

Brand Positioning Practices in The Norwegian Fishing and Aqua Culture Industry

*A Comparison of Brand Positioning Practices and Normative
Theory*

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NORGES HANDELSHØYSKOLE

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Abstract

This thesis is about the importance of Brand Positioning. We look at Brand Positioning with regards to how practices are within one of Norway's most important industries - the Norwegian Fishing- and Aqua Culture Industry. There is the first research contributing to this particular field within this industry.

We based our research on three research questions. First, we wanted to present and analyze relevant Brand Positioning theory. The chosen theory is mainly based on four renowned theorists' within Brand Positioning. We divided theory into five different parts; Brand Positioning Culture, Information Collection, Defining Brand Positioning, Implementation of Brand Positioning and Intended Effects of Brand Positioning. Theory is presented with a comparison and analysis of the different researchers' views. This comparison led to a development of a synthesis of the different Brand Positioning aspects; a Normative Framework. This framework is a basis for measuring Brand Positioning capabilities.

We uncovered what companies' consider to be their strengths and weaknesses within Brand Positioning capabilities in relation to the Normative Framework. Our findings indicate that the industry in general consider themselves to be strong with collecting information, while there are signs of weaknesses with the implementation aspect of Brand Positioning. Our findings reveal several potential improvement areas for Fishing and Aqua Culture companies within Brand Positioning.

In the final part of the research we compared companies' Brand Positioning practices and their economic performance. More specifically we looked at the companies' profit margins. Our analysis indicates that the definition aspect of Brand Positioning has a positive impact on profit margins. Only 45.2% of the surveyed companies state that they have a defined position for their brand, and merely 26.9% have a document that describes it. A lot of companies fail to come up with a position for their brands, and show a misunderstanding of what Brand Positioning means – to specifically state how their brand can be positively unique in comparison with competitors. We see that companies agree with the importance of defining a Brand Positioning, but they show poor enactment of it. This is a major improvement area within one of our nation's most important industries. If more companies' defined their brand's position, their economic performance could be a lot stronger than it is today.

Preface

This thesis is written during the final year of our Master Degree in Economics and Business Administration at The Norwegian School of Economics. Our specialization is within the field of Marketing and Brand Management. This Master thesis is about Brand Positioning. We wanted to explore the importance of this specific topic, and how it is done in an important Norwegian industry.

The process has been both interesting and challenging. We feel that we have learned a lot about the industry and the many different aspects of Brand Positioning. We are proud and happy with the final result.

We would like to thank Professor Magne Supphellen for his help and support during this process. We would also like to thank The Norwegian Fishing- and Aqua Culture Federation, Lerøy Seafood Group, and The Brønnøysund Register for their cooperation.

Bergen, 14. December, 2011

Peder Onsøyen

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background for Choice of Topic

The topic of Brand Positioning is proving to be increasingly important in today's business world. Markets are expanding rapidly, technology is constantly improving, and customers are becoming more demanding. Businesses have to be market oriented, stand out of the crowd, and differentiate positively from competition to be successful. Through Brand Positioning companies can cope with these challenges. We wanted to investigate theory on Brand Positioning, and how it is practiced in a real world industry. The reason for choosing the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry is its size and importance in Norway. As much as 95% of Norway's population lives near the coastline, and the fertility of the northern Atlantic sea is vast.

One way to describe the importance of this industry in Norway is to show the value creations' ripple effects. For every million NOK created in Fishing and Aqua Culture, 700 000 NOK is created within other industries in Norway (www.fhl.no). The Fishing and Aqua Culture business in Norway employs as many as 41 600 people. Numbers show that the fishing and Aqua Culture companies created as much as 27 billion NOK in value in 2007 (www.fhl.no). Earlier the industry was based around the commodities found in the ocean; today they also sell technology and knowledge. Some experts believe that within 20-30 years this industry will come to outgrow our oil industry, and in this way becoming our most significant source of value creation (www.regjeringen.no). It is in our belief that this particular industry is the perfect industry to investigate the knowledge, use, and importance of Brand Positioning theory in the real world – in Norway. The size and internationality of the industry leads to a highly competitive market, which in turn leads to Brand Positioning being important to stand out and vital for survival.

Throughout our years of study we have learned of different authors' theories and what their views are concerning what Brand Positioning is - what they believe is needed to succeed with Brand Positioning in different types of markets. There are not a lot of research revolving Brand Positioning practices in Norway. We will therefore try to shine a light on the subject, and in this way help us and others, better understand how it is done in a major industry. If possible, we want to find out what it means for companies' business.

1.2 The Research Problems

The research problems in this thesis will revolve around certain aspects of Brand Positioning within the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry. Our research will be an investigation of three issues. The first part of the thesis will relate to what the normative theory is concerning an optimal way of Brand Positioning. If Brand Positioning is done right, it should be an asset to any company. Brand Positioning in itself is quite complex, and is a sum of several steps. We will look into what these steps are, and what is needed for a complete way of positioning a brand.

1. *“Which are the characteristics of an effective Brand Positioning according to normative theory?”*

Because we look into the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry in Norway, we will try to discover how companies within this industry practice Brand Positioning. By using the normative theory, we wish to learn about the industry’s capability revolving Brand Positioning. The next research question takes this into consideration:

2. *“What are the strengths and weaknesses of Norwegian Fishing- and Aqua Culture companies in relation to the normative theory of Brand Positioning?”*

The last aspect of our research relates to what extent Brand Positioning is a strategic capability in the industry, and how it affects companies’ performance. A strategic capability is defined as *“a set of capacities, resources, and skills that create a long-term advantage for an organization”* (www.businessdictionary.com). Besanko et al. (2010) look at strategic capabilities as things companies do better than their competitors, which is characterized by three things – they have value across multiple products or markets, they can be described as organizational routines (not dependent on certain individuals), and they are tacit in the form that they are difficult to copy and write down as specific guides. Following the normative framework and being good at Brand Positioning should thus lead to a better performance than not following the framework at all. The last part of the research problem will therefore be:

3. *“How and to what extent are Brand Positioning Capabilities related to economic performance?”*

We will answer these three questions by looking at Normative Brand Positioning theory, investigating how the industry’s Brand Positioning deviate from the normative framework developed, and by looking at companies’ recent economic performance. The first question is the most straightforward to deal with, here we compare and discuss different researcher’s views to create a synthesis of what steps the researchers find essential for Brand Positioning. The next two parts will be answered based on a quantitative analysis of the Norwegian Fishing- and Aqua Culture industry. We aim at describing companies’ strengths and weaknesses in relation to the normative framework, and see if it affects performance in terms of results and revenues. To be certain that differences in performance are due to deviations from the framework we will control for a number of variables. Other strategic capabilities companies might possess can also lead to stronger economic performance; therefore we have included sales orientation, customer orientation, and cost orientation as control variables in our research.

Sales orientation and strongly skilled sales teams can be considered a strategic capability. A company that has high sales orientation will be able to outperform competitors who do not sell themselves and their products with the same effectiveness. An example is investments in sales technology implementation, which will allow for a more automatic process with sales between company and customer. This is a proven method to boost companies overall sales performance (Hunter & Perreault Jr., 2006).

There is no secret within the field of strategy that companies’ with lower costs than others can offer cheaper products and services than their competition. A strategic capability is therefore to be able to achieve this, whether it is with economies of scale, lean production, just in time distribution, or access to rare resources. Companies that are cost oriented and achieve lower costs will therefore have an advantage over those who do not.

Customer orientation is in short having a lot of focus on the customers. We include this as a control variable because knowing your customer should lead to better performance than not knowing them. This might lead to some confusion, since customer orientation in general is a vital part of any brand’s positioning. There is a difference however, on whether companies in

general are customer oriented, and if they choose to actively use this customer orientation as a part of their Brand Positioning.

We will also use other characteristics of the company as control variables. We use these data to control that our findings reflect what we want to find out – How Brand Positioning is done, and if it has a positive effect on economic performance. To simplify what this mean we have created a straightforward analysis model, which describes the last part of our research problem graphically:

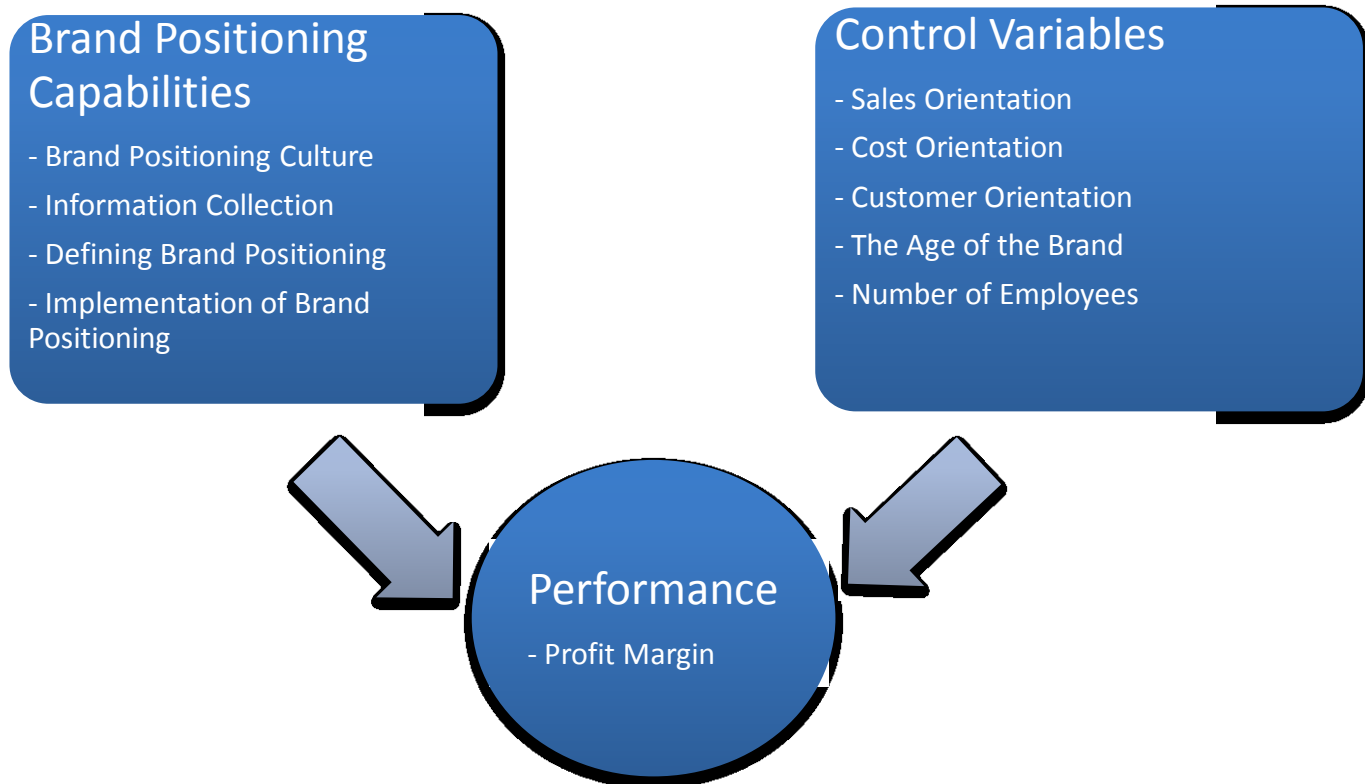


Figure 1.1: The Research Problem

1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into 6 chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction of the thesis. In this chapter we present the background for choice of topic, the research problems, and the outline of the Thesis.

In chapter 2 of the thesis we will present our chosen theories within Brand Positioning. The theory will be presented with what Brand Positioning capabilities companies should possess, followed by chosen researcher's view on the different capabilities of Brand Positioning – from Brand Positioning culture, information collection, definition of the brand's position, to implementation of the Brand Positioning. We also present the researchers views on intended effects of Brand Positioning. The thesis will include a discussion of these views, with additional opinions from other researchers, and our own thoughts on the different subjects. Summing up we will create a normative Brand Positioning framework presented in chapter 3. The framework will represent a favorable way of positioning a brand, as a conclusion of the represented theory.

Chapter 4 is a presentation of the chosen research methods. The methodology has several aspects. We will discuss and present the choice of research design, collection of data, designing the questionnaire, and operationalization of the different variables.

The analysis will be presented in chapter 5. Here we will analyze both the quantitative and qualitative data from our research. The quantitative data describes the demography of the sample participating in the research, the companies' views on their Brand Positioning practices, and economic data. Companies' thoughts about Brand Positioning are represented in the open questions included in the survey. The analysis will be divided into two parts where we answer the last two research questions.

Finally, chapter 6 will include theoretical and practical implications based on our findings, the limitations of our research, as well as implications for further research.

2. Theory

We base our research with what is considered essential for Brand Positioning on normative theory within the subject. Brand Positioning can be considered to be a capability for those who use it. It is a complex process, and should therefore be viewed as a process consisting of several capabilities.

We chose to concentrate on some of the most renowned researchers, when looking into Brand Positioning theory. Jean-Noel Kapferer, Kevin L. Keller, David A. Aaker and Al Ries & Jack Trout have all had huge impact on the Brand Positioning research worldwide.

Kevin L. Keller is considered to be one of the world's most influencing researchers in the field of branding and strategic brand management. According to Keller (2008) Brand Positioning involves designing the company's offers and image in a way that it creates a valuable place in the consumers' minds. Keller's definition of Brand Positioning is that it is about *"Identifying and establish points of parity and points of difference to establish the right brand identity"* (Keller 2008; 98). Points of parity (POP's) are the associations common for all brands in a category, while points of difference (POD's) are associations that are specific to one brand.

Jean-Noël Kapferer is one of the leading researchers within the modern marketing and brand management field. Kapferer defines Brand Positioning as *"emphasizing the distinctive characteristics that make it different from its competitors and appealing to the public"* (Kapferer 2008; 175). He further exclaims that in order to successfully position a brand a strong brand identity should be developed and managed – a strong brand identity helps with the remembrance and recognition of a brand (Kapferer 2008). According to Kapferer (2008; 172) *"Identifying potential consumers' values is an important part of establishing a suitable identity for any brand"* - So before you can develop an identity, you have to identify who your potential consumers are.

David. A. Aaker is a renowned marketing researcher famous for several books and articles within the marketing area. Aaker (1996; 71) defines Brand Positioning as *"the part of the brand identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience and that demonstrates an advantage over competing brands"*. Brands have what is called brand equity, according to Aaker (1996; 7) brand equity is *"a set of assets (and*

liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers. Aaker lists brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations as the major asset categories.

Al Ries and Jack Trout are not considered to be theorists, but more like practitioners within the field of Brand Positioning. Brand Positioning in their view is about placing a product in the minds of consumers and make decisions on how the target group should perceive the products (Ries and Trout 2001). Ries and Trout (2001) argue that it is important with a simplified message that is reliable to consumers. The focus should be on the consumers' minds, rather than the actual product.

2.1 Brand Positioning Culture

None of our chosen theorists' are specific on the importance of having a culture that supports Brand Positioning. Nonetheless, we chose to include general culture for Brand Positioning as a capability. A culture that values Brand Positioning should make for more solid Brand Positioning work. If the top management values and believes in Brand Positioning work, it is self-evident that companies will spend more time and resources within the area, and hopefully be better at it. According to Dowling (2001) the organization's culture plays a pivotal role in translating the values in the vision statement into employee behavior. A vision statement that values Brand Positioning will in this way lead to more Brand Positioning work. The organizational culture also has an effect on how many aspects of an organization's strategy, structure, and control systems are implemented (Dowling 2001). Research show that a strong corporate culture leads to reliable performance in relatively stable environments, while a strong corporate culture is less significant in terms of reliability when the environment is volatile (Sørensen, 2011).

2.2 Information Collection

Before a brand can decide where they want to be in the market, how they want their brand's position to be, information is needed. Our researchers all agree upon the need of some information before one can define a brand's position.

2.2.1 Kevin L. Keller

Keller (2008) stresses the need of an analysis before one can define a brand's position. It is important to analyze the consumers in the market. There are different consumers, which have different knowledge and perceptions about brands. Keller (2008) mentions that the marketer has to identify the potential consumer target. Furthermore Keller brings the determination of a frame of reference to the table. Category membership is about what general category the brand is in, while the competitive frame of reference explains the nature of competition in the market (Keller 2008).

2.2.2 Jean N. Kapferer

Kapferer (2008) believes successful Brand Positioning is built upon the characteristics that make a brand distinct compared to competitors, and attractive for potential consumers. To figure out how a brand is different and how it is appealing to the public it can execute an analysis based on four questions:

- A brand for what benefit?
- A brand for whom?
- A brand for what reason?
- A brand against whom?

Kapferer (2008) emphasize that it is crucial for any brand to know what choice is made up of - a comparison between brands. Answering these questions will help in coming up with a suitable Brand Positioning strategy.

2.2.3 David A. Aaker

Aaker's (1996) model on building strong brands includes a part, which states the importance of information. Just as Keller (2008), Aaker (1996) believes a thorough analysis of customers, competitors, and yourself as a company is needed for successfully positioning of your brand.

2.2.4 Al Ries & Jack Trout

Ries & Trout (2001) considers being first within a category to get into consumers' minds fundamental. Being the first is an advantage because the brand can claim the position they want, and it is always easier to remember the forerunner in a market. This can be seen in

relation to the first mover advantage, which is commonly known within the field of strategy. The first-mover will earn competitive advantages and create entry barriers for possible competitors (Kerin et al. 1992). In order to be first in a market, one must discover a vacant position, and a completely new need to fulfill. This in turn requires an analysis of the market, of the competition, and off course, the consumers. The next thing a brand must do is to identify which position they as a company are able to reach. This requires an analysis of the brand in question.

2.2.5 Comparison and Discussion

Benefit/Market

Kapferer (2008) is quite thorough with his four questions. The first question, a brand for what benefit, is essential when it comes to establishing a successful position; one has to know what benefit the brand can offer. However, brands could offer several benefits, not just one. Here we believe Keller (2008) is more correct with how the brand can differentiate with a number of benefits from competitors. Consumers buy products because they can solve problems. A brand must therefore establish what benefits they can give, or if there is a need in a market that could be solved in a better way than it currently is. Ries & Trout (2001) also come into developing a new benefit, or a solution to a need, with their vacant Brand Positioning strategy.

Customer

The next question, a brand for whom, revolves around discovering who could be the recipient of the products or services the brand offers (Kapferer 2008). Who the target customer is, is important, because this is whom you must convince to involve themselves. All companies have markets they want to sell products and services to, all companies have potential customers, and all markets consist of different type of customers (Aaker 1996). Even though customers can be seemingly very different, there are also a lot of customers with similar interests; furthermore consumers can be influenced by each other – and in some cases creating trends. Analyzing consumers' means analyzing even more than possible trends, it means analyzing what motivates these trends (Aaker 1996).

Keller (2008) talks about segmenting the market so that one can identify possible customers. Segmenting the market can be based on needs, behavior, usage situations, psychography, geography, demography, and so on. Demography however, like age, sex, and salary are in

general poor predictors of behavior, and thus not an ideal basis for segmentation (Haley 1968). Frank et al. (1997) have come up with four criteria brands should use when deciding which segment of customers they want to pursue - identifiably, size, accessibility, and responsiveness. A market that fulfills these four criteria will be a market worth pursuing.

A way to gather information on possible consumers is by knowing how they think and their purchase behavior. The Decision Making Process Model developed by Engel et al. (1995), helps the brands understand how the consumers make their purchase decisions. When the consumer experiences a gap between the actual and desired state, this will motivate them to act in order to reach a state of equilibrium (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008; Dahlen et al. 2010).

Company

A brand for what reason refers to factual or subjective elements that support the benefit the brand offers (Kapferer 2008). This means that the brand must be able to underline that they actually can deliver what it promises. Factual elements could be benefits proven through research; while subjective could be benefits that some individuals feel are personally relevant. This question can be seen in relation to Aaker's (1996) analysis of self, which is an analysis about your own company. Analyzing your own brand means finding out about your strengths and weaknesses, what opportunities is out there for you? Looking in to your own organization means finding out which organizational values are important, and making sure that these values shines through your brand through marketing work.

Competitors

Finally, Kapferer (2008) argues that all brands must know who their competition is. It is important to look at all parts of the competition, both direct and indirect competitors. To establish the category membership and the competitive frame of reference, that Keller (2008) suggests, one has to know who the indirect and direct competitors are. According to Aaker (1996) an analysis of competitors, is an analysis of their current image. Through an analysis of competitors you learn of their strengths and weaknesses. By analyzing the competition, you learn where to attack, and what type of strategy to use in order to steal market share from the competition. Hopefully an analysis will show competitors vulnerabilities. An analysis of competitors can shine a light on what strategies they use in the marketplace, and in this way you will understand your foes better.

Environmental factors

An aspect we feel the researchers miss, or at least are quite vague with are the information needed on different environments. There might be little mention of this by our respective researchers because it is in reality an obvious aspect to include, and some might feel it is included when analyzing the market. Nonetheless it is important to know what limits one has before defining and implementing the Brand Positioning (Subhash, 1989). Not all of this is relevant for the companies we investigate, but a lot of them are exporters, and has to be aware of environments abroad. Brand Positioning is not easy to standardize. There are four aspects concerning this subject, the physical environment, the legal environment, political environment, and the marketing infrastructure.

2.3 Defining Brand Positioning

In order to be successful in a market, a brand should define what position it wants, and how to reach it. This is not an easy straightforward thing to do; it takes time, effort, and extensive research to get there. Most brands define its position in some way – by knowing who they are, who their competitors are, who their possible customers are, what they want, what the company can offer, and so on. There is very little research on whether companies actually write down their Brand Positioning definition in to a formal document; the common belief is that most brands do not do so (Kapferer 2008). The following chapter will focus on how the chosen researchers would define Brand Positioning, and to what extent they would make it formal.

2.3.1 Kevin L. Keller

Kevin Lane Keller (1993) has developed the Customer Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE). In his article, *Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Consumer Based Brand Equity*, he comes very close to explaining how a brand should define its position, even though he does not specify that this is a clear instruction on how to do it.

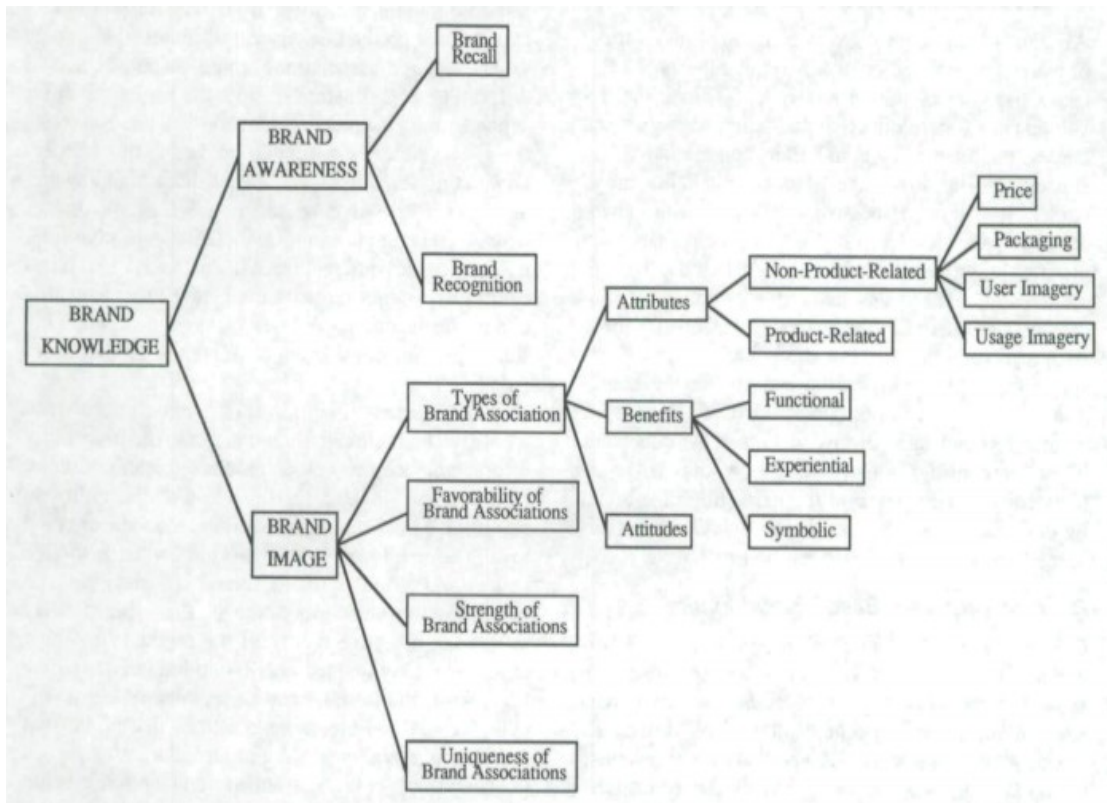


Figure 2.1.: The Customer Based Brand Equity Model (Keller 1993; 7)

The CBBE model is built up of brand knowledge, image and awareness. In short the model explains how brand equity is based on brand knowledge. Keller (2008) talks about the term brand awareness, which revolves around customers' ability to recall and recognize the brand, whether it is the name, logo, jingle, etc. Image is how consumers perceive a brand - what brand associations they might have. The brand image is defined by Keller (1993;3) as *"perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. Brand associations are the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers"*. Brand image can be characterized by brand associations according to three important dimensions; strength, favorability, and uniqueness. If these dimensions are fulfilled, the brand will have a strong positive image.

When defining its Brand Positioning, the brand must use its POP's and POD's. According to the CBBE model the possible POD's can be either functional, performance-related considerations, or abstract imagery-related considerations (Keller 2008).

POP's are divided into two types of associations; category and competitive associations (Keller 2008). If a brand equal's competitors' intended POD's, the brand in question will be perceived as equal as or better than their competition (Wilkie 1986).

Keller (1993 and 2008) argues that brand associations related to a brand can be developed in different ways. Brand associations can be related to attributes, benefits, and attitudes. The attributes are the characteristics that describe the product. Brand associations can be related to what benefits the consumer gets from choosing a brand over a competitor, and how the product or service gives personal value to the consumers. Wilkie (1986) defines the brand attitudes as consumers' overall evaluations of a brand. In general it is important to have in mind that consumers' evaluate brands differently; some might genuinely prefer a brand over its competitors.

2.3.2 Jean N.Kapferer

Kapferer (2008) believes that a brands' identity is the source behind successful Brand Positioning. Therefore when a brand is defining its position it has to define its brand identity. One of Kapferer's most known concepts is the Brand Identity prism. The prism consists of six facets of brand identity – physique, personality, culture, self-image, reflection, and relationship. A company establishes how each facet should be described by their brand, and thereby creating their brand's identity.

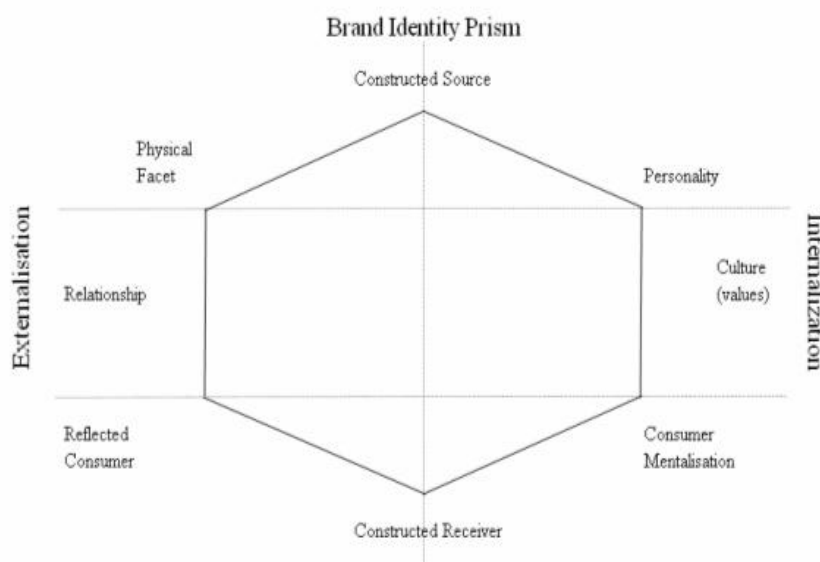


Figure 2.2.: The Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer 2008;183)

A brand's physique is made up of a brand's physical qualities – what it is, what it does, and what it looks like. A brand also has a personality, which the personality facet illustrates. The way a brand communicates its products to potential consumers show what kind of person it would be if it were human (Kapferer, 2008). The culture facet state how a brand's own culture is. According to Kapferer (2008) a brand is a culture. Every creation a company makes should be a product of their culture. A brand's inspiration is nourished by its cultural values. Country of origin is often a good indicator of a brand's culture. A brand identity also consists of a relationship facet. This facet describes what type of relationship the brand has with consumers.

Customer reflection is a facet that describes a brand's typical customer. It is about the brand's perceived client type. A brand is a reflection of its customers. Coca Cola is an example Kapferer (2008) mentions. Coca Cola reflects a narrow segment, but this does not exclude other users. It rather works in the way that younger consumers drink Coke because they want to be related with the older group, and older groups drink Coke because they want to be related with being young. The last facet Kapferer (2008) includes in his Brand Identity Prism is the self-image facet. As mentioned customer reflection is a description of a brand's users, self-image on the other hand is how the brand's target consumers look at themselves.

2.3.3 David A. Aaker

Aaker (1996) has developed a thorough model when it comes to positioning of a brand. A part of his model is called the Brand Identity System, and would be a good starting point for any brand that wants to define their position."

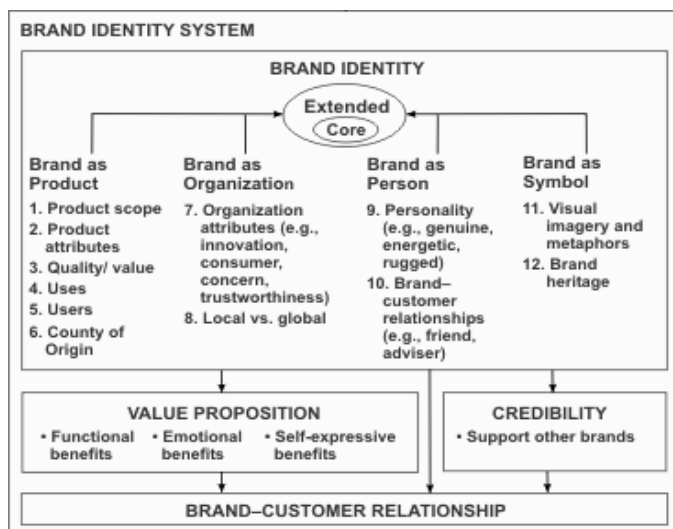


Figure 2.3.: The Brand Identity System (Aaker 1996;79)

According to Aaker (1996), the brand identity is about how employees look at their brand, what the brand's core values are, what the brand stands for, how it wants to be perceived, what type of personality it wants to project, and what type of relationships the brand have. A brands' identity should provide direction, purpose and meaning for the brand (Aaker 1996). The brand identity consists of a core- and extended identity. The core brand identity stays stable. The extended brand identity is what provides texture and totality to a brand (Aaker 1996). The extended identity fulfills the brands total identity – and is changeable over time, markets, and product classes.

Aaker (1996) mentions four brand identity perspectives: brand as a product, brand as an organization, brand as a person, and brand as a symbol. The brand as a product perspective is when you look at the brand identity with a focus on what type of product the brand offers. In short, this view consists of product related associations such as product scope, class, attributes, quality, uses, users, and country of origin. The brand as an organization perspective means looking at a brand's identity with an organizational spotlight. What portrays the organization - is it known for being innovative, trustworthy, local or global, etc.

A brands' identity can also be looked at as a person. Measuring brand personality can be done by Jennifer Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale, the Big Five - sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. The last perspective is called the brand as a symbol. Here visual imagery and metaphors, and brand heritage plays a part. What the brand symbolizes for consumers can be a part of the brand identity. According to Aaker (1996) symbols help with recognition and recall of a brand, and thus can help a brand create a stronger identity.

A brand identity can provide a value proposition, customer relationships, and credibility. A value proposition says something about what the brand can offer of value for the customers' who uses it. There are three types of benefits a brand can give its users – functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits (Aaker 1996). In later years Aaker (2009) have recognized that some brands also offer a social benefit. A brand that has a good fit with their identity and what they offer will be perceived as credible. A brand-customer relationship is what a strong brand identity can lead to.

2.3.4 Al Ries & Jack Trout

Al Ries and Jack Trout (2001) are not as precise as the other researchers we have presented when it comes to how a brand should design and define their Brand Positioning. Instead, they have raised a series of questions companies should answer in order to identify their Brand Positioning.

1. What position do we own?

It is important to analyze which position the brand already has in the consumers' minds. Changing the brand awareness in information-overloaded environments is considered to be very difficult. We can answer this question by getting an overview of the customers in the market place. The product, service or concept must be linked up with current perceptions and associations the brand has in the market.

2. What position do you want to own?

Brands should find what position that is desirable to hold on to in the long run. A usual mistake is to seek a too broad positioning that is difficult to establish among the consumers' in your market. It is therefore important that you don't position the brand to "everyone", but rather focus on establishing a unique brand position and taking advantage of your brand's expertise (Ries and Trout 2001).

3. Whom must you outgun?

When deciding your brand's position in the market it is desirable to avoid any attack on one of your direct competitors' positions, especially the market leaders. It is equally important to look at the Brand Positioning from a competitor point of view. It is considered to be almost impossible to remove a brand from the consumers' minds.

4. Do you have enough money?

It is required a marketing budget to establish to a new position in the market, and you have to consider if the brand is able to keep this chosen position over a long time period. If not, you will end up with spending unnecessary resources.

5. Is the company willing to hold on to the position prolonged?

To cope with changes in the market it is important to keep a hold of the chosen Brand Positioning over several years. Successful companies try to keep a consistent Brand Positioning strategy over a long time period. The key factor is to focus on the chosen

position, and continuously trying to improve it in some way (Hem and Iversen 2004; Ries and Trout 2001). Successful brands rarely change their basic Brand Positioning strategy, e.g. your day is still not the same without Verdens Gang (VG).

6. Do you match your position?

The Brand Positioning strategy limits how creative you can be. Your advertisements have to be in line with the objectives you have set with your Brand Positioning. There has to be a clear definition of the Brand Positioning strategy that both the creative and the “planners” agree upon, and that can shine through the whole organization.

2.3.5 Magne Supphellen

Magne Supphellen, professor at the Norwegian School of Economics has come up with the STAN model. The name stands for Strategic, Tactical, and Associative Network model. All in all, this model would be a good starting point for brands that want to define their position. Supphellen (2011) suggests that this model can be used actively when defining a brand’s positioning strategy, instead of just having a Brand Positioning statement. It is a more thorough way of defining a brand’s position, and it includes the most important aspects to consider.

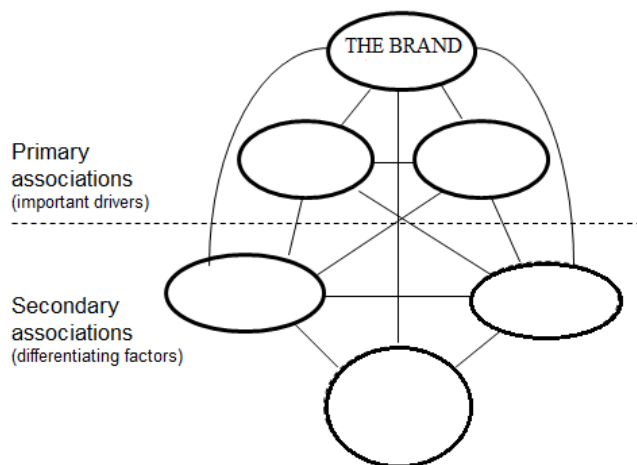


Figure 2.4.: The STAN Model (Supphellen 2011)

First of all the model distinguishes between tactical and strategic Brand Positioning. According to Supphellen (2011) Tactical Brand Positioning concerns a brand’s short term positioning, which is about what it wants to achieve within a period of 1-2 years. The

Strategic Brand Positioning concerns the long term, and is valid through the lifetime of a brand (Supphellen, 2011).

Both Strategic and Tactical Brand Positioning is built up of what Supphellen (2011) calls primary and secondary brand associations. The primary brand associations are the first associations' consumers think of when thinking of a particular brand in a particular industry - it is usually what is common for brands in a category. Secondary brand associations are more specific to each individual brand. Because Strategic Brand Positioning is meant to last the lifetime of a brand, one must choose which brand associations to focus on wisely. One should always use brand associations that are drivers for choice when deciding a brand's positioning strategy. The primary and secondary brand associations should have a natural relationship. It is considered wise to communicate one primary with an addition of some secondary brand associations, and to use brand associations already established in consumer's minds. The communication will in this way be more effective in terms of reinforcing brand associations rather than creating completely new ones (Supphellen, 2011).

The main idea is that Tactical Brand Positioning can be different from the Strategic, as long as the Tactical fortifies the Strategic Brand Positioning. This means is that no brands should position themselves short term in a way that is conflicting with their long term Brand Position. Brands must be true to themselves, and their key values. The Tactical Brand Positioning should be a way to reach the Strategic position the brand wants. Tactical Brand Positioning can in this way be focusing on what is "hot" right now, as long as it is consistent with the desired long-term brand position (Supphellen, 2011).

2.3.6 Comparison and Discussion

All our researchers agree upon the need of defining a Brand Positioning to some extent, before implementing it successfully in the market place. As described above, however, there are some differences with the researchers' views on how to do it, and to what extent it is needed. The marketing subject is a vast field within economics, and the five researchers we look at also share a lot of views.

Mental Category

The brand's mental category is of great importance when defining a Brand Positioning strategy. In the discussion of information collection we mentioned segmenting the market and discovering a target audience. None of the "definition" models above has any explicit

mention of exploiting this when deciding which part of the brand identity and brand image to communicate to the market. In any brand's definition of position it will be wise to include what mental category they are in, this also helps in deciding what to differentiate on. Mental categories are helpful instruments for creating the right brand associations among potential consumers.

Keller (2008) mentions mental maps in his book "Strategic Brand Management", which is a similar term. According to Keller (2008; 121) a mental map "*will accurately portray in detail all salient brand associations and responses for a particular target market*". With this in place it will be easier for brands to know what to focus on in its Brand Positioning strategy. Discovering a brand's mental map might prove difficult, because it requires thorough information based on consumers in the target market. The researchers we present fail to clarify whether to choose target markets in relation to what category the brand is in. There is a need for both a categorization and a specific target group. There are several possible target groups within a mental category, and the key is to choose the right ones.

Skyr, a yoghurt type product in Norway is a great example of how effective defining the right mental category and target group can be. Skyr are in the category for healthy food on the go. Even though the competition is fierce, Skyr has been able to steal market share. Through differentiation with a unique mental category in combination with an analysis of the target customer, they found how to capture the majority of the buyers of these types of products in the market – healthy conscious women. Through the brand's mental map they came up with the slogan "godt, med god samvittighet", which states that it is tasteful, but still allows you to eat it and keep your conscience clear (www.skyr.no).

Image and Awareness

Keller's (2008) CBBE model is customer-based in the sense that he looks directly at how the brand is perceived from a customer standpoint. The image part of the model is based on consumers brand associations, which in turn says something about the brand's image. The brand image is based on an outside-in point of view, and is a good way of approaching a definition of a Brand Positioning. This requires that the company does research among their possible consumers, so that they can discover their image.

An important view Keller (2008) brings to the table is the POP's and POD's, which can be compared to Supphellen's (2011) primary and secondary brand associations. There are some

differences between the terms. POP's are associations that are comparable between competitors in an industry, it is not necessarily the association that make you buy a product from a particular brand. Primary associations can be similar between different companies, and they are always working as a driver for choice. A combination of primary and secondary associations can create POD's. An immediate example is Friele coffee, which differentiates through great taste and passion. Taste being a primary association joined with the secondary association, passion, creates a POD.

The key to achieving a unique position is through POD's. Differentiation is an important aspect all the researchers talk about, but it is still worth discussing further. A unique brand identity, and a unique brand image is a source for competitive advantage. Defining the Brand Positioning should therefore include how a brand should be able to stand out from the rest. The importance of differentiation has been described by many researchers, among them are Jack Trout and Steve Rivkin who devoted a whole book to the subject – *Differentiate or Die* (Trout og Rivkin 2008). Trout and Rivkin (2008) argue that even though renowned researchers like Michael Porter acknowledge the need to be unique, few talk about differentiation specifically. Differentiation does not necessarily mean being better at all aspects. There is a danger in having a too broad Brand Positioning, so the argument supports the idea of differentiating in certain areas. In the modern market, differentiation has become increasingly difficult, especially on what is tangible – competitors can imitate it and create similar products and services. Truly brilliant brands differentiate on what is almost impossible to copy, the intangible (Trout & Rivkin, 2008). Emotional and physical differentiation should therefore be combined. In this way, everything can be differentiated, even “commodities” such as cement, copper, wheat, money, air cargo, and marine insurance (Levitt, 1991). Differentiation is a theme heavily discussed by marketing researchers, and it also has its critics.

Alf Bendik Bendixen (2011) wrote a cronicle named, *Differentiate and die*, in relation to Trout & Rivkin's book, stating that differentiation in reality was a bad idea. Bendixen's point is that differentiation is almost impossible within a product category, and that striving to be different usually leads to irrelevant differentiation. His belief is that brands should concentrate on key drivers for category choice, which usually is no more than three within different product categories. In light of this article Magne Supphellen (2011) answered to Bendixen's criticism. Supphellen stated that differentiation within a category is very much possible, and wise, as long as brands stick to what is relevant for their consumers. Keep in

mind that key drivers for choice can be many more than just two to three for certain types of products. What is important for some segments might be completely different from another. Differentiation is therefore a very useful tool behind Brand Positioning success, and a route towards customer choice.

Keller's CBBE-model also mention brand awareness, a brand cannot be succesful without people knowing about it. When people know of a brand, the chance for choice increases drastically. By adding recognition and recall in a Brand Positioning definition one would state to what extent their position needs to be worked with.

Brand Identity

Both Aaker (1996) and Kapferer (2008) mention the need of a brand identity to be established. They both include different aspects of this term in their respective models. The common theme they both share is that they look at how a company should define their Brand Positioning from an inside-out point of view, from the company's standpoint. Identity is a psychological term, and is originally meant to describe people – who am I? One problem with brands is that they are not individuals. A brand cannot answer this question. We believe Kapferer's (2008) and Aaker's (1996) views are vague; a brand does not have an identity, but they can clearly have identity like characteristics.

One thing both researchers fail to mention is that a brand also holds different types of identities. Balmer and Soenen (1999) acknowledge that there is a difference between a company's actual identity, communicated identity, desired identity, and ideal identity. The actual identity is similar to a brand's image discussed above, while communicated Identity is what part of the identity the brand choose to communicate. Aaker (1996) comes closest to a distinction between these terms, by explaining that a company must choose parts of the brand identity to implement in the market place. The desired and ideal identity is what the brand wants to be like, and how it should be like in the market place. The similarity between these two researcher's views is that their models will be a result of a desired identity and what the company believes to be the actual identity among consumers. Aaker (1996) takes it one step further and talks indirectly about the comunicated identity. They both could have been more thorough with explaining how one can find the ideal identity for a brand, with finding what is optimal when it comes to all the different parts of the model.

Finding the ideal brand identity however, is a difficult process, and would require more than the straightforward analysis these two researchers propose. There are no clear universal laws in the business world, the dynamism of the market makes it challenging to discover this ideal brand identity. Both Kapferer and Aaker realize this. Combined the Brand Identity Model and Brand Identity Prism would make a quite extensive picture of a brand's identity, and probably as perfect as possible. Kapferer (2008) talks about some terms not mentioned by Aaker (1996) and vice versa, but the key difference is that they use different names for them – e.g. Aaker (1996) talks about the brand as product, while Kapferer (2008) talks about the brand's physique. All in all Aaker (1996) might have the most complete model because he goes deeper in to some parts, the extended versus the core brand identity is an example that Kapferer (2008) do not mention – that there is a difference between the core (withholding over time) and the extended (which can be changed, and is an identity based on the present/short term view).

Desired State

When it comes to Ries & Trout (2001) they look at where the company stands today, where they want to go, who they must compete with, what they need to get there in terms of funding, if they are willing to hold on to their current position, and if they match their position in the market in relation to their desired state. They do not have an explicit model. Furthermore Ries & Trout (2001) are quite vague when explaining how they should answer these questions. When looking at a brand's current position they look at their brand's image and identity, but they do not mention different types of brand associations consumers can have in the same way as Keller (2008), Aaker (1996), Kapferer (2008), and Supphellen (2011) does. It is important for brands to look at all aspects of their brand, which includes all types of brand associations, whether they are symbolic, strictly about the products, or about the organization itself. Ries & Trout (2001) bring economy to the table, which off course is an important aspect of a Brand Positioning strategy. One can however discuss the importance of having funding in a definition of the Brand Positioning, because it is more in relation to the implementation process. They also stand out in the way that they acknowledge the need of a comparison between what position the brand have and where they want to be, a desired state.

Tactical vs. Strategic Brand Positioning

Professor Magne Supphellen's model (2011), is quite similar to Keller's (2008) CBBE-model in the sense that it talks about primary and secondary brand associations creating POD's. The new aspect Supphellen (2011) brings to the table is the difference between Strategic and Tactical Brand Positioning, which is meant to establish a long-term and a short-term brand position. The importance of this cannot be stressed enough, because what might work now might not be profitable in the long run. That is why the brand in question must have the long-term Brand Positioning in mind, before defining their short-term Brand Positioning. Aaker (1996) is the only one of the other researchers who mentions that there is a difference between now and the future with the extended and core brand identity. Supphellen (2011) distinguish himself from Keller's view through pointing out the advantage with actually defining a brand's position by making a formal document, as well as making a distinction between Tactical and Strategic Brand Positioning. As mentioned above, Kapferer (2008) mentions that there is an advantage with writing what he calls a Brand Positioning charter in his book, *The New Strategic Brand Management* – but he does not include this as an aspect specifically in his Brand Identity Prism. According to Kapferer (2008) having a formal Brand Positioning charter will be an advantage for any organization. All employees will have the opportunity to see what the brand stands for, and what position they aim for – which in turn will help in decentralizing decision making when it comes to the marketing work.

Other stakeholders

One weakness all our researchers share is that there is very little mention of other stakeholders than possible customers when it comes to the definition of a Brand Positioning. Keep in mind that brands have an effect on many more than just its customers. A stakeholder can be defined as anyone who is affected and have a perception of a company (Dowling 2001). Stakeholder theory by Dowling (2001) splits different stakeholders into four different groups – normative, functional, diffuse, and off course customers. How a brand position itself will undoubtedly affect its customers, but also the other groups involved in the brand. Most stakeholder groups share an interrelation with eachother, which means that the brand does not only affect each group, but the different groups might also affect eachother. By involving more stakeholder groups in their Brand Positioning definition, brands could get a clearer picture on how their brand would be perceived.

2.3.7 Summary

Combined all the researchers models would make up a near perfect definition of a brand's position. There are differences and similarities, but together these models would compensate for eachothers weaknesses. According to Supphellen (2011), there are Brand Positioning errors brands should try to avoid, and a combination of these models will help in steering away from the most common mistakes. First of all one must distinguish between Tactical and Strategic Brand Positioning, because of the dynamism in the marketplace. Furthermore there is always a temptation of searching for the vacant Brand Positioning, the problem is that not all markets have a vacant position. One must be aware of the possibility of indirect competition, and the development of a mental category or frame of refference is therefore essential. There is always a fear of doing things too easy, but complicating a definition will in many cases lead to values being misinterpretaded and creating wrong brand associations with all types of stakeholders. If a brand defines their position solely based on an inside-out point of view they overlook the most important stakeholdergroup, the customers. It is never about making the best products, which can lead to product myopia, it is about fulfilling needs and creating solution to problems customers have. The opposite with a complete outside-in point of view is also considered a fallpit, because a brand should never forget who they are. Underestameting the need of credibility can be disasterous for any brand, one cannot sell products or services to customers, if the customers do not see why you could be good at it. All models we discuss in relation to a definition of Brand Positioning bring something to the table - Aaker's (1996) might be the most complete by itself, but by adding terms from Kapferer (2008), a more outside-in view from Keller (2008), a comparison between current and wanted state with Ries & Trout (2001), the view that Tactical Brand Positioning is fundamental for the Strategic Brand Positioning by Supphellen (2011), and stakeholder theory from Dowling (2001) – one will have a very good starting point.

2.4 Implementing a Brand Positioning Strategy

After you have defined a clear position for your brand, you move on to the step of implementing the Brand Positioning strategy. There are several guidelines developed within implementing Brand Positioning strategies, including what brand characteristics you should use and what communication tools that are preferred.

2.4.1 Kevin L. Keller

According to Keller (2008) it is important to communicate the competitive frame of reference, continuously choose and establish POP's and POD's to communicate, and update your Brand Positioning strategy over time. Choosing which brand elements to communicate is considered to be equally important. Keller (2008) presents marketing strategies that are based on the marketing mix.

Communicating the category membership is important for the consumers' to more easily understand new products you introduce on the market. There are three main ways to enlighten the consumers about a brand's category membership. First, communicating the category benefits convince the consumers that the brand will deliver on the central reasons for choosing the product. Second, comparing to exemplars helps to inform the consumers who are the other members of the brand's category. Lastly, a descriptive brand name will tell the consumers what product category they are facing.

There are two important things the marketer has to consider when choosing the POD's you want to communicate. It has to be brand associations that the consumers think the brand is capable of delivering as expected, and they have to find associations desirable.

The level of deliverability is evaluated according to three different criteria; feasibility, communicability and sustainability. *Feasibility* is the requirement that the company can create the POD. Both the product and the marketing strategy have to be in line with the desired POD's you want to communicate. The second criteria, *Communicability*, emphasize that the communication shall provide that customers are left with a sense of what the brand is and the brand's associations. *Sustainability* means that the brand holds on to a position it is possible to protect and difficult to challenge for the competitors. Keeping these criteria at a high level will lead to POD's that will last over a long time period.

Desirability is also evaluated through three criteria; Relevance, distinctiveness and believability. *Relevance* means that the consumers must find the POD's both personally important and relevant. *Distinctiveness* means that the consumers must find the Brand's POD's special, specific, and superior. Lastly, if the *believability* is satisfied the brand gives their consumers a reason to choose their brand instead of others options. Updating the Brand Positioning is considered to be more relevant for established brands that often have to change their strategies over time.

There are two main issues. First you have what Keller (2008) call *laddering*, which means that the associations linked to the Brand Positioning are further deepened. The second issue is called *reacting*, and concerns how the company reacts to challenges that can threaten their current position in the market. It could be scenarios where competitors' challenges one of your PODS's or try exceed a POP. According to Keller (2008) there are three options on how to deal with these challenges. First, the company can decide to do nothing. This should be considered if it seems to be unlikely to recapture a POD or create a new POD. Second, the company can be defensive. If the competitor's actions are considered to have the potential to interfere with the market, it could be appropriate to have a defensive Brand Positioning. In this scenario brands can strengthen the POP's or POD's, by adding a reassurance in the product or advertisements. If the competitor's actions are considered to be threatening it can be necessary to choose the last option, being offensive. Answering competitors' actions is repositioning the brand. This can be done by launching line extensions or campaigns with the aim of changing the brand meaning (Keller 2008).

Choosing brand elements is an important part of the implementation process. Brand elements are what identify and at the same time differentiate the brand in the market. Examples of brand elements are brand names, logos, symbols etc. There are six criteria that are wise to consider when deciding what type of brand elements to choose; Memorability, meaningfulness, likability, transferability, adaptability and protectability (Keller 2008).

The marketing mix consists of price, product, place and promotion, which all can be used in a Brand Positioning strategy. When using price in the implementation process you have to consider the consumers' perception of value. The benefits and advantages for choosing the product over competitors' offerings have to be in line with what price you set. Value pricing is a strategy you can choose. With this strategy you try to find the right combination of the product's quality, its costs and prices so that you can achieve customer satisfaction and get the expected economic profit.

By using product as an implementation strategy, there are many factors you can choose to focus on. What you should choose is dependent on what the target group find important. It could for example be the functionality of the product, the product design or what kinds of services are included. Constantly improving and adding new features only increase customers demand up to a certain point. After reaching this point it will not be positive to focus on quality in a financial sense (Keller, 2008). Place is the third factor of the marketing

mix, and it's all about the distribution of the product. You can choose between direct or indirect channels in your distribution strategy. With direct channels the products are sold directly to your customers. This is the preferred strategy if there is a strong need for information of the product. If you choose indirect channels the products are sold through retailers. This is a good strategy if it is important with a big range of products, little or no form of customized products, important to have good accessibility, or if follow-up activities after a sale are not considered to be important.

When a company chooses to focus on promotion in their Brand Positioning strategy, they have to choose which form of marketing communication they can use to reach their target group in the best possible way. A company can choose to use advertising, promotion, event marketing and sponsorship, publicity and public relations, or personal selling. The most important thing is not to choose most types of communication tools, but to figure out which of them would be most effective based on your chosen target group (Keller, 2008).

2.4.2 Jean N. Kapferer

Kapferer (2008) explains implementation and activation as the final stage of the process of Brand Positioning. He argues that the implementation process is about making the brands values into acts at 360 degrees. This revolves around defining a clear marketing strategy, coming up with objectives and goals, and campaign plans into a total package.

The company must decide whether to have brand campaigns, or product campaigns. It is often wise to stick to one strategy, so that consumers build up a clear perception of the brand. A brand campaign will be marketing with the brand in focus, while product campaigns will typically have the brand's products in focus.

Communicating the brand is not just about verbal communication in today's world; it has become so much more than that. Pictures are, according to Kapferer (2008), far more important than words. The development of a brand language should be taken into account when implementing the Brand Positioning strategy. A brand language should consist of certain phrases and words that can be put together in order to communicate a brands' identity clearly. In the same way as a brand charter or a Brand Positioning document, a brand language could also serve as a means of decentralizing decisions (Kapferer 2008).

A brand should choose a name that fits with its desired brand identity. As Kapferer (2008; 211) puts it: “*manufacturers make products, customers buy brands*”. The name should have the ability to stick in consumers’ minds when they hear of it for the first time, and it should ideally be what the consumers think of when thinking of a certain type of product. Brand name and product name are two different things, the brand name should not be limited to only fit with one type of product if the brand wants to expand and create more product lines etc. Kapferer (2008; 212) talks about the danger in using descriptive brand names – “*the name should not describe products, it should distinguish them*”. Global communication may become difficult if the name is too descriptive.

Marketing and Brand Positioning has always been linked to advertising and promotion. Advertising can be an important way to position the brand, but the brand has to make what Kapferer (2008) calls creative 360 degrees communications in order to be successful. 360 communications is all about integrating advertising and promotion, but also the other P’s in the marketing mix. Some brands have extremely high costs within this area, and it is crucial that brands don’t use unnecessary funds on wasted advertising. Kapferer (2008) identifies wasted advertising as not creative enough, missing its target audience, and shown in the wrong places. A creative ad can be seen as the ability to be seen and remembered. Kapferer (2008) argues that the target audience should not necessarily be a description of those who will buy the product. It should rather be a reflection of the consumers and of the brand’s own identity. The last issue is probably the most straightforward one to deal with, distributing the ad and promote the product where the brand has capability to be present.

All brands strive for a big market share, and a big market share comes from reaching the masses. In order to reach these masses, one should try to reach a smaller group of influential people first – opinion leaders (Kapferer 2008). Opinion leaders influence the masses in a very effective way, and it works in the way that “normal” people want to be like the opinion leaders. The opinion leaders will be the group of customers that carries the brand. Research by Valette-Florence (2004) show that opinion leaders usually are perceived as experts, as having charisma, and as having a high social visibility. The market ranges from people who aren’t involved in the brand at all, to buyers who are involved and engaged with the brand, its ambassadors (Kapferer 2008). Creating a relationship with customers is of importance. Managing to create a hard core of ambassadors will help any brand reaching success and status. Not only are the ambassadors loyal customers, they actively engage in persuading others to buy their brands’ products. Another way to create status and contribute to a

successful position is through word of mouth and buzz. According to Kapferer (1991, 2004) this buzz can be created through three approaches. First of all one have to make plenty of time for the press and media, which entails giving interviews, and letting them do stories on you. The second approach consists of always considering the fall out of what the press does on your brand. The third approach is about being surprising, because a surprise is what gets the buzz going.

2.4.3 David A. Aaker

Implementing the Brand Positioning successfully is all about communicating the brand identity through a value proposition in Aaker's (1996) point of view. The brand position is a subset of the brand identity and value proposition, that is to be actively communicated at a target audience, and thereby creating a competitive advantage (Aaker 1996).

According to Aaker (1996) it can be done through a process of three steps. The first step revolves around choosing exactly which part of the brand identity that is to be actively communicated. The next step is the execution of the communication program, which involves what channels to use, and the development of specific campaigns. The last step is about tracking the Brand Positioning and actually seeing if they achieve what they want.

Aaker (1996) believes that one should identify points of leverage in its brand identity. Points of leverage will help in differentiating the brand from competition, showing what is special for a particular brand. A brand should never forget the importance of possible brand-customer relationships, and it is therefore wise to choose to focus on identity aspects that drive these kinds of relationships.

The target audience is a vital part of the Brand Positioning success. The target audience may be a subset of the brand's target segment. It is also important to know that brands can have more than one target audience.

Active communication is essential, because consumers make up an image based on how the brand is perceived. The main job with active communication is to create a brand image that fits with the brand's identity. According to Aaker (1996) a comparison between the brand identity and the brand image will show what the brand must work with in its communication. If the image is very different from the desired image, the brand can augment the image, reinforce the image, or diffuse the image. Augmenting the image entails adding or

strengthening certain aspects of the image. Reinforcing the image involves having consistent brand associations between the identity and image. If the company's image is inconsistent with the brand's identity, one can diffuse the brand image by downplaying certain brand associations that do not fit with the brand's desired image.

The position a brand chooses should express an advantage. Why use one brand over another? If the brand can prove they are better in certain areas, customers who value these specific traits will choose the brand in question. In order to demonstrate an advantage a company can resonate with its customers, through a persuasive value proposition or a meaningful brand-customer relationship. Differentiating your brand from the competition is also a way to prove a brand's excellence. Another way to demonstrate an advantage will be to match or be better than competition instead of differentiating oneself – one can for example strive to be the cheapest brand, most luxurious, most customer friendly, and so on (Aaker 1996).

To be successful with its Brand Positioning strategy the brand should generate several campaign alternatives, use symbols and metaphors, and if possible test the campaign. By creating more alternatives, the company increases the chance of coming up with a profitable campaign (Aaker 1996). Using different kinds of channels may be wise. One can also turn to less traditional channels like – promotion, direct response marketing, publicity stunts and so on. Symbols and metaphors are excellent tools to make consumers remember the campaign or brand. Testing the campaign before a launch can prove very useful. By testing the campaign beforehand the brand will know if they should go through with it or not.

Implementation consists of more than just positioning the brand through campaigns. Brands should at all times update themselves on their position in the market, and track if they are achieving the position they aim for. Tracking consists of monitoring the brand position (Aaker 1996). Tracking can be based on both quantitative and qualitative studies, where you listen to consumers on how successful you are with your Brand Positioning strategy.

2.4.4 Al Ries & Jack Trout

Ries and Trout (2001) argue that you can position your brand in five different ways: 1) Positioning of a leader, 2) Positioning of a follower, 3) Repositioning the competition, 4) Using the power of a name and 5) Line extensions. Some of these strategies are not applicable in our research. An established brand position entails that the brand already has a name. Line extensions are also a part of Brand Positioning we feel is not necessary to discuss

in this thesis. This aspect relates to growth strategies more than positioning of a particular brand.

Positioning of a leader

The brand that is the first in the market, holds on to a position in the consumers mind's which is hard to change. A brand is considered to be the first when they establish themselves as number one within a product category.

For a market leader to hold on to their position there are some strategic actions they can do, and things they should avoid. It is important to avoid being arrogant, do not communicate that you are number one. A leader should not try to push their competitors out of the market, since they need them to keep the product category alive. This can lead to a perception among the consumers that the company is insecure about their own position. If a company was the first to introduce a product, they should focus on this in their Brand Positioning strategy (Ries and Trout 2001).

In order to hold on to a leader position it is important to prepare for potential competition. If a product development shows signs of potential, the product should immediately be adapted. A usual mistake done by market leaders is to think too highly of themselves, and suddenly competing brands beat them in product development.

If the market leader is able to cover for moves done by competitors, the brand will always be in front in the market. A strategy to cover for potential competitors' moves is to change the name to a broader meaning. A broader name opens up for broader business opportunities. The airline company Norwegian has a name that allowed them to move into a new service category, credit cards. The name does not "lock" them in the airline industry.

Positioning of a follower

When describing this strategy, Ries and Trout (2001) refer to the French expression, *Cherchez le creneau*. This means "look for the hole". To find the creneau, or "hole", you must avoid following the grain. According to Ries and Trout (2001) it is most likely ineffective to position a brand where you try to reach out to everyone. The risk is that you can end up being nothing. Other brands have claimed all different kinds of positions and are perceived as leaders within certain categories.

Since it is considered crucial to be the first and establish leadership within a category, the following brands often use more time finalizing and improving their product to a near perfect state before they decide to launch it. If a company's product won't be the first in their category, it should look for a position which no one holds on to and where they can be first.

Repositioning the competition

In cases where you can't find a position where your brand can be first, you can convince the consumers' to perceive the competitors position differently (Ries and Trout 2001). It is important not to compare repositioning the competition with comparative advertising. The goal of comparative advertisement is to persuade the consumer that your brand is better than the competitor through comparison of product features and physical characteristics (Droge and Darmon 1987). The consumers most likely won't accept that kind of strategies (Ries and Trout 2001).

2.4.5 Comparison and Discussion

We see from the presentation of the researcher's views that they all are quite thorough with how they believe companies should implement their Brand Positioning strategies. Their views consist of how to use the marketing mix, and different strategies one can use to reach its target audience.

The Marketing Mix

Active communication is something that is considered to be important in all the different theories. In Keller's (2008), Kapferer's (2008) and Aaker's (2002) view it is about the choice of channels, and choosing the right ones according to your target group, and what you want to achieve out of the campaign. Keller (2008) presents the marketing mix and the four P's, but according to Judd (1987) there is an additional P. People should be considered as an equally important part of the brand's communication. Judd's (1987) article discuss that the employees in the company as a distinctive element in the marketing mix. What he refers to as "people power" should be integrated in every marketing strategy. Companies should reevaluate their employees' roles in terms of customer relations, and in this way differentiate even more from their competitors.

With the exception of Kapferer (2008) the researchers' fails to include the importance of integrating the different communication tools. If you successfully want to achieve integrated communication "*each element of the marketing mix should integrate with other tools so that*

a unified message is consistently reinforced” (Smith & Taylor, 2004; 14). The communication objective has to shine through all the different channels and all help each other delivering the same message. Research done by Madhavaram et al. (2005) argues that integrated marketing communication should be a central element in every Brand Positioning strategy, because it will lead to increased brand equity.

Choosing Associations to Communicate

Differentiating the brand in the implementation process is discussed by both Keller (2008) and Aaker (1996). Choosing associations to communicate is different from choosing associations in the brand’s positioning definition. The implementation process is more specific, and should not always contain all possible associations from the brand’s positioning definition. It is more important that this process consists of what is considered important on a tactical level. We can clearly see similarities with these POD’s and what Aaker (1996) refers to as points of leverage. Both refers to chosen brand associations that can be used to differentiate it from competitors when implementing the brand position. It is the basis of what you want to communicate to the consumers. Ries and Trout (2001) also talk about differentiation, but in a different sense. They stress the importance of finding your own, available position in the market which makes the brand unique compared to competitors within similar categories. In their view it is all about being the first brand in a potential new market. Barwise and Meehan (2004) has a slightly different view on how you should differentiate your brand. They argue that too much focus on differentiating from competitors by adding and using unique features and gimmicks to both the products and the communication, can lead to customer dissatisfaction. Instead of differentiating with new features, which they consider to be irrelevant to the consumers, brands should try to meet the basic customer needs better than the competitors. This is the kind of differentiation that is consistent with the marketing concept (Barwise & Meehan, 2004).

Channels

What can be considered as a disagreement with our researchers is the view on how many channels and the amount of time and resources you should spend on them. Kapferer (2008) clearly states that you should be careful and avoid wasted advertising, and rather choose some channels where you build creative advertisements. Aaker (1996) argues that it is important to have several campaigns, so you can increase the chance of coming up with a campaign that will give profitable results. Their views are different in the way that you

should either think clearly about your choices of channels and how to use them, or “experiment” with several until you find an optimal solution. Ries and Trout (2001) are not very specific about how you should communicate; they focus on the importance of communicating that you are the first within the category. They do not present a clear guideline on how to choose channels, or how you should use them.

Brand Elements

Kapferer’s (2008) view includes integration of a brand language, which should represent chosen brand elements. What Keller (2008) and Kapferer (2008) agree upon is that brand elements are an important factor for establishing and communicating a clear brand identity and brand image. Keller (2008) has six clear criteria for how to choose brand elements. Kapferer (2008) argues that the elements have to be in line with the brand language. Aaker’s (1996) view also points out that the communication has to be in line with the brand identity. What we clearly see from these three theories is that the brand identity is absolute essential in the implementation process.

A factor that is commonly discussed is the use of the brand name in the Brand Positioning strategy. Aaker (1996) is the only one out of our chosen theories that doesn’t focus greatly on this part of the Brand Positioning. Kapferer (2008) points out that you should avoid the use of descriptive names because it will lead to limitations for the brand in the long run. Keller (2008) disagrees with this argument, and states that a descriptive name will assure that the consumers’ will understand the product category. The main difference with their views on brand names is that Keller (2008) chooses to focus on brand naming in relation to the introduction of new products, while Kapferer (2008) has a more long-term view and argues that the name should be in line with the brand’s future plans and possible expansion. Ries and Trout (2001) also argue that the brand name is of high importance and their view support both Keller (2008) and Kapferer (2008). A study done by Suri and Kohli (2000) shows that choosing a descriptive name leads to better liking among the consumers’ than coined names. Their finding also shows that descriptive names are easy to recall, while coined names is difficult to recognize. What we can conclude from all of these different views is that the choice of brand name is something you have to strongly evaluate before launching a new brand or a new product, and that the theories developed suggest that this should be done very early, if not first, in the implementation process.

Strategies to reach target groups

Ries and Trout (2001) distinguish themselves from the other theories in the way that they explain the implementation process in relevance to what position the brand is in, or is trying to achieve, along with a couple of suggestions which every brand should consider. They do not have one clear strategy every brand should follow. Ries and Trout (2001) try to explain how it works if you are in a leader position, and how you should hold on to that position. The follower strategy suggests that they should try to reach out to a small group instead of the masses. This view is supported in the other theories, but not through imitation. Kapferer (2008) argues that to reach out to the masses you should first try to reach out to smaller groups, opinion leaders, and later expand your target group. Aaker (1996) stresses the use of metaphors and symbols when implementing your position.

Tracking

Aaker (1996) and Keller (2008) clearly points out the importance of updating your brand's position over time. They both find this important to continually improve, and keeping up with current and potential new competition. Listening to the consumers' and that the brand is up-to-date in relation to changes in the market is important.

2.4.6 Summary

In conclusion we have found some aspects concerning implementation all brands should be aware of. Each of the theories has some important elements that you have to think of when you want to implement the defined position. There are some differences where you have to think of what suits your defined position, but the theories in general complement each other. The implementation process is about being able to stand out of the crowd from other brands in the market. The competition becomes fiercer and more difficult as long as new brands are constantly being introduced to the market. Brands can differentiate through the elements in the marketing mix. The different communication channels are absolute essential when you want to reach out to the consumers', while the choice and how the channels are being used have to be in line with your communication objectives. With the help of brand elements, the consumers' can identify the brand and this will increase the brand awareness. All aspects that we have mentioned in this chapter make up a good starting point in the implementation process. The implementation is the vital part of the Brand Positioning, where you go from planning to action, and share your brand with the consumers'.

2.5 Intended Effects of Brand Positioning

Every Brand Positioning strategy has its outcome. Our presented theories should be a guideline in reaching positive results. All the researchers share some main views of what you can achieve with a successful Brand Positioning strategy. The obvious economic benefits from a strong position include higher market shares, more sales and better economic results. Because there are mostly consensus in our theorists views' with what Brand Positioning can lead to, we will jump straight to the discussion and comparison. In this chapter we will shortly describe the benefits of following normative Brand Positioning theory, in the views of our researchers.

2.5.1 Brand Equity

The marketing communication will be affected if a brand is able to increase both the brand awareness and image. Higher brand awareness among the consumers increases the likelihood that consumers will notice the different advertisements. In the marketing communication loyalty plays a role. According to a study made of Raj (1982) customers with high loyalty to the brand will react positively to an increase in advertisement. According to Kapferer (2008) successful Brand Positioning results in customers' becoming aware of a certain brand essence. The brand essence says something about the brand's key values, and what it stands for (Kapferer, 2008). When possible consumers know this, they will choose the brand because its brand essence reflects their own values.

Brand awareness is related to brand familiarity. Alba and Hutchinson (1987) define brand familiarity as the number of product- related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer (through product usage, advertising, etc.). Greater brand familiarity, through repeated exposures to a brand, should lead to increased consumer ability to recognize and recall the brand. According to Ries and Trout (2001) a successful brand position will lead to product recall and positive product differentiation in the minds of consumers in a competitive market. A good Brand Positioning strategy finds that unique place in the consumers' minds

According to Keller (2008) brand equity is built up of image and awareness. Increased image and awareness can in this way create stronger brand equity. Firstly, consumers value brands with a high level of brand equity. Favorable brand associations affect the consumers' total

evaluation of the brand. It is also shown that if consumers have a high familiarity with the brand they get higher confidence, better attitude, and good intentions of being a user of that specific brand. If a consumer is often exposed to the brand they might automatically continue to purchase it (Keller, 2008). Kapferer (2008) combines brand equity with customer equity, and explains that a truly successful brand needs both customer equity and brand equity. Customer equity is about how much revenue a brand's customers put in a company.

2.5.2 Customer Loyalty

A good strategy will support the brand differentiation, where consumers' will become convinced why they should choose the brand over others. Continued purchases might lead to loyal customers. According to Keller's (2008) CBBE pyramid a high level of brand equity can blossom into a customer-relationship, with a high level of resonance. This is the highest level of the pyramid, and the ultimate level of any brand's relationship with its customers. Customer loyalty further leads to higher acceptance with increased advertising and with higher product prices. The brand will get a higher price premium. Price premium is how much more consumers are willing to pay for sticking with a brand. An important aspect here is that loyalty needs to be nourished. When a company has achieved loyal consumers, they need to take care of them. Rapp and Collins (1994) stresses that a company should concentrate on the person rather than the client, and thus becoming what they call "a loving company".

Aaker (1996) agrees that a strong brand identity and a good position can lead to several advantages. Among these are extension options, brand memorability, guiding and enhancing of brand strategy, meaning and focus to the organization, and most importantly it provides a value proposition, credibility, and a basis for a customer-brand relationship (Aaker 1996). Customer loyalty is the ultimate goal, which will give grounds for becoming even a stronger brand in the long-term.

2.5.3 Additional Advantages

A strong position will not only lead to benefits concerning customers, but employees as well. Strong brand equity leads to organizational commitment, which means that stakeholders within the organization will become more committed to what the company does. Employees will get a sense of pride, passion, and meaning. This will in turn make them better workers, and the company as a unit could become better and a more smooth running organization.

A brand with a positive brand image is better prepared to handle a brand crisis or negative economic periods. If the brand has a great deal of brand equity their actions during a crisis can be considered credible, and consumers can have better patience towards the brand.

A successful brand can according to all our researchers be able to use their strong, favorable and unique brand associations in other product or service categories. Licensing the brand name, logo or other brand elements for other companies to use on their products could be a potential strategy. The company that is given the right to use the trademark will experience that their customers are willing to pay more for their products. For the licensor it means that their profits, promotion and legal protection will increase by choosing this strategy.

Licensing also means that the brand's awareness and image will increase even more. It may broaden the brand's exposure to the consumers and the brand associations could become even stronger. Successful Brand Positioning can open doors for potential extensions strategies. The brand can use their positive image to introduce a product extension. It can take advantage of the already existing consumer knowledge of the parent brand, and use it to increase the awareness and add potential new associations towards the brand.

3. Synthesis: a Normative Framework

From the four main theories presented above we have developed a theoretic framework of Normative Brand Positioning capabilities. This normative framework should work as a guideline when comparing the surveyed companies and their usage of what we call normative Brand Positioning theory. However, it is important to be aware that there is no completely right or wrong strategy to follow, and that the best strategy to use will probably be different in different situations. In the development of this framework we answer the first part of our research question:

“Which are the characteristics of an effective Brand Positioning according to normative theory?”

3.1 Brand Positioning Culture

Cultural values in an organization have huge impact on how the general business works. If the board of directors in a company strongly believes in certain aspects on how to run a company, the rest of the organization will follow. If the environment within the company believes in marketing work, the company ought to be better at Brand Positioning work in general.

A Brand Positioning culture is fundamental for being good at Brand Positioning aspects. The company must acknowledge the importance of a unique position, and be aware of its benefits. The idea is that a company’s culture will have an effect on employee behavior. A Brand Positioning Culture is in this way an important factor for being good at Brand Positioning, and should also be considered a Brand Positioning capability.

3.2 Information Collection

The four main researchers in this dissertation are somewhat alike with their opinion on what is needed before defining a brand’s positioning strategy. A careful analysis is of importance. The company should turn towards themselves – who are we, and what can we offer? The company should also look at what market they are in, who their competition is, and who their customers are.

In short, the company needs to analyze what they can offer the market, whether it is a completely new product, or a new way of solving an old problem. Either way it would be a good starting point before launching a brand. Discovering what they actually offer is essential before defining the position.

The next on the list of information needed concerns the customer. One must know who possible customers are. A way to limit the target market is through segmentation. Segmentation can be based on a number of possible customer's characteristics: geography, needs, behavior, and usage situation and so on.

A company must be able to deliver what they promise. An analysis of self considers discovering what strengths and weaknesses the company has. Are they able to reach the target market, and can they deliver the benefit?

It is important to keep an eye on the competitors, their actions, their campaigns, and their products. Off course it depends on what strategy you follow, whether it is a differentiator or a cost-leader. A differentiator must at all times be sure to differentiate through extra benefits, and be able to offer something extra compared to competitors. The cost-leader must at all times make sure to be cheaper than its competition.

The last aspect to be aware of is the environment in the market one operates in. The world's globalization and the modern media world create an open environment with few hidden traces. Companies must be aware of this reality, before implementing and defining their position.

3.3 Defining Brand Positioning

Defining the Brand's Positioning concerns what general plan for Brand Positioning a company has - Is it formally worked with within the company, and is it stored so that everyone who works with Brand Positioning can look it up and connect it with new plans? Writing the Brand's positioning definition down is considered a good idea, and companies that take Brand Positioning seriously should have documents that clearly state how they want to position themselves. A Brand Positioning document will work as a basis for conscious thinking, and be a foundation for a brands marketing. It is considered essential if the implementation of a position is to be successful.

What mental category the brand is in should be included in the Brand Positioning definition. Here the brand should outline what category it is in, and thus who both indirect and direct competitors are. Furthermore it should show what possible customers expect and wants as potential benefits from offered products and services. In relation to the mental category, one should also choose its target market. By narrowing the recipient market to a specific group, it is easier to come up with strategies to reach it.

Brands should always consider their image in the market, how they are perceived, not just how they look at themselves. By including an outside-in view the brand will discover a more correct image. A brand should always define a brand identity when defining their position. This is an inside-out point of view where the company goes into themselves to discover what their values and practices are. A brand identity is built upon the unique characteristics that sum up a brand. It is most easily described as the companies' own image of themselves, who internal stakeholders believe they are as a company (Walker 2010). Based on its image and identity the brand should choose which associations it wants to include in its positioning definition. The next aspect includes finding out where the company is today, and where it wants to go. Which can be compared to the brand identity and image, but it includes the aspect of discovering a desired state. One should define this state, so that the company knows where it wants to go.

Furthermore the brand should distinguish the differences between their Tactical and Strategic positioning strategies. It is important to remember that what works short term might not be profitable in the long run. The Tactical strategy should always consist of perceptions the brand wants to be associated with, so that the Tactical Brand Positioning actually strengthens the brand's strategic position. Keeping things easy cannot be overstated, because complicating a definition of a position only leads to misunderstandings when it is time to create new campaigns.

It is often easy to forget that there are more stakeholders than competitors and consumers to think of when deciding your brand's position. Many stakeholders are affected by brand's actions and positioning strategies. That is why they should be included to some extent in any brand's definition of position.

Key words when defining a brand's definition is therefore an explicit document, mental category, outside-in and inside-out view, tactical vs. strategic position, and stakeholders.

3.4 Implementing a Brand Positioning Strategy

The implementation process is where the brand's positioning strategy gets realized. All our researchers stress communication. Brands should communicate the correct brand image and identity through a value proposition. Communication can be done via the well-known 5 P's, more commonly known as the marketing mix.

The marketing mix is made up of product, place (distribution), price, promotion, and people. It is easy to jump to conclusions and say that marketing communication is just about promotions, when in fact all the 5 P's are a part of the marketing communication mix. Our main researchers agree on certain aspects of the communication process, but the modern world brings a lot of new ways to enhance the success rate of communication even more. Integrated marketing communication is an important term, because it describes how one single media strategy can have a multiplying effect (Dahlen 2010). One channel increases the effect of another and so on. Today it is also easier for brands to apply interactive communication, which brings the consumer closer to the brand – this will boost awareness to new highs. Integrated marketing communication can also be described as 360 degrees communication

The communication should demonstrate an advantage of using a particular brand. Other successful communication approaches includes resonating with consumers, choosing which POD's to communicate, or matching/outperform competitors. The communication of benefits is of significance, by comparing with competitors, and a descriptive product name potential consumers will easily understand the product category the brand operates in. The POD's and POP's is here of importance, and choosing desirable and deliverable POD's to communicate are fundamental for success.

There are some different views on whether to use many or just a few channels when communicating. There is no universal answer to this question, but the company has to consider each situation. The development of a brand language could help ease the creation of future campaigns. A well thought of brand name is valuable, and there has been some debate on whether descriptive or none-descriptive names are best to use. This varies from situation to situation.

To reach a target audience it can be wise to go through opinion leaders, and thereby creating a well-nourished buzz about the brand and its products. One should be realistic when

implementing a position, otherwise, the masses will not believe in the brand. One way to increase the chance of success with creating awareness and image is through the use of metaphors and symbols this gives the recipients something easy to link the brand and the communication with. The success of a Brand Positioning strategy relies on what strategy the brand follows. The chosen strategies should be reflected in how the brand chooses to communicate their position.

Successful implementation of Brand Positioning relies on the company's effort to constantly track their Brand Positioning successes. There are several ways to track your brand's position, researchers have developed ways to do it, and a lot of consulting agencies also have their own models they follow. One way to measure the Brand Positioning success is to use Aaker's (1996) five categories – Loyalty, Quality, Associations, Awareness, and Market Behavior through surveys and interviews of potential consumers.

Implementing a brand's position is in short realizing tactical and strategic Brand Positioning strategies by choosing specific brand associations and brand elements to build campaigns upon, choosing which channels to use, and using the marketing mix actively in the process.

3.5 Intended Effects of Brand Positioning

All our theorists consent with the notion that Brand Positioning results in awareness and certain knowledge of the brand, in addition to obvious economic benefits.

Furthermore successful Brand Positioning could alter associations stakeholders have of a brand, and thereby change the brand's image and reputation. Brand Positioning can change overall evaluations of a brand, and change brand attitudes (Wilkie, 1986). According to Ries & Trout (2001) successful Brand Positioning will lead to a unique position in consumers' minds, a unique awareness, and a unique image – possibly a “top of mind” position. Successful Brand Positioning will create positive brand equity, which is built up of brand awareness and image. Successful Brand Positioning could result in loyalty and a relationship with consumers. Kapferer (2008) mentions customer equity, which is the result of loyalty and repeated purchases. Organizational commitment could also be the result of a successful Brand Positioning strategy, with employees believing in their brand, and getting a sense of meaning with their work.

High brand equity will in turn lead to advantages concerning extension options, licensing options, easier handling of possible brand crises, and a meaningful workplace for employees.

3.6 Summary

Our simplified definition of Brand Positioning based on the discussion above is consequently that it is about “*describing how a brand should distinguish themselves positively from their competitors*”. As you see from the main theories it is not the product itself that is important in the Brand Positioning strategy but “*what the buyer thinks about the product or organization*” (Fill, 2002; 321). By using our framework, brands would have a solid platform to differentiate from the midst of competition. A corporate Brand Positioning Culture would strengthen the belief in all aspects of the brand’s positioning work. Collecting the right information should give enough knowledge about what customers look for, what the brand is able to achieve, who their competitors are, and how the market is. Defining the brand position will help in decentralizing decision making, deciding what areas to differentiate on, discovering what makes a brand special compared to their competition, and so on. The implementation process will be where words turn into action, and about all the practicalities of Brand Positioning campaigns. Following this framework should lead to positive results with increased brand equity.

Culture	1. A Brand Positioning Culture	1. A strong Brand Positioning Culture would undoubtedly be a capability when it comes to a brand’s positioning work. Companies with this type of culture will spend resources on it.
Information Collection	1. Benefits 2. Customer 3. Company 4. Competitors 5. Environment	1. An analysis of what the market needs and wants. 2. An analysis of who the potential consumers are. 3. An analysis of the company, if they are able to deliver the claimed benefits. 4. An analysis of who the competitors are, their strengths and weaknesses. 5. An analysis of the environment, with what is allowed in the market, and what is possible.
Defining the Brand’s Positioning	1. Brand Positioning Document 2. Mental Category 3. Inside and Outside	1. Formally creating a Brand Positioning document is considered an advantage for decentralizing purposes, and for knowledge of the brand’s intended position. 2. What mental category the brand is in should be

	<p>View</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Tactical vs. Strategic Brand Positioning 5. All Stakeholders 	<p>established to see who direct and indirect competitors are, and what specific needs customers have. A target market should be recognized, which simplifies the process of coming up with an implementation strategy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A definition should consist of an outside-in and inside-out view. With the brand's image and values in focus. 4. A definition should distinguish between Tactical (Short term) and Strategic (Long Term) position. This helps with brands seeing what aspects to use when implementing their Brand Positioning Strategies. 5. A definition should include possible affected stakeholders, because many more than just customers affect brands positions.
Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing Mix 2. Brand Elements 3. Tracking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication through the five P's: people, place, price, packaging, and promotion are effective tools if they are in line with a company's defined brand position. Communication should be integrated so that the different aspects of the campaign fortify each other. Choice of channels should be carefully considered for implementation having best effect. 2. Choice of the right brand elements according to what brand position is desired. Brand elements can have a strong effect. 3. Tracking the implementation's success is of importance. A successful tracking of the brand's position involves tracking the right aspects, are they reaching their intended target group, do they create the right associations, etc.
Intended Effects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brand Equity 2. Additional Advantages 3. Economic Value 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Successful Brand Positioning will lead to brand equity, with higher awareness, knowledge, and familiarity, a better image, positive associations, and a more correct perception of the brand. The highest level of brand equity entails a level of engagement from consumers, loyalty, and a relationship. 2. A strong position leads to advantages in terms of crisis handling, extension options, meaningful workplace, organizational commitment, and more. 3. Increasing the brand's value can result in positive outcome in the brand's economic performance, through better profit margins, better revenue, and better results.

Figure 3.1.: The Theoretic Framework

4. Methodology

In the following chapter we will discuss and present how we will compare practice for Brand Positioning within the Norwegian Fishing- and Aqua Culture industry, with the normative framework. The research method, design, collection of data, the design of the questionnaire, and operationalization are key points within this methodology chapter.

4.1 Research method

There are two methods that can be used to collect data to your research, a quantitative or qualitative approach (Saunders et al. 2009). There are three main differences between the two different methods. Quantitative method is a procedure based on numbers, while qualitative is based on words. These different research bases have different data collection methods and analyses. Quantitative method results in numerical and standardized data, which can be analyzed through the use of diagrams and statistics. Qualitative data collection leads to non-standardized data. This data have to be classified into different categories before the analysis can begin. The analysis is shown through the use of conceptualization.

In this research we have used a combination of the two methods, a mixed method approach. In our data collection we combine both methods at the same time. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) it is useful to use mixed methods if it gives the research a better way of answering the research question. In our case this method gives us the opportunity to gather data both in form of numbers and words, leading to a broader insight into the industry's Brand Positioning practice. We will present the usage of, and why we used, both quantitative and qualitative method in the discussion of how we designed the questionnaire.

4.1.1 Deductive approach

According to Saunders et al. (2009) research projects can either have a deductive or inductive approach. The inductive approach is based on exploring data, which leads to development of theories that can be related to literature. In our research we use a deductive approach. We identify theory and use this theory to develop a theoretical framework. The framework is subsequently tested by the data collected in the research. We test our normative theoretical Brand Positioning framework with the data from the survey, and see if there is connection between the theory and the industry practice.

4.2 Research design

According to Saunders et al. (2009) the research design is the general plan for answering the research problem in the best possible way. It should contain clear goals based on the research question, and specify the sources where you retrieve the data. It is important to consider the possible limitations one might encounter, including access to data, time, and money. Keeping within ethical boundaries are important. Fabricating your own data would be an example of unethical research. This plan should show reflection concerning the research, explaining why you choose to conduct research with the specific method chosen, and why a specific organization or industry is investigated. Saunders et.al (2009) points out the difference between research design and tactics. The main difference is that research design is an overall plan for the research, while research tactics describes in detail how you will collect data and conduct an analysis.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) argues that” *Research designs are about organizing research activity, including the collection of data, in ways that are most likely to achieve the research aims*”. Our research is characterized as both descriptive and exploratory. It is descriptive in the sense that we want to describe the Brand Positioning practice in the industry in relation to the normative framework. According to Robson (2002) the purpose of descriptive studies is to produce an accurate description of people, events or situations. From the data collected one can see what trends and patterns that exist in the industry, but one cannot establish casual relationships between the different variables in the research.

Exploratory studies aim to find out “*What is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light*” (Robson 2002). Our research is exploratory both in the way that we want to find out what renowned researchers view as necessary positioning capabilities and if following our framework leads to better economic performance. Exploratory research makes it important to be flexible and open to a change of direction, as one might discover new data and insights during the research process (Saunders et. Al 2009).

4.2.1 Research Strategy

It is important to choose a research strategy that will make it possible to answer the research question and achieve the research objectives. The fact that our research concerns a large amount of companies in a big industry we mainly used a quantitative approach. The

descriptive and exploratory nature of our research, made us choose a survey strategy. The survey strategy is often linked with research that has a deductive approach, and it is often used in exploratory and descriptive research (Saunders et.al 2009). Most of the data collected are standardized, which makes it easier to analyze. Analyzing the quantitative data is done using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of the statistical software program, SPSS. From the analysis of the quantitative data it is possible to suggest possible relationships between variables, and these relationships can be shown in models produced from the analysis.

4.3 Collection of Data

4.3.1 Primary and secondary data

There are two different ways to gather the data. One can either use primary data, which is self-acquired data. We can also collect secondary data from other sources. Our research is mainly based on primary data from the survey, but there is also need for secondary data for the development of the Normative Positioning Framework. We found secondary data in books and articles about Brand Positioning. We also collect official economic statistics, from the companies that have given their names, to perform a general analysis of their economic performance. There are different sources that hold these statistics, but we used the database Amadeus in our analysis. We got access to this database through the library at NHH (www.orbis2.bvdep.com).

4.3.2 Sample

The survey strategy allows us to gather a large amount of data from a large population. This research will include companies from a vast industry. We aimed to gather data from 100 companies, which could be a representative sample. A representative sample makes it possible to generalize our findings to the industry in question. To secure a good response rate and to reach our aim of 100 respondents we contacted FHL, The Norwegian Fishing- and Aqua Culture Federation.

4.4 Designing the questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire will affect the response rate, reliability, and the validity of the gathered data. One can maximize these measurements by having individual questions, a clear and attractive design, proper explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire, and through pilot testing before activating the questionnaire. In general, designing the questionnaire should be a carefully planned and implemented management process (Saunders et al. 2009).

We designed our questionnaire in cooperation with our supervisor, Professor Magne Supphellen. The survey was created using the online software program Qualtrics. Which type of questionnaire you choose for your research is affected by several factors, including characteristics of the respondents, how important it is to reach out to specific respondents, and how big group of respondents that is part of the research (Saunders et al. 2009). We decided to use internet- based, self-administered questionnaire. The fact that our research involves a big industry, and the available time span for this research, are the main points behind choosing a self-administered questionnaire. An internet based survey is the most effective way of gathering data.

Using Qualtrics simplifies the research, because we save time by sending out the survey electronically, and response time is shortened. Qualtrics also makes it possible to transfer data directly into our analysis program, SPSS. The survey was based on the Normative Brand Positioning framework. Before launching the campaign we executed a pilot test with one of the leading companies within the industry, Lerøy Seafood Group. The purpose of this testing was to make sure that our survey was understandable. The pilot test made our survey easier to understand for the responding companies. According to Bell (2005) there are several things you need to clarify before activating the survey;

- How long it took to complete
- How clear instructions was
- Which, if any, questions were unclear
- Which, if any, questions were uncomfortable to answer
- If their opinions led to omissions
- If the layout is clear and attractive

Through the pilot testing with Lerøy we got input on several aspects of our questionnaire. This concerned the understanding of the questions, instructions, layout, and time. We used this feedback to strengthen our questionnaire before making it available for distribution.

All the companies received the survey through email. Basing the surveys on e-mail distribution requires a good layout and a reasonable size of the questionnaire. I.e. that it should not be disorganized and too short, and rather appear as a professional survey done by serious students from NHH. If the questionnaire is too long it will increase the risk that respondents will find it too time-consuming to finish.

In the introduction of the questionnaire it is important to describe the purpose behind the research, with a cover letter. This introduction should include an unbiased title, a subtitle that explains the nature of research behind the topic, and a neutral illustration or logo that makes your questionnaire different from others (Saunders et. Al 2009). In our introduction we shortly described the background of our research, and included incentives to why our respondents should participate in the research. The fact that they will get insight in the results was the main motivating factor. The NHH logo also stands out in our questionnaire, stating the fact that the research is a professional student project.

We have mostly closed-ended questions with an addition of some open-ended questions; because we want to get qualitative data both concerning their knowledge on Brand Positioning and the companies' economy. The reason for these open-ended is the fact that we need to perform exploration research. In this case closed-ended questions will not be optimal. In the first part of our questionnaire we wanted to get information on whether companies use product brands or company brands when positioning themselves in the market. Furthermore we wanted to know if we were dealing with Business-to-Business or Business-to-Customer companies.

We asked open-ended questions concerning how Brand Positioning is defined in the respondents' view, and how they describe their brand's position in the market. This gives us insight in their basic knowledge on the subject, and information on how brands define their position. Whether companies document and define their brand's position or not are essential for us, and were important for our research.

We used a number of likert-style questions where the respondents are asked how strongly they agree or disagree with different statements on a seven-point rating scale. These

statements are designed to cover how important companies consider Brand Positioning in their work, how the Brand Positioning practices are, and some of our control variables. By using these statements we can compare how answers are in relation to the normative Brand Positioning framework. Because we are using a series of statements it is important that the different categories are in correct order, to avoid confusion among the respondents (Dillman 2007).

The likert-style scale questions have a part where the respondents must state how well they know five different concepts within marketing. Three of the concepts we present, “Critical brand mass”, “Shadow brand” and “Positioning balance” has no scientific importance, and are made-up concepts. If a respondent answer with high knowledge of these concepts, it may suggest that they have a tendency to give statements too high scores.

After our likert-scale questions, we asked quantity questions regarding companies’ economy. We cover companies’ total turnover, profit before taxes and changes in total sales from the last 2 years of business. This data will be used for our economic analysis. The demographic questions are included to get information on the respondents. We will use this information to compare respondent’s backgrounds. The information about the company includes their size and what type of industry and markets they operate in. With this information we can analyze if these characteristics has an impact on how companies position their brand. At the end of our survey we asked about the company name. After consultation with our FHL contact, this question was voluntary in case some companies found it too sensitive to give away. The reason why we ask this question is to have the opportunity to do a deeper economic analysis using official statistics.

We had the survey available online for five weeks. During that time our contact person in FHL sent out two e-mails reminding the companies to participate. We experienced that it was very difficult to convince companies to participate in the survey. To make sure that we reached a respectable number of respondents we decided to use other strategies to reach out to the companies. We bought contact lists from the Brønnøysund Register, which gave us the opportunity to actively contact all the companies in the industry. Through phone calls we tried to convince companies to participate. Fiskeriforum Vest arranged the Seafood Conference on 25th October, which we attended. At the conference we handed out the questionnaire to participating companies. This proved to be unsuccessful due to the tight schedule of the day. Calling the companies on the other hand turned out to be a good strategy

in our data collection process. Our sample can still be considered a probability sample, because we contacted all companies in the industry, and gave them a choice to participate or not. Out of the total 600 companies that got the opportunity to answer, 93 companies responded. This gave us a total response rate of 15,5%.

4.5 Operationalization

Operationalization means turning variables into measurable factors. When performing a quantitative analysis it is important to clarify and specify concepts, before designing factors. Most of our questions revolve around the concept of Brand Positioning. There are a lot of small companies within the industry, which means that some respondents might be unfamiliar with the concept of Brand Positioning. We included our own definition of the concept, before the relevant Brand Positioning questions were presented.

In our survey our respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with different statements on a likert-scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). These statements cover control variables and Brand Positioning capabilities discussed in the previous chapters.

The first statements are related to companies' culture for marketing. The cultural statements are meant to measure the companies' attitude towards Brand Positioning. A high score would mean that companies value Brand Positioning and marketing as important factors behind success. By assessing these against economic performance, we can see to what extent culture has an impact on companies' performance. Furthermore we asked our respondents to consider statements related to the other Brand Positioning capabilities. These statements are divided into the same categories as in the theoretical framework. Answers here will show us what areas companies within the Fishing- and Aqua Culture industry value and are good at. We can also see if there are potential improvement points.

Cultural Statements

Statement 1: Brand Positioning is often discussed in our company

Statement 2: Brand Positioning is not a topic in our company

Statement 3: Brand Positioning is considered to be a very important topic in our company

Statement 4: Our management is very concerned about Brand Positioning

Analysis/Information basis statements:

Statement 1: Our Brand Positioning is based on an understanding of how customers perceive our brand

Statement 2: Our Brand Positioning is based on insights about the differences customers can see on our and competing brands

Statement 3: Our Brand Positioning is based on unique skills or knowledge in our company

Statement 4: Our Brand Positioning is based on the insight about what customers finds important

Definition statements:

Statement 1: Our Brand Positioning clearly shows how we will stand out from competitors

Statement 2: Our Brand Positioning is easy to use in the planning of marketing activities

Statement 3: Our Brand Positioning is known by everyone in the company

Implementation statements:

Statement 1: Our Brand Positioning is actively used when discussing the price of our services

Statement 2: Our Brand Positioning is actively used when discussing product development

Statement 3: Our Brand Positioning is actively used when discussing the communications / advertising for the brand

Statement 4: Our Brand Positioning is actively used when we discuss how our brand can be made more accessible to the customer (distribution)

The final statements measure three of our control variables. The reason for including these statements is to see if differences in economical performances are due to Brand Positioning capabilities rather than sales, cost, and customer orientation.

Sales orientation statements

Statement 1: Our management is very concerned about increasing sales

Statement 2: The sellers in our company has high status

Costs orientation statements

Statement 1: Our Company has lower costs than most others in the industry

Statement 2: In our company we have a strong focus on keeping costs down

Statement 3: Low cost is an important part of the strategy

Customer orientation statements

Statement 1: In our business we spend a lot of time to understand customer needs

Statement 2: We have good procedures / systems to ensure high customer satisfaction

Statement 3: In our business we are very concerned about customer satisfaction

Statement 4: Those who have customer contact with us is committed to sharing information about customers with other

Statement 5: We work well across functions and tasks of creating value for the customer

Statement 6: Information about the customer is actively used by all who work in the company

Statement 7: We are good at coordinating efforts towards the customer

The last statements in our questionnaire concerns the non-scientific concepts made up to control for honest answers.

False Concept statements

Statement 1: I am familiar with the term Shadow Brand

Statement 2: I am familiar with the term Brand Mass

Statement 3: I am familiar with the term Positioning Balance

5. Analysis

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

We will introduce our analysis and discussion with a presentation of the companies' and respondents' backgrounds. In this part we will take a closer look at demographics of the respondents, to get a picture of what type of people that works within the industry. The descriptive statistics concerning the companies' show how large and diverse they are.

We will present 13 frequency analyses showing the distribution of data within the different variables. The total number of completed answers varies, and our analyses will show the valid and missing data. The descriptive statistics help us present the large amount of data into simple summaries. When transforming a large amount of data there is always a risk of losing important details. Even with these limitations the descriptive statistics enables the opportunity to compare the respondents' and the companies.

5.1.1 The Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Woman	19	20.4
Man	71	76.3
Missing	3	3.2
Total	93	100

Table 5.1.: Gender

The respondents' gender gives us a picture that men are the majority in the industry. The fact that the industry is dominated by men might be linked with old traditions, whereas the industry itself traditionally has been male dominated. Our findings are also supported by data from the government, which shows that 9 out of 10 within the industry are men (www.regjeringen.no). Three respondents' chose not to answer this question.

Age	Frequency	Percent
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20-29	4	4.3
30-39	13	14.0
40-49	25	26.9
50-59	26	28.0
60-69	5	5.4
70-79	1	1.1
Missing	19	20.4
Total	93	100

Table 5.2.: The Respondents' Age

The table above shows that the respondents' age varies. There is a large gap of 47 years between our youngest and oldest respondent. Our findings also show that most of our respondents are within the range 40 to 59, and the mean of the age data is 47. A total of 19 respondents' chose not to answer this question.

Education	Frequency	Percent
Primary School	3	3.2
High School	14	15.1
College	9	9.7
College/University in Economics, without marketing in the curriculum	14	15.1
College / University in economics, with marketing in the curriculum	29	31.2
College / University in other disciplines than economics	19	20.4
Other (Specify) :	5	5.4
Total	93	100

Table 5.3.: Educational Background

All of our respondents have a varied educational background. The alternative "other" includes respondents with a multiple educational background, and people having industry related education such as "Maritime College" or "Educated fishing boat skipper". The majority have taken higher education. 31, 2 % of our respondents have a marketing-related education.

Management Responsibilites	Frequency	Percent
Yes	78	83.9
No	4	4.3

Missing	82	11.8
Total	93	100

Table 5.4.: Management Responsibilities

Responsibility Area	Frequency	Percent
Sales	5	5.4
Market	4	4.3
Market and Sales	36	38.7
Other (Specify):	45	48.4
Missing	3	3.2
Total	93	100

Table 5.5.: Responsibility Area

Our questionnaire was mostly sent out to Managing Directors or General Managers in the different companies. This is reflected in both table 5.4 and 5.5. The table show a high number of respondents' having managing responsibilities. If we also look at the respondents' specification when choosing the alternative "other", there were 23 respondent's that was either Managing Director or General Manager. There were 11 respondents that chose not to answer this question. We can see that 4, 3 % have no management responsibility in their company.

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent
0-5	37	39.8
6-10	19	20.4
11-15	12	12.9
16-20	10	10.8
21-25	5	5.4
26 -	3	3.2
Missing	7	7.5
Total	93	100

Table 5.6.: Experience

The respondents' years of experience within managerial responsibility varies. The majority is placed in the range between 0 and 15 years. The mean of 9, 88 years tells us that there is a lot of experienced people working in the industry. Eight respondents' have over 21 years of managerial experience.

5.1.2 The Companies

Type of Brand	Frequency	Percent
Company Brand	67	72.0
Product Brand	26	28.0

Total	93	100
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Table 5.7.: Type of Brand

Of all 93 companies 67 answered their main brand was a company brand. This means that of the participating companies, 72 % profile the company, and 28 % profile specific products. The main reason for this might be that the industry in general offers natural and fresh products straight from the ocean. A type of fish is very difficult to brand, but one can say that fish from a particular company is of excellent quality.

Type of Customer	Frequency	Percent
Business	65	69.9
Consumer	25	26.9
Missing	3	3.2
Total	93	100

Table 5.8.: Type of Customer

Most responding companies are Business-2-Business. Almost 70 % sells their products to other companies before reaching their consumers. 27 % sells their products directly to consumers. 3 % of the participating companies chose not to answer this question. The type of products in the Fishing- and Aqua Culture industry might again be the reason for this skewed distribution. Fishing- and Aqua Culture industry type products are usually further distributed from the producers natural habitat to grocery stores and the like. In today's modern world consumers favors going to a grocery store over visiting the fisherman directly because of the convenience.

Defined Brand Positioning	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	45.2
No	49	52.7
Missing	2	2.2
Total	93	100

Table 5.9.: Defined Brand Positioning

Brand Positioning Document	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	26.9
No	67	72.0
Missing	1	1.1
Total	93	100

Table 5.10.: Brand Positioning Document

42 out of the 91 companies answering this question say that they do have a defined position for their brand. The fact that 52.7 % do not have a defined position for their brand is noteworthy. This might be linked with what type of customers the brands have, and most of the participating companies are Business-2-Business. Two companies chose not to answer this question. 72 % of the companies do not have a document that describes the brand's positioning. 25 companies that define their brand's position actually write this down in a separate document. One company chose not to answer this question.

The Age of the Brand	Frequency	Percent
0-25	61	65.6
26-50	9	9.7
51-75	3	3.2
76-100	3	3.2
101-	1	1.1
Missing	16	17.2
Total	93	100

Table 5.11.: The Age of the Brand

The age of the brand ranges from 148 years old, to several being established in 2011. 17, 2 % of the respondents did not answer this question. The mean age for all participating brands is 19.09 years, which is reflected in that 65% of the brands are 0 – 25 years old. The majority of the companies are in this sense young. There are fewer and fewer brands in the older age groups, and only one company is older than 100 years. The worlds and Norway's population has grown extensively over the last 30 years, which makes an increase in demand for different types of products from the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry natural.

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percent
0-25	66	71.0
26-50	7	7.5
51-75	1	1.1
76-100	2	2.2
101-	10	10.8
Missing	7	7.5
Total	93	100

Table 5.12.: Number of Employees

The table shows that there are 71% rather small companies, with employees ranging from 1 to 25. 51 employees is the mean of the companies surveyed. The smallest company has one employee, and the biggest has 1250 employees. The interesting thing to see here is that there are about as many companies with employees from 26-100 as there are companies with more than 100 employees. This shows that even though there are mostly small players, we also have as much 10, 8% of very big players operating in the industry.

Value Chain	Frequency	Percent
Fisheries	23	19.17
Aqua Culture	36	30.00
Processing	23	19.17
Trading	25	20.83
Feed Production	1	0.83
Other (Specify)	11	9.17
Missing	1	0.83
Total	93	100

Table 5.13.: Value Chain

The total answers here are higher than 93 because respondents' had the opportunity to choose more than one alternative. One respondent did not answer this question. There is a lot of variation with the type of companies surveyed. 9 % are not characterized by the available categories. These companies ranged from investment companies to energy. In the available categories we see that Aqua Culture is the most common type of business. There was only one company working with feed production. Our listed categories describe 90 % of the participating companies, which shows that it was a good categorization.

5.2 Preliminary Analyses

We categorized all statements into four Brand Positioning capabilities in relation to our Brand Positioning Framework. We made new variables in SPSS for Culture, Information Collection, Definition, and Implementation. After this was done we conducted a correlation analysis, to see how these new variables correlated. Too much correlation means that it would be difficult to distinguish that these terms measured different aspects of Brand Positioning. The analysis showed that there were high correlation between Definition and Implementation, which in turn made us look into how all Brand Positioning statements correlated with each other. By throwing out the two statements with highest correlation, statement *“Our Brand Positioning is easy to use in the planning of marketing activities”* under Definition and statement *“Our Brand Positioning is actively used when discussing the*

communications/advertising for the brand” under Implementation, we made the original correlation between Definition and Implementation go away. We could now continue our analyses. After grouping into new variables, they were tested individually with Cronbach’s Alpha.

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Statements
Culture	0.887	4
Information Collection	0.879	4
Definition	0.696	2
Implementation	0.889	3
Total	0.901	4

Table 5.14: Cronbach’s Alpha

The table above shows the different variables with corresponding Cronbach's alpha values. This measurement checks the internal consistency between the different variables. When the alpha value is closer to 0, there is little or no consistency. However, if there is good consistency the value is closer to 1. The result of a Cronbach's Alpha analysis is affected in two ways; the number of indicators and the average correlation between the indicators. The value 0.7 is a limit which is normally set as an “acceptable” lower level to maintain satisfactory reliability. As we see it is only the variable Definition that has an alpha value below 0.7. It is only 0.004 too low, which is still satisfactory. The rest of the variables have a score close to 0.900, and the consistency is considered to be high. When we put all four variables against each other it gives a total alpha value of 0.901.

	Critical Brand Mass	Shadow Brand	Positioning Balance
Mean	3.09	2.87	3.01
Std. Deviation	1.976	1.918	1.902

Table 5.15: False Concepts: Mean and Std. Deviations

The table shows measured mean and standard deviation of the three concepts that do not have any scientific meaning. The terms have mean values of respectively 3.09, 2.87 and 3.01. This indicates that respondents have considered the concepts at the lower part of the scale. The majority of respondents notice that these concepts do not belong within Brand Positioning theory, which is positive. The standard deviation shows that there are large variations among the responses, which imply that some respondents’ do not understand all concepts.

5.3 Comparison with the Normative Brand Positioning Framework

Discovering how the industries practices are in relation to theory was possible through analyzing the data we got from the survey. The data shows generally high scores within the different Brand Positioning capabilities. They all show means beyond the neutral point on the likert scale of 3.5. This suggests that the companies see themselves as fairly good at Brand Positioning capabilities. The generally high scores do not mean we can state that the industry is good at all aspects of Brand Positioning. When looking at how each Brand Positioning mean compares to the general mean of all Brand Positioning capabilities, we get a more correct view on how the Industry's practices are.

5.3.1 Industry Practices

The function, Repeated Measures, was used to do an analysis in relation to research question two - how the industry in general position their brands compared to our framework. By using simple comparison, this function makes it able to see how each mean of the different Brand Positioning capabilities are compared to the mean of all Brand Positioning capabilities combined. The clue is to discover if the mean of any of the individual capabilities is significantly different from the mean of the total Brand Positioning capability, which includes all five capabilities. To clarify, the respondents answered the different statements on a scale from 1 to 7.

Brand Positioning Capabilities	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Culture	4.2703	1.69481	86
Information Collection	4.5610	1.49358	86
Definition	4.5174	1.61144	86
Implementation	4.2558	1.69017	86
General Mean	4.4012	1.42698	86

Brand Positioning Capabilities	F - Value	Sig.
Culture vs. General Mean	4.2703	1.69481
Information Collection vs. General Mean	4.5610	1.49358
Definition vs. General Mean	4.5174	1.61144

Implementation vs. General Mean	4.2558	1.69017
<i>General Mean=4.4012</i>		

Table 5.16: Repeated Measures

We found out that 86 of our respondents answered sufficiently with regards to the different Brand Positioning statements to be included in this analysis. The Culture capability within the industry has a mean of 4.27. This capability is characterized by having the highest standard deviation, 1.69. Culture is therefore the capability with most diverse answers. Information Collection has the highest mean of 4.56 and the least standard deviation, which gives an indication of less diversity between respondents. The Definition capability has a mean of 4.51, while Implementation has the lowest mean of 4.26. The overall mean for all Brand Positioning capabilities is 4.4012, and is what we compare the individual Brand Positioning steps with.

Out of the Brand Positioning capability means, we see that Culture and Implementation are lower than the overall. Information Collection and Definition are higher than the overall mean of 4.4. However, we cannot state anything before analyzing these means further. Out of the four Brand Positioning capabilities we see that Information Collection is significantly different from the overall mean on a 10% level, and that Implementation is significantly different on a 5% level. The Information Collection mean versus overall mean has an F-value of 3.3, which tells us that the difference of variance between them is quite vast. The variance between the overall mean and the Information Collection capability mean is relatively higher than the variance within the two means. This tells us that there is a probability that the variance between Information Collection capability and overall Brand Positioning capability is not due to coincidence. The Information Collection capability mean

of 4.56 is significantly higher than 4.4 at a 10% level, which gives an indication that the industry in general is good at the Information capability. Implementation versus overall mean has an F-value of 4.15. The variance between Implementation mean and overall mean is quite extensive. Implementation has a lower mean than 4.4; this implies that the industry in general is weaker with the Implementation part of Brand Positioning than the other parts of the process.

Discussion

The high Information Collection capability entails that the industry in general believe they are good at collecting information. This means that participating respondents believe their positioning is based on customers' perception of their brand, differentiation customers see in comparison to competitors, unique skills and knowledge within the company, and insight about what customers find important. The reason for this outcome might be several.

How customers perceive brands, brand image, is essential within Brand Positioning. Within this particular industry most products are very traditional for our country. These products have always been a part of the Norwegian diet. Customer's perceptions of Fishing and Aqua Culture brands might be thought of as evident due to traditional thinking, e.g. fish products are healthy etc. Responding companies also believe they differentiate from competitors in their Brand Positioning. The industry is vast, with many suppliers, and many customers, which makes knowing how to differentiate absolute fundamental. When it comes to insight and knowledge, fishing and Aqua Culture is an industry traditionally known for self-acquired skills through specific type of work over several years. Even though our statistics show that most companies are younger than 25 years, the industry is known for people working with some relation to it big parts of their lives. The mean of experience is 10 years for our respondents. This might be one reason behind high belief in knowledge about own company and products'. The industry size makes it necessary for companies to fight for their consumers, which make information about what they need and want vital for survival. 90% of the responding companies are within fishing, aqua culture, processing, and trading, which imply that these companies are good at collecting information in relation to Brand Positioning. Another reason for the high Information Collection capability could be that most of our surveyed companies are Business-to-Business companies. We believe that Business-to-Business customers are better at showing what they need and want, because they

are much more dependent on getting the right type of products for further processing. This will be investigated further in the discussion where we compare B2B and B2C scores.

The repeated measures analysis shows that the industry in general characterize themselves as fairly weak with implementing their Brand Positioning strategies. We can say that the industry in general believe they are weak at discussing the price they set, product development, and distribution. Implementation is an important step within Brand Positioning theory; these results show a lot of improvement potential for the industry.

The industry itself is old and traditional, which might lead to companies believing that they do not need to actively implement their Brand Positioning. The reason for this can be that there has always been a demand after the industry's products in the Norwegian market. At the same time, the health wave affecting the country is indirectly doing a lot of the Brand Positioning work for the industry. When specialized media, e.g. "Dagens Næringsliv", is writing about how important Omega-3 and Krill is for the general health, it could be concerned as free marketing work for a lot of these companies.

It can be challenging to implement a brand position when companies have not defined one, or have a document to describe it. The survey in general show that most companies do not define their Brand Positioning and only 26% has a specific Brand Positioning document. The level of education can also be the reason for this negative outcome with Implementation. Merely a total of 31% have had marketing in their curriculum during school, which entails that most respondents might have little knowledge about Brand Positioning Theory.

The difference between B2B companies and B2C companies could also be decisive for implementation practices. A lot of the companies within the industry are fish breeders and fishermen, dealing with livestock to be sold for further processing. We believe that the demand for these products is so high that the necessity for companies to position their brand is not present. This theory was confirmed by many of the companies we called when reminding them to contribute to the survey - they found marketing work to be unnecessary because of very high demand.

The reason for the poor Implementation capability can also be due to the general economy of companies. A lot of the companies are startups and small of size, which may put the importance of implementation of Brand Positioning in second hand. Other things in the

business process come before this step. A further discussion of this will follow in the analysis of what size means for the businesses.

5.3.2 Comparison Between Groups

We wanted to identify if there was a difference between groups and how they answered the statements meant to describe Brand Positioning practices. The results from the repeated measures test gave us an indication of strong Information Collection capabilities, and weak Implementation capabilities. An ANOVA one-sample t-test made it possible to do a variance analysis between groups.

B2B vs B2C

We looked at the difference in answers between Business-to-Business companies and Business-to-Consumer companies.

Brand Positioning Capabilities		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Culture	B2B	64	3.9648	1.63898	0.20487
	B2C	25	4.9500	1.78098	0.35620
	Total	89	4.2416	1.72813	0.18318
Information Collection	B2B	63	4.3214	1.61172	0.20306
	B2C	23	4.9130	1.20276	0.25079
	Total	86	4.4797	1.52923	0.16490
Definition	B2B	65	4.2385	1.69353	0.21006
	B2C	24	5.2917	1.23285	0.25166
	Total	89	4.5225	1.64439	0.17421
Implementation	B2B	64	3.8333	1.80143	0.22518
	B2C	23	5.1594	1.16285	0.24247
	Total	87	4.1839	1.75190	0.18782

Table 5.17: B2C vs B2B, Part 1

Brand Positioning Capabilities		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Culture	Between Groups	17.448	1	17.448	6.187	0.015
	Within Groups	245.358	87	22.820		
	Total	262.806	88			
Information Collection	Between Groups	5.897	1	5.897	2.568	0.133
	Within Groups	192.880	84	2.296		
	Total	198.777	85			
Definition	Between Groups	19.443	1	19.443	7.741	0.007
	Within Groups	218.512	87	2.512		

	Total	237.955	88			
Implementation	Between Groups	29.753	1	29.753	10.799	.001
	Within Groups	234.193	85	2.755		
	Total	263.946	86			

Table 5.18; B2C vs. B2B, Part 2

Out of our surveyed companies 89 answered what type of customers they had. 25 can be characterized as B2C companies, while the remaining 64 are B2B companies. The comparison between these two groups clearly shows that there is a difference with scores in relation to the different type of companies' Brand Positioning capabilities. The B2C companies score higher on all four capabilities in general. The Information Collection capability is the only one who is not significantly different between the groups. This reinforces the argument for the sample in general being good at Information Collection part of the process. We cannot state that there is a difference between B2B and B2C companies in this area. The remaining Brand Positioning capabilities, Culture, Definition, and Implementation is significantly better with B2C companies, which is reflected in the significant levels and F-values.

Discussion

The first explanation for B2C companies being better at Brand Positioning capabilities could be the size of the different markets. A B2C company will typically have to deal with a lot more customers. The competition for attention and choice is fiercer in a B2C environment. These results indicate that B2C companies are more dependent on their Brand Positioning capabilities to succeed. A Brand Positioning Culture is more likely to exist in a B2C company. The value of documenting and defining the brand position should be more apparent for companies being in direct contact with the consumer. It is easier for the end-customer to compare and rank different end-suppliers than companies' further back in the value chain. A problem is that it is hard for us to state how and where the participating companies are placed. A lot of the surveyed companies can be located under several areas in the value chain.

The difference in the Implementation capability can be due to the fact that B2C companies are a subject to more distribution channels. Whereas B2B companies only supply a few customers, B2C companies distribute their products to many. Furthermore the end-customer is more available for B2C companies – companies' further back in the value chain might have the view that the next level will take care of their product's positioning. Brands become

much more obvious for the end-customer when the company is close to them. This could be a fall pit, because B2B companies should focus on positioning their brands, even though their products are not supplied directly to the consumers.

There is a significant difference between B2C and B2B companies with all Brand Positioning capabilities except for the Information part of the process. This reflects the repeated measures analysis. Information might be easier to obtain in a B2B market, but more necessary in a B2C market. This makes both B2B and B2C companies reliant on this specific capability. Furthermore we see that B2C companies score very high on Implementation, which points toward the weak Implementation being a bigger problem for the B2B companies' practices

Size of Company

We investigated if differences in size led to differences in Brand Positioning practices.

Brand Positioning Capabilities		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Culture	Small Companies	43	3.6860	1.91026	0.29131
	Large Companies	42	4.6488	1.14506	0.17669
	Total	85	4.1618	1.64285	0.17819
Information Collection	Small Companies	40	4.2688	1.94424	0.30741
	Large Companies	42	4.7321	0.89271	0.13775
	Total	82	4.5061	1.50922	0.16667
Definition	Small Companies	43	4.3837	1.88300	0.28715
	Large Companies	42	4.6429	1.30798	0.20183
	Total	85	4.5118	1.62014	0.17573
Implementation	Small Companies	41	3.7937	2.03086	0.31337
	Large Companies	42	4.4715	1.19018	0.18588
	Total	83	4.1285	1.69395	0.18594

Table 6.19: Small vs. Large Companies, Part 1

Brand Positioning Capabilities		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Culture	Between Groups	19.694	1	19.694	7.896	0.006
	Within Groups	207.019	83	2.494		
	Total	226.713	84			
Information Collection	Between Groups	4.399	1	4.399	1.954	0.166
	Within Groups	180.098	80	2.251		
	Total	184.497	81			
Definition	Between Groups	1.427	1	1.427	0.541	0.464
	Within Groups	219.061	83	2.639		
	Total	220.488	84			

Implementation	Between Groups	1.427	1	9.534	3.421	0.068
	Within Groups	219.061	81	2.787		
	Total	220.488	82			

Table 5.20: Small vs. Large Companies, Part 2

A total of 85 of the surveyed companies stated how big the company was in terms of number of employees. We characterized companies with less than the median of 10 employees as small, and companies with more than 10 employees as large. Based on this categorization the sample consists of 43 small and 42 large companies. The data shows that the bigger companies have higher means within each Brand Positioning capability. It is an issue that only the Culture capability is significantly different between the groups at a 5% level. If we expand the significance restriction to a 10% level we see that Implementation also can be seen as different between the groups. This indicates that bigger companies in general believe they have a better Brand Positioning Culture, and are better at implementing their Brand Positioning.

Discussion

Large companies have more employees, which gives foundation for a stronger corporate culture. It is also probable that a culture consisting of more people will value Brand Positioning work. More employees' makes for more people responsible for marketing aspects, which in turn also strengthen the culture in this area. Small startup companies might not have had the time to develop a strong culture yet, and could be a reason for the significant difference between small and large companies with these capabilities.

There is no significant difference in the Information Collection capability, which again strengthens the indication that Information Collection is fairly good in the industry. Furthermore we see that large companies are better than smaller ones with Implementation at a 10% level. This shows that weak Implementation of Brand Positioning is challenging in smaller companies, rather than in large ones. Why are bigger companies better at the implementation process? More economic freedom and more available capital to spend could be a reason. This opens up for opportunities. Larger companies are typically present in several markets, with different products, both domestic and abroad. As a result, large companies have more competitors, and might have a bigger need to position their brand than small companies. Smaller start-ups typically concentrate more on the production process.

5.3.3 Descriptions of Brand's Position

The open-ended question about how companies describe their brand's position was included in our survey. We wanted to get an idea of how thorough the participating companies are with their Brand Positioning. Furthermore, we wanted to see to what extent brand's specific positions are consistent with Brand Positioning theory. The respondent's different answers were analyzed in relation to Keller's (2008) view on how a brand should define its position. It is important to see if the different descriptions focus on the POP's and POD's. In this analysis we will present examples of the descriptions considered to be in line with Keller's (2008) view, and the descriptions that fall short in describing a good Brand Positioning. The data is divided into four different categories; 1) Descriptions that fits with Keller's (2008) theories and the Framework, 2) Descriptions that includes certain aspects of Brand Positioning theory, 3) Descriptions that do not fit with Brand Positioning theory, and 4) Respondent's not answering this question. We assured the quality of the answers in relation to what category they belonged to, comparing the answers with what the respondents' answered to the question: "How do you define the concept of Brand Positioning?" In this way we could see if there was a fit between both answers, and if the respondents' had a consistent understanding of the term. A problem lies with us not being able to be sure whether these answers are based on actual perceived image among customers or how the companies' see themselves.

Category	Frequency	Percent
Category 1	21	22.5
Category 2	12	12.9
Category 3	16	17.2
Category 4	44	47.3
Total	93	100

Table 5.21: The Qualitative Categories

Out of the 93 respondents, 49 answered the open question about their brand's position. There could be many reasons why 44 respondents' chose not to answer this question. The participants might found it too time-consuming or hard to answer this specific question without any preparation. Another reason could be that the companies do not have a specific position to the brand in question.

We found 22.5% of the respondents' to be quite thorough and precise with how they defined their brand's positioning. Even though most answers here were simple sentences, they were

thorough and unfolding when it came to their companies' Brand Positioning goals. These 21 respondents specified their brand's differentiation in their brand's Positioning strategy. Some examples here are companies that answered "*Upper class, in relation to price and quality*", "*Today we are a world leader for our type of product – Living King Crab. Best concerning regularity, quality, and traceability to the consumers*", and "*Considered a good quality product. Not the most visible product in its niche, but well considered and preferred among our customers*". It is easy to see that these companies try to stand out in some ways.

The main issue with over half of all answers is that there is a clear misunderstanding to what can be considered as a good definition of a brand's position. Most answers do not include the Brand's POP's or POD's. There is no clear description on how their brand stands out from the competition. They do not give the consumers an exact reason why they should choose their brand over others. Some of the answers include aspects of Brand Positioning, while others give descriptions that do not have any relation to the theory. 11 respondents can be placed in category 2, showing some misunderstandings of what Brand Positioning is about. There were two companies that had image as a lone goal for their brand's position, their answers were "*We are perceived as a serious partner for our customers*", and "*Our position is well received and strong*". Image is considered to be important in Brand Positioning, and to be central when describing a brand's position. Still, a brand should not define its position solely on their intended image in the market. There were companies that only mentioned awareness when describing their brand's position, which is considered to be a misunderstanding of the term. Example answers here are "*Known by all National Customers*", "*We are new in the market, and we're operating somewhat random in terms of what customers we find interesting, our first goal is to generate revenue, before defining a further strategy*", and "*We are well known in our market*". It is important with brand awareness, but this is just one part of Brand Positioning. The consumers' could be aware of the brand, but still needs driver's for choice to be chosen. Some respondents described the brand's positioning mentioning image together with awareness in some way; "*Our Brand Name and Logo is well known both home and abroad among buyers of salmon*", and "*Our Logo/Name on the product should give customers the security expected*".

Of all 49 answers, 16 fell in to category three. This category includes the descriptions lacking clear fit with Brand Positioning theory. Respondents' answers ranged from a weak brand position controlled by the market, to exclamations that they do not have a clear Brand Positioning Strategy.

After categorizing all the descriptions, we conducted an analysis to find out if there was any correlation between the respondents' who stated to what extent they defined their brand's position, and their answers on the Definition statements. The analysis showed no correlation between these variables. This could be caused by several factors. The two statements that give us insight about companies' focus on definition might be a weak measurement. These statements tell us if the companies' focus on differentiation, and if the Brand Positioning is well known by everyone working for the company. It may be that these two statements do not cover enough to get a good insight into companies' Brand Positioning Definition practices. Another reason could be that the respondents' answers do not reflect how they actually practice when defining the Brand Positioning. The analysis is affected by the low response rate, which could be the reason for the low correlation.

We see, on the basis of these data, that there are few companies that actually have a well-defined positioning of their brand. This is shown by the fact that 22.6 % (21 of 93) of the companies described a Brand Positioning that is in line with Brand Positioning theory. It is difficult to draw conclusions based on these findings, because half of the companies chose not to answer this question. The other analyses above show that there are no clear differences between respondent's Brand Positioning Definition practices.

5.4 Effects on Economic Performance

To see if there is a connection between high scores with Brand Positioning statements and the companies' economic performance we conducted a regression analysis.

5.4.1 Profit Margin

The linear regression model is a statistical tool testing the relationships between two variables. The model has applications that are considered to be important for our research. By using this model we can test the nature of specific relationships, and we can also see how they are related (Carver & Nash 2011). In this research we use the regression model to test

the relationship between the companies' economic performance and a number of variables. These variables include the four Brand Positioning capabilities, customer-, sales-, and cost orientation, number of employees and the age of the brand. Profit margin is the dependent variable representing the companies' economic performance.

R Square Value	Sig.
0.373	.057

Table 5.22.: Model Summary

	B Coefficient	Sig.	VIF- Value
Constant (Profit Margin)	-7.028	.681	
Brand Positioning Capabilities:			
Culture			
Information	-1.904	.509	4.457
Definition	-1.692	.500	3.321
Implementation	6.220	.042	4.682
Control Variables:			
Sales Orientation	-3.384	.266	5.531
Cost Orientation	1.781	.466	1.601
Customer Orientation	3.454	.066	1.681
Number of Employees	-3.002	.309	1.896
The Age of the Brand	.040	.002	1.498
	.221	.076	1.141

Table 5.23: The Regression Analysis

If we look at the model summary we find statistics that measures the "fit" between variables, represented by the R Square value. Our model shows that changes in our independent variables account for 37.3 % of the variation in the profit margin. This indicates that approximately 60 % of the factors that affect the companies' profit margin are explained by other variables than those included in this model.

The regression model itself is significant on a 10 % level, which gives us an indication on how some of the independent variables affect profit margin. The table of coefficients indicates that the variables Definition and the number of employees have significant impact on the profit margin at a 5% level. These two variables individually have a Beta coefficient of 6.220 and 0.040. This shows that defining the brand's position has a positive effect on the company's profit margin. The number of employees on the other hand, has a very low positive effect. The variables cost orientation and the age of the brand has a significant

impact at a 10 % level. The beta coefficients to these variables tells us that focusing on the company's costs has a positive effect on the profit margin, while the age of the brand has a weak positive effect.

The VIF values are factors that identify possible multicollinearity problems. A common rule is that these values should be below 5. As the model shows, the variable Implementation has a VIF value of 5.531. This indicates that there are multicollinearity problems with this variable.

Discussion

What might be the reason for the model's results? Why has the Definition capability a significant impact on a 5% level? It is also interesting to discuss why the other Brand Positioning capabilities do not show an effect on the profit margin.

According to the regression model it is important to define the Brand Positioning in this industry. In the survey there are two statements measuring the companies' Definition practices. Defining the brand's position means that the company has a clear picture of the brand's desired state, and how the brand is differentiated. These factors may explain the model's findings; by conducting a thorough job of defining the brand's position, companies' might achieve better financial results. The findings also suggest that defining the brand's position can be regarded as a capability, and that the theory developed within Brand Positioning is applicable to this industry.

It is important to remember that respondents' not having defined their brand's positioning or having a document, could still give high scores on the statements measuring the Definition practices. Many companies might believe that their brand's position is common knowledge within companies, and that they are not dependent on having a specific document or definition that describes it. Cost orientation, number of employees and the age of the brand also have significant impact on the profit margin. They are all included in the model as control variables, and their impact on the profit margin can be considered to be self-evident. In the analysis we rather choose to focus on the Brand Positioning capabilities.

The model shows that the other Brand Positioning capabilities do not have any significant impact on the profit margin. There may be many reasons behind these results. In addition to the low response rate, it may be that by separating the companies' in relation to the market they operate in would show more effect from the other Brand Positioning capabilities. It may

turn out that there are large differences in the markets' margins. Companies that are considered to be good at Brand Positioning could operate in markets where they compete for relatively small margins. Other companies may operate in markets where there are large margins, but the companies' are not as dependent on Brand Positioning in order to be successful. In this way, some companies might be good at Brand Positioning because they need to, while others have high margins and do not need these capabilities. If this aspect was included in the model we could have seen the effect of Brand Positioning in both highly and low competitive markets.

6. General Discussion

6.1 The Normative Brand Positioning Framework

In this thesis we have tried to answer three research questions concerning Brand Positioning theory and the Norwegian Fishing and Aqua Culture industry. We created a Normative Brand Positioning Framework consisting of theory by Kevin Lane Keller (2008), Jean Noël Kapferer (2008), David A. Aaker (1996), Al Ries and Jack Trout (2001), and Magne Supphellen (2011). This Framework was meant to include the most important and fundamental aspects of Brand Positioning. With the development of this framework we have made an important contribution on how to measure different capabilities of Brand Positioning. Our Normative Framework can be used by others to do further research of the topic in different industries, situations, and markets.

We used this Normative Framework as a basis when answering the next two research questions concerning Brand Positioning practices within the researched industry.

6.2 Brand Positioning Practices

Our findings indicate that the industry could benefit from more competence within Culture, Definition, and especially the Implementation aspect of Brand Positioning. Only 30% of the respondents' have an educational background within marketing, but the majority have management responsibilities in their company. This means that the reason for uncertainties within these areas of Brand Positioning does not lie with lack of responsibility, but rather lack of education. The industry shows good result on collection of information. It is important for the industry to continue this work. There is always need for analysing the market one operates in. Through information companies can discover new customers and become more aware of competition.

Another aspect in this analysis is the difference between groups within the industry. We looked at what kind of market they operate in, and the size of the companies'. B2C companies scored significantly better than B2B companies on all aspects of Brand Positioning, except for Information Collection. This is coinciding with general theory, stating that the end-customer is of up most importance. Naturally, B2C companies will score

better on the Brand Positioning statements. B2C companies might be more dependent on Brand Positioning. This does not mean that B2B companies are not dependent on it as well.

There was a positive difference between large and small companies with the Culture (5% significance level) and Implementation (10% significance level) aspects of Brand Positioning. These results show an indication of larger companies being better at two of the Brand Positioning aspects. These are not shocking results, as bigger companies typically will have more employees to build up a stronger culture, and more resources to spend on implementation strategies.

6.3 Economic Performance

The analysis on profit margin shows that the Definition aspect of Brand Positioning has a positive effect on companies within our sample. These results give a suggestion that it is beneficial for companies to actively define their brand's position. Defining the brand's position and having a Brand Positioning document are main improvement points for the industry. The data from the definition aspect shows that the industry sees themselves as good at defining their brand's position. The open-ended answers and the lack of Brand Positioning documents prove otherwise. Only 45 % of the surveyed companies' have a defined position for their brand, and even fewer have a document to describe it. The weakness of the model, and the few complete answers, means that these results must be interpreted with caution. The results do not show a positive effect from all Brand Positioning aspects, but they show tendencies that actually defining a brand's position is beneficial.

6.4 Theoretical Implications

We will take a closer look at some theoretical and practical implications for companies in the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry based on our findings.

These results indicate that the Implementation aspect of Brand Positioning should be further deepened within theory. Practitioners in this particular industry look at themselves as weak in this area, which means that the theory they have learned might not have been extensive enough. Furthermore there is variation within the Culture and Definition aspects. This indicates that not all respondents understand the importance of these Brand Positioning capabilities. The Information Collection capability is viewed as strong within the industry.

This means that theory on this particular aspect is good, or that you do not need to study Brand Positioning theory to be good at this capability.

Our results suggest that the Definition aspect of Brand Positioning is very important in one of Norway's most important industries. Even though most theorists within the field of marketing believe in defining brand's positions, we see that they fail to be explicit about how and to what extent companies' should do it. Keller (2008) looks mostly at image, Kapferer (2008) and Aaker (1996) mostly look at brand identity, and Ries & Trout (2001) are vague with their desired state. They all could be much more thorough on this particular aspect. Our normative framework suggests a combination of these views is a good way of defining a brand's position. Furthermore, there is very little information on what having an actual document does for a brand. Our data show that most companies within this industry do not define their brand position. Researchers should go deeper into this subject when developing new theory and state that defining a brand's position and documenting it should not be overlooked. Our results suggest that if more companies defined their brand's positions, they would have a stronger and healthier economy. How companies can better their Brand Positioning practices will be discussed in the following chapter.

6.5 Practical Implications

An obvious implication of our results is that the industry needs more marketing people to become better at Brand Positioning aspects. This can be done through recruitment, educating employees further, participation in seminars, learning by doing, hiring consultants, and management showing more belief in Brand Positioning. An issue with these improvement strategies is that they are short-term. Organizations can make them long-term strategies, by continuously employing these types of activities.

To improve long-term Brand Positioning capabilities within the industry, there is another strategy companies can follow. Remember Besanko et. al's (2010) requirement for strategic capabilities – it must be something inherent within the organization. An organization's skill with Brand Positioning should not be reliant on a few individuals. Employees come and go during an organization's lifetime. It is therefore essential to develop a system on how to develop Brand Positioning Capabilities, so that these skills become organizational. First of all one could turn to our normative Brand Positioning framework. A system based on

following these steps could help with the awareness of the positive sides of Brand Positioning, as well as making them strategic.

The top management plays a central role when improving the Brand Positioning culture. A shared value system that fortifies belief in the importance of Brand Positioning is something that should shine through the whole organization, creating organizational commitment with all employees. If more people are a part of a culture, shares the same values, and contributes to the same norms, the company culture will become stronger. If values in relation to Brand Positioning are appreciated as a part of a corporate culture, it is probable that the company will be better at all Brand Positioning capabilities. Collecting information is essential for succeeding in the market place, and should be an integrated aspect. A separate Brand Positioning document would help in creating common awareness of what brand position a company's brand aim for, and is helpful concerning decentralizing decision making processes with regards to Brand Positioning activities. Using the marketing mix in the implementation process is vital for success. Furthermore tracking should be done by all brands who want to develop capabilities within Brand Positioning. This is where they find out what works, and discover what to improve on.

6.6 Limitations

There are several factors affecting the quality of our research. The normative framework is quite extensive. Describing the industry norm with all specific aspects would require an equally extensive survey. To be sure respondents would answer we simply could not include all of these characteristics - we had to limit the research of the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry to be about the most important aspects in the normative Brand Positioning framework.

6.6.1 Reliability

According to Saunders et al. (2009) reliability concerns the consistency of the collected data. If there is a high degree of consistency in the survey, it means that respondents would answer the same at different occasions. High reliability takes place if one can answer yes to the following questions; 1) Will our research show the same results in different occasions? 2) Will similar observations be obtained by other observers? 3) Is the method transparent in

terms of how the raw data was interpreted? Furthermore reliability is considered a prerequisite for the research validity.

There are some threats to the reliability of the research. Participant error and bias are threats related to the respondents'. Participant error concerns the problem whether participants reveal their real behavior in their answers. This can be affected by misunderstandings or at what time they answer the questionnaire. Thus, in our research we had to consider when to send out the questionnaire. It was important to choose a "neutral time", where the respondents' neither were on a "high" looking forward to get off work, nor on a "low" having great workloads in the beginning of the week (Saunders et al. 2009). We sent the questionnaire emails during mid-week to deal with this problem. We did not have the opportunity to control for when the respondents chose to answer. Participant bias is that respondents might want to give what they believe are "correct" answers, instead of replying honestly. To avoid this problem we ensured, and clearly informed, that there were full confidentiality of respondents' answers in our questionnaire.

It is natural that we don't use longitudinal studies, because our time frame is limited to a school semester of five months. Our thesis is therefore cross-sectional, where we look at a particular phenomenon at a particular time (Saunders et al. 2009). A survey strategy like ours is commonly used with master theses. Nonetheless it is a limitation because we cannot state that our results will apply forever, they are only applicable for the timeframe of the research. This problem made it difficult to state whether Brand Positioning capabilities could be strategic capabilities. The definition of a strategic capability includes that it is withholding over time. Even so, it was interesting to see if our results would show an indication on a specific Brand Positioning capability being a strategic one.

6.6.2 Validity

Validity comes down to if questions measure what they are supposed to. There are four types of validity one has to account for. The first aspect is internal validity, which refers to the ability of the questionnaire to measure what it is intended. The next aspect concerns content validity, and relates to the different questions in the questionnaire providing adequate coverage of the investigative questions we want to shine a light upon. Predictive validity concerns with measures being able to make accurate predictions. The last aspect, construct validity, refers to measurements measuring the right constructs (Saunders et. Al 2009).

To achieve high validity one must work on creating good and understandable questions. This was done through pretesting and cooperation with our supervisor. The questionnaire was carefully designed, and had a clear layout. This work ensured that the respondents would not misinterpret the questionnaire, keeping the validity as high as possible. A pilot test was done in collaboration with the Lerøy Group, ensuring that there were no uncertainties when we sent out the final questionnaire.

Nonetheless we experienced some difficulties concerning the validity of our collected data. We had mortality problems in our survey. Respondents did not answer all questions given (Saunders et. Al 2009). The open and economical questions were problematic. This might have been due to companies finding the survey too time consuming, difficult, or too sensitive. In turn this led to difficulties with parts of our analyses concerning the last research question. Even though we managed to create a significant regression model at a 10% level with one relevant dependent variable, more data would have allowed us to show for a more powerful model and more significant results. The regression model used in this paper can therefore be described as tentative rather than definite.

Furthermore the results found could be due to unforeseen variables not tested for in our research. This is a fact that we have to be aware of. We cannot state that our results state exactly how it is within the researched industry. Our results are rather indications on how the reality is. The measurements on Brand Positioning capabilities only tell us how companies look at their Brand Positioning practices; it does not tell the truth about how practicalities are within each company. These data do not show if respondents possess theoretical knowledge on the different Brand Positioning aspects. Measuring practices and knowledge within Brand Positioning capabilities could have been stronger with a more qualitative approach.

6.6.3 Representativeness of the results

According to Saunders et al. (2009) generalizability is also known as external validity. If the findings in this research are representative, they can be applicable to other settings. Since our research involves 93 companies out of the 600 in the industry the results could be applicable to this specific industry. However, a 15.5% response rate in an extremely diverse and heterogenic industry in terms of size, age, and type of market does not give us the opportunity to jump to conclusions. A larger number of respondents and data could lead to

different results and more explanation power in the different variables we tested for, as well as better external validity.

Due to the relatively few respondents we chose not to include different variables' interaction effects on each other. The main problem lies with less data than optimal on companies' economy. Interaction effects would have allowed us to see how being good at two or more Brand Positioning capabilities affected the companies economy. We also experienced some multicollinearity problems in our regression model, which would require a better dataset to avoid completely.

We believe that the answering companies in general are the ones who actually values and believes in Brand Positioning work - the big professional players in the industry. The smaller less experienced players might feel that they have little to contribute to these types of surveys. This is reflected by the mean age and size of companies in our sample, 19.09 years and 51 employees. Our research is therefore more applicable for the companies that show interest in the Brand Positioning topic, than those who do not.

6.6.4 Research Design

The majority of our survey is quantitative, which leaves little room for respondents to express their own views on certain aspects of the topic. The open questions in the survey however, do show that only a few chose to exploit the opportunity to express freely on Brand Positioning Aspects. The quantitative nature of our thesis is mainly because the time and resources we had available to conduct the research.

6.7 Further Research

The results show a lot of indications on what parts of Brand Positioning companies within the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry are good at. It would be interesting to see if these results were applicable also at a later point in time, making a longitudinal research study.

The industry's strong Information Collection capability has been discussed in previous chapters. The reason for the Fishing and Aqua Culture industry's strength in this area are just assumptions. It is the same with the industry's general weak practices with Implementation. Further research could be done to shine a light on these subjects.

The difference between B2B and B2C companies' practices is also a topic to investigate further. Why do B2C companies view themselves as better at Brand Positioning, and is this the case in other industries as well? Our results also show that company size matter in relation to Brand Positioning Practices. We can only state that our data show a difference, not why this is a reality within the industry.

Further research on the effects of following Normative Brand Positioning theory should be done. Our research shows an indication that defining a Brand's Position results in a positive outcome. A bigger research sample could give higher significant variables, and might verify this finding as well as proving the effects of the other aspects of Brand Positioning.

Research with a higher response rate within the industry could help in making more representative results. If we want to test the robustness of our results we need to expose them to other settings, through a follow-up study, with preferably more respondents and more complete answers (Saunders et al. 2009). Investigating the results further with qualitative research through in depth interviews could also be a strategy to make the results more satisfactory and valid. Qualitative research enables respondents to give a more correct view on certain aspects that we only included as quantitative questions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Questionnaire



This research focuses on the reputation and branding of companies in Norway. The purpose of the research is to help ensure that companies can be even better in this area. Please answer all questions, even when you are not sure what to answer. The assumptions are also interesting for us. The results will only be reported in a general matter, and results for individual firms will not be reported. No company names will be mentioned in the report.

In this study, you should start with the key brand of the company. This may be the name of the company itself or the name of a product the company sells. Which brands are most important to you to the customers? Put a cross.

A Company Brand

A Product Brand

For what type of customers do you mainly use this brand? Put a cross.

Business Customers

Consumers

How do you define the concept of Brand Positioning?

Have you defined a position for the brand in question?

Yes

No

Does your company have a separate document that describes the brand's positioning?

Yes

No

How would you describe the market as the brand in question competes in? (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Strongly Agree)
There are many tough competitors in our market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The competition is tougher in our market than in many other markets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is frequent changes in our market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competition in our market is stable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are always things happening in the market which means we often have to make changes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How well do you know the meaning of the terms below? (1 = do not know at all, 7 = know very well)

	1 (Do not know at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Know very well)
Segmentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Line Extension	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Critical Brand Mass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand Equity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shadow Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positioning Balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Approximately how large was the turnover for the Brand in question last year?

Approximately how large the surplus before tax?

Approximately how much have sales changed (increased / decreased) over the past two years in%?

Age

Gender

Woman

Man

What is your educational background?

- Primary School
- High School
- College
- College / University in economics, without marketing in the curriculum
- College / University in economics, with marketing in the curriculum
- College / University in other fields than economics
- Other (Specify):

Do you have management responsibilities within the company?

Yes

No

Area of Responsibility

- Sales
- Market
- Sales and Market
- Other (Specify):

How many years have you worked within this area?

How many employees are there in your company?

When was the particular brand launched?

Mainly, in what part of the industry is the brand?

- Fisheries
- Aqua Culture
- Processing
- Trading
- Feed Production
- Other (Specify):

Approximately what percentage of sales goes to export?

Note: We need the name of your company in order to find official financial data from the Brønnøysund Register. No names are mentioned in the final report. All who enter the email address will receive a short version of the report showing the strengths and weaknesses of Brand Positioning among Norwegian companies.

Name of the Company

E-Mail

Thank you for the participation!

Appendix 2: Cover Letter

Hi!

We are two Master's students at the Norwegian School of Economics who writes our master thesis about the Norwegian Fishing and Aqua Culture industry. The thesis is in collaboration with The Norwegian Fishing- and Aqua Culture Federation and Professor Magne Supphellen at NHH. The report will be part of a larger research project about how marketing and branding works in practice in the Norwegian sector.

This type of research can be useful for the industry since it will reveal today's practices, and whether it will be beneficial to change. The results from the research will be reported to FHL, making it available to all their members. This gives companies the opportunity to evaluate and compare the results against their own practices. It is desirable that at least two people working with marketing responsibilities in the company take their time to answer this questionnaire. The questionnaire can be found here:

https://nhh.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8IADTVEaN0kpImE

In the questionnaire we ask for the company name, and it is voluntary to answer this question. The information will be treated confidentially and will not be published. It will only be used for statistical purposes.

The entire survey will take approximately 15 minutes to answer.

Regards,

Øystein Strand Teslo and Peder Onsøyen

Norwegian School of Economics