

Three Little... & Other Stories

- A quantitative study of using specific endorser types in storytelling

Many companies use Storytelling today. While its effectiveness has been established in several studies, little investigation has been made into how a story should be composed in order to be effective in terms of consumer response. The founder is a character that is often used in storytelling; however, other marketing theories argue the effectiveness of other endorsers such as a celebrity or a typical customer. Therefore, this thesis aims to study the effects on story and brand response of using different characters in storytelling.

An experimental 2x3 design was used, where the treatment of the groups varied by three different characters, the celebrity, the founder and the typical customer, as well as by two levels of brand awareness, high and low. This resulted in six different stories that respondents were exposed to before answering questions regarding their interest and attitude towards the character, the story and the brand.

The results showed that the effects on story response differed significantly between different characters, but the differences did not vary as a function of the level of brand awareness. Still, the relative effectiveness of characters differed between the two company cases, suggesting that the personal brand of characters is an important consideration.

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Our tutor, Magnus Söderlund, for your valuable input.

All respondents, for valuable input in a different sense.

Each other, for a good run.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Magic of Stories

I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees. We had just released our finest creation — the Macintosh — a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating. [...] I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life. During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT. [...] In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance.

(Steve Jobs, 2005)

This story was told by Steve Jobs at the Stanford graduation ceremony in 2005. It is a good example of how myth-building around a person also spreads to the company that he founded. Furthermore, it illustrates the power of storytelling as a communication tool. Creation stories and myths are frequently occurring in corporate storytelling, and the founder or founders become natural main characters.

There are stories about how the founder of The Body Shop, Anita Roddick, in the beginning produced facial creams at home in her kitchen using recycled cans since that was all she had. Those values of environmental friendliness and the stand against animal testing are what the company rests on from that time forward (The Body Shop, 2013). Furthermore, traditional communication such as ads or direct marketing has never been an option to market The Body Shop's products. Instead touching stories about how the products were innovated and produced spoke to the consumers on an emotional level (Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008).

Another rather well known story from the very beginning of a brand is the one of Ben & Jerry's, the ice-cream manufacturer. The creation story evolves around the two hippie heroes that in 1966 met for the first time in school gym class with one thing uniting them - the dislike of running and the love for food (Ben & Jerry's, 2013).

These kinds of stories justify and communicate values that the brands rest on from their founding day and forward. As these values most likely are the thoughts and dreams of the company founder it becomes natural that this is the person who should tell the story. On the other hand, when looking beyond storytelling into other areas of marketing the founder is very seldom seen as an asset for external communication. Companies profit from secondary brand associations when using a celebrity in advertisements, or gain from the recognition factor of having a typical customer communicating the product, but the founder is seldom mentioned. With these other potential endorsers in mind, should storytelling be limited to the creation story and would the best story character really be the founder? Based on theory on the endorser effectiveness of a celebrity and a typical customer in traditional advertising, we want to test what character stands for the relatively higher effectiveness when used in corporate storytelling. In other words, we want to verify or discard the assumed effectiveness of a founder, a character that is widely used in corporate storytelling today.

1.2 Background and Previous Research

1.2.1 The story of storytelling

Stories are everywhere and storytelling has been a part of human life since the beginning of time (Bennett and Royle, 2004). Its tradition varies between different cultures but can generally be considered as a form of entertainment or as a way of packaging information in an understandable way that enables it to be passed along generations (Gabriel, 2000). In other words, storytelling is a form of communication that functions as a bridge between different perspectives and represents something that people can gather around (Gergen and Gergen, 1988). While it is strongly rooted in verbal traditions and thus occurring from person to person, it has evolved with society as a whole and can now be considered as part of any type of media (Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008).

The concept of storytelling, in its broadest sense, is somewhat difficult to pinpoint. However, there are some characteristics of storytelling in general that needs to be kept in mind. What makes stories fundamentally different from other forms of communication is that while stories also have a factual basis, the fact is never the goal of the story. Instead there is a silent deal between the storyteller and the audience, where the former has the right to disengage from the facts in order to create an effect (Gabriel, 2000). Therefore, the focus of stories is for the audience to be absorbed in meaning instead of factual content (Reason and Hawkins, 1988).

From the perspective of academic research, storytelling was from the beginning only investigated by folklorists, but spread to other disciplines in the twentieth century, for example psychology and other social sciences (Gabriel, 2000; Shankar, Elliott and Goulding, 2001). Eventually it has also become part of the business community. One usage area of storytelling within the business community is as a source of information that can and should be utilized by companies (Reason and Hawkins, 1988). As already stated, stories are a way to engage with meaning, and as such they could be used in an organizational setting as a way of getting insights into the real workings of the company. This could include for example the investigation of corporate culture or human resources (Gabriel, 2000). From another perspective, stories could be created by an organization and used internally for different purposes. One example is user profiling and user scenarios, which give meaning to the product in a design process. Another example is where case-solving is used within higher education and theory and models are attributed meaning through application (McLellan, 2006).

When viewing storytelling instead as something being created and structured by companies with external audiences in mind, one area of use is the experience industry. It is common for amusements parks and hotels to build their whole concept around a story (Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008). The experience economy has however extended to other areas within business, and is becoming increasingly important for all brands (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). This includes storytelling as an element of experience. At the very highest level, there are brands such as Disney, Apple and Coca Cola that can be considered iconic brands. In these

cases brand, story and experience are inseparable from each other and form a unified whole in the mind of the consumer (Holt, 2004). Hence, there is no doubt that storytelling has established itself within business and marketing today.

1.2.2 How and who in storytelling?

The effectiveness of a story relies on how it is composed, which is dealt with within the field of narratology (Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008). A story constitutes a series of events in a specific order connected in time by a beginning, a middle and an end (Bennett and Royle, 2004). The end is also a culmination of emotional response for the reader, as for the character. The judgment of the character's success or failure is made; which determines the story's literary form (Frye, 1957). One of the most influential literature theorists, Frye (1957), believes in four basic forms of narratives, namely comedy, romance, tragedy and satire.

Story characters are the life of literature (Bal, 2009; Bennett and Royle, 2004) and one of four key elements needed to create a good story besides the message, the plot and the conflict (Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008; Fog, Budtz, Munch and Blanchette, 2010). When it comes to storytelling in a business context, little investigation has been done into what makes a good character. On the other hand, there are other areas within marketing where this is central. Endorsement theory, and celebrity endorsement in particular, is an extensive field of research. The question of the most effective attribute of an endorser has been the subject for many empirical studies, which in turn has been the basis for *source models* evaluating for example the credibility (Hovland, Janis and Kelley, 1953) and attractiveness (McGuire, 1985) of the celebrity to communicate an advertising message to a receiver with the objective of being persuasive. *The match-up hypothesis* on the other hand, argues that a celebrity's characteristics must be congruent with the endorsed brand's attributes in order to be effective (Misra and Beatty, 1990). Further, the more general endorsement theory includes the third-party endorsement of a typical customer and an expert in addition to the celebrity (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Frieden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979). The typical customer endorser is perceived as credible mainly by the similarity in usage to the receiver of the message (Reidenbach and Pitts, 1986), while the expert is credible due to professional experience and

offering expertise in their recommendations (Dean and Biswas, 2001). Using the CEO of a company as a spokesperson was a new endorser phenomenon in the 1980's (Kerin and Barry, 1981; Reidenbach and Pitts, 1986; Rubin, Mager and Friedman, 1982). Thus, the CEO impersonated an expert endorser (Kerin and Barry, 1981). However, the usage of a company founder as a spokesperson is to our knowledge unexplored in endorsement research.

While all companies have the option to use the company CEO or president, not all have a present founder, even though the use of a company creation story is frequently used for myth-building (Holt, 2004; Mathews and Wacker, 2008). There are parallels between storytelling and endorsement theory, whereby an integration of these two areas could provide new interesting insights. By broadening the use of endorsement to include storytelling as a form of communication we are also providing new knowledge of how a story should be composed.

1.3 Defining Corporate Storytelling

For the purpose of this thesis we have decided on the term corporate storytelling as a limitation of the area since our focus is the application of narratives within the business community. While some authors refer to corporate storytelling as a concept occurring within a firm (e.g. McLellan, 2006), we use the distinction made by Percy (2008) in that the term *corporate* looks externally to the company's outside audiences while *organizational* is the internal perspective with stakeholders such as employees. Since this thesis will only study storytelling as external communication we find this a useful division to make. With this in mind, and based on the background of storytelling presented above our final definition for the remainder of this thesis is:

Corporate storytelling is a communication tool applied with external audiences in mind, where information is presented using specific story elements and that has the purpose of delivering this information in an understandable, meaningful, memorable and emotional way.

For simplicity purposes we will use this term interchangeably with storytelling. A list of further definitions that are relevant for the thesis can be found in Appendix A.

1.4 Problematization

When it comes to storytelling used in external communication, the effectiveness is widely stated by practitioners (e.g. Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008; Escalas, 2004; Fog et al.,

2010; Gabriel, 2000; Matthews and Wacker, 2008) and exemplified by company success stories and comparisons in effectiveness between information made available through mere facts and information provided to its audience through stories (Mathews and Wacker, 2008). However, there are few guidelines to any explicit content of a story, and even more importantly, very little academic research has been done within this particular area. With the starting point that corporate storytelling is an effective communication tool - due to its ability to increase memorability (Schank and Abelson, 1995; Swap, Leonard, Shields and Abrams, 2001; Woodside, Sood and Miller, 2008), create meaningfulness (Bruner, 1986; Weick, 1995), help understanding (Rosa, Porac, Runser-Spanjol and Saxon, 1999) and evoke emotions (Fog et al., 2010; Mathews and Wacker, 2008; McKee, 2003) – the assumed variability in effectiveness of the building blocks comprising an effective story is to our knowledge academically unexplored.

Reading a story is a subjective experience, which could to some extent be explained by how immersed a reader is in a story (Green and Brock, 2000). That could be the reason for the quite vague guidelines provided today in marketing literature, limited to the already mentioned elements of the message, the conflict, the plot and the characters (Fog et al., 2010) that have to be in place for an effective story to take form. Even though they constitute a good checklist, there exists none or little indicative information on what to base the actual choice of for example the character or the plot of a story. Good advices exist, such as using classical story plots, assigning characteristics of a hero to the character (Fog et al., 2010; Mathews and Wacker, 2008) and suggesting that an inciting incident catches the reader's attention (McKee, 2003), but *the best choices* are never stated. There are many gaps to fill when it comes to the efficient use of corporate storytelling, the relatively better character or story plot is one area, the best medium for transferring a story is another one. Practitioners widely praise storytelling as an effective communication tool, but have little support of what choices content-wise would make one execution more effective than another.

In order to encourage companies to use corporate storytelling in their brand building activities, they will have to be guided in what choices to make content-wise. This would ease the

transition from traditional (safe) marketing activities, to reaching the potential of stories. We believe that using stories could be a way of acquiring consumers' limited attention by standing out from the clutter of traditional advertising (Rosengren, 2008).

1.5 Purpose

The aim of this study is to decrease the gap between theory and practice of corporate storytelling, focusing on its effective execution. By conducting an experiment, we want to investigate whether there are differences in how a story used for external communication is received depending on the choice of character. More specifically, we will look into if a certain character in a story is more effective than another in terms of building a strong brand by communicating a company message. The founder is today widely used in corporate storytelling with the natural advantage of being able to tell the creation story of a company. Although this is assumed to be effective, we will look into if the founder really is the best choice for a story character in corporate storytelling, when the objective is to affect brand objectives positively. Hence, we will test the assumed best-practice of today.

According to theory there are three basic types of endorsers used in advertising, namely the celebrity, the expert and the typical customer (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Frieden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979). In our case, the expert is used in the shape of a company founder, assuming that the title would encompass professional recognition and knowledge retrieved from experience. Further, since a CEO is argued to impersonate an expert (Kerin and Barry, 1981), the parallel is expected to be valid also for a founder. Endorsement theory and other related constructs will therefore be used in trying to fill the gap of story character effectiveness in storytelling theory. Spokespersons and endorsers are frequently used in traditional advertising, such as ads or billboards with a visual representation. While it can be argued that a visual ad in general is effective (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2005), others have shown that a text, and particularly a story, also has a lot to contribute with regards to advertising effectiveness (Söderlund and Dahlén, 2010). We believe that spokesperson and endorsement theory can be analogically applicable to the character in a story format for marketing communication, which make our study unique in that sense.

Empirically, we aim to explore the assumingly varying effectiveness of main story characters by integrating three different stereotypical characters - the celebrity, the founder and the typical customer - into three close to identical stories. By using two different brands of varying degrees of brand awareness, a secondary objective is to see if the implications for character effectiveness differ between them. The character and the company will be varied in six different story versions, which is our main manipulation variable in the experiment.

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to explore whether different types of characters in storytelling differ in their effect on brand response¹, and if the level of brand awareness has an impact on this effect. In order to fulfill the purpose the more explicit research questions are the following:

- *Are there any differences between specific character types in affecting consumer response to the communication and/or consumer response to the brand?*
- *Does the effectiveness of specific character types differ depending on whether the company has a high or low brand awareness?*
- *Why is a specific character potentially more effective than another?*

1.6 Contribution of the Thesis

This thesis is expected to be of interest for both an academic environment and the practicing marketing community. It is widely researched and stated that storytelling is an effective communicative tool, focusing mainly on why it is effective. However, studies on “the how” of corporate storytelling in brand building are limited. Furthermore, the importance of accountability for marketing activities’ effect on the value of a firm (Verhoef and Leeflang, 2009) indicates that actual evidence for what makes certain story content more effective than others would be crucial information. Due to costly advertising placements and possibly costly endorsers (Erdogan, 1999; Frieden, 1984), the knowledge of the relatively higher effectiveness for one character compared to another could be of significant importance for encouraging companies to use corporate storytelling as a new way of building their brand. We believe that the empirical part of this thesis will contribute to solving this problem.

¹ The cognitive response by consumers towards a brand consisting of brand interest and brand attitude.

This study will contribute to the area of storytelling by extending current guidelines for “the how” of corporate storytelling composition. More explicitly, implications for what story character is the more effective given certain conditions will be provided, which is relevant for anyone engaged in the area of corporate storytelling used as a tool for brand building, both in terms of academic research and in practice. For practitioners, the guidelines on what character to use in a story format when communicating a message will further fill the purpose of confirming or discarding assumed best-practice when it comes to corporate storytelling today.

Academically, our contribution lies in the combination of storytelling with other separate but overlapping areas within marketing academia, such as endorsement theory. One benefit of this is that it fills a gap within storytelling, but it also broadens the contexts in which endorsement theory is used, from traditional media to newer forms of communication. This will be relevant in terms of the presumed effectiveness of a founder, an endorser type that is not included in endorsement theory as of today. The use of theory on endorsement and spokespersons in the context of a story makes our approach to storytelling a first of its kind.

1.7 Delimitations

There are some delimitations for this thesis worth emphasizing. We have chosen to limit ourselves to include three characters and two companies. The characters in turn were chosen based on a general conception that there are three basic endorser types, the celebrity, the expert and the typical customer (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Frieden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979). The fascination of assumed best-practice within corporate storytelling today, using the founder, was decided to be a good analogy to the expert endorser due to presumed expertise from extensive experience from an industry. The companies are differing due to high or low brand awareness, assured by having a fictive company to represent low brand awareness. By varying the characters used in the study, the focus is on one of four basic elements of storytelling (Fog et al., 2010), hence the plot, the message and the conflict is left constant in the stories used for the experiment.

We have chosen to limit this study to consumer goods, and more explicitly the furniture industry, through the choice of companies. According to *Konsumtionsrapporten 2012*

(Handelshögskolan vid Göteborgs Universitet, 2012), furniture purchases (furniture, household goods and maintenance) represented 5 % of total household expenditure in 2011 on the Swedish market, as compared to clothes and shoes representing 4.8 %. The furniture category was also one of the consumption areas that increased the most between 2001 and 2011 with expenditure growing by 64 %. Because of this, the furniture industry constitutes an interesting industry to investigate when it comes to analyzing consumer response. The study was further delimited by the mentioning of a sofa as an object of focus in the stories, a type of furniture that is a relatively large investment in a household and naturally integrated in everyday life.

The stories used in the experiment were communicated in the format of a text, which might or might not be the best context for the usage of corporate storytelling as a communication tool. However, as we keep this constant it will not affect the relative effects of the different characters. The limitation to only test the most effective content in terms of the character made us leave the question of how to best communicate that content to future research. Regarding the sample used for data collection, the respondents approached in real life were limited to people living in the Stockholm area or nearby, while the digital respondents were more geographically spread across Sweden.

1.8 Thesis Outline

The outline for the remainder of this thesis is as follows. The Theory chapter provides the theory that makes up the basis for creating and analyzing our experiment, as well as the generation of our hypotheses. The Method section will thoroughly discuss the method for our thesis, followed by the Analysis and Results chapter in which the results from our data analysis are presented. The Discussion chapter will relate our empirical findings to theory, which will culminate in answers to our research questions, which are presented in the Conclusion section together with reflections and implications of the thesis.

2. THEORY

In this section of the thesis we build the theory, which makes up the basis for creating and analyzing the experiment, as well as generate our hypotheses. We start by describing the benefits of storytelling and the potential it has as a communication tool in a branding context. From that we go on to summarizing the necessary parts when composing a story. Thirdly we discuss the endorsement theory and the benefits and limitations of the celebrity, the founder and the typical customer as they are used in marketing communication today. Finally, we integrate the three parts in a summarizing section where our hypotheses are generated.

2.1 Benefits of Storytelling as a Communication Tool

We have chosen to define corporate storytelling as a communication tool applied with external audiences in mind, where information is presented using specific story elements and that has the purpose of delivering this information in an understandable, meaningful, memorable and emotional way. Stories are a “universal human common denominator” (Mathews and Wacker, 2008: 11) and the only way to create meaning and make sense of the world is to tell stories (Fog et al., 2010). Opposed to simply stating our opinion, telling stories illustrating our point makes us a lot more persuasive (Schank and Abelson, 1995). Furthermore, it is said to be very hard to learn from and remember abstractions unanchored in specific experiences. Stories give life to past experiences and make “memories memorable” both to ourselves and to others (Schank and Abelson, 1995). It is this sense-making and meaningfulness, combined with a memorable and emotional aspect of stories, that makes storytelling such an effective communication tool.

2.1.1 Understandable and meaningful

It can be argued that in order for markets to exist, producers and consumers have to make sense of each other's actions, and in order to do so stories are a critical sense-making tool (Rosa et al., 1999). Sense-making is a concept referring to the “placement of items into frameworks, comprehending, redressing surprise, constructing meaning, interacting in pursuit

of mutual understanding and patterning” (Weick, 1995: 6). In other words, this can be described as making something understandable and meaningful.

The reason why (corporate) storytelling is a good sense-making tool is that it brings together different elements, such as products, their benefits and usage situations, and explains the connections between them (Rosa et al., 1999). In fact, imagining a sequence of events using a product is proposed by Adaval and Wyer (1998) to have a greater impact on purchase decision compared to evaluating separate product features. From a psychological perspective, Bruner (1986: 11) argues that a narrative mode of expression, i.e. stories, can be compared to a factually based mode of thought:

Both can be used as means for convincing another. Yet what they convince *of* is fundamentally different: arguments convince one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness.

This would imply that stories are more understandable and meaningful than other forms of communication since they include several interlinked truths that people more easily can gather around, as opposed to only one truth. Furthermore, as stories are inherently separated from fact, the audience is less skeptical and more open for interpretation as well as more accepting towards the content (Gabriel, 2000).

2.1.2 Memorable

According to cognitive neuroscientist Tulving (1972), memory in terms of recall of events is divided into episodic memory and semantic memory. Episodic memory stores personally experienced episodes or events, while semantic memory is constituted of general knowledge, general concepts and how this knowledge interrelates. The episodic nature of a story and the advantage of combining verbal information and visual images could make a story vivid enough to be “experienced” by the reader. Hence, features of the story would be stored in the episodic memory, making the information more likely of being remembered and ready to be retrieved (Swap et al., 2001).

Schank and Abelson (1995: 2) argue that “human memory is a collection of thousands of stories we remember through experience, stories we remember by having heard them, and

stories we remember by having composed them.” They are not convinced of the separation between episodic and semantic memory, but do believe that all of our knowledge is contained in stories (and mechanisms to process them). According to Schank and Abelson (1995) all that we seem to know is results of personal stories and lived experiences. Specific experiences, i.e. memories, are indexed and saved somewhere in our memory (Schank and Abelson, 1995; Woodside et al., 2008). The indexes help tracing the memories and applying it to new experiences. This process is eased by stories since they contain a lot of information; hence provide many indexes (e.g. locations, attitudes, beliefs). The more indexes a story has, the more are the places in memory where it can reside (Schank and Abelson, 1995).

2.1.3 Emotional

“A strong brand is a combination of facts and emotions. We rationalize and legitimize with our brains, but we buy with our hearts” (Fog et al., 2010: 22). According to Fog et al. (2010), storytelling and branding is said to originate from the same starting point - emotions and values. Clearly defined values are the foundation of a strong brand, and a good story communicates this in an understandable way. Furthermore, emotional ties to consumers are essential for the existence of a strong brand, and a good story speaks to consumers’ emotions and creates a bond between people. It is therefore important to know your audience and to have a deep understanding of where the emotional triggers can be found (Mathews and Wacker, 2008).

According to McKee (2003), the most powerful way in persuading people is by combining an idea with an emotion, and the best tool for this is a story due to its ability of speaking to the receiver’s emotions. Stories “fulfill a profound human need to grasp the patterns of living—not merely as an intellectual exercise, but within a very personal, emotional experience.” (McKee, 2003: 52). This indicates that making sense of life is dependent on emotions connected to personal experiences, hence binds together the story effectiveness of sense-making and the importance of emotional connection.

2.2 The Effects of Storytelling as a Communication Tool

It can be argued that stories are a fundament in order for markets to form (Rosa et al., 1999)

and also for brands to emerge (Holt, 2004). There are different views of what a brand is, but in general it can be considered as a means for a company to differentiate itself or its products from that of competitors (Aaker, 1991). From the perspective of consumers this means that they have a set of associations linked to the company or product name, and therefore a brand happens when it is filled with consumer experiences (Holt, 2004). Furthermore, a successful brand needs to appeal to the consumers' emotions (Fog et al., 2010).

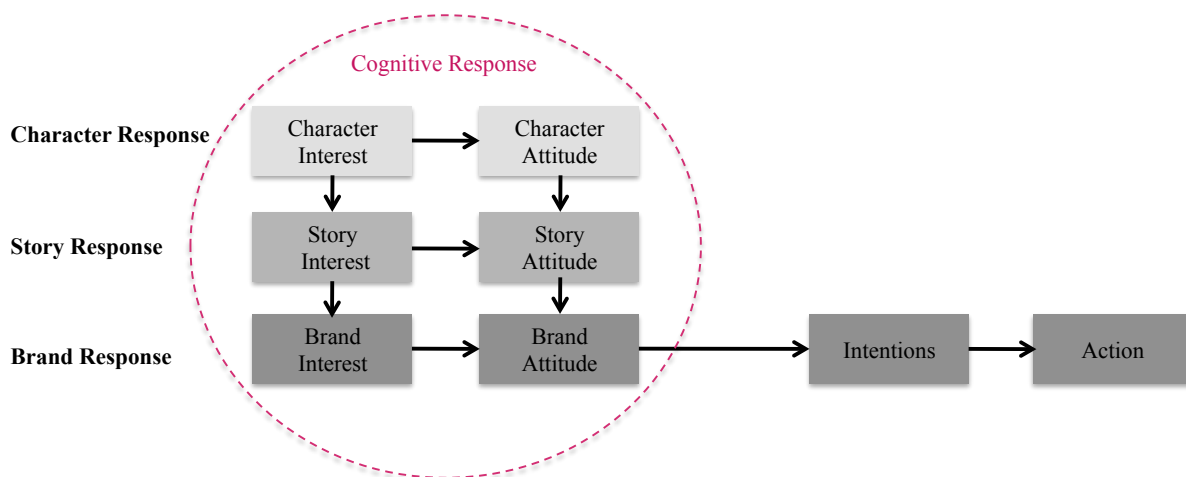
The customer-based brand equity model (Keller, 1993) is a framework that considers brand building from the perspective of consumers and their experiences with a brand. It can be represented as a pyramid in four stages made up of a total of six building blocks (Keller, Apéria and Georgson, 2008). The more intangible side of the pyramid includes the building blocks of imagery and emotions. Imagery is abstract elements with the purpose to connect with customers on a more emotional level and to create a sense of relation between them and the brand. Therefore, imagery is often concerned with applying human characteristics to the brand or associating it with actual people, for example through celebrity endorsement. Feelings, in turn, are the emotional responses to a brand (Keller et al., 2008). The association that consumers have about a brand can in most cases be attributed to the communication of the brand (Percy, 2008). A primary benefit of storytelling is that it incorporates emotions to a larger degree than other ways of communication (McKee, 2003; Gabriel, 2000) and should therefore be an optimal communication tool in building the intangible aspects of a brand.

The reactions to communication have throughout marketing history been explained through different hierarchy of effects models (Barry, 1987). These can be applied to both the consumers' response towards the brand and towards the communication. There are several different variations of the hierarchy of effects model, but commonly they all start with awareness. This means that before a brand can be considered it needs to be part of a consumer's consideration set (Keller et al., 2008) or before a communication message can be processed it needs to be seen by the audience (Percy, 2008). Awareness is followed by some kind of cognitive response where an interest or attitude towards the brand or towards the communication is formed in the mind of the consumer (Barry, 1987). Brand interest can be

defined as “the base level of approachability, inquisitiveness, openness, or curiosity an individual has about a brand” (Machleit, Allen and Madden 1993) and brand attitude is defined as “...meaning [towards a brand] that reflects your experience, knowledge, beliefs, and feelings about it...” (Percy, 2008). The same definitions are assumed to also be applicable for communication interest and communication attitude. The cognitive response will then be followed by intent to act and finally by consumer action such as visiting a store or doing an actual purchase (Barry, 1987).

For this thesis the focus will be on the cognitive response, which according to the hierarchy of effects would lead to some kind of brand intention (Percy, 2008). However, it is argued that intention is an uncertain predictor of actual behavior due to the impact of future unforeseen events (Manski, 1990), thus intention questions in a survey are hard to analyze (Juster, 1966). Furthermore, the choice of using a fictive brand, representing low brand awareness, could make it hard for respondents to visualize visiting such a store. Therefore the interest, as well as the attitude, towards the story and brand will be central to our analysis. The story response is a requirement for brand response to occur, and the relationship between them is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Hierarchy of Effects – The branding context of Storytelling



While we have discussed how storytelling is effective and where the effects of applying it can be seen, there is still the matter of how a story should be composed. When exposed to a story, the elements constructing it will undoubtedly influence the story response and also the brand

response (Barry, 1987).

2.3 Composing a Story

According to Gergen and Gergen (1988), the important components to construct an understandable narrative are the establishment of a valued end point, selection of events relevant to the end point, the ordering of events, establishing causal sequences, and the fact that a story tends to have a clear division of beginning, (middle) and end. Four basic elements to build the story is needed, the message, the conflict, the plot and the characters (Fog et al., 2010). These elements together fulfill the purpose of the story by creating meaning and communicating something to the audience. A combination of these elements can be said to represent a specific poetic mode, which is defined as a way of giving meaning to certain events. Examples of such poetic modes are comic, tragic, epic or romantic (Gabriel, 2000). The four elements of a story will be described in a general sense below, and used further as guidelines when formulating the stories for our experiment.

2.3.1 The message

Corporate storytelling is about communicating a message in a way that reflects positively on the company brand. The message in itself is the general point that the story is trying to make. The difference between a factual argument, which also has a message, is that for a story it is often in the shape of a moral. Hence, the story is used as a tool to help the audience to understand a company message (Fog et al., 2010), which is done effectively only if the moral of the story is without any doubts (Mathews and Wacker, 2008).

2.3.2 The conflict

The message of a story is likely based on the conflict and its resolution, and is further a way for the main character to communicate his or her perception of right or wrong. In storytelling, conflict is a good thing, and without it a story becomes predictable and uninteresting (Fog et al., 2010). It is however important to make sure that a conflict never touches the essence of the brand (Mathews and Wacker, 2008). According to Fog et al. (2010), the driving force of a story is conflict, or the "inciting incident" (McKee, 2003) that is throwing life out of balance. Since human beings always seek for harmony, when the sense of harmony is disturbed we are forced to act to find a solution. This makes the reader more involved, trying to bring order to

emotions of fear and change.

2.3.3 The plot

The plot has a strong connection with the overall poetic mode of the story, and can be described as its general theme (Gabriel, 2000). The story plot in corporate storytelling is most likely variations of established and dateless core storyline themes traced hundreds of years back (Mathews and Wacker, 2008) and can be used differently based on for example what stage a company is currently in. In fact, the corporation is actually said to be a commercial folktale itself (Mathews and Wacker, 2008). The story plot of company creation is of importance when communicating corporate identity since “where you come from have everything to do with where you can go” (Mathews and Wacker, 2008: 73). Further the founder story, thus the origin of a company, more or less exclusively tells the story about an entrepreneurial vision. The entrepreneurial vision is said to be a perfect match with the classical story plot of the hero’s quest (Mathews and Wacker, 2008), in which the hero is off to a quest that, if successful, will lead to fulfillment of great destinies and if not will end in unbelievable failure. This is the essence of an epic poetic mode (Gabriel, 2000). In other words, the entrepreneurial vision to offer the market something new may be a risky commitment, but if successful the entrepreneur becomes the hero.

Basic and classical story plots are re-occurring over time even though the names of the characters and the background descriptions change, the reason is that such plots are easy for the audience to understand due to familiarity (Mathews and Wacker, 2008). The examples of the corporate storytelling plots above do first and foremost rely on relating classical story plots to company relevant events such as the origin of a company. However, storytelling is not limited to this. It is advantageous to use such stories (Mathews and Wacker, 2008), especially when the main character is the company founder. On the other hand celebrities and the typical customer have proved to be effective in endorsing a brand or product (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Frieden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979).

2.3.4 The characters

The “understanding of a text is pervaded by our sense of the character, trustworthiness and

objectivity of the figure who is narrating” (Bennett and Royle, 2004: 56). A story is usually initiated by a main character pursuing a goal, and is supported by the interaction of other characters in addition (Mathews and Wacker, 2008). The same main character with the same characteristics can be part of stories with different poetic modes, however, the relationship to other story characters influence how he or she is perceived (Gabriel, 2000). Storytelling theory suggests that the character encompasses a dominant stereotypical characteristic, e.g. heroic, caretaker or discoverer (Mathews and Wacker, 2008). We aim at investigating this further, by comparing characters based on their known “title” rather than assigning certain characteristics to a make-believe character.

Thus, even though stories about the creation of a company might make a suitable plot, the character endorsing the brand is equally important as one of the four elements of storytelling. Since corporate storytelling is argued to be an effective tool in communicating a brand message, the character in the story becomes an endorser, whereby endorsement theory becomes relevant to look into. In the next section we will look deeper into the advantages of the different characters used in our stories, the celebrity, the founder and the typical customer.

2.4 The Use of Characters in Related Marketing Theory

The content and purpose of corporate storytelling makes it plausible to relate the story characters to endorsement theory. What drives the choice of an endorser of a brand should also be able to function as a determinant for choice of character in corporate storytelling. The most extensive endorser research focuses on celebrity endorsement, in which different theories argue the importance of different source attributes, but it is not limited to this only. Theory argues that there are three basic types of endorsers used in advertising, namely the celebrity, the expert and the typical customer (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Frieden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979).

Friedman and Friedman (1979) suggest that the different types of endorsers would vary in effectiveness based on product type. Hence, celebrities should be used when high *social* risk is perceived, experts would be most effective when endorsing products with high *financial* risk and consumers for products with generally low perceived risk. Furthermore, the

audiences are expected to be persuaded with the help of differing attributes depending on the type of endorser, hence using a celebrity, an expert or a typical customer will affect attitude change in different ways. In our case we use the expert in the shape of the founder of a company, as we assume that the founder title encompasses professional recognition and knowledge retrieved from experience. The benefits and limitations of using the three characters of celebrity, founder and typical customer in marketing communication will be discussed in turn.

2.4.1 Celebrity endorsement

As for storytelling, celebrity endorsement is argued to be a way of differentiating a brand and help advertisements stand out from the clutter of today's intense marketing environment (Choi and Rifon, 2012; Erdogan, 1999; Fleck, Korshia and Le Roy, 2012). The effectiveness of celebrity endorsement depends on a range of factors related to the execution, e.g. advertising quality, media planning and press relations. However, the effectiveness is above all other factors said to be indicated by the choice of celebrity (Fleck et al., 2012). Celebrity endorsement theory takes on different perspectives, and the credibility source model, attractiveness source model, the match-up hypothesis and the meaning transfer model will be presented below.

Source credibility model

The persuasiveness of a message depends on how the receiver perceives the endorser's expertise and trustworthiness (Hovland et al., 1953). Credibility has been shown to have a direct effect on attitudes and behavioral intentions, but is by no means the single factor that should be evaluated when choosing celebrity endorsers (Erdogan, 1999).

A meta-analysis (Amos, Holmes and Strutton, 2008) concluded that the source credibility model comprised of celebrity endorser trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness seems to be the most influential source effects on purchase intention, brand attitudes and attitudes towards the advertisement. Thus, suggesting that the credibility attribute and attractiveness attribute boost each other.

Source attractiveness model

According to the source attractiveness model, an effective message relies on the familiarity (the knowledge of the source through exposure), likability (the affection for the source based on physical appearance and behavior) and similarity (the resemblance between the source and the receiver of the message) of the source/celebrity (McGuire, 1985). An attractive celebrity endorser surely enhances attitudes towards the endorsed brand, however, whether it initiates behavioral intentions have not been confirmed (Erdogan, 1999). Caballero, Lumpkin and Madden (1989) found that physical attractiveness did not have an effect on behavior, even though physical attractive endorsers might evoke positive feelings.

Match-up hypothesis

When the congruence between the highly relevant characteristics of a celebrity endorser and the highly relevant attributes of a brand is consistent, the effect on brand attitude is more positive than if the match is incongruent. This means that even though a celebrity is well liked, one must make sure that the celebrity image matches the brand image (Misra and Beatty, 1990). If the perceived connection between the celebrity endorser and the endorsed brand is missing, it may lead the consumer to the conclusion that the celebrity is doing it only for the compensation (Erdogan, 1999; Jobber, 2007). On the other hand, as pointed out by Fleck et al. (2012) a celebrity that is widely liked is more likely to be seen as congruent with any brand.

Erdogan (1999) concludes that the real life applicability of the match-up hypothesis has its flaws. It is nearly impossible to identify the valid dimensions for a product, hence hard to develop an effective match-up between the attributes of a celebrity and those of the brand.

Choi and Rifon (2012) take the match-up hypothesis to the next level by proposing that consumer attitude may depend on the perception of a celebrity in reference to one's self-image. When a consumer perceived the celebrity endorser to have an image congruent with the ideal self-image of the consumer, the ad was rated more favorably and purchase intentions were higher.

Celebrities have proved to be more effective as endorsers than non-celebrities with regards to attitude towards the endorsed brand and the advertisement as well as intentions to purchase,

as long as the celebrity match the brand and target group and is not associated with any previous endorsements (Erdogan, 1999) since the link between a celebrity and a product is more distinct when promoting only one product (Mowen and Brown, 1981).

Meaning transfer model

The greatest difference between an anonymous model and a celebrity in advertising is the meanings they possess. An unknown actor with low awareness among consumers, provides imprecise demographic information while a celebrity, that in turn has a high awareness, can offer precise demographics and in addition personality and lifestyle meanings earned from public appearances. Some of those culturally constituted meanings resided in the celebrity are transferred to the product when seen in an advertisement. In turn, the meanings move from the product to the consumer, who will have to do the effort of actively using the meanings in the construction of their self-image (McCracken, 1989). Therefore, it is important to evaluate how desirable the meanings brought to the brand by the endorser actually are, in order to ensure effectiveness (Erdogan, 1999).

2.4.2 Role of a founder

We argue that a founder can take on the stereotypical role of an expert supported by legitimizing experience of the product category or industry, hence making the founder a credible source of a story. Further, the interconnection of a founder and his or hers company is assumed to have positive implications for the perceived fit between an endorser and a brand, backed up by theory on social identity and personal branding.

Expert endorsement

The expert is one of the main basic endorser types (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Frieden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979), and is relying mostly on credibility for persuasion (Dean and Biswas, 2001). High source credibility is repeatedly demonstrated to induce more attitude change than a low-credibility source (Frieden, 1984). The credibility of the expert endorser makes the receiver embrace the attitude of an expert endorser when the information presented is useful in solving a problem, a process called internalization (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). However, even though perceived as knowledgeable, a founder or a company president is not

objective. Thus, he or she would potentially be less effective in changing attitudes due to the obvious conclusion that he or she has something to gain by advocating the brand (Rubin et al., 1982).

Linking the effectiveness of a founder to the effectiveness of a CEO spokesperson is in some cases relevant. Reidenbach and Pitts (1986) found that not all CEOs possess the right qualities to be a highly persuasive company spokesperson; hence the title of a CEO does not automatically encompass high levels of credibility. Furthermore, credibility characteristics such as perceived believability, perceived integrity and perceived expertness were more strongly correlated with persuasiveness than how well known the CEO was. However, it was also indicated that a case in which both CEO and brand had a positive image from the beginning, the usage of the CEO could enhance the positive image of a brand. Otherwise, the use of a CEO could be equal to advertising money spent on making the CEO a celebrity rather than enhancing brand image. Also Rubin et al. (1982) conducted a study in which a company president was used as an endorser, which proved to generate better ratings of a commercial compared to a nameless spokesperson, also indicating a higher trustworthiness of the company president.

Founder and company interconnectivity

Regardless of the stage a company is in, it is likely that it has evolved from nothing to something due to *entrepreneurial passion*. According to Cardon, Wincent, Singh and Drnovsek (2009: 515) entrepreneurial passion is “a consciously accessible, intense positive feeling, and results from engagement in activities with identity meaning and salience to the entrepreneur”. Hence, passion is aroused by activities and behavior reflecting ones self-identity. Further, social identity theory argues that an individual’s knowledge of belonging to certain social groups brings emotional and value significance (Tajfel, 1972), which leads individuals to behave in ways that match their identities (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995). Hence, the decision making of a founder builds the company in accordance with its sense of self. This would explain why the creation processes of new firms take different directions even though facing the same context (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). With a continuously

present founder, the actions and decisions made would reflect the founder's identity as it evolves, thus the values and meanings of the founder is to be found as values and meanings of the company.

The best brands are said by Gad and Rosencreutz (2002) to be built by entrepreneurs, transferring what one stands for to the company and a way of doing so is to tell good stories. Ingvar Kamprad and the many myths about him is a good example of this. According to Herskovitz and Crystal (2010), when telling a brand story it is important to make sure that words and actions of the company match, hence the character's values and characteristics need to stay consistent over time to be in line with company actions. For example, the values of the brand Virgin is said to be synonymous with the ones of founder Richard Branson, making his personal brand to some extent identical to the Virgin corporate brand (Arruda, 2009; Gad and Rosencreutz, 2002). Therefore it could be argued that a company founder would be the ultimate brand persona of a brand story, since the values of the founder is likely to reflect onto the company as Gad and Rosencreutz (2002) suggest. Further, the brand persona could possibly drive the attitude and tone of the company, differentiating it from similarly targeted firms' stories in the same industry (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010). Also Pettigrew (1979) is of the opinion that entrepreneurs have the ability to create company culture components such as beliefs and myths.

Personal branding

According to Montaya (2002: 8), a personal brand is "the public projection of certain aspects of a person's personality, skills or values; it's not the entire human being". Hence, the public projection of the personality and values of an entrepreneur or founder could easily be reflected onto the company. This in turn stimulates the impulse on which personal brands rest - people like to buy from people they feel some kind of connection to (Montaya, 2002).

A personal brand is nurtured by exposure in the media, and maximum image exposure is crucial for its effectiveness (Hearn, 2008; Montaya, 2002). Further, a personal brand is not fully realized until it reaches its audience through some kind of performance (Montaya, 2002). Regardless of it being a matter of a personal or a corporate brand, the aim is to have the

chosen audience to respond powerfully. Thus, a personal brand is not mainly about being famous, but to be able to have influence in the chosen domain and audience, e.g. the media, one's company or an industry.

2.4.3 The typical customer

According to Mathews and Wacker (2008), companies should let the customer tell the story for them whenever possible, due to the authenticity of an economically unbiased voice. Another strong source attribute of a typical customer as an endorser is the similarity to the audience and the similarity of usage (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Wang, 2005). According to Friedman and Friedman (1979), the customer endorser is not expected to have extensive knowledge about the product category except from that of experience from usage. The typical customer would therefore be suitable in endorsing low-risk, everyday products, a category that would rather seem awkward if endorsed by an expert. The similarity aspect, both in terms of being a customer and the usage of a product, puts the customer endorser in between the celebrity endorser and the expert endorser. Hence, the customer endorser could potentially benefit from the identification process, by having other customers seeing themselves as similar, and also the internalization process by their similar usage endowing them with some expertise. Wang (2005) actually found that regular customers' positive endorsements outweighed expert endorsements when looking into audiences' behavioral intentions when it came to hedonic product characteristics. Also Brock (1965) found that if a communicator's relationship to an object were perceived as similar to the one of the customer, the source was more persuasive, which is supported by the identification process. Another aspect of typical customer behavior is their willingness to report about lived experiences involving brands (Woodside et al., 2008). Customer storytelling in the shape of blogs have been flourishing for years, and customer feedback is instantly posted online signed as third-party endorsements (Wang, 2005). The general presence and availability of such customer stories could potentially increase the perceived credibility of a customer endorser even though it is included as a commercial message from a company.

However, even though similarity to the targeted audience is widely supported as a persuasive

source characteristic (Friedman and Friedman, 1979), the same character attribute in a narrative story is said to have the opposite effect on brand evaluations (Bhatnager and Wan, 2011). Self-character similarity eases the process for a reader to immerse into a story (Bhatnager and Wan, 2011; Green and Brock, 2000), in combination with a brand the positive effect of similarity can be the opposite. According to Bhatnager and Wan (2011), narrative immersion lessens the impact of self-character similarity on brand and story evaluations, which is based on the concept of narrative transportation. Narrative transportation is defined as the absorption into a story (Green and Brock, 2000). Given the fact that the reader is transported, i.e. immersed in the story, the cognitive resources available is argued by Bhatnager and Wan (2011) to be distributed between story-oriented narrative processing (the absorption of the story and identification with the character) and brand-oriented information processing (the critical evaluation of brand information). Hence, if the character is similar to the reader, the identification process is facilitated and less cognitive resources are needed for the story-oriented narrative processing. This leaves more resources for the critical evaluation of why the brand appears in the story. On the other hand, Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) is of the opinion that an audience will find a brand story interesting only if they understand the character used in it, not to say that the character necessarily has to be similar to the reader.

2.5 Theory Summary and Hypotheses Generation

Storytelling is a type of communication tool that can be used to transfer meaning of a brand to consumers. Its effectiveness for brand communication lies in that it is understandable and meaningful, memorable and emotional. In order for a story to be considered a story it needs to contain certain elements, including message, conflict, plot and characters. The characters of the story, especially the protagonist, are essentially endorsers of the brand, thus endorsement theory becomes applicable as a theoretical area to give new insights into storytelling. When looking at three typical endorsers, the celebrity, the founder and the typical customer, and how they are used in marketing communication, it becomes obvious that they have different benefits and limitations.

The celebrity is perhaps the most well-studied of the different types of endorsers, and there

are several established models of how to evaluate the choice of celebrity. The source models are built on a basic understanding that any celebrity endorser could be persuasive in selling a product as long as he or she is credible or attractive. A celebrity possess some symbolic properties accumulated from the different roles played in society and media portraits, which in turn transfer meanings to the brand or product (McCracken, 1989). The match-up hypothesis however, argues that these properties must be congruent with the endorsed brand's attributes in order to be effective (Misra and Beatty, 1990). Similarly, McCracken (1989) means that the effectiveness of an advertising message would rely on *the kind* of credibility or attractiveness a celebrity possess. In that sense an expert endorser in the form of a company founder would be effective as the brand-fit tends to be quite high. The interconnection of a founder and its company is assumed to have positive implications for the perceived fit between an endorser and a brand, backed up by theory on social identity and personal branding. Furthermore, the founder is also seen as a credible source, but might create suspicion, as there is an inherent bias towards the company. In that sense a typical customer would be the optimal storyteller, as he or she is considered more objective. Also, self-character similarity is argued to ease the process of immersion into a story (Green and Brock, 2000; Bhatnager and Wan, 2011), which would make the typical customer effective as storyteller since another customer might easily relate to him or her.

The communication will have to be processed by the consumers, before the benefits of using endorsers through storytelling can be realized. There is a hierarchy of effects before the message is fully received by the consumer, which in turn is a necessity for a response towards the brand. For our study we have decided to focus on the communication objectives of story interest and story attitude, which are the cognitive steps of the communication processing. As we are providing the respondents with the story, the objective of awareness has already been achieved and is therefore not tested.

Since all character types have differing benefits and limitations, we believe that it will be possible to distinguish some relative effectiveness between them. Therefore we want to study the effects on communication objectives, when varying the type of character used in a

company story, giving the following hypotheses:

H1a: The effects on story interest differ depending on the type of character used in the story.

H1b: The effects on story attitude differ depending on the type of character used in the story.

When the communication is properly processed and received by the consumer, we expect that storytelling will also have effects on branding objectives, as storytelling is a communication tool that incorporates building blocks of strong brands, such as imagery and emotion, in an effective way. The hierarchy of effects concerning brand response is essentially the same as that of communication response, with the difference that the former evaluate consumer reaction to the brand, and the latter consumer reaction to the specific communication, in this case the story.

The discussion above about the benefits and limitations of each character type, suggest that they will incorporate aspects such as imagery in different ways. Once again, we believe it will be possible to detect a difference in effectiveness between the character types, and therefore we would like to answer the question whether there are any differences between specific character types in positively affecting brand response. Similarly to communication response, we are focusing on brand interest and brand attitude, giving the hypotheses:

H2a: The effects on brand interest differ depending on the type of character used in the story.

H2b: The effects on brand attitude differ depending on the type of character used in the story.

We also want to look at the question if there are elements that might vary the relative effectiveness of characters. Theory states that the type of endorser used is expected to have different effects depending on the branding objective. For example, in the case of low brand awareness a celebrity is expected to be the best choice (Frieden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979). Coming back to the hierarchy of effects model, in order for brand awareness to be a relevant objective, one have to assume that the consumers have no association to the company before being exposed to the story. Therefore we believe that the effectiveness of

specific character types might differ depending on whether the company already has a high or low brand awareness, whereby we compare a known and an unknown company to see if there is an interaction effect with the type of character. A hypothesis thus becomes:

H3: The effect of different characters vary as a function of the level of brand awareness.

In line with the different levels of brand awareness, the awareness of characters will also differ between the two companies. In the example of a known company, there is the possibility that the founder also is known, with a personal brand. This is usually not the case for an unknown company. The interconnecting bond between the founder and its company provides an impeccable fit, which is supported by social identity theory. Given that the founder also has a strong personal brand built by media exposure and a general public perception, this could in turn make a founder the ultimate “celebrity” to endorse the brand of its company.

In order to test for the difference that might occur between different company cases due to specific conditions, we will look at the two companies separately and once again test the relative effectiveness of characters in terms of both story response and brand response:

H4a: The effect of different characters on story interest differ between companies.

H4b: The effect of different characters on story attitude differ between companies.

H5a: The effect of different characters on brand interest differ between companies.

H5b: The effect of different characters on brand attitude differ between companies.

Finally after describing how characters are different from each other, we would also like to know why a specific character potentially is more effective than another. Generally, some source attributes that have proved to be persuasive in inducing attitude change are credibility (Amos et al., 2008; Dean and Biswas, 2001; Erdogan, 1999; Frieden, 1984; Hovland et al., 1953), trustworthiness (Erdogan, 1999; Hovland et al., 1953), likability (Fleck et al., 2012; McGuire, 1985), similarity (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Wang,

2005) and brand-fit (Misra and Beatty, 1990). These source attributes could in practice be obtained by any of the basic types of endorsers even though each and everyone has one or more attributes that are particularly strong (Dean and Biswas, 2001). The persuasion strength of the celebrity relies on the identification process, in which a person adopts an attitude because it is in line with one's self-perception. Internalization on the other hand is the acceptance of useful information needed to solve a problem, which opens up for the receiver to adopt the attitude of an expert endorser (Friedman and Friedman, 1979).

The relative effectiveness that will potentially be discovered through the previous hypotheses could therefore be explained by the interest and attitude towards the character. It is assumed that the character interest and attitude in turn are a result of specific character descriptives, such as the trustworthiness, similarity and brand-fit described above. Therefore we hypothesize:

H6a: The character descriptives are explanatory for differences in character interest between the groups.

H6b: The character descriptives are explanatory for differences in character attitude between the groups.

The hypotheses will be tested in chapter 4 of this thesis, Analysis and Results, and are further discussed in chapter 5, Discussion.

3. METHOD

This chapter will provide a thorough discussion of our method for this thesis. Starting with idea generation and overall research design, we then go on to accounting for our pre-study and how we decided to formulate our stories and questionnaire. This is followed by our thoughts regarding sampling and data collection, as well as considerations and tests of data quality. Finally we account for the process of data analysis.

3.1 Idea Generation

The idea for the thesis subject stemmed from an interest in company representatives, such as a founder of a company, that are highly visible in media and has a strong personal brand associated with their name. Common examples of this phenomenon are Steve Jobs and Ingvar Kamprad. While they could be classified as celebrities, the situation is somewhat different as their fame is connected to a company, while for a celebrity the personal brand is their main product. What also seems to characterize the type of companies that have a visible founder, and the founder himself, is an element of myth-building. Many such companies can be categorized as iconic brands, where myth and storytelling are central elements (Holt, 2004). This connection between founder, company, brand and myth-building implies that the founder could potentially be a strong resource for a brand not only internally, but also when it comes to external communication.

When looking at storytelling in practice, we could see that the founder is widely used for this purpose. When used externally as corporate communication, storytelling often concerns itself with the story of company heritage, where the founder has a natural role. Further investigation into storytelling showed us that while it is used by many companies in practice, there is little support behind its execution. While several authors have established the effectiveness of storytelling (e.g. Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008; Escalas, 2004; Fog et al., 2010; Gabriel, 2000; Gergen and Gergen, 1988; Matthews and Wacker, 2008) few have looked into how it should be done in the best possible way (Söderlund & Dahlén, 2010). Furthermore, when

looking at literature of general uses of a founder in a company, our findings were mainly limited to entrepreneurial theory, corporate culture and other organizational aspects. Associated theory regarding endorsement and secondary brand associations mentions several sources used to enhance a brand, such as celebrities, sponsorships and third-party sources, but the founder is not included (Keller, 2008).

Therefore we question whether the use of the founder is best-practice for companies engaged in storytelling, and wonder if other potential endorsers such as a celebrity or a typical customer might be better suited for this purpose. Thus, we landed in our final topic of investigating the relative effectiveness, of using different characters in storytelling.

3.2 Research Design

Even though our thesis topic originates from an observation of the uses of storytelling in practice, our thesis is of a deductive nature. Our point of departure is within the theory of storytelling and the gap that we have identified of how it best should be constructed in terms of character choice. From this we have generated our hypotheses, which are then tested through data collection (Bryman and Bell, 2007). From this follows that we are applying a quantitative research strategy for the empirical part of the thesis, also because we wish to make broader generalizations from our results. Furthermore, we also attempt to shine new light on the theoretical area of storytelling by combining it with endorsement theory, which means that the thesis also has an element of integrative reasoning (MacInnis, 2011).

As we want to investigate the effects of an independent variable on consumer thoughts and behavior the thesis is also concerned with causality (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Therefore, when it comes to the empirical part of the thesis, we decided on a between-subjects experimental design, to ensure a high level of internal validity. This means that respondents are from the beginning divided into different groups in a random manner, where the manipulation of different variables determine the conditions affecting each group. In our case, we wanted to vary the type of character in the story, between celebrity, founder and typical customer, and also the type of company, between a well-known and an unknown company. This resulted in six different groups, as represented in Table 1.

Table 1: Experimental Design - Including the specific characters used for each story.

Level of Brand Awareness	Type of Character		
	Celebrity	Founder	Customer
High Awareness - <i>IKEA</i>	Martina Haag	Ingvar Kamprad	Unknown
Low Awareness - <i>Folkessons Möbler</i>	Martina Haag	Unknown	Unknown

We did not include a control group in the true sense, as this implies a neutral group not exposed to the manipulated variable (Bryman and Bell, 2007). This was not applicable as our focus was the relative effects between the groups and not the absolute effect of storytelling with a specific character. The chosen format of data collection is a questionnaire since it is most commonly used for experiments (Malhotra, 2010). While the main data collection is quantitative in nature, we have also applied some elements of a qualitative research strategy for the purpose of our pre-study, where findings were collected through unstructured interviews.

We decided to limit ourselves to the Swedish market, whereby our chosen companies and characters are Swedish. This means that the stories and the questionnaire also were in Swedish. The reason for this was that since the data collection would take place in Stockholm, we assumed that the majority of respondents would be Swedish speaking. Therefore, adapting the manipulation variables and language accordingly, would limit any negative impact of language barriers.

3.2.1 Determining manipulation variables

The object of manipulation between our six groups is the story. As mentioned above, the stories differ on two aspects, the type of character and the type of company. All stories were in the format of a written text, in an attempt to keep the experiment neutral in terms of media. The chosen characters were a celebrity, the founder of the company and a customer, based on endorsement theory and practical examples available in the business community.

When it comes to the companies, we wanted to look at one established and known company, and compare this to one that is unknown. Therefore we decided on IKEA as our first case, as

they are known for using storytelling in an effective way (Dennisdotter and Axenbrant, 2008). We also thought that the furniture industry was a suitable focus. The motivations underlying a purchase in general are said to be either informational or transformational, and the type of decision could be either low- or high-involvement (Rossiter, Percy and Donovan, 1991). The type of decision is often determined in terms of perceived risk, whether it be financial or social. We assume that storytelling is an effective type of communication especially for a transformational product since it needs to incorporate emotion in the message (Percy, 2008). Furniture in general and a sofa in particular are defined as a transformational and relatively high-risk purchase, and would therefore be a suitable product for a storytelling experiment whereby the choice of IKEA is further supported. As we wanted to keep the experiment as constant as possible, the unknown company was also a furniture company with the same values as communicated for IKEA, only with the fictional name of “Folkessons Möbler” (Folkesson’s Furniture).

3.3 Pre-study

3.3.1 Pre-test 1 - Finding the values

The purpose of our first pre-test was to determine what values should be communicated in the story. As the idea was to have the same values for both IKEA and the unknown, fictional company of Folkessons Möbler, we only asked about the values associated with the IKEA brand, as they would make up the foundation of both company stories.

The applied research strategy for pre-test 1 was short interviews. We did a total of ten interviews that were open and unstructured as to avoid steering the interviewees in any particular direction (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Respondents were asked to share their view of IKEA, and the responses were then summarized under five different themes: affordable, family-oriented, down to earth, reliable and well-liked. These responses were also in line with previous investigations of the IKEA brand (Keller et al., 2008). Secondly, respondents were also asked the question: “If IKEA was a Swedish celebrity, which one would it be and why?”, with the purpose of assigning personality traits to the brand (Keller et al., 2008) and thus validating the responses of the first question by making the respondents think one step further.

However, it also had a second purpose of generating a list of potential celebrities to use in our experiment, which can be found in Appendix B.

3.3.2 Pre-test 2 - Finding the celebrity

As mentioned above, one result from pre-test 1, was a list containing several names of celebrities that would be a suitable fit with the IKEA brand. However, as only one celebrity was needed, we wanted to investigate this further to come up with the most suitable one. Based on theory regarding celebrity endorsement, the main requirement for the final choice was that the celebrity should be a good fit with the IKEA brand (Misra and Beatty, 1990). We also thought it was important that the celebrity would be plausible, in terms of the likeliness of this person actually being part of an IKEA-advertisement. Furthermore, we decided to avoid celebrities that might create polarized attitudes, and choose one that would be likeable for a large number of people, as this tends to increase the perceived congruency with the brand (Fleck et al., 2012). The risk of this is that the reaction to the celebrity tends to be more neutral, but we thought this would be more in line with the IKEA brand.

The method for pre-test 2 was once again interviews, this time five of them. The respondents were asked to share their views of each of the celebrities on the list and also to choose the one that they thought would be the best fit, considering the requirements stated above. From this we decided on moving forward with Martina Haag as our chosen celebrity.

3.3.3 Pre-test 3 - Story quality

For our final pre-test we wanted to test the reactions of the story, before handing out the questionnaire. This test was simply based on the fact that “the narrative test for a story is relatively straightforward: would a listener respond by challenging the factual accuracy of the text.” (Gabriel, 2000). From this we formulated two simple criteria: that the reader should believe that the story was true, and that they would have little comment on the content. It was also important that they observed who was telling the story.

Six interviewees were asked to read one story each, and then think aloud of their thoughts about it. Except for being asked about who the storyteller was, respondents were not guided in their answers, as reaction was meant to be spontaneous. The stories passed the criteria of

being believable.

3.3.4 Testing the questionnaire

Before beginning our data collection we asked four people to fill out our survey and comment on their impression of it. Even though the questions were the same for all groups, two questionnaires from each company were tested, and all characters were represented. The founder was tested for both companies, as this story was the one that differed the most between the companies. The purpose of this was to see whether the questionnaire was understandable and if the questions were formulated in the correct way to get the answers intended. The questionnaire was well received, and the suggested changes were of minor character, such as formatting implications to improve readability.

3.4 Formulating the Stories

Composing the stories was a critical part of our thesis, since this was our main manipulation variable. We based our decisions on the theory regarding story content that was presented in the theory chapter. It is stated that the main elements of a story are the message, the conflict, the plot and the characters (Fog et al., 2010), which can also be summarized as an overall poetic mode (Gabriel, 2000). As an extension of the character consideration we also had to consider narrative tone of voice. The goal was to keep the six different stories as constant as possible, while at the same time considering the different characters and companies.

3.4.1 Poetic mode

Considering the poetic modes described by Gabriel (2000) the nature of our plot is driven by a secondary poetic mode rather than a generic. The comic mode requires a protagonist that is a deserving-victim while the tragic mode incorporates the undeserving-victim. In our case the character is undeserving but without the pity from the audience making the protagonist into a survivor or ironist and resulting in the secondary mode of Humour (Gabriel, 2000).

3.4.2 The message

One part of the message is to communicate the values of IKEA or Folkessons Möbler. A second part is to present a product and its main benefits. The central product in the story is the sofa, and the reason for this was that we wanted a transformational product, and also one that is top-of-mind for IKEA. Therefore the general purpose of the story is to communicate the

qualities of the product, design, price and user-friendliness, as well as the values of IKEA, family-oriented, affordable and so on.

3.4.3 The conflict

For our main conflict we decided on the spilling of coffee on the sofa, and as the turn of events the fact that while the spilling seemed to be a big problem, it really was not. While being a very plain and light conflict, we thought this would be suitable for a commercial message, and also in line with the values of IKEA. This ruled for example the decision of having coffee being spilled instead of red wine or similar.

3.4.4 The plot

As mentioned before, the plot can be described as the general theme of the story, and it is strongly connected with the poetic mode. The plot in this case becomes “misfortune as occasion for wit” according to Gabriel (2000) and following the discussion of poetic mode above. This is the fundament of the plot for all six stories, but due to the nature of the founder as character, these two stories also incorporate some measure of an epic mode, in line with the hero’s quest (Matthews and Wacker, 2008). This combination of an epic and comic mode makes for a so called cock-up mode where the misfortune from before also is presented in the plot as a trial for the protagonist (Gabriel, 2000).

3.4.5 The characters

The characters in focus are our main investigative variables, namely the celebrity, the founder or the typical customer. These are then accompanied by secondary characters, not mentioned by name, that serve as the antagonist within the conflict. In the case of our celebrity, Martina Haag, her husband is also mentioned by name, to emphasize her connection to family-values.

In relation to characters, another important aspect of the story is the narrative tone of voice. The decision was to include the character as the storyteller, and thus have a first person narrative. The reason for this was that first person is considered more effective than other forms of narrative (Stern, 1991). Therefore, in order to make the story believable, we needed to mimic the tone of our different characters. As inspiration we looked at the book *Historien*

om *IKEA*² by Bertil Torekull (2008) to set the tone when Ingvar Kamprad is telling a story. The tone was then shifted by small changes such as using slightly different words to better fit the age or gender of the other characters as storytellers. The stories can be found in Appendix C.

3.5 Formulating the Questionnaire

The final version of the questionnaire contained 26 questions, and was estimated to take between five and ten minutes to complete. The questions were the same no matter what story the respondent was exposed to, and divided into control questions, demographic questions, dependent variables and explanatory variables. The choice of dependent variables stemmed from the theoretical discussion as seen in chapter two. Our focus was measurements of cognitive response, in other words interest measurements (of story and brand) and attitude measurements (of story and brand), as well as interest and attitude towards the character. Some dependent variables that were included in the questionnaire were not used for the analysis, as they were not compatible with the primary purpose for this thesis. For all measurements we used a 7-point scale, and several measurements were used for each variable as this increases the reliability of answers (Söderlund, 2005).

Finally, the questionnaire also included instructions of how to respond to the questions, and ended with a note admitting to the manipulations of the experiment. While people might be offended or feel tricked to know that the company, in the case of Folkesson's Möbler, was fictional, we still thought it would be ethical to give this information in direct connection with the questionnaire. The questionnaire in its whole can be found in Appendix D, and is summarized in its parts below³.

3.5.1 Control questions

The term control questions refer to questions intended to be used for quality controls of data. These include questions about brand awareness and character awareness, to see if our manipulations were correct. For Brand Awareness we asked "How well do you know the brand IKEA or Folkessons Möbler?" and for character awareness we asked "How well do you

² English translation: "The story of IKEA".

³ The questions below are translated from Swedish to English, whereby formulations might be misleading.

know the person telling the story?”. For both questions, respondents answered on a scale ranging from “Don’t know at all” to “Know very well”.

We also included questions with the purpose of testing if the respondent actually read the story. We asked “Who is the person telling the story?”, “Is the person telling the story a man or a woman?”, “In the story, what was spilled on the sofa?” and “In the story, did the cup break?”. Only the first question was used as a screening variable for satisfactory responses, but the other questions had a secondary purpose of getting people to go back and read the story if they did not do so the first time.

3.5.2 Interest questions

The interest questions involved the dependent variables of story, brand and character interest. For this we used established measurements (Machleit et al., 1993) with three statements “I am interested in the story/the character/the brand”, “I would like to know more about the story/the character/the brand”, “I am intrigued by the story/the character/the brand”. Respondents were asked to answer the statements on a scale ranging from “don’t agree at all” to “completely agree”. The three statements were tested for internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha, and indices were computed.

3.5.3 Attitude questions

The attitude questions involved the dependent variables of story, brand and character attitude. Respondents were asked, “How do you perceive the story/the character/the brand?” and invited to answer on a four-item scale. These were “negative” to “positive”, “not appealing” to “appealing”, “bad” to “good” and “dislike” to “like”, which are all established measurements. The reason for using four items was the possibility to eliminate one if internal consistency would improve (Söderlund, 2005). The three variables were tested for internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha, and indices were computed for each of them.

3.5.4 Explanatory questions

The explanatory questions referred to characteristics of the different characters. Firstly, respondents were asked the question “How would you describe the person telling the story?” with answers on twelve different bipolar scales. These were divided into four characteristics,

with three items of each. Trustworthiness was measured by “Not trustworthy” to “trustworthy”, “dishonest” to “honest” and “unreliable” to “reliable”. Level of expertise was measured by “not knowledgeable” to “knowledgeable”, “not expert” to “expert” and “inexperienced” to “experienced”. Level of ideal was measured by “not important” to “important”, “not admirable” to “admirable” and “not impressive” to “impressive”. Finally, level of brand-fit was measured by “does not fit with the brand” to “fit with the brand”, “not similar to the brand” to “similar to the brand” and “does not represent the brand” to “represents the brand”. These were then tested for internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha, and indices were computed for trustworthiness, expertise, ideal and brand-fit.

Respondents were also asked, “How would you describe the character in relation to yourself?” with three different bipolar measurements ranging from “unlike me” to “like me”, “I don’t identify with him/her” to “I identify with him/her” and “I do not feel a connection” to “I feel a connection”. These were then tested for internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha, and an index was computed for self-character-perception.

3.6 Sampling and Data Collection

For our data collection we wanted to gather responses in an as time efficient manner as possible, while still getting the best possible data. This meant turning to places where a large number of people could be reached at the same time, such as schools and Stockholm central station. We also distributed our questionnaire digitally through the survey tool Qualtrics.

A total of 286 answers were collected and 243 of these were used for the final analysis⁴. The age distribution of our respondents varies between 17 and 62, with a mean age of 24. The gender distribution showed to be 49 % female and 51 % male, while 79 % were students and 21 % non-students. Although respondents were not asked about their place of residence, it is safe to assume that the majority resides in Stockholm or nearby as this was the place for our data collection. This means that our data can be defined as a convenience sample (Bryman and Bell, 2007). It can however be argued that when testing theory, a representative sample is less important (Calder, 1981; Söderlund and Dahmén, 2010).

⁴ Eliminated responses: 29 incomplete questionnaires and 14 that failed on control questions.

Since our chosen method of data analysis, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), requires that the responses are independent random samples, the most important aspect to consider regarding the data collection was that the respondents were divided into groups in a completely random manner. For the digital distribution this was controlled for by collecting all potential respondents and allocating them to a group following a randomizing function. For the manual distribution of printed questionnaires, these were simply mixed into one pile and handled without further consideration of what group they originally belonged to.

3.7 Data Quality

3.7.1 Reliability

Reliability is the concern of producing results that can be repeated in a second study. This can in turn be divided into external and internal reliability (Bryman and Bell, 2007). External reliability, or stability, means that measurements taken at two different occasions with the same sample have a high correlation (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Due to time limitations we did not have the opportunity to replicate our study at a second point in time. Furthermore, it would have required a stronger engagement by the respondents to answer the questionnaire a second time, which might potentially limit the number of respondents willing to contribute to the study. Also, due to the nature of our experiment, and the fact that the respondents would need to remain unaware that our unknown company Folkessons Möbler is fictional in order for validity requirements to hold, a second measurement becomes problematic. For these reasons we have not been able to control for external reliability. Some threats to reliability that we need to be aware of is that respondents might be affected by external factors, such as for example media, in the cases where real companies or people are incorporated in our stories. In that sense there is a risk that responses might differ over time.

Internal reliability on the other hand, has been considered to a greater extent. The concept refers to the consistency of multiple-indicator measurements and concerns the question if the variables of an index measure the same thing (Bryman and Bell, 2007). In order to check for this we have used the test of Cronbach's alpha to see whether it is possible to compute the indices. Cronbach's alpha was accepted above values of 0,7 (Bryman and Bell, 2007) where

the internal reliability was considered high enough for the indices to be good measurements.

3.7.2 Validity

Validity means whether a measurement really reflect the reality that it is suppose to measure (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Therefore, we have used common and established measurements and questions. The validity construct can be divided further into for example internal and external validity. Internal validity means that a conclusion incorporating causality holds (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The fact that we have chosen an experimental research design ensures a high level of internal validity, since we know that the respondents are first exposed to our manipulated variable by reading the story, and then the measurements of the dependent variables. We have also incorporated control questions in the questionnaire to check that the respondents actually have read the story. In that way we had the possibility to discard questionnaires that did not fulfill the internal validity requirement.

External validity is defined as the possibility to generalize the findings beyond the specific research context (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Representative samples are a good way of ensuring external validity, but as we have applied a convenience sample instead this endangers the external validity. A representative sample is less important when testing theory, but should be homogenous instead (Calder, 1981). We have attempted to control for this by testing the data. For example, as the sample included both students and non-students, we wanted to see if there were any differences between them that might affect the results. The respondents were divided into two groups of 190 students and 50 non-students and an independent t-test was performed in order to compare the mean values of the dependent variables (story, character and brand interest as well as story, character and brand attitude). None of the interest or attitude indices showed significant results at the 10 % level, meaning that there is no difference in the responses of students to non-students. Therefore our sample was considered as a whole.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the statistical computer program SPSS. We decided on a

significance level of 10 % for all tests⁵, since our samples were relatively small. Also, we wanted to make sure to account for any differences that might be present in our sample, so as to avoid missing out on important connections we decided on a relatively high significance level for the tests. Since the Scheffe post-hoc test was used for the analysis, which is a proven robust test (Sirkin, 1995), the choice to use a relatively high significance level is further supported. The *p*-value will however be stated for each individual result, so that the reader is free to make his or her own interpretation of the result. For all ANOVA-tests the normality assumption was accepted since the size of each group exceeded 30 respondents (Sirkin, 1995)

3.8.1 Preliminary tests

Correlation of measurements

We wanted to look into the correlation between the interest and attitude measurements, in order to support our theoretical framework. Considering the suggested relationship between character, story and brand there should be a correlation between these three responses in terms of both interest and attitude. These correlations were tested by Pearson's *r* correlation, and we found that all measurements correlated with 1 % significance.

For the correlation tests we apply the rule of thumb that a Pearson's *r* coefficient ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 is a weak effect, 0.30 to 0.49 is a medium effect and 0.50 to 1.00 is a strong effect (Cohen, 1988). For story interest and character interest, Pearson's *r* coefficient was 0.71 implying a large correlation effect. For brand and story interest, Pearson's *r* coefficient was 0.52 implying a strong correlation effect and for brand and character interest, Pearson's *r* coefficient was 0.48 implying a medium correlation effect.

For story attitude and character attitude, Pearson's *r* coefficient was 0.63 implying a large correlation effect. For brand and story attitude, Pearson's *r* coefficient was 0.33 implying a medium correlation effect and for brand and character attitude, Pearson's *r* coefficient was 0.27 implying a weak, but still existing, correlation effect.

The fact that there is a correlation between our dependent variables, supports the theory in that response to the character affect response to the story, which affect response to the brand.

⁵ A 10 % significance level is implied for the remainder of this thesis, unless otherwise indicated.

This is a fundament for our subsequent analysis.

3.8.2 Manipulation check

As a manipulation check of the data, we wanted to see if our chosen characters scored on awareness as we presumed that they would, as well as test the relative brand awareness of the two companies. The mean values for awareness of the respective character and brand awareness are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Character Awareness

Level of Brand Awareness	Character Awareness					
	Celebrity		Founder		Customer	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
High Awareness - <i>IKEA</i>	3.55	2.05	4.62	1.95	1.57	1.05
Low Awareness - <i>Folkessons Möbler</i>	3.55	2.11	1.20	0.79	1.62	1.39

The purpose of our chosen characters was that the founder of IKEA, Ingvar Kamprad, would have high awareness, while the founder of our fictional company Folkessons Möbler would have low awareness. The customers would for both companies have low awareness while the celebrity Martina Haag would have relatively high awareness. As the mean values show, this seems to be the case for our data. We have also performed independent samples t-tests to see if any differences were significant, and we found that for IKEA the founder, customer and celebrity were all significantly different (mean founder = 4.64, mean customer = 1.57, $t = 9.03$, $p = 0.000$; mean celebrity = 3.55, mean customer = 1.57, $t = 5.42$, $p = 0.000$; mean founder = 4.64, mean celebrity = 3.55, $t = 2.38$, $p = 0.020$) while for Folkessons Möbler celebrity and customer (mean celebrity = 3.55, mean customer = 1.62, $t = 4.74$, $p = 0.000$) as well as celebrity and founder (mean celebrity = 3.55, mean founder = 1.20, $t = 6.44$, $p = 0.000$) were significantly different and customer and founder were not significantly different (mean founder = 1.20, mean customer = 1.62, $t = -1.63$, $p = 0.109$).

For Brand Awareness, IKEA scored 6.59 and Folkessons Möbler scored 1.11 as seen in Table 3. These were tested using an independent samples t-test, which showed that the difference

was significant ($t = 63.13$, $p = 0.000$). These results show the relative levels of awareness that were anticipated, whereby our manipulations seem to be correct and the data is suitable for analysis.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Brand Awareness

Company	Brand Awareness	
	Mean	SD
<i>IKEA</i>	6.59	0.83
<i>Folkessons Möbler</i>	1.11	0.49

3.8.3 Main tests

Firstly, for analysis of story response and brand response, we have performed two-way ANOVA, for each dependent variable separately⁶ (story interest, story attitude, brand interest and brand attitude), in order to evaluate the differences between our groups on an overall level. To test our hypotheses on the specific level, we have applied Scheffe's post-hoc test as to gain an understanding of between which characters any differences might lie. Secondly, we decided to look at the two types of company, case by case, in order to account for any differences between them. We thought it possible that the effects of the different characters might differ depending on the type of company, and since the two-way ANOVA showed no significant interaction effects, we used one-way ANOVA and Scheffe's post-hoc tests to test these hypotheses. Finally, we have also looked at Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA) for character attitude and interest, in an attempt to explain why these differences between characters occur, where character descriptives were included as co-variates.

⁶ A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) including all dependent variables simultaneously, was also tested. The results did not differ, whereby the two-way ANOVA was used in order to increase readability of results.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter we will present the results from our data analysis. The chapter follows the structure of our hypotheses as they have been presented before, and are divided into effects on story response, effects on brand response, influence of brand awareness, and explanatory factors.

4.1 Effects of Different Characters on Story and Brand Response

4.1.1 Story interest

In order to test the effects of the different characters on story interest, we did a two-way ANOVA with story interest as the dependent variable and type of company and type of character as the two factors. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4. A summary of the results can be found in Appendix E, Table E1a and E1b.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Story Interest

Level of Brand Awareness	Type of Character							
	Celebrity		Founder		Customer		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
High Awareness	3.06	1.51	3.64	1.67	2.91	1.55	3.20	1.60
Low Awareness	3.18	1.77	3.39	1.93	2.65	1.67	3.18	1.77
Total	3.28	1.56	3.52	1.79	2.79	1.60	3.19	1.68

Variable: Story Interest, $n = 243$

The overall results show a significant main effect of type of character ($F = 4.22$, $p = 0.016$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.03$), but no significant main effect of type of company (mean IKEA = 3.20, mean Folkessons Möbler = 3.18, $F = 0.01$, $p = 0.904$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$) and no significant interaction effect ($F = 1.11$, $p = 0.332$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$).

We also did a Scheffe's post hoc test, in order to test our first hypothesis that the effects on story interest differ depending on the type of character used. The results showed a significant difference ($p = 0.020$) between the founder character (mean value = 3.52) and the customer character (mean value = 2.79). There was however no significant difference between either of

these and the celebrity character (mean value = 3.28). However, since differences could be found, this means that our hypothesis is supported.

H1a: The effects on story interest differ depending on the type of character used in the story.	SUPPORTED
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It is also worth noting that the mean values are quite low, but the focus of the test is the relative size and difference between them, meaning that this is not accounted for in our hypothesis.

4.1.2 Story attitude

In order to test the effects of the different characters on story attitude, we did a two-way ANOVA with story attitude as the dependent variable and type of company and type of character as the two factors. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5. A summary of the results can be found in Appendix E, Table E2a and E2b.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Story Attitude

Level of Brand Awareness	Type of Character							
	Celebrity		Founder		Customer		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
High Awareness	4.78	1.22	5.24	1.41	4.64	1.26	4.88	1.32
Low Awareness	4.89	1.00	4.51	1.28	4.24	1.40	4.55	1.26
Total	4.84	1.11	4.88	1.39	4.46	1.34	4.72	1.30

Variable: Story Attitude, $n = 242$

The overall results show a significant main effect of type of character ($F = 2.93$, $p = 0.055$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$) and a significant main effect of type of company (mean IKEA = 4.88, mean Folkessons Möbler = 4.55, $F = 4.22$, $p = 0.041$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$), but no significant interaction effect ($F = 2.14$, $p = 0.120$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$).

We also did a Scheffe's post hoc test, in order to test our second hypothesis, H1b, that the effects on story attitude differ depending on the type of character used. The results showed a significant difference ($p = 0.098$) between the founder character (mean value = 4.88) and the

customer character (mean value = 4.46). There was however no significant difference between either of these and the celebrity character (mean value = 4.84). However, since differences could be found our hypothesis is supported.

H1b: The effects on story attitude differ depending on the type of character used in the story.	SUPPORTED
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4.1.3 Brand interest

In order to test the effects of the different characters on interest in the brand, we did a two-way ANOVA with brand interest as the dependent variable and type of company and type of character as the two factors. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6. A summary of the results can be found in Appendix E, Table E3.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Brand Interest

Level of Brand Awareness	Type of Character							
	Celebrity		Founder		Customer		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
High Awareness	3.75	1.26	3.82	1.63	3.52	1.35	3.69	1.42
Low Awareness	3.66	1.68	3.30	1.64	3.09	1.58	3.35	1.63
Total	3.71	1.47	3.57	1.64	3.33	1.47	3.53	1.53

Variable: Brand Interest, $n = 243$

The overall results show no significant main effect of type of character ($F = 1.41$, $p = 0.247$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$) but there is a significant main effect of type of company (mean IKEA = 3.69, mean Folkessons Möbler = 3.35, $F = 3.13$, $p = 0.078$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$). There is no significant interaction effect between the two factors ($F = 0.41$, $p = 0.663$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

Hypothesis 2a stated that the effect on brand interest will differ depending on the type of character used in the story. As the results from the overall analysis did not show any significant difference between the characters, this hypothesis is not supported.

H2a: The effects on brand interest differ depending on the type of character used in the story.	NOT SUPPORTED
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4.1.4 Brand attitude

In order to test the effects of the different characters on attitude towards the brand, we did a two-way ANOVA with brand attitude as the dependent variable and type of company and type of character as the two factors. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 7. A summary of the results can be found in Appendix E, Table E4.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Brand Attitude

Level of Brand Awareness	Type of Character							
	Celebrity		Founder		Customer		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
High Awareness	5.89	0.86	5.67	1.01	5.58	1.23	5.70	1.06
Low Awareness	5.24	1.29	5.09	1.20	4.97	1.35	5.10	1.27
Total	5.57	1.14	5.39	1.14	5.30	1.31	5.41	1.20

Variable: Brand Attitude, $n = 243$

The overall results show no significant main effect of type of character ($F = 1.29$, $p = 0.277$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$) but there is a significant main effect of type of company (mean IKEA = 5.70, mean Folkessons Möbler = 5.10, $F = 16.59$, $p = 0.000$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.07$). There is no significant interaction effect between the two factors ($F = 0.02$, $p = 0.978$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

Hypothesis 2b stated that the effect on brand attitude would differ depending on the type of character used in the story. As the results from the overall analysis did not show any significant difference between the characters, this hypothesis is not supported.

H2b: The effects on brand attitude differ depending on the type of character used in the story.	NOT SUPPORTED
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As stated above, there are no significant differences between the types of characters for either brand interest or brand attitude. In other words there are no evident direct effects of type of character on brand response.

4.1.5 Interaction effects

Depending on whether the brand has a high or low awareness, we thought that this might affect the relative effectiveness of the type of characters. In other words, the effect of the character would vary as a function on the level of brand awareness for the company. In order to test this we looked at interaction effects between type of character and type of company.

As mentioned from the test above, there were no interaction effects in any case. For story interest the interaction effect was $F = 1.11$, $p = 0.332$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$, for story attitude $F = 2.14$, $p = 0.120$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$, for brand interest $F = 0.41$, $p = 0.663$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$, and for brand attitude $F = 0.02$, $p = 0.978$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$. This means that our hypothesis is not supported.

H3: The effect of different characters vary as a function of the level of brand awareness.

NOT SUPPORTED

Since there are no interaction effects, and therefore no effect of brand awareness on the differences between the three characters, the subsequent analysis will be done on a company-separate level, through separate one-way ANOVA tests.

4.2 Difference of Character Effectiveness Between Companies

As the previous section shows, we decided on separating the two companies and analyze the results through one-way ANOVA tests, where the dependent variables were story interest, story attitude, brand interest and brand attitude, and the factor was type of character. The hypotheses are that the differences between characters differ between the two companies. A summary of the results can be found in Appendix E, Table E5 – E12.

4.2.1 Story interest

For story interest the overall results show significant differences between the characters for IKEA ($F = 2.50$, $p = 0.086$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.04$) and also for Folkessons Möbler ($F = 2.72$, $p = 0.070$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.05$). We also did Scheffe's post-hoc tests to test our hypothesis.

In the case of IKEA, the results of the Scheffe's test did not show any significant difference between celebrity (mean value = 3.06) and either founder (mean value = 3.63) or customer (mean value = 2.91). The difference between founder and customer was not significant either

for this test, but with a p -value of 0.105 it is worth noting that it was very close to the 10 % limit.

In the case of Folkessons Möbler the results of the Scheffe's test did not show any significant difference between founder (mean value = 3.39) and either celebrity (mean value = 3.49) or customer (mean value = 2.65). The difference between celebrity and customer was not significant either for this test, but with a p -value of 0.110 it is worth noting that it was very close to the 10 % limit.

In the case of IKEA, the founder had the highest mean value, while for Folkessons Möbler the celebrity had the highest mean value, meaning that there is a difference between the company cases. These were however not significantly different from any of the other characters, whereby a most effective character cannot be determined. Still, since differences could be found between companies, our hypothesis is supported.

H4a: The effect of different characters on story interest differ between companies.

SUPPORTED

4.2.2 Story attitude

For story attitude, the overall results show significant differences between the characters for IKEA ($F = 2.46$, $p = 0.09$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.04$) and also for Folkessons Möbler ($F = 2.65$, $p = 0.075$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.04$). We also did Scheffe's post-hoc tests to test our hypothesis.

In the case of IKEA, the results of the Scheffe's test did not show any significant difference between celebrity (mean value = 4.78) and either founder (mean value = 5.24) or customer (mean value = 4.64). The difference between founder and customer was not significant either for this test, but with a p -value of 0.105 it is worth noting that it was very close to the 10 % limit

In the case of Folkessons Möbler, the results of the Scheffe's test did not show any significant difference between founder (mean value = 4.51) and either celebrity (mean value = 4.89) or customer (mean value = 4.24). The difference between celebrity and customer was however significant for this test, with a p -value of 0.077.

In the case of IKEA, the founder had the highest mean value, while for Folkessons Möbler the celebrity had the highest mean value, meaning that there is a difference between the company cases. For Folkessons Möbler, the mean value of the celebrity was significantly different from that of the customer, but not from the founder. The celebrity can be considered the most effective character to a certain degree. In the case of IKEA, as there were no significant differences between the founder and either celebrity or customer it cannot be determined as the most effective character. Since differences could be found between companies, our hypothesis is supported.

H4b: The effect of different characters on story attitude differ between companies.

SUPPORTED

4.2.3 Brand interest

For these one-way ANOVAs, the dependent variable was brand interest, and the factor was type of character.

In the case of IKEA, although the mean value for the founder (3.82) was higher than for customer (3.52) and celebrity (3.75), the overall results does not show any significant difference between the characters for IKEA ($F = 0.53$, $p = 0.591$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$). In the case of Folkessons Möbler although the mean value for the celebrity (3.66) was higher than for customer (3.09) and founder (3.30), the overall results does not show any significant difference between the characters for Folkessons Möbler ($F = 1.18$, $p = 0.312$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$). Even though the character with the highest mean differ between the companies, the high p -values would suggest that the difference in effectiveness between characters are far from significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported.

H5a: The effect of different characters on brand interest differ between companies.

NOT SUPPORTED

4.2.4 Brand attitude

For these one-way ANOVAs, the dependent variable was brand attitude, and the factor was type of character.

In the case of IKEA, the mean value for the founder (5.67) showed to be lower than for the celebrity (5.89), but higher than for the customer (5.58). However, the overall results do not show any significant difference between the characters for IKEA ($F = 0.96$, $p = 0.388$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$).

In the case of Folkessons Möbler, although the mean value for the celebrity (5.24) was higher than for customer (4.97) and founder (5.09), the overall results does not show any significant difference between the characters for Folkessons Möbler ($F = 0.45$, $p = 0.641$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$). It is however worth noticing that the total mean value for brand attitude of Folkessons Möbler is as high as 5.10 (significantly different from the mean value of the scale 3.50 with $p = 0.000$), which can be compared to the total mean value of brand attitude for IKEA that is 5.70. This is somewhat surprising for a company that would be unknown for the respondents prior to answering the survey. Nonetheless, the hypothesis is not supported.

H5b: The effect of different characters on brand attitude differ between companies.

NOT SUPPORTED

4.3 Factors Explaining Character Interest and Character Attitude

When looking at why a particular character would yield a higher effect we investigated determinants of character interest and character attitude. As the correlation between character interest and story interest, as well as between character attitude and story attitude, is strong, this can be assumed to have an effect on story objectives.

The chosen tests for this were one-way ANCOVA for IKEA and Folkessons Möbler separately, factored by type of character, as there were no significant interaction effects between company and character. As co-variables we used character descriptives: level of trustworthiness, expertise, ideal, brand-fit and Self Character Perception (SCP). The mean values of these, for every character, can be seen in figure 2. A summary of the test results can be found in Appendix E, Table E13 - E16.

Figure 2: Character Descriptives

Descriptives	Mean Value					
	High Awareness Brand			Low Awareness Brand		
	Celebrity	Founder	Customer	Celebrity	Founder	Customer
Trustworthiness	5.26	5.06	5.45	5.42	5.46	5.39
Expertise	4.11	5.00	3.49	4.09	4.62	3.72
Ideal	4.25	4.95	3.74	4.30	4.53	3.88
Brand-Fit	4.56	5.08	4.68	4.40	4.48	4.67
Self-Character Perception	4.25	3.68	3.38	4.00	3.54	3.73

4.3.1 Character interest

The hypothesis for this test was that the character descriptives are explanatory for differences in character interest between the groups. For IKEA, the results showed that three of the five co-variables are significant in explaining any differences between the groups. These are Ideal ($F = 8.90$, $p = 0.003$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.07$), brand-fit ($F = 5.04$, $p = 0.027$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.04$), and Self Character Perceptions ($F = 3.08$, $p = 0.082$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.03$). Trustworthiness ($F = 1.36$, $p = 0.247$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$) and expertise ($F = 0.92$, $p = 0.339$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$) were not significant in explaining any differences.

For Folkessons Möbler, the results showed that two of the five co-variables are significant in explaining any differences between the groups. These are Ideal ($F = 7.01$, $p = 0.009$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.06$) and Self Character Perceptions ($F = 6.73$, $p = 0.011$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.06$). Trustworthiness ($F = 0.42$, $p = 0.517$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$), expertise ($F = 1.15$, $p = 0.287$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$) and brand-fit ($F = 0.31$, $p = 0.582$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$), were not significant in explaining any differences. The remaining main effect of character for IKEA is $F = 0.36$, $p = 0.697$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$ and for Folkessons Möbler, $F = 0.06$, $p = 0.940$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$. Since some of the character descriptives proved to be significant in explaining differences in character interest the hypothesis is supported.

H6a: The character descriptives are explanatory for differences in character interest between the groups.	SUPPORTED
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4.3.2 Character attitude

The hypothesis for this test was that the character descriptives are explanatory for differences in character attitude between the groups. For IKEA, trustworthiness was eliminated as a co-variate, as the correlation with type of character showed to be too large. The results showed that two of the four remaining co-variables are significant in explaining any differences between the groups. These are Ideal ($F = 8.34$, $p = 0.005$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.07$) and Self Character Perceptions ($F = 8.41$, $p = 0.004$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.07$). Brand-fit ($F = 2.73$, $p = 0.101$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$) and expertise ($F = 1.44$, $p = 0.232$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$) were not significant in explaining any differences, even though brand-fit with $p = 0.101$ was very close to the 10 % significance level.

For Folkessons Möbler, the results showed that three of the five co-variables are significant in explaining any differences between the groups. These are Expertise ($F = 3.23$, $p = 0.075$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.03$), Ideal ($F = 3.03$, $p = 0.085$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.03$) and Trustworthiness ($F = 11.36$, $p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.09$). Brand-fit ($F = 0.18$, $p = 0.672$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$) and Self Character Perceptions ($F = 2.29$, $p = 0.133$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$) were not significant in explaining any differences. The remaining main effect of character for IKEA is $F = 0.06$, $p = 0.946$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.00$ and for Folkessons Möbler, $F = 0.37$, $p = 0.693$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$.

Since some of the character descriptives proved to be significant in explaining differences in character attitude the hypothesis is supported.

H6b: The character descriptives are explanatory for differences in character attitude between the groups.	SUPPORTED
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5. DISCUSSION

The discussion section will begin with some general implications for the character effectiveness in terms of story response, which in turn will be related to the brand response. Since, there were no significant interaction effects of level of brand awareness with the different types of characters, a discussion on company level will follow, with implications about the most effective character depending on the specific considerations of each company case. Finally, the characteristics that influence the interest in and attitude towards the characters will be discussed with an explanatory purpose.

5.1 Point of Departure

That storytelling is an effective communicative tool has long been widely stated, however the guidelines for any explicit content of a story are vague. When it comes to corporate storytelling today, using the founder as the main character is assumed to be best-practice, with the benefit of using company creation elements in the story. We believe that the extensive research and theory on spokespersons and endorsers is applicable also to the character of a story, with the one difference that the commercial message is communicated in the context of a story as opposed to traditional advertising, using for example an ad or billboard dominated by a visual representation. The effectiveness of three basic endorser types will be compared amongst each other to identify what endorser type and what characteristics are most valuable for a character to possess when used in the context of a story. Assumed best-practice of the character used will be evaluated in terms of attitude towards and interest in a story, hence attitude towards and interest in the brand.

The foundation for our argumentation is that the response by an audience towards the story and the response towards the brand follow a similar hierarchy of effects, reaching from awareness through a cognitive response of interest and attitude. We argue that the response towards the story has to occur before any response towards the brand can happen. Furthermore, the attitude and interest towards the character, as an important element of the

story, shape the response in terms of the communication. This is supported by the fact that there is a clear correlation between character response, story response and brand response.

5.2 The General Case

5.2.1 Response to the story – Best-practice supported

The two-way ANOVA tests are the basis for some general implications regarding response to the story. The results for the story objectives showed that there is a difference in how effective the characters are. The founder character proved to be significantly more effective than the customer character for both story interest and story attitude. Hence, it is suggested that the founder makes the reader more curious about the story as well as is making the story more liked, to a larger degree than a typical customer.

The effectiveness of the founder is supported by the match-up hypothesis within endorsement theory. In accordance with the match-up hypothesis, the consistency between the founder's characteristics and the brand's attributes would constitute an ultimate brand-fit (Misra and Beatty, 1990). The values and meanings of a company founder are likely to reflect onto the company, making the corporate brand somewhat synonymous with the personal brand of the founder (Arruda, 2009). Thus, the founder is perceived as a credible source in the story, which we consider as support for its effectiveness as the main character and narrator.

When instead focusing a bit more explicitly on story interest, the story plot used in the experiment, combined with the founder character, describes to some extent an entrepreneurial vision. This is argued by Mathews and Wacker (2008) to be an example of the classical, hence assumingly effective and interesting, story plot of the hero's quest, in which the founder succeeds in offering the market something new and appreciated. Further, since the corporation itself can be argued to be a commercial folktale (Mathews and Wacker, 2008), any relation to its creation could potentially have some sort of entertainment value. Since this is an advantage specific for the founder character, we believe that this has an impact on its relative effectiveness.

Furthermore, we believe that the choice of using the furniture industry supports that the founder showed to be more effective than other characters. An expert endorser is said to be

the most persuasive for product categories with relatively high financial risk (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). The furniture category could, despite its affordable nature in the story, be perceived as such a purchase for some people since the object used in the story, a sofa, is a relatively large investment and is not replaced that often in a household. On the same note, the usage of a customer endorser is claimed to be most effective for low-risk everyday products, which a sofa does not qualify as. This would to some extent explain why the customer character proved to be significantly less effective compared to the founder.

The celebrity character, on the other hand, was not significantly less effective than the founder, whereby we find it difficult to argue against the use of it as the main character in a story. A celebrity is a frequently used character in assigning preferable values and meanings to a company (McCracken, 1989) and is said to be most effective when the perceived social risk is high (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). The furniture category could be argued to be associated with both perceived high social and high financial risk, which would support the use of the celebrity, as well as the founder, and explains to some extent why there was no significant difference in effectiveness between these two characters. On the other hand consumers might be skeptic about the use of a celebrity due to knowledge about high fees for the collaboration (Erdogan, 1999; Jobber, 2007), which limits its effectiveness. Consumers' suspicion towards advertising in general (Bhatnager and Wan, 2011) relies mainly on the general perception that the endorser is being compensated for any warm recommendation (Erdogan, 1999). This makes the perceived brand-fit more valuable, since it brings more credibility to the story. As the founder story plot represents a likely course of events, it is more believable to have happened in reality. We believe that this speaks against the celebrity character and favors the use of the founder character. At the same time, given suspicious consumers, the founder could potentially be even more questioned due to an obvious lack of objectivity (Rubin et al., 1982), but this trend is not visible in our data.

Furthermore, the specific choice of celebrity is of great importance (Fleck et al., 2012), hence our choice to use Martina Haag in the story is likely to have influenced the outcome of the celebrity character effectiveness. First of all, it is difficult to decide on a celebrity that is

appealing to everyone. Although the celebrity in our case, Martina Haag, was chosen based on pre-studies and based on celebrity endorsement theory, likability is very subjective and the meanings encompassed in the public figure (McCracken, 1989) cannot be perceived as generally agreed upon. In that sense we believe that it would be misleading trying to argue against the celebrity character, since it was not significantly less effective compared to the founder character. Nonetheless, based on our findings, today's dominant corporate storytelling practice in which the founder character is most widely used seems in general to be supported as the more effective character.

5.2.2 Response to the brand – No direct effects

With regards to the branding response, no significant differences could be seen between the characters for either brand interest or brand attitude, meaning that there is no direct effect. However, given that the story, hence the tool used for communicating a message, is received significantly better when incorporating the founder we believe that it might also have an indirect effect on the response towards the brand, although this was not visible in our data.

5.4 The Separate Cases: Implications Depending on Type of Company

Besides the aim of investigating differences in effectiveness for different characters, we wanted to look at those differences in the light of low brand awareness and high brand awareness. The fictive company Folkessons Möbler represented low awareness with a mean value of 1.11, and IKEA represented high awareness with a mean value of 6.59. No interaction effects were found between the type of character used and the level of brand awareness; hence the differences between characters in terms of the dependent variables did not vary with the level of brand awareness. However, there are specific conditions for each of the two company cases that we believe will impact the relative effectiveness of characters used in the story, and might to some extent invalidate the general findings that were discussed above. Therefore, we have tested each company separately, and the similarities and differences between them will be discussed in this section of the thesis.

The discussion is generalizable to the extent that similar conditions for the companies apply. In the case of Folkessons Möbler the brand has no prior associations connected to it, hence

the findings could to some extent be applicable to other low awareness brands. The discussion about implications regarding story and brand response for IKEA is perceived to be less generalizable than for Folkessons Möbler since the respondents have prior knowledge of the brand, hence associations already connected to it. Therefore, this case is more specific, which might limit the use of the findings for other company cases.

5.4.1 Response to the story – Personal brand matters

For Folkessons Möbler, a fictive brand used in the story representing low brand awareness, the celebrity showed to be the more effective character, as it had the highest mean for both story interest and story attitude. For IKEA, the founder proved to be more effective than the other characters in terms of a higher mean value for both story objectives.

Since celebrities are used advantageously to raise awareness (Friedman and Friedman, 1979), celebrity endorsement theory supports the effectiveness of a celebrity for a company with low brand awareness. An unknown brand has no prior associations connected to it, and will need to establish itself by creating links to the brand in order to help future recall and recognition processes (Keller et al., 2008). A way of dealing with a lack of associations is to use publicly known meanings of a known endorser, i.e. a celebrity (McCracken, 1989). Therefore it makes sense that the celebrity is more effective for Folkessons Möbler. In the case of IKEA, the effectiveness of the founder is supported by the same discussion as for the general implications in the previous section. However, what is specific for this case is that Ingvar Kamprad is a well-known founder. Since a publicly known founder share some characteristics with a celebrity, i.e. awareness, we assume that there is a combination of benefits from two types of characters.

Compared to IKEA, the founder is not known at all in the separate case of Folkessons Möbler and was less effective than the celebrity. This implies that there is a difference in effect depending on whether the founder is known or unknown to the general public. Although assumed best-practice of using the founder character is supported for our specific IKEA case, representing high brand awareness, in the case of a low brand and founder awareness it is not. Since in both company cases the character with the highest mean value of character awareness

gave the best effect on story response, we believe that a known character is more effective than an unknown one. This is further supported by personal brand theory, defined as a public projection of certain aspects of a person's personality (Montaya, 2002). The relatively low effectiveness of the typical customer is therefore explained by the lack of a known personality. These results indicate that there is a need for an acceptable level of awareness also for the character to maximize the interest in and attitude towards the story. While not invalidating the general results from above it shines some new light on the effectiveness of the founder. The founder is still a preferable choice due to perceived brand-fit and credibility as a sender of a message. However, we conclude that awareness of character, and in that sense a personal brand, is a requirement for the benefits of the specific character type to gain full effect.

5.4.2 Response to the brand – Positive in case of low awareness

Similarly as for the general implications, there are no significant differences between characters for brand response directly. However, we observe that even though the brand attitude mean towards IKEA (5.71) is significantly higher than the one for Folkessons Möbler (5.10), the attitude towards Folkessons Möbler was still surprisingly high taking into account that the brand was unknown to the respondents. We interpret this as a verification of storytelling effectiveness in creating positive brand attitude for an unknown brand. The mean value of brand attitude when using a celebrity (5.24) for Folkessons Möbler was the highest and significantly separated from the mean value of the scale (3.50), which in turn supports that storytelling would have a *positive* effect on brand attitude when using a celebrity endorser. This is once again related to the correlation between story attitude and brand attitude, arguing that the positive attitude towards the story has a positive effect on the attitude towards the brand. However, it is difficult to establish the direction of causality for a known brand, does the story enhance brand attitude or is the story liked due to an already positive brand attitude? But for an unknown brand, due to no prior knowledge, we draw the conclusion that the positive attitude can, at least to some extent, be explained by a positive attitude towards the story.

5.4.3 Explanatory characteristics – Identifying with an ideal self

In an attempt to explain the varying effectiveness of the story characters we tested what characteristics and attributes of the characters were significant in explaining character attitude and character interest. This in turn has implications for the attitude and interest towards the story due to high correlation between the character response and the story response, which was $r = 0.63$ between character attitude and story attitude, and $r = 0.71$ between character interest and story interest. The tested character attributes are supported by endorsement literature, and were related to the effectiveness of each character type.

For IKEA, according to our results, the main explanatory characteristics were looking up to the character (ideal), a need for a good brand-fit and identifying with the character (SCP) for both character objectives. For Folkessons Möbler, it was indicated that looking up to the character was significant in explaining the difference for both character objectives. For character interest, being able to identify with the character is also explanatory, while for character attitude trustworthiness and expertise explains differences in how liked a character is.

The explaining nature of brand-fit for IKEA is relevant for the higher effectiveness of the founder character. This supports the previous discussion as well as the theory behind it. Since, brand-fit is not explanatory for the Folkessons Möbler case, we conclude that the fit between a character and a brand is more likely to be recognized if the brand and the character have previously known values linked to their name.

For the Folkessons Möbler case, the results are more dispersed than for IKEA. Trustworthiness is an explanatory attribute of character attitude, and the effect size reached the highest value of all. This indicates two things, first of all the relatively high effect size would suggest that trustworthiness is important for how liked a character is for an unknown brand. Secondly, the difference between having known values associated with a brand, as for IKEA, and claiming certain benefits in a message that could not have been verified by a consumer in beforehand, as for Folkessons Möbler, seems to be helped if the character is perceived to be trustworthy.

For both company cases and both character objectives, looking up to the character showed to be an important explanatory factor. This is supported by the extended match-up hypothesis of endorsement theory, stating a need for a match between the endorser and the consumer's perceived ideal self (Choi and Rifon, 2012). Being able to identify with the character showed to be explanatory for the IKEA case both in terms of character interest and attitude, and also for character interest of Folkessons Möbler. This makes it an important characteristic to consider as well. Being able to identify with the character is mostly associated with using a typical customer, and while this was an explanatory factor in most aspects, the significantly lower effectiveness of the customer for both companies implies that the similarity aspect would rather be applicable to the founder or celebrity character. It is likely that the identification process, which celebrity endorsers actually rely on, would match the receiver's *ideal self* rather than the actual self (Choi and Rifon, 2012). In terms of a significantly less effective customer, our interpretation is that it is not sought for to identify with everyday, ordinary characters - hence indicating that it is more interesting to read a story about what we would like to be or perceive ourselves to be.

The characteristics that were not explanatory for the IKEA case were trustworthiness and expertise, two attributes that are strongly related to the expert endorser type. As the founder was considered the most effective, this finding is somewhat surprising. Instead, the effectiveness of the founder in the IKEA case rests mainly on the high mean of brand-fit, which we argue to be the strength rather than the expert characteristics that endorsement theory would suggest. Hence, endorsement literature would benefit from adding another basic endorser type that is a company representative, preferably in the shape of a founder, and therefore encompassing the valued brand-fit attribute. This is supported by celebrity endorsement theory, since the argument is that it has to be a good fit between celebrity characteristics and brand attributes (Misra and Beatty, 1990). However, the actual person encompassing such values could preferably be a founder instead of a celebrity for an even closer fit. Furthermore, indications for storytelling theory are that the expert endorser is in fact not effective. Since the expert relies on the internalization process, in which a consumer

adapts the attitude of the expert if the advice is perceived to solve a problem, the format of the story and the object used in it might not be suitable for the expert endorser.

The fact that expertise was not explanatory, while other characteristics were, indicates that there are certain potential differences between communicating a commercial message in the format of traditional advertising and in the format of a story. While expertise has proved to be an effective attribute of an endorser in traditional advertising (Hovland et al., 1953; Dean and Biswas, 2001), it might not have the same effect when using a story format. A titled expert could be used in future research to investigate this matter further. Thus, this is a first attempt trying to relate the extensive research on endorsement theory, and celebrity endorsement theory in particular, to the choice of character when communicating a message using a story format as opposed to traditional advertising including a visual element. The discussion will be summarized in the next chapter, Conclusion and Reflection.

6. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

This final chapter will answer the research questions of the thesis and provide some conclusions based on the analysis and discussion. Furthermore, we will share some reflections concerning the implications of the thesis, as well as critique and areas of future research.

6.1 Conclusion

This thesis had the purpose of contributing to the theoretical area, as well as current practice of storytelling by providing some guidelines for how a story should be composed in order to give the most beneficial effects for a company brand. We have limited our investigation to the character of the story, and are therefore applying endorsement theory to fill the gap in storytelling theory. Endorsement theory could in turn benefit from adding the founder as an additional endorser type representing the valued attribute of an impeccable brand-fit between spokesperson and brand. A second contribution is the broadening of the endorsement area, from mainly being limited to traditional communication such as ads or billboards where the endorser is a visual element, to also include newer forms of communication, in this case storytelling. Therefore we question current best-practice of using the founder in storytelling, and open up for new insights by asking whether different types of characters in storytelling differ in their effect on communication and brand response, and if the level of brand awareness has an impact on this effect. In order to answer this we formulated three research questions, which we will answer below.

Are there any differences between specific character types in affecting consumer response to the communication and/or consumer response to the brand?

An overall analysis with three different characters and two companies, where one is known with high brand awareness (IKEA) and one is unknown and thus with low brand awareness (Folkessons Möbler), show that there are differences between our chosen character types, celebrity, founder and typical customer. However, for brand interest and brand attitude as

dependent variables, these differences were not significant. Therefore our study showed no direct effect of character choice on brand response.

For story objectives, an overall analysis showed significant differences between the founder and the customer, but not for celebrity and any of the others. Hence, best-practice is to some extent supported. The mediocre effects of the celebrity could possibly be a result of that the choice of celebrity is sensitive, and a different choice might give a stronger effect. Nonetheless, there are differences between specific character types in affecting story response. *Does the effectiveness of specific character types differ depending on whether the company has a high or low brand awareness?*

The overall analysis with three different characters and two companies of differing levels of brand awareness, showed no interaction effects between them. This would mean that the difference in effectiveness of different characters does not depend on whether the company has high or low brand awareness. On the other hand, this invited us to analyze each company separately, which showed that there were indeed differences between them worthy to consider. Similarly to the overall analysis, there were no significant differences between characters when testing brand response. When testing story interest, the founder had the highest mean value for a company with high brand awareness (IKEA), while the celebrity had the highest mean value for a company with low brand awareness (Folkessons Möbler). There were however no significant differences between the characters, even though the *p*-value was very close to the 10 % limit. For story attitude, it was the same case, although for Folkessons Möbler, the celebrity was significantly different from the customer.

These results imply that there are differences between the companies, but these can rather be attributed to the differing awareness of the characters than the level of brand awareness. In both company cases the character with the highest mean value of character awareness had the greatest effect on story response, and indirectly brand response, even though this was not significant in all cases. Hence, indicating the importance of a personal brand for the effectiveness of a specific character.

Why is a specific character potentially more effective than another?

A test of character interest and character attitude of the two companies, with so called character descriptives included as co-variates, showed that several of these characteristics were significant in explaining variances in the character effectiveness. This does to some extent explain why a specific character is more effective than another.

For both company cases the characteristics of looking up to the character and identifying with the character, are important. The implication of this is that consumers want to identify with a perceived ideal self, rather than an actual self. For IKEA specifically, the effectiveness of the founder is attributed to brand-fit. Since this characteristic is not explanatory for Folkessons Möbler, we conclude that brand-fit is only recognized if the founder and the brand have previously known associations linked to their name. Therefore, the relatively higher effectiveness of one character to another depends on the conditions for the specific company, but generally consumers seek to identify with an ideal self, whereby the choice of character should be considered in terms of ideal, but also how relatable he or she is.

6.2 Implications

6.2.1 Theoretical implications

The theoretical implications of this thesis stems from the combination and integration of two distinct marketing areas, storytelling and endorsement. This study is a contribution to both these areas. An implication is that endorsement theory should include the founder as it represents an endorser with the advantage of having an impeccable brand-fit. Since level of expertise was not an explanatory characteristic in the case where the founder was the most effective character, its compatibility with the expert role is questioned.

Another implication is that the subject of storytelling is deepened in that we provide further insights of how it functions and influences the audience. The area of endorsement theory is instead broadened, as storytelling is a new context for its application. This transfer of existing theories into new contexts has theoretical implications as it shows the possibilities of applying integrative reasoning, and thus opening up for the formation of broader, more comprehensive communication theory.

6.2.2 Managerial implications

There are also a number of implications of our investigation for practicing marketing managers. First and foremost, this thesis provides guidelines for how a company should formulate their story when engaging in storytelling, with focus on the choice of character. Each character has its benefits and limitations and this thesis has provided some direction in that jungle.

Managers will also have to consider the special considerations applicable to their company. As our investigation has shown, there seems to be a relationship between the effectiveness of the character and the level of awareness it has. In other words, a character with a personal brand seems to be more effective as a storyteller than an unknown character. This means that the founder is not always the best suited character to use. Nonetheless, a company with a founder that has a relatively high level of character awareness, has a very strong resource as there is also the benefit of high brand-fit.

Furthermore, our investigation provided input to guide the choice of character even further in terms of what characteristics are important. It seems that the level of ideal as well as the ability to identify with the character of the story seemed to be important generally. In the case where a positive brand-fit could be established, this was also explanatory for any difference between characters. These are aspects for a company to consider when choosing a character for storytelling, as it might be more important than only focusing on the type of character.

Finally, there are also ethical implications for a manager to consider. As the definition of storytelling implies that there is an element of exaggeration involved it is important to consider how this might affect the consumer. Managers have to be careful in the formulation of the story as to avoid any false advertising, and risk tricking the consumer in any way.

6.2.3 Other implications

There are also implications that cannot be divided into theoretical or managerial implications. There are other actors in society that might also have something to gain from our investigation. While primarily having tested a commercial message, this does not necessarily mean that the findings do not translate to other messages as well. Considering the benefits of

storytelling as a communication tool, it could also be used in for example an educational setting, whether it be in school or used by policy actors. In these cases the findings regarding explanatory factors of effective characters will still be highly useful. Also, the fact that the sender of the message seems to benefit from having a personal brand is another implication that these actors should consider.

6.3 Critique

This section will discuss some aspects that might have strengthened the results of our study. The limitation of the study to include two companies of high and low awareness, and three types of characters, celebrity, founder and typical customer means that some cases are excluded, which might possibly affect the results of the study. Furthermore critique includes the design of the stories as the main manipulation variable, sampling and finally technical aspects of the analysis.

By only including two company cases, and three characters, some combinations of company and character that might affect the results were not included. The results implicated that there is an elementary need for character awareness and a personal brand. However, the experiment does not cover the case of a high awareness brand and an unknown founder, which potentially could prove the conclusion on the importance of character awareness and a personal brand wrong. Also, in order to keep the experiment constant, only one celebrity was included for both companies. While this ensured consistency, including another celebrity might have given a different, or possibly stronger, result that would have been beneficial for the study.

Some aspects of the design of the main manipulation variable, the story, can be included in the critique. A way to strengthen the sender of the story would be to include a picture with the story and in that way emphasize who the storyteller was. At the same time, this would have included yet another variable necessary to consider in the analysis.

We applied convenience sampling for the data collection, which is supported in this case since the random aspect of the distribution is more important in an experimental setting. Nonetheless, it could have been useful with a representative sample as this might have provided us with another result. Further, the setting in which the experiment was conducted

varied, some respondents were approached at the Stockholm Central Station while others read the story in a classroom. This might have influenced how the story was perceived, for example affected by the subjective level of immersion, which in turn could have impacted our results.

Finally, there is also some critique regarding the data analysis. There were some results that were not significant. We applied a Scheffe post-hoc test, which is a proven conservative test, since our groups were not of equal size due to elimination of some unsatisfactory responses. However, as equal groups would have enabled us to use a less conservative test, this might have affected our results in a different way.

6.4 Future Research

There are a number of proposals for future research that we have encountered during our investigation. First and foremost, our study would benefit from a replicating study that will help validate our results. As the time limitation for this thesis did not give us the opportunity to test our hypotheses on more than one occasion, this would be a good way of supporting our findings.

As this thesis only tested three types of characters, there are still some other types that would be interesting to look at. While we chose to classify the founder as an expert, it is also possible to look at an expert in a more traditional sense. As opposed to a founder, this would be an objective expert for example a dentist, in the case of toothpaste. There are also different kinds of celebrities that might give different results. As mentioned, we chose a generally likeable character, and avoided one that might cause a polarized response by an audience, but such a character might give interesting effects in an experiment. Furthermore, as already mentioned, our study did not include the case of a known company with an unknown founder. That is also one variation of character that would be interesting to look at in future research.

Since our study was limited to the furniture industry and interior design, as well as only focusing on one particular product, namely the sofa, this might also limit the generalizability of the results. From theory we can conclude that a transformational high-risk product would benefit more from storytelling as communication, than an informational low-risk product.

However, a future study including other products as well, would potentially shine some new light on this theory whereby it would be interesting to test different characters over a number of different industries or products.

Our choice to focus on the characters meant keeping other aspects of the story constant, such as the plot, the conflict and the overall poetic mode of the story. Complete guidelines of how to design storytelling in the best possible way would need to include also these aspects, whereby future research needs to consider all elements of a story.

In line with the point above, there is also the matter of what medium the story should be communicated in. For our study we have chosen a written text, and while being easily distributed this way, it might not be the most effective way of communicating the message. Other potential media that would need to be investigated are for example a short film, such as a TV-advertisement or promotional video, or a story being told in-store by a salesperson at the point of purchase.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

List of Definitions

Corporate Storytelling	Corporate storytelling is a communication tool applied with external audiences in mind, where information is presented using specific story elements and that has the purpose of delivering this information in an understandable, meaningful, memorable and emotional way.
Cognitive Response	“...a conscious activity that goes on when actively processing information” (Percy 2008: 190).
Story Response	The cognitive response by consumers towards a communicated message, consisting of story interest and story attitude.
Brand Response	The cognitive response by consumers towards a brand, consisting of brand interest and brand attitude.
Character Response	The response by consumers towards an element of a communicated message, consisting of character interest and character attitude.

Appendix B

List of Celebrities

Martina Haag	Erik Haag
Niklas Strömstedt	Jenny Strömstedt
Timbuktu	Carolina Gynning
Carina Berg	Kristian Luuk
Wahlgren Family	Schulman Family

Appendix C

Stories used for experiment - IKEA

Författaren Martina Haag berättar:

Det var vid en invigning av en ny krog i Stockholm för några år sedan som jag blev medveten om vad den rätta inredningen kan göra för ett rum. Krogen hade tidens mest moderna och lyxiga möbler - de kostade en förmögenhet. Senare på kvällen när jag kom hem till mitt vardagsrum och slängde mig i soffan blev jag fullt medveten om skillnaden mellan krogens lyx och den inredning man i regel hade råd med i ett hem med småbarn som spiller. Det kändes frustrerande att vardagslivet skulle begränsa en till icke-designade och medelmåttiga möbler.

Jag minns fortfarande när jag och min man, Erik, några veckor senare var inbjuden till vänner i deras lägenhet. De är båda samlare och har ett stort intresse för inredning och detta syntes tydligt i deras hem som var fullt med skandinaviska designklassiker. Efter middagen bjöds det på kaffe, och jag slog mig ner i den ljusa och stilrena soffan. Den hade en klassisk design och var förvånansvärt bekväm. Värden drog ett av sina ökända skämt och oturligt nog skrattade jag till så häftigt att koppen föll till golvet och kaffet bildade en brun fläck på möbeln. Det gick inte att ta miste på hans förfärade blick. Jag bad om ursäkt och kände mig tvingad att fråga var soffan kom ifrån, vad den kostade och hur jag skulle kunna ersätta den. Den förfärade blicken utbyttes mot ett leende då han förklarade att klädseln är tvättbar och att IKEA-soffor är oslagbara på det sättet; man ska ju kunna leva också! Jag fortsatte att skämmas, men drog en lättnadens suck då jag hade trott att det var en ovärderlig designersoffa som jag hade fläckt ner, så snygg som den var. Dessutom hade jag inte förstått att även ett sådant designfrälst par som mina vänner skulle se värdet i en möbel som inte bara var snygg utan också anpassad för livet hemma, och tillgänglig för ett mycket behagligt pris.

Grundaren av IKEA, Ingvar Kamprad, berättar:

Det var vid ett besök i Italien på en mässan i mitten på 50-talet som jag första gången utan att vara medveten om det formulerade begreppet "de många människorna" för mig. På dagen såg jag tidens mest moderna och lyxiga möbler utställda på mässan - de kostade fabulöst mycket. På kvällen hade jag turen att få följa med några italienare hem och såg med egna ögon skillnaden mellan den utställda lyxen och den inredning vardagsmänniskan hade råd med i sitt hem.

Var det nödvändigt att det sköna bara skulle kunna köpas av en elit för dyra pengar?

Det kändes frustrerande att man av vardagslivet skulle bli begränsad till icke-designade och medelmåttiga möbler.

Jag minns fortfarande när jag ett antal år senare var inbjuden till en gammal god vän och dennes hustru i deras sommarhus i södra Sverige. Hustrun är en samlare och har ett stort intresse för inredning och detta syntes tydligt i deras hem som var fullt med skandinaviska designklassiker. Efter middagen bjöds det på kaffe i salongen och jag slog mig ner i den ljusa och stilrena soffan. Den hade en klassisk design och var förvånansvärt komfortabel. Vi föll in i en animerad konversation och oturligt nog slängde jag ut med armen så häftigt att koppen föll till golvet och innanmätet bildade en brun fläck på möbeln. Det gick inte att ta miste på värdinnans förfärade blick. Jag bad om ursäkt och kände mig tvingad att fråga var soffan kom ifrån, vad den kostade och hur jag skulle kunna ersätta den. Den förfärade blicken utbyttes mot ett leende då hon förklarade att klädseln är tvättbar och kände jag inte igen en IKEA-möbel när jag såg en? Då fick jag såklart skämmas, men än hade jag inte förstått att även en sådan designfrälst som min väninna skulle se värdet i en möbel som inte bara var snygg utan också anpassad för livet hemma, och tillgänglig för ett mycket behagligt pris.

En IKEA-kund berättar:

Det var när jag surfade runt på olika bloggar och hamnade på en exklusiv inredningsblogg som jag först insåg vad rätt inredning kan göra för ett rum. På bloggarna fanns bilder på tidens mest moderna och lyxiga möbler - de kostade en förmögenhet. När jag vände blicken från datorn och tittade runt i mitt vardagsrum insåg jag skillnaden mellan den utställda lyxen och den inredning som jag har råd med i mitt hem.

Det kändes frustrerande att vardagslivet skulle begränsa en till icke-designade och medelmåttiga möbler.

Jag minns fortfarande när jag några veckor senare var inbjuden till vänner i deras lägenhet. De är båda samlare och har ett stort intresse för inredning och detta syntes tydligt i deras hem som var fullt med skandinaviska designklassiker. Efter middagen bjöds det på kaffe, och jag slog mig ner i den ljusa och stilrena soffan. Den hade en klassisk design och var förvånansvärt bekväm. Värden drog ett av sina ökända skämt och oturligt nog skrattade jag till så häftigt att koppen föll till golvet och kaffet bildade en brun fläck på möbeln. Det gick inte att ta miste på hans förfärade blick. Jag bad om ursäkt och kände mig tvingad att fråga var soffan kom ifrån, vad den kostade och hur jag skulle kunna ersätta den. Den förfärade blicken utbyttes mot ett leende då han förklarade att klädseln är tvättbar och att IKEA-soffor är oslagbara på det sättet; man ska ju kunna leva också! Jag fortsatte att skämmas, men drog en lättnadens suck då jag hade trott att det var en ovärderlig designersoffa som jag hade fläckt ner, så snygg som den var. Dessutom hade jag inte förstått att även ett sådant designfrälst par som mina vänner skulle se värdet i en möbel som inte bara var snygg utan också anpassad för livet hemma, och tillgänglig för ett mycket behagligare pris.

Stories used for experiment – Folkessons Möbler

Författaren Martina Haag berättar:

Det var vid en invigning av en ny krog i Stockholm för några år sedan som jag blev medveten om vad den rätta inredningen kan göra för ett rum. Krogen hade tidens mest moderna och lyxiga möbler - de kostade en förmögenhet. Senare på kvällen när jag kom hem till mitt vardagsrum och slängde mig i soffan blev jag fullt medveten om skillnaden mellan krogens lyx och den inredning man i regel hade råd med i ett hem med småbarn som spiller. Det kändes frustrerande att vardagslivet skulle begränsa en till icke-designade och medelmåttiga möbler.

Jag minns fortfarande när jag och min man, Erik, några veckor senare var inbjuden till vänner i deras lägenhet. De är båda samlare och har ett stort intresse för inredning och detta syntes tydligt i deras hem som var fullt med skandinaviska designklassiker. Efter middagen bjöds det på kaffe, och jag slog mig ner i den ljusa och stilrena soffan. Den hade en klassisk design och var förvånansvärt bekväm. Värden drog ett av sina ökända skämt och oturligt nog skrattade jag till så häftigt att koppen föll till golvet och kaffet bildade en brun fläck på möbeln. Det gick inte att ta miste på hans förfärade blick. Jag bad om ursäkt och kände mig tvingad att fråga var soffan kom ifrån, vad den kostade och hur jag skulle kunna ersätta den. Den förfärade blicken utbyttes mot ett leende då han förklarade att klädseln är tvättbar och att FOLKESSONS-soffor är oslagbara på det sättet; man ska ju kunna leva också! Jag fortsatte att skämmas, men drog en lättnadens suck då jag hade trott att det var en ovärderlig designersoffa som jag hade fläckt ner, så snygg som den var. Dessutom hade jag inte förstått att även ett sådant designfrälst par som mina vänner skulle se värdet i en möbel som inte bara var snygg utan också anpassad för livet hemma, och tillgänglig för ett mycket behagligare pris.

Grundaren av FOLKESSONS MÖBLER, Adam Folkesson, berättar:

Det var vid ett besök i Italien på en mässan i mitten på 90-talet som jag första gången, utan att vara medveten om det, formulerade det som skulle bli FOLKESSONS MÖBLER's vision. På dagen såg jag tidens mest moderna och lyxiga möbler utställda på mässan - de kostade en förmögenhet. På kvällen hade jag turen att få följa med några italienare hem och såg med egna ögon skillnaden mellan den utställda lyxen och den inredning vardagsmänniskan hade råd med i sitt hem.

Det kändes frustrerande att man av vardagslivet skulle bli begränsad till icke-designade och medelmåttiga möbler.

Jag minns fortfarande när jag ett antal år senare var inbjuden till vänner i deras sommarhus i södra Sverige. Hustrun är en samlare och har ett stort intresse för inredning och detta syntes tydligt i deras hem som var fullt med skandinaviska designklassiker. Efter middagen bjöds det på kaffe i salongen och jag slog mig ner i den ljusa och stilrena soffan. Den hade en klassisk design och var förvånansvärt komfortabel. Vi föll in i en animerad konversation och oturligt nog slängde jag ut med armen så häftigt att koppen föll till golvet och innanmätet bildade en brun fläck på möbeln. Det gick inte att ta miste på värdinnans förfärade blick. Jag bad om ursäkt och kände mig tvingad att fråga var soffan kom ifrån, vad den kostade och hur jag skulle kunna ersätta den. Den förfärade blicken utbyttes mot ett leende då hon förklarade att klädseln är tvättbar och kände jag inte igen en FOLKESSONS-möbel när jag såg en? Då fick jag såklart skämmas, men än hade jag inte förstått att även en sådan designfrälst som min väninna skulle se värdet i en möbel som inte bara var snygg utan också anpassad för livet hemma, och tillgänglig för ett mycket behagligare pris.

En FOLKESSONS MÖBLER-kund berättar:

Det var när jag surfade runt på olika bloggar och hamnade på en exklusiv inredningsblogg som jag först insåg vad rätt inredning kan göra för ett rum. På bloggarna fanns bilder på tidens mest moderna och lyxiga möbler - de kostade en förmögenhet. När jag vände blicken från datorn och tittade runt i mitt vardagsrum insåg jag skillnaden mellan den utställda lyxen och den inredning som jag har råd med i mitt hem.

Det kändes frustrerande att vardagslivet skulle begränsa en till icke-designade och medelmåttiga möbler.

Jag minns fortfarande när jag några veckor senare var inbjuden till vänner i deras lägenhet. De är båda samlare och har ett stort intresse för inredning och detta syntes tydligt i deras hem som var fullt med skandinaviska designklassiker. Efter middagen bjöds det på kaffe, och jag slog mig ner i den ljusa och stilrena soffan. Den hade en klassisk design och var förvånansvärt bekväm. Värden drog ett av sina ökända skämt och oturligt nog skrattade jag till så häftigt att koppen föll till golvet och kaffet bildade en brun fläck på möbeln. Det gick inte att ta miste på hans förfärade blick. Jag bad om ursäkt och kände mig tvingad att fråga var soffan kom ifrån, vad den kostade och hur jag skulle kunna ersätta den. Den förfärade blicken utbyttes mot ett leende då han förklarade att klädseln är tvättbar och att FOLKESSONS-soffor är oslagbara på det sättet; man ska ju kunna leva också! Jag fortsatte att skämmas, men drog en lättnadens suck då jag hade trott att det var en ovärderlig designersoffa som jag hade fläckt ner, så snygg som den var. Dessutom hade jag inte förstått att även ett sådant designfrälst par som mina vänner skulle se värdet i en möbel som inte bara var snygg utan också anpassad för livet hemma, och tillgänglig för ett mycket behagligare pris.

Appendix D

Example of questionnaire

4

Vänligen svara på frågorna som följer.

Jag är:

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Kvinna

Min ålder är: _____

Är du student?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nej

Vem berättar historien som du precis har läst? _____

Är berättaren man eller kvinna?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Kvinna

I historien, vad spilldes på möbeln? _____

I historien, gick koppen sönder?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nej

Vänligen besvara frågorna nedan på en skala 1 - 7 (Exempelvis: 1 = Stämmer inte alls, 7 = Stämmer helt och hållet).

Vilka känslor känner du just nu, när du har läst berättelsen?

	Stämmer inte alls (1)	2	3	4	5	6	Stämmer helt och hållet (7)
Ilkska	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rädsla	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sorgsenhet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avsky	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Förvåning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Förväntan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tillit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glädje	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hur väl känner du till varumärket *FOLKESSONS MÖBLER*?

Känner inte till alls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Känner till mycket väl
--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------

Hur väl känner du till *berättaren* av historien?

Känner inte till alls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Känner till mycket väl
--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------

Hur uppfattar du *historien* som du precis har läst?

Negativt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positivt
Inte Tilltalande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tilltalande
Dålig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bra
Tycker inte om	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tycker om

Hur uppfattar du berättaren av historien som du precis har läst?

Negativt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positivt
Inte Tilltalande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tilltalande
Dålig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bra
Tycker inte om	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tycker om

Hur uppfattar du varumärket FOLKESSONS MÖBLER?

Negativt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positivt
Inte Tilltalande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tilltalande
Dålig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bra
Tycker inte om	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tycker om

Hur skulle du beskriva berättaren av historien?

Inte Trovärdig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Trovärdig
Oärlig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ärlig
Opålitlig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Pålitlig
Inte Kunnig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Kunnig
Inte Expert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Expert
Oerfaren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Erfaren
Inte Respektingivande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Respektingivande
Inte Beundransvärd	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Beundransvärd
Inte Imponerande	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Imponerande
Passar inte med Varumärket	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Passar med Varumärket
Olik Varumärket	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Lik Varumärket
Representerar inte Varumärket	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Representerar Varumärket

Hur skulle du beskriva *berättaren* av historien i relation till dig?

Inte lik mig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Lik mig
Identifierar mig inte med	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Identifierar mig med
Känner inte samhörighet med	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Känner samhörighet med

Hur skulle du beskriva varumärket *FOLKESSONS MÖBLER* i relation till dig?

Inte lik mig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Lik mig
Identifierar mig inte med	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Identifierar mig med
Känner inte samhörighet med	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Känner samhörighet med

I vilken utsträckning håller du med om följande påståenden?

	Stämmer inte alls (1)	2	3	4	5	6	Stämmer helt och hållet (7)
Jag vill veta mer om historien som jag precis har läst.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag tycker att historien som jag precis har läst är intressant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag är nyfiken på historien som jag precis har läst.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I vilken utsträckning håller du med om följande påståenden?

	Stämmer inte alls (1)	2	3	4	5	6	Stämmer helt och hållet (7)
Jag vill veta mer om berättaren av historien som jag precis har läst.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag tycker att berättaren av historien är intressant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag är nyfiken på berättaren av historien.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I vilken utsträckning håller du med om följande påståenden?

	Stämmer inte alls (1)	2	3	4	5	6	Stämmer helt och hållet (7)
Jag vill veta mer om varumärket FOLKESSONS MÖBLER .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag tycker att varumärket FOLKESSONS MÖBLER är intressant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag är nyfiken på varumärket FOLKESSONS MÖBLER .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hur sannolikt är det att du kommer att besöka en FOLKESSONS MÖBLER-butik den närmaste veckan?

Inte Sannolikt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mycket Sannolikt
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Hur sannolikt är det att du kommer att besöka FOLKESSONS MÖBLERs hemsida den närmaste veckan?

Inte Sannolikt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mycket Sannolikt
-------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------

Hur sannolikt är det att du kommer att söka information om FOLKESSONS MÖBLER den närmaste veckan?

Inte Sannolikt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mycket Sannolikt
-------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------

Hur sannolikt är det att du skulle rekommendera *varumärket FOLKESSONS MÖBLER* till en vän?

Inte Sannolikt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mycket Sannolikt
-------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------

Hur sannolikt är det att du skulle berätta om *historien* du precis läst för en vän?

Inte Sannolikt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mycket Sannolikt
----------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	------------------

Hur sannolikt är det att du skulle berätta om *berättaren* av historien för en vän?

Inte Sannolikt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mycket Sannolikt
----------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	------------------

Hur sannolikt är det att du skulle berätta om *varumärket FOLKESSONS MÖBLER* för en vän?

Inte Sannolikt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mycket Sannolikt
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Stort Tack för din medverkan!
Anna & Maria

Historien, personen och varumärket i undersökningen är fiktiva. Inspiration till vissa formuleringar har hämtats från "Historien om IKEA, Ingvar Kamprad berättar" av Bertil Torekull.

Appendix E

Tables of results

Table E1a: Summary of Two-way ANOVA for Story Interest

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	4.22	0.016	0.03
Level of Brand Awareness	0.01	0.904	0.00
Interaction Effect	1.11	0.332	0.01

Variable: Story Interest, $n = 243$

Table E1b: Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Story Interest

	Mean Difference	<i>p</i> -value
Celebrity - Founder	- 0.24	0.662
Celebrity - Customer	0.48	0.183
Founder - Customer	0.72	0.020

Variable: Story Interest, $n = 243$

Table E2a: Summary of Two-way ANOVA for Story Attitude

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	2.93	0.055	0.02
Level of Brand Awareness	4.22	0.041	0.02
Interaction Effect	2.14	0.120	0.02

Variable: Story Attitude, *n* = 242

Table E2b: Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Story Attitude

	Mean Difference	<i>p</i> -value
Celebrity - Founder	- 0.05	0.974
Celebrity - Customer	0.38	0.168
Founder - Customer	0.43	0.098

Variable: Story Attitude, *n* = 242

Table E3: Summary of Two-way ANOVA for Brand Interest

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	1.41	0.247	0.01
Level of Brand Awareness	3.13	0.078	0.01
Interaction Effect	0.41	0.663	0.00

Variable: Brand Interest, $n = 243$

Table E4: Summary of Two-way ANOVA for Brand Attitude

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	1.29	0.277	0.01
Level of Brand Awareness	16.59	0.000	0.07
Interaction Effect	0.02	0.978	0.00

Variable: Brand Attitude, $n = 243$

Table E5a: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Story Interest - IKEA

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	2.50	0.086	0.04

Variable: Story Interest, $n = 126$

Table E5b: Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Story Interest - IKEA

	Mean Difference	<i>p</i> -value
Celebrity - Founder	- 0.57	0.272
Celebrity - Customer	0.15	0.912
Founder - Customer	0.72	0.105

Variable: Story Interest, $n = 126$

Table E6a: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Story Interest – Folkessons Möbler

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	2.72	0.070	0.05

Variable: Story Interest, $n = 117$

Table E6b: Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Story Interest – Folkessons Möbler

	Mean Difference	<i>p</i> -value
Celebrity - Founder	0.10	0.969
Celebrity - Customer	0.84	0.110
Founder - Customer	0.74	0.171

Variable: Story Interest, $n = 117$

Table E7a: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Story Attitude - IKEA

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	2.46	0.090	0.04

Variable: Story Attitude, $n = 125$

Table E7b: Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Story Attitude - IKEA

	Mean Difference	<i>p</i> -value
Celebrity - Founder	- 0.46	0.300
Celebrity - Customer	0.14	0.882
Founder - Customer	0.60	0.105

Variable: Story Attitude, $n = 125$

Table E8a: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Story Attitude – Folkessons Möbler

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	2.65	0.075	0.04

Variable: Story Attitude, *n* = 117

Table E8b: Scheffe's Post-hoc Test for Story Attitude – Folkessons Möbler

	Mean Difference	p-value
Celebrity - Founder	0.38	0.404
Celebrity - Customer	0.65	0.077
Founder - Customer	0.27	0.630

Variable: Story Attitude, *n* = 117

Table E9: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Brand Interest - IKEA

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	0.53	0.591	0.01

Variable: Brand Interest, *n* = 126

Table E10: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Brand Interest – Folkessons Möbler

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	1.18	0.312	0.02

Variable: Brand Interest, *n* = 117

Table E11: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Brand Attitude - IKEA

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	0.96	0.388	0.02

Variable: Brand Attitude, *n* = 126

Table E12: Summary of One-way ANOVA for Brand Attitude – Folkessons Möbler

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Type of Character	0.45	0.641	0.01

Variable: Brand Attitude, *n* = 117

Table E13: Summary of ANCOVA for Character Interest - IKEA

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Trustworthiness	1.36	0.247	0.01
Expertise	0.92	0.339	0.01
Ideal	8.90	0.003	0.07
Brand-fit	5.04	0.027	0.04
Self-Character-Perception	3.08	0.082	0.03
Character	0.36	0.697	0.01

Variable: Character Interest, *n* = 126**Table E14: Summary of ANCOVA for Character Interest – Folkessons Möbler**

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Trustworthiness	0.42	0.517	0.00
Expertise	1.15	0.287	0.01
Ideal	7.01	0.009	0.06
Brand-fit	0.31	0.582	0.00
Self-Character-Perception	6.73	0.011	0.06
Character	0.06	0.940	0.00

Variable: Character Interest, *n* = 117

Table E15: Summary of ANCOVA for Character Attitude - IKEA

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Trustworthiness	-	-	-
Expertise	1.444	0.232	0.012
Ideal	8.335	0.005	0.066
Brand-fit	2.731	0.101	0.023
Self-Character-Perception	8.409	0.004	0.067
Character	0.055	0.946	0.001

Variable: Character Attitude, $n = 126$ **Table E16: Summary of ANCOVA for Character Attitude – Folkessons Möbler**

	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Partial Eta ²
Trustworthiness	11.36	0.001	0.09
Expertise	3.23	0.075	0.03
Ideal	3.03	0.085	0.03
Brand-fit	0.18	0.672	0.00
Self-Character-Perception	2.29	0.133	0.02
Character	0.37	0.693	0.01

Variable: Character Attitude, $n = 117$