinks and behaves (its attitude and behaviour) will be its corporate culture. In order for internal branding to be successful, scholars of employer branding (Ruch, 2000), holistic branding (de Chernatony, Drury & Segal-Horn, 2003) and brand leadership (Aaker & Joachimstahler, 2000) – all relating to the concept "internal branding" – emphasise that leadership can only be aligned with a corporate brand if the internal culture of an organisation expresses the corporate brand values. According to Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006), the organisational culture is a platform for developing the corporate brand and communicating its promise to employees. Aaker (1996) and de Chernatony and Drury (2006) argue that successful brands capitalise on the congruency between organisational culture and the values of the company. Such congruency is widely acknowledged as a key component of a firm's overall corporate branding strategy. This provides a framework for reinforcing the brand identity in the minds and hearts of the employees and for rationalising the firm's branding strategy.

A strong organisational culture may also contribute to assimilating different understandings of the brand's promise, due to the increasing social and functional diversity of people responsible for branding issues (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Alloza, Conley, Prado, and Espantaleon (2004, p. 66) point out that "the vision of an integrated company, brand and corporate culture represents a guide for behaviour in an organisation – a measure of consistency between 'what is said' and 'what is done' that permits the strengthening of a corporate reputation over time". It is vital for a
company to strike a balance between its image and a "reality", especially the "reality" as perceived by the employees.

The concept "market orientation" (King & Grace, 2006) or "internal market orientation" (Lings & Greenley, 2009) relates to the culture of an organisation and is positively associated with the performance of an organisation. Market orientation calls for a culture that is focused on the customer, and employees that have a collective understanding of what is expected by and delivered to the customer (King & Grace, 2006).

Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005, p. 182) recognise the role of leadership and culture as follows:

"One way to ensure that culturally diverse employees develop a shared understanding of service brand values, is through leaders orchestrating cognitive, affective and communicative dimensions. Effective leadership is a key factor distinguishing successful and less successful brands."

5.4.3 Openness

The concept "openness" was discussed under the concept "employees in internal branding". A culture of openness will only prevail in an organisation if employees are given all relevant information on the organisation and its brand.

5.5 Competitive forces and branding

This section deals with the competitive advantage of successful brands, competitive forces and employer branding, and competition for resources.

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Please see 5.2.5.
5.5.1 Competitive advantage of successful brands

Boyd and Sutherland (2006, p. 9) highlight the competitive advantage of brands by mentioning that "in a competitive business environment, brand management is viewed as a critical success factor", and that "in order to leverage every possible advantage in today's highly competitive business environment, companies are revitalising their brand strategy". The competitive advantage of a brand comes about through the identification of a specific product that signals quality and offers a promise of performance (Keller, 2003). In this regard, Dobni (2002, p.42) state that "outperforming the competition in the financial services industry rests on the ability to create and sustain employee behaviours that allow organisations to perform differently from their rivals".

According to Ghodeswar (2008), successful brands are those brands that adapt well to the environment and thus survive and flourish in the long term in spite of competition. Companies need to continuously investigate the status of their brands, especially in the face of aggressive competition. They need to establish how their brands are doing in the marketplace, and what impact certain market interventions will have on brand equity.

Companies that present a cohesive, distinctive and relevant brand identity may become the preferred brand in the marketplace, add value to their products and services, and command a price premium (Schmidt & Simonson, 1997). When a brand faces aggressive competition, brand personality and reputation help it to beat competing offerings. This can result in gaining customer loyalty and achieving growth.

A strong brand identity that is well understood and experienced by customers helps to develop trust which, in turn, results in differentiating the brand from its competitors. A company needs to establish a clear and consistent brand identity by communicating brand attributes in a way that is easily understood by customers (Ind, 1997; Schmidt & Simonson, 1997).

A manufacturer's existing brands are potentially vulnerable to successful new brands from competitors. Therefore, it is in the manufacturer's interest to maintain the relative functional excellence of its existing brands. The most successful brands
keep up with competitors by creating points of parity in those areas where competitors are trying to find an advantage, while at the same time creating points of difference to achieve advantages over competitors in some other areas (Keller, 2001). It is necessary to develop and implement long-term integrated communication strategies demonstrating the brand's value to the target customers. The message should be consistent with the brand value, brand personality and other brand identity dimensions. A strong brand helps a company to position and extend its brand and to have greater influence on customers' purchase processes (Keller, 2001).

Progress can be monitored in terms of the level of purchasing, consumption, brand recognition, brand recall, advertising awareness, and many other ways. Such monitoring will enable brand marketers to assess the effect of a marketing campaign on the target consumers, which in turn will enable brand strength measurement (Kotler, & Keller, 2009).

5.5.2 Competition for resources

The pace of global competition and technological change has left managers struggling to keep up. A competitive advantage, whatever its source, can be attributed ultimately to the ownership of a valuable resource that enables a company to perform activities better or more cheaply than competitors (Boyd & Sutherland, 2006).

Brands serve exactly the same general purpose in business-to-business markets as they do in consumer markets: They facilitate the identification of products, services and businesses as well as differentiate them from the competition (Anderson & Narus, 2004). Brands are an effective and compelling means to communicate the benefits and value of a product or service (de Chernatony, 2001). They are a guarantee of quality, origin and performance, thereby increasing the perceived value to the customer and reducing the risk and complexity involved in the buying decision (Keller, 2003).
5.6. Leadership and branding

Leadership is the key to organisational success (Blanchard, 2009; Ulrich, 2008; Van Gelder, 2005; Gregory, 2006). This is discussed below in terms of the differences between management and leadership, leadership's investment in the growth of a company, leadership and brand management strategies, leadership and vision, leaders with knowledge and finally leaders with commitment.

5.6.1 Leadership, the key to organisational success

Blanchard (2009, p. 21) defines leadership as the "capacity [of leaders] to influence others by unleashing their power and potential to impact the greater good". Brand leadership, by extension, would be leaders' capacity to unleash employees' power and potential to impact the greater marketing and branding good for the company. "If leadership is successful, there is a guarantee that the rest of a business organisation will be successful. A company's reputation is not so much dependant on its products and services, but on its leadership" (Ulrich, 2008, p. 13).

Van Gelder (2005) concurs with Gregory (2006) in that they both see leadership as the key to business strategy, brand strategy and marketing strategy, and in that they both hold that leadership is needed to encourage creativity throughout the organisation. They see leadership as creating the vision, structures, systems, trust and clarity that inspire people in an organisation to achieve creativity and apply it to the things they do in their work, as well as creating partnerships with other stakeholders of the brand. It is imperative that management and leadership believe firmly in what they want to convey, both to the external market and their employees, which Gregory (2006) labels "consistency".

There is a distinct difference between traditional and emerging definitions of leadership, and the difference between leadership and management.
5.6.2 Leadership versus management

Schemerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1997) emphasise that leadership is a controversial topic and that many arguments have been put forward on the difference between managers and leaders. However, the general assumption is that a manager should promote stability or enable the organisation to run smoothly, whereas a leader should promote adaptive or useful changes. Schemerhorn et al. (1997) mention that leaders have influence, as they get an individual or group to do what they want the individual or group to do.

Kaplan and Norton (2001, p. 331) propose the following distinction:

*Management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly … Leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances … Successful transformation is 70 to 90 percent leadership and only 10 to 30 percent management.*

As mentioned previously, in this study, leaders can also be seen as managers.

5.6.3 Leadership's investment in the growth of a company

The main focus of most leaders is organisational strategy, with the aim to increase the financial performance of the company. The core outcomes of organisational strategy are service strategy, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. A company’s external marketing must be consistent with the consumer's experience, and therefore employees must be deployed accordingly (King & Grace, 2006). King and Grace (2006) state that management must lead by example, show commitment to organisational goals and values, and transfer knowledge coherently to all employees.

5.6.4 Leadership and brand management strategies

As shown in Figure 5.13 below, although leadership takes priority over management, King and Grace (2006) see the role of management as ensuring a conducive culture
or market-orientated brand strategy, influencing a company's brand management directly and engendering superior brand performance. To achieve this, brand management philosophies and standards must be relevant and managers must communicate these standards to employees. Managers must be seen to shape the desired employee behaviour and heed the differences among service employees. Management must train service employees and communicate well with them (internal marketing), and recruit the correct employees (King & Grace, 2006). As previously mentioned, Figure 5.13 below, illustrates these points.

**Figure 5.13: The impact of brand management strategies on employee roles**

Source: King and Grace (2006, p. 377)
In order to achieve effective brand management, as depicted in Figure 5.13 above, King and Grace (2006) identify the following themes related to brand management in a service firm: direction, involvement, employee selection, relevance, employee satisfaction, flexibility, management role, comprehension of differences, influencing role, control foundation, internal marketing, management role enhancers, and element of control. Since the themes of relevance and comprehension of differences are new themes according to King and Grace (2006), these themes are investigated intensively by the authors.

Employees must be made aware of the market orientation of their organisation. Therefore managers need to be involved in the organisation at all levels, and involved in employee selection. Managers must also transfer the relevant knowledge, ensure that employees are contented (mainly through clear roles and responsibilities). Managers must ensure that employees are trained to be flexible in responding to customers, and be aware of their specific role as management, and the need to lead with commitment and by example.

Also, irrespective of differences among employees, managers must ensure that knowledge is transferred. Managers must be able to influence employees and consistently maintain control. A "foundation" of systems and procedures for internal marketing must be in place. This calls for training and internal communication to align, motivate and integrate employees. Employees have to be role enhancers, but for this they need full customer knowledge. Employee empowerment is encouraged, but some control is necessary to ensure they behave in line with company values.

In summary, in order for an organisation to deliver service quality in line with a company's brand promise, as laid out above in Figure 5.13 above, management must: train existing service employees and communicate well with them (internal marketing), recruit new correct employees, and impart the correct skills (interactive marketing). These trained and skilled employees, will then offer customers the correct knowledge and service, with the resultant correct and effective brand management and external marketing in line with the company's brand promise (King & Grace, 2006). This is captured in Figure 5.14 below.
In their research on the role of leadership and structures, Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006) suggest that a leader's verbal communication on leadership responsibility for corporate branding needs to be complemented by non-verbal communication (see also Asif & Sargeant, 2000; de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001). For instance, showing commitment, living brand values and identity, trusting and enabling employees to be empowered, applying the proper dress codes and addressing colleagues appropriately can encourage employees to actively support the brand promise. In this way leaders act as facilitators between structures and individuals.

Once a brand message has been established and leadership is in place, a company can begin the ongoing process of internal brand education. Gregory (2006) highlights the importance of consistency, particularly in strategy (which is set up by the CEO and executives) and communication. He asserts that if strategy and communication support each other, you are already building an effective and sustainable brand culture. Strategy, creativity and leadership all have an important part to play in branding, and getting the mix and balance right will be the most crucial job of global and local management in the years to come.
Once the leadership is in place, what it conveys to the external market must be aligned with what the employees are experiencing and perceiving.

5.6.5 Leadership and vision

Meyer and Botha (2000, p. 68) define a visionary leader as "being able to deal with and manage the paradoxes in your life". Leadership vision is the ability to notice "what is" and "what could be" (Fleming, 2004). De Chernatony and Cottam (2008, p. 941) express their views on the influence of leaders on employee direction as follows: "To influence employee attitudes and behaviour so that they reflect organisational requirements, it is necessary to provide employees with direction." King and Grace (2005) confirm that such direction will enable employees to carry out their tasks successfully.

It is evident that, in the changing economic and business environment, the building blocks of leadership are also changing. Therefore, leaders of the future need not only to adapt but to be flexible enough to adapt quickly.

According to Kane (2004), leadership is seen as the art of getting people to accomplish things that they never thought they could accomplish. People are taken to places they never thought they could reach. The leadership attributes identified by the author are vision, passion, authenticity, integrity, courage, wisdom and communication skills. To these one can add: building collaborative teamwork and interdependent work environments, creating a culture of trust, and focusing action on the future and change management.

5.6.6 Effective leaders

The new economy requires a different approach to products and services because knowledge and information and the speed of delivering these are making increasing demands on the leaders of organisations. They have to be much more aware of what is happening in their industry and where their organisation is in relation to the environment to ensure their organisation's survival and establish a competitive advantage. This, in turn, requires individuals with different psychosocial dynamics
and competencies and capabilities; individuals who can build their credibility more on the demonstration of their value system than on their technical ability to do a specific job. Individuals who can speak to the heart of people and inspire them will be more successful as leaders. This does not mean they should stop managing and guiding in the traditional way, but that they have to focus more on the people side of the organisation.

Leaders in the new economy will be evaluated on their excellence, on the way in which they drive organisational performance and ensure stakeholder satisfaction, taking care of tangible and intangible assets and ensuring holistic organisational functioning while also taking responsibility for the environment and community within which they operate. Leaders of the future will face more pressure to perform, stay ahead and stay relevant. These demands will increase as technology and globalisation accelerate (Beyleveld, 2005).

As depicted in Figure 5.15 below, Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006) suggest that successful leaders act as "integrating forces" on two levels: integrating the elements of corporate identity structures (referring to corporate culture, corporate design, corporate communication and corporate behaviour), and mediating between the corporate branding structures and the individual. Leaders must help align individual employees' behaviour with the defined brand identity. Leaders must also mediate between what is happening and should happen in the organisation in terms of brand identity. The effect of such leadership is a more powerful brand image.
Structures of Signification, Legitimation and Domination

Concept of New Structure of Corporate Culture, Corporate Design, Corporate Behaviour and Communication

New Scripts for Translation of Concept

Leader as a Mediator

New Schemas for Action

Ongoing Individual Behaviour

New Brand-adequate Behaviour

Figure 5.15: Structuration of internal branding and the role of leadership

Source: Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006, p. 775)

In a subsequent study, Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005), which is shown in Figure 5.16 below, focus on the role of leadership during internal brand building of service brands in international companies. Figure 5.16 captures such brand building.
As indicated previously in Figure 5.16 above, Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005) emphasise that employees are a critically important part of the service delivery process, and are responsible for delivering on the brand promise as set out by the company. Employees need a shared understanding of the service brand's values, with strong commitment and identification. Leaders must be able to leverage cognitive, affective and communicative differences among culturally diverse employees, referring to making a positive mental, emotional and communicative (communication) difference respectively to employees. Two behavioural competencies are crucial: (a) defining a clear brand vision; and (b) facilitating verbal and non-verbal social interaction patterns (showing commitment, trusting employees and living brand values). This helps build passion, commitment and organisational
identification among employees, who are responsible for delivering the successful service brands. Again, all these are clearly shown in Figure 5.16 above.

Hattingh (2004, p. 112) emphasises the importance of having a leader who is a role model by stating the following:

If your employees can align their own life purpose with your brand purpose, if they can proudly project themselves through the work you offer them, then they will automatically brand you as a preferred employer. But they'll align themselves with your organisational purpose only if it is built on the kind of human values that enable people to find a higher meaning through their work. Those values are set by leadership – not in the words of a mission or vision statement, but by example. Once the brand purpose is clear to everyone, from executives to cleaners, they will automatically know how to behave – how the phone should be answered, how proposals should be presented, and how customers should be treated.

Ulrich and Smallwood (2000, p. 2) also regard the role of the leader in branding as important in that they hold that "the brand must be imbued in each leader throughout the firm; then they communicate that brand to employees, who then sustain it with customers. The organization creates leaders who are branded, or distinct from leaders of other firms."

When the corporate brand is defined and clarified through internal branding, organisation leaders can guide employees to better sense making (Mitchell, 2002). If leaders produce the desired results in this regard, they will produce effective brand results. Such leaders will distinguish themselves "both to employees, supervisors, and ultimately customers. These leaders make a difference not just because of what they say or who they are, but what they deliver" (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2000, p. 4).

Vallaster and de Chematony (2006) emphasise the role of leadership in external and internal brand building in their exploratory research on Southwest Airlines, America's most successful "no frills" airline. Its executives initiated branding to achieve strategic focus in the organisation. As a result, Southwest Airlines achieved a
competitive advantage, and on top of it a sustainable competitive advantage (Miles & Mangold, 2005).

A corporate brand is a company's most valuable long-term financial investment and should be treated with the same constant attention and scrutiny as any other valuable asset (Gregory, 2006). There must first be clear lines of communication starting from the CEO, an agreed-upon brand manager, and the realisation by the leadership that the employees are the most important part of the company's branding effort. Asian companies, due to societal factors, have decided against the use of branding practices in the boardroom, which has been to their peril. Based on research on Asian companies that were unsuccessful due to their lack of branding efforts, Roll (2006, p. 42) states that "branding should no longer be delegated to the lower echelons of the company but rather managed by the CEO".

However, according to Judson et al. (2006, p. 100), communication alone "is most likely not enough for employees to 'live the brand'. Although it is critical for the institution's brand identity to be promoted externally, the brand promise must also be supported internally through various promotional methods." Because the workplace climate impacts profoundly on organisational outcomes, it is critical to examine the factors that determine organisational climate (Asree, Zain & Razalli, 2010; Bellou & Andronikidis, 2009). Asree et al. (2010), and Bellou and Andronikidis (2009) found that the formation of organisational climate is based on the leadership of senior managers who can effectively lead their followers to align themselves with the organisational vision (Davidson, 2003; Scott-Halsell, Shumate & Blum, 2008). For example, a CEO who serves as a role model for employees regarding the communication of brand values, influences employees' dedication to their organisation, which in turn increases performance (Davidson, 2003; Gill & Mathur, 2007).

Branding should not be mistaken for a fancy arm of advertising that is practised by the elite, but rather an approach the CEO engages in to inspire employees to follow suit. Roll (2006) advises Asian and other business leaders to treat branding as an investment and not an expense. Furthermore, they should build up strategic intangibles such as brand equity rather than tangible assets such as buildings, factories and the like (Roll, 2006, p. 44). However, "organisations admired for their
brand strength have learned the most important brand-building axiom – the brand on the outside is as strong as the brand on the inside" (Speak & Hanson, 2008, p. 22).

According to Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006), leaders can be catalysts for internal brand building and brand-related information, knowledge and networking. The research results drawn from Vallaster and de Chernatony's (2006) study indicate that successful internal brand building requires leaders that can establish corporate structures (corporate culture, corporate design, corporate communication and corporate behaviour) that convey coherent and consistent brand-related messages to staff. Indeed, successful internal brand building rests on the interplay between strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2003, 2001, 1997). Such coherency seems to stimulate employees' commitment to the brand.

According to King (2010), transformational leaders get employees to live the brand via internal communication. Once employees understand as well as accept the brand values, an organisational brand climate is established that improves the management of customers' service experiences.

5.6.7 Commitment and leadership

Lämsä and Savolainen (2000) suggest that attention should be paid to managerial commitment, because most commitment literature refers to the employee only. According to Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006), non-verbal communicative behaviours including showing commitment, living brand values and identity, and trusting and enabling employees, are crucial leadership behaviours. Truly committed managers consider themselves part of internal brand building and they work diligently and continuously towards progress with process. Such managers actively learn from anyone who might provide valuable insight, including their followers.

As mentioned by Devasagayam et al.(2010) and Mitchell (2002), employees will understand the brand better, have a passion for the brand and perhaps even live the brand daily if their leaders know how consumers react to certain situations, and apply this knowledge of consumer behaviour to internal communication. Synergy
between what leadership is conveying to the external market and what employees (the most valuable asset) are experiencing and perceiving is essential.

The next section integrates the concepts "internal branding", "external branding", "culture" and "leadership" within a competitive environment.

5.7 Internal branding, external branding, culture and leadership

Van Gelder (2005) and Gregory (2006) see leadership as creating the vision, structures, systems, trust and clarity that inspire people in an organisation to achieve its strategy, apply creativity to their work and establish partnerships with other stakeholders of the brand. It is imperative that management and leadership believe firmly in what they convey to the external market and their employees, which Gregory (2006) labels "consistency".

Great brands are built from the inside out (Leonhardt, 2001). “As organizations grow, the value of people can get lost amid strategies and structures and finance, but in reality the management of people determine both competencies and strategies” (Ind, 1997, p. 83).

Interbrand Insights (2003, p. 2) point out that "aligning your organisation, operations and culture around your brand values brings the promise to life". They further hold that "for a brand to come to life with customers, the organization must be internally aligned to deliver the brand promise through the organization's culture, reward systems, key success activities and structure". A corporate brand stands for the relationship that an organisation has with its employees, as much as it represents the relationship that it has with its customers through its products and service offering. In order for the employees of an organisation to construct a corporate identity, they should have a common sense of goal achievement. Schultz (2003) affirms that a company's external brand promise must be properly aligned with the actual performance within the organisation, and that employees are important internal promise deliverers. Thus, messages conveyed to the employees of an organisation are just as important as those sent to customers.
Internal branding therefore entails the alignment of the organisation around the brand by coordinating marketing efforts with principles of organisational change management (Tosti & Stotz, 2001). The marketing effort is focused on defining customer value through external marketing, and clear direction regarding change towards this, while change management that is focused on performance management gears employees to work in line with the organisation's requirements.

Akotia (2007, p. 102) states:

*Therefore, while performance management aims at getting employees to want to work as required by the organisation, internal branding ensures employees work for what the brand and customers (stakeholders) value about the organisation.*

The results of the study conducted by de Chernatony and Cottam (2008) based on the interactions between organisational cultures and corporate brands highlight the need for managers to be consistent and congruent regarding values in the organisational culture and the corporate brand, so that employees can be empowered. This requires that the organisation aligns its people, processes and products with a proposition in order to deliver the promise it makes to customers.

At the Avatar Corporation, where brand identity was imposed by the human resource department on company employees, the outcome was negative (Cushen, 2009). The company wanted the employees to be passionate, reliable and innovative, but the company failed to mention and show that the company itself was committed to the well-being of the employees. Employees saw the aim to establish brand identity as being abstract, not giving them credit for "having a brain", and "seducing" them into an extra functional, discretionary effort without offering anything in return.

To ensure their brand is perceived as an integrated offering, managers should ensure that staff "speak with the same voice" about the brand. By being more open with staff, providing them with more information about the brand and empowering staff who are aligned with the brand's values to offer the brand promise to customers, employees become more agreeable to presenting a coherent message about their brand (de Chernatony, 2001, p. xii). This ensures a balanced perspective that looks inside and outside an organisation to satisfy stakeholders' needs. As
pointed out by Drotskie and Viljoen (2011, p. 2), "[i]f a person or organisation would like to address something in the external environment, the real work must happen internally". It is thus essential that leaders concentrate on the "real work" among the employees inside the organisation for all other issues in respect of customers in the external environment to be resolved satisfactorily.

A corporate brand stands for the relationship that an organisation has with its employees, as much as it represents the relationship that is has with its customers through its products and service offering. In constructing an identity among members of an organisation, members should have a common sense of goal achievement. Wilkins and Ouchi (1983) emphasise that "sometimes employees do not require a complete sense of identity with the goals of the organisation, but a 'goal congruence', with a general similar goal orientation."

This can only be achieved by committed leaders who lead their employees to a higher level, with vision, knowledge and commitment.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, using the six core themes derived from the research participants' accounts as a framework, I discussed existing theoretical views and empirical findings contained in the study fields of branding and leadership.

In the next chapter, I integrate the six core themes (the outcomes of open and axial coding) and the storyline (the outcome of selective coding) in order to create a model of leadership and brand alignment.
Development of the Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM) and Concluding Comments
CHAPTER 6

Development of the Leadership And Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)
Chapter 6
Development of the Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I offer a model of branding and leadership which I constructed by integrating the research participants' experiences and views of branding with the scholarly concepts and research findings I derived from the literature. Before I present the model, it is necessary to outline the analytic tools I employed to develop it.

6.2 Analytical tools

Local scholars, Mouton and Marais' (1990), offer a useful hierarchical framework of concepts for generating scientific knowledge. Their (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p.125) framework can be presented as per Figure 6.1 below:
**Paradigm/Research programme**

- **Conceptual frames of reference** (Including theories, models and typologies)
  - Statements
  - Statements
  - Statements
  - (Including definitions, hypothesis)

- Concepts
  - Concepts
  - Concepts
  - Concepts

**Figure 6.1: Hierarchical framework**


Figure 6.1 can be explained as follows:

**Concepts**

Concepts are the most basic or elementary symbolic constructions through which one can classify reality. They can be clustered to form higher units of thought, namely constructs (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

**Statements**

Mouton and Marais (1990) define statements as sentences that make an identifiable claim about true knowledge.
Conceptual frameworks

According to Mouton and Marais (1990), conceptual frameworks are determined by the function they must perform. Three conceptual frameworks can be identified: typology, model and theory.

- A **typology** classifies a phenomenon in terms of the typical characteristics that it shares with similar phenomena, classification being one of the basic functions of conceptual frameworks. A typology also functions as a frame of reference for observation and data collection (Mouton & Marais, 1990).

- A **model** is a copy of the real thing but differs from it by including only those features that are required to meet the research purpose (De Vos, 2002). According to Burden (2006), a model represents the dynamic aspects of a phenomenon by illustrating the relationships between its elements in a simplified form.

- A **Theory** has been defined in many ways by philosophers of science and scholars working in various academic disciplines. (Benecke, 2006). It is clear that understanding theory and how it relates to the research process is no easy task since one needs "to travel into someone else’s mind and become able to perceive reality as that person does" (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. xiv). Kerlinger’s (1973, p. 9) definition of theory refers to "a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of a phenomenon by specifying relations among variables so as to explain and predict the phenomenon".

As I need to unravel and describe the experiences and views of a group of managers of branding and afterwards link their conceptualizations to existing knowledge Prof Schurink suggested, I apply the first and second order constructs typology of Schutz (1962)\(^\text{17}\).

\(^{17}\) Please also see my position regarding theory and literature in qualitative research in Chapter 2.
Discussing the complexity of the subject matter of the social sciences Schutz (1962, p. 59), writes:

"...the thought objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of men, living their daily life within their social world. Thus, the constructs of the social sciences are, so-to-speak, constructs of the second degree, that is, constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene."

Aspers (2009, p. 3) points out that:

... in conducting empirical studies, the researcher aims at understanding the meaning levels of the actors, ie, their first order constructs. Only on the basis of these first-order constructs is it possible to develop second order constructs which may then, in turn, become part of a theory. Accordingly, a researcher's second order constructs are based on the constructions of the actors in the field and it is this way that the researcher connects the "common sense world" with the scientific world of theories.

Now that the tools I used are outlined, let's turn to the model below.

### 6.3 The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)

The integration of my research findings with existing theoretical concepts and research findings confirmed that successful leadership in the orchestration of internal branding is a dynamic process, but that the relationship between the various elements still has to be demonstrated. This I attempt to do by means of the model I set out in Figure 6.2 below.
Figure 6.2: The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)
Source: Developed by the author
Let us take a look at the first-order and second-order concepts that informed the respective components of the Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM).

- **Leadership**

Leadership encapsulates the vision, commitment, internal and external environmental knowledge, and investment of the leader/s in the organisation. A clear organisational vision among leaders inevitably leads to a clear brand vision, which drives corporate identity and later brand identity. The corporate vision and the brand vision are embedded in an organisation's heritage, capabilities and personality.

Leaders with extensive external environmental knowledge and experience will have a positive impact on the organisation and ultimately on the employee-brand identity fit (similarity between employee values and brand values). Leaders who are committed to the organisation, its employees and the brand-building process are "energisers" and constitute the "care factor". They also mediate continuously between different types of employees to increase the effectiveness of internal brand building.

Leaders' ultimate aim should be to invest in the organisation, the employees and knowledge of the brand. It is only through the evaluation of internal brand management outcomes that leaders can continuously enhance internal brand management practices.

**First-order constructs**

P1  "The people here are for the love, and definitely not for the money. They are so committed. I like to say I am a leader with direction, and people seem to follow."

P2  "A leader should be willing to serve – that is what we are there for. Leaders must lead by example and respect towards others."

P3  "As a leader, one needs to have a vision and direction … we've all grown up in Company X, we were all young when we started."
"We as leaders are always reminding our employees of the importance of the brand, to recognise the brand, and be good motivators to our staff."

"I am passionate and committed."

**Second-order constructs**

The vision of leaders coherently and consistently defines and drives a brand's corporate identity (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). A clear brand vision must also be defined – a crucial behavioural competency (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). The brand will inevitably provide the necessary direction and leadership (King & Grace, 2006). Leaders must convey the brand identity, including its heritage, vision, values, capabilities and personality (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Leaders must be aware of the internal market's orientation, as it provides the necessary direction (King & Grace, 2006). Lings and Greenley (2009) agree that leaders must be aware of the internal market orientation or culture of the organisation. Leaders need to provide employees with direction, in order to influence their attitudes (King & Grace, 2010).

Committed leaders "energise" the internal branding process (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006) or act as the "care factor" in the organisation (King & Grace, 2006). Leaders are brand ambassadors (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005), must thoroughly understand the internal branding process and actively demonstrate commitment to it (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). The employee-brand identity fit is enhanced where employees spend time with leaders (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Leaders mediate between people from different environments (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). People (including leaders) must have branding, skills, knowledge and experience (King & Grace, 2006).

Leaders need to invest in knowledge of the brand (King & Grace, 2006) and corporate structures such as culture, design and communication (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). It is only through the evaluation of internal brand management outcomes that internal brand management practices can be enhanced continuously (King & Grace, 2010).
• Culture

Culture incorporates the concepts organisational socialisation (family), openness, state and issues. The culture of the organisation has to be cocooned within an environment where the general state and all issues in the company are transparent. Culture sets the platform for displaying what the corporate brand stands for and for bringing this to the attention of all employees. The corporate culture sets the standard for all employee behaviour. Role conflict between employees is minimised by a transparent organisational culture, which is the result of clear and continuous communication on issues and the present state of the organisation. The culture of the organisation must also empower employees to use their talents. Culture firmly roots the individual in the organisational family. This fosters social interaction and shared understanding of a brand’s values. Organisational socialisation occurs when an employee perceives that the organisational environment assists employees to learn and identify organisational values, beliefs and expectations. Brand values are internalised and the employee-brand identity fit is established through organisational socialisation.

In short, successful internal branding rests on a foundation of excellent leadership, a sense of family and transparency on the state of, and issues in, the organisation.

First-order constructs

P2 "There is a culture here of people being nice. There is a culture of humanism."

P3 "Our company is the best. There is a whole new culture out here."

P4 "What is a family? It is really belonging. This is what we are here for at the Company."

P6 "I am ever so proud of our brand. I am the brand. I resigned and worked for the competitor and never ever felt so proud of their brand, as I do with the Company's. I am the brand. We have a sense of belonging here which you never find anywhere else."

P9 "There is a strong culture here. People are passionate and service driven."
"We've had to make do with what programmes we can put together that's going to help them to put the campaign together. We really think of the Company as a family, and in fact we are a family."

**Abstract constructs**

Physical evidence of a service brand depends on the culture of the organisation, and the training and attitudes of its employees (King & Grace, 2006). An organisation's corporate culture defines the corporate identity and standards for individual behaviour. Corporate culture is a helpful platform to develop the corporate brand and communicate its promise to employees (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006).

Corporate culture enhances the consistency of brand-supporting behaviour when employees are receptive to original dialogue. Openness or open-mindedness boosts information sharing (King & Grace, 2010), which in turn is based on an organisation's internal market research and the effective communication of information (King & Grace, 2010).

Organisations should aim to create a culture and system that enable employees to use their talents (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). All cognitive activities are shaped by the culture and context in which they occur (King & Grace, 2010). Culture makes for a predictable world that roots an individual firmly (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). Culture has a significant impact on the development of a shared brand understanding (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). A company's diverse workforce must display a shared brand understanding. Such understanding is based on social interaction (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005).

Organisational socialisation is the extent to which an employee perceives that the organisational environment assists employees to learn and identify organisational values, beliefs and expectations (King & Grace, 2010). Brand values are internalised through organisational socialisation in the shape of informal transmission of values by colleagues and superiors, as well as formal value statements. Training enhances this socialisation and the eventual employee-brand identity fit (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).
Human factor/employees

A conducive internal environment or culture enhances employees' ability and motivation to acquire and develop relevant and meaningful brand knowledge. Therefore, leaders should attend to the development and training of employees, communication with them and ways to motivate them.

When employees feel that they are trusted, empowered and equipped with adequate training and information on the organisation and its brand, they will feel inspired and then perform at their best.

A stable organisational family produces employees who feel complete and certain. In my view, it also leads to employees who adopt the corporate identity:

EMPLOYEES WITH COMPLETENESS AND CERTAINTY → PERSONAL CORPORATE IDENTITY

First-order constructs

P3 "We have respect and enthusiasm – because I think we employ attitude and personality."

P6 "Everybody is there to assist you – it is an affirmation every time I see it happening – such an unspoken thing where everybody is looked after. If we look at it – the biggest is not the best always. We are small, yet very family orientated."

P8 "I believe that there is a lot more that we need to do with this brand. We can filter down this brand to the staff. It is important to know the staff's perception of the brand. Service to us is top priority. The brand evokes emotions within us – the brand is in our face so we can feel part of the brand."

P9 "When I joined this company, my whole life changed."

P10 "We are always told that we are the Company's best – so we started to believe it – we are people that believe that they are the best!"
Second-order constructs

Leaders must trust and enable employees to do their best (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). Leaders must consistently communicate messages to employees about the brand, the brand identity and commitment (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). It is essential to create an internal environment that enhances employees' ability and motivation to acquire and develop relevant and meaningful brand knowledge (King & Grace, 2006). Management should also attend to the work environment so that employees can be guided through training and communication to eliminate inconsistencies in the employee-brand identity fit. Management should carefully consider employee characteristics such as age and educational background, and motivate them accordingly (Punjasiri et al., 2009a).

- Empowerment

The concept of empowerment encapsulates empowerment of, and information and training to, all employees within the organisation. This calls for the availability of information, and adequate and relevant training on the brand and how to advance it.

First-order constructs

P1  "Information is always picked up and passed on in our organisation."

P2  "There are always different ways in which information is communicated, e.g. through e-mails, SMSs, information in pigeonholes and forums."

P3  "This company always has open information lines."

P1  "We empower others by enabling them to act."

P2  "All our intensive training leads to empowered employees."

P3  "It was very innovative – empowerment of the people; whereas before it was all about empowering the individual. His big drive was empowering people to make a decision!"
"We believe in empowering people through training and development, especially self-development courses. Our company spends a lot of money empowering people."

**Second-order constructs**

Management should pay attention to the work environment of employees so that employees can be trained towards reflecting the brand in all aspects of their work (Punjaisri et al., 2009a). Creative internal communication and information on brand-strengthening behaviours are crucial. Emphasis on delivery is essential (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). Formal and informal information and communication across all functions and levels minimise miscomprehension about the brand’s promise (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Such information increases comprehension of attitudes and capabilities in the organisation regarding delivery on the brand promise (King & Grace, 2010). The information must be meaningful and relevant to employees to ensure successful transfer of knowledge, which in turn will have a positive influence on fulfillment of their roles and responsibilities. Managers must be aware of the difference in employees’ receptiveness to different forms of information (King & Grace, 2006). Leaders must consistently communicate with employees about the brand, the brand identity and commitment (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006).

Employees must also be trained in brand-strengthening behaviour (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). Economic wealth comes from knowledge assets and intellectual capital, which derive from successful recruitment, training and long-term employment in a company. Internal marketing and training are essential (King & Grace, 2006). Employees must also be rewarded when they display exemplary brand behaviour (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). Professional development must be aligned with the defined brand values (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). King and Grace (2006) do however believe that there should not be too much empowerment, that is, a measure of control must be retained. Employees with a high employee-brand identity fit are to be empowered or promoted (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).
• **Internal brand building**

A solid strategic vision, a strong and stable internal family culture, and an identifiable corporate identity among all organisational members are the foundation for optimal internal branding. Leadership should not only facilitate these aspects, but should also be the key drivers of all internal branding efforts. Internal branding includes employee empowerment through training and information on the brand. It also includes employee development programmes. Internal branding that integrates training and internal communication has a positive impact on employees' brand identification, brand commitment and brand loyalty.

Leaders must understand, support and actively demonstrate commitment to the internal brand-building journey.

**First-order constructs**

P2  "More importantly, I think branding should come from within. I think it's true branding – you cannot teach people to be nice, I think we should go back to the basics. I am very close to the brand. In wearing my uniform – that to me is brand awareness. As long as you are working here, you have to live the brand. We are in love with our corporate brand, but have to diversify it."

P10  "Love the Company and love this brand – there are always lots of internal employee campaigns."

**Second-order constructs**

Internal branding has a positive impact on employees' attitude and behaviour regarding delivery on the brand promise. Successful internal brand building rests on a sound interplay between strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate identity (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Leadership is the key driver of internal branding (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). Internal branding must be evaluated regularly to ensure that the outcome is successful (King & Grace, 2010).

The effectiveness of internal branding programmes depends on both training and internal communication. Internal branding that integrates training and internal
communication has a positive impact on employees' brand identification, brand commitment and brand loyalty (Punjaisri et al., 2009a). Internal branding includes employees' development programmes (Punjaisri et al., 2009b).

Leaders must thoroughly understand, support and actively demonstrate commitment to the internal brand-building process (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005).

- Contented employees

Leaders must lead the internal branding efforts. A clear vision, a strong family culture with a clear brand identity, empowerment, training and pertinent information are a strong foundation for optimal internal branding. Open and transparent information is vital to avoid any role conflict among employees, and increases employee satisfaction.

**First-order constructs**

P3  "I am totally dedicated to and passionate about the brand. There is a fantastic brand out there. I am the brand. I feel internal branding is the buy-in of the people of the brand. There are always open communication lines. When I do presentations on my brand, I indeed feel it."

P4  "A positive environment leads to happy employees."

P5  "People within this organisation made me stay – and I am proud of having stayed."

P9  "We are passionate and proud to work in this place."

**Second-order constructs**

All internal branding efforts initiated by the leaders in an organisation with a strong culture result in contented employees. Role conflict will be avoided and job satisfaction increased where there is clear guidance (King & Grace, 2006).
• Brand citizenship behaviour

Identification with the brand results in brand commitment, and then brand loyalty. Strong individual brand commitment leads to brand citizenship behaviour. As theorists have indicated, employees can only turn brand commitment into brand citizenship behaviour if they have access to the necessary resources and if know-how, appropriate information infrastructure, planning, budgeting and controlling systems are in place. This can only be achieved through efficient and effective leadership that drives these foundational requirements. Strong internalisation has the largest influence on brand citizenship behaviour. Internalisation is developed through organisational socialisation that establishes a fit between individuals' values and the brand values.

Thus, the LBAM suggests the following:

EMPLOYEE-BRAND LINK: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

PERSONAL CORPORATE IDENTITY → BRAND IDENTITY

EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT → BRAND COMMITMENT

EMPLOYEE LOYALTY → BRAND LOYALTY, and thus

EMPLOYEE CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR → BRAND CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Since identification with the brand leads to brand commitment, then to brand loyalty, and ultimately to brand citizenship behaviour, it can be said that personal corporate identity leads to employee commitment, which leads to employee loyalty, and thus employee citizenship behaviour. Employee citizenship behaviour constitutes positive behaviours that employees display towards their job, such as a positive attitude, enthusiasm and willingness to go beyond the line of duty. The empowerment of employees is an important factor in the advancement of these positive behaviours.

Employees who are embraced by a culture of family and feel a sense of completeness and certainty owing to the efforts of good leadership will have a stable
personal corporate identity. If leaders solidify such personal corporate identity with strong internal branding efforts, employees develop a sense of oneness with the brand as well, and thus identify with the brand. In turn, identification with the brand, together with employee commitment to the organisation, leads to brand commitment and positive word-of-mouth marketing among employees. Brand commitment creates employees who believe in their organisation and want to stay in its employ (employee loyalty), which sentiments feed back into loyalty to the organisation's brand (brand loyalty). Such employees will display employee citizenship behaviour, that is, a positive attitude to the organisation and the brand, a sense of oneness, support to fellow employees and the leadership, and ultimately acting as brand ambassadors among customers and external stakeholders.

First-order constructs

P1 "We are always positive here, so we expect good things to happen."

P4 "My brand runs through my veins. It is a genuine passion for the brand. When I see my company, I feel pride for my brand, my company, the symbol. You either share the characteristics or not, and we all seem to share these characteristics."

P7 "We as leaders are always reminding our employees of the importance of the brand, to recognise the brand, and be good motivators to our staff."

P9 "I hate working with miserable people because I'm not a miserable person. I hate the atmosphere when people walk in all moody, because I'm not like that."

Second-order constructs

Internal branding enables an organisation to influence employees' brand identification, that is, their sense of belonging, brand commitment or emotional attachment, and brand loyalty expressed as their intention to stay (Punjaisri et al., 2009b). Brand identification leads to brand commitment and then brand loyalty. Brand loyalty and brand commitment are linked. Brand commitment is the psychological attachment or feeling of belonging an employee has towards an
organisation (King & Grace, 2010). Brand commitment based on identification or internalisation is mainly generated through brand leadership (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Brand identification is a driver of brand commitment, which precedes brand loyalty (Punjaïsrï et al., 2009b). Brand identity rests on the emotional appeal of the brand, which in turn rests on properly managed central or interactive information. Strong individual brand commitment leads to brand citizenship behaviour. Employees can only turn brand commitment into brand citizenship behaviour if they have access to the necessary resources and if know-how, appropriate information infrastructure, planning, budgeting and controlling systems are in place (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

Strong internalisation has the largest influence on brand citizenship behaviour. Since internal branding influences employees’ perceptions, it has a direct impact on the extent to which they behave in a way that supports delivery on the brand promise and on their intention to stay with the brand (brand loyalty) (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). The corporate structure should enhance the consistency of brand-supporting behaviour (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006).

- Enhanced employee commitment and performance

When employees have a conducive work environment (leadership, culture, training, empowerment, and company and brand information), they are contented, committed and loyal. Hence they will perform at their best, be committed and loyal to the brand and display brand citizenship behaviour. Such employees must be recognised and rewarded.

First-order constructs

P1 "My 29 years' corporate experience and 12 years with this company make me a better person. Experience is the best teacher."

P2 "I am not long here, but do not feel that less passionate about the brand than everyone who has worked here longer. I love the Company and the brand."

P3 "I am here 18 years and loving it."
P4  "It is just your energy from within this company, that's what it is. That is contagious, energy that is contagious."

P6  "There are lots of us with good attitudes."

P10 "We are incredibly passionate about our brand. We are very, very brand orientated. We feel so possessive about our brand – the international sales division, building international brands, the outbound brand."

P10 "There is sufficient passion to get us around in this company."

**Second-order constructs**

Employees must be rewarded when they recognise their company's brand promise, and internalise its values and identity (King & Grace, 2006). Effective internal communication could engender employees' commitment and loyalty (Punjaissri et al., 2009b).

- **Customers**

Customers will quickly notice employees' company and brand commitment (especially such commitment among front-line employees). Such commitment will show in willingness to serve the customer and go beyond the line of duty to assist the customer. It will also show in employees' generally pleasant and contented disposition. Furthermore, contented employees will readily give feedback on the wants and needs of customers, so leaders can use this information to tailor customer packages with a view to boosting sales. Thus, contented employees will not only draw customers back for more purchases, but also satisfy customers' needs and wants. As a result, turnover and ultimately net profit will increase.

**First-order constructs**

P1  "You're there for the shareholder, I understand, but more importantly you're there for the stakeholders."

P3  "I love this company and respect the people ... So it's about meeting the customer requirement."
"It's confusing for me that that's more an internal perception. I have to be honest: I think in our own minds the brand is stronger – especially now that I'm reaching this … I feel strongly about the Company."

Second-order constructs

Top management must act on how an organisation's values and aims are perceived by customers (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Information from external stakeholders usually "travels up" the organisation. Organisational structures must be "permeable" to allow information to travel (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Employees must be flexible enough to give effect to information, or changes to information, regarding customers (King & Grace, 2006).

- Superior organisational performance

As indicated, effective leaders or managers not only set the "perfect foundation" for internal branding to occur, they also motivate employees towards behaviour change and company and brand loyalty. This results in contented employees, a happy work environment, a healthy organisational environment and ultimately superior organisational performance. When such a foundation is in place, employees are proud of their organisation's brand and their brand leadership, and the company leadership is committed to and passionate about the brand.

First-order constructs

P3 "We are always big on service delivery and excellence."

P5 "Some people in other companies do not feel the pressure to produce; we do. We are 100% service orientated."

P10 "Our company has been around since 1968 – we are based on service, integrity and good values."

Second-order constructs

Successful managers shape the behaviours required to engender superior organisational performance (King & Grace, 2006). A brand becomes alive when
employees are proud of their organisation's brand leadership, and the company leadership is passionate about the brand (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005).

- **Enhanced brand and company performance**

An employee with a personal corporate identity, employee commitment and loyalty, within a conducive culture of family, will display brand identification, brand commitment and brand loyalty. This will lead to enhanced brand performance, since external stakeholders will feel positive towards and seek association with the brand. This will result in increased sales and eventually increased company performance.

**First-order constructs**

P1  "Marketing for us is branding. We are part of an international brand. Our brand can be seen as professional. Our brand itself has personality – loads of fun yet professional."

P3  "We are always big on service delivery and excellence."

P5  "Some people in other companies do not feel the pressure to produce; we do. We are 100% service orientated."

P10 "We are incredibly passionate about our brand. We are very, very brand orientated. We feel so possessive about our brand – the international sales division, building international brands, the outbound brand."

P10 "It's confusing for me that that's more an internal perception. I have to be honest: I think in our own minds the brand is stronger – especially now that I'm reaching this … I feel strongly about the Company."

P10 "Our company has been around since 1968 – we are based on service, integrity and good values."

**Second-order constructs**

Brand ambassadors must be appointed (Burrmann & Zeplin, 2005) and leaders must be aware of investment in the shape of brand knowledge (King & Grace, 2006).
- Greater competitive advantage

External stakeholders want to deal with an organisation and brand that are different and "better than others". As mentioned, a better or differentiated organisational brand and employees who are proud to work for it will attract greater talent, as the organisation will come to be seen as one of the best to work for. Furthermore, its brand will be perceived as one of the best brands in the country and beyond. It will be well known, and the organisation will be recognised as a corporate branded company. These "accolades" will give the organisation greater competitive advantage, both as an employer of choice and a reputable corporate brand.

First-order constructs

P4 "I worked for the competitor. They have better systems and procedures – but we are always better."

P5 "We may not be as big as the other competitors, but we are the best."

P7 "If I ever would resign, I would never ever go to the competitors."

P10 "What I see from our competitors I strongly dislike. I think I have an opposition complex. Our company is touchable and humane."

Second-order constructs

Internal branding could engender employees' brand identification and sense of oneness because it communicates to employees the brand values, making the brand and organisation different from others (Punjaisri et al., 2009b). Brand identity must be captured to outsmart the competitor's brand as well (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

De Vos (2002) mentions that a model will include only those features that are required to meet the research purpose. The LBAM does just that. Also, as indicated by Burden (2006), a model represents the dynamic aspects of a phenomenon by illustrating the relationships between its elements in a simplified form. The LBAM posits leadership as a conduit for building relationships in the internal branding process so as to achieve superior organisational performance, enhanced brand
performance and ultimately greater competitive advantage.

Since the model meets the particular research purpose and pinpoints the relationships between its elements, it can be seen as a contribution to science and a basis for further research in the area of leadership and branding.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM) which I constructed by integrating the research participants' experiences and views of branding with the scholarly concepts and research findings I derived from the literature.

In the final chapter, I summarise the study, present its key findings and their implications, offer my assessment of the study, and provide some recommendations.
CHAPTER 7

Précis, Implications and Recommendations
Chapter 7
Précis, Implications and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

How does one conclude a qualitative study?

After the feedback of my promoters and my final discussions with Prof. Schurink I knew that the answer to this question was not as straightforward as I initially thought. Wolcott (2001) believes that a qualitative study should not come to a conclusive end, neither should it lead to a "dramatic climax". In his view it is much more appropriate for the author to highlight basic issues he or she believes readers should ponder.

(Wolcott, 2001, p. 123) continues:

"Some alternatives to writing a formal Conclusion include Summaries, Recommendations and/or Implications, or a statement of Personal Reflections. Any one or a combination of these may satisfy the need for closure without tempting you to go too far, losing your audience just as the final curtain descends."

I followed Wolcott (2001) broadly. Firstly, I provide a synopsis of the study in this chapter. Secondly, I present the key implications and contributions of the study. Thirdly, I demarcate the study's key shortcoming. Fourthly, I offer my own assessment of the study. Fifthly, I present recommendations that I believe merit both scholars and practitioners' attention. I conclude with a few personal reflections.

7.2 Précis

With regard to presenting a summary in the final chapter of a qualitative report, Wolcott (2001, p.123) cautions:

A summary is not the place to startle readers with important additional information that could, and should, have been introduced earlier. When
summarizing do not be tempted to introduce an interpretive emphasis that gives a totally new twist. A summary provides opportunity for the repetition and emphasis to ensure that your message gets across, if indeed, there was a message.

In Chapter 1, I contextualised the study by pointing out the importance of internal branding as a business imperative for research, and briefly outlined the significance of the alignment between a company's internal and external branding, especially the leadership's role in this. My initial literature review led me to the following:

(1) Research problem: There is insufficient or no alignment between a leader group's internal experiences and perceptions of their organisation's brand and what a company is hoping to achieve externally.

(2) Research question: How can we as scholars explore and describe the concrete experiences and views of managers of an organisation with regard to branding and develop a model of branding?

In an attempt to find an answer to this and also make a contribution to present knowledge I formulated the following aim and objectives:

Aim: To explore and describe the experiences and views of managers of a South African organisation with regard to branding and to develop a model of branding.

Objectives:

- To develop a qualitative research approach to capture and unravel the experiences and views of the managers.

- To study the work of prominent scholars in the relevant study field in order to infer theoretical constructs and demarcate research findings that are relevant to understand the managers' experiences and viewpoints regarding branding.

- To develop a model of branding by integrating the everyday experiences and viewpoints of the managers with the relevant theoretical and empirical work of scholars.
In **Chapter 2**, I outlined the modernist qualitative approach I had opted for, offered my research philosophy (ontology and epistemology) and key scientific beliefs (my position as to the use of literature and theory, and research ethics), and described the key decisions I took during the research process.

I introduced the company where I conducted the research and outlined its official views on branding, profiled the ten research participants and described open coding, the first step in grounded theory, in **Chapter 3**. Secondly, I provided excerpts from the recordings I had made of my interviews with them. Thirdly, I manually ordered the participants' experiences and views on branding. Fourthly, I identified 36 themes with the aid of Nvivo 9 and an Excel spreadsheet. These themes I derived from my knowledge of branding, the insights gained during the interviews and inferences I made from scholarly work on branding. Finally, I linked each of the 36 themes to the relevant keywords (3 183) exported by means of Nvivo 9.

In **Chapter 4**, I discussed the second step of grounded theory, axial coding, and the resultant themes. In the first round of axial coding, I dealt with the factors underlying the core categories so as to identify their properties and illustrate the emerging constructs. I identified 15 broad themes, which I eventually consolidated into 6 core categories. Having identified the categories, properties and themes, I moved on to the third and final phase of coding, namely selective coding, to find a single storyline or core construct. In the process I referred back to the data I had obtained from the participants. This led to important insights that enabled me to formulate the core construct of the study, namely: the importance of the role of leadership in internal and external branding.

Using the six core themes (the outcomes of open and axial coding) and the core construct (the outcome of selective coding) I examined, in **Chapter 5**, existing theoretical views and empirical findings associated with external branding, as well as the human factor in branding (or internal branding), organisational culture and branding, competitive forces and branding, and finally leadership and branding.

In **Chapter 6**, I followed Mouton and Marais’s (1990) analytical "tools" to illuminate phenomena and Schutz's (1962) first-order and second-order constructs typology, and developed the Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM). More particularly, I constructed the model by integrating the research participants'
experiences and views (the first-order constructs) with the second-order constructs (theoretical concepts and research findings).

Having summarised the study we can now turn to its key findings, their implications and what I believe may be regarded as contributions to scholarship and practice.

7.3 Key findings

Two sets of findings may be differentiated, namely: general and company-specific findings.

7.3.1 General research findings

The general findings are outlined below with reference to 12 constructs.

- **Leadership**

  Leadership entails clear vision, commitment, knowledge of the internal and external environment and investment in the organisation. A clear vision of the organisation leads to a clear vision of the company's brand, which in turn drives corporate identity and brand identity.

- **Culture**

  Culture includes the concepts of organisational socialisation (family), openness, state and issues. These concepts set the platform for displaying to employees what the corporate brand stands for. The corporate culture sets the standard for all employee behaviour and firmly roots each employee or individual in the organisational family. It is through this strong foundation in a company's culture, which is mainly brought about by organisational socialisation, that brand values are internalised and the employee-brand identity fit is established.

- **The human factor**

  A positive internal environment or culture enhances employees' ability and motivation to acquire and develop relevant and meaningful brand knowledge.
Therefore, leaders should attend to the development and training of employees and devise ways of communicating with them and motivating them. Once employees feel that they are trusted, empowered and equipped with adequate training and information on the organisation and its brand, they feel inspired and perform at their best.

- **Empowerment**

Empowerment encapsulates the availability of information, including brand information, and adequate and relevant training, also on how to advance the brand.

- **Internal brand building**

A solid strategic vision, a strong and stable internal family culture, an identifiable corporate identity, purposeful empowerment, thorough training and pertinent information among all organisational members provide the foundation for optimal internal branding. Not only should the leaders facilitate the realisation of these features, but they should also be the key drivers of all internal branding efforts. They must understand, support and actively demonstrate their commitment to the internal brand-building journey.

- **Contented employees**

When leaders lead internal branding, it results in contented employees. To avoid role conflict among employees and to increase employee satisfaction it is vital to ensure that information is open and transparent.

- **Brand citizenship behaviour**

Identification with the brand results in brand commitment, which in turn facilitates brand loyalty. Strong individual brand loyalty leads to brand citizenship behaviour. Employees can only turn brand commitment into brand citizenship behaviour if they have access to the necessary resources and if know-how, appropriate information infrastructure, planning, budgeting and controlling systems are in place. This can only be achieved when these foundational requirements are driven by an efficient and effective leadership.
• **Enhanced employee commitment and performance**

Contented employees will perform at their best, be committed and loyal to the brand and eventually display brand citizenship behaviour, which must be recognised and rewarded.

• **Customers**

Customers quickly notice company and brand commitment among employees (especially among front-line employees). Such commitment is reflected in the employees' willingness to serve and go beyond their line of duty, as well as their generally pleasant attitude. Contented employees readily give feedback on the wants and needs of customers, which feedback leaders should use to tailor customer packages with a view to boosting sales. Thus, contented employees not only draw customers back for more purchases, but also satisfy customers' needs and wants. As a result, turnover and ultimately net profit will increase.

• **Superior organisational performance**

Effective leaders or managers not only set the foundation for internal branding to occur, they also motivate employees towards behaviour change and loyalty to the company and its brand. This in turn leads to contented employees, a happy work environment, a healthy organisation and ultimately superior organisational performance. When such foundation is in place, employees are proud of the organisation's brand, which in turn boosts leaders' commitment to and passion about the brand.

• **Enhanced brand and company performance**

Employees with a personal corporate identity, commitment and loyalty, within a positive culture or family, display brand identification, brand commitment and brand loyalty. Since external stakeholders then feel positive towards and seek association with the brand, brand performance is enhanced, which in turn brings about increased sales and eventually better company performance.
• **Greater competitive advantage**

External stakeholders want to associate with an organisation and brand that are both different and better than others. Such an organisational brand together with employees who are proud to work for it attract greater talent, as the organisation comes to be seen as one of the best companies to work for. Furthermore, its brand is perceived as superior. It becomes well known and recognised as a corporately branded company. These "accolades" give the organisation a greater competitive advantage, both as an employer of choice and a reputable corporate brand.

### 7.3.2 Company-specific findings

The members of the company where the research was conducted worked in a team and in an inspirational and humane environment. The company can be characterised as follows:

- It offered excellent service to customers.
- It had adequate technology, processes and assets at its disposal.
- Its employees were fair and ethical and took responsibility.
- There was evidence of mutual trust, respect, openness and transparency among the employees.
- There was a clear commitment to external and internal service excellence.
- A culture that promoted participation, empowerment and teamwork pervaded the company.
- The company nurtured accountability among the employees through rewards or warnings.

We now briefly look at the key discoveries of this study.
7.4 Key discoveries

A number of discoveries which enabled me to identify the skills, qualities and characteristics that leaders should have to be effective at aligning a company’s internal branding with its external branding were made from the first-order constructs obtained from the research participants.

- **Leaders need to have internal and external environmental knowledge**

Apart from vision, commitment and investment in the organisation, leaders must have sound internal and external environmental knowledge. Leaders with extensive environmental knowledge and experience have a positive impact on their organisation and ultimately on the employee-brand identity fit.

- **Employee-brand link as conceptual framework**

The research findings and previous studies confirm that there is a clear employee-brand link. This implies the following:

  1. If an employee has personal corporate identity, this will lead to brand identity.
  2. If an employee is committed, this will lead to brand commitment.
  3. If an employee is loyal, this will lead to brand loyalty.
  4. If an employee has employee citizenship behaviour, this will lead to brand citizenship behaviour.

- **Family**

Family is cherished in South African culture and also featured strongly in the study. The interviewed leaders believed that their adhesiveness was due to the strong sense of family. "Family" is closely aligned to organisational socialisation, entails a warm group notion, and should emerge in any organisation where leaders are experts at internal branding.
• **Employees with a sense of completeness and certainty**

A brand rests on the people behind it. If these people have a thorough understanding of the corporate brand, they are likely to have a sense of completeness and certainty, which in turn should bring stability and direction in the organisational family and culture. Although change is important for an organisation, employees need a sense of completeness and certainty to experience stability and build their organisation.

• **Time**

Although time is taken for granted in the performance of all organisations, it stood out as a necessity for organisational as well as brand performance in this study. Brand life cycle and performance go hand in hand. In other words, there is a relationship between brand performance and time, and company performance and time.

We now turn to the contributions of the study.

### 7.5 Contributions of the study

I believe that my study contributes to the study of branding in particular and leadership generally.

• **Theoretical contributions**

Since the work done by South African scholars on alignment between a company’s internal and external branding is limited, the insights gained in my study modestly contribute to local knowledge about this feature.

The study derived theoretical concepts from the viewpoints and experiences of leaders in a local company, which provided building blocks for theory. By integrating the concrete or first-order constructs of the leaders and their experiences with relevant theoretical constructs (second-order constructs) taken from marketing, organisational, leadership and human resource management studies to arrive at a conceptual framework or model, I believe the study contributes to the existing knowledge of branding.
While the model needs to be subjected to further research, it may be used together with the constructs of King and Grace (2008, 2009, 2010), Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009a) and Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005, 2006).

- **Methodological contribution**

From my review of local studies in the fields of organisational behaviour, marketing, leadership and human resource management, I could not find any evidence of a qualitative study applying grounded theory to the alignment of a company’s internal and external branding. Therefore I believe it is reasonable to claim that this study provides guidelines for such research in South Africa.

There has been a steady increase in qualitative organisational and leadership studies in South Africa in recent years, employing traditional to radical research approaches. While grounded theory seems to have been favoured by local researchers, formal analytical methods such as phenomenology, analytical induction and narrative analysis have also been utilised. As far as computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is concerned, local scholars have thus far favoured Atlas pi. I chose Nvivo 9 instead. It enabled me to successfully order and systematise the concrete experiences and views of company leaders with regard to branding. As far as I could establish, this particular software has yet to be applied by local qualitative scholars generally and those working with grounded theory in particular. Therefore I believe that my application of Nvivo 9 provides valuable guidelines as to how it can be used in local qualitative studies generally and studies on branding, leadership and organisational behaviour particularly.

- **Practitioner contributions**

In globalising organisations such as the company where the study was conducted, a difference between employees’ brand values and external brand values results in branding challenges, which have to be resolved if such organisations want to survive in a competitive environment. This calls for the continuous revision of organisational policies, including those dealing with marketing, branding, leadership, human resources and management. My study confirms that synergy is required between the human resource department and the marketing department, and that their leaders should maximise such synergy.
The study revealed how leaders of a South African company experienced internal branding. This provided valuable insights into the role of leaders in branding, and in managing internal and external branding. For instance, leaders should be long-term change agents of internal branding, demonstrating their will to attain employee commitment and satisfaction so as to ensure customer satisfaction and ultimately sustained business excellence.

The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM) sheds light on the steps leaders should take to ensure that internal branding takes place in their organisations so as to produce satisfied customers. Provided that a company is open to new learning, my model provides for validating and/or revising policies, procedures and processes regarding management and leadership, people development, recruitment and talent management. In particular, the model provides insight into the impact of brand management strategies on leader and staff behaviour. Monitoring such strategies and amending them where necessary could raise a company's organisational effectiveness and streamline its internal branding initiatives.

By pinpointing the nature of the alignment between the experiences and views of company leaders regarding internal branding on the one hand, and external branding on the other hand, I offered ideas as to how the absence of "living the brand" in a company may be resolved. The model reiterates that the responsibility for efficient internal branding rests squarely on the shoulders of a company's leaders.

But what are the study's shortcomings? This question is addressed next.

7.6 Noticeable shortcoming of the study

While work on the limitations of qualitative research and the mistakes made by researchers abound, I believe one major shortcoming of my study is rooted in the notion of "researcher as research instrument" and its reference to subjectivity and the limitations brought about by this in thinking and decision-making during the research process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Although I continuously applied reflexivity, that is, a thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the dynamics between myself and the research participants, I cannot claim to have eliminated all subjectivity in the research process.
But what did I do in addition to applying reflexivity to minimise the effect of bias and ensure quality research as far as possible?

### 7.7 Strategies to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity

The reliability and validity of qualitative studies are a contentious issue. According to Schurink (2004a, p. 3), assessing qualitative research is no easy matter, and its success is determined from the outset; one needs to consistently, in the course of the study, consider quality criteria and employ appropriate strategies. I employed quite a few sets of strategies in an attempt to ensure a study of quality.

#### 7.7.1 Guba and Lincoln's (1998) criteria for trustworthiness

I apply Guba and Lincoln’s criteria one by one to my research as follows:

- **Credibility**

  In order to attain credibility, I spent a considerable time in the Company and during my casual observation of various members of staff gained valuable information on its culture as reflected in the day-to-day activities.

  The multiple methods I employed to collect data, namely in-depth interviews with the managers, obtaining unsolicited documents, observation of the interviewees and the interaction between staff, generated rich data.

  In order to capture as much data as possible, I compiled field notes, kept a diary and held a project journal or log book of my experiences and revelations. The field notes were invaluable for preliminary analysis and to capture my experiences and views of the interviewees so as to take them up with the interviewees for confirmation of information.

  Grounded theory’s open, axial and selective coding for systematising the participants’ experiences and viewpoints as well as the specialised computer-assisted data analysis software tool, Nvivo 9, were invaluable in analysing the substantive and rich data.
I discussed the experiences and views of the interviewees with them in follow-up interviews, emails and phone calls, and feel convinced that I did not miss important experiences and perceptions they shared with me. I regret that I failed to do member validation, that is, offer the research findings to the interviewees for their comment. Therefore I did not obtain their confirmation that I correctly understood their world.

However, I believe that while I certainly may have missed some points in their accounts, my research findings generally reflect their social world.

- **Dependability**

As far as dependability is concerned, I described in detail how I planned and executed the study. I explained the key decisions I took during the research process and believe that the reader will find my account logical and coherent.\(^\text{18}\)

- **Transferability**

Transferability is an alternative to external validity and basically implies the transferability of research findings of one study conducted in a particular context to another, similar, study. I managed to obtain rich information about the culture of the Company and its managers and believe that these can at least form a basis for studies conducted in similar companies in South Africa.

- **Confirmability**

Confirmability entails that, while complete objectivity is not possible, the researcher must ensure that he or she takes caution not to influence the research participants. I did my level best during the research process to impose neither my theoretical nor my personal values on the participants and believe that my influence on them was minimal.

- **Authenticity**

I took heed of Pretorius’s (2006, p. 218) questions throughout the research process to meet Guba and Lincoln's (1998) authenticity criterion:

\[^{18}\text{Please see Chapter 2 as well as my research story provided in Appendix 1.}\]
(1) Does the study represent the viewpoints of various research participants fairly? (Fairness).

(2) Does the study assist the research participants to understand their world better? (Ontological authenticity).

(3) Does the study help the research participants to understand the perspectives of other research participants better? (Educative authenticity).

(4) Has the study encouraged the research participants to take action to change their circumstances? (Catalytic authenticity).

(5) Has the study empowered the research participants to take the steps required for engaging in action? (Tactical authenticity).

I cannot claim that I addressed all five questions adequately, and especially not those emphasising the practical outcome of qualitative research. Yet I took special care to present all the key experiences and views the participants shared with me during the interviews, and to provide them with the opportunity to "speak for themselves" by inserting excerpts of their accounts in my exposition of the research process. I believe that the relatively lengthy in-depth interviews assisted at least to some extent in enticing the participants to take a different look at the Company and its organisational culture generally, and its internal and external branding specifically.

7.7.2 Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative case studies

I assess my case study on the basis of Lincoln and Guba's criteria as follows:

- **Resonance**: This refers to the degree of fit, overlap or reinforcement between the case study report and the basic belief system of the researcher. It also entails conscious reflexivity, that is, an intensely personal engagement with the case.

- **Rhetoric**: This refers to the assessment of the form, structure and presentation of the case study. A case study should be well organised, advance some central idea, reflect unity, simplicity, clarity and craftsmanship (power and elegance, creativity, openness, independence), and display emotional and intellectual commitment.
• **Empowerment**: This refers to fairness, educativeness and actionability, all of which raise the consciousness of the reader of the case study.

• **Applicability**: This refers to the extent to which the case study enables the reader to apply insights gained from the case study to his or her own context.

I believe that my case study complied with all the above criteria. It attests to positive resonance, rhetoric, empowerment and applicability.

### 7.7.3 Other strategies

Several other strategies were applied in my research to ensure a quality study.

- **Replicability**. This entails that reflexivity can be achieved through reflexivity, which, in turn, enables readers to replicate studies imaginatively, and also helps to ensure that claims are supported by adequate evidence. As already pointed out, I applied reflexivity during the course of fieldwork. How I went about it is contained in my research story\(^\text{19}\).

- **Peer reviewing**. This was continuously done. As I indicated, I got excellent feedback from both my promoters. I "sound-boarded" with them my many thoughts, especially on, qualitative methodology, the development of the model, and the writing up and structuring of the thesis.

- **Triangulation**. Mouton and Marais (1990, p. 91) write: "Researchers ought to accept that as a general principle the inclusion of multiple sources of data collection in a research project is likely to increase the reliability of

\(^{19}\) I present my reflective account of this research journey in the form of a self-narrative. I outline the way in which I carried out the research, reflect on my intention with the study and provide an overview of the key research phases of the study. In short, it is a detailed account of my reflections on, insights into and impressions of the study.
observations." This is generally acknowledged by researchers. I believe I triangulated the data by interviewing and observing the Company's employees and by analysing unsolicited documents of the Company, and in this way neutralised the effect of what Mouton and Marais (1990) term "nuisance variables".

- **Establishing rapport.** After introducing myself and the aims of the study, the ice was broken and some degree of rapport established. Although it is difficult to sustain trust between researcher and research participant, I believe that sustained trust between the participants and me is evident from their willingness to engage in follow-up interviews, phone calls and emails.

- **Observation effects.** According to Mouton and Marais (1990), observation effects include researcher effects, particular effects, measuring instrument effects, and context effects. I want to refer in particular to those related to the researcher's demographics, the audio visual recordings of the interviews, and the setting where the interviews were conducted.

  (1) **Researcher effects.** I pondered the possible effect on the participants of my being female, Indian, 43 years old, middle class and a lecturer. During reflections shared with Prof. Schurink\(^{20}\), I felt convinced that based on how the participants interacted with me during the fieldwork, these characteristics did not compromise the quality of the study.

  (2) **Effects of the audio visual recordings.** While the possibility that the interviewees could have tried to present themselves in a favourable light by offering experiences and viewpoints they believed would be regarded desirable, I never felt during the interviews that this was the case. As I pointed out, they became so engrossed in sharing their experiences and views that, after a short while, that they seemed to completely forget that they were being videotaped.

\(^{20}\) 23 October 2012.
(3) Effects of the research setting. The participants generally suggested the interview venues. These were their offices, or the lobby of a private hotel at Oliver Tambo International Airport. Disturbances were few and insignificant. My general impression from the interviews and the participants' body language was that they were at ease and that the venues had no effect on the outcome of the study.

Let's now turn to recommendations I believe merit both scholars and practitioners' attention.

### 7.8 Recommendations

My recommendations relate to scholarly work on leadership and branding, the Company, and local qualitative and grounded theory studies of branding.

- **Scholarly work on leadership and branding**

  I barely touched the tip of the iceberg with my explorative-descriptive study and at best set building blocks for further research on leadership and branding. Therefore I believe that it is important that further work be undertaken particularly to:

  1. Verify the Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM) both in South Africa and abroad.
  2. Explore the views of employees on company leaders' branding performance to enhance the validity of leaders' branding interventions.
  3. Explore the relationship between brand performance, company performance and time, since my study is not clear on how length of time impacts on brand and company performance.
  4. Explicate the validity of the employee-brand link.
  5. Explicate in more depth the study's suggestion that a brand is internalised when organisational socialisation establishes a fit between individuals' values and the brand values.
(6) Explore leaders' interventions and strategies to enhance internal branding in terms of the outcome of the study.

- The Company

The company that granted me permission to use it as research site was exemplary in many respects. Yet there were indications that its organisation of operations needed attention. Therefore it is suggested that its senior managers take time to listen to front-line employees, and to assess whether vital information provided by the formal communication channels reaches them. The following points in particular should be heeded:

1. Since front-line employees are in direct contact with consumers, they can make a significant contribution to external branding, which is essential for organisational change and growth.

2. Managers should continue to provide relevant support, resources and information. Their commitment to change and involvement in the actual tasks will encourage front-line employees to persist when times are hard.

3. The Company should be proactive in its competition with competitors. Although everything points to the Company being the best to work for, in the industry, it did not seem to be customers' first choice. Hence it should concentrate more on developing a competitive advantage and to improve its brand image.

- Local qualitative and grounded theory studies of branding

Several quantitative studies have been done on external branding, but only a few have been done locally on internal branding, and on brand leadership in aligning internal and external branding. Since information on the nature of leadership in the alignment of internal and external branding rests on perceptions, qualitative research is appropriate to investigate the topic further, particularly in South Africa. Therefore I suggest that more qualitative research should be conducted on branding to produce rich and meaningful results.

As for grounded theory, it was a huge challenge and I struggled to come to grips with it. Based on my experience, I recommend that local researchers wishing to use
grounded theory should get clarity on the different qualitative approaches before they take to the field. I also want to advise them to develop a conceptual framework and flowcharts of the entire process, which would illuminate grounded theory’s open, axial and selective coding steps. Finally, until they thoroughly understand grounded theory, novice researchers should use a manual system rather than computer software for the analysis. My use of computer software (Nvivo 9) did eventually save time during the analysis, but only after I wasted precious time in trying to figure out the relation between grounded theory and data analysis.

7.9 Some final personal reflections

This doctoral journey, which I thoroughly enjoyed, has had a profound impact on my professional and personal life. I have been acquainted with branding for many years, but this study substantially deepened and broadened my understanding of this phenomenon. My Mount Everest\textsuperscript{21} was a steep climb but I managed to reach the summit in time and accomplish my goal. There were many highlights and "defining moments" throughout this journey\textsuperscript{22}, but I conclude with only the following:

- Personal and professional growth

My Mount Everest was a daunting task that almost overwhelmed me, but in the end provided me with a most exhilarating experience. I felt physically and mentally exhausted when I finally reached the top, yet immensely relieved, and on looking back on the path I travelled I am extremely proud of my achievement.

This was my first encounter with qualitative research, and if I had to conduct research again, this style of research would indeed be my first choice for any study on social change, even though I found it to be much more difficult than my encounters with quantitative research. However, the richness of the data and the depth of insight gained from them, and the growth in my interpersonal relations and self-discipline are incomparable.

\textsuperscript{21}I refer to this research as a journey up Mount Everest, which is covered in Annexure 1 – My Research Journey.
\textsuperscript{22} Please see also Annexure 1.
• Doctoral programme of the Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management (IPPM) at the University of Johannesburg (UJ)

I have the deepest admiration for the doctoral programmes offered by the IPPM and in particular for its January schools that set me on a firm foundation for success, for which I am so grateful!

I have been blessed with the supervision of an "academic stalwart", Prof. Willem Schurink, whose specialist knowledge of qualitative research expertly guided me on this journey. He also counselled and strengthened me through the toughest times during this journey. I have the deepest respect, admiration and gratitude for Prof. Schurink.

My co-supervisor, Prof. Jos Coetzee, also stood as a pillar of strength, especially by endowing me with his amazing theoretical insights. His humour, when I became too serious about the study, was also greatly appreciated.

• Never-ending learning

Even though I have come to the end of this doctoral journey, I believe it is also the beginning of further research on brand leadership, brand alignment and related issues for me. Internal and external branding and brand leadership have to be monitored continuously in a changing business environment. Brand management processes, systems and core beliefs should be congruent, and the aspirations of consumers and employees should be factored in. Leadership is about raising people's vision to higher levels, building their personality beyond normal limitations, and respecting them and their work (Drucker, 1999), all of which result in people's internalisation of the brand concerned.

I sincerely hope that the opportunity will be afforded to me to conduct further research into the aforementioned areas and therefore I take great courage from the words of Charmaz (2007, p. 1163):

[E]nter the phenomenon and open yourself to the research experience.

Face the inevitable ambiguities. Flow with the existential dislocation of
bewilderment. Bring passion, curiosity and care to your work. In the end you will transform our images of studied life, and your research journey will transform you…
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ANNEXURE 1

My Research Story – Up Mount Everest
1. Introduction

Here I offer a personal account of my research, that is, a behind-the-stage look at the research in the making or a *natural history* of the study. Claassen (2004, p. 24) writes as follows about his natural history:

> This story, or in Becker's (1970) terms "natural history", represents a narrative of the various steps that I took in conducting the research. While I could clearly not provide a complete exposition of all the research steps and decisions in a single chapter, I offer information on the key steps. As is generally proposed by modernist qualitative researchers in particular, I hope to together with the sketch of its results … provide adequate information to assist you, the reader, in establishing the study's credibility.

Let us take a closer look at what precisely this implies.

**Firstly**, as Schurink, et al. (2011) points out, research stories serve as *audit trails*, as they are compiled by qualitative researchers from what they chronicled in their journals and diaries during the research. Such audit trails provide what Plummer (2001) terms research knowledge, that is, an understanding of the process through which knowledge has been produced, as conveyed through a narrative tale.

**Secondly**, a research story may be regarded as the researcher's contemplation of accomplishments, insights and impressions, and his or her challenges and frustrations in executing a study. A such, it is a *confessional tale* (Van Maanen, 1995), which "foregrounds the voice and concerns of the researcher in a way that takes us behind the scenes of the 'cleaned up' methodological discussions so often provided in realist tales" (Sparkes, 2002, p. 57). According to Van Maanen (1995), confessional tales are written in a highly personalised style and are self-absorbed mandates. Sparkes (2002) therefore concludes that confessionals take away the
mysteries associated with fieldwork or participant observation by revealing what actually happened in the research process from start to finish. This also includes the hardships endured and accounts of what fieldwork did to the fieldworker.

**Thirdly**, because research stories are personalised narratives, they also display elements of what has become known as an *auto-ethnography*. Ellis, who is renowned for her writings on auto-ethnography, defines narratives as "the stories people tell – the way they 'organize' their experiences into temporarily meaningful episodes" (Ellis, 2004, pp. 195-196).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 739), auto-ethnography implies that the –

> **first person voice** … appears in a variety of forms – short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought and language.

It is important to note that in telling the story of my doctoral study I make use first and foremost of what is known as confessional tales and to a lesser extent of auto-ethnography.

**Finally**, *reflexivity* is of particular importance in a qualitative research story. Although it has been criticised by academics, as it originates from within the self (Finlay & Gough, 2003), it eliminates most subjectivity in the research process, because it is a thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the dynamics between the researcher and the researched (Cunliffe, 2003). The researcher reflects critically on the ways in which his or her social background, assumptions and behaviour affect the research process. Such reflection challenges researchers to address fundamental questions about the nature of reality and stimulates critical exploration of how they represent knowledge and perform their research. This may lead to new methods of research, which, in turn, could enrich the field of study.

Reflexivity can also contribute to richer understandings of context-sensitive,
complex, uncertain and undefined social experience. By identifying contradictions and inconsistencies we can engage in deeper and more enlightening research. Plummer (2001) believes that reflexivity entails much more than the researcher being self-aware or socially aware; it boils down to being aware of the entire research process. This includes awareness of the researcher-self as a holistic being; the environment in which the research is conducted; and events and experiences during the research process.

Taking the above into consideration, I now turn to contextualising myself as the research instrument of the study by means of a self-portrait.

2. **Who am I?**

![Photo 1: Vinessa Naidoo](image)

I am Vinessa Naidoo, a 43-year-old South African woman from a middle-class background and of Indian descent. Although I still abide by much of the Indian culture, I have never been to India. Apart from following certain Indian customs, which include traditional dress (saris or punjabis), eating traditional food (curries, sweetmeats) and attending some Indian prayers of Hindu relatives, I consider myself
more South African than Indian. My best friends do not look like me at all; they are white, black or coloured. I am conservative, mainly because I have been brought up with strong Christian principles. However, I am generally the life of a party, and make the most of any situation, especially when socialising. I make friends easily, but have not looked around for new ones during the study. To summarise, I am a dedicated Indian wife and mother, an ambitious and loyal career woman, an active member in the church and the community, and a qualitative doctoral student. I highlight "Indian" wife and mother, since although I was born and brought up in South Africa and see myself as a South African, I have a deep respect for my forefathers who came to South Africa in 1820, not only helping to establish the sugar-cane industry in the country but also bringing along their customs, beliefs and traditions. These were ingrained in their descendants who became part of the Rainbow Nation. So, although I am proudly South African and open-minded about our beautiful free nation, Indian culture and customs have always been part of my life.

Most professional Indian women are not only meticulous in their careers, but they are also icons in their families. Most South African Indian women spend a lot of time being wives to their husbands, and nurturing mothers to their children, relinquishing their high-profile career roles to serve they step into their homes to serve their families. Whilst most of them have helpers in their homes, they nevertheless see themselves as the primary care-givers. This tradition is carried down from generation to generation, both in India and in South Africa. I can clearly recall my mother telling me as a young teenage girl, "It does not matter how many degrees you have, nor how senior you are at work, a woman’s first joy is her family – that is the first thing a woman will think about on her deathbed!" These words have remained very clear in my mind, and have shaped my life and career.

My typical day consists of “labouring away” as a lecturer during office hours, followed by a short exercise routine and then pampering my family and cooking. Weekends usually involve studying on a Saturday morning, spending time on Saturday afternoons with my family and sometimes with my extended family and friends, and church activities on Sundays.
We love going on holidays as a family and spending Christmas and New Year's Eve with our large extended family. I am a sensitive and caring individual yet sober-minded, and offer wisdom on most aspects of life when requested to do so.

I was born and bred in a beautiful city called Pietermaritzburg. Located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg is small compared to Pretoria (the capital of South Africa situated in Gauteng) where I live now.

Due to apartheid, each racial group in South Africa was compelled to live in designated areas, and thus I grew up in an Indian area in Pietermaritzburg called Raisethorpe. I still fondly remember wonderful carefree days and evenings playing with my friends and cousins, whilst being quite oblivious of the fact that the law subjected us to separate designated areas. Although apartheid was eradicated in 1994, Raisethorpe is still mainly occupied by Indians.

My father died as a result of a heart condition when I was 13 years old, but my mother is still quite fit, beautiful and loving at the age of 71. She left the family home in Pietermaritzburg to come and take care of my household so I could have undivided time to write up my thesis.

Photo 2: My mother
On the death of my father, my elder brother Gonie took over the role of my deceased father in my world. I was left devastated when he himself died of heart failure 17 years ago at the age of 35.

I have two siblings left, my sister Prisla, and my younger brother Thamo, who I love dearly together with their respective families. Prisla would always pray for me when I was really down during my studies. My siblings and their family all live in Raisethorpe.

I married my husband Roger in 1989 when I was only 21 years old, just before I completed my Bachelor of Commerce degree. Since Roger was in the South African Navy, we moved to Durban, and I completed my degree there.

![Photo 3 (left): Roger and I at an English dinner](image)

![Photo 4 (right): Roger and I at a traditional Indian wedding](image)
Roger has just one sibling, also called Thamo (like my brother), who is a church minister or pastor. Thamo and his wife Mirolyn (also a pastor) have three sons. I am truly blessed to have such warm and loving in-laws.

For work reasons, Roger and I moved to Pretoria, the Jacaranda City\(^{23}\), in 1995. It has been our home ever since. Roger is presently a successful businessman in the catering industry. I could not have asked for a more loving, caring and understanding husband. He has been my pillar of strength, and we have practically grown up together over the past 22 years. Roger would bring me coffee late at night while I studied and always supported me.

We are blessed with two wonderful daughters, Andrea Cleo and Jadene Clarice, who are respectively 20 and 17 years old. Andrea is a third-year medical student and is doing extremely well, because she works very hard. She is a calm, stable young lady with quiet determination which makes us proud. Jadene is an ambitious and energetic teenager, full of new adventures and fun, but works steadily to complete her Grade 11 this year. Both my daughters have spent many late nights studying beside me in an attempt to keep me company while I was completing this study. They also assisted me with many administrative tasks such as downloading pictures and checking references.

\(^{23}\)Pretoria is called the Jacaranda City because of its beautiful Jacaranda trees.
I not only had to balance my doctoral studies with my role as wife and mother, but also with my career. I am a marketing lecturer in Business Administration and supervise MBA students at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), and have been working at this institution for the past ten years. Most of my students are high-profile and highly respected professionals. I have to be at my best when lecturing to and working with them. My lecturing entails Saturday classes for ten weeks in a year, which calls for preparing for the lectures during the week. I also assist with all practical marketing tasks at the Business School. As a professional life coach, I sometimes also present life enrichment talks to senior executives in corporate businesses, usually once or twice a month during my flexi-hour working day. These talks include, amongst others, the topics stress management and substance addiction.

TUT is one of the biggest residential universities in South Africa and I have been truly blessed to be employed there. TUT not only fully financed this study, but also allowed me a study grant, over and above the study fees, to pay for the research
activities. I am ever so grateful to my employer, knowing that when such blessings come your way, you can just thank God for them.\textsuperscript{24}

While juggling the roles as mentioned above during my research, I was also an active member of the Hopeline team at the Hatfield Christian Church, where I counseled people who needed guidance in their relationships (marriage), their finances and other areas of life. I did this twice a month. After some time, I realised that I had to terminate some of my activities. Consequently I cut down my life enrichment talks and minimised my duties at the church. This was to ensure that I give undivided attention to my doctoral studies and career and still be able to give attention to my family. Because of my demanding work as marketing lecturer, I applied for sabbatical leave. When this was approved for the entire 2012, I indeed felt blessed. It enabled me to devote sufficient time to my doctoral study and my family!

My career foundation was laid in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) when I was selected as the first South African Indian vetting officer in 1994. I was intensively trained to be objective, open-minded and versatile so as to handle secret and top-secret applications from SANDF members. During the five years at the SANDF, I learnt that it was imperative that I complete security clearances objectively and with an open mind, as people's careers depended on my recommendation. Objectivity and open-mindedness were also of the utmost importance during my research journey and while compiling field notes. When I started getting subjective, these traits brought me back on the impartial track. For instance, whenever I was about to pose leading questions, I would quickly rephrase them as open-ended questions.

My diploma in life coaching greatly enhanced my qualitative interviewing. As a life coach one is trained to check in and to check out – to express what one is feeling before and after a coaching session. This is done to alert one to your present feelings so as to not influence the coaching session with these and to take stock of what has been done or not done, so as to plan further.

\textsuperscript{24} As I mentioned, my employer also granted me a full year of sabbatical leave to complete the study.
I did the same before and after each research interview, and wrote my impressions down as field notes\textsuperscript{25}.

Having offered a brief biographical sketch of myself, I next share significant experiences and activities that occurred during my research journey.

3. The journey

Before I offer an account of my doctoral journey, let us first take a look at why I embarked on a doctoral study.

3.1 The need for a doctoral study and my reservations

Senior lecturers at TUT are required to obtain a doctoral degree. This caused me much stress, because I was already very involved in various obligations at work, my family, the community and the church. I felt that I had neither the time nor the energy for such a mammoth undertaking and may very well not succeed. On top of this I had been a diabetic\textsuperscript{26} since my first pregnancy, and the stress of juggling my many obligations would worsen my condition\textsuperscript{27}.

Another major challenge was attempting to do a full research-orientated doctoral degree. My previous qualification was a practically focused master's degree in Business Leadership, which did not require much research knowledge or acumen. I soon came to realise that to be an academic and a good researcher was an enormous challenge. Although my colleagues at work were helpful, I would have to learn the fine art of research myself.

My many excuses for not engaging in a doctoral study were probably the greatest reason for my initial lack of progress. However, I forged ahead, enrolled and

\textsuperscript{25}My logbook page is shown in Annexure 4 to illustrate how I filled in my check-ins and check-outs.

\textsuperscript{26}I was diagnosed as a diabetic during my first pregnancy, started taking oral medication 20 years ago, and insulin injections 10 years ago.

\textsuperscript{27}I became quite ill at times in the course of the study and had to learn to manage my health.
persevered despite many obstructions. Now, many years later, I would not substitute this experience for anything in this world: This is one of the greatest accomplishments of my life!

3.2 Why do a study on the alignment of internal and external branding in a leader group?

Branding and how employees and particularly the leaders perceive, feel about and act in relation to their company's brand have been my life-long passion. When lecturing Marketing, internal branding is my favourite section of the course, and I base my lectures on Kotler and Keller's (2009) textbook. Leadership is another passion, and I have lectured leadership modules in-house at several companies. So leadership and internal branding combined was a natural choice as the topic of my doctoral study!

3.3 The challenge

The completion of this doctoral study often seemed insurmountable, but I am proud to say that I persisted and managed to do it; to me it was like climbing Mount Everest.\(^{28}\)

\(^{28}\) When Prof. Schurink, my promoter, read my research story he shared with me the lyrics of Everest sung by the famous British pop singer, Cliff Richard (1999). Its idea of struggling to come to terms with a hard reality appealed to me, since I could fully associate with it on the basis of the extremely hard work I had to put into realising my dream of obtaining my doctoral degree.
Mount Everest, the highest mountain on the earth, is 8848 m above sea level and is situated on the border between Nepal and Tibet (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest). Located in the Mahalangur section of the Himalayas, it attracts many experienced mountaineers, presents many challenges and has claimed many lives. Climbers seeking to reach the summit of the Mount Everest, which is called the "Hillary Step", typically spend substantial time in the death zone (altitudes higher than 8 000 metres) where they face significant challenges to survive. The atmospheric pressure is high, as the air has only about a third of the oxygen we normally breathe (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest).

There are two routes to the top, the southeast ridge from Nepal and the north ridge from Tibet. The north ridge route is the more difficult route, and resembles my

doctoral journey. Mountaineers set up at base camp, Camp 1, at 5 180 m. To reach
Camp 2, they have to ascend the medial moraine to the base of Changtse at around
6 100 m. They then reach Camp 3, called the Advanced Base Camp, situated at
6 500 m. To reach Camp 4, climbers ascend to the foot of the mountain pass where
fixed ropes help them reach the Northern Mountain Pass at 7 010 m. From here,
climbers ascend the rocky north ridge to Camp 5 at 7 775 m. Here the route begins a
diagonal climb to the base of the Yellow Band, reaching Camp 6 at 8 230 m. Setting
out from Camp 6 on the last stretch to the top, one faces three dangerous steps:
Step 1 takes you to 8 534 m, Step 2 to 8 626 m, and Step 3 to 8 800 m. The ultimate
step to the summit (Hillary Step) is a slope of 50 degrees, bringing the climber to
8 848 m (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest).
Too many events occurred and too many decisions had to be taken in the course of my doctoral research of three years to cover here. Therefore I describe only the most significant ones, as far as possible chronologically. Because it was impossible to separate events that were directly related to my doctoral study from those that had taken place in my private and work life, some of the latter two are included in the account below.

Each time I faced and overcame an incredible hurdle or obstacle, I compared it to reaching one of the six camps on the north ridge route to the top of Mount Everest. There were days that I laughed a lot; there were days that I cried a lot; and there were days my diabetic body did not want to wake up. My faith in God, the support of

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*Camps 5 and 6 are not shown on this photo.*
my family and friends, and my confidence in myself enabled me to finally accomplish the feat.

Photo 9: Reaching base camp, Camp 1

Reaching base camp: Undertaking the study at the Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg

I started thinking about a quantitative doctoral study on the role of leaders in internal branding in 2005 and decided to enroll with the Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management (IPPM) at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) for this purpose. I was guided by Prof. Theo Veldsman in writing the research proposal. However, the lack of research on the topic in South Africa made me skeptical, as to whether I should register to study in 2005. Prof. Veldsman noticed my skepticism born from my lack of confidence, yet remained patient.
I did not give up, although my exploration of the field took loads of time and patience. On top of this I knew little about research and research skills. While every year seemed longer and my goal a little further, I learnt the fine art of "eating the elephant one bite at a time". While reading avidly on my topic and research skills, I started growing emotionally and intellectually day by day. I wrote some notes, but did not try to review and compare scholars' views critically in the beginning. I only engaged with scholarly writing when I was ready to put together the research proposal.

In November 2006, after spending numerous hours working on my research proposal, I was invited to present it at the IPPM under the leadership of Prof. Veldsman. I was a nervous wreck during the presentation, since this was my very first attempt at a doctoral proposal, and the beginning of a doctoral study, and my fear of failure at this stage was great. Afterwards I was advised to make numerous changes and think about many issues I had never thought about.

The more I read about research, the less I seemed to be able to amend the proposal satisfactorily, and the strain of the study also worsened my diabetes. I felt like a baby who had tried to eat big chunks of steak and was choking as a result. So I decided to take a break, fully realising that I was not progressing as a doctoral candidate should. On 1 May 2007, I wrote in my diary: "Dear Diary, I have never felt so down and out in my life. The more I try in my studies, the harder it seems to become. Will I ever get this doctorate?"

Prof. Veldsman also despaired of me, because regardless of his attempts to motivate me, I wasn't progressing. In November 2007, I even asked him to give me time out until I felt ready to continue, and I stopped my studies for a year. I will never forget my sense of failure I felt at that time.

I did some soul-searching. I loved chatting to others and seemed to have good "soft skills". Hence the qualitative approach would be more in line with who I was: a "people's person" rather than a "number cruncher". Perhaps if I had chosen a qualitative approach right from the start, I would have succeeded in my first attempt at a doctorate.
In September 2008, I attended a course in qualitative research at the Business School of the University of Stellenbosch (US). I do not know why I attended this course, fully paid by my employer, the TUT, but I believe fate steered me towards it. Prof. Willem Schurink gave the most awesome lecture there, and when I looked carefully at him, I realised I had seen him at a research study school at the UJ previously, and could also remember him as one of the panel members when I presented my first research proposal in November 2006.

Photo 10: Prof. Schurink lecturing on qualitative research at the USB

Photo 11: Listening attentively to Prof. Schurink’s lecture on qualitative research at the USB
I started reading about qualitative research, but had difficulty getting rid of my sense of failure due to my lack of progress with my study. My colleagues at work encouraged me to register for the study with my employer, the TUT, and do the study under a very experienced and knowledgeable professor linked to the TUT. I chatted to this person about my topic but never registered my study at the TUT. Since the UJ was the institution where I had contemplated enrolling for my doctoral degree initially, it would remain the only place where I would complete my doctoral degree. (I am generally headstrong, and once my mind is made up, it takes a lot of convincing to change that.)

This stage of my journey reminded me of Camp 1, where I did the final preparations for the climb up my Mount Everest.

![Photo 12: Reaching Camp 2](image)

**Reaching Camp 2: Only failures quit!**

In 2008, amid the pressure of not making progress, I reflected on my desire to do this study. Should I just give up completely? Was I doing this for work purposes?
Was it for the status? Or was it just for me? I then realised that the main reason for this doctoral study was that I really wanted to fully understand the role of leaders in internal branding. What crossed my mind persistently was: Only failures quit! So I had to continue, regardless of the Khumbu Ice Falls on this stretch, the most dangerous area on the mountain, with most deaths among climbers having been recorded there. Yet people have persisted with their quest to get to the top of the mountain. I would do the same.

2008 brought clarity and led to great heights. As a climber would take precautions to avoid compromising his safety, I reduced my risks by enrolling for a diploma in life coaching to clear my thoughts and define my purpose for the trip. This was the best thing I could have done for myself, because upon completion of the diploma I indeed had a new purpose in life. As I continued reading extensively about qualitative research, I also realised that this type of research would be more appropriate than quantitative research for my study on internal branding. Besides, being a sociable person and loving interaction with people, I would be able to hone the fine social art of qualitative research.

In 2009, I continued reading on qualitative research, especially on grounded theory, but it was a year of emotional turbulence. My husband’s business was in turmoil and he required my undivided support. Andrea was struggling with the stress of first-year medical studies and Jadene had to cope with the stress of high school. These stressors together with my long battle with diabetes did nothing to help my situation. However, my faith in God and going down on my knees to pray for a divine intervention saw me through. I clearly remember the remarkable verses below that pulled me through my toughest times, which included the decision to carry on with this doctoral study.
I approached Prof. Veldsman again at the end of 2008 so as to complete my study. He remarked that if I had continued my studies in 2007, my doctoral degree would have been completed by 2009. Although I felt regretful about this, I realised that I had learned much academically and personally in the interim.

After toying for some months with the idea of changing my research methodology from a quantitative to a qualitative approach, I now reached a firm decision to do so, as it suited my personality. After I told Prof. Veldsman about my decision, he pointed out that qualitative research was not his forte. So I suggested Prof. Schurink as my promoter.

I met Prof. Schurink at his home in Silver Lakes for the first time on 22 November 2008 to discuss the completion of my study under his supervision. I felt quite apprehensive when telling him that I was coming from Prof. Veldsman as an unsuccessful quantitative student, and was now considering a qualitative study. Prof. Schurink pointed out his views about the student-promoter role. He also suggested that I contact some of his previous students to see how they went about their studies and learn more about the relationship between him and his students. I felt quite good hearing this, as I knew one of his previous students very well – Ms B. Tlou (now Dr Tlou) whom I worked with in the SANDF as a vetting officer. However,
my relief turned to anxiety when Prof. Schurink mentioned that he was very busy and would have to consider assisting me. He would have to co-opt a co-promoter who was knowledgeable about branding, as he was a qualitative methodologist and not a subject specialist in branding.

Photo 13: Prof. Schurink in his home in Silver Lakes, Pretoria

Prof. Schurink invited his colleague and friend, Prof. Koos Uys, to his home on 16 February 2009, to meet me and see if he would be interested in co-supervising me. I related everything about myself and the study to Prof. Uys. I can clearly remember how uncomfortable I felt while stating what my topic was and what I wanted to achieve, since I had done all this before in November 2008, when I related all this to Prof Schurink for the first time. I felt Prof. Uys listened very attentively and then told me flatly that he was not interested. He mentioned that he would be interested only if I was doing a study of the CEO of the company that I was considering as research site. Although Prof. Uys was under no obligation whatsoever to be my co-promoter, and Prof. Schurink could easily approach other colleagues of his, I felt deeply despondent about Prof. Uys's response, although I appreciated his honesty. Since I was keen to make headway in my studies this second time around, Prof. Uys's disinterest made me feel as though I was wasting more time.
I clung to Prof. Schurink as my last hope to pull this doctoral study off. He called me to his home again on 25 February 2009 and told me that he had thought about being my promoter. My apprehension turned into the greatest sense of relief when he said that he would be my promoter. I wanted to cry with relief at the thought of having him as my lead guide while climbing my Mount Everest.

I asked Prof. Schurink why he had decided to accept me as student given that he had supervised over 30 doctoral studies and had been very successful as promoter of qualitative studies. Prof. Schurink said my topic interested him and that, as a qualitative methodologist, he would like to see how the study was going to unfold. However, he cautioned that should I not work hard, he would not hesitate to abandon his role as my promoter, since he was very busy. This was an instant wake-up call to

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31 The route seemed misty and unsure, but I knew that if I followed him, I would reach the top of my Mount Everest.
work as hard as I could, especially since this was my second and final chance to do this doctoral study.

Prof. Schurink mentioned that he had another co-promoter in mind – the experienced and competent Prof. Jos Coetzee, who had immense knowledge of corporate business. He wanted to meet with Prof. Coetzee and me, and I suggested that if Prof. Coetzee would decline to be my co-promoter, Prof. Schurink could consider approaching Prof. Veldsman as the co-promoter, since he knew much about my study. Prof. Schurink mentioned that Prof. Veldsman had been promoted to Head of Department and would not be available for research supervision or co-supervision.

Prof. Schurink then chatted at length about qualitative research: modernism versus post-modernism, indigenous sampling etc. He also gave me his contact details and requested my CV and a picture of myself. After he had reflected on the research questions of my study, he turned to company leaders' feelings and perceptions, experiences, satisfaction and quality of work life. He also indicated that I should not select too many cases. He referred me to previous studies on case study methodology, since I had indicated that I was very interested in researching a corporate company/ies in South Africa. He asked me to think carefully about the research setting (the company to be studied), especially in light of the deteriorating economic situation in South Africa, as he could foresee that my study could make a positive difference to the company and other companies in South Africa. I indicated that I had a company in mind, and he asked me to make contact with the company.

At this meeting Prof. Schurink highlighted the need for doctoral research to contribute to existing knowledge. We continued to discuss the role of breakthroughs in science, the fact that this topic had never been dealt with in South African research and the possibility of "testing" models so as to find a proper one for leadership in internal branding.

Prof. Schurink arranged a meeting with Prof. Coetzee and me for 3 March 2009 and I had to draw up an agenda. Prof. Coetzee was straight to the point and soon stated that he would be the co-promoter of my study, and that I should work hard and progress well. We spoke about the proposal, and set a realistic date for its submission in May 2009. I was apprehensive, since I knew that I had to quickly raise
my standard and complete the proposal per the agreed deadline, yet felt positive for the first time in a long while. I needed to prove myself now!

This phase of my journey called for perseverance and reminded me of the stretch to Camp 3.

Photo 15: Prof. Coetzee, Prof. Schurink and I at the beginning of the threesome journey
Reaching Camp 3: The amended proposal

The amended proposal was similar to reaching Camp 3, the advanced base camp where the snow is really thick, and the terrain is rugged and dangerous, and where the real treacherous climbing begins. In retrospect, the previous part was not that difficult. My amended proposal was the beginning of the real test of my strength of character. After updating my references and many hours of hard work I set up a proposal in line with my qualitative framework. It was based on the old one, yet was largely modified in line with qualitative research methodology. I submitted the new proposal to Prof. Schurink and Prof. Coetzee, and they were pleased with my first attempt. The next step was to present my proposal to the IPPM's research panel for approval.
On the Friday afternoon of 26 May 2009, I apprehensively waited to be called in to present my proposal to six seasoned professors of the IPPM.

I was more stressed about this presentation than I had been with my earlier presentation as a student of Prof. Veldsman. After their initial selection for a doctoral course, students have to present a research proposal to an IPPM panel to determine if they really have the potential to succeed with a doctoral study. I was indeed very fortunate to be given a second chance to present a research proposal.

When I was eventually called in, I was very nervous yet spoke passionately about the topic that I had chosen, and how I was going to conduct my research. The professors were very friendly and seemed to share my enthusiasm. Although we left late to go our separate ways for the weekend, I was very pleased and felt I had jumped a great hurdle. I had to make some changes and resubmit the proposal in writing in September 2009.
My husband Roger and my daughters Andrea and Jadene were so excited that we toasted to my second chance on that same night. I made a pledge to myself and my family that I would complete this journey, no matter what came into my path!

Prof. Schurink asked me to set up a plan of the next research steps and make arrangements to meet the company I wanted to research.

Photo 18: Reaching Camp 4 up Mount Everest

Reaching Camp 4: Preparations and entrée to the research setting

The next few months seemed challenging, as appointments had to be scheduled with Prof. Schurink and the company that I wanted to use as research site. It reminded me of climbers looking up at the summit, only to find the view is dull and dreary. Prof. Schurink and I usually met at his home in Silver Lakes, Pretoria, or even at a coffee shop nearby. On 13 February 2010, after extensive planning and reading on branding studies on my side, we met at a coffee shop to discuss the way forward.
We spent many hours discussing the way I would handle entrée into the company. I had already sent an e-mail to the Group CEO, who responded positively. Having reached Camp 4, Mount Everest climbers make use of fixed ropes to reach the next camp. Prof. Schurink’s many years of practical experience of qualitative research resembled these ropes. Not only had he undertaken and overseen many qualitative studies at the Human Sciences Research Council, but he had also successfully guided many doctoral students. He offered many invaluable ideas and tips as to how to approach gatekeepers and go about accessing entrance to the research setting. These “fixed ropes” enabled me to climb up to the next Camp.

The Group CEO wanted to meet me in Sandton for an initial meeting, and Prof. Schurink was to join us. I prepared an agenda for this meeting, querying the time that we had available for covering everything. The initial meeting with the Group CEO of the holding company on 20\textsuperscript{th} of May 2010 went extremely well. He suggested that we use one of the subsidiary companies rather than the entire holding company as the research site. Prof. Schurink found this acceptable, since my study, being a pure qualitative study, could be based on a single case (one subsidiary). The Group CEO offered to introduce us to and leave us in the competent hands of the CEO of the subsidiary company. After this meeting, Prof. Schurink and I spent a long time in the car outside the Group CEO’s office reflecting on the meeting and the way forward. I still remember how apprehensive and nervous I felt, as the road ahead seemed so exciting yet unsure. I still clearly remember writing in my diary on 20 May at 12:10:

\begin{quote}
Wow! The Group CEO is awesome! He is kind and respectful, and genuinely interested in my studies. He honestly feels that this study will make a tremendous difference to this company. He is offering me 100 percent support. I have to do my very best, that I do not disappoint the company, and especially the Group CEO. Everything is working out beautifully for me! Thank You, God!
\end{quote}
In July 2010 the Group CEO introduced Prof. Schurink and me to the CEO of the subsidiary company (the Company), but left soon after. The CEO invited us to visit him in his office at a suitable time.

Prof. Schurink and I had a lengthy meeting at a coffee shop in Silver Lakes on the 15 October 2010 to discuss the precise way in which my study should be done, so as to be well prepared for this meeting. We looked at previous studies on leadership and branding, considered prospective interview candidates and identified people exposed to the brand. Prof. Schurink urged me to obtain a tape recorder to record the interviews, and to accumulate whatever writings I could find on my topic. He emphasised that this was an explorative-descriptive study and could possibly benefit from the use of grounded theory. So I would have to explore and understand my chosen topic, beginning with the interviews, then look at the relevant theoretical contributions and eventually make a contribution to science.

On Tuesday morning 26 October 2010, Prof. Schurink and I turned up for our first meeting with the CEO of the Company with an agenda I had prepared. I anticipated this to be a difficult meeting and wrote the following in my logbook check-in section on 26 October at 06:00:
The morning did not go fine with the family. Trying to do so much in the home before an early morning meeting in Johannesburg is not easy. This will be a tough one as well. A highly experienced Professor and a knowledgeable CEO who has seen the world. Here is myself, a novice researcher, trying to fit in between them to pull this research off. I know I can do this.

This stage resembled mountaineers ascending the rocky north ridge of Mount Everest to Camp 5, but I felt sure, owing to the ropes Prof. Schurink had provided. In spite of the hurdles I faced and being a "rookie" to qualitative research, I was very much aware of the many things I needed to learn. However, the fact that I was Prof. Schurink's apprentice and had already learned many "ropes" resulted in my being less concerned about the journey ahead. After introducing himself, Prof. Schurink explained the difference between qualitative and quantitative research, and the benefits of a pure qualitative study. The CEO wanted to know more about the unique contribution of qualitative research and was quite amazed as to what qualitative research implies and looked forward to the envisaged study and its findings. I carefully explained to the CEO that the overarching aim of the study was to determine if there was synergy between the leaders' views and experiences of the Company's brand on the one hand, and what the Company was saying about its brand to the external market on the other hand. I also mentioned that the objectives of the study were to find answers to the following questions: What exactly was the leader group saying about their internal branding; what exactly was the Company saying about its external brand; was there synergy between the leader group's experiences and perceptions of the Company's internal branding and its external branding; and did the Company display leadership in its branding?

The CEO undertook to offer his assistance to me in every way possible. He also mentioned that he would inform his staff by e-mail that I might contact them and what my study entailed. Because of the confidential nature of the information I would produce, he wanted to see the thesis after it was examined. Prof. Schurink assured him that confidentiality would be observed at all times, including the identity of the participants. Yet we requested the CEO's permission to videotape all interviews to ensure that all documentation recorded would be accurate. This was indeed an
intensive meeting, but contrary to being a fly on the wall between these two very senior and knowledgeable men, I was fully involved in the discussion. I was asked to explain how I would go about the research, from choosing the participants, to conducting the interviews, keeping field notes and much more. Apart from raising my confidence, this prompted me time to think more about how I would carry out the study.

According to Prof. Schurink, the "ambience of a company is created by its people". Hence the CEO was to identify key people in the Company, after which I would arrange interviews with them. During my first interview with each participant, I introduced myself and gave him or her the consent form for completion and signing, while stressing the importance of confidentiality in this study. The interview would be video-recorded, transcribed and annotated in detail. Video-recording the interviews would not only allow me to go back and rewind the recordings, but would also enable me to analyse facial and body language, which is essential when conducting qualitative research. Based on Prof. Schurink's experience, we decided to have an one-hour interview per participant for a start, but if more time was required, I would contact the participants concerned again. The CEO wanted a brief résumé of me as the researcher and what I was going to do and expected to achieve. It was agreed that I would meet the CEO again in early December.

A happy Christmas spirit filled the air when I turned up for my personal meeting with the CEO on Wednesday, 15 December 2010. I felt nervous but so excited, since this was my very first interview for a qualitative study. I soon relaxed in the warm, friendly and calm presence of the CEO and eventually enjoyed the interview. The CEO turned out to be an experienced and wise man. His many years saw him looking at the world and life in a balanced way. I intuitively knew that I was in good hands. This was the beginning of a pleasant research journey in the Company.

32 Prof. Schurink reminded me that a consent form had to be signed before each interview. Please see the form in Annexure 3.
Photo 20: Reaching Camp 5, and speculating on the diagonal climb to Camp 6

Reaching Camp 5: Exploring the participants’ experiences and viewpoints

On my way from Camp 5 to Camp 6, I faced a diagonal climb: I had to complete several in-depth interviews, using techniques and skills that would probably bring me safely to the next camp if I was careful yet remained level-headed. For instance, I had to ask the right questions and follow-up questions, and avoid getting too involved when responding to the participants' comments, yet remain friendly. I also had to remember to observe carefully the participants' body language. The participants were chosen carefully and the interviews were conducted between December 2010 and June 2011. As professional life coach, I am used to doing a logbook check-in before and a logbook check-out after each coaching session, which are similar to field notes in qualitative research. I followed the same procedure during each interview. The check-in made me aware of my dominating mood before the interview; why I felt this mood; what I was concerned about in the interview; and what to look for during the interview. It also cleared disturbances I had in my mind,

33 Please see the logbook check-in and check-out form in Annexure 4.
so that I would not "contaminate" the interview. The check-out allowed me to reflect on the interview and everything that came to my attention, and to prompt follow-up.

Prof. Schurink and I spent much time on researcher roles, rapport with my participants, and staying focused as much as possible. Staying focused was no problem, though, as the participants spoke openly and enthusiastically about themselves, the Company and its brand. I enjoyed the long chats and acknowledged the participants' opinions and answers. Sometimes I was enticed to air my own views, but would shortly afterwards remember that these sessions were about the participants and not me. Then I smiled and actively engaged with the topic without becoming the centre of attention.

The atmosphere during the first round of interviews was relaxed, mainly because of the assurance of confidentiality. Follow-ups on completed interviews were made after careful deliberation. I wrote my field notes diligently, reflecting on my impressions of the participants and possible gaps to be followed up.

My first interview was with the CEO. He had seen the world, displayed integrity, was reputable and cared for his staff. He was a principled man, hard-working yet open to comment and criticism. He loved the Company dearly and was trying to position the brand as a "fun" brand and the Company as a "fun" company to work in.

The other participants were initially skeptical of me, probably because I might be a "company spy" who was investigating which employees were speaking negatively about the Company. However, over time they came to trust me, as they were given the assurance that all the information I had obtained from them during the previous interviews was treated confidentially; they began to understand and accept that my intentions were purely research driven. I was surprised by their love and passion for the Company. One participant was not too fond of the CEO, but loved the brand very much. Surprisingly, some participants had met their spouses at the Company, were still married, both were still working for the Company, and their children, too, seemed to want to work for the Company some day. There were many social events for employees, and the "family notion" was quite evident and even seemed to include employees' immediate families.
I used a research schedule for the first interviews\textsuperscript{34}. It was generally the same for all the interviews, but changed somewhat depending on the person interviewed. For instance, when I was interviewing the Marketing Manager, I spent more time on marketing-related issues, but still covered all the other issues, although less intensively. The schedule prompted the participants to describe themselves, their personal life, their entire career, what they thought about the Company, what they thought and felt about the Company’s brand, and many more.

After the first interviews, I set up another interview if the data were vague or I did not understand them. If after the second interview I was still unsure, I telephoned the participant concerned to get clarity on unresolved issues. My field notes (my check-in and check-out), as far as humanly possible, tried not to influence the participants, and believe that to the extent that it happened was limited. I observed them during our discussions and managed to solicit a diary of one of them. The videotapes of the interviews allowed me to view the participants many times to ensure that my opinions of them were correct.

I am not sure when I actually stopped searching for new or substantiating data, because I found it extremely difficult to say: “That’s it. There is nothing new to add or verify.” Every time I thought I had exhausted the list of properties of a category, something additional to what I had uncovered before would come up.

I became ridiculously anxious when nothing new came to the fore and it seemed that I might have insufficient data to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field! However, I was reminded that data saturation was fully acceptable in qualitative research and that I was to use the theoretical constructs of other researchers to verify my participants’ perceptions and experiences of branding, and ultimately identify a gap in the body of knowledge on leadership and branding and fill the gap with new knowledge.

By the end of November 2011, I had completed the fieldwork. The interviews and follow-up face-to-face and telephone interviews yielded a tremendous amount of

\textsuperscript{34}Please see the schedule in \textit{Annexure 2}.
data. Prof. Schurink called it a "sea of knowledge" and complemented me on the depth and intensity of the interviews.

By March 2011, I had conducted ten intensive in-depth, one-on-one interviews (first interviews), eight one-on-one follow-up interviews and nine telephonic follow-up interviews, solicited a diary of one participant, and did observations before, during and after each interview at all the settings.

I decided that this was it: I would stop looking for new data. I informed the CEO that I had completed the fieldwork and would not be around for some time, since I would next be doing intensive data analysis. This would entail analysing and interpreting the data and writing up the report. However, since I might require additional data to illuminate particular themes, I pointed out that I might have to telephone or e-mail the participants. I was sad to leave the Company, as I had grown very fond of all the participants at my "second home". As a novice qualitative researcher, I was apprehensive about eventually offering my findings and interpretations for scrutiny to the Company. Yet I looked forward to returning there, albeit for a brief visit.

By now I was entering the base of the Yellow Band, the most treacherous stretch on the way to Camp 6. Here, at 8 230 m, as other climbers do, I faced significant challenges to survive (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest).
Photo 21: Reaching Camp 6 up Mount Everest

Reaching Camp 6: Analysis, writing up the thesis and constructing a model

From Camp 6, climbers make their final push to the top. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Everest). This involves three steps. Step 1 for me was the analysis of my data, Step 2 was the writing up, and Step 3 was the construction of my model.
Photo 22: The steps on the last stretch up to the summit

Step 1: Analysis

I see the analysis phase as Step 1, as it was scary and extremely challenging. As a climber I was looking up at the summit, my goal, yet realising that one wrong turn could send me back thousands of metres, even killing me. The challenge at this stage was to order, store and analyse the data. I stored them systematically in a lock-up cabinet in my study at home, which only I entered. During this time, I worked exceptionally hard to make sense of the data. I usually got up early and read and reread the interviews late into the night. However, I did not know how to go about putting together or categorise the enormous chunks of data. So I enrolled for a "refresher course" on qualitative research for prospective doctoral students presented by Prof. Schurink at the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB) in September 2011. Prof. Schurink's lectures helped a bit, but did not answer my real questions. I still did not know how to analyse these massive chunks of data.

Next I decided to consult a specialist qualitative research analyst. I discussed this with Prof. Zeleke, a colleague at the TUT, who suggested that I contact a qualitative
data analyst in Pretoria who was exceptionally good and could assist me. So I approached Dr Victor Andoseh, and he suggested the use of two computer-assisted qualitative analysis programs, namely Nvivo 9 and Atlas Ti.

We spent considerable time looking at these two programs. I found Nvivo 9 more powerful and user friendly. It also seemed to be a more recent application and more widely used but, more importantly, it was well suited to analyse video and text. I decided to use Nvivo 9. We worked meticulously through more than 1 000 themes, and finally extracted 36 themes. We were quite happy that these 36 themes constituted our open coding. Further intensive analysis led to the identification of 15 sub-themes or sub-categories. (I use the terms "themes" and "categories" interchangeably throughout the thesis; the same applies to "sub-themes" and "sub-categories".) Working on these 15 themes, we developed 6 final themes to conclude our axial coding. These 6 themes were further integrated to develop our final story line, which constituted our selective coding.
Working through my sea of deep, valuable data in a meticulous and patient manner was exhausting: We worked from early morning until late every day, importing data, using Excel, and then refining the themes and doing the coding. The proverbial low atmospheric pressure, lack of oxygen and risk of frostbite at this level led to intermittent despair. I realised and accepted that I would have to continue refining the themes, however exhausting and time-consuming this seemed. Victor taught me very much about data analysis, and did so patiently. It seemed never-ending, but after two months, by the end of February 2012, we produced amazing results, which I was so proud of.

**Step 2: Writing up**

I wrote up most of my thesis between March and June 2012, that is, after I received the final statistical analysis from Victor in February 2012. It was at this stage – after the completion of selective coding – that "the light came on" and I could see the direction the thesis was taking. I wrote chapter by chapter, eating the "massive elephant" one day at a time. My account included reference to previous studies undertaken at the IPPM. During March and April 2012, I spent tedious hours reviewing and writing up the literature on grounded theory. I decided to do this last so as to be able to use the final themes that emerged from the analysis as a guide for my literature review.

**Photos 24 and 25: My study at home where I worked consistently**
I worked thoroughly through my literature, and in order to get clarity on the multitude of concepts and themes, I set up "play summaries" of my literature. In March 2012, Prof. Schurink and Prof. Coetzee requested me to brief them on my research results and prospective model. I planned well for this and brought along posters from home. Like the climbers on Mount Everest, I had been given a climbing aid, a Chinese Ladder. In real life, this ladder had been set up by Chinese climbers to facilitate climbing at this high altitude. My Chinese Ladder was my promoters’ constructive feedback on my briefing. I could proceed more sure-footed higher up.

Photos 26 and 27: Prof. Coetzee and Prof. Schurink during my briefing on my research findings and prospective model

35 Please see Annexure 3.
Step 3: Constructing a new model and making contributions to the body of scientific knowledge

Constructing a new model and making contributions to the body of scientific knowledge was the last step before summitting. Oxygen was so low at that altitude that I could hardly breathe. The task was daunting, as it takes time and hard work, and requires great conceptual skill to construct a model. From a qualitative perspective, it also requires originality and creativity.

I did not know precisely how I was going to construct a new model and contribute to scientific knowledge, but spent many days on each stage of the analysis, that is, the open, axial and selective coding, to look for emerging themes. It was like working through a maze. This truly frustrated me! At times, I would sit for hours until it hurt, and then walked away, more confused than when I began. This felt like taking a few steps upwards, but falling down many more. It was so very hard.

Finally, after many, many months in this maze, I wrote out the final story line, and then vaguely knew where I was heading. My two guides on this climb, Prof. Schurink and Prof. Coetzee, gave me solid and constructive feedback, which set my feet firmly on steady places and tied the rope tightly around my hip. When I lost momentum, they challenged me intensely to think beyond my current impasse, remember how far I had already come, what my goal was and just go on.

The next step was to relook experts’ work on branding and leadership to see how the concrete or first-order themes drawn from the participants' impressions and opinions matched the abstract constructs of scholars. I drew up a table to compare each first-order concept with the second-order concept I drew from prominent scholarly work. This was a lengthy and intensive task, but in the end I could set up a new model, and looked back on it with pride and disbelief that I actually did it.

All that remained was the Hillary Step from 8 800 m up along a 50 degree slope to the summit ridge at 8 848 m. This involved (1) carefully sustaining the student-

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36 All the themes and sub-themes extracted during the open, axial and selective coding are described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.
37 Annexure 7 contains a table showing my themes comparative to concepts of leading authors in internal branding and leadership.
promoter relationship, (2) ensuring that my language and technical editing were meticulously done, (3) finalising my references and quality control, and (4) updating the chapters by giving effect to comments and suggestions made by my promoters. This I found difficult, because the stress worsened my diabetes and left me powerless on a number of occasions, as if I was not receiving enough oxygen.

3.4 The student-promoter relationship

In his book *How to succeed in your Master’s and Doctoral Studies*, Mouton (2001) sees a promoter as an adviser, expert guide, quality controller and pastor. Prof. Schurink, as my primary promoter, and also a specialist in qualitative methodology, advised and guided me many times on what I should do or not do, the resources I needed, my research ethics and the requirements of the IPPM. The research journey up my Mount Everest would never have been possible without my expert guide.

Prof. Jos Coetzee, my co-promoter, with his specialist knowledge of the theoretical aspects of the study, advised me on specific resources to use, articles that I would need and time management in this project.

Both Prof. Schurink and Prof. Coetzee were the most excellent quality controllers. While Prof. Coetzee concentrated on the quality control of my theoretical chapters and the integration of the theory and research chapters, Prof. Schurink focused on the methodology chapters, and the overall quality control. I saw all their critique as fine-tuning my study.

My doctoral journey culminated not only in my intellectual and spiritual growth, but also in enormous emotional growth. Whereas undergraduate and master’s degrees concentrate on the explanation of existing knowledge, a doctoral study allows one to think beyond the "inconceivable". In the quest for new knowledge and a contribution to science, a doctoral student slowly learns to reach another learning platform. My growing self-reliance drove me to another level, which was awesome. When my promoters saw I was doing my best, but was capable of more, they prompted me further. I am truly grateful for their emotional and motivational support, as well as
performing a pastoral role intermittently. I never dreamt that I would expand beyond my boundaries!

3.5 Language and technical editing

Initially I edited my chapters myself, but later on Prof. Schurink recommended a few people who could assist me in this regard. This is how I got Ina Stahmer on board, and I feel blessed that she could edit my chapters and my final thesis. When you write, especially the long chapters, you assume that everyone will understand what you have written, but you often make very little sense to the next person. While Prof. Schurink pointed out argumentation that was not logical and coherent, Ina was the one who queried my unclear phrases and sentences and suggested possible changes to render them understandable, especially in my literature chapter. I also clearly remember Ina sending me an e-mail on 10 July 2012, a week after I sent her my Chapter 6, to inform me that she was progressing very slowly with the chapter since the content was poorly integrated. Previously Ina told me that my writing was not too bad, so this comment felt like a slap in my face. I was also scared, as I knew Chapter 6 was one of the most important chapters in the study. But in the end I sorted out the problems in the chapter with her professional and competent help.

Photo 28: My language editor, Ina
3.6 References and quality control

I encountered another "angel" on the journey up my Mount Everest. I needed someone who could type my complex diagrams, assist me with the compilation of the many references, and do the final layout of my thesis. I can type very well, but my computer skills are very basic.

Santie Moll, a close friend from my church, came to my rescue, and has been a tower of strength. Her exceptional computer skills made for this stunning final document. God puts the right people on our path at the right time.

![Photo 29: Santie, my layout artist](image)

3.7 Changes proposed by my promoters, and Prof. Schurink's follow-up

When my second proposal was accepted with minor changes, I expected the same to happen with my thesis, as I had given my very best. However, when my promoters gave me feedback on the respective chapters, an avalanche swept me down quite some distance just when I thought I was almost at the summit of my Mount Everest. I was shocked, because it felt like I would have to redo the climb from Camp 3 or Camp 4. My research skills and my write-up were not up to standard. End of fantasy. I was down and out, and had to get up all by myself! However, Prof. Schurink decided to spend time with me working through the feedback and recommendations.
during several sessions. One that stood out was a long session on 20 July 2012 at Dros, a family restaurant franchise, adjacent to Silver Lakes. We worked through Chapter 1 and 2 and the research story. Prof. Schurink discussed each comment meticulously, looked at some of the changes I had made, complemented me on some and patiently explained what was still needed in the rest. I looked at this man with admiration. His tired face after five hours of work with me made me realise that I was fortunate to have such a dedicated and awesome expert guide. Prof. Schurink had little to gain, yet put so much effort into helping me get to the top of my Mount Everest by reading and rereading my chapters and working through my final changes with me. My selfishness turned into humble appreciation, and I recommitted myself to producing a thesis that was as perfect as was humanly possible.
3.8 The examiners' report

I submitted my final thesis for examination at the end of October 2012, and was quite surprised about my tenacity in writing and rewriting this thesis until my two supervisors thought that I was ready to submit. I was so relieved when I handed the final thesis to Ms Fozia Kasoojee, who just laughed at me. I felt as though I was almost at the top, but had a few very steep steps left. I sighed deeply due to exasperation.

The Christmas season passed, and although I felt as though the “big rock” had been rolled over, and I could finally “breathe” again, I also felt a bit anxious and irritable. I often wondered what my examiners were thinking while they were reading my thesis, which had taken me years of hard work.

January 2013 began with a big bang, as I had to return to work after the one-year sabbatical. Every time I was greeted by a familiar face in the workplace, they would ask: “So have you passed your doctorate?”
My anxiety and irritability increased daily. While I busied myself with day-to-day activities at work, I was constantly reminded that I could not formally supervise the MBA student dissertations, since I did not have the doctorate yet.

At the end of January 2013, I sent Prof. Schurink an SMS and related to him how nervous I was about my results. On 2 February 2013, Prof. Schurink responded as follows: “Prof. Jos and I are very confident of your abilities, and if we were not sure that you were ready to submit your thesis, we would never have sent it for examination. It will not be long now – just hang in there.” This gave me a deep sense of reassurance, and with all the patience I could muster I looked forward to what the future would bring. At this stage I imagined myself standing looking at the top of Mount Everest, with the last few steps the hardest, and pondering when I would reach the very top of the mountain. I thought of myself glaring into the sun while taking the last few steps up to the summit.

On 23 February 2013, a Saturday at 06:15, I received an SMS from Prof. Schurink. It read as follows: “Good morning, Vinessa. It is indeed a beautiful day. I finally received all three examiners’ reports, and want to share the feedback with you. Please meet me at the Wimpy. No – on second thoughts, can you please bring your family along and we can meet at Pappachinos in Silver Lakes, Pretoria at 10:00.

On receiving this SMS, my hands started shaking and my throat became so dry that I could barely swallow, but I managed to get out of bed and arrange my disheveled thoughts. Why did Prof. want me to take my family for the examiners’ feedback? Hearing the feedback was stressful enough, even without my family being present. I related these feelings to my family, and I felt that it was better if I went first, and my family came later.

I arrived at 09:45 at Pappachinos, and waited anxiously for Prof. Schurink. When he arrived, I looked nervously at him, but he came to greet me with such a warm and open smile. He then chatted about the theft of his laptop and continued with some more chit-chat.
Photo 32: Prof. Schurink and I having a chit-chat on 23 February 2013

About 15 minutes later, my mother, husband and two daughters arrived at the restaurant. After the introductions, Prof. mentioned the reason that he had invited all of us there: to give me the feedback of the three examiners. Prof. emphasised that I had put hard work into the thesis.

Prof. read out the comments of the first examiner:

The thesis is of outstanding high standard and a very detailed process was undertaken. The student has successfully demarcated the research problem, research question, the reasons for executing this study, the specific research objectives, and therefore the scoping and scaling of the study are clear. The candidate relates the different theoretical views and empirical findings to external and internal branding. The literature review draws on a useful literature base, providing a historical overview, and is successfully developed. I found the model (the LBAM) that was developed outstanding and valuable for the discipline of leadership, and a contribution to the body of knowledge.

The technical quality, style and format are of outstanding high quality and academically acceptable.
I was left speechless by these fabulous comments, but my disbelief turned into jubilation. Tears rolled down my cheeks, while my family stared at me with joy and pride.

Prof. then read out the comments of the second examiner:

Logical conclusions were formulated. The summary is structured logically and recommendations made by the candidate are satisfying.

The qualitative study makes a contribution, through the themes and categories proposed.

After each report, Prof. seemed to pause with so much pride for what I had accomplished through his leadership, which truly made me feel so proud.

Then Prof. turned to the comments of the third examiner:

The candidate contextualised her study in the introductory chapter, by providing a clear problem statement, aims and objectives for the research journey.

The research and methodology are scientific and rigorous. The study was based on a strong theoretical foundation.

The seven chapters were provided in a balanced manner and are in line with the nature of a doctoral study.

This study makes a clear contribution to qualitative research in branding and research.

The study contributed to theory by means of the proposed Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM).

A practical contribution was made, as the study reiterated the definite need for synergy between the marketing and the human resource departments in an organisation.
Referencing is good and the readability and interpretation were enhanced by the selective use of applicable tables, figures and photographs. The language use and terminology are on a standard associated with a doctoral level.

Prof. then stopped and told my family and me that this feedback was very positive, and that such fine comments were rare. Prof. then told my family that it was time that I was formally congratulated on this superb outcome.

My husband Roger ordered champagne and my companions toasted to the fabulous comments of the examiners.

Photo 33: A toast by my family and Prof. Schurink on the wonderful feedback of my examiners

We then took a final group photograph in Pappachinos to remember this awesome day.
There were a few comments that needed to be addressed in a table format for submission to the various academic committees, and Prof. mentioned that we would get together soon to do that.

It was about four days later when Prof. Schurink suggested that we meet again. He had emailed me the complete report of each examiner. Examiner one and examiner three were very generous with their comments. Examiner one suggested two small changes, while examiner three suggested none. Although examiner two was also complimenting me, he had suggested many changes. These changes seemed to come from his quantitative perspective, which made me quite sad at first, but later quite appreciative, since I realised his feedback could be used to improve the quality of my thesis.

I completed the final table, and then submitted it to Prof. Schurink, who made some modifications and submitted the document to Ms Fozia Kasoojee for submission to all the academic committees.
I then painstakingly and meticulously ensured that all changes were done according to the examiners’ requirements, and finally met Prof. Schurink on 5 April 2013 for his final approval.

Photo 35: Prof. Schurink and I at our final meeting – 5 April 2013

Photo 36: Prof. Schurink and I at our final meeting – 5 April 2013
Prof. Schurink wanted to have some final photos, and officially congratulated me on my hard work and achievement. I also thanked Prof. Schurink for playing such an integral part in this difficult, yet wonderful journey.

The changes were rechecked by Ms Ina Stahmer, my editor, and my layout artist, Ms Santie Moll, who ensured that the final changes were done to perfection so that printing could be done.

On 8 April 2013, I finally received the letter from the University of Johannesburg stating that I had complied with all the requirements for the Doctor Philosophiae in Leadership in Performance and Change in the Faculty of Management. I felt so totally humbled, and thanked God for giving me the strength and grace to finally reach the top of my Mount Everest.

Having finally reached the top of my Mount Everest, I can relax for a while and reflect on this awesome journey.

3.9 Pondering qualitative research and the journey

I really struggled to convey my experience with my qualitative research journey properly. I experienced many diverse feelings, from wanting to throw in the towel, to excitement, exhaustion, disbelief and immense pride. But if I had to single out one aspect, it would undoubtedly be sustained hard work regardless of my commitments to my employer, my children, my husband and my friends. The sabbatical leave granted by my employer in the end enabled me to spend hours on end in front of my laptop and still have sufficient time for other commitments.

The turmoil in my personal life and my poor health made it particularly difficult to make progress at the outset of my journey. The excellent support I received from my two promoters, and in particular from Prof. Schurink, helped me to overcome the many adversities I faced.

I will never forget my encounter with social science research. I started out with a quantitative approach, but stopped in my tracks at the realisation that I could not
punch up numbers in order to explain organisational branding and unravel people's experiences and viewpoints and eventually make a contribution to scientific knowledge. I needed a research approach that would enable me to tap into the dynamics of people's experiential worlds. Qualitative research was the answer! However, my excitement was soon seriously tempered by challenges I had not foreseen in my wildest dreams. Yet, as many other newcomers to qualitative research, I also experienced phenomenal moments! Qualitative research is truly remarkable, and I will never regret that I switched from quantitative to qualitative methods on my doctoral journey.

Let us now take a closer look at the most outstanding highs and lows on the road I travelled and what I learned from them.

- **Lack of practical research experience**

Looking back today I know that my initial attempt at doing doctoral research failed not because of laziness, but because I lacked research experience. The many lectures I attended, the many academic works I read on different aspects of research, and the substantial mentoring by promoters, friends and colleagues, while all valuable, were not sufficient to set me off securely and smoothly on the track up Mount Everest. Many adjustments had to be made in the course of the study, which wasted time and energy.

- **Overlooking that one requires time to recover one's strength**

There were many times when I did not wake up on time, or felt so depressed that I just "shut down" and watched TV, or just cried. Cold winter mornings were the worst. My despondency made me feel undisciplined, and I chastised myself for it, since I knew I was not a lazy person. What I failed to understand initially was that I was first and foremost human. It was only after I realised that I had to make provision for time to recover my strength that I could push to a higher level.

- **Managing chronic illness**

Due to my diabetes I was often unable to work as hard and fast as I wanted, although this is not offered as an excuse. Nevertheless, those who live with this
illness will know that one is sometimes physically (and even mentally) so tired that you can hardly do anything! At first I could not understand why I was struggling to work on my thesis on certain days. Upon checking on my diabetic level, I found that it was dangerously high, as I had either forgotten to eat, or had eaten but had forgotten to take my insulin injections and my diabetic tablets. I also forgot important things easily, even things related to my research. My diabetes specialist confirmed that the lack of oxygen in diabetic patients affected all parts of their body, including their brain. I realised then that I had to manage my diabetes especially well, in order to complete this study. Being a workaholic, it took some effort on my part to pre-empt exhaustion by stopping work in time and carrying on the next day. Prof. Schurink, who had supervised other diabetic doctoral students, often urged me not to underestimate the challenges the disease posed to serious study.

- **My South African Indian heritage**

Although I prefer to see myself as a South African, I could not run away from the strong sense of family obligation that my Indian culture brought upon me. My husband and our daughters knew that I had to work very hard on my doctoral study. Yet I could see that they were unhappy when I did not get around to making dinner. I think they did not really appreciate the demands of a doctoral study and still expected me to do what I had been doing for them over the years. My extended family also knew I was studying, but was upset or agitated when I could not attend a family function, and there are many of these functions in the Indian community. These include kitchen teas, weddings, lunches and Hindu prayers. Meeting these obligations became physically exhausting and sometimes emotionally draining. I felt quite irritated when yet another invitation was made, and when my immediate family was upset about the tedious wait for the completion of my study. I had to bear with this and focus on the study at the same time.

- **Sudden death of a close friend**

The sudden death of Kevin, our best friend for 20 years, disrupted the study. We spent 13 May 2012, Mother's Day, with Kevin and Leona, and their family. Our two families had spent weekends together having dinners and braais, and had even gone on family vacations together. At one stage we lived within 5 km from each
other. Kevin was not feeling too good and had been in and out of hospital to find out what was wrong with him. Although he had more than ten tests at the Pretoria East Hospital, the doctors were none the wiser. Later that evening he had difficulty to breathe and was rushed to hospital. Despite efforts to resuscitate him, he died at 21:15. We were devastated!

As was to be expected, Leona was traumatised and grief-stricken. My husband and I had to help coordinate the funeral, which was to be held in Durban where Kevin's extended family was living. We also had to support Leona and her two sons, Chase and Tyrel (19 and 16 years respectively). Due to these activities and the emotional stress I could not concentrate on my research and set it aside for three weeks. It was only through prayer that I managed to resume my studies at the beginning of June 2012.

- Scholarly support

I would never have made my dream come true without my main guide, Prof. Schurink. From the moment he agreed to be my promoter, I knew intuitively that he would change my life forever. However, I had to come to terms with my expectation
that he should demand more of me. Prof. Schurink is not pushy; rather, he has a calm yet motivating disposition that inevitably leads doctoral students to take the initiative and do their best. Not only was he my promoter and mentor, he was also my coach, motivator and visionary. At times when I felt demotivated he "awakened me" and told me that I should not give up and should put the negative behind me.

I clearly remember the e-mail I sent him on 15 February 2012, telling him I was running around in circles in my grounded theory analysis. His responding letter evoked calmness in me: "Grounded theory should set you in circles. There is no clear answer, and that is why qualitative research, especially grounded theory, is so exciting and fabulous. The answers will come eventually – within you." These words came true soon after. Prof. Schurink stood by me in my best and toughest times. I will forever be indebted and grateful to this great man who made my journey pleasant, shone the light in my darkness, motivated and inspired me, and brought out the best in me.

Whereas Prof. Schurink was the qualitative specialist, Prof. Coetzee was the specialist in leadership and branding. His many years of studying and lecturing on corporate business, especially leadership, made him exceptionally knowledgeable. His pleasant, humorous and calm disposition was a great comfort during the journey. However, he did not mince words and made it clear from the start that he would not tolerate any laziness from me.

When we met on 12 March 2012, after I had collected my data, Prof. Coetzee's positivity encouraged me greatly. In June 2012, he underwent a major back operation, and I clearly remember how worried I felt when Prof. Schurink told me about this. I prayed for him, and was very grateful to hear that the operation was a great success.

Prof. Coetzee made an indelible impression on me and I will never forget how he helped steer me in the right direction.
4. **Final words**

In this annexure I attempted to offer a personal account of my doctoral journey, applying the confessional writing style (Sparkes, 2002). I tried to give insight into what happened behind the scenes of my research in the making, and to assist the reader to assess the quality of the study. The study caused great emotional turbulence, but if I were to turn the clock back, I would choose to do this all over again. Although it was painful, I grew emotionally and spiritually much on this journey.

![Photo 38: Having reached the top of Mount Everest](image)

I have learnt that **nothing is impossible**, however impossible it may seem. If you truly want something, you can reach the seemingly impossible if you believe in
yourself. I reached the top of Mount Everest, regardless of many hurdles, obstacles and challenges, because I believed that, with God's help, I could do it!

In closing I share the lyrics of Nothing's impossible (Cliff Richard, 1961), which Prof. Schurink shared with me as encouragement:

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If your heart is really in it
   It's a fight but you can win it
If only you will trust your dreams
   Nothing's impossible
No use stand around and sighing
   If you try and keep on trying
Then you'll bring off your wildest schemes
Sing out, state your faith in the human race
Why doubt, your own personal miracle is about to take place
   Nothing's impossible
Faith can move a slab of granite
   Any day we'll reach a planet or two
Yes, that's what we'll do
   Nothing we can't achieve
Because nothing's impossible
   As long as you believe
Just take Everest, what did they say?
   No one can climb it anyway
Oh yeah, what happened coronation day?
   I guess nothing's impossible
Space, they said we'd never win
They said around the earth a man could never spin
Ever heard of Major Gagarin
You see, nothing's impossible, impossible? Never!
It's always so easy saying "something can be done"
Don't they realize, there's always a prize to be won
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Someone said something couldn’t be done
At which point someone went out and did it
The city of Jericho
Oh sing it sister
Would not admit defeat and that’s why General Joshua

What did Joshua say?
Said sound retreat
And just at that moment those trumpets hit that rock ‘n roll beat
Down came the wall as you’ll doubtless recall
With an almighty far proving one set for all
Nothing’s impossible, nothing’s impossible, nothing’s impossible
Sing out, state your faith in the human race
Why doubt, your own personal miracle is about to take place
Nothing’s impossible
Faith can move a slab of granite
Any day we’ll reach a planet or two
That’s what we’ll do
Nothin’ we can’t achieve
Because nothing’s impossible
As long as you believe
Nothing’s impossible
As long as you believe
Nothing’s impossible
As long as you believe
As long as you believe
ANNEXURE 2

Themes Covered During the Interview
Annexure 2
Themes Covered During the Interview

1. Interviewee/Participant Information
   a. Tell me about yourself
   b. Tell me about your career history
   c. Tell me about your career at this company (Title, duties, reporting lines, career at this company)

2. The External Brand
   a. What do you understand about the word “branding”? 
   b. List all words that come to your mind that is associated with this word “branding” and your company brand.
   c. Discussion of 2 (b).

3. The Internal Brand
   a. Think again about your company brand - Do you feel close to your company brand?
   b. Why or why not? Critically discuss 3 (a)
   c. Do you think that the staff/employees feel close to this brand?

4. Competitors
   a. Who do you see as your competitors?
   b. Do you think that your company outsells all its competitors? Discuss critically.

5. Training/Empowerment
   a. Does your company do training?
   b. What type of training does your company do?
   c. Are you happy with the company training?

6. Communication/Information
   a. How does the CEO and your line manager communicate to you?
   b. How do you communicate with your staff?
   c. Are there clear channels of communication and information? Discuss

7. Culture
   a. Critically discuss your company’s internal environment or culture
### ANNEXURE 2: THEMES COVERED DURING THE INTERVIEW

#### 8. Leadership

| a. How do you lead?  | b. How do you ensure that your employees know about your external brand? | c. Do you think that the employees believe in the external brand? Why or Why not? | d. How do you think your leadership impacts the company brand? | e. How do you think your leadership impacts employees and the company's brand? |

#### 9. Performance

| a. Does the company do performance appraisals on staff? Yes/No and Discuss. | b. Does the company look at the performance of its brand? |

#### 10. Customers

| a. Who is the company's customers? | b. Discuss the company's product and service offered to customers? | c. Do you think customers are happy and satisfied with the company's product? | d. Do you think customers are happy and satisfied with the company's brand? |

#### 11. Other

| a. Any other follow-up questions you think necessary from the above questions |

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**UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG**

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ANNEXURE 3

Informed Consent Agreement
Annexure 3
Informed Consent Agreement

This agreement serves to confirm that the research participant mentioned below gave his/her consent to participate in a qualitative study regarding Leadership in Aligning Internal and external branding. The research participant agrees to provide the researcher with his/her experiences and views to the best of his/her ability. The undersigned participant understands the purpose and nature of this study and understands that her/his participation is voluntary and that he/she may withdraw from the study at any time. The participant further grants permission for the data collected to be used in fulfillment of part of the requirements for the doctoral degree: Leadership in Performance and Change, including an article, and any future publications.

The data collected will be used for research purposes only. The researcher undertakes neither to disclose the identity of any of the participants, nor the origin of any of the statements made by any of the participants. However, the undersigned participant understands that in terms of the ideals of the study's methodology that the researcher are obliged to make use of verbatim statements from the transcribed taped interviews and/or excerpts from solicited essays and/or any other visual (e.g. photographs) in order to illustrate the world of the research participants and their perspectives in the research report.

The participant undertakes to give a true representation of his/her perspectives and/or her/his experiences.

I, .................................the undersigned participant, agree to meet at mutually agreeable times and duration/s or other means of communication, e.g. by e-mail, as reasonably necessary to enable the researcher, Vinessa Naidoo, to complete the study. I further acknowledge that I received a copy of this agreement.
and that I may contact any one of the under mentioned if I have any subsequent queries.

Signature of research participant: ________________

Researcher: Mrs. Vinessa Naidoo

Title, initials and surname: ______________________

Employer: Tshwane University of Technology

Tel: (012) 382 3039/082 5616 955

Date: ______________

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Annexure 4
Logbook Page

Date:___________________

Name : ________________

Name of Person Interviewed: ___________________

Time In : ____________________________

CHECK IN:

My dominating mood before the interview:
__________________________________________

My physical condition before the interview:
__________________________________________

My thoughts before the session:
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
I promise to be present, and objective in this interview.

_____________________________________________

CHECK OUT:

My dominating mood after the interview:

_____________________________________________

My thoughts after the session:

_____________________________________________

_____________________________________________

Time Out: ______________________

SIGNATURE: ______________________
ANNEXURE 5

Interview with Participant 1
Annexure 5
Interview with Participant 1

Interview 1

The interviewer gave the CEO the informed consent form which he filled in and signed. Interviewer stressed confidentiality. She mentioned that this will be a series of interviews, and also when she interviews other staff, whilst keeping their confidentiality, but still needs to clarify anything with the CEO she will come back to query with the CEO.

VINESSA: I want to know who you are, where you come from. Where you’re sitting in the big chair now, how you got to the big chair. We want to start from the personal ….. put you into a personal context, then put you into a work context if you don’t mind. This is going to be

P1: My life is a simple life. My parents met in Pretoria – my father worked at the Mint as an Accountant. My mother was a tennis player, top league, almost played at Wimbledon. She was also a musician and she could sing beautifully and could play several instruments. My father was born in Viljoenskroon in the Free State in a family of 9, a very close family. I don’t think there were many opportunities there. My grandfather from my mother’s side worked on the railways. My mom’s side was Irish and Australian. My grandfather from my father’s side was a farmer in the Free State, a very British gentleman. A Red Coat as it where in those days. He married a 16 year old girl from the Free State. My father was also a top line sportsman. I was born in Pretoria and my sister was born in Durban. I am a Blue Bulls supporter, but my sister is a Sharks supporter. Just before my sister was born we moved to Durban. My dad worked at the Refinery as an accountant. My father has a degree (CIS) and a Diploma, CWA. He joined the sugar industry and worked at Ilovo Sugar. My grandfather on my mother’s side lived with them until he died. We lived on the Bluff, it was a nice (new) area in the 1950’s to grow up in we participated in sport. My father was assigned to be the Project Accountant at TSB in Malelane. I picked up on my parents’ sport genes and played tennis, football, rugby, hockey, and cricket, so I was fortunate enough to win a semi sports scholarship at X College. I was in the boarding school, sports was the reason I was there. My peers were
studying while I was reading comic books but eventually peer group pressure started me studying. My father couldn't quite afford to send me to University so I studied part-time while working in the sugar industry in Stanger. I became an accountant but never got the "ticket". I ultimately became a B.Com and a CIS drop-out. I did work my way up in the accounting line and eventually I was appointed to the post of estate accountant. In the 1971's I met a schoolteacher who is now my wife, we got married in 1975. My daughter was born in 1977 and my son in 1980. I was transferred to Pongola as an accountant; we enjoyed a very nice country way of life. The nearest English school was at Mkuzi, which was an hour’s drive away. We decided to move back to Durban. I got appointed as Admin Manager at COMPANY Z in Durban. Advancement was slow so I made the decision to apply for a position at COMPETITOR 1 in the industry and I was appointed in 1981 as Regional Admin Manager, a newly created position in the industry in South Africa at that time. I was asked to implement a Regional Accounting portfolio. One of the founders of the industry in South Africa, he was the MD of COMPETITOR 1, liked what he saw and he asked my wife and I to come to Johannesburg to work in the Head Office. We moved to the East Rand area. They doubled my salary but I was worse off because in Johannesburg everything was more than twice the price than in Durban at the time. My wife went back to teaching after the children grew up and is recently retired to be a full-time granny. So I went through the ranks at COMPETITOR 1 and was promoted me to be the District Manager Operations for the whole Eastern Transvaal area based in Pretoria. Then they moved me back to Johannesburg which was a bigger region to run. Then they suggested that I had a flair for sales which I did not see. I did not know that I had a side of me that did that. They suggested that I give it a go and I was quite successful at that as well. On the operational side I was awarded the operational person of the year for two years in a row. They moved me to the sales team, and I was quite successful at that as well.

I suppose I was always ambitious. I worked extra hard because of my lack of a university education, I did a 3 year transport diploma through Rand Afrikaans University, and I followed that up with a MDP at UNISA SBL. Then I attended the Graduate Institute of Management Technology where I did a one year Diploma in Company Direction. Beside that I also became a Trainer at Louis Allan Management Training. So yes, I was belated in getting some sort of formal training behind me.
am a Capricorn, I am a bit slow but I'm sure-footed, I know what I want and I will
generally get there. I like solid foundations and I am quite structured in the things
that I do and think and say. So yes, I ended up doing quite well in the sales
environment. Then I was head-hunted by a signage company after 9 years. They
paid me a lot of money. When you are young you tend to chase the dollar. I ended
working 18/19 hour days, no weekends. I earned a lot of money but there was no
balance in my life. I didn't play tennis anymore, didn't socialise anymore, all I did
was just work, come home and sleep. I didn't have time for the family at all, so it
didn't work for me. I realised that I was actually a corporate animal. At that time
Company X was looking for a National Sales Manager. I hadn’t been for many
interviews in my life, each one I set out to go to, I got it. I think you’re either
passionate or you’re not and it shows in the eyes and the behaviour. The interviews
that I went on I felt that I chose the right place. So I was appointed at Company X
and two years later they appointed me as Sales Director. I spent 9 years with them.
Then the company was taken over by a big transport consortium. If you have a bad
day you can get over it, but if you spend a bad week and then a bad month you
realise that something is not well. So I actually resigned and was without a job. My
wife was worried but I have faith in a higher being and my ability to get another job.
Within a week I was fortunate to find another job. Somebody found me and I found
them, and that is the Company I am with today.

VINESSA: P1, how many years of experience did you have prior to entering the
company?

P1: I had 18 years experience in the vehicle rental environment.

VINESSA: And prior to that? Total working experience?

P1: I started in 1970 I started working at sugar as a trainee accountant.

VINESSA: And when did you start at The Company?

P1: I started at the company 12 years ago in July 1999.

VINESSA: So you have 29 years experience before that.

P1: I joined here as the Sales and Marketing Director. The company had four MD’s
in 8 years. I thought I should apply for the MD position. I was fortunate enough to be
appointed MD on the 01 February 2008. This company is like a big family. The people that I work with are absolutely wonderful. We don't pay very well - so yes - they must be here for the love. Not particularly for me because they've seen many MDs over the years, but they're here for the love. Mrs R has been 34 years in the company, she can tell you some stories I'm sure. They're a resilient lot and well experienced. So that is a bit of my background. If you pick up a lot of knowledge and you pass it on to whoever you can. When they made me Sales Manager in the COMPETITOR 1 days, which I had no knowledge of, I started teaching myself that Christmas holiday from books on Sales and Sales Management that I could find in the Library. I made notes of all the pertinent points and when I got back in January it looked as though I knew what I was talking about and what strategy and direction I wanted to take. My Math teacher at school always said: "Do what you do, do well". Everything I do, I do to the best of my ability. I just know, that if you choose a line, choose a line that takes you to the top. In all my years of sport, I always wanted to be the captain, I made sure I was the captain. If I joined a club I made sure I was either the treasurer or the secretary. I like to be in control of my destiny, not necessarily as the boss but have input on. Even as a team player, have an input because it will have an influence on the boat you're on. If they've checked, somebody on the Titanic might have seen the Iceberg. I suppose my leadership skills came from those days. All the people I was mixing with I took guidance and took the good stuff and discarded what I thought was the bad stuff. My wife is the glue that holds the family together and always supported me. My daughter married my best friend's son, they were sweethearts from junior school, but sadly now divorced. They're still soul mates and good friends, just divorced. My son is married to a wonderful girl. Her mother died of cancer when she was 12 years old. Religion is very important in their lives. He's got a B.Comm from Tukkies. She has honours in Social Welfare from WITS and she works at the oncology unit in Johannesburg. She's a strong lady. On the 5th of January 2010 they presented us with our first grandchild, a little girl, who is the love of our lives. We have a family dinner once a week, we try and do it Thursday evenings, my wife coordinates everything. We are a very close family. Going back a little bit, two years ago my mother and mother and law died, two weeks apart. My father died in 1979 of a heart attack. In 1982 I was transferred from Durban up here to Johannesburg. It was there and then I thought so what? It was a bit quiet during December 1982. So it was then that I actually wrote
down my goals in five (5) year time frames to age 65. To date I have achieved all with the exception of my whole family going to Disney world together. Sometimes I have been ahead of target, sometimes I dropped behind, but there was always an end goal. I talked about the focus, the ambition, and once you’ve done that you’ve got to talk about how to get there. What do you do to get people to mentor you? Something else I want to mention is that in life you have to have a goal. It’s the same as you have strategic goals in business. What do you want to achieve in the domestic front? It was in that period as well that I also sat down at sort of analysed; who am I? You have to have those balanced feel in life. In fact I still have those notes. (Showed it to Vinessa and also pictures) I did it end of 1982.

**VINESSA:** Unbelievable. I am so impressed.

**P1:** What it does is like a GPS System for life. My philosophy is that you must do your best at what you’re doing. I do these things; I take stock and believe that you can’t just keep going down the road. You have to have a map of life. To me it is a sort of a GPS of my leadership. In life and in leadership and in management there are people that sort of look at you with questions and sometimes you don’t know the answer. It is then that I refer to this. I suppose we’re heading into the philosophies of CEO and I thought it will be a good time to work with these notes. One of the things in me is the Capricorn that I am sure-footed and at times you might appear to be negative. We’ve worked quite hard to get here on the top of the mountain, and we don’t want to start at the bottom again. It’s not being negative or short-sighted, its just that you don’t want things to go haywire, it’s just that I want to make sure that we’re on the right path. When you talk about taking stock, seeking challenges, staying up to date, challenge the status quo these are things that I remind myself to do. Because sometimes you get too busy to do your job as a leader, as a manager or as a mentor. You get so indulged in the technical stuff that you forget to stop, you forget to strategise, forget to touch somebody on the shoulder and to say; “that was great”. So those are some of the little things that I believe in, some of many things I use in my approach to leadership. One of my weaknesses is that I need to be 120% sure of things whereas 80% is OK. At 80% you can generally trust your judgement. “If it walks like a dog, smells like a dog, barks like a dog – then it probably is a dog”. I am sort of a generous person in many ways but sometimes you end up getting left behind. Sometimes modesty is a good thing and sometimes it is also a bad thing.
For instance you're waiting for the bus, and this happened to me more than once in my life, before I realised what was going on, is, I would help people to get on the bus and then the bus would be full and the door would be closed. I would still be at the bus stop. Everybody would think P1 is such a nice chap, meanwhile P1 is still stuck at the bus stop. And it would happen again, but then I realised that there had to be a different way. I try and get people to participate. What you do is try and step onto the bus, and then you help other people get onto the bus. You stay with the program, the progress and you're more useful to the people on the bus than if you were back at the bus stop. That is where my teachings, my philosophy and my leadership and management style comes out. I like to be with them on the bus. Make sure you're part of the result, part of the good stuff. We need to coach people, train and mentor people. I still think we need to be on the bus. There's no harm in when you're successful to not hide the success and you need to learn people to be successful. I want to be on the bus and on the journey together and bear fruit and also enjoy the fruit of success with them. This leadership practice inventory is very special in my line to try and get it right. It is a leadership practice checklist.

VINESSA: So do you use it as CEO quite a lot?

P1: I am sending it to our management team. All the people that you will get to talk to they will have this on their file somewhere. I try and remind them, like me to do it and each year I send it out to them and say guys, remember as leaders, try and remember what we should be doing. Are you enabling others to act, are you involving others in the planning, are you treating them with respect. You can't be your brothers' keeper but you can offer advice and guidance. Our people out there are good. When I joined up we had under 3,000 cars. We now have nearly 9,000 cars in the fleet. Sometimes when things get bigger you get the silliness and bigness creeps in and you forget about the basics. You are so busy on the technical work that you forget the intangible stuff. Sharing your dreams, sharing their dreams and that sort of stuff.

VINESSA: How long are you CEO now?

P1: Three years. I took over when the world economy collapsed, crashed. All my friends said the timing was shocking.
VINESSA: Tell me everything about how the world collapsed and how you've taken it?

P1: What happened is that the previous guy resigned at this period. I have a very good friend and colleague, my right hand person, her name is Ms X. She was the Financial Director and now the Operations Director.

VINESSA: Is she still here?

P1: On my arrival at the company in 1999, she was the Financial Director and I was the Sales and Marketing Director. We were in the terminology of the other 3 directors, there were 5 of us, we were the junior guys. She has been with this company for 20 years. So we made a pact. Our pact was that hard work will win the day. There is no substitute for hard work. You can have all the talent in the world as a sports person, if you don't go to practice every day you look like scrap. One of the basics of life is that you have to work hard every day. Again, do what you do, do well. She has that same work ethic and philosophy. Over time the others have chosen to follow different paths, different careers. Then Mr K, the Financial Director, what a fine gentleman he was. A good friend of his was in a near fatal accident was almost declared brain dead. He had a transport business. So Mr K gave up his position in this company to go and keep continuing with this business of his best friend. That is when Ms X became Operations Director. Then a new person joined us as the Financial Director. I arrived in a position where the previous Director didn't leave a legacy of any note. So we had now to try and sort of glue the stuff together. I put my hand up and said I will give it a go because this company was too good with too many good people to let it flounder. I said to Ms X, the pact that we had, let's call a meeting and I said, listen guys it doesn't matter whose next we are the company and that's the truth of the matter. Doesn't matter who the new coach is, he/she has an impact but we are the players. We are where the rubber meets the road, that's us. There were 19 of us and we agreed that we will continue to do what's good for the company in our region, we will take responsibility for the things we say we're going to do. That's what we decided as to how we were going to go forward. As it turns out they did appoint me. So all I had to do was just reinforce that philosophy. My management style is a simple style. I think I'm inherently "lazy", I have good days and bad days, some days I work harder that other days, but I still
think that if you don’t give tasks and responsibility to people, you are missing a big opportunity. I used to think nobody could do something as well as me. But then I’d think, I shouldn’t be doing that and then I remember that there is somebody like Ms R. Then I’d phone Ms R and say, Ms R, what you did last year when we were running short of business, can we do that again? Instead of me phoning people and say will you buy the cars. Sometimes I almost feel "lazy" because I’m not technically involved, I’m strategically very involved because I am directing from the “lifesavers chair”. That is something that I have also learnt over the years. To be the leader sometimes you may for very short spells be required to get down from the chair and quickly go and do something and get up there again, if you don’t get back up there, you’re floundering in the waves, we do a hell of a good job. We are saving lives but we are probably doing it in an organised order, or not rescuing the people we should be rescuing. And this is a "P1-ism" as well. Something that I always keep in my mind is that somebody has to be sitting there and saying; come here, you go there, and you go there. As a leader one also needs to have a vision and a direction. To control some way you elevate just slightly above it all to be able to see the full field and then make the decisions. And it’s interesting, you see it in professional rugby at the moment. You see the head coach; he sits high up in the grandstands. You see them at the microphone and he is talking to the fellow on the field with the water bottles, when he runs on he gives the message. If the coach was down on the field he wouldn’t have the lifesavers view. Business is about saving lives and saving jobs as well. I’ve seen it reinforced by the behaviour of football and rugby coaches. They are able to talk to the guy before they do the player exchange. Whether I always get it right, probably not, but it is not without giving it a full go. I try and lead from the front. Hence as I sit here I tell you that I’m exhausted because of the circumstances of the last year and there are only the two of us. Even as we are now we alternate with taking our leave. Ms P is on holiday right now, she’s back next week then I’m on leave. The commitment is there. It is not always clever to lead from the front because sometimes if the leader does gets shot, now what? As I said, you rush in and get back out, then give strategic direction.

**VINESSA:** P1, tell me your attitude towards your job. Tell me your attitude as being CEO?
P1: When you're running a company, there are philosophies, you're there for the shareholder, I understand, but more importantly you're there for the stakeholders. Now the shareholders are only one stakeholder. The people in the company are stakeholders. Your suppliers are stakeholders. Your customers are stakeholders. Each of those spokes are stakeholders in your company, they cannot be ignored. Profit is a very important factor in business, because that is what sustains things, ultimately. But it's the people that make it happen. My responsibility has always been through this recession, to never retrenched one person. My wish is that on my memorial stone they will put that I never retrenched one person. I lied, I cajoled, I delayed, I look for alternates to save people because I didn't want them to go without food. I've been poor, I understand what it is like not to have food. I go right back to when I was at the OK bazaars, having moved from a very comfortable environment. I received a free breakfast and a free lunch. At lunch time I used to make a sandwich for My wife, which was her dinner. At the OK they used to throw away the vegetables, I used to take that home, cut off the bad pieces and purée it for the children. Most of the technical work in this job I'm in now, or in the company, I've done it. So I also understand poverty and hunger and I don't want it to happen to anybody. There was a bit of statistical manoeuvring. That is probably the greatest achievement I've ever achieved. We did decrease the staff compliment by natural attrition, if people chose to leave we didn't replace, that's different. I never instructed anybody to call a person and say you've got to cut someone loose. So my responsibility is to the people because it's the people that will make the profit. That's really what it is. Hopefully I will be the conduit or the catalyst for growth. If we can get this right profit is a consequence in my belief for effort. Sometimes when you don't make a profit it's nothing to do with you but I still take it very personally, even though the whole world is in recession and things are tough, and the result doesn't look good, it's personal, I live it, I can't step out of it. I am the leader, the buck stops here. The good stuff is for the people, the bad stuff is because I didn't manage people because I didn't manage it right, that's the way it is. It is important to me. There are companies that are cold and callous. That's fine I won't work with those companies. I've been with one of those, so I've left, it's ok, I've been without a job, I can do that again if it would deteriorate to that.
You've got to have principles and if you can live within those. On Sundays My wife and I do ask for forgiveness for things that we didn't quite get right or didn't say right. Words can come quickly sometimes and they hurt. Besides apologising to that person and I would do that, it still doesn't fix things. You can say sorry, but it is still a bit sore until it wears off and the memory disappears. Sorry, can also be a bit shallow sometimes. I turn 58 on the 23rd of December, so in theory I have 4 years before I retire. I have confidence in my ability. I'm not stressed by it, I am stressed for the people, I'm not stressed for me. If whoever is my superior or the holding company feels that I'm not adding value and they decide to tell me so, it's also fine. I can't waste energy worrying about that. I need to plough my energy into all the things that I've spoken about, because reward is a consequence of effort. People who worry about money, will never have money. People who worry about things that will make money, they will have money. So I suppose this is about we closing out for this session. I want to thank you.

VINESSA: Thank you. P1 you seem to having enjoyed this session?

P1: I do, I love people, I love sharing stuff, not stuff about me but stuff about training and growing.

VINESSA: Thank you very much.

P1: There is a lady for example that desperately wanted to be part of our sales team but she had no experience. That's the hard part of the job of being a parent, of being a boss sometimes. You pass it down to their manager and say no I'm not endorsing this. But if she really wants to become a sales person she can come and see me. She made the appointment. I said so you want to be here because you get a car and a free baby seat? Is this your reason for doing it? If you really, genuinely want to become a sales person, can I be part of that growth? If and when and while I'm still here you can become that person. But we would have to have a lot of genuine effort from both of us. Sales training is a passion for me, I really am so intrigued by successful sales people. People who made it and how they made it. Things that made them successful. Not that I always applied that correctly, but don't do as I do, to as I say. The best coaches are golf coaches and the best coaches are not as such the best golfers. That is where I fit in perhaps. I am perhaps not the best but I might be the best coach and mentor. So if she fulfils her side, in
November next year I can’t see why she cannot be a sales person. I always say to people, if somebody gives you the gift of knowledge of some sort, all I ask is that you give it to somebody else. How they spend your knowledge is also up to them. All I ask is respecting the team.

**VINESSA:** P1, you told me about your wonderful history. So much tenacity and grit and we’ve come to your work history, and I want you to tell me if there is anything else that you have not shared. The next session will be about branding and the importance of branding. Preferably I will like to cover that at a different time because that doesn’t get away from this wonderful exiting time with P1 here as a man, an employee and as a CEO. If you want to continue, you’re welcome. If we can do that at another session it will also be fine.

**P1:** I think we need to do it at a different session.

**VINESSA:** Yes, because then we get into the hard part of business. But I want you just to conclude from your side, talking about whatever you need to say. Just round it off in a nice way this whole P1-as a man, P1 as a father, P1 as a husband, P1 as an employee, P1 as the CEO. If you can just conclude with that?

**P1:** I suppose is that my conclusion of all this is that I tried ...

**INTERVIEW 2**

**P1:** I have just returned from a company visit overseas. It was an international conference. The corporate strategy is they will tell you what it is that drives them. So what understanding would you have if you were to publish something yet each of those sectors the chain, market, just to you strategy, sales company, find some. This will work lovely for you.

**VINESSA:** Is it? Thank you very much. As mentioned previously we will focus on branding, marketing and the competitors!

**P1:** How we go about or how we should be going about doing what we do. The business is divided into sectors. Each of these sectors tells you from what the target
is, how we get it, including even the small businesses- you know what even what the small businesses would take it.

VINESSA: Ok. Thank you, great stuff.

P1: So it is more than a sales strategy more than a marketing strategy. Marketing is whishy-washy, marketing for us is branding it is not really marketing.

VINESSA: Do you have a dedicated person just doing your branding?

P1: Yes, her name is “another Participant”.

VINESSA: Is that the lady that I spoke to?

P1: Yes I think you spoke to her downstairs in the marketing office.

VINESSA: Yes I will get all the stuff from her now.

P1: That is another Participant, she has it. There are different kinds of campaigns that we do.

VINESSA: Sure.

P1: We’re refocusing very heavily now into it.

VINESSA: On the Internet?

P1: Yes, we do because print media is a bit outdated for us.

VINESSA: Especially for you I think that the internet is the way to go.

P1: It is yes.

VINESSA: P1 I want to spend say just 50 minutes, I know that you are busy, we’ve been chit-chatting, just 50 minutes, I won’t be too long. It is 5 past 10 let’s say about 50 minutes.

P1: I’ve got you until 11 o’clock.

VINESSA: Is it, Oh great stuff, great stuff. I want to ask you a question, (coughing) let’s say from 15 to 20 minutes.

P1: Ja?
VINESSA: I want you to talk to me every single little thing; we've spoken about P1 as a person. You told me about P1 the family man, about your children, where you grew up your mom your dad, where you grew up. I've got all of that, I've summarised it. Then we're looking at P1 the CEO, you told me how you came into the office and your predecessors and how you've changed things so we basically discussed you as a CEO. I want to know P1 in terms of how you see the company brand, how you, you now see how you've come, even before you've come into the CEO position, how you saw the brand, how you see it ...... how you envisage the brand ...... bigger or better, your futures ...... visions of your brand. What does this brand signify to you, just to talk to me everything you talked to me about your brand that is what I'm really interested about.

P1: Brand, to start off I think what we need to do is for you to prompt each question so I can respond to each question. So what is the question so that you can get an overview of what you are trying to achieve?

VINESSA: Yes.

P1: So you pop me the question and I'll build on to that question.

VINESSA: Great stuff. Tell me when you had your personal badge, you've given me how you've done your management and I was very impressed with that. From the personal brand, how do you see yourself fitting into the company brand?

P1: The Company as a brand, before my time of joining was assessed by an Agency so when they do a brand review or a brand personality check they equated it to film stars. Different kinds of film stars, so for example Competitor 1 attracted Richard Burton and now the late Cleopatra, what is her name?

VINESSA: You're talking about Elizabeth Taylor?

P1: Yes. Elizabeth Taylor, which was quite staid and regal and that sort of image and of course professional. One company came out as Helen Hunt and Robbie Williams. Also very professional and a lot of sense of fun so nothing is detracting because they are a lot more jolly and jovial. So the personality we still try and project is that one of fun without detracting from the professionalism of the brand. In South Africa there is only three International brands, proper International brands
where you can get a car. Tokyo is a bit thin on the ground, the branch there I think it was washed away. It really is, I mean in Beijing you will see the company.

VINESSA: In the United States you have the company

P1: Huge. So Competitor 2, competitor 1 and The company are the only three International, really true International brands I think. The brand itself, fortunately or unfortunately in the world with a name like The company tends to attract more of a leisure market, a leisure label in other words more a sort of social, rental and leisure environment whereas the corporate traveller, I am talking about outside of South Africa you know, will see competitor 1 and Competitor 2 as the corporate type of a brand. In South Africa we did go down that path about eight years ago to jolly it up almost too thorough, in other words the corporate traveller would not really take us that seriously. We then brought it back put our arms around it again, re-branded it on a more corporate structured basis, rather than I would say the animation aspect to it more than the animation process. So the brand itself has this personality: I think it is a nice personality to have because first off, it is very professional and also oozes off a lot of fun at the same time. They tell me it is very difficult to act a comedy part, more difficult than a serious part, so in other words you have to be more professional because if you try to be funny and it really isn't you really do look silly.

VINESSA: You look silly yes.

P1: So what I try to continue with and keeping the memory on a sort of just a temporary passing through custodian of the brand away will be because the company started in say '68 or whenever it was and before me, and after me, it will continue so one needs to not ever see it every CEO that comes in or MD you can't keep on taking off in different directions. What you have to do is to continue to build on that wonderful foundation of the company world wide brand. For example I am going to be in early May, I am going back to the UK. We have two days of Western European, Middle East, Europe and Eastern Africa. The Middle East has a different way of marketing and selling the brand to their environment than the sort of Western, we're more Western, European as in French .....
VINESSA: Is that your jurisdiction?

P1: Yes, but we're all under E M E A, this office does reporting into their branding requirements, functions etc. We send out franchisees into London so it is more, the people I meet, we talk you know, the Portuguese, not Croatia that is still Eastern Block, Portugal, Spain, Israel. There is no Saudi Arabia for instance, it is Belgian, German, France, Holland, Sweden not that block, we culturally, and the way we do business, fit into that environment. So all I am saying is that this thread comes from The company all AB Group, competitor 1, The company people.

VINESSA: competitor 1 and The Company are all the same again?

P1: Same, but only at the Stock Exchange level as an investment. So we are part of the AB Group out of the United States.

VINESSA: And yet here you're like competitors?

P1: We're totally competitors.

VINESSA: How come that works now?

P1: Well it is just that listed Company A owns competitor 1 - The company the brand and they're competitors.

VINESSA: In South Africa?

P1: In South Africa.

VINESSA: And the competitor 1 and The company in USA?

P1: We're just a corporate location. In London there is also an AB Group. Competitor 1, The company, Competitor 1 plc owns the company brand.

VINESSA: Oh I see, but not here in South Africa?

P1: Not here in South Africa but we report through to AB Group, we report into competitor 1 plc for instance totally different brand, brand strategies and management.

VINESSA: Is that only in South Africa now?
P1: No, no, no all over. We are just a corporate location, for example in France we've got a sub-licensee which is owned by competitor 1 PLC, the company brand and the competitor 1 brand.

VINESSA: How come we don't have a thing like you're talking about the plc, how come it's not coming also to South Africa?

P1: No because they're two separate licenses. You see if they could find somebody like that in France to take the company brand, they would offload it but nobody, or the people who have tried to do that haven't made money so now they've tuned the brand down. So what has happened is the whole Europe owner of the brand which is competitor 1 has to suck it back in. So if you go to the kiosk which is a controlled airport there is a kiosk this big, half of that is competitor 1 and half of it is The Company but you'll be served by the same person.

VINESSA: That is strange and as here you see them as a total competitor.

P1: Total competitor.

VINESSA: How do you feel about that?

P1: You know it is not a big issue because what happens is internationally we have access to a bigger fleet and a more professional operation in France because behind the scenes they use the same vehicles for both brands. In the old days in France we would have one Chico Golf, one BMW and one Volkswagen Microbus because the licensee could only afford that, the competitor 1 / The Company Licensee. So if I was sending our customers to The company- France the choice was limited. Now competitor 1 has group A, B, C, or D now we also have the same access to that same fleet, so all that happens is what they do, is change the key tag behind the scene so you get that car with The company key tag. The competitor 1 guy comes tomorrow and would like to rent that same car, they give him an competitor 1 key tag so the efficiency absolutely makes sense because they do the same thing the same everything but from the front it is the company brand.

VINESSA: You see because when I interviewed your staff they were really anti competitor 1 and I picked that up.

P1: Yes of course they are anti everybody (Opposition).
VINESSA: I think especially anti competitor 1 they seem like you know you've said this elitists type of mentality and even more so and then I heard about this and I wondered now, this customer or this employee goes to work in the UK, how would they feel about this?

P1: It's just it doesn't matter you see an employee does this as well, sometimes and I don't know the answer I should probably get my head around that. It is a natural phenomenon that people will worry about things that they can do nothing about. They waste a lot of negative energy on things like that. So if they were in the UK at London Heathrow Airport and they were working for The company they will do their best for The company the fact that behind the scene, the motive part yes sir that BMW went to an competitor 1 customer today it is absolutely irrelevant. She's got to serve or he has to serve the company brand as the company brand, in the company uniform, servicing whoever comes to them as thinking and knowing that this is The Company.

VINESSA: And yet they've got the same brand name?

P1: It's a brand you know, it's like the McDonalds and the East Rand Mall and the McDonalds in Port Edward Street in New York. They are part of McDonalds but the people who are running the licenses are all different.

VINESSA: So the listed Company B bought the license for ……

P1: …for South Africa, Southern Africa.

VINESSA: And listed Company A bought it for competitor 1?

P1: Yes.

VINESSA: It makes sense now.

P1: That is what I'm saying. So Competitor 1 send their franchise fees straight to the plc. We send ours up to a middle company called Z which is owned by plc and that runs the company brand in the EMEA region. I don't know how many other countries in Europe are franchised as competitor 1 because competitor 1 is generally running their business as a corporate environment. Where we use the word
corporate plc Office, in other words Head Office in the branch in Charles de Gaulle competitor 1 is managed by them directly.

VINESSA: That's where now you're talking, in Europe?

P1: plc yes, Europe, they report directly in that office other people there are responsible for all that, whereas in South Africa there is nothing, there is just a EMEA rep, competitor 1 EMEA rep from Head Office that comes out just to make sure that the signage, the branding is complied and that we're not cheating them and are sending them the percentage of revenue that is theirs.

VINESSA: Sjoe, now you're in charge of, what you said, Africa?

P1: No, Southern Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

VINESSA: Is that the whole region?

P1: That is just us.

VINESSA: But you head the whole region?

P1: Yes.

VINESSA: And is the brand any different? Is South Africa comparative to Namibia?

P1: We run it to the same standards, the same processes. But if you went into Nairobi Kenya the company brand reports directly into Z Company it has nothing to do with us at all. In theory is applies to they call it the corporate identity the CI it should be the same.

VINESSA: Ok.

P1: But again, in different countries in Mauritius for example it is similar however the cars are older because of import duties and the cost of the cars the cars in Mauritius could be four years old. So in the UK they might run it for six months so there is no standard there, the standard is complete reliable cars that is befitting of the brand, in other words you must know that you are going to get good service, you will recognise the company Logo when you get to the airport like a McDonalds will
always look like a McDonalds throughout the world outside the M, The company must be the same.

VINESSA: The same. P1 can we come back to our question, I want to find out, when you see the company brand what vocabulary words come to you and why?

P1: It's warm. Again the word The company intimated good value.

VINESSA: Does it not signify cheap?

P1: No, you can maybe look cheap if you want to behave cheap, you will become cheap, that's not what it is, the word the company is not meant to be cheap. That is really why we do struggle as a brand if we try and compete with regal brand names like competitor 1 like it was with Competitor 3. You can't be more expensive with the word like the company; because it is just I mean what are you thinking? The name is The company so it must at least be a rand cheaper it can't be a rand more expensive in theory. So that is where the dilemma is where we are if you try to get the rate up but no The company has not got anything to do with cheap. It is great value and we've got to be seen as a value for money operation.

VINESSA: Sure. Talk to me about warmth, is that the only word, and why do you think warm?

P1: The colour orange is a warm colour anyway it is quite a vibrant warm colour.

VINESSA: Because the colour orange, why do you have to bring a warmth to your brand?

P1: Because again it is pretty similar to compare. It began because we had a market share of about the 20% mark we were still able to spend time with you to recognise you as the customer as the renter whereas if you get big the silliness of being so big we are still able to do that warmth. An example, when Competitor 3 started they only had ten customers per day so they used to walk their customers to their car it was warm, it was friendly it was all those things. Now they can't do that anymore because they've got 30% market share, they are too busy and of course labour is very expensive. If you pay somebody R6 000.00 per month so they can walk somebody to their car, besides the guy doesn't really want to be walked to the car he is in a hurry he wants to get to his meeting. But that's on the side that's how
things have changed, we’re past that. So the first thing for me when I think The company I think warmth, friendly sort of amicable, and talked to that is really the way I see it.

**VINESSA:** Now Competitor 3 had this warmth that you've mentioned now, warmth, friendly and amicable. In terms to you as a person, do you feel it correlates to you as a person?

**P1:** Yes that is definitely me. That is how I am and I also represent the brand when I'm out there, so one of the things that people do forget is that in your place of work within a short space of time people know where you work, so if you're an idiot and behave like an idiot and someone says he works at a company somehow the whole of that company employs idiots, that is what it is, so in theory you're on duty all the time. When people find out where you operate from, and when you happen to be the boss of that organisation even more so, you and your company are on show because if so and so say P1 is an idiot have you seen his behaviour and he is the boss of The company imagine what that company is like. So at no stage are you off the hook.

**VINESSA:** Beautiful.

**P1:** So one has to continue and it is my job and duty to make this flow as warmth, amicable, humble, that sort of approach to customers and to colleagues and to just anybody that you come into contact with and you can always stay humble, because when you're at a big company and you have the name of listed Company B behind you it is very easy to become cocky and arrogant because it is a big strong company. So how often haven't we seen people that think that they are the listed Company and they're just like me they are an employee of Holding Company. That does why I say be humble because humbleness gives you the results that you work for. So caring, listening, that is the sort of company and people that we have and we will continue to do that and hopefully I can get it right on a daily basis, and to do that, and to nurture that warmth that friendliness and caring because that is all we've got.

**VINESSA:** Sure. So you say that it cascades down from listed company boss to you?

**P1:** Well less so because he just reminds us.
VINESSA: Ok so he reminds you?

P1: It reminds us to be humble, I don't know that is why I'm saying I'm not talking on his behalf, but he has reminded us on many occasions to stay humble.

VINESSA: Great stuff.

P1: It is very easy to win Wimbledon once and become cocky and cute and then never do win it again. I'm going to use a real live example in the perception of Mr GS is that one of being cocky and cute and arrogant. And the people now that he hasn't achieved they are really all over him. There is nobody helping him now, he is on his own and it is cold out there. Because had he been over the years more humble and said gee whiz I've let you down, it's a shocker. Some things don't endure you, you've got to sort of lead things from the front in that sense, more so when times are tough. When times are good you make everybody else look good, not you, other people and when times are terrible you be in the front and you protect others so you're the protector so that is really it.

VINESSA: Fantastic, now tell me P1 in terms of what you mentioned in all these vocabulary words now I want to take it, you mentioned about walking customers to the car and all that, I want to take this to the employee dimension, how do you feel that you inculcate these vocabulary words to your employees?

P1: I can't that is why we have people that know how to do it in our system so one hopes. I don't have a ……..

VINESSA: How do you ……….

P1: I don't have a platform that I come to a platform and talk to the nation. We don't do that sort of thing. The people that mixes it down from me and hopefully there next level down so we hope the broken telephone doesn't break down too much, because it will have diluted your words and your message, so hopefully you've surrounded yourself with these same warm people whom we have informed, most of them. All I have to do is remind them as well and say, “guys without people we've got nothing, and make sure that they pass it on”. Whether they do it all the time correctly or not I don't know that, but by example I was in Cape Town last week so when I get the chance I do, I do that face to face. What I do is to stop 'How are you',
'How are things going' I do that in every department in the depot last week. Mr F who also runs our door to door operation, we have nine drivers who are not full time employees, sort of contracted full time but not full time employees of The company. We had a sandwich and a lunch together in their little training room where I just sat and answered a few questions, where we're going what we're doing. So I do spend time right at the bottom with that driver just letting him know, letting him understand what his expectations are. I don't do that often enough but I do it when I get the chance. We had a talk last night, I chap I met many years ago his name is Mr D, he was a security guard; he is now one of the top motivation speakers in South Africa.

He was saying you know he started off as a security guard and, “I was the guy that people used to ask me a whole new route and used to abuse me. It was me and I'm still more of a human being trying to find where I was going you know, I didn't really want to be a security guard it was all I could find at the time.”

Our security guards in our complex, whenever we drive there they always comes out to greet us and I make a point of stopping and greeting them because they also don't want to be there is really what I was saying. If I can somewhere somehow treat people that I work with like that one hopes that they will do that further down and the chances are better that they would if I am treating you this way if you're watching I need to also try and do it this way whether we will get it right all the time is another question. If I was an abusive cocky, loud, rough, bad language boss people might emulate that. If I am really not treating them well they probably won't treat their people well but I feel in a way that I do because I am a caring, concerned sort of a person.

VINESSA: Good. P1 I hear fantastic things I have seen fantastic things. Talk to me through the culture that has come, the company culture that has come before you even now to your brand. The culture of the brand.

P1: The company in its history is very turbulent, very turbulent, they had many fathers and orphaned in a way on many occasions through lack of funding and different companies, bankrupt, sold out to the next person who came up with the money, so the next year or two years they would be selling to somebody else and then to somebody else, and then sold to THE HOLDING COMPANY 's and them
THE HOLDING COMPANY's too went bankrupt and then by a consortium of banks and then came the listed companies and they had another father again. Over time a lot was various role model bosses that The company had that were rugged rough, and then some was more caring and some less caring, all about the money, need the return and then I think it was in 1990 or around there I can't remember the exactly when it did start he brought this sort of culture of caring into the system more so and into the company brand the South African The company brand and that is the one that we try and continue with. Now his role in the listed company is a little more rugged and that doesn't mean that we need to become rugged, they would like to see us become rugged in terms of I won't say less caring more profit but just kind of be nice and make money. So that is where my job is the shield, I've got to shield the people from the cold wind out there.

VINESSA: Tell me P1 in terms of getting info about the past history of the company Group and the Holding Company is there anything apart of what you gave me is there anything more? You said the brand started in 1968. I didn't pick it up before this until you told me now.

P1: No.

VINESSA: I'll pick it up on the ..?.. circuit.

P1: The Company The industry the history is there if somebody told you that they don't know.

VINESSA: Before we get to the last question I just want to signify the question you speak about fun that you've started with, is this fun equivalent to the same fun that was tried to be done by Southwest Airlines?

P1: I don't see it as that, I find it too, animated, it is too flippant and it is too casual. It is really, I know a guy his name is Joe Callaghan he started it, Southwest Airlines. No, no.

VINESSA: Nothing?

P1: The fact that I'm mentioning for example when it is Cricket Friday we do the jeans thing it is 100% pure South African, football we do on Fridays we participate and that, but we also had the theory that the girls in the Debtors Department or
Christmas time will knock up a breakfast where they all bring a 'skottel' and that, that sort of fun that is really what I am saying.

VINESSA: That sense of belonging?

P1: Yes but it is really is smiling, it is warmth that is the fun that I'm talking about. Fun is not 'jol' and party and no work. I call it rule number six, and it is not mine, it came out of a book somewhere and it is rule number six, which means, we all work jolly hard but when there is time for a moment of a bit of frivolity and a bit of fun we all enjoy that as well.

VINESSA: I saw that in your management, your leadership style. So you say this is how it started. Now I want you to look at your employee brand. Assess it for me please, the value of your employ brand?

P1: Well again, one hope that through training and through visual management the people that I come into contact with we hope that they will portray it down into that. The employee brand again I'm looking for that warmth because that is what varies that understanding, that caring, that 'how can I help you', that look in the eye, that smile, 'it looks like you had a tough flight'. 'Looking at the board I saw that your flight was delayed, I'm sorry about that I'm trying to get you on the way as soon as possible', and off he goes. That is really what we are looking for. For example Ms M L. from sales, so what does she do? She knows that the fellow from Munich, one of our tour operators likes Amarula and had to drag a briefcase through Europe making sales, seeing customers and even if it was the last call she would carry that damn bottle of Amarula so when she calls on him as the last call she, there it is, that is the caring, that is remembering the birthday, that is sending a car, that is empathising that is sympathising when things are not right. It is almost like becoming friends of your customer base more than just they are just customers. A lot of people, and that is why I like the words customer, the people talk about something strong a terrible word, oh man something doctors call a patient, I'm trying to remember now. Anyway I like customers. So why do I use the word customer? Because it is easy to make a sale, but it is difficult to make a customer. See a customer means he is coming back that is what we try to do, I try to do, because of my service background, I want him to come back, I want him to become a customer I don't want them just to make a sale,
a sale is a one-shot deal, a customer in theory is for life so if and when they ever need to rent a car they'll come to The company.

**VINESSA:** Sure.

**P1:** That is really what we are trying to do, we're trying to make customers.

**VINESSA:** Do you try to make customers?

**P1:** Client, sorry, the word client is so cold it doesn't even have a number and a name, Customer has a warmth when somebody says that is my customer it's like warmth, my client is like commercial, he pays me ten rand or I give him ten rand and that is it. That is the way client comes up in my mind.

**VINESSA:** That is wonderful and warm. Now when you choose, or when you look at your marketing or sales whatever you like to put it marketing or whatever, do you think you need more to impress customers or your staff?

**P1:** No, on my personal note no.

**VINESSA:** Do you need investment to impress?

**P1:** No, in theory investments are people because they will impress. I can't see the customers, all the customers all the time, that is why we have a sales team who does that. Even our National Sales Manager which is now Gaynor can't get to see them all the time. On a weekly, monthly basis that is what your people do. So all we can do is invest in their training and their sort of EQ, IQ development and hope that that filters through to those environments. When I was a proper salesman in this company as the Sales Director, when I was out there I was hoping that by being with those people that they would behave in a way, hopefully with their own personality, you don't want a clone, in the same provision of care and service, that is really what it is.

**VINESSA:** Beautiful.

**P1:** You know in Rotary we call it service above self. But this, you can't really do service above because the company also needs to be profitable so all that needs to be is sort of one way. That is really you know....
VINESSA: Service by selling.

P1: It's sort of, you see my thrill in life, including here is seeing people grow and develop and become successful. Because that is what I really want and I try to adopt it. So if I learn something, in fact, I don't know who said it but the comment was if I teach you something I'm happy to do that, but I want you do teach somebody else the same thing and just pass it down. I recently was at a conference where Martina Navratilova was our guest speaker.

VINESSA: My goodness.

P1: .....and she is just the most awesome, outstanding person I've ever met. I don't think she knows how famous she is that is how humble she is and that again just looking at her at her presentation for an hour all I saw was humbleness, humility and she's been through the mill, I mean she's surviving still living with and cured of cancer.

VINESSA: I didn't know she had cancer.

P1: Yeah she did. So she shared with us what made her a successful tennis pro and probably the most successful athlete in my time, that I was in the game and what she did to accomplish it, what she did leading the teams, surrounding herself with real friends. Real friends do not agree with you, real friends tell you when you're a jerk, that is a real friend. That is the things that she equates with her success on the court when one sees tennis it is an individual sport but it is not at all, it is all about the team, it is about nutritionist, it is about the coach, about the guy that provides the transport and gets you there. Your travel manager because they travel a lot, that is one who makes sure that you get enough sleep before you have your first practise game or your first match game, those things. Surrounding yourself with because you don't always understand that that's there. She taught us, and reminded us, that you stay in the moment you know don't jump too far ahead stay in the moment. She also taught us and reminded us that if your problems are identified that is as much that you need to worry about because you punctuate when your problem is there use your head to find the solution, beautiful stuff and I taught that and I really shared that with some of my colleagues. I was fortunate enough to go there and I made lots of
notes much like yourself, and there it is in my cupboard. So I shared it and offloaded
that. My point being she shared with me, I want to share with the other people
around me.

VINESSA: That is phenomenal. Just what little you told me has made me just
think about myself.

P1: Yes, well that is what it is this is for one's own life and about the business
environment She was diagnosed with cancer, there it was. She says she was
miserable, down, moped for a full half hour, sorry for herself so she said that is it,
sitting and moping is not going to help me, I got it, get on to it, get my nutrition get
the best surgeons, get the best people who can help me, where is my friends, this is
what I've got guys, where is the solution. During her whole time of chemotherapy
and treatment throughout this process she never missed one day of training. Never
missed a day of training some days she didn't train very well but she never missed a
day of training. That is staying in the moment that is concentrating so if I can stay fit
I've got more of a chance of beating the system than if I was run over and saying
well that is it, it is over. So in business it is the same.

VINESSA: Very good.

P1: You know you can lose an account and say oh well tough luck I've lost another
one. No, no hang on, hang on guys what do we do is, what is the problem, ok we
are not losing another one how are we going to stop losing another account and how
are we going to get some accounts. Concentrate, use your energies on solutions
because the problem you've identified, it is done sitting and discussing it for an hour
does not change the problem, discussing the solution for an hour has a way of
overcoming the problem. Wonderful stuff and she just spoke about at her age at 32
people have retired from tennis at 25 and 26 they have already been there for nine
or ten years. At 32 she was still winning grand slams, at 32 she changed her whole
stance because when she learned to play tennis and I know because I've played
tennis on a high level myself. The way we used to cross over and play a backhand or
a forehand we used to cross over, nowadays kids learn to stand flat they play like
this and they've got a whole different grip and all that. So at 32 she changed
everything she had done before and continued to win another two grand slams or
what have you, major tournaments which also proves that you can also teach an old
dog new tricks. That is the kind of information that she imparted so you've got an old man like me, I still can learn something in depth and improve. That is what she was saying, you're never too old to learn but you have to identify that you can reform because if you stay with the old, if you still think you can use a wooden racket because at Wimbledon they used a wooden racket so therefore it is good enough for them it is good enough for me. No, use technology, use the opportunity the best that you can. Then go and find those people because it is wonderful. So those warm things that I've learned sitting and listening to her for an hour anybody who wants to hear my story, my staff, my few friends, my family, share it because I'm changing. Sometimes you need to do that; all of us need to do that just that 'sure, you're right' that is a nice thought.

VINESSA: Wonderful.

P1: That is really what I am saying so if I can just do that with the people that I come into contact with on a daily or weekly basis like with Mr WM down in Durban next week I will sit, I will go through all that and say I want to share this with you. Nothing that you haven't heard before but I just want to remind you because every time I do it I also get reminded because it is practise the more you repeat good things the richer you are. One other thing that has come through that as well from that, you must practise, practice, practise, you must practise a lot of things. Because if you don't practise nothing becomes better so you most always remember what is right and practise what is right. You see, going to the driving range and practising a bad swing is not getting it better so practise is important but you must practise the right things, little things like that I've just reminded myself because when I'm talking to people like we're doing today when I'm finished chatting to you I will go out, I will be better for the rest of the day because I've reminded myself because in a way it is practise, repetition that what it is. I don't know if I can convince other people but I'm hoping that somewhere in this whole big environment, the whole business, we all have a lot of stresses and strains at work but that somewhere in a day, somewhere you will remember that those few words those warm words when somebody's touched you on the shoulder and said gee whiz we haven't spoken for a while, how are you doing, looks like you're doing great. Just that is small stuff because that small stuff is big stuff. I like it when somebody does it to me so why wouldn't the next person like it? They might pretend that they don't like it or that they don't need it
but we all do at a stage, we all need encouragement because it is tough out there, it is very tough out there. When we stop and do it, it actually feels quite good. I have a good friend and I say a good friend but I haven’t seen him for twenty years, but he is a good friend, we stayed in touch, he’s in Cape Town. When I’ve been to Cape Town I tried to see him, I’ve tried to phone but there was no answer. I was only there for an hour or two before I had to go to my next appointment so I didn’t see him but through his sister that said it is his birthday tomorrow I send him a note and just wished him well and it was like twenty years ago. Those are the things, my friends tell me I am good at it but probably not as good as other people but what I’m trying to say is that I’m ok at it but I’m trying to be better. It took me, I promise you probably one minute to look up his address …….. many ……..

P1: We will get to get to see each other I can tell you that, I’ll try and do that, that’s all, no more, no more if only for one minute. But I could spend an hour telling you why I haven’t got time to do that, that is the things that we do that is what companies do. They sort of pretend that they care but they don’t really. So because it is only people that can make the difference. People don’t really leave their company, they leave their bosses. I’m telling you, they leave their bosses. So we can all be better bosses, better leader, better mentors in theory. In theory, you know yourself if you are happy here you do perform better so if everybody can feel 1% better than yesterday or I get 1% more productivity and positive behaviour out of it and we can all do that. But there is a saying that I can’t be my brother’s keeper either, you can only do so much in a day with so many people and with having the faith that they will also pass it on hopefully share the good experiences that we had. So ja, that is us you know.

VINESSA: You’ve uplifted me 100%.

P1: No, shame, you are very kind. But we’re all that and I’m just saying that as long as we recognise people, individuals bigger than us all, bigger than sport. I mean there is Ms I. H. downstairs she’s got the loveliest, prettiest daughter and it is probably during school holidays I don’t know but she’s there, she brings her doll and her colouring book with her and she saw me, as she does every school holiday and I don’t even know her name but she comes up and she gives me a hug. It is wonderful to see her because we’re all family and friends and Ms I.H. rather could be
somewhere else but she brings her kid to the office and nobody's got a problem with that we're a family. Now I don't know whether that is acceptable or unacceptable but with me that is fine for me. Because for me it is the last day of the month when we collect twelve million rand which we collect every day are collected in their department which is the run of their department. She sends me a little notice because as I do every day, as soon as she arrives, this is the big day you know, today is the day, this is the last portion this is the last rope. She doesn't have to send a note. We see and do follow up collections every day. It is not as nice walking down which I do sometimes. It's a bit of rule six I want to see what is happening in there and have a bit of jovial nonsense, that is what it is I don't do that every day I couldn't, if I could I would. But it is just to stop and greet somebody is what you've got to do all of us- he doesn't always get it right, he doesn't. But sometimes, I know he is going to get it wrong. I understand I don't know, but that is his grudge because really who am I to judge? I don't know, maybe it is just his relief if he's a bit pissed off whatever his, he knows that it is wrong but if he wants to spend my two rand towards a bottle of brandy I don't know but It's ok it is two rand, but I don't know why he is doing it but It's ok it is two rand. I wish you the best of luck I would have preferred to have given food but I'm probably not my brother's keeper and off you go I just wish you good luck hopefully he has a long life what he is going through. He doesn't want to be at the traffic light he doesn't, it is circumstance. Whatever it may be, maybe it is his own doing, and maybe it is circumstance I don't know. We judge too easily. I want you to have a lot of good luck.

**VINESSA:**  You too, thank you you're very kind.

**P1:**  So whatever we need to do next sure just give me a summary if I can I'll think of some departments. What you need to do is to say P1 I really would love to sit and talk to Ms B and her department. Ms B, I'll send her a note, Vinessa is going to be in touch with you and I let you have a copy of that note so there it is. P1 said that I need to be in touch, I'm being in touch, where and when will it suite you? So here is my proposed easy shorter version of the Australian questionnaire don't use the word kangaroo here they don't like it.

**VINESSA:**  Thank you I have just written that here. I'm going to think about our interview on our discussion points and speak to my professor.
P1: Just ask him what he could maybe suggest.

VINESSA: And then I will send you a precise exactly what I’m doing next with the stuff.

P1: In summary.......

VINESSA: Sure.

P1: This is the document that you might find of interest. it is just some of the stuff of what we are doing this is a lot of stuff, it is sales, what we do, how we try to do it. Who is our customer in this sector, what services is there? I might look disorganised I’m not really.

VINESSA: No you’re not because I’ve got all your stuff from your management and leadership things, ten years of it.

P1: So there it is, so there is the different sectors in fact there are different sectors that I've put in and consolidated if you want to take that with you.

VINESSA: Thank you very much. What I'm also going to do P1 is apart from retrospection I possibly may come to you another two times for info, to chat like this, because I realise that you're my pressure ..??.. what you can give me nobody else can so I'll be back.

P1: No, I'm fine, as I say sorry that sometimes we have to reschedule or cancel but ....

VINESSA: I've learnt a lot now that you cannot believe it.

P1: I know it is nobody's fault when you're late etc it's just that we also run a tight ship.

P1: Do you like that photo of my wife, she hates that photo.

VINESSA: Is it?

P1: There’s the ...............
ANNEXURE 6

Reflection on Participant 5
Annexure 6
Reflection on Participant 5

P5 is a pretty, vibrant and bubbly 49 year old who is the Manager of the regional store, and has direct control of all the COMPANY Stores in the XXXX Suburbs. She seemingly has experienced "it all" at THE COMPANY, over her approximate 20 year work experience and seems to take her work very seriously. She is full of energy when she talks, very positive, friendly and sociable. Her husband also works for the Head Office.

P5 seems to have no hidden agendas. She says things as is, swears, and is forthright and honest.

Her impression of the company is very positive and she has an absolute passion for her job and the company. She sees the company as her family, and gives the impression that she is so faithful and loyal that she would never resign, but retire gracefully at this company.

The Interview

Some people are useless and will never be part of the brand.

49 years old, at the company for 27 years. Worked in many different company locations. Husband at Company – Head office. Husband – computer person. Met husband 4-5 years after starting at the Company.

Personality

A positive person.
Opportunistic. Always revved up over new opportunities. Sales team – not as revved up.

Positive, friendly person.

Does not like figure work but have to analyze figure work.

Outdoors. Enjoy photography. Farm girl.

"I am a control freak".

**Previous career**

Loved her first day at the company. Loved the uniform. Bright – orange uniform. Bit gross but loved it.

Started in Cape Town.

Had to be bilingual. Checked language – English and Afrikaans. Checked if I could drive.

THE COMPANY was the "the most perfect fit imaginable". The reason was "THE PEOPLE". Everyone got involved and it was the most awesome thing.

Childish and love action.

The people are all good people. There are more things to life. Phenomenal support from people around you.

The COMPANY was security. You get your support from the company.

From Cape Town, to Bloemfontein in the Free State. Was very challenging. Made major changes in 9 months. Then was transferred to A REGION – in charge of Nelspruit initially. Opened up branches in LOCATION 1, 2 and 3.

Then transferred to Eastern Cape. Then transferred back here as Regional Manager. Based at Isando.

Relates incidences where MD's checked on her in the past. Location 1, 2, 3 – where everything is happening.
Present career

P5 is presently the Regional Manager of XXX. There are two area managers here that report to me, and one area manager in Botswana that reports to me.

P5 is in the present job for the past two years. She had terrible withdrawal symptoms since Isando is where all the action happens but that has settled now.

P5 has a staff complement of 77 staff. (68 in South Africa and 11 in Botswana).

Standards of leader

People must have the same high standards as the leader.

People must meet deadlines

People must respect customers

Waiting is a big deal – customers must not wait. Customer service means that customers never have to wait.

Standardize customer service expectations to staff irrespective of the background that the staff comes

Make sure that irrespective of who the customer is - rich and affluent or poor - the same customer service must be given.

The leader and the brand

I am very proud to be at the Company.

We are not out there enough at all although huge financial constraints.

Proper usage of uniform by staff.

We are not in people's faces like Competitor 1, 2 etc.

P5 sees the COMPANY brand as herself. "The company is me and I am the Company".
Committed to brand.

Loyal, stupid person.

Maybe length of service

Get so excited when I see the company brand anywhere.

Maybe because the company has been good to me.

Unbelievable amount of loyalty to the company.

Good Place to work – working with great people.

A fun environment and taking your job seriously.

Strict lines of what you can and cannot do – brings about stability.

Fair environment.

Disciplined environment.

Open door policy and 100% fairness.

Everyone is so happy.

Well paid – P5 considers herself earning a "disgusting amount of money".

Some employees are complaining now – they are paying tax on their company cars. Now they have lower take home pay.

Although unhappy, they still love this brand. It seems that they know nothing else either.

I have contributed enormously to the success of my company.

Middle management has provided an enormous amount of stability in the company. "It is family here at the company". We bounce off each other advice and ideas.

Family means – a sense of real belonging. And it is easier in a company if you are longer in a company.
The family ideology has always been there. My father died after I was at the company for three months. Then a young Jewish girl - new employee offered to do Christmas weekend for me – since my family was meeting just after the funeral. People cover for other people.

The new generation staff have different values that we have. Do not want to put in extra time and hours in their job.

"The harder you work and the more enthusiastic you are, and the harder you try, the bigger the benefit".

It is all about the heart, and not about the money.

Long working hours, 7 days a week until 8/9 pm. Very pressurized environment.

**What makes the branding?**

People who are really committed. Warmth and Caring.

Versatility in the job. Corporate culture imbedded.

Changes necessary : The company must be a market leader. People must be more committed. The company must be ethical, consistent and reliable – and keep telling our customers so. Commitment to say irrespective of what our title is, we are personally committed 24 hours a day. Our competitors tell us that they have children at home so do not answer their cell phones at night.

Every single staff member is there marketing the brand. If we do it right, then customers will tell everyone else that we are doing it right. Staff must project this externally.

Mr X is the man – the CEO of the Holding Company - that personally sent me an e-mail when my mother passed away.
ANNEXURE 7

Comparison of Themes from Pioneers in the Existing Literature
## Annexure 7
Comparison of Themes from Pioneers in the Existing Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Environmental Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005)</td>
<td>A clear brand vision must be defined – a crucial behavioural competency.</td>
<td>Leadership is a key driver that supports internal branding on a global scale.</td>
<td>Non-verbal social interaction patterns, including commitment, will encourage brand supporting behaviour.</td>
<td>Brand reality is when the employees are proud of the company's brand leadership and the brand leadership is passionate about their brand.</td>
<td>Leaders mediate between people from different environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006)</td>
<td>The vision of leaders coherently and consistently define and drive a corporate brand's identity.</td>
<td>Leaders need to invest or establish corporate structures such as culture, design and communication.</td>
<td>Leadership and the commitment of leaders as 'energizers' are important throughout the internal branding process.</td>
<td>The top management team carries out how the company values and its aims are perceived by customers.</td>
<td>Leaders must consistently communicate messages to employees about brand identity and commitment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **King and Grace (2006)** | Leaders must be aware of the market orientation, as it provides the necessary direction.  
The brand will provide the necessary direction and leadership. | Leasers are to be aware of the investment of knowing the brand. | Commitment is the care factor of the organisation. | People and especially leadership should have skills, knowledge and experience. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>King and Grace (2010)</strong></td>
<td>In order to influence employees' attitudes and behaviour, it is necessary to provide direction.</td>
<td>It is only through the evaluation of internal brand management outcomes that continued investment and enhanced internal brand management practices can be realised.</td>
<td>Brand commitment is the psychological attachment or the feeling of belonging and employee has towards an organisation.</td>
<td>Creation of an internal environment to enhance the employee's ability and motivation to acquire and develop relevant and meaningful brand knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009a)** | Management should pay attention to the work environment so that employees are positively trained, and communication about the brand is reflected in other aspects of the workplace.  
Management should carefully carve out the mix of employee characteristics such as age and educational background to understand how to motivate those employees. | Brand identification, employees, brand commitment, loyalty and commitment are positively linked.  
Brand identification is a driver of brand commitment, which precedes brand loyalty of employees. | | |
<p>| Burmann and Zeplin (2005) | Leaders must convey the band identity with its heritage and vision, its values capabilities and personality. | Brand ambassadors must be appointed. Leadership must be fully committed to internal branding, the relevance of the brand and the brand identity concept, as it generates commitment based on identification and internalisation. The three levers for brand commitment are: brand centred HR activities, brand communication and brand leadership. Strong individual brand commitment leads to brand citizenship behaviour. | Potential employees should spend time with experiences employees to enhance the personal identity-brand identity fit. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)</th>
<th>Organisational Socialisation (family and people)</th>
<th>Openness within the Company</th>
<th>The State of the Company</th>
<th>All Issues within the Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005)</td>
<td>The company must display a shared brand understanding amongst their diverse workforce. The development of shared understandings of a service brand's values is based on social interaction.</td>
<td>Culture adds a significant complexity to the process of developing a shared brand understanding.</td>
<td>Culture lays out a predictable world in which an individual is firmly rooted. The success of IBB depends on the ability to leverage cognitive, affective and communicative differences amongst culturally diverse employees.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006)</td>
<td>An organisation's corporate culture defines the corporate identity and standards for individual behaviour. Corporate structure should enhance the consistency of brand supporting behaviour. Corporate culture is a helpful platform to develop the corporate brand and communicate its promise to employees. Social systems (organisations) reproduce relations.</td>
<td>Create a culture and a system that enables employees to use their talents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2006)</td>
<td>Employees should be provided with open and clear guidance. The result of awareness of the market</td>
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<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2010)</td>
<td>Organisational socialisation is the extent to which an employee perceives the organisational environment to assist employees to learn and identify organisational values, beliefs and expectations.</td>
<td>Extent to which an employee is receptive to original dialogue. Openness or &quot;open-mindedness&quot; is linked to information generation and knowledge dissemination. It is also linked to the human factor.</td>
<td>All cognitive activities are shaped by the culture and the context in which they occur.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009a)</td>
<td>Internal branding could engender employees brand identification, reflecting their sense of &quot;oneness&quot; because it is about communicating to employees the brand values, making the brand and company different from others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burmann and Zeplin (2005)</td>
<td>Internalisation is developed through organisational socialisation – between the individual's values and the brand values. Strong internalisation has the largest influence on brand citizenship behaviour. The socialisation process is driven by an informal transmission of values through colleagues and superiors as well as formal value communication.</td>
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</table>
### EMPOWERMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)</strong></th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005)</td>
<td>Creative internal communication and information on brand-strengthening behaviours is crucial. Information and emphasis on strong delivery is essential.</td>
<td>Employees must also be trained in brand strengthening behaviour.</td>
<td>Employees must also be rewarded when they display brand behaviour and their exemplary behaviour must be celebrated. Leaders must trust and enable employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006)</td>
<td>Formal and informal information and communications across all functions and levels help to minimize miscomprehension about the brand's promise. Information from external stakeholders usually 'travel up' the organisation. Structures must be &quot;permeable&quot; to allow information to travel.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>Professional development of employees seems to be managed more in line with the defined brand values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2006)</td>
<td>Information provided must be meaningful and relevant to employees to ensure success.</td>
<td>Economic wealth comes from knowledge assets, intellectual capital. There was successful re-</td>
<td>Internal brand management engages and inspires employees to deliver the brand promise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2010)</td>
<td>Information generation refers to the organisation increasing its comprehension of attitudes and capabilities – with respect to delivering the brand promise.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal market research and communication of information contributes to clarity of the employees' roles – linked to openness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009a)</td>
<td>Effective internal communication could engender employees' commitment and loyalty.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The effectiveness of internal branding programmes depend on both training programmes and internal communication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Internal branding includes employees' development programmes.</td>
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</table>

Successful transfer of knowledge. Employees must have information and knowledge about the brand, which influence their roles and responsibilities. Employees must be flexible for information or changes to information regarding customers.

Managers must be aware of the difference in employees and their receptiveness to different forms of information.

Internal marketing or training is a definite affirmative – people must know what is happening in the organisation to better manage this.

Do not believe in too much employee empowerment (element of control).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burmann and Zeplin (2005)</th>
<th>There is a positive impact on employees brand identification, brand commitment and brand loyalty where training and internal communication are coordinated.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees with a high personal identity–brand identity fit (person-brand identity fit) are empowered or promoted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training enhances the socialization process, viz, the person-brand identity fit.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees can only turn brand commitment into brand citizenship when they have access to the necessary resources and know-how, appropriate information, infrastructure planning, budgeting and controlling systems in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brand identity needs emotional appeal and this is done through properly managed information through central and interactive, cascade and lateral communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)</td>
<td>Knowledge Attitude Practice (KAP)</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005)</td>
<td>Internal branding must align staff's behaviour with brand values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006)</td>
<td>The greater the fit between the brand values and the individual, the more likely it is that the attitudes and behaviours of employees are consistent with the brand's promise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2006)</td>
<td>The limited physical evidence in a service brand depends on the culture of the organisation, the training and attitudes of its employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2010)</td>
<td>The extent to which an organisation perceives them as a human being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009a)</td>
<td>Internal branding is found to have a positive impact on attitudinal and behavioural aspects of employees in their delivery of the brand promise. It further reveals that internal branding enables an organisation to influence employees' perception that they are part of the brand's success, (brand identification) and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees’ brand identification in terms of their sense of belonging, brand commitment or emotional attachment and brand loyalty expressed as their intention to stay.</td>
<td>Their intention to stay with the brand (brand loyalty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>An employee might change his/her attitude towards the object to be consistent with his/her leader.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the comparison of themes from the pioneers in the literature.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM)</th>
<th>Performance Management</th>
<th>Time Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005)</td>
<td>Employees must be rewarded when they display brand accepted behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006)</td>
<td>Employees must be rewarded appropriately when they acknowledge, recognise and support the brand’s promise and internalise its values and identity.</td>
<td>The incorporation of time is crucial to the examination of the interplay between structure and agency. These must work on the same time intervals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2006)</td>
<td>For “ideal” performance, managers believe that customer knowledge or awareness provides employees with the necessary direction to satisfy the requirements of the customer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjaitsri, Evanschitzky and Wilson (2009a)</td>
<td>To ensure that employees are able to deliver on the brand promise the company need to engage in any activities that will aid their employees in their ability to deliver on the service promised e.g. training, rewarding, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burmann and Zeplin (2005)</td>
<td>Organisational citizenship behaviour/brand citizenship behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
displayed as a result of internal branding – where employees volunteer outside of role expectations – which enhances the performance of the organization.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Leadership and Brand Alignment Model (LBAM) 2012</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2005)</td>
<td>Staff needs to believe in the brand's values, and then exude this to the customers – to have a competitive advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallaster and de Chernatony (2006)</td>
<td>Leaders are to ensure a coherent and consistent brand identity. Brand consistent behaviour supports the development of a coherent brand image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2006)</td>
<td>Superior performance &quot;market orientation.&quot; Market orientation only becomes alive when all members of an organisation are aware of how employees contribute to revenue through excellence in customer relations and actively promotes this through the performance of the employees. Managers shape the desire behaviours to engender superior organisational performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and Grace (2010)</td>
<td>Real competitive advantage is realised through employees skills and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brands with emotional and functional benefits. Successful brands equal high brand equity

**Burmann and Zeplin (2005)**
Brand identity must be captured to outsmart the competitor's brand as well.

---

Tabulation

I considered the following authors to be the "forefronters" in leadership and internal branding, and some just the "forefronters" of internal branding, which I used as a basis to compare my final six (6) themes with:


3. King and Grace (2006) : Their article entitled: "Exploring manager's perspectives of the impact of brand management strategies on employee roles within a service firm".


