Exploring the 'nuts and bolts' of developing brand positioning: a case study evaluating the brand purpose and brand identity of a small hardware store in a competitive industry.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS   PAGE

Abstract

This research explores how brand purpose and brand identity contribute to the developing of brand positioning. This research will use a small hardware as a guide and reference for the research. The literature is what informs this study, it looks at three main themes, brand purpose, brand identity and brand positioning, in order to understand the complexities of positioning. The literature is also a guideline for research methodology. The research methodology uses a qualitative research design and compromises of questionnaires and interviews. The findings are then processed using a qualitative content analysis method. After key points are established they are concluded by referring back to the research problem and objectives.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The chosen field of specialisation is to research the branding and marketing strategies of a family owned business, Fastworld industries, with the aim of exploring and understanding the complexities of developing brand positioning. Brand purpose and brand identity will also be explored in terms of how it is integrated in developing a positioning strategy. The company's image will be analysed because of its partnership with Jacks Paints and hardware, which is an established chain of hardware franchise stores. The strategic partnership involves bearing the Jacks logo, Jacks Paint and Fastworld industries, and stocking some of their products. Fastworld industries also pays them a loyalty fee instead of a proper franchise fee and are allowed to keep full control of the company and are able to outsource cheaper suppliers and stock other products that are not from the Jacks Paint brand.

The significance of this study is that it will help to grasp a firm understanding of branding and marketing and understand thoroughly how the consumer mind works when it comes to perceptions relative to the company and its branding. It will also help me understand the complexities of developing brand building elements that aid in everyday business. This will help at every stage in achieving my honours in Strategic Brand Communication and also broaden the already attained foundation of knowledge from understanding different perspectives from different people of the same field.

1.2 Field of specialisation

Exploring the 'nuts and bolts' of developing brand positioning: a case study evaluating the brand purpose and brand identity of a small hardware store in a competitive industry.

1.3 Research problem

The research problem at hand is developing a better understanding of small hardware stores building strong brands within a competitive market, usually ruled by 'giants'. By using brand purpose and brand identity alongside with other theories and models as a theoretical framework, and using Jacks Paints and Fastworld industries

as a case study there can be a deeper and more profound understanding of developing successful positioning strategies. The research questions are:

- What is the role of brand purpose and brand identity in developing brand positioning?

- How can small businesses utilise brand positioning to develop strong, competitive and distinctive brands?

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To analyse and assess marketing and branding strategies that are currently being used and how effective they are.
- To understand the complexities of developing a brand positioning by taking the theories and models and apply it through real world application, using a small business as a case study.
- Identify how the partnership between the two companies interferes with their brand in terms of image perceptions with reference to the customers.
- To understand the role that brand identity plays in developing a brand positioning strategy.

1.5 Hypothesis

If there is a better internal understanding and implementation of the brands purpose, values and identity, then more effective and relevant strategies can be developed which will result into a stronger customer base.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Jacks paint and Fastworld industries use fairly traditional marketing and branding methods but their strategic alliance has been beneficial. The trending marketing and branding strategies open doors to opportunities that the company can benefit from, these opportunities can be identified through the use of brand building elements. One of the common themes for addressing the task of positioning the brand has emerged by the fact of the company not focusing on building an effective brand identity. This literature review will not only serve as a guideline for the research it will also help to answer the research questions and meet the research objectives.

The theoretical framework that will inform the study is Neil Borden's Marketing Mix model of the four P's with more emphasis on placement and the positive ways of positioning (Yoo, Donthu and Lee, 2000, p.198). Brand identity, brand leadership and brand equity models by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009) will also be discussed along with other relative branding building and positioning models (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009).

2.2 Positioning

The four P's are product, price, place and promotion. Product refers to the tangible attributes and the prices refers to the costing and mark up of the products or services (Yoo et al, 2000, p.198). Promotion entails the marketing activities to create awareness of the brand (Yoo et al, 2000, p.198). Place refers to the positioning of the brand and is the main theme of this study. Positioning along with methods to establish a good positioning strategy will be discussed throughout the study (Cant, Heerden, Ngambi, 2012).

Marketing plays a crucial role in a company's success, it involves using resources to communicate with the target market and position themselves in the mind of the consumer relative to their competitors in a positive way (Venter and Jansen vanRensburg, 2009). Brand strategies are long term goals and objectives to build on brands and develop them so that they are successful in attracting customers, creating a positive image relative to competitors and taking care of customer needs.

Brand building strategies are needed to establish a brand identity so that a loyal relationship between customers and the brand can be encouraged and that the value and benefits that are offered can be realised by the customers (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009).

In a business environment a brand can be seen as a tool that the company uses to promote its goods and services. Through the eyes of the customer a brand is the promise and delivery of the core essence of the company and should communicate its value through every contact point (Gallagher and Savard, 2009). Positioning is not specifically what strategists do with a product; it is what you do to the mind of the prospect. Positioning therefore can be seen as the position of the product in the mind of the consumer relative to its competitors (Ries & Trout, 2000).

According to Keller, Sternthal and Tybout (2002) there are three questions you need to ask about your brand as a guideline to positioning:

"Have we established a frame?"

This question is based on the assumption that brand positioning starts with establishing a frame of reference so that consumers are signalled the goal that they can expect from the brand. Identifying the proper frame is crucial because of the influences and dictates the types of relationships that will be used as points of difference and points of parity (Keller, Sternthal and Tybout, 2002).

"Are we leveraging our points of parity?"

This refers to the requirements that are needed in order to compete so that consumers view the brand as a formidable competitor. The brand should offer similar features and have similar attributes to competitors so that consumers can identify the basic value that the brand offers (Keller, Sternthal and Tybout, 2002).

"Are the points of difference compelling?"

This asks whether or not the differentiation elements of the brand are effective. Having unique, strong and favourable associations that differentiate the brands from the same frame of reference sets the foundation to successful and positive positioning. There are three types of brand differences that help to better target and position the message that the company or brand is trying to communicate to the

consumer. The first type of brand differences is brand performance associations and this refers to the satisfying of functional needs through services or products offered by the brand. The second and third brand differences are brand imagery associations and consumer insight associations (Keller, Sternthal and Tybout, 2002).

To develop an effective position means that after establishing a frame of reference, points of parity and differentiation points there should be a form of cohesion internally so that there is consistency between these points at any given time. These points should also not contradict each other. Over time a brand should always be current with new trends and still catering to the change in consumers' needs over time (Keller, Sternthal and Tybout, 2002).

Brand positioning sets the path or direction for the brands marketing activities and programmes (Ries and Trout, 2000). It dictates what should be done and what should not so that a controlled and influenced image is crafted and communicated. Brand positioning also involves and relies on key associations of other brands in the mind of the consumer so that there can be an assessment by the consumer with reference to points of parity and points of difference (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). These key associations of other brands are needed so that the brand can identify how it differentiates and proves better in the mind of the consumer for competitive superiority (Keller et al, 2002).

Keller and Lehmann (2006) state that along with selecting tangible product attribute levels for positioning there should be brand intangibles and the role of corporate images and reputation that are of the same importance that should be working in correspondence with each other. Brand intangibles refer to the aspects of brand image that do not have physical, tangible or concrete benefits (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Marketers use brand intangibles as a means of differentiating and adding value to the products so it aids in communicating the products in an understanding way and associates the products with the image of the brand (Ries and Trout, 2000). There are different types of brand intangible associations that marketers can exploit. These brand associations are actual or aspiration user imagery, purchase and consumption imagery and history, heritage and experiences (Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

Integrated brand contact audit is also essential in positioning, by planning and managing contact points to carry out the brand promise and effectively relay the message of the brand for a successful positioning of the brand.

Consumers need to experience a streamlined brand experience from the brand through all of its contact points. A contact point is any form of communication from the brand to the consumer (Enslin, 2011).The contact point inventory of the hardware store is a range of social media networks, newspaper advertisements, bus shelters and sales representatives. These contacts points influence the image and positioning of the brand throughout the whole consumer contact journey (Audra, 2014). Brand contact cohesion is achieved through effective brand contact management, cohesion refers to the influence the contact point has and how long it lasts (Enslin, 2011). The role of the brand identity system in creating brand contact cohesion is that the brand identity system clearly maps out the core value and essence of the brand so that brand leaders can communicate the core values, essence and extended brand identity through the contact points so there is a clear understanding of the brand for the customers (Enslin, 2011).

Enslin (2011) argues that the Integrated Brand Contact Management (IBCM) model is a guide that should be followed in order to maintain effective and efficient contact points. The IBCM model consists of five points: 1) Consumer- centric approach, 2) Brand identity, 3) Innovation led, 4) Sustainable and 5) Promises and delivers real value (Enslin, 2011).

The consumer journey unfolded consists of actions, motivations, questions and obstacles (Audra, 2014). Actions refer to reading, taking down details, taking pictures, enquiring or researching. Motivation is required from the contact points to enforce and encourage the consumer to further engage with the brand. Questions refer to the enquiries that consumers have for the brand or company. The final element of the consumer journey is the obstacles that consumers will face, from communication mistakes or performance of products and services.

The hardware stores brand contact points should also be managed in order to deliver a streamline brand experience at every point of contact. This management needs to be done in order for the hardware store to ensure cohesion and that it projects a positive image and effectively delivers the identity of the branded store, for

positioning, through its contact points. The four layers of brand contact management according to Enslin (2011) are:

- Brand contact inventory: this is a list of all the hardware stores contact points. This should be done to identify weak and effective contact points of the brand.

- Brand contact audit: this is an audit of the hardware stores contact points to prioritise and rank them according to their influence. "It's usually measured through frequency of contact, impact of contact and, first and last moments of contact".

- Contact management vehicle: the contact management vehicle can be seen as support or a guide that is created to direct the brands key contact fields of consumer interaction with the brand (Enslin, 2011).

- Implementation and contact integration: "here the contact management vehicles are activated and an organisation wide brand building philosophy is encouraged. Management vehicles are activated to achieve brand contact integration and to ensure that the brand promise is delivered at every point of contact".

The brand contact points of the hardware store need to be creatively designed and well thought out. Therefore a Brand Contact Council is established within the company to always manage the contact points are of a certain quality and standard (Enslin, 2011). An organisation or company that aspires to be a brand leader should recognise the importance of brand building and the need for a brand contact council to achieve organisation wide brand contact integration (Enslin, 2011).

These different definitions and interpretations of brand positioning prove the immense amount of research and development that is initially required to formulate a positioning strategy and implement it. The implementation of the positioning strategy will occur through the brands different contact points therefore contact points need to be planned and managed to get an overall successful positioning. Brand positioning is not a strategy that can be implemented without a clear understanding of what the brand offers, what its points of parity are and what differentiates it. These points need to be researched, leveraged and persuasive in order for effective positioning to take place. This is where brand purpose and brand identity fits in, to establish a frame of reference and develop an identity for direction.

2.3 Brand Purpose

Neumeier (2003) elaborates on the five disciplines of brand building which consist of differentiation, collaboration, innovation, validation and cultivation. Differentiation and collaboration are the disciplines that explain focus alongside positioning and collaboration that explains how collaborative networking is not simple. Brand purpose is to know who you are, what you do and why matters. By answering these three questions a sense of purpose can be established (Neumeier, 2003). This also helps creates a focus in which you can use to differentiate your brand. The purpose of a brand can extend to however people perceive it, and how others perceive your brand is what really matters (Neumeier, 2003). By encouraging a brand purpose you encourage further development of identity to answer who you and what exactly do you do or offer. Why it matters is what feeds into positioning so that it can be used to gain a competitive advantage (Neumeier, 2003).

Collaboration can be used to further explain the partnership of Jacks Paint and Fastworld industries. Collaboration can be interpreted with linking your brand to other networks to help grow your brand or collaboration can be fostered through a partnership of two brands that share benefits to create a unique all in one type of offering (Neumeier, 2003).

According to Buzzell and Ortmeyer (1995, p.86), a channel partnership is "an ongoing relationship between a retailer and an independent supplier in which the parties agree on objectives, policies, and procedures for ordering and physical distribution of the supplier's products". The channel partnership that exists between Jacks Paint and hardware and Fastworld industries is a strategic partnership where the retailer which is Fastworld industries and the supplier Jacks Paint and hardware can integrate their offerings and produce an efficient, effective and value adding experience to the customers. The benefits of Jacks having to brand a store with their logo brings more recognition and awareness which means more customers and ultimately more sales. At the same time the small hardware store also benefits from using the Jacks trading name in order to get discounted and competitive prices like the Jacks Paint franchises do on the products that they offer.

Brand confusion is a major threat; not branding your company in the correct way could scare off potential customers due to mental strain and confusion on what the

company is and what they offer (Buzzell and Ortmeyer, 1995, p.86-87). Customers should recognise advertisements and relate them to a brand already positioned in their mind, if there is confusion due to branding then customers can be lost to competitors (Buzzell and Ortmeyer, 1995, p.86). Factors such as colour schemes, logo's and symbols help customers position and differentiate between brands. The partnership of Jacks Paints and Lock Nut Bolt industries on one hardware store may have still retained existing customers that have been around before the partnership therefore they are still loyal to the Lock Nut Bolt industries brand and new customers that have been attracted because of them being loyal to the Jacks Paint brand but there may be brand confusion. This could be part of the problem that the hardware store has in terms of sales, because some potentially new customers don't want to associate themselves with the confusion (Poiesz T and Verhallen T, 1989).

This explains the complexities of a brand partnership, its advantages as well as its disadvantages. It also creates a guideline as what to do and what not to do, while at the same time showing the relationship between brand purpose and brand identity.

An established way to avoid any form of brand confusion or product confusion is to create a brand identity and structure effective brand architecture. A brand identity and brand architecture help organise a detailed map of the company's identity and brand portfolio in order to direct and guide the positioning process (Aaker, D and Joachimsthaler, E, 2009, p.43,134).

2.4 Brand Identity

The brand identity is an incremental factor in brand building; it's how consumers identify the brand and how they rank it relative to other brand associations (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Brand identity sets the foundation for the brand to position itself and it creates the image of the brand that consumers refer to or associate with negative or positive perceptions. The elements of brand identity such as the extended identity, core identity and brand essence together with other tangible and intangible attributes of the brand, these elements must work cohesively to give the brand a unique identity (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Brand identity can also be seen as a way to resonate with customers, differentiate the brand from competitors and project how the brand is going to add value and what the company will do over time (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.43 - 45).

By using the Brand Identity Planning Model developed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009) the development of a brand identity would entail three categories. The first being a strategic analysis, the second is the brand identity system and last is the brand identity implementation system. The hardware store can start a strategic brand analysis to understand the customers and competitors in their market and their own brand.

The brand identity system involves the brands potential twelve elements, from product scope and organisational attributes to brand personality and visual imagery, into four categories that are the brand as a product, the brand as an organisation, the brand as a person and the brand as a symbol (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.43). Apart from these four categories the brand identity structure includes a core identity, extended identity and a brand essence which sets the foundation for positioning and should be compulsory for the hardware to establish (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.43). The core identity is established to create a focus for both the customer and the organisation. The extended identity is other elements of the brand that are not included in the core focus. The brand essence binds the core identity elements together and should resonate with customers while driving the value proposition, provide differentiation against competitors and it should be energising and captivating to inspire employees of the organisation (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.45).

The value proposition within the brand identity system relates and stresses more on how the brand delivers value and how the brand is positioned or perceived by consumers. The value proposition consists of functional benefits, emotional benefits and self-expressive benefits (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.49 - 50). These benefits relative to a hardware store can be applied and approached through different methods and examples. Functional benefits can be seen in the form of the power tools for sale that perform a function. Emotional benefits can be present through offering trusted name brands that were used by older generations and bring back fond memories that the consumer had shared with older generations (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.49). If the hardware store brand proves its value to the consumer then a positive image is created through adding value to the consumers experience with the brand. The brand identity planning model also maps out the

brand positioning and implementation system as the final step in pursuing a well structured and unique brand identity (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.41).

The brand identity implementation system is the final phase in the brand identity planning model. In this phase the brand identity is integrated into all the brands contact points so that the positioning of the brand can take place and the value proposition of the brand can be communicated to customers through the development and measurement of brand-building programs (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.41 - 42). Brand identity elaboration is also conducted in this phase to add richness, texture and clarity to the brand identity. This is where the positioning of the hardware store's identity is executed and it should position the brand in a positive way in the mind of the consumer relative to its competitors. Further brand building programs are developed and executed through the brands contact points. The final step in this phase is tracking the effectiveness and efficiency of the brand building efforts and the results can be interpreted through the management of the brand's equity (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2009, p.42).

Due to the many different products, brands and services that the hardware store offers it is easy for both employees and customers to get confused from the brands portfolio complexities. From these complexities there needs to be structured order, brand architecture is a structuring tool that can be used to eradicate confusion (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009, p.134) state that "Brand architecture is an organising structure of the different brand portfolios that specifies the brand roles and the relationships among brands and different product-market brand contexts".

According to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009, p. 134–145) Brand architecture consists of five dimensions:

- The Brand portfolio: this includes all the brands and subbrands that are attached to product-market offerings.
- Portfolio roles: this identifies the different roles of brands and allows a more systemic overview of how they relate to each other.
- Product-market context roles: these are product-market context roles that work together to define a specific offering.

- Brand portfolio structure: this is to identify the best possible way to structure the brands in the portfolio that have complex relationships. This is crucial so that there is clarity and synergy of all brands.
- Portfolio graphics: this is the patterns of visual representations for brands and contexts.

Compiling the portfolio brands into structured brand architecture outlines the problems and clears the path for direction. The objectives of brand architecture prove to be immensely needed in all fields of business to acquire positive relatable positioning and embody a sense of brand leadership (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000).

According to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009, p. 152-156) There are six objectives of brand architecture:

- Create effective and powerful brands: create strong brands that resonate with customers and differentiate themselves from competitors while still captivating customer appeal at the same time.
- Allocate brand-building resources: identifying which brands need certain resources and distributing them in a way in which brands will not be starved of resources.
- Create synergy: a well structured architecture should encourage and result in synergy between the different elements of a brands portfolio. Synergising different brands in different contexts is done to create better brand associations and visibility.
- Achieve clarity of product offerings: the brand architecture helps clarify product offerings for customers, employees and partners.
- Leverage brand equity: this is to make brands work harder so that their impact can be increased in their market and leveraging brands also allows brands to extend into new markets.
- Provide a platform for future growth options: Brand architecture sets the foundation for future growth by supporting strategic advances for new product markets.

Brand architecture creates clarity and allows for individual growth of brands while having a systemic goal of creating brand leaders and establishing successful positioning strategies.

2.5 Conclusion

In this research almost all factors relating to brand positioning, identity and purpose have been explored to gain a thorough understanding of these brand building elements. This was done to see how these elements can be applied to small businesses and what advantages it can have for their brands. Brand positioning can only be formulated once a brand identity has been established as well as brand purpose. A company or brand first needs to have an identity in which it wants its customers to know about. Then the brand needs to be defined, in terms of what you do and how it is important and it needs to be differentiated, this is where brand purpose fits in. After these value adding elements have been discovered then only can a brand positioning strategy be formulated and set out to be implemented. Small business can adopt these brand building guidelines to build strong competitive brands that are distinctive due to their positioning of their brand.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

There three known designs of research. Qualitative, quantitative and a mixed methods approach. The characteristics of the type of data or information that are acquired through a quantitative approach are numerical or statistical data, this method also aims to predict and control events while also explaining the significance of quantities and the relationship of quantities (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014, p.174-178). The outcome of using a quantitative method is usually to prove a phenomenon or get answers. The outcomes and characteristics of a qualitative research approach are to understand, describe or to explore people's behaviour. A qualitative approaches main aim is to get an in-depth understanding of behaviours, attitudes and trying to get a background on why people react in the way they do, it is not to prove theories or find solid calculable answers. The mixed methods approach uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.174-178).

The type of study that was undertaken is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research refers to understanding in detail, observing participants, in-depth interviews and textual analysis (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.174). The hardware store Jacks Paint and Fastworld industries will be used as the case study, using their customers and employees as population samples. They are currently located in the Durban North vicinity and have been around for almost twenty-two years. The company shares a unique partnership with another hardware brand and this will be assessed alongside the exploration of development in positioning. This type of research design will be best suited to understand how the hardware store positions itself and the complexities involved in developing a positioning statement. It will also help in identifying how brand identity aids in improving productivity and efficiency with reference to the double branding.

3.2 Field research approach

The field research approach that is used is an ethnographic approach to gain a better understanding directly from the people involved and a case study approach will also be used to obtain a detailed description of real-world social phenomena (du

Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.174-178). The ethnographic approach involves descriptions of particular cultures that is needed to gain a foundation or better understanding of the research problem (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.174-178).

3.3 Data type

There are two types of data, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is raw data that has been collected for the first time (Bryman and Bell, 2014). Secondary data is data that has already been obtained and processed (Bryman and Bell, 2014). The type of data that was collected is primary data. The type of raw data that will be collected and analysed are comments, feedback, interviews, questionnaire answers, observational data and perceptions. This data will then be processed and interpreted to answer the research problem and meet the expectations of the objectives.

3.4 Population

The data was acquired from the three main data sources or population that will be analysed, the internal environment of the company, customers and the community members from the nearby surrounding community. Therefore a qualitative approach to this study was applicable (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.14-15; 232 - 233). The internal environment of the company consists of all employees, managers and directors. The customers will be current customers of the hardware store, that are present or not at the time of conducting the research. The surrounding community will be the residents that are customers or potential customers that live near the hardware store who have come across the store and their brands.

3.5 Sampling

The sampling method was used is a non- probability sampling method. Non-probability sampling is used for research when it is impossible to determine who the entire population is and when it is difficult or almost impossible to gain access to the entire population. In non-probability sampling every unit does not have an equal chance of being selected unlike probability sampling and this is because it would prove too costly and not worthwhile to conduct this research. Also other factors such as such as government laws and other barriers that will not allow for this type of

research or exposure to their citizens prove that this research cannot use probability sampling (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.137).

The two types of non-probability sampling that was used are convenience sampling, for the everyday regular customers and nearby residents, and purposive sampling for the employees (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Purposive sampling refers to purposefully choosing the elements or people that fit the description of the characteristics. People are chosen by looking at the population and research question and filtering them to determine the people who have characteristics that are important for the research and disregard those who do not (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.142-144).

The sample size of this study was fifty-two participants. Twenty-five of the fifty-five participants are customers and five participants are near residents. The other twenty-two participants are the employees of the company (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.150 -152).

3.6 Validity, reliability, trustworthiness

The reliability and validity of the research relative to the quantitative data that will be obtained will be ensured and proven through the different methods and types of reliability and validity. Reliability can be ensured through the test-retest so that stability can be measured where the same results are obtained through the same participants but the method or instrument will be administered at different times. Validity will be proven at the results concluded and processed from the researched data (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.254-257).

Trustworthiness will be present with the qualitative data through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility will be assured through the accuracy of the data obtained through the guidance and help provided by the researcher to the participants answering the questionnaire. Transferability will be evident through the results of the research being versatile and flexible in terms of using the results beyond the specific research topic. Dependability will be achieved through the total quality management of the process in which the data is collected

and integrated through the stages of data collection, data analysis and the theory synthesised from the findings. Each step will be controlled and compared to a set standard of measures to ensure the quality of the data, the meaningful integration and synthesis of the different process stages. In the process of integration the results will not be structured in a way to favour a certain outcome, it will be produced and structured according to the actual results and will not be structured in a biased way. Confirmability refers to how well the data collected support the interpretations of the researcher so confirmability will be achieved by actually proving that the interpretations and findings done by the researcher is supported and matched by the data collected so that others who analyse the data can produce similar conclusions (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.258-259).

3.7 Data collection

The data collection methods will consist of optional personal interviews, dependent on participants preference, for some employees and customers, a focus group may be considered to identify employee knowledge and thoughts of the marketing and branding strategies that are being practiced. Questionnaires are simple and they consist of closed ended questions as well as open ended questions. Compared to other surveys a questionnaire is quick, easy and is seen as convenient to the target population. A questionnaire structured with questions to gather views and perceived images, of the company's goods, services and brand as a whole by the public, employees and customers will be used.

Interviews had been held at the hardware store, within the office space and sales floor, during operating hours due to the easy access of the customers and availability of the internal staff. Some customers were contacted telephonically. Interviews are qualitative data collection methods that allow you to learn more about participants' views and opinions (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.188 -189). Standardised, open-ended interviews were used because it focuses on asking the same set of questions to all participants. The type of data that will be gathered can be more easily analysed and it is comparable to other views and opinions (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.188 -189).

Questionnaires for the surrounding community to gather their perceptions were done at the convenience of the residents whether it is in person or over a phone call (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.150 -152).

3.8 Data analysis method

Engagement in the brand in terms of interacting with customers and employees were done to gather perceptions and experience. The qualitative data analysis method that was used is the qualitative content analysis so that a deductive approach can be utilised to achieve specific themes from general theories (du Plooy-Cillers et al, 2014, p.232-235). A qualitative content analysis is used to explore and identify themes and patterns that are embedded in the data collected. This data analysis method is best suited for this research because the patterns that will be identified will be used to identify whether or not the hardware stores branding leads to confusion. The patterns identified will also be used to identify whether or not the hardware store will experience problems in defining their brand and developing a positioning. An assessment of their contact points reach and influence will also be identified and compared to how contact points should be planned and managed to see if there is any practise of brand building within the hardware store.

3.9 Ethical issues

Ethics will be practiced with regard to the participants by informing them of the research topic and explaining to them what it is about so that they clearly understand what will be required of them. The research will be well structured and organised so that the participant's time will not be wasted. No harm will be brought to any of the participants. Harm will be avoided by not bringing up emotionally painful memories through questions or embarrassing a participant in a group by asking embarrassing questions that are personal. Deception will be avoided by telling the participants the truth about the research study and telling them exactly what is needed for the research. The information will only be gathered from participants that are documented and registered, only so that falsifying information cannot take place. The researcher will not in any way distort the results or allow bias to influence the interpretation; this will be ensured by the quality checks done at each step of the process for interpretation, emphasis will not be placed on certain aspects of similar

value and by confirmability so that if other researchers wish use the gathered data they will interpret similar conclusions (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.264-271).

3.10 Pilot study

A single customer was asked to complete a customer questionnaire that consisted of six questions. The results from the pilot study were that the questions need to be explained more in detail. The customer also pointed out that most consumers would not understand what a contact point is and that it should be explained so customers can answer truthfully for the best results. The same had happened in asking an employee to answer an employee questionnaire, they had not been familiar with branding jargon and the concepts had to be explained first.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings

4.1 Questionnaires

Internal environment (Employees/ Employers):

1. Are you familiar with the brand identity of the company?

    - Yes: 17
    - No: 5

Participants who have answered yes referred to the overall offerings of the brand in terms of products and services. They also admitted to not seeing an actual brand identity document and it has been established that their knowledge of a brand identity is limited to only what the company offers in terms of their products and services. Some of the popular answers were:

- " Yes, I have not seen it"
- "Yes, no formal representation"

What a company offers in terms of products and services is only part of a brand identity and a common theme found was that there was no proper foundation of knowledge on what a brand identity is and how comprehensive it can be.

2. Does a positioning statement for the company exist? If yes are you familiar with it?

    - Yes: 2
    - No: 17
    - Not sure: 3

All of the participants did not know what a positioning statement is and whether or not the company had one. The two participants that answered yes confused the positioning statement with the Jacks Paint slogan. There is no current positioning statement for the company. Reasons to believe this are derived from the replies:

- "No positioning statement"
- "Company does not have one"
- "Don't know"

3. Does the double branding of Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries confuse you? Please explain why.
   - Yes:2
   - No: 20

Twenty participants understood the relationship between both brands. Some of their replies were:

- "No, we offer a variety of products/ brands to cater for the different needs of the community"
- "No. I understand the relationship"

The participants who replied with yes:

- " Yes"
- "I don't understand"

Although most participants understood the relationship between brands it was important that every single participant or in this case employee understood the relationship so that everyone is on the same page and have a mutual understanding about the strategic relationship.

4. What are your perceptions of the company in terms of the products and services that they offer?
   - Positive: 20
   - Negative: 0

These responses could be biased as the participants are a part of the company but they had to be asked to see how their perceptions are compared, to customer perceptions, to identify the actual positioning of their products and services. All the responses were positive responses. Here are some of the responses:

- "Products – Reliable and efficient for the customers. Services – Outstanding co-operation in terms of service."
- "There is a wide variety of products which is easily accessible under one roof, convenience is a speciality."
- "Good"

5. Do you feel that you are a part of a team or just an employee?
   - Team: 17
   - Employee: 4
   - Not sure: 1

This implies that there is a lack of cohesion between internal members of the company. There are participants who feel part of the team and there are some employees who think more team building is needed in order to build cohesion.

   - "Just an employee, I feel that we need more team building."

Customers:

1. Is Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries your preferred hardware store? Please explain why.
   - Yes: 21
   - No: 4

Participants who answered yes explained that the variety of products, cost-effective pricing and good services is why the company was their preferred hardware store. Some of the participant replies were:

   - "Yes; there is a wide selection of products"
   - "Yes, it is convenient and it has a range of products"

Participants who answered no explained that the lack of stock and control over it has driven them away from having the company as a preferred hardware store. Reason to believe this:

   - "No; their stock control has no order"
   - "No; bad service"

None of the participants, who answered no, made reference to the double branding as a negative driver.

2. Does the double branding of Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries confuse you? Please explain why.
   - Yes: 3
   - No: 22

The 3 participants who answered yes explained that they were confused if it was one company or and who it was owned by. Some of their replies for reason to believe that they were confused:

- "Yes, not sure if they're owned by one person."
- "Yes. No synergy between names"

The 22 participants who answered no explained that they knew of both the companies and understood the relationship of the Jacks Paint franchise with Fastworld industries.

- "No, they are in partnership together"
- "No, I know of both companies and it is evident that they share a relationship."

This is evidence that most customers at the hardware store understand the double branding, even customers who are confused by it still shop at the store. This further shows that customers may not see the double branding as a negative point.

3. What are your comments on the products offered at this hardware store?
   - Positive: 20
   - Negative: 2
   - Average: 3

Some of the positive comments:

- "Good variety, has all I need"
- "Good, well priced"

Negative comments:

- "Low quality"

Comments that were not positive or negative:

- "Average"
- "They're not the best but it gets the job done"

This shows us that there is good perceived image, of products, to most customers yet there are still customers who already perceive the brands offerings as negative. These images can be influenced on the type of positioning.

4. What are your comments on the service that you receive at this hardware store?

   - Positive: 21
   - Negative: 2
   - Average: 2

Positive comments:

- "Exceptional"
- "Very helpful"

Negative comments:

- "Terrible. Some staff have no idea what the business offers and have no direction."

Comments that were not positive or negative:

- " Average"

From this there are mostly positively perceived images of the services the brand offers yet some customers are unsatisfied and feel that they need more direction.

5. A contact point is any form of communication or interaction that the customer has with the brand or company. (e.g. a business card, employees, advertisements, products etc.)
   5.1) What contact point/ points do you frequently come across or interact with?

   - Employees: 16
   - Marketing(advertisements/ branded promotional items): 7

- Products: 2

It is evident that employees and staff are their most important contact point.

5.2) How influential or effective is this contact point/ points?
- Employees: (Positive: 13) / (Negative: 2) / (Average: 1)
- Marketing: (Positive: 7)
- Products: (Positive: 1) / (Average: 1)

Employees are said to have aided in the decision making progress of some customers while two customers thought that employees were negative influencers. Marketing such as branded pens, rulers, signage and bus stop shelter advertising are considered a positive as an influential contact point. This also tells us that due to less marketing activities employees are frequent contact points. This further highlights the importance of employees, as an influential contact point, understanding the brand identity and understanding how it is to be positioned. Products are a contact point but were not seeing as influential as employees and marketing.

6. What will Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries have to improve in order to be a preferred hardware store to you, if it is not already, and other customers?

   The 4 participants that did not choose the company as a preferred store explained that they had experienced issuers with stock control, pricing, bad service and that there should be a greater variety in their building materials category. Some of their comments:

   - "Offer building materials such as cement, building sand etc."
   - "Market their offerings more"

Surrounding community/ nearby residents:

1. Are you familiar with the hardware store Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries? If yes please explain how you came into contact or familiarised yourself with the store.

All five participants were familiar with the store through their marketing in surrounding areas such as the bus shelters and a local magazine. Some participants visually come into contact the store itself and its products. This proves that their marketing to the public is effective. It was clearly noted that their advertising in the surrounding areas had made them aware of the hardware store yet it had little impact in terms of projecting the brand essence and promise.

- "Yes, I drive past it almost every day."

2. Is the combination of two different brands attractive, confusing or does it matter at all when making decisions on choosing a hardware store?

Three participants had stated that a combination of hardware stores is an attractive factor in a sense that they automatically presume there are more and better offerings. The other two stated that it didn't matter and that more variety is always a positive.

- "Its attractive to me, means more variety. Variety and accessibility matter in choosing a store."
- "It does not matter, more variety is better."

3. What is the most important factor to you when choosing a hardware store?

All participants stated it was quality, variety, prices and good customer serive. This helped to conclude that the double branding of a hardware store may not interfere with the image of a company in a negative way; it could possibly make it seem more attractive.

4.2 Interview

Interview with director of the company:

1. What is the relationship between Fastworld Industries and Jacks Paint?

The partnership between Fastworld industries and Jacks Paint is a strategic partnership where the Jacks Paint franchise has collaborated with Fastworld industries to provide a unique and broad offering. The retailer Fastworld industries bear the Jacks name alongside theirs and acts as an outlet of Jacks Paint while still allowing Fastworld industries to have full ownership of the

physical shop. The benefits of the partnership are that both brands can embrace their respective customer market and Fastworld industries pay a loyalty fee instead of a franchise fee. Fastworld industries is now allowed to utilise the competitively priced suppliers that are a part of Jacks Paint data base and use this to offer more value and benefits to their customers and potential customers.

2. How would you describe the identity of your company or brand?

- People orientated.
- Always ready to help.
- "The type of shop that will go the extra mile to satisfy customers"

There were discussions of what the brand offers to consumers as well as the brands visions and aspirations. These aspirations and essence of the brand were not constantly related to the employees of the brand. Most employees at the company have matriculated and some of them have left school at early stages in their lives. It was explained that these employees were trained to work in a particular environment, only until recently have they had formal training on how to interact with customers and how to conduct sales. This has led me to believe that employees of this company are not at all familiar with the branding industry. Therefore many of the employees may not have any idea of how brand building elements and structure is important in influencing everyday business and how customers perceive the brand.

3. What is the purpose of your brand?
- To provide good quality products and services at competitive prices, relative to the hardware industry, to all customers.
- Provide employment and help in the development and training of employees.
- To be active in community development programmes as well as environmentally friendly initiatives.
4. How would you like customers to see your brand?

- A one stop hardware shop.

- A hardware store where there is everything that customers need and if it is not available it will be outsourced especially for them.

The participant stated that the hardware is to be the only store that comes to mind when consumers need anything they want related to bolts, nuts, tools, safety equipment, safety wear and paint. It is to be perceived as the hardware store with excellence service, quality products and cost effective prices while at the same time being able to help customers get everything they need that store does not stock.

5. When marketing your brand, how are the contact points that are used prioritised and managed?
   - "Most of our customers are regular customers"
   - "We try to attract residents in our advertising"

The participant had stated that most of the company's customers are regulars from neighbouring business who need supplies. When the company advertises in local areas it aims to attract new customers from residential areas. The contact points are not entirely prioritised and managed, they work with seasonal timing. This means that during festive seasons and in the coming of the new year they advertise their promotional strategies on various marketing contact points such as local news papers, pamphlets and nearby advertising spots like bus shelters.

4.3 Key findings

- There is no physical representation of a brand identity or positioning statement.
- Employees don't know what a positioning statement is as well as the full extent of a brand identity.
- Employees are not familiar with the branding industry and how brand building can aid in doing business through the different brand building elements such as brand identity and positioning.
- Only with an established identity and purpose can a brand strategise and implement on how it wants to be positioned.
- Employees are a very important contact point that drives the purchasing decision and choice of brands.

- Double branding in terms of the hardware industry is seen as attractive to customers.
- Contact points are not planned or managed effectively.

The questions that were used for the internal environment of the company, the customers, community and for the interview that took place with the director of the company were structured in a way to inform my study and broaden my overall knowledge on the reach of the branding industry.

The questions helped in my understanding of how employees understood their brand and explained to me their knowledge when it came to the branding industry. The questions used for customers helped me understand the type of market that the hardware store attracts, how customers view the branding choices of the company and what they expect from the company. The questions used for the surrounding community gave me a gauge of the reach and awareness of the brand while also giving me a public perception on double branding. It also allowed me to understand which of the companies contact points are most influential in this type of industry. I was also able to understand nature of business conducted at the shop and what type of purpose it serves. This has helped broaden my overall knowledge of how small businesses brand themselves, which ultimately leads to their positioning, and whether it is seen as a priority, to them, as it is in the branding industry.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This research was conducted to explore and understand the complexities involved in positioning while using a hardware store, as a case study, and evaluating their brand purpose and brand identity. Through the research conducted and relevant literature reviewed the research questions were answered within reason and the objects were met.

The first research question was: What the role of brand purpose and brand identity in developing brand positioning?

Here both the literature reviewed and research conducted aided in answering this question. The review of relevant literature helped gain an understanding of brand positioning, brand purpose and brand identity is. With this understanding it allowed me as the researcher to identify that businesses or brands first need to develop an identity and purpose to establish a direction. After you have defined an identity and purpose with direction you are able to establish points of difference along with points of parity and differentiate your brand and use these points of difference to develop a positioning strategy. This strategy uses the combination of the identity and purpose to effectively inform and differentiate the brand in the mind of the consumer so that it is positioned above competitors.

The second research question was: How can small businesses utilise brand positioning to develop strong, competitive and distinctive brands?

Positioning involves effectively communicating the brands purpose, essence and points of difference to captivate consumers and influence their perception of the brand. Brand positioning as stated before and identified through research can only result after a well structured and established identity and purpose. If small businesses are able to develop a brand identity and identify the purpose of their brand then they can focus on positioning and delivering their message through the right channels. These channels are the contact points that first need to be planned and managed in order to receive the maximum exposure and influence in positioning. By successfully positioning their brand in the mind of the consumers it is

easy for them to differentiate themselves and stay above the competition. This not only keeps the brand competitive it also strengthens the image of the brand while making it distinctive to the consumer.

How the objectives were met:

1. To analyse and assess marketing and branding strategies that are currently being used and how effective they are.

This objective was met through the questions of contact points and how influential they are. Employees were the most influential contact points and this was due to the lack of planning and management in the implementation of the brands contact points.

2. To understand the complexities of developing a brand positioning by taking the theories and models and apply it through real world application, using a small business as a case study.

The complexities that were uncovered were that firstly some small businesses do not have a brand identity or purpose and that they have no knowledge on positioning and its benefits. In this case the brand had no identity or positioning statement and branding terms and elements had to be explained to employees. The brand identity had to be established first in order to develop a positioning statement for employees to keep in mind. From the fact that employees of this brand did not have much knowledge or a primary foundation of the branding industry and it had to be explained to them proves just one dimension of the complexities involved in developing brand positioning.

3. Identify how the partnership between the two companies interferes with their brand in terms of image perceptions with reference to the customers.

Through the use of the literature and research it was made clear the relationship that the both brands of the hardware store had shared. Through research it was brought to attention that first employees need to understand the relationship so that they could help consumers understand it too. It has been noted that a partnership between two hardware retailer brands is attractive to their target market.

4. To understand the role that brand identity plays in developing a brand positioning strategy.

A brand identity has proven to be a crucial and essential building block in the development of positioning .When positioning a brand the brand needs to know how its identity can be used to create a competitive advantage and what image it wants its consumers to perceive. A brand identity encourages the knowledge of brand building, this has been seen through the reviewed literature and research conducted where the explanation of an identity lead to the implementation of it identity through positioning.

This research has helped me explore and understand the different dimensions that create and complicate the development of brand positioning. It has broadened my knowledge on how the branding industry needs to be more integrated into everyday business activities and it has brought to my attention how alienated branding jargon and the branding industry as a whole is to many people. This study has proven that there a different steps, levels and schools of thought that first need to be established in order to start developing a positioning, it's also proven that brand identity and brand purpose can be seen as building blocks in brand building.

The extension of this research can be seen through a quantitative study of how small businesses can reap the benefits of brand building through sales volumes or even prove many small businesses actually use brand identity and other brand building elements. This research can also lead to other research such as exploring the complexities of brand contact planning and implementation in a small business.

A recommendation can be made for the hardware store to use the activation and develop more on their brand identity while implementing more brand building strategies to help successfully position their brand. They should also familiarise themselves with the importance of contact planning in order to integrate and synthesise their brand experiences so that it contributes to effective positioning.

5.2 Delimitations/ limitations

Limitations are limits that are not controlled by the researcher this can be in the form of resources and time (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.275-276). The limitations to this study were that it was conducted in a small geographic location; the area in

which the store is located will be the only are studied. Time will also be considered as a limitation due to the fact that this study has to be completed before the end of 2015. Another limitation would be accessibility to customers as well as employees.

Delimitations are choices or parameters that are made by the researcher to guide the research (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014, p.276-277). The delimitations to the study is that franchises will not be explored and building relationships with customers will not be done. Other delimitations would be the population that is chosen as well as the type of research questions.

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Appendix A: Customer questionnaire

A Brand Positioning Questionnaire on Jacks Paints and Fastworld Industries.

Name: Contact (Cell/ email):

1) Is Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries your preferred hardware store? Please explain why.

_____

_____

2) Does the double branding of Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries confuse you? Please explain why.

_____

_____

3) What are your comments on the products offered at this hardware store?

_____

_____

4) What are your comments on the service that you receive at this hardware store?

_____

_____

5) A contact point is any form of communication or interaction that the customer has with the brand or company. (e.g. a business card, employees, advertisements, products etc.)

5.1) What contact point/ points do you frequently come across or interact with?

_____

5.2) How influential or effective is this contact point/ points?

_____

7) What will Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries have to improve in order to be a preferred hardware store to you, if it is not already, and other customers?

_____

_____

Thank you.

Appendix B: Employee questionnaire

A Brand Positioning Questionnaire on Jacks Paints and Fastworld Industries.

Name: Contact (Cell/ email):

1) Are you familiar with the brand identity of the company?

_____

2) Does a positioning statement for the company exist? If yes are you familiar with it?

_____

3) Does the double branding of Jacks Paint and Fastworld Industries confuse you? Please explain why.

_____

_____

4) What are your perceptions of the company in terms of the products and services that they offer?

_____

_____

5) Do you feel that you are a part of a team or just an employee?

_____

Thank you.

Appendix C: Community questionnaires

A Brand Positioning Questionnaire on Jacks Paints and Fastworld Industries.

Name:

1) Are you familiar with the hardware store Jacks Paint and Fastworld industries? If yes please explain how you came into contact or familiarised yourself with the store.

_____

_____

2) Is the combination of two different brands attractive, confusing or does it matter at all when making decisions on choosing a hardware store?

_____

3) What is the most important factor to you when choosing a hardware store?

_____

Appendix D: Interview questions

Name:

1. What is the relationship between Fastworld Industries and Jacks Paint?
2. How would you describe the identity of your company or brand?
3. What is the purpose of your brand?
4. How would you like customers to see your brand?
5. When marketing your brand, how are the contact points that are used prioritised and managed?

Appendix E:

27 September 2015

To: Whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that Fastworld Industries KZN CC allows MR Varshen Naicker access to use our company as a case study to aid him in his research.

Feel free to contact me should have any further queries.

. Mrs. E. Naicker (Member)