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**THE USE OF HUMOROUS BRANDED CONTENT IN ORDER
TO IMPROVE BRAND IMAGE-
Case: Brändärit and Crazy Ones**

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ABSTRACT:

It is easier than ever before to avoid advertising. Current market situation forces the brands to invent new ways to reach and attract consumers' attention. It is nowadays important to be able to evoke feelings, arouse conversations, amuse people and engage them in order to differentiate from the competitors. The content of the marketing message is today the thing to be focused on. Branded content is today "the marketing communication method" and it is becoming more utilized every day. Only few bands have been able to utilize it successfully for years. Also a humor is a popular way to communicate with consumers and its effectiveness have also been proved with several studies. For that reason the purpose of this study is to find out if it is possible to improve brand image by utilizing branded content and humor together and how does Finnish and American culture affect on an individuals' sense of humor or does it. Two cases called sitcoms were studied; Brändärit and Crazy Ones. The focus of the theoretical framework will be on sponsorship, product placement, branded content, brand image, humor and culture. Several books, articles and other online content were used as a source of information. Methods that were used in this study were mostly descriptive. The results were collected through questionnaires and group interview. The objectives were achieved and the research question were answered. The results were strongly related to the previous studies and supported the theoretical framework.

KEYWORDS: branded content, brand image, humor, culture

1. INTRODUCTION

It is easier than ever before to avoid advertising. (Valiquette 2013). Some recording devices have made traditional television advertisements useless because they allow consumers to fast forward through the commercials. (Marken 2006). According to Grey (2006) "...it is becoming harder to make an impact using traditional advertising". Also Myung-Jin and Hye-Jin (2013) argued "... media digitalization has progressed and consumers have become able to voluntarily select desired information, businesses are changing marketing paradigms in line with the changes in the media environment."

On top of the basic advertisements people are used to see on TV, printed media and bus stops, people are nowadays forced to see advertisements all around them, such as on movie tickets, on movies, receipts, inside the busses, on the busses, inside of an aircraft, on side of an aircraft, all over the Internet and so on. Most of these advertisements people do not register at all. People are unconsciously selecting and processing information they see. It is a self-defense mechanism they use because people's brains cannot process all the information they see around them every day. The filter selects the information that it wants to be processed. This is also the reason why people are mostly reading and watching things they are interested in; to deliberately select certain information. There is way too much information for a human brain to process at the same time, so the brains are forced to choose only a small percentage of all the stimuli they see. That is one of the reasons why companies are struggling every day to get the consumers' attention. (Aaker 1996:16.)

Almost 20 years ago, Aaker said, "in the coming decades, the firms that become skilled at operating outside the normal media channels ... will be the most successful in building brand awareness." With this "outside the normal media channels", he meant for example promotion, sponsorship, publicity, sampling, and other attention-getting approaches. (Aaker 1996:16). Companies should all the time think new innovative ways to execute marketing communication. Still, even if they did, many times they are not able to get the attention of their target audience. Methods of marketing are changing and keeping companies on their toes. It forces the brands to invent new ways to reach and attract current and

potential consumers. It is more and more difficult to get people's attention and create interest towards their own products or services, so brands are forced to find new ways to find and reach the consumers and affect their emotions. The role of marketing is changing and advertising becomes harder and harder to execute. A bias can also be a huge burden to a company. A bias towards changes may prevent innovations and companies dare to try something new. Because the changes may also be risky and cost a lot of money, companies are more likely to keep the battleground unchanged. Also, it is not rare that the companies become blind to the changes in the competitive situation. By ignoring these changes or possibilities companies make their brands vulnerable and face the risk of missing huge opportunities. (Aaker 1996:32.)

Collaboration between several different parties from several different fields is nowadays really common. Companies need experts from different fields in order to execute successful marketing campaigns. This collaboration is priceless when each party gives their best and the parties share the same goal. For example the broadcasters are used to pay large amounts of money about different productions but sometimes they cannot afford it, mostly because they are supporting so many different shows at the same time. It is not that rare anymore that at least some of the costs are provided straight by the brands. This can be seen as clear changes in working methods. (Canter 2011). A couple of good examples are Lidl's Challenge Hans and Jamie Oliver by Tefal. Canter (2011) also argued that "the trend is for broadcasters to commission on the basis of "deficit funding", where a broadcaster has decided that it wants to commission a program but is only prepared to cover a proportion of the cost itself. It is then up to the production company to find the remaining funding from a brand."

Also the way of thinking has been changed from product-centered closer to the value chain approach. It is important to know and understand what the consumers really want and appreciate. It is important to affect them and evoke feelings in order to differentiate from the competitors. According to Stewart (2014) "in a world of fragmented audiences and constant disruption, branded content is a key link to establish and cement relationships with customers and brands." Though according to Grey (2006) "engaging with consumers is still one area where many brands fall short."

1.1. Background of the study

This study has been assigned by Juha-Matti Raunio ja Theodor Arhio, from TBWA\Helsinki. They invented and own the original idea of a Finnish sitcom called Brändärit. Also an American sitcom called Crazy Ones is included into this study so that these two cases could be compared and the possible role of culture could be identified when utilizing humor. It is assumed that the role of culture needs to be taken into account when planning to use a certain type of humor and identifying the target group.

The topic is relatively new in this field. Both Brändärit and Crazy Ones are new TV series called sitcoms which are based on humor. It is interesting to find out what the Finnish and American consumers feel about these humorous marketing communication methods, and is it possible to improve brand image on consumers' minds by utilizing branded content. That is going to be examined in this study. What makes this study current is that conversations about branded content have already started and it is becoming a quite hot topic. Brändärit has already started a lot of conversations and reached a lot of attention in Finland and also overseas. The format has already won a number of respected national and international awards. Crazy Ones started to air in Finland 16th of February.

The traditional marketing communication methods that were mentioned earlier include channels such as television, radio, print and outdoor advertisements. Traditional communication methods also include the utilization of publicity and word-of-mouth. Nowadays companies are also commonly executing case videos on Youtube and Vimeo, companies are internally managing their own Facebook pages, and innovative events and tastings are organized all the time. Companies are relatively used to execute passive marketing methods, such as sponsorship and traditional product placements in their marketing communication plan. Now a new kind of marketing method is starting to increase its popularity. This method is called an active marketing communication method, branded content. Some brands, such as Red Bull and Manolo Blahniks in Sex and the City have already found out years ago how to utilize branded content successfully. All of these three methods; sponsorship, product placement and branded content will be explained later in the chapter two.

“The real challenge is not to get your advertisement on a newspaper, though it is to attract the interest of the media”. (Kotler 2005:167). The biggest challenge is not only to attract the media anymore, though it is to get the attention of the consumers and create interest towards your brand. Consumers are nowadays the most important ones who are sharing the stories, messages and any other content companies are publishing online, not just media. A media has many times become a secondary source since people had an access on the information that can be shared and found on the Internet. In order to get their content shared among other consumers, companies need to be able to evoke feelings, stimulate discussion and entertain the viewers.

Traditional marketing methods are increasingly becoming less profitable. (O’Leary 2014). Products can no longer speak for themselves and according to Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård (2004) “the real route to commercial success is supposed to be found in the artful creation of images and brands... When branding is the core business, the activities of marketing, advertising and branding are no longer categorized as supportive functions, but rather as the essence of the enterprise”.

From the consumers’ point of view, many brands and companies are nowadays seen as a bit old-fashioned and boring. By being innovative companies are able to change their image, evoke emotions and conversation, and then appear to be more up-to-date. Emotions are a big part of remembering the received information. People are most likely to remember the information, when there have been enough emotions attached to it. People also make a lot purchasing decisions based on emotions, which is why a good brand image is priceless for a company. (Laakso 2003:66&71-72).

Late 90’s advertising methods have also proven that using humor is an effective way to succeed in marketing communication. The marketing message will more likely be remembered, especially when the humor has been understood. (Laakso 2002:67). The role of culture when utilizing humor will be studied and discussed on chapter three.

Stewart (2014) argues that “for businesses, having a website, being easily found online, interacting with consumers on social media and having a local online presence are no longer optional – these are the foundations.” The effective content on strategic marketing messages is now the thing to be focused on. The

role of Youtube and Vimeo, and consumers' will to share these videos should not be ignored when planning on the content of the marketing message. People need to be entertained and impressed.

1.2. Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out if it is possible to improve brand image by utilizing branded content and humor together and how Finnish and American culture affect an individual's sense of humor.

The research question is that what is the effect of humorous branded content on brand image and how does the culture effect on Finnish and American consumers' sense of humor?

In order to be able to answer the research question, I have identified four (4) objectives that I try to achieve.

1. The first goal is to define and explain brand image as a term.
2. The second goal is to define and explain the term branded content through sponsorship and product placement.
3. The third goal is to find out the role of culture when trying to utilize humor on branded content.
4. The fourth and final goal is to find out through questionnaires and interview if branded content combined with humor can improve brand image on consumers' minds and how culture affects individuals' sense of humor.

1.3. Delimitations and the key concepts of the study

From all marketing communication methods, only sponsorship, product placement and branded content will be studied. The reason why only sponsorship and product placement will be studied is that the branded content

is kind of like a modern combination or up-to-date version of those two methods. The case studies Brändärit and Crazy Ones are based on branded content. both of them will be included into this study in order to be able to identify the role of humor on consumers' sense of humor.

When defining the basics of marketing communication the focus will be on mass communication because all of these three methods; sponsorship, product placement and branded content, are utilizing and based on mass communication.

Sponsorship will be seen as a consumer-focused, from a commercial point of view. The focus will be on sponsorship in television programs. The focus area was chosen based on the case study Brändärit and Crazy Ones which are TV shows. The study about product placement will be focused on television programs, for the same reason as the previous one.

Branded content will include the definitions and examples of platforms and originals, which will be explained later. Also the positive features and challenges of branded content will be studied and discussed.

When defining a brand as a term the focus will be on brand image. This term is included into a research question so it is a really important term in this study. Products and services will not be studied separately. Only the term "products" will be used.

The meaning of humor and role of culture when trying to utilize humor on branded content will be examined. The relationship between these two features is trying to be identified.

This study will be executed from the consumers' point of view. That is why a consumer research will be executed through questionnaires and group interview. Both Finnish and American consumers will be included into this study.

The focus of theoretical approach will be on sponsorship, product placement, branded content, brand image, humor and culture. Several books, articles and other online content will be used as a source of information.

1.4. Structure of the study

The first chapter is the introduction of this study. This chapter includes the background of the study, the purpose and objectives of the study, the delimitations and key concepts of the study, the structure of the study and it also introduces the methodological choice of this study.

The second chapter includes the definition of a brand and brand image. Also the differences between an image and identity will be discussed. This chapter also includes the definitions of passive and active marketing communication methods. The chapter will explain the differences and similarities between sponsorship, product placement and branded content. The sender and receiver on marketing communications will be explained and the definition of mass communication will be studied. The main focus of this chapter will be on branded content. The positive features and challenges of branded content will be examined at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter includes the final part of the theoretical framework. Theories and styles of humor will be examined and explained at this chapter. The focus will be on humor that can be found from television shows. This chapter will also present three cultural dimensions and will study the relationship between these dimensions and the preferable style of humor in Finnish and American cultures. At the end of this chapter the summary of the theoretical framework and hypotheses will be presented.

The fourth chapter will present the chosen research methodology. At this chapter the chosen method to collect data will be explained. The chapter also includes the analysis, reliability and validity of the data.

In the fifth chapter the results will be presented and described. The analysis will be mostly descriptive.

The sixth chapter includes the summary and final conclusions of this study. Objectives and research question will be answered and hypotheses will be tested.

1.5. Methodological choice

A new kind of marketing concept has born during the past few years and it is bringing together the TV series, marketing agencies, their clients, and the products and brands of the their clients through a fictional, humorous way.

"Brändärit" is a Finnish sitcom, which started September 7th 2014. Brändärit is also a new kind of comedy TV-series that takes you to an adventure into a fictional advertising agency called "Mainostoimisto!". Brändärit is a co-operation project between TBWA\Helsinki, Maikkari and Fremantle Media Finland. Even though the whole "Mainostoimisto!" and its employees are fictional, the products and projects are real cases. Some of the brands that participated in this project were Paulig, Gigantti, Nissan, Fazer, Atria, Lambi and Lidl. (MTV 2014.)

"The Crazy Ones" is an American sitcom, which started September 26th 2013 and aired until April 17th 2014. It is a story of a fictional advertising agency and its employees who are trying to fulfill all the crazy needs of their customers. In order to be creative they are always planning and executing the craziest ideas, case after case. According to the Futon Critic (2013) the Crazy Ones is "a single-camera workplace comedy about a larger-than-life advertising genius whose unorthodox methods and unpredictable behavior would get him fired... if he weren't the boss". The series was starred by Robin Williams and Sarah Michelle Geller. The series used the real big brand names in order to make the show more believable, but the companies behind these brands did not pay anything for them. Since the first episode the series has received both positive and negative feedback and reviews. (The Futon Critic 2013; Hochman 2013.)

At this study a quantitative and descriptive method will be executed. This method were chosen because the received information is not that statistic and certain computer programs such as SPSS were not available. Some statistic methods were utilized in this study in order to make the study more scholarly. The topic is relatively new and specific information about consumers' attitudes towards certain brands and sense of humor were needed in order to execute this study.

When talking about succeeded marketing communication methods, the increased amount of sales and/or market share is easy to prove statistically. But it is lot more difficult to see and prove the difference when talking about improved brand image. (Vuokko 1997:24.) That is why the focus of this study is on consumers' point of views rather than on statistics of the companies. So, on this study two questionnaires and group interview were executed and statistics were not included.

Structured and semi-structured questionnaires were organized for both Finnish and American consumers. The questionnaire for Finnish consumers was about Brändärit and the questionnaire for American consumers was about Crazy Ones. The first questionnaire was executed to a group of Finnish consumers who had watched at least two to four episodes of the Brändärit. The goal was to receive at least 50 answers. All of the episodes and advertisements were included into the questionnaire in order to receive as reliable information as possible about consumers' attitudes towards humorous branded content and their sense of humor. The second questionnaire was executed to a group of people who had watched at least one episode of Crazy Ones. The goal was to receive at least 30 answers. This second questionnaire was made in order to receive more information about how people feel about branded content combined with humor, how Finnish and American consumers' feelings may differ and to make the survey international. These people were contacted through an American friend who was willing to invite his American friends to answer to the questionnaire. The questions were not randomly chosen rather they were the quite the same questions that were used in some of the similar studies. The findings are based on a relatively small sample however they provide a useful framework for future research.

In both cases the respondents were contacted through Facebook in order to reach people fast and remind them to answer to the questionnaire if needed. The people were not chosen randomly though it was taken into account how likely they would be willing to the answer to the questionnaire.

Also a group interview about Brändärit and Crazy Ones was organized for a small group of Finnish consumers. The group interview were executed at the interviewer's home. 10 people were invited to participate in a group meeting and talk about Brändärit and Crazy Ones. Only a few questions were prepared

beforehand but otherwise the interviewees were able to discuss and comment freely. In order to minimize tension the interviewees were familiar with each other. The participated interviewees will be presented at chapter four. Their comments about Brändärit and Crazy Ones will be presented at chapter five.

The data for this paper was collected through secondary sources such as academic journals, books and other online sources.

2. FROM THE USE OF SPONSORSHIP AND PRODUCT PLACEMENT TO THE USE OF BRANDED CONTENT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE BRAND IMAGE

“There is coffee. And then there is Starbucks’ coffee” said Russel Hanlin, the CEO of Sunkist Growers. (Kotler 2005:166.) “An orange...is an orange. Unless, of course that orange happens to be a Sunkist, a name eighty percent of consumers know and trust.” (Aaker 1996:1). “Even though all of our manufactures would burn to the ground tomorrow, it would not affect the value of our company because it is based on our brand.” (Kotler 2005:166.)

This chapter will discuss about the definition of brand and brand image. Also the differences between an image and identity will be discussed.

Advertising agencies are increasingly looking for new innovative ways to engage and “wow” their audiences. (Day 2010). The line between the entertainment and marketing communication methods has become increasingly blended. (Zhang 2010). This chapter will also introduce an active marketing communication method called branded content. Branded content as we know it today combines two traditional marketing communication methods; sponsorship and product placement. (Pena 2011.)

2.1. Definition of a brand

Almost anything can be a brand; a person, product, store, symbol and so on. A brand has a meaning and different associations on people’s minds. A strong brand is one of the most important resources for a company, because it cannot be stolen like so many other resources, such as employees, welfare and production equipment of a company. Creating a brand is a long-term process that can take years and a lot of resources. Most of the times a strong brand creates brand loyalty and increases sales of a company. A successful brand needs to have an interesting name, maybe a totally new category and it needs to tell a story. There

needs to be commitment to quality, maintenance of brand awareness and loyalty, and a strong and clear brand identity. (Kotler 2005:166-167; Aaker 1996:2.)

A certain brand represents a certain status, image and values. Through a certain brand people can express themselves and create, maintain or strengthen their own personal brand and image. All the attributes of a product, such as color, packaging and design, communicate something to the consumers. Just the name of a brand can represent something about the quality, manufacturer, country of origin or the price category of the product. (Vuokko 1997:12.) A brand includes several different characteristics, such as the brand personality, organizational associations, the country-of-origin, self-expressive and emotional benefits, and brand-customer relationship. (Aaker 1996:74.)

When talking about a brand as organization, rather than focusing on the attributes of a product, the focus will be on the attributes of an organization. These attributes include for example innovation, pursuit of quality and environmental responsibility. These attributes are based on the people, culture, values or programs of the company. Organizational attributes are more resistant than product attributes to a competition, mostly because they are much more difficult, or even impossible to copy or imitate. Some of the attributes, such as innovativeness are hard to evaluate and to compare. (Aaker 1996:82-83.)

A brand as a person is based on a more interesting brand identity than when it is based on just product attributes. Brand can be seen as fun, trustworthy, humorous, active, impressive, and so on. The personality of the brand may create even a stronger brand. Through the brand's personality people can express their own personality by using the brand. These kinds of brand personalities may create or increase the brand loyalty of the consumers because the brand is part of who they are or what they want to be. When certain type of people are using the product it may also tell both to the company and consumers whether the brand is modern or old-fashioned, interesting or boring and ordinary or exotic. (Aaker 1996:83-84; Laakso 2003:116.)

A brand as a symbol helps to create a structure to the identity. This kind of structure makes it easier for the consumers to recognize and recall the brand. A symbol is one of the key elements when developing a brand and it can be anything that represents the brand. Symbols that include a visual imagery are

usually the most powerful and easiest to recognize and recall. With a metaphor the symbols can be even more powerful and meaningful. Even the heritage of a brand can create a meaningful and strong symbol, so strong that it can increase the brand image and equity, and consumers' brand loyalty. (Aaker 1996:84-85.) A well-planned and recognizable symbol can make a brand even stronger and create competitive advantage towards the competitors. The meaning of symbols has not changed during all these years. The cognitive outcomes of information process are called brand awareness and image. The latter one will be presented below.

2.2. Brand image

According to Keller (1993:2) "brand image refers to the set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory". The brand image is a current reality of a brand. How the brand is seen on the eyes of a consumer? How does it differ from the competitors? What kind of associations the brand is linked on? What kind of benefits the brand is offering? What kind of attitudes the consumers have towards the brand? (Keller 1993:2; Laakso 2003:112.)

If the brand image is negative, there will be no demand towards the brand. (Vuokko 1997:10). Brand image relates to the consumer perspective and it is based on the consumers' subjective attitudes towards a company and its products. (Lindberg-Repo 2005:67.)

As the use of Internet is becoming more widespread the companies are facing a lot of challenges in order to keep their brands' images strong and positive. It is not that easy to lie to the consumers anymore because the user reviews spread rapidly on the Internet. These bad and disappointed user reviews can easily damage or destroy the brand image for good.

2.2.1. Things affecting brand image

"Attributes, benefits, and attitudes developed over time—essentially other informational nodes linked to the brand and containing meaning—can be

considered to be brand associations". (Cornwell et al. 2005). Brand value pyramid contains attributes and functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits. (Figure 1.)

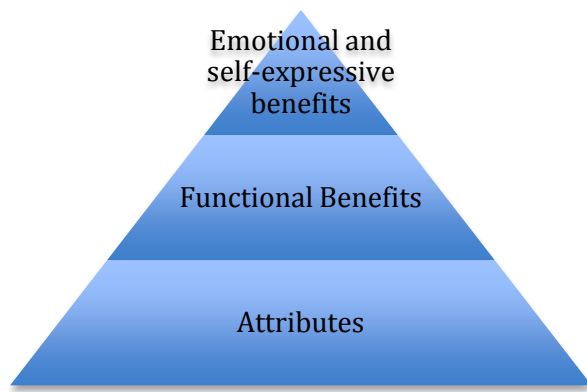


Figure 1. Brand Value Pyramid. (Davis 2002.)

When trying to examine the current brand image, consumers can be asked what kind of associations they get when they see the logo or hear the name of the brand. (Laakso 2003:115). Brand associations have a direct link to the overall image of a brand. Associations can either create competitive benefits or decrease the value of the brand on consumers' minds. If the associations are negative, it is highly important to change these associations to positive. If the associations are positive, it is highly important to strengthen these associations. (Laakso 2003:149-151). Associations give a reason to buy a certain brand. They can be anything a consumer links to a brand or the company behind the brand. Associations are important because they are a way to differentiate from the competitors. (Laakso 2003:160-161.)

Attributes are product-related. They are directly linked to the brand choice decisions and the use experience. Attributes can provide functional or emotional benefits for consumers and they can create a value proposition by offering something extra or by offering something better than the competitors. Quality is one of the most important product-related attributes, which and it is usually used as a core identity element. Link to country or a certain region, which will add more credibility or quality for the product, is one of most used strategic option.

So the associations included on this category are: a brand differentiates with a certain product feature, a brand provides certain benefits from using the product or a brand has a competitive advantage based on the price of a product. (Aaker 1996:78&80-81; Laakso 2003:162; Davis 2002.)

Functional benefits have a direct link to a decision-making process of the consumers and use experience. These kinds of decisions are based on rational motives. People are buying certain products because their functional features fulfill consumers' needs. When a consumer is purchasing a certain brand because the brand is providing a positive feeling for the consumer, it is called an emotional benefit. These kinds of purchasing decisions can be made even unconsciously. Consumers may also use certain brands in order to express themselves. This is called a self-expressive benefit that a brand provides to a consumer. By using a certain brand they are able to express their own self-image. These benefits are highlighted especially during economic boom. Emotional and self-expressive benefits are as important as the functional benefits. (Aaker 1996:25&96-99; Laakso 2003:93-97&162; Davis 2002). According to Aaker (1996:97) "the strongest brands identities have both functional and emotional benefits."

Functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits explain consumers buying behavior. But buying behavior is also driven by the values of the consumer, which are creating the base for attitudes. These values can be either extroverted or inward. Social acceptance is one example of extroverted values. Self-esteem and happiness are some examples of inward values. (Laakso 2003:119-120, 162; Davis 2002.)

Attitudes can be positive, negative or neutral. Attitudes can also be the strongest of all the associations and they are really hard to be changed, especially if the three components of attitude; cognition, affect and conation, are in balance. Attitudes are based on the things that the brand represents; company's heritage and values, the country of origin of the product and so on. It is a learned tendency to respond to a certain brand. Individuals' attitudes are shaping their motivations. (Blythe 2000:9). At the introduction part it was presented that if a brand seems to be out-of-date on consumers' minds and be less humorous than the competitors it may decrease also its desirability.

By entertaining and engaging consumers brands are able to affect on consumers' attitudes and their image about the brand. Brands should evoke feelings, and cause discussions and sensations. A really good examples are Fazer Pantteri with their Gigolo advertisement and Instrumentarium with their Naisen katse advertisement. One person requested a statement from the Council of Ethics in Advertising because he felt that the advertisement strengthens the prejudices of immigrants and it is insulting. The Council of Ethics in Advertisin did not agree. This caused a lot of media attention for the advertisement and it got a lot of free visibility and evoke conversations. The Gigolo advertisement has been watched on Youtube almost 55 000 times. (Appendix 1). The second good example; Instrumentarium's advertisement called Naisen katse also evoked a lot different feelings, emotions and opinions. Some people thought it was brilliant and some people thought it was totally out of line. The Naisen katse advertisement has been watched on Youtube almost 36 000 times. (Appendix 1). It will be studied and discussed in chapter four how these advertisements affected Fazer's and Instrumentarium's brand image.

2.2.2. Differences between an image and an identity

Image and identity can be considered as the two different sides of the same thing. As it was mentioned before, brand image relates more to the consumer perspective, while identity refers to the economic perspective. (Lindberg-Repo 2005:67.)

Brand identity can be built based on brand as a product (product scope, product attributes, quality, uses, users, country of origin), brand as an organization (organization attributes, local vs. global), brand as a person (personality, brand-customer relationship) or brand as a symbol (visual imagery and metaphors, brand heritage). Brand identity is based on the name, slogans and symbols of the brand. (Aaker 1996:68&232.)

The identity structure includes two identities; the core and extended identity. According to Aaker (1996:85-86) the core identity "is the center that remains after you peel away the layers of an onion or leaves of an artichoke." The core does not change when the time goes by and it should represent the values of the company. The core identity makes the brand unique. (Aaker 1996:87)

Without developing a brand identity, companies are not able to build strong and successful brands. In order to be able to create brand equity, companies have to understand and manage the brand identity. (Aaker 1996:25&105.)

Brand identity helps to identify the purpose, meaning and direction for the brand. "Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain." (Aaker 1996:68). The brand identity reflects the soul of the brand also what it wants to achieve. (Aaker 1996:70.)

Brand image is passive and it tells how the consumers see the brand. It is based on the previous campaigns, advertisements, promotions and so on. It is a current reality. (Aaker 1996:70&180.) Identity is active and it tells how the company sees the brand. Brand identity is a part of company's business strategy and vision. Its focus is on the future. Identity can also be a goal what a brand wants to represent. (Aaker 1996:70&180.)

Brand identity includes the important values a company wants to communicate to its consumers. The main purpose is to communicate the values to the consumers and also clarify the image of the brand. A brand identity is a combination of several factors such as the name, symbols, sponsors, products and the legacy of a brand. (Lindberg-Repo 2005:67-68.)

2.2.3. How to bring the brand image closer to the identity

If the company's brand identity is too far away from the current brand image, there is a possibility to augment, reinforce or diffuse the brand image. The brand position should be actively communicated. (Aaker 1996:181-184.)

Augmenting the brand image becomes useful when the current brand image is too restrictive. This means that the brand has seen to be focused on more narrow target audience that it actually is. For example Clinique has been a brand for young people who have an oily skin. The brand has been struggling to maintain its current strong image while trying to reach for a wider audience without any skin problems. (Aaker 1996:180-181.)

To be able to reinforce the brand image, it requires that the associations of the brand image are consistent with the identity. There is no point trying to create a new brand position if the consumers already have really strong image about the brand and its current position. These kinds of attempts can turn out to be really risky for a brand and its current brand image. Though, if the brand is already seen as fun and humorous, these kinds of features can and should be reinforced in order to increase the image strength. (Aaker 1996:180-181.)

If the brand image is inconsistent with the brand identity, the image should be diffused, softened or deleted. According to Aaker (1996:181-182) it is not only important to communicate what the brand is, but also what it is not.

2.3. Meaningful marketing communication

Marketing communication is one of the competitive factors of companies and it has a certain meaning; it tries to create positive impact on consumers and it is focusing on external stakeholders in order to indirectly or directly create demand towards a brand. Without proper communication there can be no demand, especially if the consumers are not already familiar with the brand. Companies are using marketing communication in order to inform, convince or remind the consumers about their products or services. (Vuokko 1997:9-11).

Most of the marketing communication methods are executed and targeted for big audiences, and the marketing message and the chosen communication method is impersonal. There is a change that sometimes the company's understanding about their product does not coincide with the consumers' understanding about the same product. By communicating to the consumers, companies are trying to narrow this gap and to create a mutual understanding about the product between the consumers and the company. There is also a chance that the understandings do not coincide with each other because consumers have never heard about the company, brand or the product before. (Vuokko 1997:13-16 & 92.)

Anand&Shachar (2007) argue advertisements are especially noisy marketing communication methods. According to them marketing communication can be improved by just increasing the number of ads. They are not emphasizing the

content but the number of the ads. They also believe that even though advertisements are noisy they are able to deliver the wanted results and the right choice of marketing communication channel can ensure that consumers are fully informed.

Keller (2009) and Gilbreath (2009) are today emphasizing the concept of meaningful marketing which means a noninterruptive marketing communication that “can be seen in most of the major modes of marketing communication”. According to Puligadda, DelVecchio & Gilbreath (2012) by utilizing a traditional marketing communication consumers are being interrupted with a marketing message while they are watching some other content, such as seeing ads between TV episodes. On the otherwise, meaningful marketing communication is something that consumers choose to engage with.

Meaningful marketing communication should add value to consumers’ lives instead of just pushing the companies’ products and services. The main goal of meaningful marketing communication is not to just inform about the benefits of the product but to build a relationship with the consumers by building up their trust towards the brand. (Puligadda et al. 2012). For example, after the launch of Nike+ which tracks running distance and time, uploads data to website, allows goal and challenge settings, Nike grew total profits by 8% in its first year and market share grew up from 48% to 61% between 2006 and 2008. (Gilbreath 2009).

Typical features of meaningful marketing are that it normally involves an activity-based interaction, it does not explicitly inform about the features of a product, and the gained contribution is immediate and unconditional. It has also been argued that “consumers are willing to give brands credit for being benevolent and do not penalize them if they advertise themselves in the process.” (Puligadda et al. 2012). They also suggest that companies can use meaningful marketing “to build relationships with consumers even while advertising their brands”.

2.3.1. Sender and receiver on marketing communication

Communication has been seen to involve four factors which are the sender (company), the message (stimuli), the receiver (consumer) and the response (the effect). (Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol 2008).

The sender is the one who is somehow trying to affect the other party, the receiver. Senders have a motivation or a certain goal they are trying to achieve through the marketing communication. The sender plans and creates the message and then sends it to the receiver by using some of the marketing communication channels. (Vuokko 1997:22-23). By creating a marketing message a sender (company) can inform a receiver (consumer) about product attributes. (Anand&Shachar 2007). Also according to Anand&Shachar (2007) senders are facing a lot of competition when trying to communicate their message to the receivers and their fundamental problem is that the message they send might be misunderstood, in other words they cannot control the perceptions of the receivers of the message.

The receiver can be either active or passive. An active receiver means a consumer who is interested about a certain thing, constantly looking for information about it and can be seen, for example, as a person who is watching certain type of TV programs (about cooking, traveling, extreme sports, documents and so on). These people are more likely to be interested also about the brands concerning these programs. (Vuokko 1997:22-24). For example people interested about fishing are more likely to be interested about the advertisement of the fishing gear. So it sounds more than logical that a fishing gear brand would utilize sponsorship, product placement and/or branded content on fishing programs.

However, even the passive viewers are sometimes randomly watching these kinds of shows, so also they can occasionally be the receivers of the marketing message even though they are not actively looking for any new information. So, companies who are using sponsorship, product placement and/or branded content on TV formats and/or advertisements are able to reach both active and passive receivers. If the awareness of the brand will not increase after these kinds of marketing methods, something has gone wrong. (Vuokko 1997:22-24.)

Like in any communication, also marketing communication may face some disruptions. These disruptions include for example negative attitudes and images or ignorance towards each other, or there can be too much going on at the same time so it is impossible to get the receivers' attention. Disruptions on marketing communication can be caused by the sender, receiver or the chosen marketing communication channel. (Vuokko 1997:24-25). According to Anand&Shachar (2007) disruptions and miscommunications can be due to several different reasons such as misread of a message, misinterpretation or the receiver is not paying enough attention towards the sender's message. They also believe that in equilibrium situations "the content of the message is ignored by the receiver" which means that even though the sender's product is not the type the receivers are looking for or prefers, they would still buy the product. According to Sweeney et al. (2008) the receivers and their responses are the most difficult to study.

2.3.2. Goals of marketing communication on three different levels

There are three different levels a marketing communication can affect on; a cognitive, affective or on a conative level. On a cognitive level people are familiar and aware of things. It represents knowledge. When a company is trying to affect on a cognitive level, some of its goals could be to share information, increase awareness or change the image among the consumers. (Vuokko 1997:35&93.)

On an affective level people have certain attitudes, opinions and beliefs towards a certain brand, product or company. When a company is trying to affect on an affective level, some of its goals could be to change or strengthen people's attitudes and beliefs about the product, brand or the company, or to create the interest to test a new product. (Vuokko 1997:35&93.)

A conative level is based on people's actions, such as their testing and buying behavior. When a company is trying to affect on a conative level, some of its goals could be to maintain brand loyalty, or to increase sales by using for example price reduction campaigns. (Vuokko 1997:35-36&93.)

One of the most-known and still widely used models describing these levels is called the AIDA-model. (Figure 2). The letters stands for attention, interest, desire

and action. The attention is representing the cognitive level, the interest and desire are representing the affective level and the action is representing the conative level. This is a very simple model that does not take into account many different variables, such as the interplay between the marketing communication and its target audience. (Vuokko 1997:36-37; Blythe 2000:12.)

Another of the most-known models is called the DAGMAR-model. (Figure 3). On that model the awareness is representing the cognitive level, the comprehension and conviction are representing the affective level and the action is representing the conative level. (Vuokko 1997:36-37.)

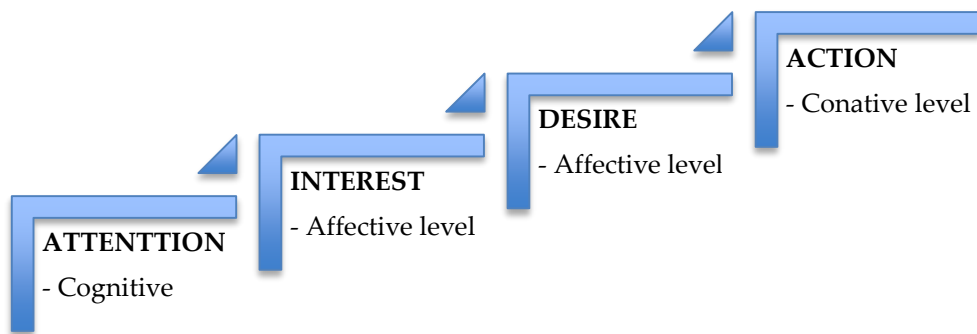


Figure 2. AIDA-model.



Figure 3. DAGMAR-model.

According to Blythe (2000:3) the hierarchy of marketing communication effects has seven different levels that are called brand ignorance, awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase. (Figure 4). This does not mean that

the process would always go directly from one level to next one. It depends on the situation and the brand. This hierarchy does not take into account impulse purchasing.

Consumers may be ignorant towards a brand when they are either not familiar with the brand, or they do not care about to be familiar with the brand. Awareness is needed if the company wants to sell its products. Without the awareness there is no demand towards the products.

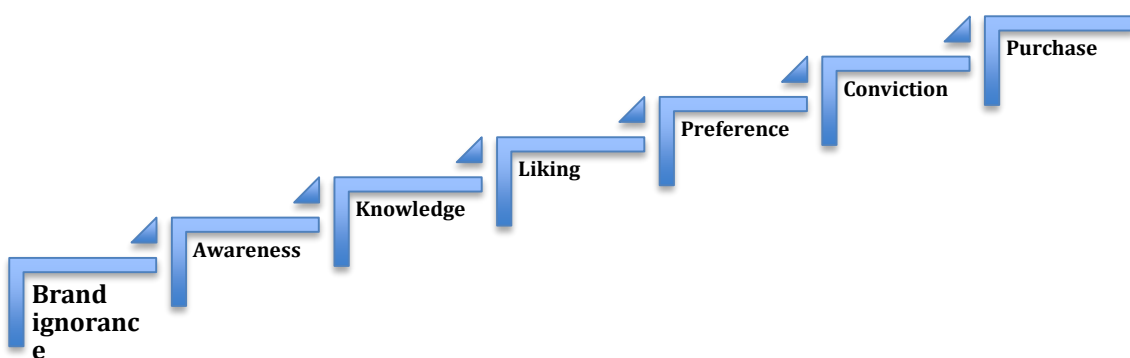


Figure 4. Hierarchy of communication effects. (Blythe 2000:3.)

2.3.3. Mass communication

Several kinds of typical features can be identified when talking about mass communication. One significant feature is that instead of one or few people, the target group can be anything from zero to N. One of the benefits of mass communication is that the same message can be delivered directly at the same time to a various number of people. It has been argued that by using mass communication methods it is quite easy to effect on people's emotions, and use different kind of associations and symbols. (Vuokko 1997:26-28.)

Some challenges can also be identified. Feedback is indirect and certain situations, for example the ads of competitors on the same channel cannot be controlled so they should be somehow to be predicted. Most of the disruptions the marketing communication faces cannot be controlled and the ability of the receivers to end the communication whenever they want is rather high. Even

though through television programs it is quite easy to affect on people's emotions and use different kind of associations and symbols, one of the biggest challenges is that there is no guarantee that all of the receivers will see or understand the message the way it was supposed to be. (Vuokko 1997:27-29.)

Between 1994-2000 several people predicted that a mass communication is a dying communication method. (Laakso 2003:131-132). But over 20 years later, it is still commonly used. Rappaport (2007) argues mass communication is not a dying communication method but the conventional "interrupt and repeat" is going to change more engaging, on-demand advertising.

Sponsorship, product placement and branded content are based on mass communication and they will be studied below.

2.4. Sponsorship

A sponsor means a subject, individual or a group of people, who is financially supporting an event, activity, person or organization by buying someone else's image. It normally has a big target audience. (IEG 2000; Vuokko 1997:75). Sponsorship has been defined as "a cash and/or in-kind fee paid to a property such as sports, entertainment, non-profit event or organization, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property". (IEG 2000). According to Tuori (1995) "a sponsorship means renting an image of an individual, group or an event and utilizing it for some marketing communication purposes." According to Meenaghan (1991) sponsorship is "an investment, in cash or kind, in an activity in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with this activity". It is commonly used marketing method and both of the parties, the sponsor and the sponsored party, are actively looking for a partner. (IEG 2000; Kotler 2005:131). Especially the event sponsorship is a highly popular way to increase the awareness and image of a brand. (Blythe 2000:115). According Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) "Sponsors' motives are perceived as being more altruistic than commercial".

The main point of being someone's sponsor, is to get more positive visibility for your own brand. Companies are using sponsorship in order to achieve media

attention and to benefit from its positive effects. For example Coca-Cola has sponsored Olympics, World Championships and Super Bowl for years, mostly because they are trying to increase the positive visibility of their brand. Through sponsorship it is possible to increase positive visibility, media attention, brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty and sales. (Kotler 2005:131; Vuokko 1997:76-77). According to Blythe (2000:116) at 1998 the top four reasons for executing sponsorship were the press exposure, TV exposure, to promote brand awareness and to promote corporate image. According to Vuokko (1997:76) several different objectives can be identified when a company is thinking about choosing a sponsorship as their marketing communication method. They may want to increase the brand awareness, change or improve the brand image, or increase the sales of their product. They may also want to improve their customer relationships or show social responsibility. The objective is totally dependent on the subject the company is trying to affect on; the consumers, business partners, a huge audience or its own employees.

Still, sponsorship is not an ordinary advertising because the sponsor cannot advertise or communicate any specific information about its products. It is indirect advertising. (Vuokko 1997:78-79). Cornwell, Weeks and Roy (2005) has explained the difference between the sponsorship and advertising the following way: "Sponsorship involves a fee paid in advance for future potential communication values, while advertising offers a more knowable and more controlled communication".

It is very common that brands are utilizing the positive reputation of the celebrities' because most of the times they can give the product more positive visibility and credibility. (Kotler 2005:131). It has been proved that "sponsorship generally creates positive consumer perceptions". (Meenaghan & Shipley 1999). But sponsorship can also turn up to be more a burden than an investment. (Kotler 2005:132.)

According to Laakso (2003:72-73) sponsorship is part of testimonial and "the effect of experts" marketing. This means that when for example a celebrity or a doctor recommends for some sort of product, people are more likely to believe it and the message becomes more reliable on the eyes of the consumers.

Sponsorship is anything but cheap. Some researchers have estimated that companies are sometimes forced to use two or three times more money on advertising about being a sponsor, than they are using for the sponsored party. Sponsorship is more likely to be understood and work as it was supposed to, when there is a clear and understandable link between the sponsor and the sponsored party. (Blythe 2000:116). Blythe (2000:116-117) has represented four criteria that need to apply when a company is considering of utilizing sponsorship. Most of all, the sponsorship needs to be cost-effective. The sponsored party or event needs to be also consistent with the company's brand image and the overall marketing communication plan. It needs to be considered that it should be possible to reach the target audience through the sponsored party and the sponsored event. And if the event has been sponsored before, there is a possibility to benefit from the earlier sponsors or to be mixed up with the other current sponsors.

There are two different forms of sponsorship; providing a financial or in-kind assistance. (Carrillat & d'Astous 2012; Cornwell, Weeks & Roy 2005). According to Carrillat & d'Astous (2013) the official partners, who buy property rights and provide a financial assistance "benefit from the presence of their name or logo on the event site. Their objectives in these cases are mainly image or reputation improvement and increased awareness". When implementing in-kind assistance "...the sponsor's products or services are used to support the event logistically...to demonstrate the functional soundness of the products...". Program sponsorship is a really good communication method when the target group is well defined and the main goal is to increase brand awareness. (Laakso 2003:142-143.)

2.4.1. Consumer focus

Sponsorship is a commonly used marketing communication strategy. The main goal of the consumer-focused sponsorships is to improve brand awareness, attitude, image, or behavioral intention to purchase products among the current and potential consumers. As it was mentioned earlier, sponsorship generally creates positive consumer perceptions and that is because the company is seen as supporting a good cause, so it also has a huge impact on the brand image on the consumers' minds. (Carrillat & d'Astous 2013.) According to Meenaghan and

Shipley (1999) sponsors' motives are perceived as being "more altruistic than commercial".

Several different marketing communication actions have been proved (McDaniel 1999; Olson & Thjømøe 2009; Quester & Thompson 2001) to increase consumer awareness and attitude towards the sponsor, such as sales, promotion activities and actively advertise their engagement as event partner. (Carrillat & d'Astous 2013).

In marketing literature (e.g. Carrillat, d'Astous, & Colbert 2008; Cianfrone & Zhang 2006; Meenaghan 2001; Meenaghan & Shipley 1999; Prendergast, Poon & West 2010; Rajaretnam 1993; Stipp 1998) it has been proved that a consumer-focused sponsorship is an effective marketing communication tool when trying to increase brand awareness and image without executing traditional advertising on TV, radio, and print. (Carrillat & d'Astous 2013.)

A several different kinds of psychological and communication theories have been used to explain the links between the sponsor and the consumers. Carrillat & d'Astous (2013) argue that one of the most important findings of the different studies of commercial sponsorship is that the brand will achieve the best possible outcome from the sponsorship when there is logical link between the sponsor and sponsored party. This link means that when the consumers are thinking of the brand it may trigger event-linked associations, and when they are thinking of the event it may trigger brand-linked associations. However, Cornwell, Weeks and Roy (2005) have shown that it is possible for the brands to benefit from the sponsorship also without the logical link, for example through the effect of the memory of the consumers, as explained a little bit earlier.

When a brand is using a sponsorship on television it is financially supporting the television program and it has a control over the TV shows' story lines or how the products are presented on the show. (Russell 2002.) According to Laakso (2003:140) the better the program has been targeted the more the program sponsorship will increase the awareness of the brand among the consumers. Program sponsorship is a really good communication method when the target group is well defined and the main goal is to increase brand awareness. (Laakso 2003:142-143.)

2.5. Product placements

Product placement is executed in order to create a positive image for a brand. It means placing the products in movies and TV shows. The main difference between the sponsorship on television programs and the product placement is the control of the brands. By using a sponsorship a brand is financially supporting the television program and it has a control over the TV shows' story lines or how the products are presented on the show. But when the brands are willing to execute product placement on the television shows, they are only paying for the produce of a movie or TV show in order to get their products to be seen somewhere in the show. The second biggest difference is that on sponsorship the brand is clearly seen and visible. Product placements are sometimes so subtle that people notice them only on unconscious level. (Blythe 2000:114; Russell 2002). According to Avery and Ferraro (2000) companies are utilizing product placement in order to sway the consumers' brand attitudes.

According to Blythe (2000:115) and Pena (2011) product placement is based on associations people have linked on for example celebrities. When they have positive associations towards celebrities, they will most likely also feel positive about the product they are using on the show. But of course this is not always the case. For example a consumer may have so strong attitudes and negative image about a brand, that it makes no difference who uses the brand in a movie or TV show.

Product placement is seen to be a relatively easy way to expose consumers to companies' products, but it is not the cheapest one. According to Blythe (2000:115) "product placement is academically under-researched." He also argues "there is a high entry level in terms of cost because the cost of funding a movie or TV shows is high, even when the firm placing the products is only meeting a fraction of the cost... ". Not all companies can afford to do product placement. It usually requires a lot of time through extensive negotiations. (Blythe 2000:115.)

Usually the companies' main goal is to affect on a brand's image by using the product placements on the various TV shows. Often the product placement is invisible to the audience because it fits to the show and to the specific scene so

well. Though sometimes the product placement can also affect negatively on consumers' attitudes towards the brand. Although product placement has been studied a lot, only a little evidence has been found how it affects on people. (Russell 2002.)

DeLorme's and Reid's (1999) qualitative investigation of product placements suggests that "consumers welcome the reality-enhancement aspect of product placement". On the other hand, Gupta's and Gould's (1997) survey "investigating viewers' attitudes toward the practice of product placement also indicate that too much repetition, obvious commercial motivations, or the use of ethically charged products, are less acceptable". (Russell 2002.)

According to Kim, Kim, Song, & Tak (2002) a product placement can be defined either in a narrow or a broad sense. A narrow sense usually refers to a product that is used as a prop on a broadcast set. A broad sense refers more to an "indirect advertisement that promotes any product but the sponsors'. Product placement could be used to develop a marketing campaign strategy that uses indirect methods to promote the sponsors by exposing consumers to their images, names, or location.

According to Shashidhar (2014) the easiest way to utilize product placement is to place a product of a brand within a popular TV show. And "a more clever way is to integrate the brand with the show's script so that actors use the product and talk about it... The consumer has so many options to consume content today that if the brand doesn't look at participating in the content creation process it could face the risk of completely missing out its target audience." By engaging the consumers of a brand, it is possible to create immense value for the brand. This engagement can be achieved by utilizing branded content in marketing communication.

Product placements can be categorized along three dimensions. These dimensions are called visual, auditory and plot connection. "The visual dimension refers to the appearance of the brand on the screen". The second "refers to the brand being mentioned in a dialogue" ... and the third "refers to the degree to which the brand is integrated in the plot of the story...the level of plot connection will determine the role and meaningfulness of a placement in a story". (Russell 1998; Russell 2002). Some of the previous researches have focused

primarily on “encoding the differences between visual and auditory information”. (Russell 2002.)

Russell (2002) used a theater methodology and experiment to study the effectiveness of product placements. The purpose of the study was to “investigate whether the ways a brand is placed within audiovisual media programming affect memory for the brands and attitudes toward those brands”. 107 marketing students were invited to join a live performance. “The stage readings were presented as the pilot of a new television sitcom”. Afterwards the students completed a five-paged survey. The main point was to measure their attitudes towards the show. The experiment included five one-hour laboratory sessions with approximately 30 undergraduate marketing students. The students watched 27-minute sitcom and afterwards completed a questionnaire.

According to Russell’s study (2002) auditory placements are better recalled than visual placements in both the lower and higher plot connection but there was no significant difference between higher and lower plot auditory placements. (Figure 5). Though higher plot visual placements were better remembered than the lower plot visual placements.

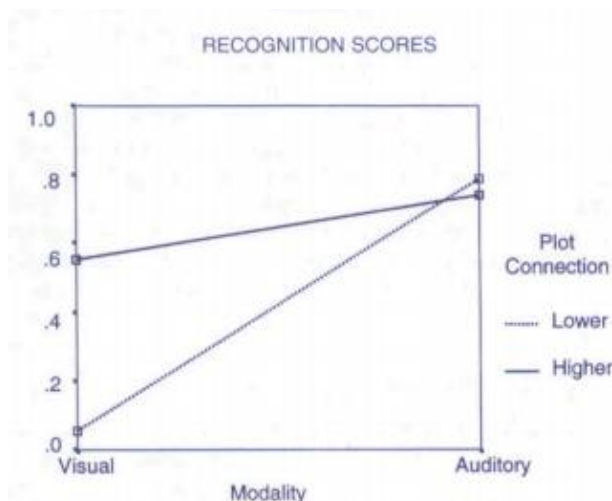


Figure 5. The recognition scores. (Russell 2002.)

Russell’s study (2002) also presented that lower plot visual placements were more persuasive than higher plot visual placements. (Figure 6). Russell also

argued that that higher plot auditory placements were more persuasive than lower plot auditory placements. H congruous placements were more persuasive in this study than incongruous ones. In this study incongruent placements were found to adversely affect brand attitudes because such placements appear unnatural.

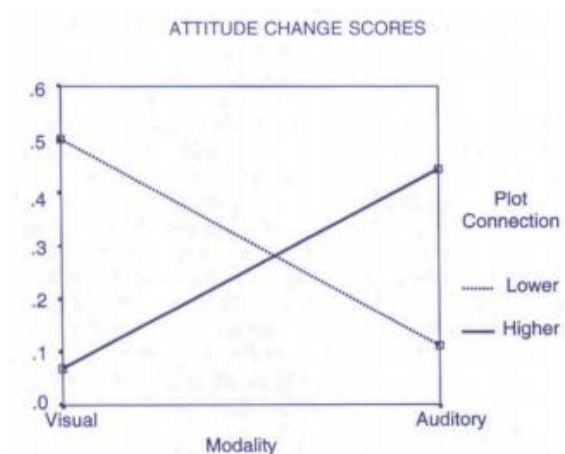


Figure 6. Attitude change scores. (Russell 2002.)

2.6. Branded content

On 2009 Schweppes launched a short movie called “Signs”. In 2009 Red Bull created an online series based on mountain bikes, targeted to extreme-sports fans. In 2012 Red Bull executed “Stratos” together with Austrian skydiver and base jumper Felix Baumgartner. In 2014 Brändärit was launched.

Branded content refers to an advertiser who is either taking part of the funding or the creation of a TV show rather than just buying a traditional ad. When done properly products can be even embedded within the chosen TV show. (Shashidhar 2014). Unlike the traditional editorial content, branded content is generally funded entirely by a brand. Branded content is also known as branded entertainment because it is an entertainment-based marketing tool. Branded entertainment can be used on several channels, such as on television shows, movies, video games and online. According to Vincent (2010) the main difference between sponsorship and branded content is that “sponsorship is

adding a brand's logo to an already existing event or entertainment property, whereas branded content involves coming up with the creative idea together with the brand and the producers. It is an effort of collaboration in order to bring consumers entertainment that they want, in the form that they want it." According to Pavlou (2010) branded content "is the technique used by brands to create a direct relationship with a type of entertainment through funding or creative content." Pavlou also argues that branded content "allows brands to play a much more central part in the project, tailoring content to fit its message and reflecting the brands personality." Branded content projects are based on content partnerships between brands, advertising agencies, producers and broadcasters.

Even though the meaning of engaging the consumers has been recognized for decades, the term branded content was born in 2001 when the BMW project called Hire was launched. The Hire was a collection of eight short movies starred by Clive Owen and the BMW car was the real star of the action. According to Vincenzo (2010) "as consumers had begun to be engaged with much more interesting, relevant and definitely longer content, in 2001 this was considered a breakthrough innovation... The new decade has definitely started with a BANG within this marketing environment... 2010 being the year for branded content." The history of branded content goes way back when brands used to sponsor radio shows so the audiences were able to receive free entertainment and from time to time they had listen to the marketing messages of the sponsoring brand. Stay-at-home moms used to enjoy day time radio shows featuring dramatic story lines and they were consistently interrupted with ads of the sponsoring brand. These ads were intentionally engaged with specific radio programs in order to reach their target audiences. This was the first introduction to the branded content as we know it today. (Pena 2011.)

Branded content is not a new way to execute active marketing communication but its popularity is increasing. It kind of combines the positive effects sponsorship and product placement and it is "more evolved form of advertising... because it takes the association between advertisers and content producers to a whole new level." (Shashidhar 2014; Pena 2011.)

A humor and entertainment has a huge role in branded content. As it can be seen below, viewers can see advertisements as part of entertainment. (Figure 7). On Super Bowl 2015 over 77% looked the advertisements as entertainment and only 4,5 said that the advertisements bothered them.

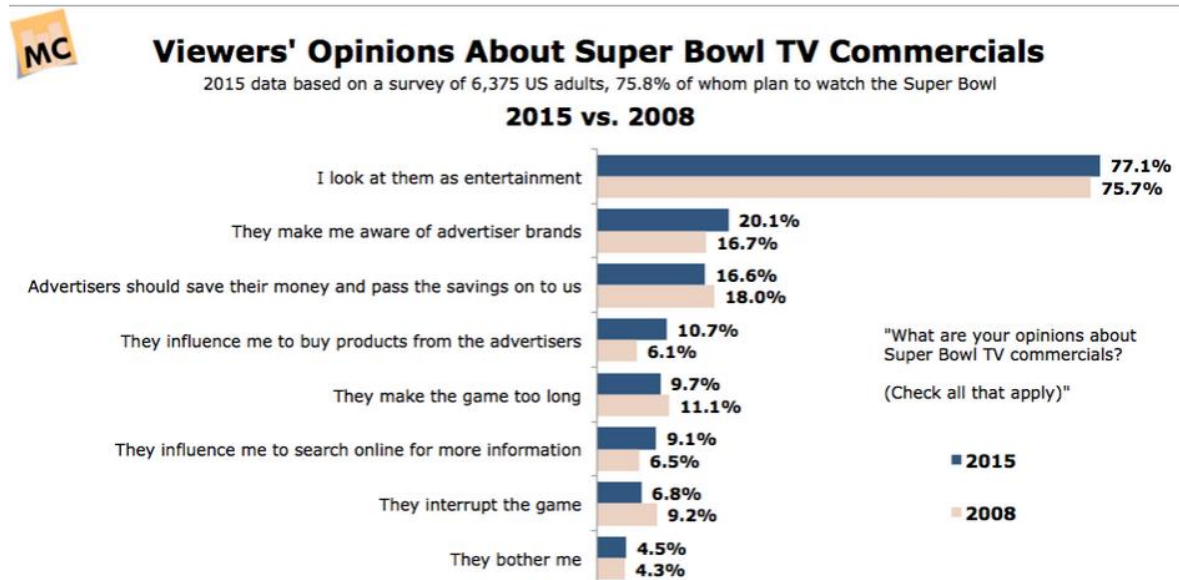


Figure 7. Viewers' opinion about Super Bowl TV commercials. (Marketing Charts 2015.)

When companies are utilizing branded content "consumers can expect to be informed, entertained and get more involved in communication than they could with traditional marketing". (Goodale 2014). According to Stewart (2014) "It is important to create content that customers want to see rather than what we as marketers want to say". According to Bernardo (2010) "branded entertainment is becoming more and more important as audience habits shift from live, linear broadcasts, to an on-demand, PVR based or Internet based consumption of moving images." Cresswell (2011) argues that it can be expected to see an increase in advertiser-funded content, both on TV and online and "there is a growing need for collaboration between broadcasters, commissioners, schedulers, advertisers and their agencies." One-time deals have changed into long-term commitments. (Atkinson 2008). According to "as commercial ratings continue to decline, and companies constantly struggle to maintain viewership

during ad breaks, this sort of partnership is a very valuable mechanism.” (Hampp 2008). Atkinson (2008) believed that branded content is quickly becoming the most effective form of advertising.

The main goal of branded content is to create relevant and valuable content which attracts, acquires and engages the target audience. The goal is to target potential consumers better and win consumers’ heart. (Shashidhar 2014; Stewart 2014). Stewart also argues that useful content is one of the main reasons people follow brands in the first place. Branded content “influences purchase decisions, improve brand loyalty and ultimately increase the long-term value of brands”. Content should always be consistent and allow the consumers to interact with the brand. Content should include a story that is interesting or somehow relevant to the target audience. It should also have a strong voice or a personality that has an effect on people. According to Gray (2006) “branded content can add entertainment value to brands by integrating them into the editorial content of media channels”. Stewart had a strong opinion that those that invest in great content will have an advantage over their competitors. (Stewart 2014.)

“If people are skipping commercials to get to the programming they want, we’re naturally going to try to embed ourselves in that programming”, argues Valiquette (2013). He also argued that “the problem is that people who have a story they want to tell think about characters, plot, and pacing -- not brands”. According to Valiquette, the biggest problem of advertising agencies is that they are trying to be movie makers instead of focusing on a content starred by brands. He also argues that too many times agencies first design and make the content, and after that they try to brand it.

It is also really hard to create a successful TV show and according to Wood (2010) and when these attempts are made based on a brand brief it is even more challenging and extremely difficult. The best results of branded content can be achieved when a brand is buying wider media strategy, such as radio, television and blogs, rather than just the branded entertainment program. (Marlow 2010; Marken 2006).

When talking about branded content two different categories can be identified. These categories are called the originals and platforms. Both of them will be examined below.

2.6.1. Originals

Originals are based on one product, one brand and one concept. This means it does not matter whether the Lego-movie is popular or not. If the concept of Legos will change, there will not be a sequel. This means that there is a full dependence of the one brand. The concept is totally dependent on the original brand and product that was used in the original program. Branded content originals are quite expensive to execute and are tend to be executed online. Only few brands can afford to execute originals on TV. (Raunio&Arhio 2014.)

Red Bull is one of the brands that has executed interesting and exciting content for a really long time by collaborating with some of the most adventurous people of the world (Stewart 2014) such as previously mentioned Red Bull and Strato and Red Bull Crashed Ice.

2.6.2. Platforms

Platforms can be also called extended product placements. Branded content platforms have several positive features. One is that the format owner owns the whole story. Brand platforms are not dependent on a certain brand which makes it flexible and adaptable. Platforms can be scaled also for a smaller markets. (Raunio&Arhio 2014.)

Brand content platforms have also some negative features. Brands need to be able to negotiate and be flexible. Usually there are a lot of different parties to work and deal with. Timing is crucial on platforms. Also, only few brands have money to be proper broadcasters by themselves. (Raunio&Arhio 2014.)

Manolo Blahniks in Sex and the City has proven the effectiveness of the brand platforms. Manolo Blahniks has been placed in Sex and the City since the TV show started to air over 10 years ago. The brand is really part of the show and it is mentioned numerous times by the main character, fashion icon Sarah-Jessica Parker who also wears Manolo Blahniks in most of the episodes. The brand has a direct link to the television show, the Sex and the City-movies, the main character called Carrie and even to Sarah-Jessica Parker in real life. After so many years people have a lot of associations towards the brand. It cannot be separated

from the show anymore. This is an excellent example of a highly succeeded brand content platforms.

Challenge Hans is a Finnish TV program that started to air in 2014. It is totally sponsored by Lidl. Brändärit is a platform where brands have an active role in a scripted sitcom.

2.6.3. Why branded content?

The pros of using advertiser-funded programming is that advertiser-funded content can entertain and inform like few other media. (Gray 2006). People are nowadays watching a lot of shows on the Internet, so they are also seeing a lot less ads than before. Sometimes they are able to even skip the ads on the Internet if they want to. That is why the content and engagement are so important. By using branded content companies are able to engage their consumers, increase brand awareness and improve their brand image and consumers' attitudes towards a brand.

On Cannes Lions categories there is own entry category for branded content and entertainment. One thing is for sure; branded content is here to stay. "The definition of branded content and entertainment for the purpose of Cannes Lions is the creation of, or natural integration into, original content by a brand. Entrants will show how a brand has successfully worked independently or in association with a content producer or publisher to develop and create or co-create entertaining and engaging content for their audience. This could be either by creating original content or programming for a brand or by naturally integrating a brand into existing formats by partnering with a publisher or media partner". (Cannes Lions 2014.)

According to Stewart (2014) "if advertising helps win minds then content helps win hearts ... The evolution of content has opened up a world of possibilities for business. But only companies that harness the power of technological advancement and adapt to change quickly will flourish and future-proof their profitability".

It is very common that brands want to move away from the traditional marketing communication methods and advertisement because of the endless amount of competition. According to Shashidhar (2014) companies can no longer afford to ignore the meaning of branded content, mainly because the consumers already have so many options to consume content. A company can face a risk of missing out. According to Hackley (2008) branded content has become an extremely effective marketing communication tool. "The most successful branded content programs are able to blend the advertising message... and make it a part of the storytelling..."

A study has shown that over one-third of people are skeptical about traditional ads and only one-tenth trust the companies producing such adverts. According to the study "in the overwhelming majority of cases consumers preferred the more innovative approach compared with traditional advertising. (Branded Content Marketing Association 2008.)

2.6.4. The risks of branded content

Simple product placement or boring and un-engaging content can create unwanted results. Like in any business, also branded content includes some risks. Even though the branded content has been seen to be extremely effective tool, there are risks involved if the content has not made properly. (Hackley 2008; Pavlou 2010). Gray argues that the cons of using advertiser-funded programming is that "most proposals fail to make it to the screen, falling foul of product-placement regulations or broadcasters' demands for content that is engaging and impartial". (Gray 2006.)

Brands should have enough time and money to create long-term strategic commitments. If not, it is likely that branded content fails. Developing the right content and reaching the target audience is rather challenging. There is also a risk of breaking product placement regulations. (Pavlou 2010). The target audience should also be able to see the content as something more than just an advertisement. (Hackley 2008.)

According to Cresswell (2011) one of the biggest challenges of branded content is that usually the brand owners want to see returns for their media budgets after

a certain timeframe and most of the times when dealing with branded content campaigns this cannot be guaranteed to happen in that given timeframe.

According to some people, branded entertainment has gotten some mixed reviews and it has lost its shine. Some people have even argued that mobile marketing has already supplanted branded entertainment as a marketing method. Some people argue that it will take years until someone make branded entertainment work as it should.

3. HUMOR AND CULTURE

The role of culture when utilizing humor will be studied in this chapter. The three dimensions that are included into this study are Hofstede's power distance, individualism vs collectivism and masculinity vs femininity because the humor used in a certain culture are highly linked to those three dimensions.

Humor is a way to communicate and interact with its audience through funny and entertaining ways. The main purpose is to make people laugh and entertained. (Leins & Müller 2013). Humor is specific kind of mood on people that determines the way people deal with life and humorous situations. Preferred styles of humor in Finnish and American cultures will be studied in this chapter.

Several different factors can be identified that are affecting how different people may see the same humorous situations differently. Some of these factors are the culture, age, gender, level of education and intelligence of people and also the personal sense of humor of an individual. (Kalliny, Cruthirds, and Minor, 2006; Martin et al.2003; Wang 2014). The sense of humor is also based on individuals' intellectual talent, aesthetic sensitivity, way to behave, temper, attitudes and defense mechanisms. Intellectual talent means an individual's ability to understand jokes. Aesthetic sensitivity means that an individual is also enjoying jokes. A way to behave includes certain characters such as telling jokes and sensitivity to laugh other people's jokes. The good sense of humor requires also a certain temper, such as hilarity. Attitude towards life is positive and playful. Defense mechanisms include the ability to laugh at difficulties and challenges the life brings along. Several studies have proved that a good sense of humor will most likely increase the quality of life, stress control and social relationships. It will also help an individual to overcome stressful life situations. (Leins & Müller 2013; Kuiper & Martin 1998:159). How people see the world, determines their sense of humor. According to Critchley (2002:14) a good sense of humor includes the ability to separate good and bad humor. A good type of humor will never insult anyone or enjoy other's misfortune. A good type of humor always includes a little bit of self-irony. Humor is a not a direct communication, it needs to be understood. Humor is a good way to change people's attitudes and perceptions

about brands that seem old-fashioned and boring to them. It is good and an effective way to differentiate from the competitors by making bold decisions.

3.1. Finnish and American culture

After presented the three dimensions, the table one presents more clearly the dimensional differences between the Finnish and American cultures. The Hofstede's dimensions were used because they are the most-known and used dimensions that has many times proved to be still functional and useful.

3.1.1. Power distance

Cultures with high power distance have very centralized management that moves from top to down. An individual's possibilities to effect on things a rather low and there are no possibilities to influence on decision-making processes. This dimension also tells how much an individual expects equality on a daily basis. People working in cultures with high power distance feels inequality is natural and acceptable. Everybody has a certain role in their family and men and women are not seen as equal. Attitudes towards authorities are clearly shown and authorities are respected. (Hofstede 1993:46-47, 54-56.)

Cultures with low power distance have more shared management which gives a lot more possibilities to effect on different decision-making processes. Equality is expected and valued and the role of management is not that controlling, The role of children are much more equal with their parents and rising a child is not as strict as in cultures with high power distance. Both Finland and America are examples of cultures with low power distance. (Hofstede 1993:46-47,56.)

3.1.2. Individualism vs collectivism

This dimension studies the relationship between an individual and the surrounding society. An individualistic culture highlights the rights of an individual rather than focusing on a whole group of people. An individual is

seen more important than a group and people are trying to pursue their own interest and fulfill their own needs. Sometimes these actions made by someone's else expense. Independence and financial solidity are highly appreciated and valued. America is one good example of an individualistic culture. But as presented earlier also Finland has more individualistic than collectivistic culture. (Hofstede 2001:209; Hofstede 1993:78.)

A collectivistic culture highlights the rights of a whole group of people. The meaning of an individual is lot less important and social cohesion is highlighted. Individual's loyalty towards a group is expected and highly important. The benefits of a group are highly more important than the benefits of an individual. A social network has a huge importance when an individual is building up one's identity. (Hofstede 1993:81-87)

3.1.3. Masculinity vs femininity

The third dimension divides cultures based on their feminine and masculine features. This dimension examines how much the traditional gender roles are appreciated in a certain culture. In masculine cultures money and power are highlighted and appreciated. Men are seen as competitive and aggressive whereas women are seen as caring and gentle. American culture is seen as a masculine culture. (Hofstede 1993:130-135.)

In feminine cultures women have broken their traditional roles. They are allowed to build up a career or stay at home with their children. In feminine cultures also men can be seen as househusbands and their masculinity is not based on only their status or a role in a company. In feminine cultures competition and inequality are not appreciated. High quality of life and helping others is what people are trying to do and achieve. People do not boast about their economic success, it is not appropriate in feminine cultures. Finland is seen a lot more feminine than masculine culture. (Hofstede 1993:130-135.)

Table 1. Differences between a Finnish and American cultures according to Hofstede's dimensions.

COUNTRY	Power distance	Individualism vs collectivism	Masculinity vs femininity
Finland	33	63	26
USA	40	91	62

The dimensions are presented on a scale from 0-100.

Power distance: 0= low power distance, 100= high power distance.

Individualism vs collectivism: 0=highly collectivistic, 100=highly individualistic.

Masculinity vs femininity: 0=highly feminine, 100=highly masculine.

3.2. Theories and styles of humor in Finnish and American cultures

When talking about humor, three types of theories and four styles of humor can be identified. These theories and styles provide the basic information in order to understand humor theoretically. The preferred theories and styles of humor in Finnish and American cultures will be studied below.

3.2.1. Superiority, relief and opposites

The theory of superiority is very close to a term called *schadenfreude*, which means that a person is laughing about an accident that happens to someone else. Superiority is based on a situation where a person is seeing himself better than anyone else. Superiority can be based on for example culture, ethnicity and lack of intelligence. (Laes 1998:278; Wang 2014). Youtube is full of American videos where people scare each other on a daily basis and laugh at each other when someone gets hurt. America is an example of an individualistic culture and its humor is many times based on the theory of superiority.

Laughing release tension and creates more positive energy. A negative feeling that follows after a negative experience, such as falling on an icy road can be turned to more positive by laughing at the accident. Laughing creates relief and decreases the level of negativity. (Laes 1998:278–279.)

According to theory of opposites people are laughing when they notice different objects that are incompatible or they are unexpected, illogical or inappropriate. This theory is also called incongruity theory. (Laes 1998:279). Duncan et al.1990.)

There is one thing that all the theories have in common and that is the fact that humor includes laughter. But the style of humor determines whether the laughter is positive or negative. Positive styles of humor are usually somehow unexpected, ambiguous and illogical, or they include inappropriate behavior that people find funny. (Alden, Hoyer & Lee 1993; Lee & Lim 2008.)

Previously explained theory of superiority is a good example of a negative style of humor. According to superiority theory people laugh to someone when they feel themselves better than the others or when someone else has somehow made to look bad. The theory of superiority is more acceptable and used in masculine and individualistic cultures such as in America. The other previously explained theory opposites is an example of a positive style of humor. This theory is generally linked with feminine and more collectivistic cultures such as Finland. (Duncan, Smeltzer, & Leap 1990; Lee & Lim, 2008).

3.2.2. Affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive and self-defeating humor

The first one, affiliative humor is used in order to laugh in a group or just together with someone else. It is based on well-wishing jokes and stories. People who are using an affiliative humor are more likely to be happy and positive people who own a good self-esteem. These people are less likely to suffer from anxiety and depression. Affiliative humor is a positive style of humor. (Martin 2003; Leins & Müller 2013; Wang 2014; Miczo, Averbek & Mariani 2009). This style of humor represents collectivism.

The second one, self-enhancing humor is used in order to increase individuals' own happiness and positivity on stressful situations. These kinds of people have positive and humorous attitude towards life, and usually they are a lot less stressed than the others. This kind of humor is also used when individuals are trying to figure out their status in social hierarchies and relationships. People who are using a self-enhancing humor are also more likely to be happy and

positive people who own a good self-esteem. These people are also less likely to suffer from anxiety and depression and they usually they are more optimistic than others. Self-enhancing humor is a positive style of humor that is often used and appreciated for example in the United States. (Martin 2003; Leins & Müller 2013; Wang 2014). This style of humor represents masculinity and individuality.

The third one, aggressive humor is based on mocking and criticizing other people, and making a fuel of them. By using an aggressive humor an individual is trying to make one look better than the others. This style of humor includes for example sarcasm and can sometimes be even hostile. Even though an aggressive humor can be used in order to keep your status in the social hierarchy, it is still antisocial behavior and can be detrimental for social relationships. Aggressive humor is a negative style of humor. Because an American culture is individualistic, the use of aggressive humor is not avoided in the United States and is also often used style of humor. In individualistic cultures, such as in the United States "...when a character on television is mocked through aggressive humor, people laugh at the disparagement from the disparaging party's standpoint." (Martin 2003; Leins & Müller 2013; Wang 2014). This style of humor represents individuality.

The last one, self-defeating humor is conducted by an individual who is constantly laughing to oneself. These kinds of people are making other people laugh by making themselves to look silly and maybe even stupid. They are not afraid of making a fool of themselves. These kinds of people want to make people laugh at their own expense. Most of the times these kinds of people are more likely to be anxious and depressed than others. They are more likely to own a low self-esteem. This can be found more negative than positive style of humor. American consumers are not likely to use this style of humor because they do not want to be seen as weak individuals. (Martin 2003; Leins & Müller 2013; Wang 2014). This style of humor represents femininity.

Different styles of humor are likely to create different stimuli to consumers. According to Wang (2014) "the use of positive humor styles, such as the self-enhancing humor style and the affiliative humor style, may be more likely found in older and more educated individuals than in younger and less educated people because of the learned manners accumulated through education and life

experience.” According Kalliny et al.(2006) despite the home country, men are more likely to accept and use aggressive humor than women.

When it comes to the forms of humor, both Finnish and American consumers are tend to like jokes and wordplays which are examples of a verbal form of humor. They also tend to like comedy and stand up which are all based on a popular culture.

More than Finnish consumers, American consumers tend to like candy camera, slapsticks and pranks. Candy camera is based on a popular culture, and slapsticks and pranks are two examples of physical forms of humor. But how Finnish and American consumers feel about sitcom? That is going to be studied at the following chapter.

3.3. Humorous advertising

For decades television advertising has been one of the most powerful mass media communication channels. (Russell 2002). Several previous studies (e.g. Sternthal & Craig 1973; Glb & Pickett 1983; Belch & Belch 1984; Duncan & Nelson 1985; Lammers 1991) have shown that the use of humor enhances and improves the consumers’ attitudes towards the marketing communication message and the brand. Several studies have shown that consumers prefer humorous advertisements over serious advertisements. (Pornpitakpan & Tan 2000.)

According to some studies (e.g. Duncan, Nelson & Frontczak 1984; Stewart & Furse 1986; Zhang & Zinkhan, 1991) that humor promotes message comprehension. However, some studies (e.g. Gelb & Zinkhan, 1986; Lammers, Liebowitz, Seymour and Hennessey 1983) have also found a negative relationship between humor and comprehension. Several studies (e.g. Madden & Weinberger 1982; Stewart & Furse 1986; Duncan & Nelson 1985; Weinberger & Campbell, 1990) have found the positive effect of humor on attention in magazines, television and radio.

Moderate incongruity means humor with expected/unexpected humor whereas extreme incongruity means humor with possible/impossible humor. Alden &

Hoyer (1993) argued that regardless the culture, moderate incongruity is more likely to cause humor than extreme incongruity. Also the study of Pornpitakpan & Tan (2000) supported that argument. The study also supported the argument that humorous advertisements exhibiting moderate incongruity are more effective than are those exhibiting extreme incongruity. According to Pornpitakpan & Tan (2000) moderate incongruity creates more favorable attitudes towards the advertisements and the brand than the extreme incongruity. Their study provided additional evidence in support of previous findings "that humor is positively related to liking for the advertisement and the brand".

Because previous studies about humorous advertising have proven substantial, positive impact on consumers, it has been considered an effective technique to increase positive responses among consumers. (Eisend, 2009; Wang 2014). According to Wang (2014) "the investigation of consumer responses can help to broaden the current understanding of effective humorous advertising practices based on consumer preferences." Humorous advertising creates and increases awareness and attention, positive attitudes towards the advertisement and advertised products. (Lee and Mason 1999; Weinberger and Gulas 1992; Chung and Zhao 2003). It has been proven that humorous advertising is as useful approach in developing countries as it is in developed countries. (Wang 2014.)

Cultural analysis, and superiority theory or theory of opposites explain the acceptance or rejection of humorous advertisements. It has been proposed that those who are not likely to use self-enhancing humor in real life are more likely to like that style of humor in commercials. It has also been proposed that the American consumers are more likely to use aggressive humor because of the individualistic culture and they are also likely to enjoy laughing at insults presented in advertisements. (Wang 2014.)

3.4. Summary of the theoretical framework

In summary, the attitudes based on the youthfulness (or out-of-date) and desirability of the brand, cultural background and consumers' sense of humor are the most important variables in this study and they are assumed to have an effect on brand image.

Hypothesis 1.

Based on the theoretical framework the hypothesis one is that if Finnish people tend to like humorous TV shows they are also likely to feel positive about Brändärit because it is based on humor and is targeted to Finnish consumers. This would also mean that if American people tend to like humorous TV shows they are also likely to feel positive about Crazy Ones because it is based on humor and is targeted to American consumers. This would also mean that Finnish consumers would not feel positive about Crazy Ones.

Hypothesis 2.

Based on the theoretical framework the hypothesis two is that the youthfulness and desirability of a brand has a meaningful role on a brand image and these associations correlate positively with each other. So by becoming more youthful or desirable on consumers' minds brands are able to improve consumers' attitudes towards them and change their brand's image.

Hypothesis 3.

Based on the theoretical framework the hypothesis three is that the advertisements that attracted the most attention in media, evoked a lot of feelings among consumers and successfully utilized humor were also the most watched and liked ones.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

When talking about succeeded marketing communication methods, the increased amount of sales and/or market share is easy to prove statistically. But it is lot more difficult to see and prove the difference when talking about increased brand awareness and image. (Vuokko 1997:24.) That is why the focus of this study was on consumers' point of views rather than on statistics of the companies. So, on this study two questionnaires and a group interview were executed and statistics were not included. The respondents were contacted through Facebook in order to reach people fast and remind them to answer to the questionnaire if needed. The received information is not statistic so the used methods are mostly descriptive.

4.1. Data collection

A new kind of marketing concept has born during the past few years and it is bringing together the TV series, marketing agencies, their clients, and the products and brands of the their clients through a fictional, humorous way.

"Brändärit" is a Finnish sitcom, which started September 7th 2014. Brändärit is also a new kind of comedy TV-series that takes you to an adventure into a fictional advertising agency called "Mainostoimisto!". Brändärit is a co-operation project between TBWA\Helsinki, Maikkari and Fremantle Media Finland. Even though the whole "Mainostoimisto!" and its employees are fictional, the products and projects are real cases. Some of the brands that participated in this project were Paulig, Gigantti, Nissan, Fazer, Atria, Lambi and Lidl. (MTV 2014.)

"The Crazy Ones" is an American sitcom, which started September 26th 2013 and aired until April 17th 2014. It is a story of a fictional advertising agency and its employees who are trying to fulfill all the crazy needs of their customers. In order to be creative they are always planning and executing the craziest ideas, case after case. According to the Futon Critic (2013) the Crazy Ones is "a single-camera workplace comedy about a larger-than-life advertising genius whose

unorthodox methods and unpredictable behavior would get him fired... if he weren't the boss". The series was starred by Robin Williams and Sarah Michelle Geller. The series used the real big brand names in order to make the show more believable, but the companies behind these brands did not pay anything for them. Since the first episode the series has received both positive and negative feedback and reviews. (The Futon Critic 2013; Hochman 2013.)

Structured and semi-structured questionnaires were organized for both Finnish and American consumers. The questionnaire for Finnish consumers was about Brändärit and the questionnaire for American consumers was about Crazy Ones. Also a group interview about Brändärit and Crazy Ones was organized for a group of Finnish consumers.

4.1.1. Questionnaires

The first questionnaire was executed to a group of people who had watched at least two to four episodes of the Brändärit. The goal was to receive at least 50 answers. The first questionnaire was sent to 109 people and 88 answered, so the answering rate was 80,7% and the goal was achieved and even exceeded. The target group was 20-60 year-old men and women. Education, place of residence, social status or wealth of the target group was not taken into account. The respondents were contacted through Facebook because that was the easiest and fastest way to reach a big enough group of people. The people were not chosen randomly though it was taken into account how likely they would be willing to the answer to the questionnaire.

All of the episodes and advertisements were included into the questionnaire in order to receive as reliable information as possible about consumers' attitudes towards certain brands and humorous branded content, and consumers' sense of humor. In order to be able to identify the meaning of culture on humorous advertising the Finnish respondents needed to watch all of the advertisements and answer whether they found them funny or not.

The second questionnaire was executed to a group of people who had watched at least one episode of Crazy Ones. The goal was to receive at least 30 answers. The amount of the goal was so low because it was acknowledged that from a

different country it would be a lot harder to get people motivated enough to answer and participated in time. This second questionnaire was made in order to receive more information about how people feel about branded content combined with humor, how Finnish and American consumers' feelings may differ and to make the survey international. The second questionnaire was sent to 54 people and only 28 answered, so the answering rate was just 52% and the goal was not quite achieved. The target group was 20-40 year-old men and women. The age of the second target group was a little bit younger, because younger people were easier to reach through Facebook. Education, place of residence, social status or wealth of the target group was not taken into account. These people were contacted through an American friend who was willing to invite his American friends to answer to the questionnaire.

The questions were not randomly chosen rather they were the quite the same questions that were used in some of the similar studies about brand image and consumers' attitudes.

The findings are based on a relatively small sample however they provide a useful framework for future research.

4.1.2. Group interview

The group interview were executed at the interviewer's home. 10 people were invited to participate in a group meeting and talk about Brändärit and Crazy Ones. Only a few questions were prepared beforehand but otherwise the interviewees were able to discuss and comment freely. In order to minimize tension the interviewees were familiar with each other. They were not exactly friends with each other but they had met in several occasions. They were all friends with the interviewer and had been in contact with the interviewer during the past year so they were all easily agreed to be interviewed. The interview lasted about 45 minutes.

Interviewee 1: Woman, 25 years. Watched four episodes of Brändärit and all the episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 2: Woman, 25 years. Watched two episodes of Brändärit and two episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 3: Woman, 26 years. Watched all the episodes of Brändärit and all the episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 4: Woman, 26 years. Watched three episodes of Brändärit and almost all of the episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 5: Woman, 30 years. Watched all the episodes of Brändärit and three episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 6: Woman, 35 years. Watched four episodes of Brändärit and four episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 7: Man, 26 years. Watched four episodes of Brändärit and two episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 8: Man, 28 years. Watched three episodes of Brändärit and almost all the episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 9: Man, 34 years. Watched four episodes of Brändärit and three episodes of Crazy Ones.

Interviewee 10: Man, 35 years. Watched all the episodes of Brändärit and all the episodes of Crazy Ones.

The interviewees were between 25-35 years old. They had watched at least two different episodes of both series and all of the advertisements of Brändärit. The comments were written down by the interviewee as the conversation went on. These comments are included into the discussion about the results on chapter five.

The interviewees were contacted with a phone call and they were asked to participate in this interview on 10th of March.

4.2. Data analysis

Current attitudes towards humorous TV shows were measured with a scale from one to five. Number one was the most negative option and number five was the most positive option. Six numbers were chosen because it makes it more specific and easier to answer when the two lowest numbers are the more negative ones, the two biggest numbers are the most positive ones and the one in the middle is somewhere between.

Current attitudes towards the brands were measured with two ways. At first respondents had to choose whether their current image about the brands was positive, negative or neutral. This one was the easiest way to measure the brand images but it did not give any specific information or the reason behind these attitudes. So the second measurement was a scale from one to five. Number one was the most negative option and number five was the most positive option. Six numbers were chosen for the same reason as above. The two variables that were measured were the youthfulness and desirability of the brands. These two variables were chosen because they were the best suitable options for this study, mostly because branded content is assumed to make brands look more youthful or up-to-date and desirable and therefore increase the image of a brand.

Attitudes towards the humor used on Brändärit were measured with a scale from one to five. Number one was the most negative option and number five was the most positive option. Six numbers were chosen for the same reason as above. The question about the adjectives describing Brändärit were semi-structured so some of the adjectives were given but respondents were also able to write down some more adjectives.

Attitudes towards the humor used on the advertisements were measured with a scale from one to five. Number one was the most negative option and number five was the most positive option. Six numbers were chosen for the same reason as above. Respondents were also able to choose the advertisements they liked the most.

4.3. Reliability and validity

There is always a possibility that people may have not understood all the questions correctly. In order to reduce misunderstandings the Finnish group received questions in Finnish and the American group received questions in English. The interview was held in Finnish because all of the participants were native Finnish speakers.

People may have answered the questionnaire without even watched a single episode. There is also a chance that people have mixed some episodes with each other when answering the questions.

The role of age is not reliable because in both cases the older part of the group (over 40) was much smaller than the younger part of the group (between 20-39 years old). So if there is any differences between these age groups they cannot be generalized. The possible differences between the age groups are not reliable because the sample is so small.

Because the names of the advertisements may not say anything to people the links of the ads have been added so people can watch the ads before answering the question. For that reason it is quite reliable that people have seen the advertisements they said they have.

There is also a possibility some of the answers may have been different if all of the respondents had seen all of the episodes.

There is a possibility that the interviewees did not say everything that came to their mind, though the group members were already familiar with each other in order to minimize this. Interviewees were able to talk freely and the discussion were really open and honest. Though like in every group some people talk more than the others.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were not used because to sample was so small and the possible differences between the age groups could not be generalized.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two separate questionnaires were executed, one for Finnish consumers and one for American consumers. At first the results of the Finnish questionnaire will be studied and discussed. After that the results of the American questionnaire will be studied and discussed. The case Brändärit is including the role of culture and changes in brand image and attitudes. The case Crazy Ones is including the role of culture.

5.1. Case Brändärit

88 people responded to the questionnaire. 60% were women and 40% were men. The gender of the group did not play a remarkable role among the received answers. 58% were between 20-29 years old, 31,8% were between 30-39 years old and the rest 10,2% were over 40 years old. (Figure 8.)

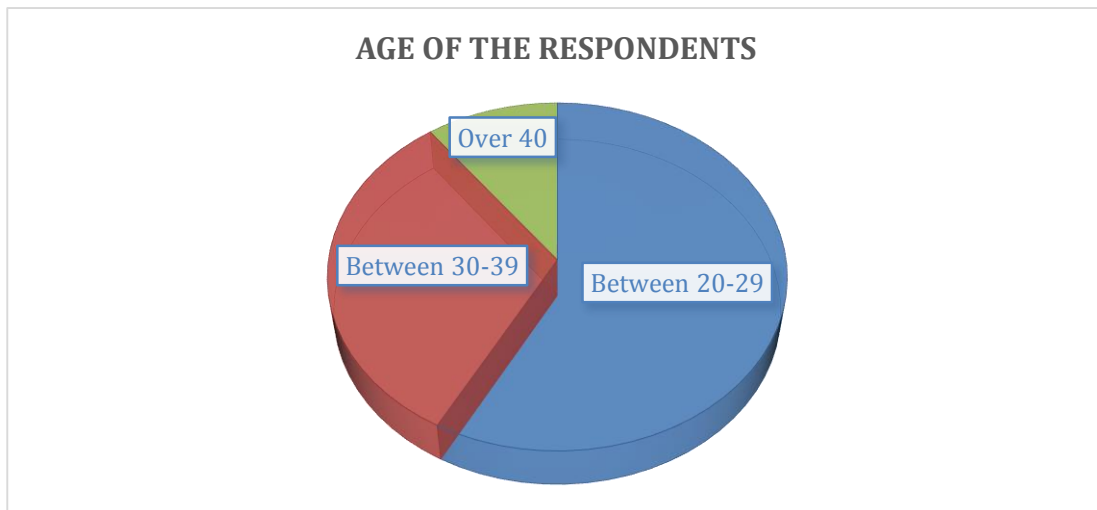


Figure 8. Age of the respondents.

Before the respondents were asked to watch the episodes and advertisements, they were asked how they normally feel about humorous TV shows, what their

current images about the brands are and what their attitudes towards the brands are.

When asked about current attitudes towards humorous TV shows there were not a lot differences between the age groups. (Table 2). According to the answers it can be argued that over 40 year-olds tend to like humorous TV shows more than people between 20-29 year-olds, though it has to be taken into account that the sample is relatively small and for that reason that result cannot be generalized. Though it can be generalized that despite the age Finnish consumers tend to like humorous TV shows. The biggest difference was that among the youngest ones there were a couple of respondents who do not normally like humorous TV shows at all. It was not asked why the respondents had certain attitudes towards the humorous TV shows.

Table 2. Current attitudes towards humorous TV shows.

AGE	1=Normally dislike a lot (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5=Normally like a lot (%)	AVERAGE
20-29	3,9	-	33,3	35,3	27,5	3,82
30-39	-	-	28,6	42,8	28,6	4,0
Over 40	-	-	11,1	55,6	33,3	4,2

The next step was to find out what was the respondents current image about the brands that were participated in Brändärit. The options were either positive, negative or neutral. Fazer, without a doubt, has the most positive brand image on the respondents' minds with over 91%. The next one was Paulig with over 69%. (Table 3).

Atria and Viking Line had the lowest amount of positive brand image. Also 17% answered that they had negative brand image about Viking Line, over 12% had negative brand image about Atria and over 9% had negative brand image about Gigantti. None of the respondents had negative brand image about Paulig, Fazer, Lambi, Lidl or Nissan.

Table 3. Current image about the brands.

NAME OF THE BRAND	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)
Gigantti	38,6	9,1	52,3
Paulig	69,3	-	30,7
Atria	9,1	12,5	78,4
Fazer	91,3	-	8,7
Viking Line	12,5	17,0	70,5
Lambi	47,7	-	52,3
Lidl	64,8	-	35,2
Sonera	30,7	7,9	61,4
Nissan	36,4	-	63,6
Instrumentarium	35,2	4,5	60,4

The next goal was to find out what kind of attitudes the respondents had towards the brands. There were only two options; out-of-date/youthful and desirability of the brand. The scale was from one to five.

It can be seen without a doubt that Fazer has the most youthful brand image. (Table 4). The next most youthful brands are Nissan, Gigantti, Lambi and Lidl. On the contrast without a doubt Atria has the most out-of-date brand image on the respondents' minds because almost 97% answered either one or two. The next most out-of-date brands are Paulig, Viking Line and Instrumentarium.

The most desirable brand without a doubt is Lidl. The next most desirable ones are Fazer, Nissan and Lambi. On the contrast without a doubt the at least desirable brand is Atria. The next ones are Paulig, Viking Line and Instrumentarium.

Table 4. Current attitudes towards the brands (1=out-of-date, 5=youthful, 1=very undesirable, 5=very desirable).

GIGANTTI	1=Out-of-date (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5=Youthful (%)	AVERAGE
Out-of-date/youthful	2,3	10,2	67,0	20,5	-	3,1
Desirability	5,7	15,9	57,9	20,5	-	2,9
PAULIG						
Out-of-date/youthful	12,5	59,1	28,4	-	-	2,2
Desirability	16,0	51,1	28,4	4,5	-	2,2,
ATRIA						
Out-of-date/youthful	18,2	78,4	3,4	-	-	1,9
Desirability	28,4	67,1	3,4	1,1	-	1,7
FAZER						
Out-of-date/youthful	-	-	56,8	39,8	3,4	3,5
Desirability	-	5,7	55,7	30,7	7,9	3,4
VIKING LINE						
Out-of-date/youthful	17,0	59,1	23,9	-	-	2,1
Desirability	12,5	44,3	43,2	-	-	2,3
LAMBI						
Out-of-date/youthful	3,4	22,7	45,5	28,4	-	3,0
Desirability	3,4	28,4	33,0	28,4	6,8	3,0
LIDL						
Out-of-date/youthful	-	27,3	43,2	29,5	-	3,0
Desirability	1,1	1,1	25,1	63,6	9,1	3,8
SONERA						
Out-of-date/youthful	4,5	14,8	44,3	36,4	-	2,8
Desirability	7,9	28,4	45,5	9,1	9,1	2,8
NISSAN						
Out-of-date/youthful	-	9,1	39,8	47,7	3,4	3,3
Desirability	-	4,5	45,5	44,3	5,7	3,5
INSTRUMENTARIUM						
Out-of-date/youthful	15,9	28,4	43,2	12,5	-	2,5
Desirability	7,9	39,8	35,3	12,5	4,5	2,7

After the respondents had answered the previous questions they were asked to watch at least two different episodes of Brändärit. The first question after watching the episodes was that which episodes of Brändärit the respondents had watched.

From all of the episodes “Ässä” were the most watched one. 67% of the group had watched that episode, featured by David Hasselhoff. (Table 5). It is likely that Hasselhoff was the actual reason so many people were interested to see that episode. Over 55% had also watched “Etäpäivä” and “Miljoona”. 9-35% of the group had watched the rest of the episodes so there were a lot variation between the rest of the episodes. Lammaskuiskaaja was the at least watched episode with less than 10%.

Table 5. Episodes watched.

NAME OF THE EPISODE	(%)
Tarkastus 31	35,2
Koira 13	14,8
Mummo 21	23,9
Ex-mies 21	23,9
Juhlat 17	19,3
Lammaskuiskaaja 8	9,1
Säästöt 15	17,0
Etäpäivä 50	56,7
Ässä 59	67,0
Miljoona 49	55,7

The next question was about the humor used on Brändärit and whether the respondents liked it or not. The biggest variation was in the youngest age group. Almost 8% did not found Brändärit funny at all. (Table 6). Though almost 4% found it very funny. The rest of the respondents were between two, three and four, though over 45% of the respondents had answered number four and over 37% answered number three. It can be argued that most of the young people, age between 20-29 years old did enjoy the humor used on Brändärit. The average answer among the youngest group was 3,3.

There were only a little bit of variation between the older age groups. Over 57% of the age group between 30-39 years old answered number three. Over 55% of the age group over 40 years old also answered number three. That group's average answer was the highest, 3,4.

Table 6. Attitudes towards the humor used on Brändärit.

AGE	1=Not funny at all (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5=Very funny (%)	AVERAGE
20-29	7,8	5,9	37,3	45,1	3,9	3,3
30-39	-	14,3	57,1	28,6	-	3,1
Over 40	-	-	55,6	44,4	-	3,4

Next the respondents were asked what kind of adjectives would describe this new TV-format. They were able to choose one or more adjectives. This question was semi-structured so some of the adjectives were given but the respondents were also able to write their own adjectives.

Over 56% of the respondents said Brändärit was funny, almost 65% felt like it was interesting, over 51% felt positive about it and almost 65% felt like it was entertaining. (Table 7). Almost 50% felt that the new format was an innovative idea.

It is not likely to be able please all the consumers at the same time with the same marketing communication method and message so obviously there were also respondents who did not like the new format. Almost 13% of the respondents felt the format was irritating, negative and failed. Almost 5% of the respondents described the format as boring and weird. There were no open responses so this study cannot ask the question why some of the respondents felt that the format was irritating, negative, failed, boring or weird.

Overall it can be argued that the format has been a quite success if only 4-13% of the respondents describe it with negative adjectives, and over 20-65% of the respondents describe it with positive adjectives.

Some people also gave some extra comments. One person said that the episodes and advertisements linked well together and felt natural. One person said that even though the episodes were really entertaining, commercialism pushes through quite obviously. One person commented that Brändärit has done excellent job and they have really succeeded with the content and one person commented that this is a really refreshing and interesting idea.

Table 7. Adjectives that describe Brändärit.

ADJECTIVE	(%)
Funny	56,8
Interesting	64,8
Positive	51,1
Informative	21,6
Innovative	47,7
Entertaining	64,8
Negative	12,5
Failed	12,5
Boring	4,5
Irritating	12,5
Weird	4,5

The next goal was to find out which of the Brändärit advertisements the respondents had seen. The lowest rate was only 17,0% and it was Lidl's Sportyfeel Jackhammer. (Table 8). Though it is likely that the rate is so low because the ad aired on TV only once after the Lidl's episode. Also the amount of people seen the Lidl's episode was the same amount that had seen the advertisement. On Youtube on the other hand the advertisement has been watched almost 6 500 times. (Table 9).

Michael Monroe's advice was the most seen advertisement with almost 80% of the respondents, Gigolo came second with almost 70% and Nissan came third with over 60% of the respondents. On Youtube the Sonera's ad featured by Michael Monroe has been watched over 65 000 times. (Table 9). Gigolo has been watched over 61 000 times and Naisen katse has been watched almost 39 000

times. The overall rate is pretty good, especially because people are said to increasingly watch TV episodes online where they can skip the ads. Only 9,1% respondents had not seen any of the advertisements. Though there is a possibility that people had seen the advertisements but they just did not remember seeing them. As it was mentioned before advertisements are more likely to be remembered if they evoke feelings and arouse conversations.

Table 8. Seen advertisements.

THE NAME OF THE ADVERTISEMENT	(%)
Yllättyshullut	35,2
Takaa ajettu	38,6
Pata kattilaa soimaa	43,2
Gigolo	69,3
Uusi ihminen	26,1
Bää	47,7
Sportyfeel Jackhammer	17,0
Michael Monroe's advice	78,4
Nissan QQ ft.David Hasselhoff	61,4
Naisen katse	52,3
None of these	9,1

Table 9. The number of views on Youtube per publisher.

THE NAME OF THE ADVERTISEMENT	Mainostoimisto Official	TBWA\ Helsinki	The brand itself
Yllättyshullut	360	555	-
Takaa ajettu	604	58	-
Pata kattilaa soimaa	935	25	153
Gigolo	61 452	14	-
Uusi ihminen	9 033	467	.
Bää	1 977	-	-
Sportyfeel Jackhammer	5796 +691	-	-
Michael Monroe's advice	2 738	-	61 888 +666
Nissan QQ ft.David Hasselhoff	5 778		1 164
Naisen katse	472	1 603	36 811

Then respondents were next asked which ads they liked the most. They were able to pick one or more advertisements. As it can be seen there were a lot of variation between the ads. (Table 10). The at least-liked were the Gigantti's Yllätyshullut with only 4,5% and Lambi's Bää with only 9,1%, even though over 35% of the respondents remembered they had seen the Gigantti's ad and over 47% of the respondents remembered they had seen the Lambi's ad. 10,2% of the respondents did not like any of the advertisements.

Some of the participants of the group interview felt that the Gigantti's ad was more weird than funny and entertaining. The Lambi's low rate can also be partly explained with the answers from group interview where some of the participants felt that the ad was more annoying than funny.

The most liked ad was the Fazer's Gigolo with 67%. (Table 10). That means that almost all of the respondents that had seen the Fazer's advertisement, which was 69,3 of the respondents also liked it. The next most-liked advertisement was the Nissan's ad featured by David Hasselhoff with 53,4%. Instrumentarium's ad was the third with 46,6%.

Table 10. The most liked advertisements.

THE NAME OF THE ADVERTISEMENT	Liked (%)
Yllätyshullut	4,5
Takaa ajo	27,3
Pata kattilaa soimaa	19,3
Gigolo	67,0
Uusi ihminen	17,0
Bää	9,1
Sportyfeel Jackhammer	12,5
Michael Monroe's advice	36,4
Nissan QQ ft.David Hasselhoff	53,4
Naisen katse	46,6
None of these	10,2

In order to receive more informational results the respondents' attitudes towards the humor used on the advertisements were studied. The scale was from one to five. The number one was the most negative and number five was the most positive.

There were only two advertisements that some of the respondents did not like at all; Lambi's Bää with 35,2% and Lidl's Sportyfeel Jackhammer with 28,4%. (Table 11). They were without a doubt the less liked advertisements.

The most-liked advertisements among the respondents were Gigolo, Michael Monroe's advice and Naisen katse.

Table 11. Attitudes towards the humor used on the advertisements.

THE NAME OF THE ADVERTISEMENT	1=Did not like at all (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5=Liked a lot (%)	AVERAGE
Yllätys hullut	-	36,4	45,5	13,6	4,5	2,9
Takaa ajo	-	14,7	58,0	4,6	22,7	3,4
Pata kattilaa soimaa	-	6,9	59,1	29,5	4,5	3,3
Gigolo	-	-	16,0	17,0	67,0	4,5
Uusi ihminen	-	45,5	37,5	17,0	-	2,9
Bää	35,2	35,2	20,5	9,1	-	2,0
Sportyfeel Jackhammer	28,4	35,2	23,9	12,5	-	1,7
Michael Monroe's advice	-	11,4	17,0	35,2	36,4	4,0
Nissan QQ ft. David Hasselhoff	-	-	46,6	23,3	30,1	3,8
Naisen katse	-	-	29,5	30,7	39,8	4,1

After the respondents had seen the episodes and advertisements the goal was to find out if their image about the brands had changed at all. Surprising result was that the Atria's brand image was the only one that did not change at all. (Table

12). Viking Line's brand image changed positively only among 4,5% of the respondents though at start it was negative among 17,4% of the respondents. Paulig's brand image changed positively among 18,2% of the respondents and Nissan's brand image changed positively among 33,0% of the respondents.

It has to be noted that there is a chance that the respondents did not understand the question correctly and even though the current image about a brand was already positive they may have answered that the image changed positively after seeing the episode or advertisement.

Table 12. Changed image after seeing the episode and/or the advertisement.

NAME OF THE BRAND	Changed positively (%)
Gigantti	9,1
Paulig	18,2
Atria	-
Fazer	6,8
Viking Line	4,5
Lambi	13,6
Lidl	9,1
Sonera	9,1
Nissan	33,0
Instrumentarium	21,6

In order to receive more specific information about the possibly changed brand image the respondents' were asked whether they now see the brands more youthful or desirable than before seeing the episode and/or the advertisement.

It can be seen that Nissan and Instrumentarium are clearly seen more youthful and desirable among a number of the respondents. (Table 13). Only Gigantti, Viking Line and Lambi did not seem any more desirable and only Atria did not seem any more youthful on the respondents' minds.

It is kind of interesting that in the previous table none of the respondents answered that their image about the Atria's brand had changed positively after

seeing the episode and/or the advertisement. (Table 12). Though on the next one some of the respondents answered that the brand seems now more desirable.

Table 13. Changed attitudes after seeing the episode and/or the advertisement.

NAME OF THE BRAND	More youthful (%)	More desirable (%)
Gigantti	9,1	-
Paulig	18,2	9,1
Atria	-	10,2
Fazer	5,7	6,8
Viking Line	4,5	-
Lambi	11,4	-
Lidl	7,9	9,1
Sonera	9,1	4,5
Nissan	26,1	33,0
Instrumentarium	21,6	18,2

5.2. Case Crazy Ones

57% of the respondents were men and 43% were women. 73% of the respondents were between 20-29 years old and 27% were between 30-40 years old.

The goal of the first question was to identify how many episodes each respondents had watched. When the first episode aired in United States 26th of September 2013 the number of viewers was 15,52 million. After that the number has been mainly decreasing, the number of viewers of the second episode was 11,71 million and the viewers of the third episode 9,69 million. (Kondoloy 2013 & Bibel 2013).

Over 53% of the respondents had watched maximum 5 episodes of 22. (Table 14). But over 30% watched all of the episodes so it can be argued that at least 32,1% of the respondents liked the American sitcom. It was not asked which episodes the respondents watched because there were so many them and there is a change people would not remember the name of the episodes. That information would not also be any useful for this study.

Table 14. Episodes watched.

THE NUMBER OF EPISODES	%
1-5	53,6
6-10	14,3
11-15	-
16-22	32,1

Of the 53,6% of the respondents who watched from one to five episodes only 60% liked the humor used in Crazy Ones. (Table 15). Some of them also commented that even though the show was funny they were not interested to watch anymore episodes. Some respondents who had watched from one to ten episodes commented the humor was too “cheesy” to their taste. Overall it can be argued that more the people enjoyed the humor the more episodes they watched. Approximately three out of four American respondents liked the humor used on Crazy Ones.

Table 15. Liked the humor.

THE NUMBER OF EPISODES WATCHED	%
1-5 (9)	60,0
6-10 (3)	75,0
11-15	-
16-22 (9)	100,0
AVERAGE	75,0

More than two out three of the American respondents described Crazy Ones as funny and entertaining. On the other hand over one out of four of the respondents described it as negative, failed and irritating.

Table 16. Adjectives that describe Crazy Ones.

ADJECTIVE	%
Funny	71,4
Interesting	10,7
Positive	21,4
Fresh	7,1
Different	14,3
Entertaining	71,4
Negative	28,6
Failed	28,6
Boring	17,9
Irritating	28,6

5.3. Finnish group interview about Brändärit

The interview was executed in the interviewer's house with ten interviewees. The main thing that arose from the interview is that not everybody understood that an each episode was related to the advertisement shown after the episode. Nonetheless these same people enjoyed the episodes and they said they felt entertained. Overall people found the TV show funny, interesting and entertaining.

Those who enjoyed to episodes and advertisement said they are looking forward to the sequel of Brändärit because it is interesting to see which brands would be willing to participate in Brändärit now when the show has won a number of prizes and attracted a lot of attention and conversations.

Here are some of the comments the interviewees presented.

"I really enjoyed the episodes and especially some of the advertisements. Some of them were really funny."

"Actors were overacting and they were overdramatic."

"It was surprisingly entertaining."

"I did not get it."

"The whole show seemed to be more like hidden advertising. I am not sure if I understood the point correctly."

"The episodes and advertisements were really refreshing with their totally new approach."

"Really cool and innovative concept."

"Brändärit is exactly the show we needed to change the image of marketing."

"I am looking forward to see which brands would be willing to participate on the sequel."

5.4. Finnish group interview about Crazy Ones

Approximately two out of three of the interviewees did not find the show funny. Some of them felt that the show was very basic and unoriginal. According to some of them the show only tries to be clever. The interviewees argued the show seems rather childish so it fails badly.

A couple of the interviewees said they had a lot of difficulties to follow the episodes. They said they felt the jokes were changing so rapidly that they did not have any time to react. When they understood the joke, the moment was over and they had already missed the next comment. They commented that every time they even blinked they had already missed something, not to mention if they watched the show with their friends and commented the show while watching.

One of the interviewees watched only episode. He did not find it funny at all so he did not watch any of the following episodes. This person also commented that he find American humor childish, basic and predictable.

Here are some of the comments the interviewees presented:

"The show seems plastic."

"This TV show resembles nothing to the ad-agency world."

"I felt like every time I blinked I missed so much."

"I watched all of the seven episodes of 'The Crazy Ones', and it is one of the funniest American TV shows I have seen for a while."

"I totally loved the show."

"The show is not funny. It is 'typical American TV show'. Everything has to be so exaggerated."

"I did not like the first two episodes of 'The Crazy Ones'. They were not good. But after the second one, the show got better and better. Maybe it took a while to understand it."

"It makes the people working in advertising agencies to look stupid and unstable."

According to the answers got from the group interview it can be argued that most of the interviewees liked Brändärit more than Crazy Ones. One of the reasons is that some of them had a lot of difficulties to follow the episodes of Crazy Ones and American humor was described as childish, basic and predictable. Also some of the interviewees found the humor more mocking than funny. Most of the interviewees preferred the humor used on Brändärit. Even still, 40% of the interviewees watched all of the episodes of Crazy Ones and enjoyed it.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes the summary and conclusions of the study. The research question and the objectives of the study will be repeated and answered. The results got from the questionnaires and group interview will be compared to the theoretical framework. It will be discussed how these results can be utilized and what could be the ideas for future research.

6.1. Summary

The research question was, what is the effect of humorous branded content on brand image and how does the culture effect on Finnish and American consumers' sense of humor?

The objectives of this research were:

1. To define and explain brand image. This objective was achieved in chapter two.
2. To define and explain the term branded content through sponsorship and product placement. This objective was also achieved in chapter two.
3. Find out the role of culture when trying to utilize humor on branded content. This objective was achieved in chapters three and four.
4. Find out through questionnaires and interview if branded content combined with humor can improve brand image on consumers' minds and how culture affects individuals' sense of humor. This objective was achieved in chapter five.

Brändärit includes an aggressive style of humor but it is also a lot more serious, subtle and little less silly than Crazy Ones. Crazy Ones includes sexist jokes, self-enhancing and aggressive humor. Both of the TV shows include comic and ironic, which most of the Finnish and American respondents and interviewees seemed to enjoy.

The brands in Brändärit were utilizing very different styles of humor in their own advertisements and all of them affected differently on consumers. There were a lot of differences between the advertisements whether people found them funny or not. So it can be argued that the chosen style of humor really matters how people end up feeling about the advertisement or the brand. If the style of humor is inappropriate or badly chosen it might end to even decrease the image of the brand and start a boycott. Instrumentarium's Naisen katse is a really good example because it made some of its previous consumers so mad that some people even created a Facebook group called "Instrumentarium ostoboikotti". It has 234 likes.

It also seems that it is possible to improve brand image by using humorous branded content, as it can be seen from the tables 10, 12 and 13. All these tables correlate positively with each other and it can be argued that humor had the most important role on the increased brand image and the most liked advertisements. The "most shocking" advertisements (Fazer's Gigolo and Instrumentarium's Naisen katse) with those that used celebrities (Nissan's Nissan QQ ft. David Hasselhoff and Sonera's Michael Monroe's advice) are clearly the most liked ones or those whose brand image seems now more youthful or desirable on the respondents' minds. (Table 12 and table 13.). So it seems that the style of used humor has a remarkable role when utilizing humor and it needs to be taken into account how to use it on branded content so that companies will not end up to accidentally decrease their brand image.

There were not a lot of differences between the Finnish answers about Brändärit and Americans answers about Crazy Ones. Some of them liked the TV show and some did not. Though some differences could be identified between the Finnish and Americans opinions about Crazy Ones. Some Finnish people found the American sitcom too silly, plastic, aggressive and exaggerated. Approximately three out of four Americans enjoyed and found the Crazy Ones funny, while approximately only one out of three Finnish enjoyed and found the Crazy Ones funny. So it seems that culture has a quite remarkable role on consumers' sense of humor and that needs to be taken into account when thinking about the target country.

According to the results some of the brands seemed to be quite out-to-date and "not that desirable" on the respondents' minds. The results indicate that after

seeing the episodes and advertisements some of the brands' image has been changed positively on the respondents' minds because now the respondents see the brands more up-to-date, innovative and desirable. (Table 13.)

6.2. Conclusions

According to Carrillat & d'Astous (2013) the official partners, who buy property rights" benefit from the presence of their name or logo on the event site. Their objectives in these cases are mainly image (or reputation) improvement and increased awareness. This has been utilized well in this new concept of branded content. In the case of Brändärit, the brand gets a lot of visibility throughout the whole episode and at the end the broadcaster shows the advertisement that is connected to the episode. As it was argued earlier, the most successful branded content programs are able to blend the advertising message... and make it a part of the storytelling. Also mentioned before, studies has shown that over one-third of people are skeptical about traditional ads and only one-tenth trust the companies producing such adverts. According to the study "in the overwhelming majority of cases consumers preferred the more innovative approach compared with traditional advertising. (Branded Content Marketing Association 2008.)

It can be noted that that some the brands, such as Fazer and Instrumentarium did very brave choices. Instrumentarium stood out from the other opticians with their bold and unique advertisement and Fazer surprised people with their exceptionally funny advertisement about sweets. Both of them caused a stir in the media. It was mentioned at the introduction part that feelings have a significant role for remembering the advertisements people have seen. For example Instrumentarium's Naisen katse and Pantteri's Gigolo were the two advertisements that evoke a lot of feelings and conversations, and also media attention. They were also the most seen advertisements. (Table 9). Laakso (2003:111) said, "It would be hard to imagine that a Finnish Fazer might diverge from its heritage which is highlighting the taste of the product." That is exactly what Fazer did with its Gigolo advertisement and it got a great reception among consumers. It was the most liked advertisement. (Table 10.)

Based on the theoretical framework the hypothesis one was that if Finnish people tend to like humorous TV shows they are also likely to feel positive about Brändärit because it is based on humor and is targeted to Finnish consumers. This would also mean that if American people tend to like humorous TV shows they are also likely to feel positive about Crazy Ones because it is based on humor and is targeted to American consumers. This would also mean that Finnish consumers would not feel positive about Crazy Ones. This hypotheses proved to be right on chapter five, because most of the Finnish respondents liked humorous TV shows and Brändärit, and most of the American respondents liked humorous TV shows and Crazy Ones. Though only approximately one out three of the Finnish respondents liked the humor used on Crazy Ones. So it can be argued that culture indeed has an effect on consumers' sense of humor, as it was presented in chapter three according to some previous studies. Culture of the target country should always take into account when planning on humorous advertising. If the target countries have significant differences in the preferred styles of humor, adaptation is highly recommended. (Wang 2014). Also this study supports this argument.

Because the American culture is individualistic, the use of aggressive humor is not avoided in the United States. In individualistic cultures "...when a character on television is mocked through aggressive humor, people laugh at the disparagement from the disparaging party's standpoint." (Martin 2003; Leins & Müller 2013; Wang 2014). Though according to Wang (2014) "the use of positive humor styles, such as the self-enhancing humor style and the affiliative humor style, may be more likely found in older and more educated individuals than in younger and less educated people. This argument cannot be proved with these results because the sample was too small to be generalized and compared with each other. Also the education of the respondents was not taken into account. There is one idea for the future research.

Based on the theoretical framework the hypothesis two was that the youthfulness and desirability of a brand has a meaningful role on a brand image and these associations correlate positively with each other. So by becoming more youthful or desirable on consumers' minds brands are able to improve consumers' attitudes towards them and change their brand's image. This hypotheses proved to be right on chapter five, because when people answered that their brand image

about certain brands had changed positively they also answered that they saw the brands more youthful and/or desirable.

Based on the theoretical framework the hypothesis three was that the advertisements that attracted the most attention in media, evoked a lot of feelings among consumers and successfully utilized humor were also the most watched and liked ones. This hypotheses proved to be right on chapter five, because Gigolo, Naisen katse, Michael Monroe's advice and Nissan QQ ft. David Hasselhoff were the most liked and watched ones. All of them evoked feelings, stimulated discussion and entertained the viewers. As it was mentioned in chapter one emotions are a big part of remembering the received information. People are most likely to remember the information, when there have been enough emotions attached to it. As it was suggested earlier, according to the result of this study and previous studies humor really is a good way to change people's attitudes and perceptions about brands that seem old-fashioned and boring. It is good and an effective way to differentiate from the competitors by making bold decisions. By being innovative companies are able to change their image, evoke emotions and conversation, and then appear to be more up-to-date. It was presented that if a brand seems to be out-of-date on consumers' minds and be less humorous than the competitors it may decrease also its desirability.

Based on the theoretical framework by utilizing branded content brand are able to affect on an affective level of the consumers. As it was presented earlier, on an affective level people have certain attitudes, opinions and beliefs towards a certain brand, product or company. When a company is trying to affect on an affective level, some of its goals could be to change or strengthen people's attitudes and beliefs about the product, brand or the company. (Vuokko 1997:35&93). The interest and desire, from the previously presented AIDA-model, are representing the affective level.

As it presented earlier several previous studies (e.g. Sternthal & Craig 1973; Glb & Pickett 1983; Belch & Belch 1984; Duncan & Nelson 1985; Lammers 1991) have shown that the use of humor enhances and improves the consumers' attitudes towards the marketing communication message and the brand. This study also supports this argument. Several studies have also shown that consumers prefer humorous advertisements over serious advertisements. (Pornpitakpan & Tan

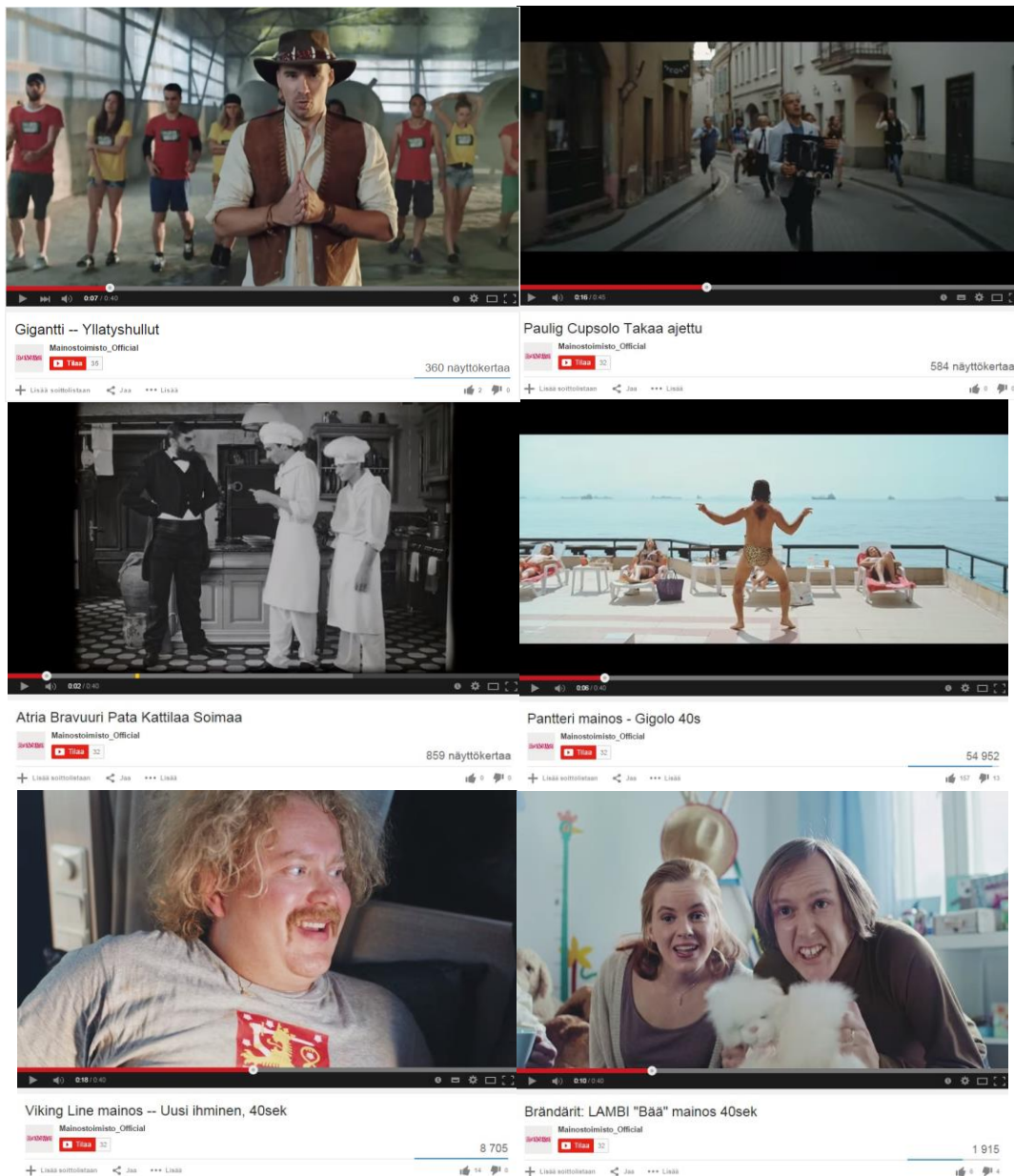
2000). This study supports also this argument; the funnier the advertisement was the more liked one it was.

The findings are based on a relatively small sample however this topic and the findings provide several different opportunities and ideas for future research. It can be argued that branded content will be one of the biggest topics for the next several years. If brands are not standing on their own way humorous branded content can give their endless amount of possibilities if they pay on attention how they end up utilizing humor on their target markets.

Through humorous branded content companies are able to change their brand image more youthful and desirable. Through humorous branded content companies are able to improve their brand image.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Mainostoimisto Official's Brändärit ads on Youtube, the amount of views 20.2.2015.



Brändärit: LIDL Sportyfeel "Jackhammer" mainos

Mainostoinisto_Official

5 692

+ Linkki sovitellaan Jaa *** Linkki

Brändärit: Sonera mainos - Michael Monroe's advice

Mainostoinisto_Official

2 655

+ Linkki sovitellaan Jaa *** Linkki

NISSAN QQ commercial - feat David Hasselhoff

Mainostoinisto_Official

5 551

+ Linkki sovitellaan Jaa *** Linkki

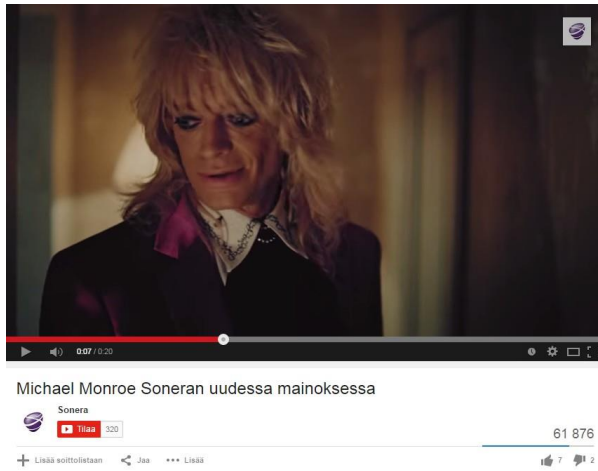
Instrumentarium - Naisen katse tv-mainos

Instrumentarium

35 936

+ Linkki sovitellaan Jaa *** Linkki

Appendix 2. The shorter version of Michael Monroe's advice, the amount of views 20.2.2015



Appendix 3. The questionnaire Brändärit

1. I am...

- Woman
- Man

2. I am...

- 20-29 year-old
- 30-39 year-old
- Over 40

3. I normally like these type of humorous TV shows...

- 1= Normally dislike a lot
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 = Normally like a lot

4. Do you have positive, negative or neutral brand image about the brands below?

- Gigantti: (pos/neg/neut)
- Paulig: (pos/neg/neut)
- Atria: (pos/neg/neut)
- Fazer: (pos/neg/neut)
- Viking Line: (pos/neg/neut)
- Lambi: (pos/neg/neut)
- Lidl: (pos/neg/neut)
- Sonera: (pos/neg/neut)

- Nissan: (pos/neg/neut)
- Instrumentarium: (pos/neg/neut)

5. What is your attitude towards the brands below? (1=out-of-date, 5=youthful, 1=very undesirable, 5=very desirable)

- Gigantti: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Paulig out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Atria: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Fazer: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Viking Line: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Lambi: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Lidl: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Sonera: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Nissan: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5
- Instrumentarium: out-of-date/youthful 1-5, desirability 1-5

6. Which of the episodes did you watch? (They are listed from the oldest to the newest one)

- Tarkastus
- Koira
- Mummo
- Ex-mies
- Juhlat
- Lammaskuiskaaja
- Säästöt
- Etäpäivä
- Ässä
- Miljoona

7. The humor used on Brändärit episodes was...

- 1= not funny at all
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 = very funny

8. How would you describe this new TV concept?

- Funny
- Interesting
- Positive
- Informative
- Innovative
- Entertaining
- Negative
- Failed
- Boring
- Irritating
- Weird
- Something else, what: _____

9. Which of these advertisements do you remember seeing before? (Use the links below to watch the advertisements)

- Yllätyshullut (GIGANTTI)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDPjKH5TYVA>
- Cupsolo, Tajaa ajettu (PAULIG)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRrdwnT1ekg>
- Pata kattilaa soimaa (Bravuuri, ATRIA)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19zE1AVNlas>
- Gigolo (Pantteri, FAZER)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3TN8gt7T1Q>

- Uusi ihminen (VIKING LINE)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-U2j8qXkuI4>
- Bää (LAMBI)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqvGLleZ-RE>
- Sportyfeel Jackhammer (LIDL)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3Kd4J-Fxw8>
- Michael Monroe, Rock n´ Roll (SONERA)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Ksxxq2bcA3I
- David Hasselhoff (NISSAN)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_95Buq4eOCU
- Naisen katse (INSTRUMENTARIUM)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OoBsZB8oTI>
- None of these

10. Which of the advertisements you liked the most and why? (You can choose more than one)

- Yllätyshullut (GIGANTTI)
- Cupsolo, Takaa ajettu (PAULIG)
- Pata kattilaa soimaa (Bravuuri, ATRIA)
- Gigolo (Pantteri, FAZER)
- Uusi ihminen (VIKING LINE)
- Bää (LAMBI)
- Sportyfeel Jackhammer (LIDL)
- Michael Monroe, Rock n´ Roll (SONERA)
- David Hasselhoff (NISSAN)
- Naisen katse (INSTRUMENTARIUM)
- None of these, because : _____

11. The humor used on the advertisements was... (1 = not funny at all, 5= very funny)

- Yllätyshullut (GIGANTTI) 1/2/3/4/5
- Cupsolo Takaa ajettu (PAULIG) 1/2/3/4/5

- Pata kattilaa soimaa (Bravuuri, ATRIA) 1/2/3/4/5
- Gigolo (Pantteri, FAZER) 1/2/3/4/5
- Uusi ihminen (VIKING LINE) 1/2/3/4/5
- Bää (LAMBI) 1/2/3/4/5
- Sportyfeel Jackhammer (LIDL) 1/2/3/4/5
- Michael Monroe, Rock n´ Roll (SONERA) 1/2/3/4/5
- David Hasselhoff (NISSAN) 1/2/3/4/5
- Naisen katse (INSTRUMENTARIUM) 1/2/3/4/5

12. Did your image about a certain brand change more positive after seeing the episode and/or advertisement?

- Gigantti: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Paulig: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Atria: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Fazer: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Viking Line: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Lambi: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Lidl: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Sonera: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Nissan: Yes/No/I can´t say
- Instrumentarium: Yes/No/I can´t say

13. Did your image about a certain brand change more youthful or desirable after seeing the episode and/or advertisement?

- Gigantti: more youthful/more desirable
- Paulig: more youthful/more desirable
- Atria: more youthful/more desirable
- Fazer: more youthful/more desirable
- Viking Line: more youthful/more desirable
- Lambi: more youthful/more desirable
- Lidl: more youthful/more desirable
- Sonera: more youthful/more desirable

- Nissan: more youthful/more desirable
- Instrumentarium: more youthful/more desirable

Appendix 4. The questionnaire Crazy Ones

1. How many episodes have you watched?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-22

2. On a scale 0-5 how much did you like the humor? (0=not at all, 5=liked a lot)

- 1-5 : 0/1/2/3/4/5
- 6-10: 0/1/2/3/4/5
- 11-15: 0/1/2/3/4/5
- 16-22: 0/1/2/3/4/5
- If you answered 0 or 1, why

3. How do you find this type of TV format?

- Funny
- Interesting
- Positive
- Fresh
- Different
- Entertaining
- Failed
- Boring
- Irritating
- Something else, what ...

Appendix 5. Group interview.

1. How old are you?
2. How many episodes of Brändärit did you watch?
3. How many episodes of Crazy Ones did you watch?
4. How did you feel about Brändärit?
5. How did you feel about the humor used on Brändärit?
6. What did you think about the advertisements linked on Brändärit?
7. How did you feel about Crazy Ones?
8. Which of the series did you prefer and why?

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