Brand driven innovation: fulfilling brand promise through new product development.

a framework for translating brand identity into successful product innovations

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1. Executive summary

In management literature and business practice, both branding and product innovation are widely discussed. Both are assigned the role of differentiator: they can create sustainable competitive advantage for the company, by differentiating the product offering from that of the competition. This research aims to connect the body of knowledge of branding to that of product innovation.

Branding is often discussed in terms of brand identity. Although the concept of brand identity has different meanings throughout literature, a recurring theme is that of the brand promise: the brand identity implies a promise to the consumer. This promise—sometimes referred to as the brand contract—leads the consumer to expect a certain behaviour from the service or product.

Product innovation is a powerful tool for keeping the company aligned with changing conditions. Companies develop new products to meet shifting consumer demands, to capitalise on new technologies and to keep ahead of competition. Being innovative is seen as the key success factor in modern day businesses.

Recently, the concepts of branding and product innovation have been converging.

Traditional branding tools like advertising—especially in above the line media—have become more expensive and less effective. Consumers are becoming more suspicious of brand promise, and are gearing more toward the fulfilment of this promise. Brand managers are looking for alternative ways to position their brands in the minds of the prospective consumer. Within this context, the product is gaining ground as significant brand touchpoint. The product can be a clear presence in retail environments, thus communicating the brand’s aesthetical identity in an effective manner. But more interestingly, in its interaction with the consumer during use, the product has the potential to actually fulfil the brand’s promise.

If this potential were to be unleashed, a brand–product synergy would occur, both inside and outside the company. The credibility and thus the equity of the brand would increase: the brand’s promise would be fulfilled. And the chance for success of the product innovation would increase: it would directly benefit from the brand’s ability to position the product emotionally and create preference in the consumer’s mind. For the consumer, the interaction with the product–brand would be more satisfying. An attractive promise is made and kept, while the brand’s identity is experienced over time through interaction with the product.

This research sets out to come to grips with this aspect of the brand–product relationship. It is aimed at finding a method for using brand identity as input for product innovation. The problem definition is as follows:

*How can brand identity and product innovation work in synergy so that new products will fulfil the brand’s promise?*

The research objective is to develop a useable tool for both brand managers and innovation managers in medium sized product companies. This tool should help create synergy between the two disciplines. This research proposal contains a preliminary literature study, a conceptual model in which the brand–product construct is explained, and a methodology section, proposing a best–practice case–study approach.
2. Introduction

This research proposal was written as the initial phase of a dissertation, final project of the Masters in Design Management programme, conducted by the author at Inholland University / Nijenrode University, the Netherlands. The author is coached by moderator Jos van der Zwaal of Takepart. The research proposal sets out to present a problem definition in the field of Design Management, that merits research, and is backed by an initial literature study. The problem that is presented in this research proposal concerns the relationship between brands and product innovation.

It is well known that brands and product innovation play a vital role in the business of consumer product manufacturing. Their respective roles in creating sustainable differentiation advantages for the company have been studied extensively. Recently, the two fields have been converging: it appears that the discipline of branding can no longer ignore the product as major brand touchpoint (Davis and Dunn, 2002), while the discipline of product innovation has to allow the brand to become one of its driving forces. Although this development is clearly present, not a lot of writing has been done on the subject yet. Although there are some case studies on the subject (Zaccai and Heppner, 2002; Bhat and Bowonder 2001, Hardy et al, 2002), little theory or grounded research can be found. This is why the author feels challenged to unravel at least a corner of this fascinating subject. This proposal will explain in further detail the definition of the research problem, the focus of the proposed research, and the methodology by which the research will take place.

Throughout this research proposal, the term ‘product innovation’ is used. The author has chosen this term deliberately to stress the focus on intensive product development programs incorporating new technologies, new product functionality, new product interaction, and/or new value networks. To some, the term ‘new product development’ will sufficiently cover this meaning. These readers may substitute the term ‘product innovation’ with ‘new product development’ at their will.
3. Problem definition:

3.1 Problem field

The problem field this research wishes to address is the point where the disciplines of branding and product innovation touch. Brand identities have to be positioned in the minds of the consumer (Aaker, D., 1996; Kapferer, 1992). Traditionally, brands have used external means like above and below the line media to accomplish this goal. Since a few years, a paradigm shift towards a more internal view of branding can be discerned. Not only has internal branding become a significant part of the brand’s domain (Ind, 2001), brand managers also start to realise that the product is one of the most influential brand touch points (Davis and Dunn, 2002). The product can be a clear presence in retail environments, thus communicating the brand’s aesthetical identity in an effective manner. But more interestingly, in its interaction with the consumer during use, the product has the potential to actually fulfil the brand’s promise.

In a parallel line of reasoning, product innovation is mainly driven by external input. Most New Product Development projects are initiated by the Marketing department (Borja de Mozota, 2003a), which could be seen as an internal source. The author argues however that what this internal source presents to the product innovation department are external drivers: new technologies, competitor strategies, consumer preferences and trends. According to the author, what is missing in the list of innovation drivers is brand identity. If new product innovation wants to play a role in fulfilling the brand’s promise, and if new products want to profit from the differentiating power of the brand, product innovation will have to be prepared to look inside, at the brand, for guidance.

Michael Porter already knew in 1985 that integration of disciplines creates competitive value (Porter 1985, cited by Borja de Morzota, 2003a). Other sources (Montague, 1999; Kapferer, 1992, 2004; Karjalainen, 2004) also suggest that integrating the efforts of branding and product innovation is very beneficial for the corporation. The author feels that these benefits are sufficiently discussed and treats them as given. (This is not to say that the field of design management would not benefit from an in–depth study of the benefits of brand driven innovation. Within the scope of this research however, a different focus on the problem field will be leading). This dissertation will focus on the’ how’ part of the problem field. As such, the problem the author wishes to research is a methodological one.

Concluding: The relationship between brands and product innovation is problematic. Current developments suggest that both disciplines depend heavily on each other, while good tools to manage this interdependency are lacking. It appears that the benefit of close cooperation is clear, or at least intuitively understood. It is especially the methodological aspects of the problem field that remain –until now– unclear.

3.2 Problem definition

The problem definition the author arrived at, through an initial literature study and through choices regarding research focus, reads as follows:

How can brand identity and product innovation work in synergy so that new products will fulfil the brand’s promise?
4. the conceptual model:
A conceptual model has been drawn, to clarify the forces that occur within the problem area. The model consists of two parts. Situation one (figure 1) represents the undesirable situation where the disciplines of branding and new product development are separated, both in- and externally. All input comes from outside of the corporation all output goes to outside of the corporation. The consumer experiences inconsistency between product (physical and functional materialisation) and brand (emotional identity and promise). Situation two (Figure 2) represents the desirable situation: the brand is connected to the product, both in- and externally. Input comes from outside and inside of the corporation. Output goes to inside and outside of the corporation. The consumer experiences consistency between product (physical and functional aspects) and brand (emotional aspects). The product and brand benefit from each other mutually.

Figure 1: conceptual model situation one: undesirable

Figure 2: conceptual model situation two: desirable
5. Research questions

1. What is brand identity and promise and how are they communicated to the consumer?

2. What is the role of product innovation in branding and what are current trends regarding this role?

3. What are best practices in brand driven product innovation?

6. Aims and objectives

6.1 Research objectives

The objective of this research is twofold:

1. To help brand managers define their brand’s identity in such a way that product developers and designers can use it as input for product innovation. It is likely that traditional ways of defining brand identity are too explicitly geared towards communicating this identity externally. It is expected that for product designers to be able to use brand identity, this identity should be constructed along a different set of guidelines. A desirable outcome of the proposed research would be such a set of guidelines.

2. To help product developers and designers use this brand identity to develop products that fulfil the brand’s promise. It is expected that the use of brand promise as input for a product development process is new to many product designers. They lack a tool with which to transform brand identity into a useable product development driver. A desirable outcome of the proposed research would be such a tool.

The set of guidelines and the tool combined form the intended outcome of this research, and they will be referred to in the future as ‘the framework for brand driven innovation’.

6.2 Scope

The outcome of this research is meant to benefit small and medium sized enterprises in the durable consumer goods market, because he feels this is an area that is relatively underdeveloped in branding and innovation discussions. Another reason to focus on SME’s is that the author’s clients are mainly from this area.

The main focus will be on larger SME companies (> 300 employees). The reason for this is that in smaller companies, the internal and external separation between product and brand, as discussed in the conceptual model in chapter 4, has not yet occurred: the founder/owner is often the embodiment of both brand and product quality (Grinten and van der Zwaal, 2004)

However, large multinational companies might also benefit from this study. What makes these companies different from large SME’s in this context is that they are often very well equipped to link brand and product: they have the resources and critical mass to organise this very well. One methodological approach might be to look at these multinationals, learn from them, and translate the acquired knowledge to a useable format for large SME’s. The relationship between brand and product in different size companies is shown in figure 3.
Besides a focus regarding company size, the author will focus on consumer product innovation rather than service or business innovation, because of the direct applicability in his profession.

A further focus will be on functional innovation and the behavioural interaction of the product with the user (Norman, 2004), as opposed to a more aesthetic and semantic focus where product semantics are related to brand identity, (Karjalainen, 2004, Stompff, 2003).

To conclude, with regards to brand identity, the author chooses the Brand Identity Prism as a working model. (Kapferer, 1992, 2004) This prism is represented in figure 4 in chapter 8.

Figure 3: the relationship between brand and product in different companies of different size.
7. Methodology

Regarding methodology, the proposed line of reasoning is that of the Grounded Theory Methodology developed by the two sociologists (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; cited by Amber and Styles, 1997). This method is described as "... a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (ibid.). "In this method a number of cases are examined using the same unit of analysis, Such a multiple case design follows a replication logic, whereby each case is analogous to a single experiment. Achieving similar results for each case suggests replication, akin to achieving similar results over a number of experiments (Yin, 1994; cited by Amber and Styles, 1997). Simply put, the method is aimed at finding underlying regularities in a set of different cases. The reason for choosing this method at this point is the lack of theory on the subject and the supposed need for hands-on working tools. The proposed primary research will correspondingly focus on studying cases where products have been developed based on brand identity. The goal is to find similarities in underlying methodology, and to bundle these similarities into a the framework for brand driven innovation (see 6.1 research objectives).

7.1 secondary research

The secondary research will study the discourse on brand identity, traditional product innovation drivers, the role of product innovation in branding and how it’s shifting, and finally, the discourse on brand extensions. The latter being very close to the subject matter, since brand extensions are in essence a product innovation based on an existing brand identity. They can even be considered different fulfilments of the same promise (Kapferer, 2004). Brand extensions and the extensive discussion and theory surrounding them will provide fertile ground for developing a tool for brand driven innovation, so the author believes.

7.2 primary research

The primary research will start by interviewing people in the field who have working experience in the subject, and are relatively easy to reach. The goal of this exercise is

1. to get a quick feel for necessary further literature research
2. to get an idea of possible cases to study
3. to find out what methods or frameworks already exist.

The following persons may be contacted shortly or have already been contacted:

• Erik Jan Hultink, professor at the Delft University of Technology. Specializes in strategic product design and branding, is devoting a special issue of the Journal of Product Innovation Management on the relationship between branding and product development.
• Louk de Sévaux, managing director, Qua associates. Qua is specialized in translating brand identities into branded environments and has developed a working method for this.
• Fedde Talsma, design director, Volvo cars. Has designed the latest generation Volvo’s, based on a strict brand identity programme.
• Jos Oberdorf, managing partner, NPK industrial design. Manages one of Holland’s leading industrial design agencies and has lectured on brand identity as driver for innovation programmes.
• Guido Stompff, product designer, Océ Technologies. Has written on brand based product design.
• Jan Hoekstra, head of design, Royal van Kempen & Begeer. Has developed a new line of tableware based on the new Royal VKB brand.
• Alexander Koene, brand and innovation specialist, de Positioneringsgroep. Lectures and writes on the innovation imperative for brands.

After this initial round of interviews, a set of three or four case studies will be executed. The case studies will be developed by holding a personal interview with the people involved, backed up by the use of questionnaires. At this point in time, the author does not have a clear picture of which companies to use for the case studies. The following can be considered as initial ideas:

• Although the study is aimed at SME’s, the author is considering the option doing the case studies at large multinational companies. The rationale behind this is that in these companies the chances of finding usable working tools and/or methods is larger. The challenge of this approach would be to translate the findings to the SME situation. Examples to approach for case studies are Procter & Gamble, known for rigorous brand management and innovation programs; Apple computer, known for seamless integration of brand and product offerings; BMW or Volvo, both known for products that fulfil the brand’s promise in great detail, and for strong brand extensions.
• A good subject for the case studies could also be those product design agencies that regularly and with success use the clients brand identity as input for product innovation projects. Ideo is of course a famous example, but also Fitch–worldwide and Designworks are good examples.
8. A preliminary review of the relevant literature:
This research proposal contains a preliminary discussion of the relevant literature. A complete thematic and critical literature appraisal will be presented in the final dissertation report.

The background for the research topic is discussed in two discourses: that of brand management and that of innovation management.

The literature the author discusses here is organised according to the research questions. They provide the framework for both primary and secondary research.

8.1 What is brand identity and promise and how are they communicated to the consumer?
What exactly is the essence of a brand? Literature research shows that there are different views on this. Some call it the brand identity. The concept of brand identity started relatively recent in Europe (Kapferer 1986; cited by Guzman, 2005). Kapferer defines brand identity by describing the identity prism (figure 4).

The brand identity prism represents the brand as having six sides. Each side represents a distinguishable aspect of the brand:
1. Physique: the physical aspects of the brand
2. Personality: the character of the brand
3. Culture: the set of values feeding the brand
4. Relationship: the mode of conduct of the brand
5. Customer reflection: the outward reflection of the customer the brand addresses
6. Self-image: the target’s internal mirror of the brand

The six sides are organised along a hexagon. The hexagon’s top part refers to those aspects of the brand which constitute the picture of the sender: physique and personality. The bottom part refers to those brand aspects representing the picture of the recipient: reflection and physique. The left half of the hexagon deals with externalisation of the brand’s identity (reflection, relationship and physique), while the right half deals with internalisation of the brand (self-image, culture and personality).
David Aaker (1996) defines brand identity as "a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organisational members". It is interesting to note in this context that in Aaker’s view, brand identity implies a direct promise to customers.

According to Chernatony (1999), identity “is about ethos, aims and values that present a sense of individuality differentiating the brand” (p. 165). From this point of view, the identity characterizes the brand, just like the identity of a person characterizes him or her. This identity differentiates the brand, suggesting that the presence of a brand identity influences the consumer’s choice. The brand is directly connected to the process of purchase and use. Thus, in the views of Kapferer, Aaker, and Chernatony, brand identity can be considered to be the core of the brand upon which all other elements are built (associations, attributes, benefits, promises). All three views imply that the brand in its essence, makes a promise to the prospective customer. The author considers this brand promise a cornerstone of his research: it is this promise that should be fulfilled. And it might be fulfilled through product innovation.

There are different views however:

Jennifer Aaker has argued that the term brand personality reflects the essence of the brand (Aaker, J. 1997). She defines five personality dimensions along which a brand can be defined. The personality dimensions are: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. Kapferer and Azoulay (2003) however, claim that brand personality is part of the brand’s identity, and as such, a derivative of the essence of the brand, which should not be confused with the essence itself.

Ellwood (2000) uses the term brand DNA for the core of the brand. From this DNA stem the brand theme, the brand name and the brand identity, in that order. In this school of thought, the term identity is used as representing the outward appearance of the brand. Borja de Morzota (2003b) also adheres to this school. She sees brand identity as “the outward manifestation of the essence of the corporate, product or service brand or brand environment”. In her view, brand personality is part of this identity system. It is interesting to note however that apparently, also in Borja de Morzota’s definition, there is a brand essence preceding her definition of identity.

My research is concerned with this essence, whether it’s called brand DNA or brand identity. For further reference, the author will stick to Kapferer’s view and use the term brand identity, and use the corresponding brand identity pyramid as a working model.

What are means for a brand to communicate this identity?
The most comprehensive way to describe how brands bring their identity to the consumer is the Brand Touchpoint Wheel (Davis and Dunn, 2002). Figure 5 represents this touchpoint wheel. Although the model is very useful, the author modestly argues that from a product branding point of view it seems rather concise. As can be seen in figure 5, the product is one little cell in the post purchase experience segment of the touchpoint wheel. But it is clear that the product plays a huge role as brand touchpoint in all three segments of the wheel. Maybe not in its physical form, but surely present in pre-purchase (product based advertising, word of mouth based on product quality and interaction), purchase (trying the
product in the store, being attracted by it, comparing it to other products) and post purchase (the product’s aesthetics, the interaction with the product, servicing the product etc.). For the sake of this research, it will certainly be useful to extend the brand touchpoint wheel to accommodate a more product oriented approach to branding. This effort will not be part of the current research proposal.

Figure 5: the brand touchpoint wheel.

8.2. What is the role of product innovation in branding and what are current trends regarding this role?

For a long time, the brand was treated as being part of the product. (Urde 1999; cited by Guzman, 2005). The product was the hero of the brand’s story and its technical (rational) performance was the key element of the advertising and marketing (Ellwood, 2000). As technology became commoditised, it became harder and harder for the consumer to distinguish between brands, and for brands to position themselves based on technology. Lee Clow, chairman and Chief Creative Officer of TBWA is quoted saying “people bought Nike not because of what they made but because of who they were” (Clifton and Maughan, 2000; cited by Webster, 2003). A different development was the post-war emergence of the service industry, where the product delivered was no longer tangible.

As such, the focus shifted to the brand itself, which encompasses much more than just the product (Ambler and Styles, 1997). This more holistic approach defines a brand as “the promise of the bundles of attributes that someone buys and that provides satisfaction” (Ambler, 1992). Brands became abstract constructs existing separately from the product; the brand became a promise.

Interestingly, this shift from product to promise did not lead to differentiation on the shelf. Many product categories worked according to similar product propositions that lacked differentiation (Webster, 2003). At the turn of the twenty first century, branding has homogenized products rather than differentiated them. The Naomi Klein (2000) school of anti-brand sentiments is partly based on this phenomenon. But Klein also argues that brands need more and more advertising and marketing budget to sustain them. A spiral that
can’t be stopped, and that, according to Klein, leads to a cacophony of advertising. This cacophony has two downsides: one is that brands are no longer able to distinguish themselves from competition through advertising, and the other is that consumers become immune to the very brands that try to reach them. Add to this the rise of the internet, facilitating the consumer’s quest to look behind the cacophony for facts and figures, and compare products based on personal criteria.

The result is what Lewis and Bridger (2000, cited by Webster, 2003) have baptised the “new consumer”. The new consumer is independent, informed, and distrustful of anything that does not ring true. This consumer is turning away from the brand, and turning towards the product (Webster, 2003, Lewis and Bridger, 2000, Koene 2003). And brands realise this: the most powerful way for a brand to position itself in the mind of the consumer is the product itself (Koene, 2004, Kapferer, 2004). And thus, we have come full circle, with the product in a new lead role: not only does it need to perform (functionally, emotionally, and as a tool for self expression, Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000) but it also needs to support the brand. It makes the brand credible by delivering on its promise, and it captures the brand identity in a tangible form. As such brands have become two-legged value added systems, where brand and product need each other to be sustainable (Kapferer 2004).

Why do brands need to innovate, and why do they need product innovation? There is much agreement among scholars on the need for brands to innovate. Kapferer (1992, 2004) considers innovation a durable success factor for brands. It captures the mind of the prospective buyer by presenting “a real, strong expectation which had gone unheeded until then” (Kapferer 1992, 2004: 176). It keeps the brand interesting and fresh by renewing old products, it creates desire in saturated markets and it is a source of competitive advantage.

According to Larry Keeley of the Doblin group (2001), brand excellence comes principally from customer relevance. Relevance is the degree to which the brand has somehow managed to find a dimension of everyday life that some people care about deeply. This suggests that there is a reason for the brand’s promise to be delivered, and this reason lies in the wishes and demands of the consumer. From this point of view, the brand needs to innovate to keep its promise to the consumer.

Alexander Koene (2003) is firm in his belief that brands should innovate: “you’d better make sure you’re better than your competition, or become better fast…..otherwise you will become relatively worse and your company will eventually perish”(Koene 2003:8).

The author concludes that although much is written on why brands should innovate, it remains unclear how they should go about doing this.

What are innovation drivers?
Technology, Competition, and Consumer trends or needs are the traditional drivers for product innovation (Ambler, Styles, 1997). The author, surprisingly, has found no mention of brand as innovation driver, although Monty Montague (1999) comes close by introducing a model where brand and product are developed side by side, mutually driving each other.

8.3. What are best practices in brand driven product innovation?
In a case study of Indian watch manufacturer Titan Industries (Bhat, Bowonder, 2001), the experience of interweaving brand reputation, organisational and technological innovation is discussed. The authors stress that brand reputation and innovation influence each other in a virtuous cycle (somewhat comparable to that of Montague (1999). They also discuss how
brand reputation and innovation work together across the value chain (Porter, 1985; cited by Bhat, Bowonder, 2001).
A different case study discusses how brand and product development work together at Master Lock (Zaccai and Heppner 2002). In this case study, the development of reliable products is clearly seen as fulfilment of the brand promise. Also interesting is how innovation is seen as essential part of the brand identity: the brand is innovative in its essence, and therefore it innovates.
The author concludes that although existing case studies like this offer a great opportunity to see how innovation and branding are approached by real life companies, they don’t offer sufficient insight in underlying methodologies. They don’t lead to a useful generalisation concerning brand driven innovation. Therefore the author will consult primary sources to discover whether more to the point case study material is available (see paragraph 7.2).

Of a completely different nature is the approach called Comprehensive Brand Presentation (CBP) (Haynes, Lackman and Guskey, 1999). This approach links with Total Quality Management efforts to generate a quality improvement process. This process is aimed at what the firm says as well as what the firm does: it tries to minimize the discrepancy between the two. “The result should be that communications to and from the marketplace are reflected in the physical products and services delivered by the business”. (Haynes et al. 1999: 300) “With CBP, every exposure the customer has with that product, through either actual experience or messages received, reinforces the brand image that the company intends to achieve” (Haynes et al. 1999: 287). What’s very interesting about this method is:

a. that it is an actual method: it provides a complete and workable framework, and as such it is unique in this field, at least to the author’s current knowledge.
b. It provides a theoretical foundation for the concept of brand consistency: it tries to align the company’s identity with the image it chooses to portray and the image it actually portrays at the consumer. The authors are clear on the product’s role in this process, and as such, they support the notion that ‘the product should fulfil the brand promise’. The article offers a framework for the way the brand is presented to ensure a consistent image. However, the authors do not pay any special attention to the role of product innovation in this process.

**methods for brand and line extension that may be applied to brand driven innovation**

Line and brand extensions offer an interesting discourse with regard to the subject at hand. (see paragraph 7.1). Although the author has not yet intensely researched this topic, a few things are worth mentioning at this point. First some definitions: brand extensions involve the use of an established brand name to enter a new product category (Aaker and Keller, 1990; cited by Ambler and Styles 1997). Line extensions, in contrast, involve the use of an established brand name for a new offering in the same product category (Reddy et al., 1994; cited by Ambler and Styles 1997).

In their Journal of Product and Brand Management article Ambler and Styles (1997) mention the ‘fit’ between the brand and the extension. This concept of ‘fit’ is interesting: it describes how a certain brand (identity) matches with a certain product. It appears that if this match is absent, the new product is less successful (Sunde and Brodie, 1993; cited by Ambler and Styles 1997). But what exactly is this ‘fit’? What determines what kind of new products a brand can credibly match with? And if these determinants have been discovered, how can they put to use to actively generate matching new products for existing brands? These questions remain unanswered by Ambler and Styles (1997), although their article is of great use for gaining insight in the process of brand extension decisions.
9. Preliminary conclusion of the literature review:

at this stage, a few conclusions can be drawn:

a. The author is far from finished studying the relevant literature, but he is covering ground. His starting to get a feeling of the scope of ‘what’s out there’.

b. The subject of brand extensions merits much more research.

c. Due to the author’s background in product design, the subject matter was approached mostly from the brand angle: that’s where he needed to learn the most. This has resulted in an underdeveloped innovation angle. It is possible that much interesting material lies waiting in the product development discourse.

d. Of the leading thinkers in branding, Keller has somehow not entered the picture yet. The author realizes he is leaving a hiatus here, soon to be filled.

e. As has been mentioned before: it is clear that brands and product innovation need each other. The benefits of using product innovations to fulfil the brand’s promise are many. What literature has not answered yet is how companies should go about this process.

10. Action plan

- May 4: meeting with coordinator Jos van der Zwaal
- May 18: meeting with coordinator Jos van der Zwaal
- May 21: meeting with Schelte Beltman of Nijenrode and Aart Goud of Eurib
- May 30: hand in research proposal
- June 20: have had meetings with relevant specialists in the field
- June 30: finish literature study
- July 30: finish primary research methodology
- September 30: finish primary research
- October 15: finish data analysis
- November 30: hand in report

11. Resources

Although the author has some ambitious plans regarding his primary research, resources are not a significant problem and don’t need to be discussed here.

12. Constraints and contingencies

The major constraint with regard to this research proposal is the access to reliable and relevant cases. It is vital to have complete access to at least three but preferably four complete cases. This will involve talking with the brand manager and the innovation manager. It will cost time, and the company will have to be prepared to share possibly confidential information.

The author has realised this constraint and has taken the following precautions:

1. He will consult relevant specialists in the field in a very early stage, some even before the end of the secondary research. These meetings (see paragraph 7.2) will have priority over the remaining secondary research, and will in part be aimed at finding good cases to study.
2. At least one case can be studied at a client of the author’s, and involves a project the author was involved in. As such, this information is very accessible.
13. References

13.1 Articles:


13.2 Books:


14. Signatures

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