

Research topic:

Collective case study on healthy brand building: A qualitative investigation of brand building methods used by entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town.

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Abstract

In a country such as South Africa, where unemployment is rife, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activity plays a vital role in assisting to boost the economy. However these entrepreneurial ventures face overwhelming odds in terms of actually surviving in this competitive and cutthroat context. The FNB/GIBSs report says that, "start-ups fail at a rate of about nine in ten in the first two years of operation" (Mafoyane, 2015). This study aims to delve into the branding aspect of these entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town, South Africa. Branding is a crucial element of any business and is directly linked to the success of a business. This research aims to understand what methods are effective in branding an entrepreneurial venture in this specific context of Cape Town.

This research is presented as a case study approach and three entrepreneurial ventures have been analysed, namely Skinny Scoop, Ucook and Nifty250. Each of these ventures started in 2014 and have been in operation for two years. Kevin Lane Keller's seminal work regarding brand building and brand equity was used in this research in order to analyse if these brand-building methods were actually utilized in these three entrepreneurial ventures. In addition, Carmody, Cook, Enslin & Erwin's (2010) healthy brand criteria were used in order to determine what methods of brand building contribute to creating a healthy brand.

This research uncovered that Keller's brand building model does indeed prove to have effective methods of creating a brand. This research highlights a strong alignment between Keller's brand building steps and the entrepreneurial ventures being studied. In terms of a healthy brand, these methods do contribute to making a brand healthy. The data collected showed that Keller's brand building steps does pave the way for these entrepreneurial ventures to grow and transform into healthy brands as compared to the healthy brand criteria. However, the one element of a healthy brand that seemed to present issues for these entrepreneurial ventures is the sustainability element. These three brands say that sustainability is a concern with the ever-changing market needs and macro environment of South Africa.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1) Research Title

Collective case study on healthy brand building: A qualitative investigation of brand building methods used by entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town.

1.2) Background and Context of Study

The term “entrepreneurship” can take on many different meanings, as it is a loaded term. However for the purpose of this study ‘entrepreneurship’ is defined as the creation of a business venture through idea generation (Westhead & Wright, 2013). An entrepreneur is an individual who is able to see an opportunity or gap in the market place and takes action in order to turn it into a business venture or a profit generating opportunity. “Entrepreneurs create new businesses, and new businesses in turn create jobs, intensify competition, and may even increase productivity through technological change. High measured levels of entrepreneurship will thus translate directly into high levels of economic growth” (Acs, 2006:97). Thus entrepreneurship is important for the economy and in a South African context, entrepreneurship is especially crucial due to the fact that unemployment is rife in the country. There was a reported 25% unemployment rate in the country as of April to June 2015, which translates into 5,2 million people being unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2015).

In addition to highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship in Cape Town, this research project aims to investigate the different brand building methods explored by these entrepreneurial ventures in order to become healthy brands. Keller’s (2001) brand building model, explained in chapter 1.8.2, shall be used as a benchmark for these brand building methods in this research. The process of building a successful brand in an entrepreneurial venture is interesting to investigate as it presents a different situation to brand building in a corporate space. The uniqueness of this business model can then be seen. These entrepreneurial ventures are by definition businesses that start from the ground up, and some are able to transform into powerful and healthy brands.

This research project aims to investigate the best methods in going about building a healthy brand in these enterprises. This will be done through a case study design, as three entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town will be examined.

It is relevant for all entrepreneurs wishing to run a successful business venture to learn how to build an effective, meaningful and healthy brand in their enterprise. “Today, every organization wants to have a brand” (Klopper & North, 2011:3). Becoming a ‘brand’ can add to the success and value of an organization. This research focuses not only on just the concept of creating a brand, but rather how to establish a ‘healthy brand’. Having a ‘healthy brand’ suggests success as it shows an overall “state of brand well-being” (Carmody, Cook, Enslin, & Erwin, 2010). This research project aims to add to the body of knowledge that focuses on the most effective ways of creating a healthy brand within an entrepreneurial venture. Even though Keller’s (2001) model shall be used as a benchmark for how to build a brand, this research may additionally uncover other methods of going about building a brand.

This research project is also relevant due to the fact that in South Africa, the number of SME (small and medium enterprises) failures in year 5 of business varies between 50% and 95% (Neneh, 2012:3365). In addition, “about 75% of new SMEs do not become established firms, which is one of the highest in the world” (Neneh, 2012:3365). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor sampled South Africa and disappointing results were found; “only 2,3% of South African owned SMEs have been in existence for more than 3.5 years, with South Africa ranked 41 out of 43 countries in the survival rate for established business owner-managers, therefore signifying a high failure rate among start ups” (Neneh, 2012:3365).

Consequently it is relevant to understand how brand building in entrepreneurial ventures can contribute to the success of these organisations. In addition, this analysis will provide findings on how successful brand building can occur in a climate where these enterprises face overwhelming odds against them.

1.3) Problem Statement

To investigate the different brand building methods used by entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town to create a healthy brand. It is a highly competitive environment for these organisations, and it can be a challenge to achieve the ‘healthy brand’ criteria.

1.4) Research question and sub-questions

This study is underpinned by the following primary research question:

To investigate the brand building methods used by entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town in order to create a healthy brand.

Two objectives can be derived from this question:

- To benchmark the brand building methods used against the Keller (2001) model and then to analyse the data against this model.
- To highlight the additional and/or different methods used by the entrepreneurial venture that will be discovered through the research process.

This study also aims to answer the following secondary questions:

- How can brand building in these entrepreneurial ventures contribute to their overall success?
- What does it mean to be a healthy brand?
- And finally, over what time frame does this transformation into a healthy brand occur?

1.5) Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to understand what is at the core of brand building within a startup business model and what are effective ways of creating a healthy brand within an entrepreneurial venture in Cape Town.

Secondary aims include trying to understand how the brand building practice is different in this startup business model compared to the established corporate business model. The study aims to find out if successful brand building contributes to the overall success of an entrepreneurial venture.

Another secondary aim of this research project is to find out what challenges face these enterprises that are in the process of building a brand and how these challenges would be different from a corporate business model.

Keller's (2001) brand building model shall be used as the main theoretical framework and used for comparison purposes for the entrepreneurial ventures examined. However, other methods of brand building that deviate from Keller's model may also be discovered through this research. It may show more effective ways of brand building that could lead to achieving the healthy brand status. Carmody, Cook, Enslin & Erwin's (2010) definition of healthy brand criteria will also serve as a benchmark for the case studies analyzed in this research.

The vision of this research is that it will serve as a reference for entrepreneurs on how to build a healthy brand. Startups require many resources; and this research aims to be helpful for startups seeking knowledge about brand building in order for this process to be done in the most efficient way possible.

1.6) Purpose Statement

This research shall be conducted using a multiple case study approach. Three entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town from different industries shall be interviewed and analyzed. Then these entrepreneurial ventures shall be compared with the combination of Keller's (2001) brand building model to understand brand-building methods employed, and the healthy brand criteria as described by Carmody, Cook, Enslin, and Erwin (2010). It will be examined as to how these methods used by these entrepreneurial ventures result in a healthy brand being created. These two theories will serve as a benchmark to understand how effective these brands that have been created by these entrepreneurial ventures are. This research aims to understand if using Keller's brand building methods are effective in creating a healthy brand, or to uncover if these businesses utilize other brand building methods that are more effective in creating a healthy brand.

1.7) Rationale

In South Africa it is particularly important to promote entrepreneurship in order for economic growth to occur. “The definition of entrepreneurship holds the promise of growth, expansion, and long-term financial gain” (Van Aardt, 2011). As previously mentioned, unemployment is a problem for the country as well as the fact that startups are not likely to succeed in this climate.

This is a dangerous combination, as entrepreneurship needs to flourish in order to help alleviate that unemployment crisis in South Africa, as well as help uplift the economy.

This research is worth pursuing as hopefully it can provide some valuable insight for entrepreneurs who want to know what methods are effective when building a brand within a startup. Startups are all-consuming business ventures that take up valuable resources such as time, energy and money. Therefore this research aims to help to uncover some findings that can ease the pressure on these precious and limited resources.

1.8) Abbreviated Literature Review

1.8.1) The importance of branding in startups

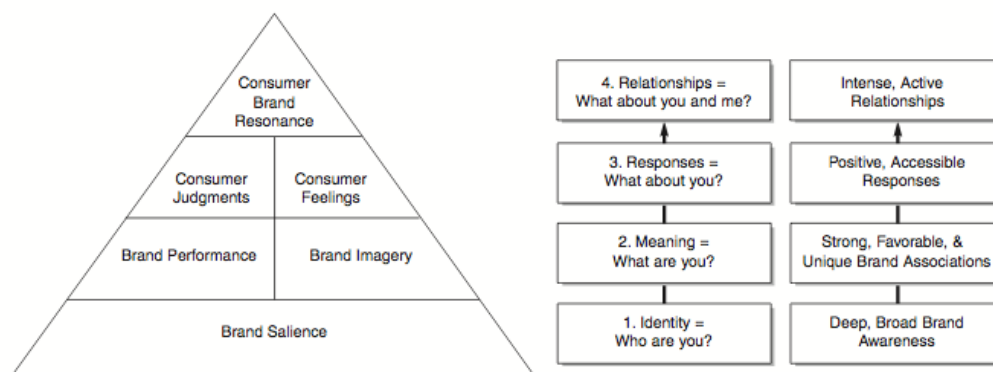
Bresciani & Eppler (2010) conducted a research study on branding practices in startup businesses in Switzerland. The research shows that “branding is a crucial activity for the successful establishment of a new company, that helps customer acquisition, retention and to build a favorable reputation” (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010:356). The research is focused on how SMEs go about building a brand and what challenges “young ventures face in the branding inception focus” (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010:356). This research was conducted using a case study approach, where 15 of the largest and most successful startup companies in Switzerland were examined. This research is helpful as it shows the different steps of branding a SME. Even though the study is based in Switzerland, elements of the brand building process will be relevant to this research.

1.8.2) The branding process

This research will be based on Keller's brand building model, which includes four steps to creating a brand. These four steps are as follows:

- 1.) The first step is to ensure identification of the brand with customers and an association of the brand in the customers' minds with a specific product class or customer need.
- 2.) The next step is to link the brand strategically with tangible and intangible brand associations.
- 3.) The third step is to get the correct response from the customer when they see this brand identity and brand meaning.
- 4.) The last step is to be able to transform this response into an action and create a loyal relationship between the customer and the brand.

Figure 1. Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid



1.8.3) Brand building in a South African Context

In order to understand SMEs in the South African context, Brand, du Preez & Schutte (2007) discuss how the South African climate influences SMEs. “Although the current economic and political environment is favourable towards entrepreneurs who operate their own businesses, most SMMEs in the informal sector find it difficult to survive or contribute formally to economic activities” (Brand, du Preez & Schutte, 2007:188).

Brand building is crucial to the success of a entrepreneurial venture. It can add to a company's competitive edge. Branding can “represent an important determinant both of effectiveness and ability of the firm to link its internal and external environment successfully” (Abimbola, 2001:100).

Abimbola (2001) discusses how branding is important for SMEs in order for them to flourish. It is highlighted that startups have limited resources when going about the branding process.

1.8.4) Understanding the term ‘healthy brand’

The research question asked in this study requires an understanding of the term ‘healthy brand’. Most of the literature mentioned above focuses on brand building practices in SMEs and startups, and understanding startups in the South African context, however it does not explain what the term ‘healthy brand’ means. Carmody, Cook, Enslin & Erwin (2010) discuss the seven points as to what defines a healthy brand. Which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

This research project aims to examine whether certain brand building practices within startups can lead the brand to achieve this ‘healthy brand’ status. By interviewing startups in Cape Town, this research will determine whether startups can achieve this healthy brand status through certain branding practices.

1.9) Conceptualisation

1.9.1) Entrepreneurial venture

Entrepreneurship is a term with many different meanings for different people. In the Oxford English Dictionary “the term ‘entrepreneur’ is defined as one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risk of a business enterprise” (Van Aardt, 2011). This research focuses on ‘entrepreneurial ventures’ which can be defined as small business run by this individual mentioned above.

1.9.2) Brand Building

“Brand building, in its primary form, involves the identification of one ‘thing’ to differentiate it from another” (Klopper & North, 2011). This research will be based on Keller’s model of brand building. Keller (2001) has developed a customer-based brand equity model that includes four steps to building a strong brand. This model shows how the brand is built around the customer and the customers’ needs. This model includes the fundamentals of brand building, such as brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand relationships.

1.9.3) Healthy brands

The ‘healthy brand’ status can be achieved by ensuring that the seven criteria stated by Carmody, Cook, Enslin, and Erwin (2010) is reached by the brand.

The healthy brand criteria can be found in the literature review. This theory shall serve as a benchmark and the entrepreneurial ventures used in this research will be analysed as to whether they meet this healthy brand standard.

1.9.4) What is a brand and how it is different from an entrepreneurial venture?

It is important to distinguish between a business and a brand. A brand is created by an entrepreneurial venture in order to ensure it is recognizable and different from other businesses. A brand can be defined as “whenever marketers create a new name, logo or symbol for a new product or service, they create a brand” (Klopper & North, 2011).

1.10) Proposed Chapters

This research will be divided into 5 chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter will include a background and context for this study. It will also highlight the objectives and aims. It will give a good overview of what the study entails.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

This chapter will explain the literature and theoretical framework used for this study.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter will explain what research methods shall be used in this study and how the researcher shall approach this study.

Chapter 4 – Data analysis and Findings

This chapter will show the data found through the research conducted. This data shall then be analyzed and discussed.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

This final chapter will conclude what has been discovered through this study.

1.11) Methodology

1.11.1) Proposed Paradigm

Paradigms “serve as a lens or organizing principle by which reality is interpreted” (Maree, 2016:52). This research will subscribe to an interpretive paradigm. Interpretivism refers to the “views of writers from various intellectual traditions who are critical of the application of the scientific model to study the social world” (Bell & Bryman, 2011:14). It “assumes that any research approach needs to respect the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences” (Bell & Bryman, 2011:14).

1.11.2) Research Design and Approach

This research will be conducted using mostly qualitative data. The case study approach shall be used and several startups in Cape Town will be selected and interviewed. These interviews will be structured and contain both open-ended and close-ended questions. The interviews shall be recorded as well as written down. This research will be specific to startups in Cape Town South Africa. Once this qualitative data has been gathered an inductive data analysis shall occur. This is due to the fact that the nature of this study will be interpretivist. “Interpretivism is based on the assumption that there is not one reality but many, and interpretivist researchers therefore carry out their studies in natural contexts to reach the best possible understanding” (Maree, 2016:39). This applies to this research project as there may not be a singular definite answer, but rather multiple ways in understanding how a healthy brand is build in an entrepreneurial venture in Cape Town.

1.11.3) Population sampling

Three entrepreneurial ventures’ from different industries shall be interviewed and then analysed. The results of this data collected will then be compared against Keller’s brand building methods and the healthy brand criteria. The proposed three companies are as follows, “Skinny Scoop”, “Thalia Strates”, and “Nifty250”.

1.11.4) Data collection methods

This research will consist of qualitative data. The participants of this study will be interviewed. An interview will be carefully planned and considered in order to gather the correct information. This interview will consist of open and closed ended questions regarding brand building methods and the success of the entrepreneurial venture in question. The interview session will be recorded, and once recorded it will be transcribed. The purpose of using interviews is to gain an in depth insight into these business owners and understand the workings of an entrepreneurial venture.

1.11.5) Data analysis methods

The content that is collected from these interviews shall be analyzed and coded. “Coding is the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units” (Maree, 2016). Coding the interviews will therefore allow for better understanding of the data that has been gathered. The data will then be compared with Keller’s four steps of brand building, and it will be analyzed whether or not it correlates with these methods. It will then be further analyzed to see if it does in fact result in achieving the healthy brand criteria. Alternatively if there is no relation to Keller’s model, it will be uncovered what other methods of brand building have been used and if these are other more effective ways of reaching this healthy brand status.

1.12) Ethical Concerns

It is crucial to represent participants of the study fairly and accurately. It may be difficult to get all the information needed, as some businesses may not share all the necessary information. Information that is published must not damage the reputation of the startups involved or misrepresent them. All participants must not be reflected in a negative light and they must all be credited. If some participants wish to remain anonymous then that will be the case.

1.13) Delimitation of Field of Study

This research is specific to Cape Town, however not every startup in Cape Town can be examined. Therefore the data shall only be gathered from a few startups in this region. This research is very context specific and results may be different according to industry and geography.

1.14) Validity and reliability

Although it is difficult for qualitative data to be accurate and reliable all of the time, this study shall include forms for participants to sign in order for them to be honest during the interviews. The coding of the interviews shall follow a logical flow in order for it to be able to be replicated by other researchers.

One researcher shall analyze the data and a consistent way of measuring this data will be executed.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1) Introduction

This research focuses on individual concepts and social interaction and will therefore be examined through an interpretivist lens. Interpretivism is a contrasting epistemology to postivism, due to the fact that “interpretivists start from the premise that the subject matter of the social sciences – people and their institutions – is fundamentally different from that of natural sciences” (Bryman & Bell, 2014:14). This research focuses on brand building methods of entrepreneurial ventures that are based in Cape Town, South Africa. It is a case study of three separate businesses and the aim is to understand how these businesses have built their brands and if they do indeed reach a healthy brand status.

It is crucial to understand the relevance of this research in a South African context, as entrepreneurship plays a vital role in building the economy. It is understood that branding within an organization is crucial for the overall success of a business. Therefore this research delves into what methods of brand building are used by these smaller businesses. This research will be based on Kevin Lane Keller’s seminal work of his customer based brand-building model. It will also be based on Carmody, Cook, Erwin & Enslin’s healthy brand criteria. The data collected from this research will be examined in a deductive manner.

2.2.) Defining the terms ‘entrepreneurial ventures’ and ‘startup’

These terms can be understood as one and the same concept. However for the purpose of this research paper, these two terms must be clearly separated. The research will focus on entrepreneurial ventures and how they have approached brand building for their organisations. An entrepreneurial venture is the action of taking an idea and transforming it into an expectantly profitable business venture (BusinessDictionary.com, 2016). In the life cycle of business ventures the startup stage would occur in the second phase of seven phases according to Van Aardt (2011). This ‘startup’ phase of an entrepreneurial venture would include “the prototype being developed, the business plan refined, a management team identified, and the market analysis undertaken” (Van Aardt, 2011:345). Van Aardt (2011) has made these seven phases of the business venture life cycle clear. These phases are as follows:

Phase 1: Seed or concept.

Phase 2: Startup.

Phase 3: Product or organizational development.

Phase 4: Production and market development.

Phase 5: Major financing.

Stage 6: Rapid expansion.

Stage 7: Maturity.

Therefore the term ‘entrepreneurial venture’ will be used throughout this research instead of ‘startup’. This research will focus on entrepreneurial ventures that are still in the early phases of development and that have not been in business for more than two years. The three entrepreneurial ventures that are examined in this paper were all established in the year 2014. The reason for this is being that this is the stage where the process of creating the organisational brand starts and in particular, focuses on creating the identity of the organization. It will be evaluated how these three organisations have established their individual brands over this two year period.

2.3.) The importance of branding in entrepreneurial ventures

Bresciani & Eppler (2010) have conducted a research study on branding practices in entrepreneurial businesses in Switzerland. The research shows that “branding is a crucial activity for the successful establishment of a new company, that helps customer acquisition, retention and to build a favourable reputation” (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010:356). The research is focused on how these ventures - approach building a brand and what challenges “young ventures face in the branding inception focus” (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010:356). This research was conducted using a case study approach, where 15 of the largest and most successful entrepreneurial ventures in Switzerland were examined. This research is helpful as it shows the different steps of branding an un-established small organisation. Even though the study is based in Switzerland, elements of the brand building process will be relevant to this research.

Brand building is crucial to the success of any company, especially entrepreneurial ventures as they are most likely created from a zero-base, and therefore the brand building process must start from building a strong brand identity (Keller, 2001).

Branding can bring many advantages for a company such as adding to a company's competitive edge, thus making it crucial element of an organisation (Abimbola, 2001). Branding can “represent an important determinant both of effectiveness and ability of the firm to link its internal and external environment successfully” (Abimbola, 2001:100). Abimbola (2001) discusses how branding is important for small businesses in order for them to flourish and how branding can be used as part of an organisation's competitive strategy. It also shows that unlike a corporate business model, a startup has to go about the branding practice in a way that is innovative and creative as it is more compatible.

Nyman (2013) has conducted research that explores the importance of brand building for entrepreneurs. The results of this research indicate that entrepreneurs find brand building essential for their organisations and implement brand building methods in their strategies unconsciously (Nyman, 2013). According to Nyman (2013) “Startups can be called the only companies that are able to build their corporate brands from a clean slate, and thus the entrepreneur's mindset towards corporate brand building is also key for successful brand building activities in a startup company”.

There are benefits to being ‘brand orientated’ in a business. “By using brands as a starting point in the formulation of company strategy, brand orientation should be created as a pre-condition, with well-established brands being able to the ability of the companies to compete as well as generating growth and profitability” (Merrilees & Wong, 2008:372).

2.4) What is a ‘brand’

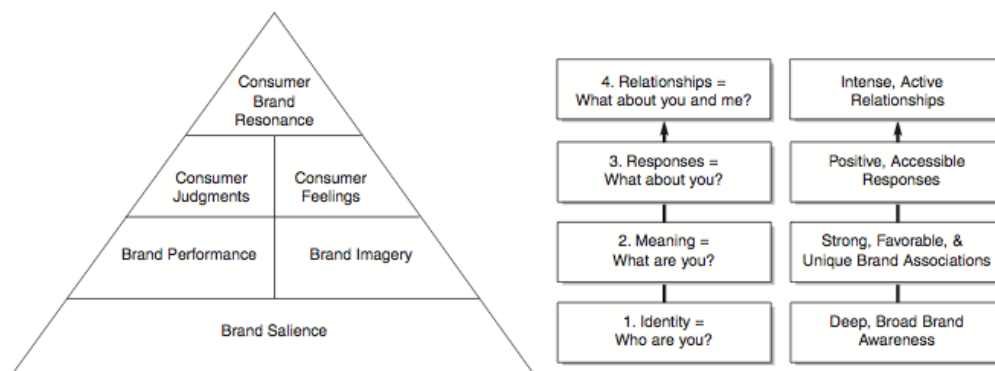
“A brand is a social construct” which means that society has shaped the concept of a ‘brand’ (Klopper & North, 2011:15). According to the AMA a brand can be defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition” (Klopper & North, 2011:15). A brand can be present in many forms and spheres, such as commercial, political, a person, or a city and so forth (Klopper & North, 2011:15). “Although each of these spheres of branding has a unique nature, they each have one thing in common – the conscious development of a particular and unique meaning that holds value and connects with people” (Klopper & North, 2011:15). Another definition of the term ‘brand’ according to Wood (2000) is that it is the primary point of differentiation between competitive offerings, thus making a brand crucial to the success of a company.

2.5) The branding process

This research will be based on Keller's brand building model, which includes four steps to creating a brand. These four steps are as follows:

- 1.) The first step is to ensure identification of the brand with customers and an association of the brand in the customers' minds with a specific product class or customer need.
- 2.) The next step is to link the brand strategically with tangible and intangible brand associations.
- 3.) The third step is to get the correct response from the customer when they see this brand identity and brand meaning.
- 4.) The last step is to be able to transform this response into an action and create a loyal relationship between the customer and the brand.

Figure 1. Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid



Keller's Customer-based brand equity model assists in managing the brand building efforts of a company. As seen in figure 1, branding starts with identity and brand meaning, which means asking those difficult questions of who the brand actually is and what it stands for. The last point is brand resonance, this only occurs when all the other brand building blocks have been established. "With true brand resonance, customers express a high degree of loyalty to the brand such that they actively seek means to interact with the brand and share their experiences with others" (Keller, 2008). This model focuses on how the customer experiences the brand, therefore building a brand based on the customers connect to it. This brand building model provides a measure or "yardstick by which brands can assess their progress in their brand building efforts" (Keller, 2008:19).

Social media is a valuable platform for branding to be expressed. "Social media has and still is revolutionizing how organisations are reaching out to their consumers" (Awad & Fatah, 2015). For the purpose of this research, entrepreneurial companies' social media platforms shall also be examined in order to analyze if branding through these platforms can contribute to making a healthy brand.

2.6) Brand Building in a South African Context

In order to understand entrepreneurial ventures in the South African context, Brand, du Preez & Schutte (2007) discuss how the South African climate influences these ventures. "Although the current economic and political environment is favourable towards entrepreneurs who operate their own businesses, most SMMEs in the informal sector find it difficult to survive or contribute formally to economic activities" (Brand, du Preez & Schutte, 2007:188).

This research study shows that entrepreneurial organisations in the informal sector have various challenges that add to their high failure rate. This study is relevant to this research as it provides insight into how entrepreneurship works in a South African context.

Witbooi (2011) also helps to contextualize entrepreneurship in South Africa. Witbooi's (2011) research discuss the success factors of entrepreneurial activity within the context of the Overberg region in the Western Cape, South Africa. This research is relevant as it aims to understand what makes a startup successful in this context. This research shows that entrepreneurs are struggling to get support and funding in order to grow their business ventures. In addition, lack of skills also affects the growth of entrepreneurial ventures in this particular research.

Neneh (2011) outlines the difficulties facing entrepreneurial ventures in South Africa. “In South Africa, the number of SME (small, medium enterprises) failures in year 5 varies between 50 and 95% and about 75% of new SMEs do not become established firms, which is one of the highest in the world” (Neneh, 2011:3365). This shows that there are factors that are working against small businesses starting in South Africa.

It is important to note how South African society and the South African consumer has shifted and changed over the past twenty years. Branding and marketing need to keep up with this ever-changing context. Some of the problems that entrepreneurial ventures would face whilst branding in this context according to Mackay (2014) would be as follows:

- “There is a large insight gap in South African marketing. Many brands are still communicating in cliché, operating with a superficial understanding of their customers and their needs, and compromising quality” (Mackay, 2014:13).
- “Young South Africans are also more likely to prefer international brands and chose an international brand as their favourite brand and as the brand that best understands them” (Mackay, 2014:13).

Therefore it is evident that there needs to be more support for local businesses in South Africa. Small businesses face overwhelming odds to gain success in South Africa.

2.7) Understanding the term ‘healthy brand’

The research question in this study requires an understanding of the term ‘healthy brand’. Most of the literature mentioned above focuses on brand building practices in startup business ventures, and understanding these entrepreneurial ventures in the South African context, however it does not explain what the term ‘healthy brand’ means. Carmody, Cook, Enslin & Erwin (2010) discuss the seven points as to what defines a healthy brand. These seven points are as follows:

- 1.) Does the brand have a particular and meaningful purpose?
- 2.) Is the brand purpose served in all that the brand does?
- 3.) Does the brand have a distinctive identity?
- 4.) Is the brand an engaging, authentic and coherent communicator?
- 5.) Does the brand add value to the lives of people?
- 6.) Does the brand build sustainable relationships by never taking more than it gives?

- 7.) Does the brand and the business demonstrate that profit is not the driver but a consequence of all the above?

This research project aims to examine whether certain brand building practices within entrepreneurial business ventures can lead the brand to achieve this 'healthy brand' status. By interviewing entrepreneurs and their companies in Cape Town, this research will determine whether these entrepreneurial business ventures can achieve this healthy brand status through certain branding practices.

2.8) Conclusion

Entrepreneurial ventures are crucial to the contribution the South African economy. There is no doubt that these ventures face many challenges in building a brand in this specific context. It is thus vital for these entrepreneurial ventures to really understand the market place in order to create a brand that can be successful.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1) Introduction

Research can be defined as “one of many different ways of knowing or understanding ... a process of systematic inquiry that is designed to collect, analyze, interpret, and use data” (Mertens, 2015:2). This research will consist of mostly qualitative data and it will examine the nature of healthy brand building within the entrepreneurial business model. This research will use a collective case study design, which allows the researcher to explore differences within and between cases (Maree, 2016:82). Three entrepreneurial ventures will be interviewed in depth and data about their brand building practices will be gathered and examined in order to try to solve the research problem.

The two main themes that occur in this research are brand building and entrepreneurship. Brand building and creating a powerful brand is a vital part and asset for any business. This process may be different for different companies, therefore it is interesting to investigate methods utilized for this process.

The researcher interviewed three entrepreneurial companies in Cape Town from different industries in order to understand what it takes to create a healthy brand within that specific business model. The particular research problem investigated was: what are methods are used by entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town to create a healthy brand?

3.2) Methodology

Research methodology “implies more than simply the methods you intend to use to collect data. It is often necessary to include a consideration of the concepts and theories which underlie the methods” (University of Manchester, 2016). Methods are tools that researchers use to collect data (Maree, 2016:4). The following will explain the methods used in this research project to collect data and then analyze this data.

3.2.1) Methodological orientation

The nature of research can either be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Qualitative research refers to an emphasis on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011:31). It normally includes methods such as surveys. This is different to quantitative research, which emphasizes the testing of theories, a deductive approach and a focus on numbers (Bryman & Bell, 2011:31). Mixed methods refers to a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methodology being used. This research was qualitative in nature, adopting an interpretivist epistemological orientation. This was done in order to fully understand the motivation and perspectives for these entrepreneurial ventures in their brand building process in detail.

3.3) Population and sample

Three entrepreneurial companies will be interviewed. These companies are based in Cape Town and were all launched in the year 2014.

Table 1: The entrepreneurial ventures involved in this study

<u>Company Name</u>	<u>About</u>
Ucook (2014)	Ucook is an online service that provides ready-to-cook nutritious meals that are delivered to your door. Each week new recipes are placed on their website that one can choose and order.
Skinny Scoop (2014)	Skinny Scoop is the first premium protein ice cream brand to launch in SA. The product is available at certain outlets such as Spar and the Wellness Warehouse.
Nifty250 (2014)	Nifty250 is a website that allows easy printing of your photographs. It is a stress free method of printing photographs and it links directly to your Instagram account.

	The photographs are then delivered, making the printing process easy and simple.
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3.4) Research Design

Research design refers to “the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data” (University of Southern California, 2016). This research was qualitative in nature and followed a case study design. The advantage to this specific design is that it is an interactive study and allows for in depth understanding of human choices. The field of research that this project delves into is so broad, therefore a case study design allows for a few researchable examples to occur. A case study also allows for the testing of theories to see whether they apply to phenomena in the real world (University of Southern California, 2016). It was investigated whether the steps in Keller’s brand building model are utilized. It was also investigated whether these steps translate into helping achieve the healthy brand criteria.

3.5) Data Collection

Data collection refers to “the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes” (Northern Illinois University, 2005). It is important to collect data correctly in order to have more reliable research, and the incorrect collection of data could lead to skewed results. The data was collected in the form of interviews. These interviews were structured and consisted of a combination of closed and open-ended questions. The interview was recorded and then transcribed. These interviews were conducted with the owners of each of the businesses in order to get the best insights into these businesses.

3.6) Data Analysis

There are a few general steps in analyzing qualitative data according to Maree (2016) these steps include: the preparation of data, describing the participants and sample, organizing the data, transcribing the data, and then finally getting to know the data. In order to analyze the data in this research, the information from the interview must be organized systematically. The interview responses will then be coded in order to understand the data better. “Coding is the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units” (Maree, 2016:116). Therefore the interviews will be coded in order to understand where the brand building techniques fit in and the healthy brand criteria. A priori coding system will be used, which means that the “meaning units are established prior to the data-analysis based upon some theory” (Maree, 2016:116). The meaning units in this research will be based upon Keller’s brand building model and Enslin’s healthy brand criteria. It is vital that coding is consistent in order to make it reliable. Stability or intra-coding refers to the same coder should use the same codes for data in a consistent manner in order for the data to be more reliable (Maree, 2016:119).

3.7) Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the research. Trustworthiness is “of the utmost importance in qualitative research” (Maree, 2016:123). Four criteria put forward by Guba (1981) helps to assess the trustworthiness of research. The first one is credibility, which deals with how the reader will believe the findings. The second is transferability, which focuses on context. Dependability is the next step and is demonstrated through the research design. The last of the criteria is confirmability, which is about the research remaining unbiased through the study.

3.8) Conclusion

This research was designed as a collective case study that is qualitative in nature. It investigated the brand building methods of three different entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town, namely Ucook, Skinny Scoop, and Nifty250, and compare them to Keller’s (2008) model.

In addition, it was investigated whether or not these methods used to build the brand, actually lead for the healthy brand status to be reached.

Chapter 4 – Data collection, Analysis and Findings

4.1) Data Collection

The data for this research was collected by means of interviews. The researcher conducted separate interviews with three separate entrepreneurial ventures that are based in Cape Town. These companies were Skinny Scoop, Nifty250, and Ucook. The founders of each of these companies were interviewed on separate occasions. These three entrepreneurial ventures all started from the ground up and were all launched in the year 2014. Each company is in a different industry and focuses on a different target market. The data collected and the subsequent analysis of the same data, is done so based on a qualitative research approach. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and finally coded. The aim was to collect data that could help uncover what brand building methods were utilized by these three companies. The purpose of which, ultimately aims to answer to what is at the core of brand building within a startup business model, and in addition, uncovering effective ways of creating a healthy brand within an entrepreneurial venture in Cape Town. The data has been coded from an inductive perspective (Maree, 2016) and was also largely informed by Keller's brand building model (Keller, 2001). Keller's brand building model was used to examine the success of each entrepreneurial ventures' brands methods. Lastly, the interview questions themselves were informed by the criteria highlighted by Carmody, Cook, Enslin & Erwin (2010) to determine whether they have been successful in achieving the healthy brand criteria.

4.2) Data Analysis

As mentioned above, this study was a qualitative study which focused on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011:31). It adopts the view of social reality as "both constantly shifting and emergent, as interpreted by individuals" (Bryman & Bell, 2011:31). Qualitative data is difficult to analyze as it "tends to be an ongoing and iterative (non-linear) process" (Maree, 2016:109).

Furthermore, the research was based on an inductive data analysis as “themes are allowed to emerge from the data itself” (Maree, 2016:39). The transcribed interviews were coded using key words from Keller’s brand building model as well as the healthy brand criteria as the main code. The code made use of elements such as brand identity, brand meaning and purpose, brand response, and brand relationships and associations as defined in chapter 2. Keller’s model is based on shaping how the customer thinks and feels about the brand in order to create a strong brand with a high equity. These also intersect with some of the healthy brand criteria. For example, “does the brand have a clear and meaningful purpose?” is an element of a healthy brand. The interviews were analyzed as such in order to assess whether these business owners believe that their brands really add value to the lives of their customers and also if they think that their businesses are indeed sustainable.

4.3) Data Interpretation

The data from all three interviews showed that the building of the brand has been crucial part of growth and directly linked to the success of the brand. These brand-building methods also overlap with the healthy brand criteria. Each interviewee expressed that the consumer is becoming increasingly more judgmental of brands and therefore brands need to be able to compete at this high level of expectation. Each business has focused on customer relationships, proving that Keller’s brand building model does indeed come into play. Lucas Adams stated that Nifty250 are all about customer experience, “you here to run a business you have to have customers, and they have to be the number one thing you care about” (Lucas Adams, 2016). David Torr from Ucook also emphasized customer relations, stating that customer service is one of the best touch points they have. Lastly, Skinny Scoop founder Gabriella Esposito also highlighted that customer perceptions and service is crucial for any brand. Keller’s model focuses specifically on how the brand is positioned in the consumer’s mind and this ultimately impacts on the brands equity (Keller, 2008). Each brand pays specific attention to the positioning the brand in the mind of the consumer, and this is mostly done through brand associations and collaborations. Brand identity and purpose are important starting blocks for each of these companies.

The interview questions were tailored specifically to uncover branding practices of these three businesses. There were similarities between the three businesses in terms of brand building practices.

Each business has a clear purpose and this is visible to their consumers. By having a clear purpose it helps to create a better culture within the business and among employees, as employees can really embody the values of the brand. Each business was asked what their purpose and vision was for their brand, and all three had strong answers. Each business has a strong reason for existing, thus contributing to the businesses being a healthy brand. These three companies all thrive through knowing that they add value to people's lives. For example Nifty250's founder, Lucas Adams stated that his business is where he wants his customers to want to come and "have a great experience and feel a part of something that is local" (Lucas Adams, 2016).

Ucook's David Torr also points out the value that the company offers to its customer's lives. "It also allows you to eat healthy food without have to go to the grocery store. The organic aspect is also huge. The meat comes from a sustainable source. A lot of people are tapping into a holistic lifestyle. Also generally speaking people want to learn to cook but they don't have the time or energy to go to a cooking class." (David Torr, 2016).

Skinny Scoop's value-add is also clearly expressed. "We want to make products that are indulgent and delicious, but at the same time are healthy and give you nutritional benefits. So I think that's our goal, to use natural ingredients and locally sourced ingredients, to support local business. Promoting local business and helping each other is important, there are so many international companies coming here all the time" (Gabriella Esposito, 2016).

4.4) Findings

4.4.1) Skinny Scoop Interview

The key findings that derived from the interview with Skinny Scoop protein ice cream were that the company has a strong sense of purpose and brand identity. The company, which was registered in 2014, spent almost a year and a half of strongly focusing on creating the brand before actually starting to trade. The company did employ a creative agency in order to help with the actual visual aspect of the branding such as the packaging and the logo.

Gabriella Esposito, who is one of the founders of the company, explained that her and her business partner Jarred Plug came up with the idea and thought of the “who, what, and why” before the company started. Skinny Scoop aims to be South Africa’s first premium protein ice cream. They differentiate themselves through sleek packaging, and there is a monochrome colour palate present in Skinny Scoop’s branding, creating a modern, yet also classic and timeless feel. The brand has clear goals for the future, and understands the nature of the ever-changing business trends in Cape Town. Staying ahead of trends and being aware of new products on the market help Skinny Scoop in the competitive health food market in Cape Town.

In terms of brand building methods Skinny Scoop has made use of personal networks such as friends and families, utilizing connections in order to build brand awareness. Skinny Scoop is also extremely careful with who and what the brand is associated with. The brand uses social media as an important touch point with its customers. Dealing with customers and creating a good customer relationship is imperative to the brand. Gabriella Esposito highlighted that communicating directly through social media has been a good touch point with the customer. Customers enjoy to be featured on the Skinny Scoop’s social media as they like to feel special and a part of the brand, Gabriella explained. Skinny Scoop also used brand associations and used events such as the Lorna Jane launch as a tool for marketing the product. However, the brand is aware of the associations it makes.

4.4.2) Nifty250 Interview

Nifty250 focuses on having clear and simple branding that is easy for people to recall. The brand also focuses on creating an emotional connection between the brand and customers. The brand taps into nostalgia, especially since the brand deals with photographs, which does have an emotional element for people. Nifty250 focus’s on providing a great experience for customers. It also works on creating a good culture among the employees. The business ensures that the branding is on everything the business does. Lucas Adams, one of the founders of Nifty250, emphasizes that believing in your brand and being proud of the brand is what also helps the brand to be successful. The founders’ really live this brand and bring it to life.

Nifty250 also made use of personal networks in order to get the brand out there. Talya Goldberg, the co-founder of the company, was an established blogger and Instagram persona.

Her network was leveraged in order to promote the brand. Nifty250 is a part of the Instagram community, and aim to live through their audience. This makes the brand personal for customers. The brand elicits the correct response from customers because of this close relationship between the customer and the brand. Nifty250 focuses on making a nostalgic and intimate relationship with its customers.

Customers are drawn to the convenience of the brand, as it is quick and easy to order photos. More importantly, customers are drawn to the detail of the brand's essence and personality. For example Nifty250 makes use of emoji's, thus making the language of the brand more colloquial and relatable. This attention to detail is something that is clearly part of their brand identity and they have been successful in translating this to their brand image. This clear brand identity is then coupled with a product offering that actually works, therefore making it easy to see why Nifty250 has grown into a success.

4.4.3) Ucook Interview

Ucook has come a long way since starting in 2014. After a slow start the company is now growing at a rapid pace of about 20% per month. The company has had to expand its workforce in order to keep up with this fast paced growth. Ucook delivers around 4000 meals per month and aims to deliver 50 000 meals per month by the end of the year. The company is in the process of doing a complete rebranding.

Currently, one of the founders, David Torr, feels that the branding of Ucook does not have any relevance to the company and what it stands for. The new rebranding of the company will be edgy and simple, and have more relevance to the company. The company also feels as though it is not reaching the over 40-year-old target market effectively.

The company relies on customer service as being the most effective touch point with customers. The company also made use of collaborations and partnered up with other brands in order to build brand awareness. The brand is playful and light hearted. The personality of the brand and the brand identity is not as well established at this point in time. Although the service has beautiful and well-crafted aesthetics, the actual brand needs work at this moment in time.

Ucook does bring value into people's lives and promotes ethically sourced and nutritious meals. It is convenient and easy as well as providing a service that can teach one how to cook in a home environment. The company had trouble explaining the concept online to customers in the beginning. However, now the company is growing increasingly just through word of mouth. The rebranding of the company may help to potentially reach the over 40 market and boost the success of the business even further.

4.5) Interpretation of Findings

Through analyzing the data collected in the interviews with the three entrepreneurial ventures that are Skinny Scoop, Nifty250, and Ucook, there are some patterns that can be seen in the way these businesses have built a brand. These brand-building methods that have been uncovered resemble Keller's brand building model. In addition, they also contribute to these brands achieving the healthy brand criteria.

With each case study, the purpose of each of the businesses was clear. Purpose and brand identity is the first step of Keller's model. A distinct brand identity can help to create a deep sense of brand awareness. A brand needs a strong reason for existing and it is crucial to add value to the customer's life. Through this research, it can be seen that a brand with a strong purpose are the brands that are the healthiest and most successful. Ucook acknowledges that their brand identity system needs improvement, hence the rebranding that is currently taking place. All three of the companies have clear reasons for existing and this purpose story is crucial in order for a healthy brand to be created. Each company has reason for existing and brings value into the lives of their customers. This research showed that without a value-add a brand is useless and will not be successful.

Skinny Scoop and Nifty250 both have a strong sense of brand identity. The aesthetics are clear and differentiate the brands within their specific markets. David Torr from Ucook stated Ucook has recently undergone a re-branding and this will help them to strengthen their brand identity, which will result in increasing their brand awareness and being able to reach the target markets they intend on. Regarding the actual brand name and aesthetics of the brand, each of the companies stated that it was best to keep it simple and relevant. Even in the re-branding of Ucook, they have simplified and made the branding more relevant to the purpose of the company.

The relationship with the customer is vital for all three of these companies and each ensures that customer relationships are valued. Nifty250 and Ucook especially thrive off good customer experience due to the fact that they do their business mostly online. How the brand interacts with people, whether it be customers, stakeholders, or employees, people are an essential part of creating a healthy brand. Therefore good customer relationships and providing a good experience with the brand are crucial for businesses, especially in the e-commerce industry. This research showed that human capital is vital in any business, and how people are treated is linked to the success of a business. Skinny Scoop also follows a customer centric model, and they ensure that customers are dealt with in the most efficient and personal way as possible. Keller's model mentions relationships and associations, and associating the brand with other brands or people was another finding that occurred in this study. All three of the companies did collaborations and often did launch events with brands that would create a good synergy between the brands. For example Skinny Scoop did a launch event with Lorna Jane active wear, and this worked because it reached out to the same target market. It is beneficial to both brands as they can feed off each other and promote each other.

Brand positioning was another big thing for creating a brand amongst these entrepreneurial ventures. Each company said that the way the customer views the product can be a large determining success factor of the business. This is also related to Keller's model, as brand response is a key factor. For example Skinny Scoop has targeted the 'health market' and educated individuals who are trying to live a healthy balanced lifestyle. Therefore they have not positioned the product as a fitness product, which would be directed at a market that dedicates their entire lifestyles to fitness such as athletes and body builders. This is due to the fact that this market would prefer a protein shake rather than a protein ice cream. This product is aimed for a person wishing to have a more balanced well-rounded lifestyle.

Therefore it can be seen that Keller's model does indeed come into play regarding the building of brands in these entrepreneurial ventures. The first step is 'who are you?' which is brand identity. The second step is 'what are you?' which relates to bringing value to customers' lives. The third step is 'what about you?' which is all about brand response from the customers. Finally, the last step is 'what about me and you?' which is referring to customer relationships and brand associations. All three companies have made use of these brand-building steps. These brand-building steps lead to creating a high brand equity as they give the brand meaning and

value. These steps are definitely linked to the healthy brand criteria as the healthy brand criteria relate to having a meaningful purpose, a clear brand identity system, and adding value to the lives of people, just to name a few.

4.6) Conclusion

The data presented in this study, indicate some clear brand building methods that will particular serve entrepreneurial ventures well in establishing their brands. Many of these were highlighted above, but can be summarised as follow:

- Simplicity is key, the brand logo and name must be simple yet effective.
- Relevance, the branding must have some relevance to the company and not just be aesthetically pleasing. A brand must also maintain relevance in the market place.
- The brand must be on everything the company does in order to emphasize it.
- Interaction with customers is the most crucial part of a brand. It can make or break the business. Brand response can indicate how the branding works or not.
- The brand identity needs to be clear from the beginning. This includes brand personality, brand as a symbol, as a product, and as a company. This positions the brand in a certain way in the consumer's mind, which is vital to the success of the branding.

In addition to the brand building steps highlighted above, there were also clear evidence from the findings that entrepreneurial ventures secure better odds of success by focusing on the healthy brand criteria as a guideline for building their brands. Some of the key findings to this point were:

- If the company has a strong sense of purpose and identity, this reflects in the success of the brand.
- Building relationships and doing collaborations also help position the brand in a certain way.
- How the customer feels about the brand and connects to it is vital to the company's success.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1.) Conclusion

This research uncovered that Keller's brand building model and steps can be used and are used by entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town. This research also shows that these steps link to becoming a healthy brand. Each of the three businesses achieves the healthy brand criteria, except for the issue of sustainability being the one element that presents some difficulty for the brands. Brand identity, meaning, response and relationships are important elements that can be seen in Skinny Scoop, Nifty250 and Ucook.

A few brand-building methods were uncovered in this research that proved to help each of these entrepreneurial ventures on the journey to success. The aesthetics of the brand must remain simple and relevant. A strong brand identity system must be in place from the beginning. The brand also needs to have a strong value-add in order to compete in the market place. These are elements that must be dealt with first before anything else. This will determine brand response, which can make or break a brand. Brand response helps a brand to judge the success of their positioning. Brand associations also help the brand to deepen awareness and position the brand in a certain way. Brand relationships are the most important element out of Keller's model and this can be seen in this research. The relationships the brand has with customers, employees, or stakeholders are vital, as this is how people connect with the brand, and ultimately determines the success of a brand. Lastly, there is an order or 'brand ladder' as Keller (2008) calls it. This refers to the fact that each step is a building block and certain steps must be done first in order for the rest to follow. This research showed that the steps must be followed in order to build a brand from the bottom up.

5.2.) Implications of findings

The findings of this study show that the first step of building a brand is indeed to have a strong brand identity and purpose story. The brand has to have a reason to exist and provide value. The aesthetics of the brand are important too, especially amongst consumers today as they are more aware and judge brands more harshly. The findings show that there definitely are key steps that must be taken first to build a successful and healthy brand. Keller's model does provide those steps and as seen in the case studies, following these steps do work to produce a successful brand.

Ucook is a brand that proves that an identity system needs to be put into place in order for a brand to be successful. The company is doing a re-brand in order to have a stronger and more relevant identity. This will result in deepening their brand awareness among their consumers. This shows that the first step of the brand creating an identity system is vital for the progression of the next steps of building a brand.

This research indicates that it is very difficult to achieve the healthy brand status by achieving all the criteria put in place by Carmody, Cook, Erwin & Enslin (2010). Although Keller's brand building steps do allow for some of the healthy brand criteria to be reached, not all could be achieved. For example, Ucook has followed the brand-building model, and the brand understands that a strong brand identity needs to be one of the first steps in creating a successful brand. Ucook achieves the following of the healthy brand criteria:

- It has a meaningful purpose
- This purpose is served by all the brand does
- The brand has a distinctive identity (post rebrand)
- The brand communicates coherently
- The brand adds value to the lives of people
- The above is a profit driver for the business

This means that the brand has achieved six out of the seven healthy brand criteria. The one point of being a healthy brand that the Ucook does not seem to be reaching is the sustainability aspect of a healthy brand. David Torr explains that he does not think that the business is sustainable as he believes that the product offering may not be a need in the future. However he states that it possibly could evolve and adapt to the changing needs and demands in the market. Sustainability is the concern for all three of these companies, as changing markets, demands, and technology provides a climate that is constantly in flux. Nifty250's and Skinny Scoop both stated that their brands will be sustainable as long as they are able to keep up and adapt to these environmental changes.

5.3) Recommendations

These three companies should keep updated with changing trends and the demands of customers. The macro factors affecting these businesses are volatile and as long as the needs of the

customers are constantly being met, and if these ventures are able to keep ahead of market trends and up to date with the changing environment, it will enable the companies to become more sustainable. These ventures should think of ways to become more sustainable in terms of creating a conscious consumer. Although all three companies promote local trade and business, Ucook is the only one that promotes locally grown and sourced food. Skinny Scoop imports some of their ingredients, and although this is cheaper for the business currently, it may be more beneficial for the South African economy and more sustainable to source ingredients locally.

Brand awareness is also a big factor for these specific companies, although they have each grown rapidly, they show that small enterprises have to focus a reasonable amount of energy on creating brand awareness. This is due to the fact that these businesses came into the market as completely new brands. This brand awareness stems from having effective aesthetics and a strong identity system. However, these ventures should also do collaborations with charitable foundations that relate to the industries that they are each in. This would be a driver for brand awareness and it would also stimulate a positive brand response.

5.4) Limitations

This research has certain limitations because it only deals with three entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town. This data does not prove true for all entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town. It cannot be seen as a generalization for all start up businesses. It also deals with companies that are in certain industries and therefore it does not cover a broad spectrum of industries. All three companies also prove to be success stories and have shown major growth over time since they each started in 2014. This may not be the case with all entrepreneurial ventures.

This research also in no way is an indicator for the future. This data shows that sustainability is an issue for entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town. Time is also a limiting factor present in this research. This is due to the fact that this research project was limited to the space of a few months in the year 2016, and therefore these companies have been interviewed in a specific time in their business. This is limiting because it could be more accurate and beneficial to monitor these brands over a period of time.

5.5) Ethical Issues

This data had to be handled in such a way not to cast a negative light on any of the brands involved in this study. Any misrepresentation of these brands would be an ethical issue in this research.

Each participant of this study was made aware of the nature of this study and how this data was going to be utilized. Each participant of this research was not coerced into this study, and participated out of his or her own will. The researcher has tried to give accurate findings without being negative or biased about the brands involved.

5.6) Validity and Reliability

It is difficult to ensure that qualitative data remains valid, reliable and unbiased. This research is credible, as the data collected has come from founders of the entrepreneurial ventures examined. Credible sources and participants have been used in this study. In terms of transferability, this study is specific to the context of Cape Town and for companies that have been in business for two years, therefore the results may vary if transferred to other entrepreneurial ventures in Cape Town. Dependability refers to the researcher accounting for the ever-changing environment that the study occurs in, which is highlighted throughout this study. Lastly, confirmability occurs in this study as this data is being checked not only by the researcher conducting the study, but also a supervisor.

Appendix 1

1.1) Example of Interview & Coding – Skinny Scoop (Gabriella Esposito)

Code Key:

Keller's brand building:

Brand Identity

Brand meaning and purpose

Brand Response

Brand relationships and associations

Interviewer: So when did your business start, when did you register?

Interviewee: We registered our business in 2014, I will never forget signing those papers, with my business partner now who was actually my old personal trainer, Jarred, and so we decided to a 50/50 business. We only started trading as Skinny Scoop in June last year. So it's been like a year and a half, and a lot of people wondered what we have been doing for a year and a half, mostly brand stuff.

Interviewer: So have you found an increase in your sales since you started, or have you been going a steady pace, what are your annual sales?

Interviewee: So we actually started in winter and a lot of people asked "why would you start an ice cream business in winter and launch it then?". Our prime time is from September to April each year, that's when it's hot and busy. So the thing is when we launched last year because we were so new on the market and because we were the first protein ice creams in SA we were very busy at the start of last year and we couldn't keep up with orders.

Interviewer: So you were the first protein ice cream in SA? Are you still the only one?

Interviewee: So there's us and another company in Johannesburg called My Whey. We launched at exactly the same time, they launched like two weeks before us. We called ourselves the first premium protein ice cream because all of our ingredients are one hundred percent natural. Its

raw, no sugar, very natural, and it has no weird stuff in it and it still tastes very yum, which is a win. So basically now in winter things have slowed down a lot, because we were new last year there was a such a hype and we were busy. Our summer was very busy, February was our busiest month. We are launching a new flavor soon, so hopefully that will pick up sales again soon.

Interviewer: What is the flavor?

Interviewee: Peanut butter.

Interviewer: So how did you create such a hype when you first came out? Sorry I am deviating a bit from my set questions.

Interviewee: No worries. **Definitely family and friends have been incredible.** We pretty much started doing every event we could think of, whether it be a fitness show or a market, a new coffee shop or clothing shop launch, we tried to be at events that would give us free media exposure.

Interviewer: So did you target private gyms for example like Sweat 1000?

Interviewee: **Not really, we didn't want to just go to gyms. We are available at the BUC fitness club though,** we love their brand and love being a part of them. But we didn't just want to go to the gyms first because I think in Cape Town you have to be so careful with who you target, **because if we were just at the gyms people would think oh its just another health fitness product, when its actually we are trying to market it to moms and kids and families, not just the fitness fanatics.**

Interviewer: Oh okay, so like a healthy alternative?

Interviewee: Exactly. **So kids can have their ice cream and enjoy it and be healthy. This is why we didn't want to just target the gyms.** We started doing fitness shows because both Jarryd and I have experience in the fitness industry so it was quite easy for us to do the stands there. So I must say just social media, if I can give anyone advice, social media is the way to go. Only after a year of trading that I am going to spend more money on social media. Like on facebook you can sponsor posts. Since sales have dropped recently, we have a smaller budget but you would be surprised at how many ads you can get out there. People say its like "fake followers" but not

really you just putting yourself out there for more people to see your product. So I would go more this route this year.

Interviewer: So not so much associating the brand with things or other brands, but rather kind of individual this is who we are and we not attached to anything?

Interviewee: Yes for example we are a Banting product if you had to think of it logically. We have cream and milk in it, but we haven't categorized it as a Banting product because we don't want to be put into that box. Because when Banting is not really hype anymore, you know with cape town the trend changes every two seconds. People would say then I cant eat that ice cream its not Banting or whatever. One of our main outlets is Wellness Warehouse. I am not going to lie their margins are really high and they are a lot more expensive than other stores. We put our prices down especially so that it could stay the same. If had to give our normal margin to Wellness Warehouse compared to other stores, they would be selling our ice cream for like probably like eighty rand more than other stores, which for us as a new business... you have to kind of take the hit sometimes.

Interviewer: Do you rent shelf space or do they buy the product from you?

Interviewee: Yes they buy the product from us at a wholesale price. Every shop has their own margin and you have to try to keep the shop owners and your customers happy, and you also trying to make money. So it's definitely been the hardest thing. But the nice thing with Wellness Warehouse is that people that go there, its not people who just have money that go there, but people who are actually educated. So normal people will see the ice cream and be like oh its thirty five rand for a tub of ice cream, but people at wellness warehouse or health conscious people will know that if you go to Nu for a protein shake after you train – you are going to pay thirty five rand, which is literally a scoop of whey protein with some milk. People are happy to pay the price because they are educated. General people you have to educate them a bit more because initially when they see the price they think it's a bit pricey. But once they know the story behind it, they are happier to pay.

Interviewer: So what are your daily activities in running the business?

Interviewee: I will tell you what I do and then what Jarryd does. I oversee production and the recipe is mine. I kind of bring about the new flavours. So everyday I start by doing some admin

work and then we have a girl names Michelle who works for us in the factory. I will make the mixture and she churns it etc. We are also setting up a second business, a little coffee shop which has been on my agenda a lot lately. Just getting that media up and that branding sorted. Admin, sales, and going to see retailers to see how stock is going. I have definitely found that your customers have to be well looked after, but a very close second is your clients. I will go to Wellness Warehouse and Spar to see how things are going, and so will Jarryd. It gives it a personal touch too, to go there and check up, its an old school way of doing things but I like it. If you want to get done its better, because emails, especially in Cape Town takes like 5 to 7 working days to get a reply. We try being on top of our admin all the time and replying as soon as possible to emails.

Interviewer: So what is the size of your business, how many employees?

Interviewee: It's just myself, Jarryd and Michelle at the moment. Hopefully by October we will have another 4 staff members. So another two girls to help Michelle and we want to make her the manager of the factory. Also we want to get a barrister for our coffee shop. We also need an admin guy to come and handle our everyday orders. So hopefully we will grow our team. One thing I learnt from my dad, he has his own business, is that rather have less staff and treat them really well and they will do their job properly. I would rather have a small team, pay them well and keep them happy. I want a business that runs smoothly with staff I trust.

Interviewer: Okay so now I am going to go onto building the brand and that kind of aspect of the business. So how did you come up with the brand concept or identity? What is your brand identity?

Interviewee: So we came up with the idea to do a protein ice cream and then we decided why do we want to do it and the "how? What? Where?". We registered our company Nu Whey and we were actually going to call the ice cream Nu Whey, I then spoke to my dad and he said that name was aiming more to the fitness market. So then I chatted to a girl named Abigail that did all my dads rebranding and new logo. I explained to her my concept and she is literally one of the best things that ever happened to us. We would give her our ideas and she would change them into something that we kind of saw but we would never have come up with it. We started toying around with the idea of 'scoop' ice cream scoops, different themes and eventually we came up

with Skinny Scoop. So our company is Nu Whey and then we can have brands under that. So that's kind of how the brand was built.

We then decided we wanted to have themes for flavours, like the chocolate flavor is more warm and so we thought we could make it like a 'love flavour'. Like romance. It was terrible. Then we thought of playing with pastel colours, very playful and fun. But then Abby said that our company is not the norm and said we should do the opposite of playful and fun. So we decided to go black, minimal, simple. It makes it sleek and its always trending. Very classic and simple. We looked at what was trending overseas. We found this company, I can't remember what it was called but they do puddings. And they use very sleek black and white branding - very indulgent, and we were like that's the kind of vibe that we want to go with. Then Abigail said why not make the flavours people instead of themes. Which has actually worked out amazingly with kids. Because no one will say they want a vanilla, they want the 'Camilla' one. Because our flavours are Vanilla Camilla and Afterdark Cacao Donatella. And the nice thing is that every time we release more flavours we can do competitions like what do you think the name will be, and this makes it more fun. We will be bringing out a whole new range of stock at the beginning of next year. Everyone wants to know if we will be bringing out a man flavor, so we do have a man in mind. Its very exciting.

Interviewer: So would you consider this brand building as a crucial element to starting your business?

Interviewee: I think about all the things we have spent money and time on and the brand is in the top three. There is so much competition, since we have opened our business I think that there have been another ten new healthy ice cream options that have come out. It's so crazy. So you all have the same product, a frozen dessert, what is going to make you better? Your brand. People love our packaging, some people don't even want to eat it because it looks so nice when you open your freezer and see it.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you get the correct response from your target market? Who is your target market?

Interviewee: Definitely, health market wise has been great. The fitness community prefers to spend money on their supplements and gym. So because of our price bracket, some people see it

as expensive, we have had an average response from the fitness market. A lot of them though do love the protein aspect of it. Health community has been amazing we have had a good response. I am going to be honest with you the only thing that has maybe dropped sales slightly, as cape town is very fickle and all about trends, is the dairy free trend is going at the moment. We actually had thought of dairy free about 6 months ago, the reason why we haven't done it yet is because you need a separate machine, which is expensive. A whole rebrand using coconut milk. Its expensive too because its in imported and people don't realize. So that has dropped sales a bit.

Interviewer: I notice how you have differentiated the “fitness” and the “health” market. Fitness being trainers and that their lives are fitness and health market being more about balance.

Interviewee: Yes exactly. We are all about balance. People ask how much can I have every day, technically you can have one a day. It makes up one third of your fat content for the day.

Interviewer: So what is your purpose and vision of the brand? How did you establish this?

Interviewee: A lot of people have told us if you guys are able to pay yourselves anything after two years of production, you have done well. So basically our goal is to make sure that there is a healthy option that tastes nice, a lot of health products just taste like cardboard. We want to make products that are indulgent and delicious, but at the same time are healthy and give you nutritional benefits. So I think that's our goal, to use natural ingredients and locally sourced ingredients, to support local business. Promoting local business and helping each other is important, there are so many international companies coming here all the time. For example Ben and Jerry's is coming to SA next year – and small businesses will then suffer. People like the brand for example Starbucks – their coffee is disgusting but people love the brand of it. We want to launch a range of products that are under the 30 rand price bracket so we can market to a lower LSM.

Interviewer: Sorry how much do you sell your ice cream for again?

Interviewee: Its 34,99 for small tubs. We are in a higher LSM probably about a 8 to 10 LSM market.

Interviewer: So did you use any unconventional methods when building the brand? Anything out of the ordinary to push your brand?

Interviewee: Not really. **We did the Lorna Jane launch with them.** They are a clothing brand and we are an ice cream brand but all the girls that shop there and can afford to shop there would be our target market.

Interviewer: What would you say is unique to your specific brand? Do your staff embody the values of the business?

Interviewee: We only have one staff member, Michelle but we have become very close with her. With all our staff we want to be a family – I know its cliché. So I think what makes us unique is the way we go about things. We picture our product as very natural, and price increases have really affected us, we have taken a hit but we will still go use locally sourced ingredients. It's actually ironically more expensive than getting from overseas. It's actually cheaper for us to import cream from France than to buy cream locally. I don't know why, there has also been a bit of a cream shortage in SA at the moment. It is ridiculous.

Interviewer: Would you owe a bit of your success to your brand image and do you think your customers embody the brand?

Interviewee: Yes I think so, **we have a good client base**, we have some clients that buy from us every single week and they only buy from us. For example we have this random mom who stays in Vredehoek, and she always posts about us on Instagram and stuff. **To know that people are making good comments online it feels good and that feeling never gets old.** **We have also learnt that people who you affiliate your brand with like "Instagram models" or whatever, a lot of them can make or break your brand. You have to be careful with associations.** For example some of our market is moms and kids, so I don't want to see my ice cream with an Instagram model and then a picture of her in a G-string next to it, you know? **People and brands we associate with have been a big part.** My dad has also played a good role in helping me guide this business. I didn't study business, I did photography, so he has helped a lot. People say they love our logo and packaging, you see when brands make an effort. **People want to feel expensive and worth something and that luxury feeling is what we want to bring.**

Interviewer: Would you say then that you are a prestige brand then?

Interviewee: Yes we definitely want to go that route. For us, our goals are be like Hagen Daze and have people like George Clooney eat our ice cream on TV. We actually have Bryan Habana on board, so when we have a bit more money we will use him for a campaign.

Interviewer: So is the brands purpose served by all that you guys do?

Interviewee: Definitely. Just be healthy and happy and balanced. Enjoy the finer things in life I guess.

Interviewer: What are your most effective touch points with the customer? Social media? You don't really do other advertising?

Interviewee: Social media is a big one. We are part of a PR agency so we have been in magazines and some print media. We do a lot of work with Glamour magazine, they have been amazing. They are always on it and keen. Some magazines make a big effort - which is great. Social media and replying to people is crucial. Replying to comments and messages straight away is important. If someone posts a picture and we share it, people love being affiliated and being involved.

Interviewer: So sorry we nearly at the last question, do you think the brand is sustainable going forward?

Interviewee: Its only going to be sustainable if we keep on our toes and if we make sure that we are following each and every trend. Fortunately I have the luxury of travelling quite a bit, my dad travels to a food show in Italy every year. He always follows new trends. I also follow food bloggers. Germany, weirdly enough, know what's going on, those food bloggers are amazing. And Australia as well. Every change of season our goal is to have a new flavor so it keeps people having something new on their plate. And that's why we also looking to open another business, the coffee shop, so we can feed off the ice cream. We going to be doing different flavoured coffee etc. you have to be creative, especially in Cape Town because it changes all the time. You have to be on your toes and know what's going on.

Interviewer: How is your brand growing? What do you think the future holds for your brand?

Interviewee: Put it this way, there are days, like this past month that have been really crap. Also the reason why is because we are starting a new business with the funds from our current business, which is not making a lot of money because its winter and that's normal. So we spoke to a lot of guys who are business owners and basically our turn over and how things have been going apparently we are doing well. I have been waking up having panic attacks with how are we going to do this winter. But according to more of the experts they have said we could not be going better. We just want to get there slowly. I am only 23 and I just want to make some decent cash by the time I am 25. We are going well and we need to keep up and make sure our product is better than the next one to come out. We also have to keep doing our market research.

Interviewer: Okay awesome, thank you so much for your time I really appreciate it.

Interviewee: No problem, if you left anything out just email me.

Appendix 2

1.2) Example of Interview & Coding – Ucook (David Torr)

Code Key:

Keller's brand building:

Brand Identity

Brand meaning and purpose

Brand Response

Brand relationships and associations

Interviewer: So please can you start off with a brief history of the business and how it all started? How did you come up with the concept and when did you register?

Interviewee: So my background is in business science finance, I did post grad copywriting. I went overseas and worked over there for a bit. I came across a concept called Hello Fresh, which is very similar to Ucook in many ways. Besides from the fact that it doesn't offer selection and choice, it's almost an exact replica of the business model. I've always been a foodie and I owned a restaurant called Bahari, which is still running. I've always been in food and loved cooking, I'm not a chef by any means. I started using Hello Fresh at the time because it made sense. I'm also big into organic produce and it got me into ethical food products. I then thought it would be worth trying to see if the idea would work here [South Africa]. I started it with no funding, like out of my mates garage with no salaries. It was eight months of grueling slave work and we grew really slowly initially, because we didn't have the means to propel the service into the right market space. We relied on good aesthetics to kind of leverage the business into like the media. Trying to acquire PR through nice pictures and stuff and we did this quite successfully. Kind of like 6 months into it we made it into The Argus, we had a full page. Then after that we got noticed by brand houses and blogs and newspapers.

We were delivering about 400 meals a month late last year, so like relatively nothing. Then we thought it was time to acquire funding. So we took a loan in December last year. This year we have grown our revenue by about 440 percent. It's been ridiculous. So we now are delivering about plus minus 4000 meals a month. We have grown like 10x since December last year. We are increasing growth by 20 percent each month. And we have just taken more funding this month so we look to get to 50 to 60 thousand meals a month by the end of the year. And we are

looking to introduce a new product as well. We are going to be introducing meals that are tailored towards family. Catering for four or five meals a week. We also looking to get into like wine and pantry essentials. So Cyber Cellar will be helping us pair wines with the meals and then we are going to have a niche pantry selection of like knives and gourmet products like olive oils etc.

Interviewer: So what is the size of your business? How many employees do you have?

Interviewee: So currently there of 9 of us in the management team and 16 in the packaging environment. It has scaled drastically, there were 3 last year.

Interviewer: Did you have to employ more people to keep up with the growth of business?

Interviewee: Yes. I think one of the key points of success is when things start fraying at the seams. It's been interesting we have had lots of learning. And brand has been one of our key means to success. We realized that there is a space in SA for aspirational brands, brands that have specific traits that SA can really buy into. We took our branding quite seriously, if you look at our website its quite crafted and curated. One of our founders is actually a photographer.

Interviewer: how did you come up with your brand identity? Who is ucook as a brand?

Interviewee: I'm not really good with this kind of stuff. I think that the brand identity can come down to the benefits we provide. We drive three key benefits that are reflected through our site and all our communication. First one is ethical eating, which we think is a huge market differentiator in South Africa. People are stoked to buy into that, like LSM 8 to 10. Organic and sustainability is important. The next thing is 'learn to cook' because it's very much something young women want to pick up. Also in the 30 to 35 year old gap men and women want to learn. Its one of our biggest selling points. Its like a recipe cook book that comes with the food. You don't want to spend ages searching for some obscure Indonesian spice. It just arrives and it works. It's convenient and you can nourish your skills. We released a video series too. It's a cool way to sell the product. Ethical, convenience, and learn to cook. It helps you understand flavor combinations.

Interviewer: What would be the personality of your brand be?

Interviewee: I think it's more about being fun playful, lighthearted. The packaging is quite crafted, very similar to the site. Very clean very simple. Then again, we do have an undertone of playfulness. Our voice on social media is quite playful. I wouldn't say it's too family-centric at the moment. It's a great question that I feel can't be answered full at this point in time.

Interviewer: Would you say that branding is crucial at early stages of development in the business?

Interviewee: I think South Africa is very judgmental of new brands. And you are dealing with millennials who will eventually become your target market and are very critically about aesthetics. Aesthetics are key and brands have to look good and be on point. So yes I definitely think so. We grow 40 percent by word of mouth.

Interviewer: What are your key touch points with your customers?

Interviewee: It's so varied. We do largely emails; social media has been amazing especially because food is so shareable. Getting people to advocate the brand will help to grow it. At the beginning of the year we were on like 2000 likes on Facebook and now we have like 7500, and it's growing each month. Videos have been big as well. We have been collaborating with like Schalk Bezuidenhout, we want to do a Master Chef spoof series. Just very playful and effective. We also going to be trying to get on TV which is exciting.

Interviewer: How would you describe your relationship with your customers at this point?

Interviewee: Customer service is like make or break in the ecommerce environment because you lose the tangible touch point with customers. You don't have that means of engagement. It's vital and that has contributed to our success. We do refunds if there is an issue and deliver new boxes if people are unhappy. Customer service is the best touch point that we have had. Developing relationships with people and making them feel connected to the brand rather than just enterprise.

Interviewer: Did you make use of any unconventional methods when building the brand?

Interviewee: Yes definitely. We have teamed up with Bodytec Health. We partnered with them, we gave a discount to their customers and in return they had to push our brand in their stores. We partnered with Wellness Warehouse. Just to get the word out there. We partnered with We Benefit, Uber, Superbalist, Price check. We did it to get the brand out there. It's very important, especially if you don't have any money.

Interviewer: Do you think it took time to get the brand out there?

Interviewee: It was hard to get people to understand how the service works. It's hard to explain it without laboring people. So that has been challenging.

Interviewer: So who designed your logo?

Interviewee: We are actually about to do a rebrand. We find that our current logo is quite generic it doesn't really speak to people much. It's like a black circle. So we wanted a logo with relevance that speaks to someone. We don't want to follow like other Cape Town brands that look cool but have no relevance. So we are redesigning a colour palate and logo that is quite cooking centric. Still edgy and still simple. More of a message though.

Interviewer: What makes you stand out? How do you differentiate yourself?

Interviewee: Our brand is distinctive stylistically, the aesthetics are very well produced. We want everything to look artful. But Woolworths was doing that ages ago. We do offer a choice though. I don't think brand wise we don't have anything unique at this point in time. Our service is good though. I think brands take time to build. A real brand is something you just know instantly, like coca cola. There's a definitive persona that's attached to that, that's taken years and years to build.

Interviewer: so do you think the brand has effective communication to the target market?

Interviewee: Tough question. No I don't think we are hitting the right target market. We are currently hitting customers that are below 40 years old and I our ideal customer is 40 plus that wants to buy every week so our retention is better. Our current communication and brand exposure makes sense in terms of the market we are hitting currently, which is like young

working professionals that enjoy trendy on point brands. So currently yes and long term no. I think you need to understand who your brand is speaking too. Ultimately we would like to be going older. It will evolve. We are hitting the 20 to 35 year olds. We are still getting to the 40 plus.

Interviewer: what value do you think the brand brings to peoples lives?

Interviewee: Convenience is key. It also allows you to eat healthy food without have to go to the grocery store. The organic aspect is also huge. The meat comes from a sustainable source. A lot of people are tapping into a holistic lifestyle. Also generally speaking people want to learn to cook but they don't have the time or energy to go to a cooking class.

Interviewer: How is your brand growing? What does the future hold?

Interviewee: We want to take on the concept of Africa and go into budding economies, like Botswana, Nigeria, Kenya. We want to grow the trend. The more customers we have the more cost effective it will be. We are heading to more of a main market direction.

Interviewer: Do you think that the brand is sustainable?

Interviewee: The brand is sustainable if the offering out there is so. There are always exits. If you buy into it because you want to learn to cook it may become too basic after a while. If you buy into it for convenience, you may decide to eat out rather. I don't think that it's holistically sustainable as like a grocery disruptor. I think that there has to be other offerings that are added to it. I think there needs to be a box of food that could be delivered with essentials. Maybe have groceries that you could pick up on site. So the brand has longevity sure we can evolve it into something that makes sense. Does the product offering have longevity ten years from now? Probably not.

Appendix 3

1.3) Example of Interview & Coding – Nifty250 (Lucas Adam)

Code Key:

Keller's brand building:

Brand Identity

Brand meaning and purpose

Brand Response

Brand relationships and associations

Interviewer: Okay so I am going to start with about your company, when did you start Nifty250? When did you register? And just like a brief history, like how long you have been running, that kind of thing?

Interviewee: So me and my partner Talya, who isn't here at the moment, we have always been doing business together. Officially we started getting things together in late 2013, and we launched in the beginning of 2014. In December we had the website ready but officially we say 2014 was the first year we started doing business. We had one format, which was our polaroid format, so you could order that online. The process was still the same but it was a much older website. So that was the whole of 2014.

Interviewer: So when did you register?

Interviewee: We only registered last year, so we registered a year and a bit later. Which is pretty quick, I mean a year to do a business. Look a lot of people just want to get that documentation done like their accounting and book keeping etc., which is all good, but I am of the opinion that you first need to learn how to do business through having a business and then do the rest. Everything I am saying is my experience and is purely what works for me, and when I fail I will tweak it. But we registered in 2015, it wasn't because I wanted to look more professional, but there were legal things like we had to VAT register. So Vat registration is when you start doing a turn over of excess of a million rand, and we hit that point last year. We were doing a thing called social printing, which is live events where you print at the event and that was doing really well. Because we were working with brands and agencies and the turn over was much higher more than the orders online. So that was our back end revenue stream, and it was good marketing

as well because people saw us at these events. So that was last year, and this year was the beginning where I said I really want to get professional in terms of book keeping and accounting and have a proper system.

I did industrial design and I had a business before this called Kraftisan, which does product design. We sell some Nifty stuff off that website. It's a registered business and I did it for 3 years its my main baby and its how I got inspired to do Nifty. I have a workshop in Woodstock where we do custom design jobs. We want to have a nifty shop where we have products that we make ourselves.

Interviewer: How did you come up with the name Nifty250?

Interviewee: It started off as 250 gram, that was the original name. It was random and it came from the paper which we use which is 250 paper. It's a stock standard Polaroid printing paper and also "gram" like Instagram. Then we actually had to change the name because Instagram told us so! We got into a situation where we use some of Instagram's technology, in order to get the orders from the clients. We use something called API to access Instagram so that we can actually get the pictures from customers. When you place an order on our site there is a mechanism that happens there that we borrow from Instagram, so they can actually tell us what to do in retrospect. Which is why we are breaking free from Instagram.

Interviewer: That's so crazy so how did you sort that out?

Interviewee: You basically go through certain guidelines and they said to us look you have the word "gram" in your name which is associated to Instagram and even to this day they are very strict and have an Instagram brand policy. So if you want to utilize anything and ride on Instagram's back, you have to fall in line, and I get that, absolutely. So we changed our name, and it was random we wanted to keep 250 in the name and someone just said Nifty250, and I actually didn't really like it but everyone else loved it and it just stuck. We did a complete rebranding and kept it simple with our logo.

Interviewer: So what would be your daily business activities in running the business?

Interviewee: My role is really being a designer, not specific so not only graphic or not only product or illustration. It is really hard to pin me down and say this is my day. I just wake up and make it happen. That's only me, because everyone else who works here has a specific role, I try and keep that process to each one of them so they can cross pollinate and give each other feedback. I don't want people to be bored doing the same thing everyday. Look my average morning I normally do some admin, doing boring stuff. When it comes to running the business I do all of the accounts, like book keeping and admin. I rarely do meetings, I think meetings should only happen if you cannot Skype or phone call or email or voice note. I think that meetings are old school. We have been working on our launch the past six months so that has been taking up my day. So I have been building up and doing a lot of design work with my developer.

Interviewer: What do you mean launch?

Interviewee: Well we are launching a complete new version of business, like everything will be new. New website, products, new formats. This was meant to happen last year. This is going to be the next level, it's going to be completely from the ground up and it incorporates a shop it incorporates two years worth of feedback. We want to build this office to be our actual shop, we have about 15-20 people coming in here everyday so we want to turn this into a coffee shop. Come print pictures, hang out, use the Internet have a coffee. There's a whole another thing. So I mix my day up depending on what product is right product to do at the moment. I do plan in advance; I do plan 3 to 5 days in advance maximum. Every day is a blend of doing admin, doing packing, design, orders, dealing with suppliers. I am completely random about that, it is very hard to pin me down.

Interviewer: okay so what is the size of your business? how many employees do you have?

Interviewee: Well there are 6 of us, 2 part timers, but we very small. To be honest, we probably have too many people we could probably do with less. I think its good to be small and have a small tight team that is very busy to make everyone feel important and have a role. With a startup you are only pinning on as you need it and as you can afford it. It's a very streamline minimalist system. It will get to a point where you have enough revenue to expand. I think it's also a control thing with entrepreneur's in general. Its nice when you have a startup and you have like 4 people that you can sit around the table and know them intimately. And when you get to a

certain size, you have to get a bit more corporate. Like when you have to employ a manager etc. you start getting corporate. And that's where your fundamental culture either works or it doesn't.

Interviewer: Who are you as a brand? Like if your brand had a personality who would it be?

Interviewee: Our personality is like the most hipster, fun, girl or guy going for a walk on the promenade, chilling, reading etc. Our audience is young, but I hate the words like "hip" and "fresh".

Interviewer: Who is your target market?

Interviewee: Our target market is basically everybody, because everybody takes photos and loves them.

Interviewer: But wouldn't it be a higher LSM category because its people who have access to smart phones and things like that?

Interviewee: Absolutely, everyone would use the service. What we offer is not weird and only applicable to a certain audience, the concept of getting photos printed is for everyone. As a brand in this community, its definitely for this generation, it starts from the moment a toddler can start using an iPad and where we end is hard to say, as far into the 40s, we don't really do demographic checks. If you are able to use a phone, you are our target market, but specifically people that use and promote our brand are the bloggers, the influencers, the people in their 20s. People who are up to date, reading news and blogs, reading trends etc. to be very specific if you are an Instagram user up to this point, you are our target market. If you not, then you would not have heard about us. We are breaking from that in three weeks though. That will all change. We are missing some sales because you can't do it directly from a phone. So actually our target market are people who know how to use a laptop. When we launch in a few weeks then everything will be mobile responsive. We want people to be walking, take a picture, place an order right then and there and get it delivered the next day.

Interviewer: So how did you guys come up with your logo? Did you hire someone?

Interviewee: Absolutely not. We do everything. Me specifically I have always done creative stuff, I once again hate the term being a “creative”. But my parents were artists and I always painted, drew, took photos etc. I have done this enough now to know what works. So by the time we sat down and had to rebrand nifty, it was easy we knew it had to be simple and clean, something you can recognize. Everything you see here that has been designed we have done. We have never pulled anyone in.

Interviewee: What do you consider the most important elements of a brand identity for a company in early stages of development?

Interviewer: I that establishing your identity and sticking to it and making sure it is on everything you do, without it being too distasteful, what I mean by that is not pushing it in your face. Lets just say I am selling ice cream, and I have 5 customers, there are a couple ways in which these customers are exposed to your branding. You can be very aggressive and shout it in their face, or you can be very subtle about it.

Interviewer: so were you quite subtle when building your brand? How did you get the brand out there?

Interviewee: I think this is where Talya needs to come in. Her contribution to the business is that she was a blogger, she did the whole blog thing and built up followers. So where I built up business and design, she built up her big network and audience. She leveraged her personal network and her ability to see something that’s good and bad. I learnt from her and she learnt from me, that’s why we work well together. Instagram was really big for her and she was already nailing it when I was like ah Instagram is okay. She knew who the right people were, the bloggers and influencers. So I think early in development, to go back to that question, you need a logo. Keep it simple. Get something that people can recall and that doesn’t tax their minds. Something that is point blank and visually attractive and stands out. All the basic things. But don’t make it too literal. I mean ours is a red circle with an N. But if you look at Kauai, their re-launch is great. It is a great basic logo. MasterCard also did a rebranding. They barely changed it, all they have done is removed things and made it simpler. Human beings are bombarded with so much visual crap out there that people just want to know a colour and a shape and that’s it. So get your logo simple.

The second thing is get your name to be something easy off the tongue. You have to be specific with it. The next thing is you have to think would you have a bumper sticker of your brand on your car? You have to think the brand is cool. I've driven around with two big N's on my car for like the past three years and I am stoked to do that.

Interviewer: Okay so what is the purpose and vision of your brand?

Interviewee: okay so we are here to print photos...

Interviewer: But like to make it easy right? That's the point?

Interviewer: Our tagline is to the point, we want to revive printing. It's nostalgic. I remember spending my teens going and buying film and taking pictures. You can the most hardened Instagrammer who takes 30 000 pictures on their phone and then only chooses one. You can give that person a film camera with 20 shots and make them pay for it and I promise you it will change their whole experience. As you click that button its R4.50 and then you will think about that picture. Then it will mean so much more to you when you print it out. Our whole purpose is that we provide a service that can print all your millions of photos but we want you to be a little bit more specific because you pay for it. We tapping into the technological age, we make it convenient and cool. The experience of doing it with us is memorable, and that's really what we are here for. We are here give you a great experience and to make it easy. You will feel that this brand is a fit, its cool and we part of the new generation. Its not like this business that's trying to make money off Instagram, we actually live this, we know the community and that's really what its about.

Interviewer: Do you think you elicit the correct response from your target audience?

Interviewee: Yes definitely. That's again where Talya nails her job. Because we really live through our audience, we don't study them and say what do we need to give them or say to them. We live it. Once again we know the influencers we know the bloggers. We put out great content ourselves. Our brand is based on the Instagram community. We live and breathe with what we put out there, so we have to engage with our audience. The customers react to the brand they like us and buy from us. They engage with the content, we do competitions we give away a lot of free stuff. We add emoji's to our print orders because its part of the Instagram culture. We are aware

of the conversation going on in the community and we embrace that through our business and they react by supporting us. If we weren't eliciting a great response, we wouldn't be here.

Interviewer: So you would say you have a good relationship with your customers?

Interviewee: Yes. **We are all about customer experience.** You here to run a business you have to have customers, and they have to be the number one thing you care about. That's after the conversation about your is your product good, is your packaging good etc. all that I am not going to talk about because you have to get that right first.

Interviewer: So I think what makes you different is how you interact with your customers...

Interviewee: **Yes they are our friends. I'm not even kidding.** I want people to come in here and I want to surprise them as much. **Make them feel like wow this is actually a business. I want them to have a cup of coffee, I mean obviously I want them to spend money too let's cut to the chase.** But that's because we want to do more business with them and offer them more cool stuff.

Interviewer: So did you use any unconventional methods when building your brand? Have you done any brand collaborations?

Interviewee: **Yes we have done a few brand collaborations. We have collaborated with Nomu, they give us hot chocolate. We have done a lot of collaborations always doing things like that. One of our core things is that we don't spend money on marketing. I don't buy market share or pay for ads. I don't do banner ads.**

Interviewer: So social media is your biggest way of marketing?

Interviewee: Is it an expense because I pay someone to do it for us. We don't spend money actively on ad campaigns and go to brand agencies to develop things. We do it here because we can. Our audience does the work for us. They tell their friends. If we do our job right then they will promote us.

Interviewer: But would you say the main way your brand got out there was through social media?

Interviewee: Yes well our brand is about Instagram. We print from Instagram. Instagram is our focus and we have good contact and followers. We may not have like 200 thousand people but they are real followers and add value to the account.

Interviewer: So how much would you owe the success of your business to the branding?

Interviewee: A lot more than I would like to admit! If we had a bad logo and we were terrible at Instagram we wouldn't be here. Branding is vital we had to have a cool name and logo and be authentic. By doing we are branding. We don't go and actively brand. For me the biggest thing of a successful brand is when you look at something and you feel something. Very few brands make you feel something. Like Take A Lot I look at that logo and I don't feel anything. I don't have an emotional response to it. But if I look at Yuppie Chef I immediately have a response to it. I smile, its warm, cute...they put a lot of work into that brand. I think its absolutely essential to get that emotive response. People these days can see straight through crappy branding. It all comes down to is your brand and business cool? And if it is you are probably 65 percent of the way there. Uber is cool, Airbnb is cool, Take a Lot is not cool.

Interviewer: Do you consider your customers to carry the same brand image as intended by your brand identity?

Interviewee: I don't think they have too. I don't think they all have to have the same response. As long as the brand resonates with the customers. They have to be proud to say your brands name.

Interviewer: What differentiates yourself in the industry?

Interviewee: Besides our customer service etc. there aren't many businesses like us in SA. We have a monopoly. There are other printing companies but they aren't hooked up to Instagram.

Interviewer: Would you say that the brand has effective communication to the target market?
What are the crucial touch points?

Interviewee: Online. We don't like email people. But social media is our biggest touch point. We want people to comment on our photos or direct message us. Or send us a message on Facebook about their order. Replying super quick and being thorough about it is important. Our branding is definitely defending our market.

Interviewer: So do you think you add value to peoples lives?

Interviewee: Yes its very convenient and easy. If you try go get 80 Polaroid photos printed at ORMs you will see it's not that easy. People are going to print with us, we live this, it's what we do. We only print, we not selling like cameras etc. This is where you want to come and have your stuff printed and have a great experience. You also feel a part of something that is local. It's a local tech startup and supporting local community, which I think is really cool as well.

Interviewer: Is this brand sustainable?

Interviewee: I hope so. It's been 2 and a half years...

Interviewer: And in terms of the ever-changing technology, are you keeping up with that?

Interviewee: Yes. I think our sustainability is super high. I am worried about at home printing though. I think that's going to be pretty easy to do. Our experience and software though is what makes us cool. We will change and that's why we are starting to focus on our shop now, we really want to make our revenues come from physical stuff like other products such as phone covers.

Interviewer: What does the future hold for your brand? How are you growing?

Interviewee: It's been steady growth. We have had a lot of the challenges, developer wise, we don't have a technical founder part of this team. That's limited us being able to grow tech wise. But I think now we are going to start moving towards that. We have literally done two years of branding and building an audience. We not millionaires, we here, we surviving. When we launch - this is going to be where you see the first steps blossoming into a proper business. Everything up to this point has been building and priming the audience. We have proven the concept and that's is feasible. We have proved the business model. We will have a lot more formats, shipping

options and products. The goal is to be international. When you think of printing or Instagram we want you to think of Nifty250. I want to tap into the idea of having a physical print shop. Like on Bree Street, like Jason's bakery. We want a shop on the bottom and we live on the top. This is so early, its still the beginning and it has been a challenge. We have been navigating the business. You have to have a killer instinct to learn when something is not a good idea. You learn that by actually doing stuff your whole life. I'm sure every entrepreneur you interview will have had a background of hustling and selling stuff. They have a gut instinct. I regret the few times where I didn't follow my gut.

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