



Brand Identity and Brand Image

A case study of the Nordstan brand

Bachelor Thesis in Science in Business Administration: Marketing
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Preface

This work is a bachelor thesis at the School of Business, Economics and Law at Gothenburg University. It has been written at the Faculty of Business Administration during the autumn of 2008.

This road has been strenuous and sometimes difficult but not once did we have a boring time. We have enjoyed writing about brand identity and image of Nordstan and we hope that this thesis will be of benefit for the company.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has made this study possible. First, we would like to sincerely thank Anders Larsson, manager at Nordstan, for his openness and positive attitude. This research could not have been conducted without the necessary and valuable information received by Anders and his time and effort. Secondly, we would like to thank Katarina Bouraza, press responsible at Nordstan, for her time.

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Abstract

Title	Brand Identity and Brand Image – a case study of the Nordstan brand
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Key words	Brand, brand identity, brand image, customer value.
Problem	This thesis is about brand identity of Nordstan, company's perspective, and brand image, consumers' perspective. Communication between the company and the customer is a useful way to understand the core of the brand and its role in the market place. Therefore we wish to answer the following problem: <i>Does the brand identity of Nordstan agree with consumers' image of Nordstan?</i>
Purpose	The purpose of the thesis is to describe and understand the brand identity of Nordstan and how well it is homogeneous with the brand image of the customers.
Methodology	In this thesis both an exploratory as well as a conclusive research is applied. To attain general information about Nordstan, the shopping centre concept and reading literature to gain knowledge about the subject, an exploratory research approach is used. To evaluate the findings we have used a conclusive approach. Further, we have used both the quantitative method and the qualitative method in this thesis.
Conclusions	After having studied the brand identity and the brand image of Nordstan, we have experienced difficulties for Nordstan to communicate the brand identity that they want to possess. This conclusion is based on the fact that the image of Nordstan does not completely correspond with the brand identity. However, Nordstan has achieved in communicating their wide range of offer and their attractive location in their market communication. We finally present our recommendations to Nordstan and future studies of the subject.

Key words

Brand

A brand is a distinguishing feature, which separates a company's supply of goods and services from competitors.¹ It can be a special word, a personal name, figures, letters, numbers, the shape and look of a product and the packaging.²

Brand identity

A brand identity is a set of associations that a company tries to create or maintain. These associations should reflect the values and strategy of the company. It should differentiate the company from competitors.³

Brand image

The image is the way in which consumers interpret all of the signals coming from the products, services and communication covered by the brand.⁴ It reflects the value that customers, possible customers and lost customers associate with the company.⁵

Customer value

Customer values are the advantages that the product gives a customer in order to satisfy his or her needs.⁶

Shopping centre

A shopping centre can be defined as a concentration of shops, often with cafés and other types of services.⁷

¹ Urde, M. (1997)

² Melin, F. (1997)

³ Aaker, D., Joachimsthaler, E. (2002)

⁴ Kapferer, J-N. (2004)

⁵ Grönroos, C. (2002)

⁶ Kotler, P. (1999)

⁷ www.ne.se (Nationalencyklopedin)

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1. Introduction and background

This opening chapter introduces the background of the thesis. First of all we present a background of the company, Nordstan, the business today and the owner structure, in order to describe the background of the problem. Thereafter the reader will be introduced to the key definitions of the thesis. The chapter ends with a disposition of the whole thesis.

1.1 History of Nordstan

In the 1960's, the area where Nordstan is located today, was a slum area with a city plan from the 17th century. The area was dominated by neglected properties and it represented the district of emigrants, warehouses and pubs. The post-war period made the situation gradually worse and the area began to decay. At that time, mostly small businesses were established.⁸

The vulnerable situation triggered entrepreneurs and large banks to discuss possibilities of redevelopment and in the 1960's different alternatives were discussed. These discussions were based on either to restore the area or to rebuild it. The option was not obvious, due to uncertainties whether there was a need for a big shopping centre in Gothenburg city. Large private banks and entrepreneurs decided to buy the 90 properties in the district between Östra Hamngatan and Stora Hamnkanalen and made the decision to redevelop the area. This project was named Östra Nordstan and is unique in Europe, since the whole district was demolished and then rebuilt on private initiative. The support from leading politicians and government authorities facilitated the building process.⁹

The construction started in 1966 and was divided into different parts. An outline was made, where Nordstan's building process was divided into nine construction objects, owned by different property owners. Financial negotiations began with the banks, insurance companies and the ATP-fund in Gothenburg. The banks wanted to reduce the risks and therefore the decision was made to complete the construction by stages.¹⁰

In 1975 the building of Nordstan was finished and the interest to establish businesses in Nordstan increased. The development of Nordstadstorget was of great importance for attracting both customers and tenants. It is an area where the crowd can sit and chat. The purpose was to make it lively with fountains, plants, a gym, a playground and babysitting service. But due to the vandalism at night these activities had to be taken down.¹¹

⁸ Fritz, M. (1997)

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

1.2 Management structure of Nordstan

After the construction of Nordstan was complete it has continued to develop. Today Nordstan's management structure consists of Samfällighetsföreningen, Företagarföreningen and Marknadsledningen, each with own responsibilities.¹²

Samfällighetsföreningen

The property owners became part owners in a number of associations, one association for each building. In 1980 there was reorganization in the activity and the different associations merged into one, called Samfällighetsföreningen. Except from owning the properties and being responsible for their maintenance, the Samfällighetsföreningen decides which tenants are suitable for a place in Nordstan. The association takes propositions about suitable tenants from Marknadsledningen, but reserves the right to the final decision.¹³

Företagarföreningen

In discussions with the property owners and the tenants, the Företagarföreningen was founded in 1972. Together with Samfällighetsföreningen and Marknadsledningen, Företagarföreningen has influenced the mix of shops in Nordstan and is responsible for order- and security issues. Over the years, the shops in Nordstan have had a good development, increasing turnover and have shown fine results in profitability.¹⁴

If Företagarföreningen wants some activities to be done, it is carried out by Marknadsledningen.¹⁵

The tenants of Nordstan are in fields like clothing, shoes, furnishing, sports, toys, restaurants, hotels, bank, post office, tourist agencies, perishables and other service.¹⁶

Nordstan's Marknadsledning

The property owners realised it was essential to market Nordstan. Samfällighetsföreningen also had to cooperate with Företagarföreningen in some aspects, especially in the marketing process, which is why Marknadsledning was created. Marknadsledningen's main purpose is to market Nordstan and to be responsible for activities in the shopping centre, in such way to make Nordstan more attractive to the customer. The mutual purposefulness between Samfällighetsföreningen and Företagarföreningen is to strengthen the competitiveness of Nordstan, which has made it possible to form a prolonged collaboration.¹⁷

Marknadsledningen runs information- and market oriented activity.¹⁸

¹² http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4-6 accessed 2008-11-14 17.07

¹³ Fritz, M. (1997)

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ <http://www.nordstan.se/> 2008-11-11 11.02

¹⁶ Fritz, M. (1997)

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ <http://www.nordstan.se/> 2008-11-11 11.05

Nordstan is today one of Gothenburg's largest workplaces, the largest indoor shopping centre in Scandinavia and among the largest shopping centres in Europe with total area of 320 000 km². Nordstan has an attractive location. It is situated in the centre of Gothenburg and has approximately 90 000 visitors daily.¹⁹

Short facts

- Total area: 320 000-square-feet²⁰
- Total area of shops and restaurants: 70 000-square-feet²¹
- 2700 parking spaces, approximately 1,4 millions cars parked annually²²
- Turnover; 3,1 billions SEK (2007)²³
- 180 annual events²⁴
- 6000 employees²⁵
- 200 shops and restaurants²⁶

1.2.2 Owner structure

The property owners

Nordstan consists of eight buildings within the city centre of Gothenburg. The ownership is divided between nine property owners.²⁷

Object 1 has a total area of 9 800-square-feet and is owned by AP Fastigheter AB.²⁸ It is Sweden's largest real estate corporation, who owns, builds and administrates properties.²⁹

Object 2 consists of an area of 22 100-square-feet and is owned by AP Fastigheter AB³⁰

The total area of object 3 is 31 000-square-feet and is owned by F O Peterson & Söner Byggnads AB, Gösta Andersson Byggnadsfirma AB and Kjell Andersson Byggnadsfirma i Västra Sverige AB.³¹ F O Peterson & Söner Byggnads AB was founded in 1870. The company consists of four different departments, such as construction, carpentry, service and real estate.³² Gösta Andersson Byggnadsfirma AB started in 1893 to obstruct the disloyal competition regarding the work force. The purpose is to strengthen and develop the position and attractiveness of the construction branch.³³ The purpose of Kjell Andersson

¹⁹ Fritz, M. (1997)

²⁰ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.2 accessed 2008-11-11 16.32

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ <http://www.nordstan.se/> accessed 2008-11-10 13.30

²⁸ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4 accessed 2008-11-10 13.45

²⁹ <http://www.apfastigheter.se/Templates/MainPage.aspx?id=1340> accessed 2008-11-10 13.53

³⁰ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4 accessed 2008-11-10 13.45

³¹ Ibid accessed 2008-11-10 13.59

³² <http://www.fop.se/> accessed 2008-11-10 14.00

³³ <http://www.gbgbf.se/foreningen/> accessed 2008-11-10 14.05

Byggnadsfirma i Västra Sverige AB is letting and administration of real estate and bonds, run construction business and forestry.³⁴

Object 4 has an area of 24 400-square-feet and the owner is AMF Pension.³⁵ AMF Pension is a large group consisting of two subsidiaries, AMF Pension Fastighetsförvaltning and AMF Pension Fondförvaltning. The company was founded in 1973 is owned by the union LO together with Svenskt Näringsliv and activity consists of life insurance and administration of real estate.³⁶

Hufvudstaden owns 51 900-square-feet of object 5.³⁷ Founded in 1915, the vision of the company is to be the most attractive property company in Sweden. The business concept is to offer companies high-quality offices and trading premises in attractive market places.³⁸

Vasakronan AB owns object 6, which has an area of 46 500-square-feet.³⁹ Vasakronan is one of Sweden's leading property companies. The company's concentration is to office premises and shops in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Lund and Uppsala. They also offer services to their tenants, such as conferences, restaurants and catering, reception and telephone services.⁴⁰

Object 7 has the largest area of 100 300-square-feet and is owned by Nordstan's Samfällighetsförening.⁴¹ It is the property owners mutual company, which is responsible for managing the market and streets of Nordstan, the parking spaces and other common buildings, for example Hotel Europa.⁴²

Eklandia Fasighets AB owns object 9, which has a total area of 20 700-square-feet.⁴³ The company concentrates on office premises, shops, and industry- and storage premises. Eklandia does not search for tenants to a complete building. It is the tenants' needs and desire that control design of the premises. Eklandia is a subsidiary to Castellum AB, which is a property company listed on the stock market.

1.3 Background of the problem – the importance of brands

In a globalised world where markets become more and more international, where access and offer of different products increase and where products become more and more similar, the importance of brands gain essential meaning.

Brands have become a major player in modern society and shape our lives. Brands represent immaterial assets that often have greater financial value than material assets. A brand is a

³⁴ <http://www.allabolag.se/5563559250/verksamhet> accessed 2008-11-10 14.08

³⁵ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4 accessed 2008-11-10 14.0

³⁶ <http://www.amffastigheter.se/> accessed 2008-11-10 14.16

³⁷ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4 accessed 2008-11-10 14.18

³⁸ <http://www.hufvudstaden.se/en/About-Hufvudstaden/About-Hufvudstaden/Vision-and-business-concept/> accessed 2008-11-10 14.22

³⁹ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4 accessed 2008-10-12 14.24

⁴⁰ <http://www.vasakronan.se/sv/Om-Vasakronan/Foretagsfakta/> accessed 2008-11-10 14.36

⁴¹ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4 accessed 2008-11-10 14.38

⁴² <http://www.nordstan.se/> accessed 2008-11-10 14.53

⁴³ http://www.nordstan.se/om_nordstan/pdf/Faktablad2008.pdf s.4 accessed 2008-11-10 15.18

name that influences buyers, by creating mental associations and relationships built up over time among customers and distributors.⁴⁴

“A product is something that is made in a factory, a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor, a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated, a successful brand is timeless.”⁴⁵

Strong brands are fundamental to succeed in the powerful competition in the marketplace. They gain higher preferences from consumers, and individuals tend to prefer products that are familiar and have high awareness. Furthermore strong brands can escape price competition, since it can command a higher price. Strong brands attract loyal customers who tend to repeatedly purchase the same brand.⁴⁶ Successful brands add value to all parties involved, which entices customers to buy their products. When a company has a weak brand, as a result of failing to create favourable associations, customers may understand the products only as a commodity, which makes the price the conclusive factor for purchase. The importance of having a strong brand will in the long term increase corporate profits.⁴⁷

Establishing strong brands can be an extremely valuable asset, since it is the brand name and the company that secure the relationships with customers and makes long-term profit.

“The brand is a management tool. When the competition is fierce, the brand separates the winners from the losers.”⁴⁸

Furthermore a brand represents a relationship between a product and a customer. How this relationship develops is signified by the expectations on quality and service the customer gains over time. How customers perceive a brand depends on the associations that the brand holder manages to communicate. This way the company can create loyalty by delivering and acting in a way that will satisfy or exceed customers' expectations.⁴⁹

Nordstrom is one of the United States most successful shopping centres and has the highest rate of loyal customers. One of the company's strengths is the ability to understand the importance of building and deepening strong relationships with their customers. Many stories confirm Nordstrom's amazing service spirit, which creates a good reputation among customers, a word-of-mouth effect. This differentiates and distinguishes the company from its competitors.⁵⁰

Competition among different shopping centres is increasing. During the latest years, new shopping centres have appeared and old have been rebuilt or renovated in and around Gothenburg, such as Allum and Backaplan. This industry has developed and the increasingly competitive retail environment is one cause behind the shopping centres' offer of more equivalent products. Simultaneously as the range of similar products increase the companies brands have not been strengthen or are not acknowledged.

⁴⁴ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

⁴⁵ Frans, M. (1997) p. 38

⁴⁶ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

⁴⁷ Kotler, P. (1999)

⁴⁸ www.bdc.co.tt/businesslink08.pdf accessed 2008-11-11 11.44

⁴⁹ Kotler, P. (1999)

⁵⁰ Ibid

We claim this as a problem in the industry, since different shopping centres are interchangeable. If customers do not recognise the brand, then the product is just any other commodity and the price becomes relevant. If the price is the only factor that counts when purchasing a product, the discount companies are the winners. Today customers do not feel strong connections to a certain shopping centre and can not identify themselves with one, which means that customer loyalty is low and when necessary they will not hesitate to look for other alternatives.

1.4 Disposition

This opening chapter will give an insight into the assignment and into the company, Nordstan.

In chapter two the purpose of the thesis and a problem analysis will be presented.

Chapter three will contain a presentation of relevant theories and models in order to reach the purpose of the thesis. The theoretical framework is based on a modified model by Grönroos. The purpose is to illustrate the relationship between expected and experienced quality from a company's perspective and consumers' perspective. From the company's perspective factors such as brand identity, business concept, brand associations, market communication and customer needs are analysed. From the customer's perspective factors such as product attributes, word-of-mouth, advertisement and customer value are analysed.

Chapter four will provide a presentation of the methodological reasoning chosen in the research. It will discuss chosen research approach, scientific approach and evaluation of data.

Chapter five will present the empirical result of the thesis. It will consist of a presentation of Nordstan and the result will be applied to the theory. The results are based on interviews within the company concerning the brand identity and communication from a company's perspective. Further this chapter will present the result from a qualitative questioner concerning brand image from customer's perspective.

Chapter six will provide an analysis where the empirical results will be applied to the theoretical framework. This chapter will provide a discussion about the empirical result in a relation to the purpose and the research questions. This analysis will contain a comparison between the brand identity of Nordstan and customers opinions of the brand image. Further this chapter will contain a discussion of possible discrepancies.

Chapter six will present the conclusions of the thesis and the recommendations. The conclusions will be related to the problem analysis in order to reach the purpose of the thesis.

In figure 1.3 an overview of the thesis is presented to simplify the continuing reading and to illustrate the outlook of the thesis.

CHAPTER 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction and background</p> <hr/> <p>In this chapter the authors will introduce the reader to the subject and give a background of the studied company Nordstan.</p>
CHAPTER 2	<p style="text-align: center;">Purpose and problem analysis</p> <hr/> <p>In this chapter the authors present the purpose of the thesis followed by an analysis of the problem.</p>
CHAPTER 3	<p style="text-align: center;">Theoretical approach</p> <hr/> <p>This chapter is based on a modified model by Grönroos which explains the relationship between expected and experienced quality from the consumers' perspective and the company's perspective.</p>
CHAPTER 4	<p style="text-align: center;">Methodology</p> <hr/> <p>This chapter gives the reader understanding about the methods used to achieve the result of the thesis.</p>
CHAPTER 5	<p style="text-align: center;">Empirical study</p> <hr/> <p>The results from the qualitative and the quantitative researches are presented in this chapter.</p>
CHAPTER 6	<p style="text-align: center;">Analysis</p> <hr/> <p>The analysis of the thesis is presented in this chapter. The theoretical framework is compared to the result from the quantitative- and qualitative research.</p>
CHAPTER 7	<p style="text-align: center;">Conclusions and recommendations</p> <hr/> <p>This chapter contains conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings presented in the previous chapters.</p>
CHAPTER 8	<p style="text-align: center;">List of references</p> <hr/> <p>This chapter presents the sources used throughout the thesis in order to achieve the purpose and reach a conclusion.</p>

Figure 1.3 Disposition of the thesis

2. Purpose and problem analysis

This chapter explains the purpose of the thesis and thereafter a problem analysis is presented. The problem analysis links the purpose to the research problem and gives an explanation to the background of the problem. We have chosen to present the purpose of the thesis before the problem analysis to give the reader insight in what we want to investigate with this thesis. We believe that this way the reader will be able to understand the problem analysis with more perspectives in mind and make the further reading easier. After the problem analysis we present our main problem, sub problems and information required, in order to come to a conclusion. The description of the delimitations closes this chapter.

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to describe and understand the brand identity of Nordstan and how well it is homogeneous with the brand image of the customers.

2.2 Problem analysis

The purpose of the problem analysis is to link the purpose of the thesis with the research problem. In the problem analysis the authors will define the problem of the thesis and the source of the problem. Further we will describe how the main problem, the sub problems and the information needs have arisen. A profound analysis and definition of different theories will not be included in this chapter, in order to ease the reading and keep the structure of the thesis. A profound description of the theories will be given in the theoretical chapter, chapter three.

2.2.1 Analysis of the main problem

It is stated that established brands constitute entry barriers for new brands in the market place. In the United States 8 out of 10 newly established brand products are withdrawn from the market within two years. This is an obvious problem since the launching of a new consumer product is estimated to cost approximately 100 million dollars.⁵¹

Chernatony⁵² claims that a brand gives the company three competitive advantages; a platform for launching new products, it builds resilience in time of crisis and it creates a barrier to entry.

⁵¹ Frans, M. (1997)

⁵² Chernatony de, L., Mcdonald, M. (1998)

From a consumer's perspective, a brand has a value because it distinguishes the offering from the competitors, reduces their perceptions of risk and reduces their effort in making a choice.⁵³

*"Customers must recognize that you stand for something"*⁵⁴

Successful brands are those who succeed to create the perfect balance between satisfying buyers' rational and emotional needs.⁵⁵ A brand loyal customer is nine times more profitable than a temporary customer.⁵⁶

A brand identity provides a direction, purpose and meaning for the brand. The importance of branding and brand identity has gradually gained recognition worldwide. As a result of the strong competition and the increasing range of products, companies are forced to establish a clear and understandable brand identity. The brand identity specifies the features of a brand's uniqueness and value in such way that it differentiates the brand from competitors.⁵⁷

If a brand lacks a well defined identity, consumers will not interact with it and therefore will fail to develop a strong relationship because the central personality of a product gives consumers greater confidence in using well known brands. To explain this statement further it will be illustrated by an example which clarifies the role that branding played in drugs sold in retail stores. Individuals suffering from headache were given two identical pills, one in a branded form and the rest were given the same drug lacking any branding. The results showed that branding had added an image in the consumers' minds that made the branded medication much more efficient than the unknown pills. Calculations showed that more than a quarter of the pain relief was a cause of branding.⁵⁸

When brand identity is not well stated and communicated by the company, the consumers may create an image that deviates from the identity or even create a negative image that is difficult to get rid of. When a company fails to communicate their identity or if they fail to fulfil consumers' expectations, the consumers will exclude specific brands.⁵⁹

*"People buy things not only for what they can do,
but also for what they mean."*⁶⁰

Consumers choose powerful brands, mainly because of the image they project. A study made by the advertising agency BBDO found that consumers in most cases found differences between competitors regarding emotional appeal.⁶¹

Having analysed the importance of homogenous brand identity and brand image we will now focus on shopping centres as brands.

⁵³ Chernatony de, L., McDonald, M. (1998)

⁵⁴ Aaker, D. (1996) p.67

⁵⁵ Chernatony de, L., McDonald, M. (1998)

⁵⁶ Lingbell, R. (1996)

⁵⁷ Kapferer, J-N (2004)

⁵⁸ Chernatony, L., Macdonald, M. (1998)

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Sidney J. Levy (1959)

⁶¹ Chernatony, L., Macdonald, M. (1998)

Shopping centres are not just increasing in amounts or size, they are developing from being shopping centres to being entertainment centres, due to the competition and increasing tourism. The idea is to make customers spend their entire day at the shopping centre. Nordstan is today moving towards this concept by having restaurants and events, such as musical performances, fashion shows and sport activities, in the shopping centre. Other centres are also taking on this direction, why it is important that Nordstan can deliver what they promise so that the customers can create as good image as possible.

The number of shopping centres is increasing in Sweden. Lately, several shopping centres have emerged in the suburb areas of Gothenburg. The range of products and shops in the different shopping centres is increasingly similar, which is why it is not enough to build a large shopping centre and have well-known shops. It is important to have a strong brand and position on the market in order to stand out from competitors.

The more a brand expands and diversifies, consumers can feel that they are dealing with several brands. How well a company has communicated the brand identity is reflected in the mind of the customers, where they create an image for the specific brand. The image is very valuable to the company, since it points out in what direction the company will continue to develop.⁶²

By increasing the amounts of visitors in Nordstan and keeping the regular customers, it is necessary to make Nordstan attractive to the customer, which can also attract the customers of the competitors. To be able to achieve this it is required that the customer's opinion of Nordstan corresponds to the one desired by the company.

“A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs more closely”⁶³

Thus the main research problem of the thesis is to;

Investigate whether the brand identity of Nordstan agrees with consumers' image of Nordstan.

2.2.2 Sub research problems

It is important that Nordstan is separated from its competitors, and it should be perfectly clear to the customers what Nordstan stands for.

“Fundamentally, a brand is a promise a company makes to consumers”⁶⁴

It is necessary to investigate which attributes in Nordstan's identity is being communicated to the customers. In order to do so it is essential to understand the brand of Nordstan and understand what elements are at core of their brand. It is required to study different theories about brand identity, image, position, communication, core values and business concept etcetera, in order to answer the main problem of the thesis.

⁶² Kapferer, J-N (2004)

⁶³ Chernatony, L., Macdonald, M. (1998) p.20

⁶⁴ LePla, F. J., Parker, L. M. (1999) p. 13

Positioning distinguishes the brand from competitors by focusing on the unique characteristics of a brand.⁶⁵ While looking into the brand identity, the current position of Nordstan will be presented in order to investigate if this position needs to be either changed in some way or communicated differently.

Communication between the company and the customer is a useful way to understand the core of the brand and its role in the market place.⁶⁶ If the communication fails it can result in customers experiencing that the company does not offer what it promises. This misconception may create wrong brand associations, which are driven by the brand identity.⁶⁷ This is an example of why discrepancy between the companies' desired identity and the customer's perceived image of the company may be a problem.⁶⁸

As mentioned above, brand image is a key factor to a successful brand and it is important for companies to understand that discrepancies between brand identity and brand image can arise, which is why companies need to take action. The message that the company transmits to the customers has to be consistent and agree with the expectations that the customers have. Therefore the companies should investigate their market place in order to keep informed on how their brand is being perceived by its customers. If discrepancy is noticed between the brand identity, communicated by the company, and the image in the consumers mindset the company should take action.⁶⁹

This leads the authors to defining the sub problems that need to be answered, in order to reach a conclusion about the main problem.

The sub problems are;

1. What is the brand identity of Nordstan today?
2. How do consumers perceive the image of Nordstan today?
3. Does Nordstan need to make changes in their identity or image? If so, how can Nordstan in the best way do that?

In order to find answers to our sub problems we have presented examples of information required in figure 2.1. When analysing the literature we have come to this conclusion of information required.

⁶⁵ Kapferer, J-N (2004)

⁶⁶ LePla, F. J., Parker, L. M. (1999)

⁶⁷ Aaker, D. (1996)

⁶⁸ Grönroos, C. (2002)

⁶⁹ Ibid

2.2.4 Compilation of the research problem and information analysis

In figure 2.1 we have compiled our research problems and the required information to reach an answer.

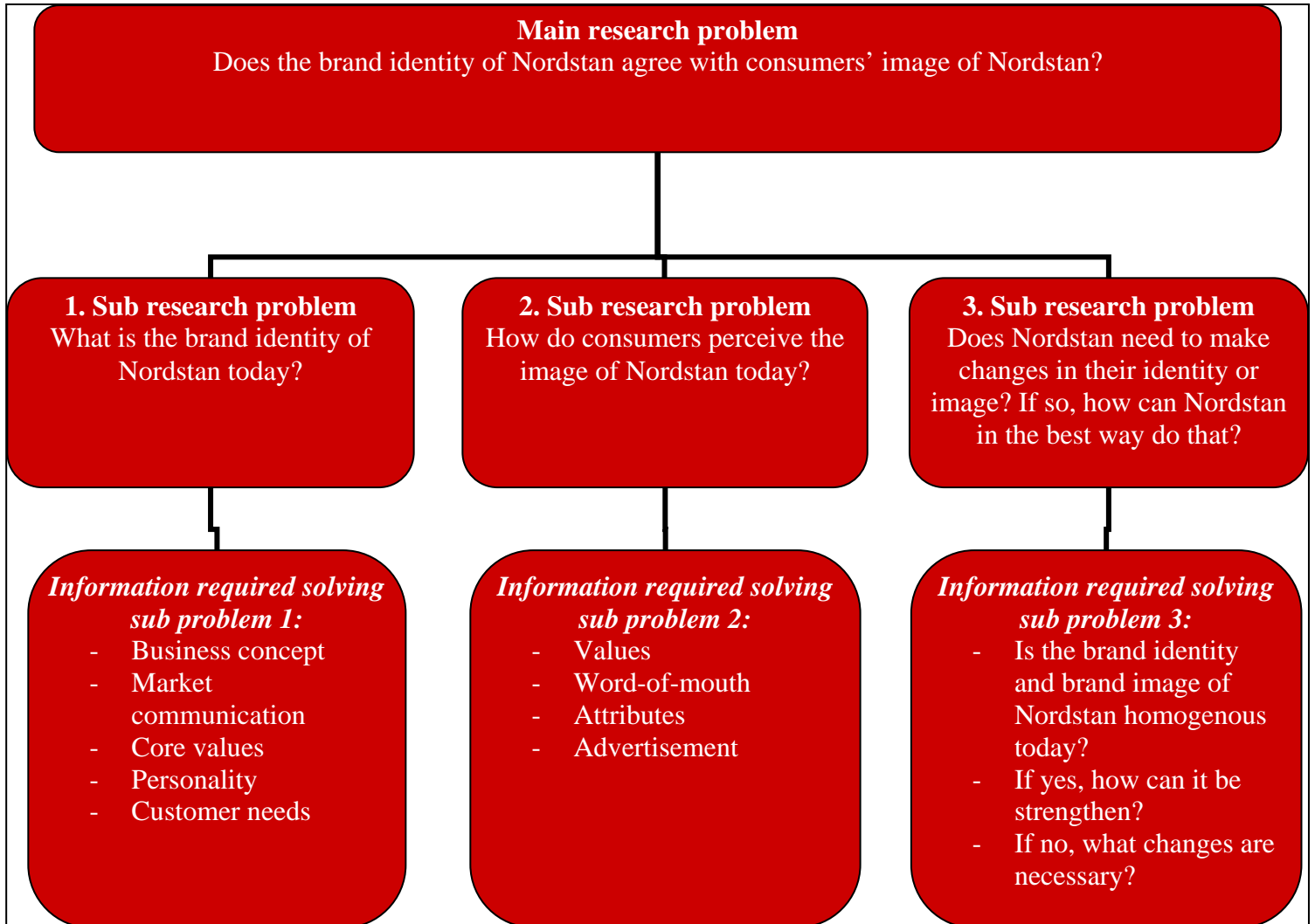


Figure 2.1. Problem analysis disposition

2. 3 Delimitations

We have investigated the brand identity of Nordstan from the management perspective and the brand image of the consumers. We have not considered the property owners perspective in this thesis because we wanted to analyse the perspective of those mainly responsible for the marketing of Nordstan, who also implement different marketing strategies.

We have chosen to analyse the brand of Nordstan as a shopping centre, meaning that we have chosen not to focus on separate shops in Nordstan, which was clearly stated in the questionnaire.

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Model

In this chapter the theoretical framework for the thesis is presented. First the reader is introduced to the definition and the background of brands, and then a model is presented. The theoretical framework constitutes a base for the continuing work with the analysis of the empirical framework.

3.1 Brands

“We do not longer buy products. We buy brands.”⁷⁰

A brand can be defined as all signs that are reported graphically, a special word, a personal name, figures, letters, numbers, the shape and look of a product and the packaging.⁷¹ The development of brands has been quick and they are of great importance. A brand is a symbolic embodiment of the information connected to a company. It is the products and services that a company markets under a certain name. The logotype, product, the soul of the brand, personality, design and other associations that are related to the name are factors, which differentiate the brand from competitors.⁷²

In the 1980s' discussions were raised around brands as valuable assets, due to strategic acquisitions of international brand companies. The importance of having a strong brand rose and later, brands were included in the balance sheet as an immaterial asset. The increasing focus on brands during the latest years has had organizational consequences. Some companies have introduced positions, such as Director of Brands, to show how important their brand is.⁷³

In order to understand the importance of modern brands as a competitive tool it is essential to be familiar with its historical path. The first noticed trace of a mark was in the ancient Egyptian wall paintings in the Bronze Age. The first time labelling was used to identify the origin of a good was on Roman oil lamps. The modern development of brands began in 19th century in the United States of America and Great Britain. The industrial revolution led to mass production, mass distribution and mass communication, which forced companies to differentiate from competing brands.⁷⁴

3.2 Research model

The theoretical framework is based on a modified model by Grönroos (2002). To be suitable to the purpose of the thesis we have changed the structure of the model and added some areas.

⁷⁰ Lagergren, H. (1998)

⁷¹ Melin, F. (1997)

⁷² Mårtensson, R. (2008)

⁷³ Melin, F. (1997)

⁷⁴ Ibid

The model is a method of describing the connection between expected quality and experienced quality. It can explain how customers experience quality and which factors that can affect their experience.⁷⁵

The purpose of the model is to illustrate the relations between the company's perspective of expected quality and the customer's perspective of experienced quality.

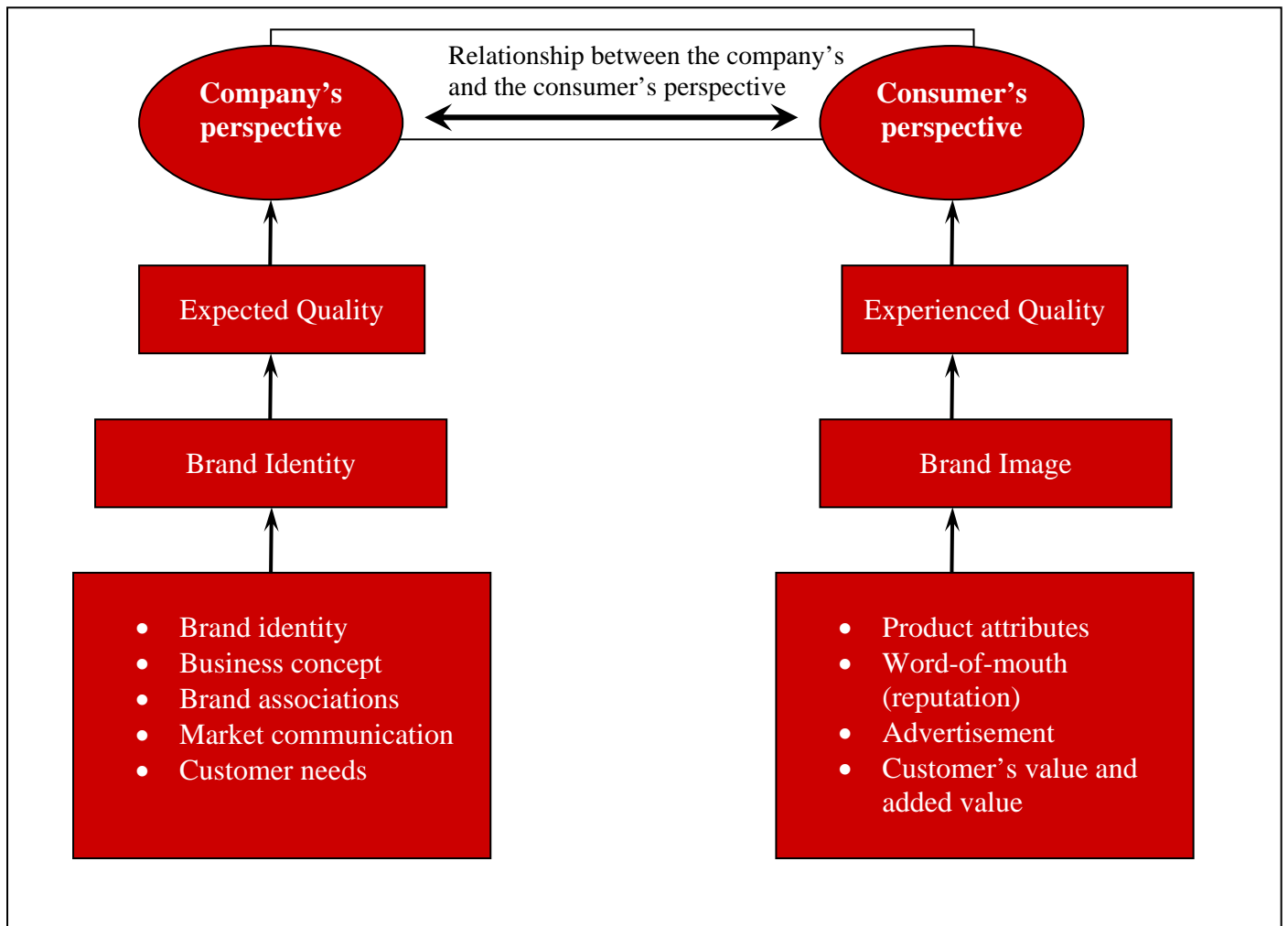


Figure 3.1 Relationship between the expected and the experienced quality (“Total experienced quality”, Grönroos, C., 2002, p.80) (Modified by Arijana Hubanic and Vedrana Hubanic, 2008)

3.3 Company's perspective

The company's perspective is represented by the brand identity, business concept, brand associations, market communication, brand personality and customer needs. Companies work with these tools to understand which attributes to market. How well the company succeeds with it is reflected in the expected quality.

⁷⁵ http://www.bokforingstips.se/Kvalitet/gronroos_modell.htm accessed 2008-11-13 15.58

3.3.1 Brand identity

“Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members”⁷⁶

The brand identity is the internal desired image that the company wants to communicate to the target group. A strong brand has a clear and specified brand identity, which is a set of associations that the company tries to create through, for example, market communication.⁷⁷ Brand identity specifies the frames of a brand’s uniqueness and value. It describes what a brand stands for and is difficult to copy.⁷⁸ By generating a value position, brand identity establishes the relationship between the customer and the company. The benefits can be functional, emotional or self-expressive.⁷⁹ Brand identity involves all the basic characteristics of a company that will persist over time and provides a framework for the overall brand coherence. It expresses the unity and durability of a brand.⁸⁰

According to Kapferer⁸¹, the brand identity prism is a good tool for analysing brands. It gives a description of how the brand owner wants the target group to perceive the brand identity.⁸²

The brand identity prism consists of physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. These concepts together define the brand identity that can be communicated to consumers.⁸³

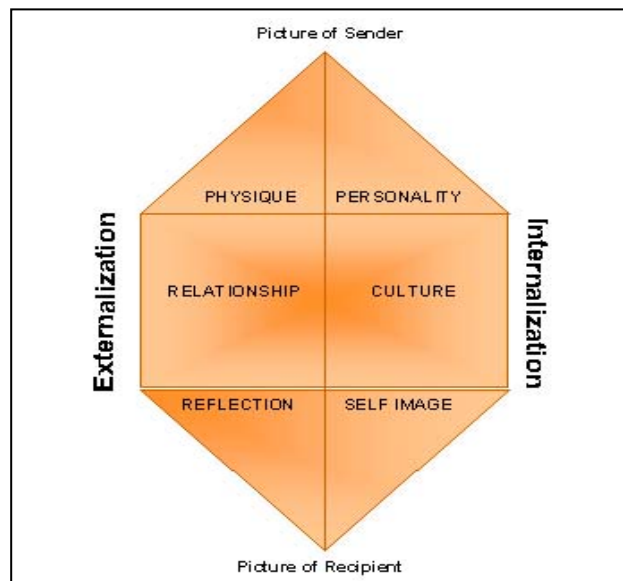


Figure: 3.2 Brand identity prisms

(<http://radio.weblogs.com/0121664/images/2003/09/18/Kapferer%20Prism.jpg> accessed 2008-11-13 20.34)

⁷⁶ Aaker, D. (1996) p.68

⁷⁷ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

⁷⁸ Melin, F. (1997)

⁷⁹ Aaker, D. (1996)

⁸⁰ Kapferer, J-N. (2004)

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Apéria, T., Back, R. (2004)

⁸³ Kapferer, J-N. (2004)

Physique

The physique consists of the salient objectives, which are the features that immediately come to mind when thinking about a brand. Furthermore it is the brand's strength of character and its intangible outer value. Relevant questions when defining the physical facet are what is it concretely? What does it do? What does it look like? For Volvo it is the security that represents the physical facet.⁸⁴

Personality

This is a way in which the company is communicating its products. It describes what kind of a person the brand would be if it were human and its characteristics. A spokesperson can easily form a brand's personality. An example of brand personality could be a famous athlete or a fiction, like the Marlboro Man.⁸⁵

Culture

Culture is a set of values that are the brand's inspiration. It is the source of a brand's core values. Culture links the brand to the firm and plays an essential role in differentiating the brand. A question which can be asked is; what are the values for which the brand stands for? An example of culture are banks, such as American express gold card which symbolizes dynamic, triumph and capitalism where money is shown and flashed about.⁸⁶

Relationship

Every brand has to maintain a good relationship with their customer, which marketing measurements are intended to do. A question to be asked is; how does the brand want to be seen by customers in marketing communication? Dior symbolizes a relationship that is extravagant and grandiose, with a desire to shine like gold.⁸⁷

Reflection

It is a description of the way customers wishes to be seen as a result of using a brand. This reflection becomes identification. The company needs to answer the question; what would the users imagine while using the product? The reflection is the idealized vision of the company's target group and is its outward reflection. For example Coca-cola that has a wider clientele than the narrow segment it reflects. This is because the younger segment identifies Coca-cola as a dream and the older as a way of living. They segment their target group based on customers' lifestyles rather than age.⁸⁸

Self-image

Self-image is the target's internal reflection. It is individuals' attitudes towards certain brands and by purchasing certain brands customers send out a picture of who they want to be.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Kapferer, J-N. (2004)

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

3.3.2 Business concept

The business concept outlines a company's goals and the stated strategies to fulfil the goals. When a company is founded the business concept is created. It describes which and who's needs the company has to satisfy. The business concept provides direction and guidelines to company's personnel and to the market about what the company stands for and it summarises the business proposition. The business concept reflects the vision of the company and a good business concept has to answer following questions:

- Why the company exists?
- What are the goals for the company?
- How will these goals be achieved?

It is essential that company's business vision and concept are reflected in their market communication since it reflects what the company stands for, its identity.⁹⁰

3.3.3 Brand associations

Brand associations are very important for both the company and the consumer. Brand associations are the meaning individuals associate with the brand when they are exposed to their name, logotype, and advertisement etcetera. An association is everything that a brand does, says or looks like that makes an impression on a consumer, who links these associations with a certain brand. Associations are a psychological direction to the brand promise. When brand associations are positive, these can be valuable to the brand building process. But if brand associations are negative, they are things that a company should stop doing.⁹¹ Associations are a way of developing a deeper relationship with consumers by getting more of their senses involved in the experience. When different senses are stimulated, such as sight, smell, colours, tunes, emblems and sound they become particularly important and more unique.⁹²

⁹⁰ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² LePla, F. J., Parker, L. M. (1999)

3.3.4 Market communication

The main purpose of market communication is to reach the desired audience, attain their attention, communicate desired message and make sure that the message is linked to the company's brand.⁹³ Market communication is responsible for creating strong, unique and favourable associations to a company's brand. It should both create and mediate an added value for company's product and services. Furthermore market communication creates and maintains brand awareness and makes sure that the brand is visible on the market.⁹⁴

A company can communicate their message in four different ways:⁹⁵

Planned message

The purpose of planned message is to convince existing and potential consumer to behave in a certain way. This kind of message is least trustworthy since the communication to the consumer is planned. Examples of planned message are internet, television and direct advertising.⁹⁶

Product message

Product message is the message regarding the organisation and its offerings. This assumes the actual products that the company offers for example, how the product is constructed and how it is used.⁹⁷

Service message

Service message consists of personnel's clothing, approach and behaviour and has its origin in the service process. The interaction between the personnel and the consumer in the service process is essential and encompasses important communication. This way the consumer gains valuable information and trust from the company. Service message has more credibility than planned message and product message since service message is more difficult for the company to control and rule.⁹⁸

Unplanned message

The unplanned message comes from gossip, articles, recommendations and oral sources. These unplanned messages can affect the consumer's experiences negatively, since they are unpaid and uncontrolled. Therefore it is important to evaluate all types of sources of communication and its possible effects, planned as well as unplanned, even if they are not communicated by the company.⁹⁹

⁹³ Grönroos, C. (2002)

⁹⁴ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

⁹⁵ Grönroos, C. (2002)

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid

3.3.5 Customer's needs

“...the problem of all business in an age of abundance is to develop customer loyalties and satisfaction, and the key to this problem is to focus on the customer's needs.”¹⁰⁰

Customers' needs refer to the advantages that the customers gain by using certain products or services. It is important to find out what customers' needs and wants are because highly satisfied customers create several benefits for the company. They are less price sensitive, remain loyal for a longer period and they talk favourably about the company and its products. Satisfaction with a brand will strengthen positive beliefs and attitudes towards the brand.¹⁰¹

When a company is satisfying the customers' needs and wants they are building business relationships and engagement with the customer. There are two basic types of need, *biogenic needs* and *psychogenic needs*. Biogenic needs refer to the basic necessary elements. A company has to fulfil these needs in order to satisfy the consumer which is obvious for consumers when considering a purchase. Psychogenic needs refer to the need for status, power, and affiliation etcetera. For example, some consumers may be driven to devote their income on products that display their wealth and status while other consumers may have other priorities. This is important for a company to identify.¹⁰²

Brand loyalty and satisfaction are important. If these are positive the company can create a commitment to the customer who will purchase the brand and this behaviour will be repeated.¹⁰³

3.3.6 Expected quality

Expected quality is the result of brand identity, brand associations, market communication and consumers' needs. These constitute what the consumer can expect from a certain company. Expected quality is something that companies create by developing a legible brand which influences consumers' perception of the brand.

3.4 Consumer's perspective

The consumer's perspective is represented by the product attributes, word-of-mouth, advertisement and added value. These factors are of vital importance when a consumer selects one brand before another. Their choice is based on the brand image which refers to the experienced quality of a brand. Brand image provides useful information when developing a brand identity.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Urde, M. (1997) p. 30

¹⁰¹ Kotler, P., Armstrong, G. (2004)

¹⁰² Solomon, M. (2002)

¹⁰³ Aaker, D. (2002)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

3.4.1 Product attributes

Product attributes describe the characteristics of a product that add value to the customer. These attributes directly affect the consumer's perception of a product and indirectly how consumers perceive a brand and what associations they create about the brand. Furthermore product attributes are distinctive tangible and intangible features of a product that gives value to the user. There are several attributes associated with the building of a product.¹⁰⁵

3.4.2 Word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth is informal information conveyed by individuals, such as comments and suggestions by friends and family members.¹⁰⁶ The experiences that a customer has of a company or a product can be communicated further to the company's present or potential consumers through the word-of-mouth method. Positive communication between consumers leads to positive word-of-mouth and negative communication between consumers leads to negative word-of-mouth, which can result in a negative image of the brand.¹⁰⁷

People tend to believe that personal, informal information obtained from those we talk directly to, such as our friends, family members or other consumers, is more reliable than the information received through formal channels, such as advertising. The more positive information consumers receive about a company or a product, the more probable it seems that the consumer will make contact with the company and buy its products.¹⁰⁸

If there is a conflict between the message in the word-of-mouth communication and the message in an advertising campaign, the message in the advertising campaign generally receives less importance.¹⁰⁹

"Today, 80 per cent of all buying decisions are influenced by someone's direct recommendations"¹¹⁰

3.4.3 Advertisement

Advertisement is paid presentation by the company, through mass media, whose purpose is to promote sales of goods and services. Advertising is a tool to build up and maintain an attractive appearance of the company, but also to entice purchase and to make consumers stay loyal.¹¹¹

It is important that the commercial is persuasive and entice individuals who watch it to buy the products in the commercial. It can also be effective to broadcast the commercial on television repeatedly, which will stick in people's memory. One important feature is that the

¹⁰⁵ Kotler, P., Armstrong, G. (2004)

¹⁰⁶ Solomon, M. (2002)

¹⁰⁷ Grönroos, C. (2002)

¹⁰⁸ Solomon, M. (2002)

¹⁰⁹ Grönroos, C. (2002)

¹¹⁰ Solomon, M. (2002) p. 318

¹¹¹ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

commercial or communication obtains a unique attribute or benefit of the product, which makes the message brand-differentiated.¹¹²

Effective advertisement should get attention by the viewers, create correct brand awareness and create, increase or strengthen the brand preference. The benefits of a commercial are that it creates awareness and builds up strong and attractive associations around the brand.¹¹³

3.4.4 Customer's value

A value can be defined as a belief about some desirable end-state that exceeds specific situations and guides selections of behaviour. Customer' value consists of customers' judgement of the general capacity of a product and its capability to satisfy customers' needs.¹¹⁴ Further, values can be seen as characterising the company's position.¹¹⁵ The company that offers highest customers' perceived value will be chosen by customers. Customers' perceived value is defined as the customer's evaluation of the difference between all the benefits and all the costs of a marketing offer relative to those of competing offers.¹¹⁶

Added Value

A brand is more than just the sum of its component parts. It represents, for the purchaser, additional attributes and values gained from design, price, service or advertisement. To illustrate added values, Diet Pepsi was compared against Diet Coke by consumers. In a blind test, when the brand identity was concealed 51 per cent preferred Pepsi and 44 per cent preferred Coke. When the true identity of the brands was revealed only 23 per cent preferred Pepsi and 65 per cent preferred Coke.¹¹⁷ This example illustrates the power of added values that are aroused in the minds of consumers.

A less expensive product might be as good as an expensive product, but some customers will pay much more for the intangibles. These values are given to a product through the marketing mix of product, packaging, promotion, price and distribution. These elements are used to create a distinctive position in customers' mind.¹¹⁸

3.4.5 Brand Image

“Everyone experiences more than he understands – but it is experiences, not understanding, that influences behaviour.”¹¹⁹

Brand image reflects consumers' perceptions of a brand's characteristics and can be determined by their associations. The image refers to the way in which consumers' interpret all of the signals coming from the products, services and communication covered by the

¹¹² Solomon, M. (2002)

¹¹³ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

¹¹⁴ Solomon, M. (2002)

¹¹⁵ Apéria, T. & Back, R. (2004)

¹¹⁶ Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2004)

¹¹⁷ Chernatony, L., Macdonald, M. (1998)

¹¹⁸ Kotler, P., Armstrong, G. (2004)

¹¹⁹ Aaker, D., Joachimsthaler, F. (2002) p. 260

brand. Brand image should convey the product's distinctive benefits and positioning.¹²⁰ A positive and well-known image is an asset to all companies because the image is a powerful purchase influencer that affects the consumers' perception of the company and its communication.¹²¹

A brand has several brand images. The key is to identify the most powerful images and reinforce them through consequent communication. Brand image has four purposes; brand image *communicates expectations*, it *influences the perception of a company's activities*, brand image is a *result of consumers' experiences as well as their expectations* and it *affects the company internally*.¹²²

Brand image communicates expectations

Brand image communicates expectations through marketing campaigns such as advertisement, personal sales and word-of-mouth communication. This way image directly affects market communication. A positive image makes it easier for companies to communicate more efficiently and makes the consumer more susceptible to positive word-of-mouth.¹²³

Brand image influences the perception of a company's activities

Brand image influences the perception of a company's activities through technical and functional quality. If the image is good, occasional problems become less fateful and the image functions as a protection. But this protection can have an opposite effect. When the image is negative an increasing dissatisfaction occurs among the customers.¹²⁴

Brand image is a result of consumers' experiences and expectations

When consumers create expectations and experience technical and functional quality the experienced quality may change the image. If the experienced quality is equivalent to the image, or exceeds it, the image will be strengthened or improved. But if the company does not succeed to deliver the experienced image the effect will be the opposite. If the image is indistinct it will gain decipherability through consumers' experiences.¹²⁵

Brand image affects the company internally

When the image is unclear it affects employees' attitudes towards the employer and the organisation. This can lead to a negative impact on employees' work and their contribution which affects quality and their relationship with customers'. A positive and legible image will strengthen employees' positive attitudes for their organisation.¹²⁶

Image is created on the basis of two variables, personal and indirect experiences. Personal experiences arise through direct contact with the company while indirect experiences occur

¹²¹ Grönroos, C. (2002)

¹²² Ibid

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Ibid

through communication with the environment, such as rumours and media. For the latter, selective perception plays an important role. Selective perception refers to how every individual choose and interpret information in order to create their own image of a certain element. Selective perception is related to the way expectations affect perception. In other words, we choose what we want to see and hear.¹²⁷

Image is created through other components. The most important and powerful is media such as television, radio and magazines. Other factors influencing brand image are employees, events and product design.¹²⁸

3.4.6 Experienced Quality

Experienced quality is what consumers subjectively think and feel about a product or an experience, which is based on their needs and desires. The experienced quality is a result of the evaluation of consumers own expectations and what they actually experienced from a product, with consideration to the image the consumers had of the company.¹²⁹

The consumer values a product's quality as high or low, depending on its superiority in comparison to substitutes on the market. The products that are compared by the consumer are a result of the consumer's evaluation of the competing products, not a decision made by the company or the brand manager.¹³⁰

Product attributes, word-of-mouth, advertisement and customer values are contributing to the image that the consumer perceives of a company, a product or a brand. When the consumers are using the product or get to know the brand in some way, it results in the experienced quality.¹³¹

3.5 Relationship between company's and consumers' perspective

Like we have mentioned before, the brand identity is on the sender's side and the image is on the receiver's side. What image the consumers create about the company depends on how well the company communicates its brand identity. In fact, the brand identity does not need to exist on the market because that implicates how and where the company wants to be. The image does exist on the market and is a result of how the identity is communicated to the employees and the consumers.¹³²

According to Kapferer¹³³ there are three different *noises*, which can affect the communication between the company and the consumer and therefore the perception of the brand. First, there are companies that do not have a clear brand identity or a clear idea of what their brand identity is. Therefore they choose to imitate competitors and their market communication. Second, there are companies that want to please the consumer in order to build an appealing image. It can result in the company making too many changes too often. Third, there are

¹²⁷ Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2004)

¹²⁸ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

¹²⁹ Grönroos, C. (2002)

¹³⁰ Apéria, T. & Back, R. (2004)

¹³¹ Grönroos, C. (2002)

¹³² Kapferer, J-N. (2004)

¹³³ Ibid

companies that are using a made up identity to make the brand as one would ideally like to see it. The company is striving for an identity that they are not communicating.

Grönroos¹³⁴ claims that when customers' experienced quality does not correspond to their expectations, there are three negative consequences; *negative word-of-mouth communication and negative references, the credibility in the company's message that is communicated to consumers is deteriorated and the company's image is damaged*. One reason for the discrepancy between the expected quality and the experienced quality is that the company may have failed in their communication of the brand identity or message to the consumers.

Grönroos¹³⁵ claims that the image is how the brand is perceived in reality, while the brand identity is how the company wishes to be perceived by the consumers. If the image is wrong and is not homogenous with the identity, it is often because of bad communication from the company. There are two main reasons to a bad image; the first is that the organization is well-known, but has a bad image and the second is that the organization is unknown and therefore has an unclear image or has an old perception of the company.

3.6 Summary of the theoretical framework

We have chosen to use a model by Grönroos¹³⁶, which explains the relationship between brand identity, the company's perspective, and brand image, the consumer's perspective. It is of great importance how the company, the sender, communicates its brand identity to the consumer, who is the receiver of the information. The consumer is affected by other factors in their surroundings. All this together, determine what image the consumers will create in their minds.

¹³⁴ Grönroos, C (2002)

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Ibid

4. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology of the thesis. First we will introduce different ways to conduct a research assignment. This is followed by a description of different scientific approaches. Thereafter, we will choose suitable methods that are important for further writing of this thesis. Further we will give a depiction of the data collection process, how to evaluate the collected data and how we maintain high validity and reliability.

4.1 Research approach

There are three types of marketing research; namely exploratory research, conclusive research and performance-monitoring research. In figure 4.1 Kinnear and Taylor¹³⁷ describe the three stages, which determine the type of research that is required. Each stage is described on the following pages.

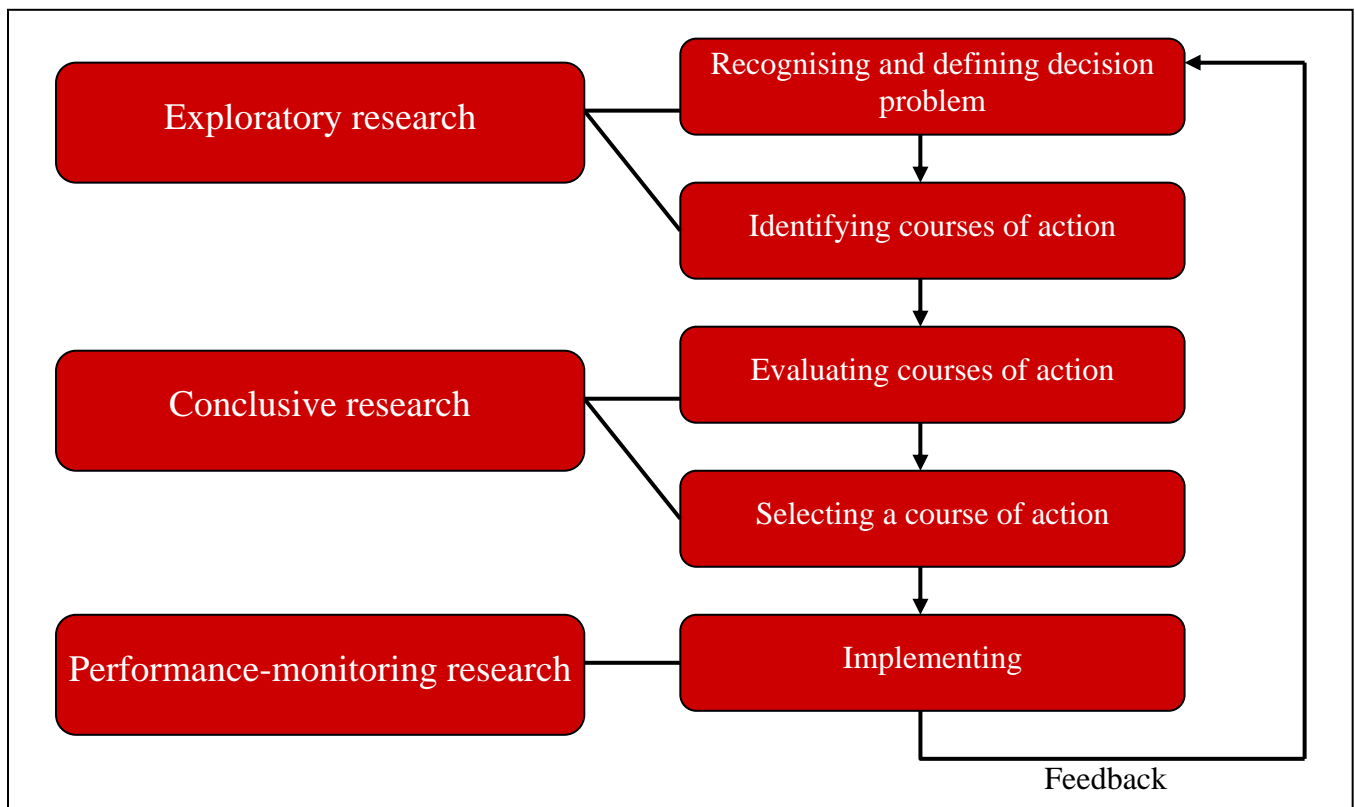


Figure 4.1: Types of researches (Kinnear, T., Taylor, J.R., 1996)

¹³⁷ Kinnear, T., Taylor, J.R. (1996)

4.1.1 Exploratory research

The exploratory research is mostly suitable in the early stage of the decision-making process. The main purpose is to collect as much knowledge as possible about what the problem is. The exploratory approach attempts to elucidate the problem from a comprehensive perspective. It is usually the primary step in the research process and aims to gain insights and knowledge for later investigation¹³⁸.

4.1.2 Conclusive research

The conclusive research has a goal for the investigation and should be used when evaluating alternatives or testing a theory.¹³⁹ There are two types of conclusive methods;

Descriptive

The descriptive investigation describes circumstances that have happened in the past or descriptions circumstances that exist right now. The goal is to describe how it looks without explaining why.¹⁴⁰

Causal

The causal investigation explains how different factors affect each other, from a cause – effect point of view and explaining how factors are connected to each other.¹⁴¹ This approach is used when the problem definition is quite well structured and the research objective is to gather evidence regarding assumptions made concerning present, cause and effect relationship.¹⁴²

4.1.3 Performance-monitoring research

Gathering information by performance-monitoring research means the information is collected through control and follow-up by the market plan. The main sources of data, when conducting this research, are interviewing respondents, secondary data and observations.¹⁴³

4.1.4 Choice of method

In this thesis both an exploratory as well as a conclusive research is applied. To attain general information about Nordstan, the shopping centre concept and reading literature to gain knowledge about the subject, an exploratory research approach is used.

¹³⁸ Kinnear, T., Taylor, J.R. (1996)

¹³⁹ Molnár J., Nilsson Molnár, M. (2007)

¹⁴⁰ Patel, R., Davidson B., (2003)

¹⁴¹ Molnár J., Nilsson Molnár, M. (2007)

¹⁴² Kinnear, T., Taylor, J.R. (1996)

¹⁴³ Molnár J., Nilsson Molnár, M. (2007)

To evaluate the findings we have used a conclusive approach. We have chosen a descriptive research approach, since in the beginning of the research process we collected as much information as possible and had a starting point in the defined problems. Since the problem was already defined in the thesis we have used the descriptive research approach to investigate and describe the company's brand identity and how the customers perceive the image of the company.

4.2 Scientific approach

There are two scientific approaches, which are hermeneutic and positivism. They are separately explained below, followed by our choice of approach.

4.2.1 Positivism

Positivism has roots from empirical and scientific tradition. It means that knowledge is useful, can improve the society and is based on observations. The positivists believed in a uniform science and that knowledge is built up by a causal nature, which is called the cause-effect relation and the theories are often put together in form of mathematical formulas. Having a positivistic approach means that the scientists must remain objective.¹⁴⁴

4.2.2 Hermeneutic

Hermeneutic was from the beginning a way of interpreting religious texts, because people believed they were true and the purpose was to get to the truth. Later it was developed to interpret all types of texts and even human actions. In our time, the hermeneutic approach is used to understand and interpret facts, which are already given. The scientist puts the over all problem in relation to the different parts of the problem and tries in that way to search for understanding. The process in the hermeneutic approach is to evaluate the text in order interpret it and finally to get comprehension of the problem.¹⁴⁵

4.2.3 Choice of method

We will choose a hermeneutic approach, since the thesis purpose is to understand if the brand identity agrees with the image that the customers have of the brand. We will try to understand the factors behind these concepts.

4.3 Collection of data

The search for reliable and sufficient data is of great importance for a research project. There are different types of data sources and below is a description of the two main categories.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Patel, R. & Davidson B., (2003)

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ Jacobsen, D., I. (2002)

4.3.1 Primary data

Primary data is the information gathered directly from individuals or groups of people, which means that the obtained information has a specific purpose. There are two ways of collecting primary data¹⁴⁷;

Observation method

Observation methods are the process of recognizing the behaviour of people and objects, which helps the decision maker to get relevant and valid data. An example is observing people's behaviour in their natural environment, such as schools, work place etcetera.¹⁴⁸

Communication method

The communication method is based on questioning the respondents and some kind of a questionnaire is used. It can be personal interviews, telephone interviews and /or mail contact.¹⁴⁹

4.3.2 Secondary data

Secondary data is based on gathering information from already collected and compiled information by others. It has been gathered for other purpose than the specific research approach. The secondary data can be external or internal type of data. The internal data comes from the company and the external data comes from published sources. The main problem with secondary data is the search for relevant information.¹⁵⁰

4.3.3 Choice of method

The primary data comes from personal interviews with the manager of Nordstan, Anders Larsson, and the responsible for media, Katarina Bouraza. These personal interviews are a good approach since the communication takes place under relaxed circumstances. We were able to ask complicated questions and to build up a relationship with the respondent. One major advantage is that the respondent's body language can be observed. Further a questionnaire was made and answered on place by the visitors at and around Nordstan, but also by mail contact. Questionnaires can easily reach a large number of respondents, but it takes a long time to carry out and the number of respondents not answering is relatively high. E-mail questionnaires have the advantage to be quick, but there is also a risk of not receiving enough answers. The secondary data consists of books, Internet and articles.

¹⁴⁷ Jacobsen, D., I. (2002)

¹⁴⁸ Molnár J., Nilsson Molnár, M. (2007)

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

¹⁵⁰ Christensen, L., Andersson, N., Carlsson, C., Haglund, L.,(2001)

4.3.4 Data collection techniques

There two types of data collection techniques, qualitative and quantitative collection techniques. The choice of method should depend on the definition of the problem, which method would suit the best. One obvious difference between the two data collection techniques is that quantitative data result is reported in numbers, for example per cent, number of employees, and the qualitative data result is presented by individuals experiences and interpretations of situations in words.¹⁵¹

Quantitative

Quantitative data contains information, which can be expressed in numerical form and can be used in statistical investigations. There are different methods for conducting quantitative data analysis, such as cluster analysis, regression analysis and time series analysis.¹⁵²

The advantage with the quantitative method is the standardized information, which is easy to analyze with computer programs. The costs of the investigation are less than with a qualitative method, which means that more sources of information can be asked and it gives a representative selection of individuals.¹⁵³

The disadvantage with the quantitative method is that the investigation can get a superficial impression, since it is aimed at many individuals it can not be too complex. Another risk with this method is that the investigator in advance defines what is relevant to answer.¹⁵⁴

Qualitative

Qualitative method results are presented in words from individuals' experiences and feelings in the investigation. The goal is to analyze the overall picture that the investigator gets from answers from the individuals asked.¹⁵⁵

The advantage with this method is that the questions are open and the investigator has in advance decided what to search for. The starting point is the definition of the problem and how to elucidate the problem. The individuals asked give their opinions and interpretations of a certain relation or situation.¹⁵⁶

The disadvantage with the qualitative method is that it can be demanding to implement. The decision of how many respondents to interview in order to get a representative result is important.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Jacobsen, D, I (2002)

¹⁵² Patel, R. & Davidson B., (2003)

¹⁵³ Jacobsen, D, I (2002)

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

¹⁵⁵ Patel, R. & Davidson B., (2003)

¹⁵⁶ Jacobsen, D, I (2002)

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

4.3.5 Choice of method

We have used both the quantitative method and the qualitative method in this thesis. A combination of these two methods allows us to “frame-in” our problem. This way we get a deep understanding and insight into the purpose of our thesis through the qualitative method. By using a quantitative method we have a possibility to generalise.

As we are interested in analysing the brand identity of Nordstan, we have chosen to carry out a deep interview with Anders Larsson, manager and primary responsible at Nordstan. The qualitative interview was constructed based on the secondary data chosen for the thesis. This was foregone since internal expert knowledge was necessary to receive required information. This has helped us to understand one part of our purpose which is the Nordstan’s perspective and the brand identity. We have also performed a deep interview with Katarina Bouraza, press responsible at Nordstan to attain a deeper knowledge about how articles in different newspapers affect the reputation of Nordstan and how much has been written about Nordstan, without the company paying for it.

Based on our interview and our secondary data we have formed a questionnaire to find answers to our sub research problem which is to find out how the intended image is perceived by the customers. The questionnaire consists of both closed and opened questions. We have chosen to use closed questions in order to be able to measure the respondents attitudes and opened questions were used in order to attain a deeper understanding of the respondents’ actual perception and what they are based upon.

4.3.6 Data sources

The information can be classified in how it has been documented and who has produced it. The model consists of formal and informal information, internal and external information. *Formal information* is written information, found in news papers, annual reports etcetera. *Informal information* is information found in peoples knowledge or memories and can be gathered by interviews. *Internal information* can be found in the company, while *external information* is found outside the company.¹⁵⁸

The figure below is a description of the internal and external information used in the thesis.

158 Molnár J. ,Nilsson Molnár, M. (2007)

Types of Document- Ation	Formal	The place for production of information		
		Internal	External	
			Domestic	International
	Web page Brochures Books Statistics			
Informal	Anders Larsson Katarina Bouraza	Interview respondents		

Figure 4.3 Different sources of information (Molnár J., Nilsson Molnár, M. , 1999, p. 131)

4.4 Evaluation of data

To perform a study correctly it is of great importance to validate that the data is correct and reliable. There are two ways of evaluating data, which are called validity and reliability. To present a study correctly, it is of great importance to examine if the retrieved information is what was asked for. This means that the study requires good validity. Further it is essential to establish that the collected information is reliable. There is a correlation between these conceptions, where both need to be evaluated.¹⁵⁹

4.4.1 Validity – are we measuring what we think we are?

The relation between what is retrieved and what was asked for need to correspond, in order to achieve high validity in the study. The validity of a measure refers to the extent to which the measurement process is free from both systematic and random errors. Validity describes how well the research is conducted and this method is common in marketing to control validity.¹⁶⁰

According to Patel and Davidson¹⁶¹ there are two major ways of how the validity of a data collection can be secured. It is through content validity and concurrent validity.

Content validity can be accomplished through a logical analysis of the content. This analysis is connected to the theoretical framework of the thesis. On the basis of relevant literature for the study, a questionnaire or an interview is formed. It is essential to secure content validity, from evaluating relevant theory to designing a questionnaire. If content validity is high the problem of a thesis will be covered and the interpretation from theory to the studied problem will gain credibility. Content validity involves a subjective judgement by an expert, as to the appropriateness of the measurement.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Patel, R. & Davidson B. (2003)

¹⁶⁰ Lekvall, P., Wahlbin, C. (2001)

¹⁶¹ Patel, R., Davidson B. (2003)

¹⁶² Ibid

Concurrent validity is another way to secure validity. It involves correlating two different measurements of the same marketing phenomenon. This requires testing the theory on a group of individuals, which resembles the group that the theory is intended for.¹⁶³ It is primarily used to determine the validity of new measuring techniques by correlating them with established techniques.¹⁶⁴

4.4.2 How to maintain high validity

Analysis of the content validity is connected to the theoretical framework, as mentioned before. In order to reduce the risk of systematic errors in our research, the questionnaire was tested on a group of individuals. According to the feedback we received from the test group and an expert on the subject, some questions were reformulated or eliminated. We could also see if the questions were correctly understood by the respondents, by the type of their answer and if they had been able to answer all the questions. Since we had personal interviews we had the ability to eliminate misunderstandings in the questions and the answers, by posing resulting questions.

The quantitative interviews were performed during a period of three days at different hours of the day, to get a wider range of respondents. The questionnaire consists of questions with alternative responses, but half of the questions were not given any alternatives. In this way we have tried to reduce the influence we could have on the respondents' answers. Preconceptions of certain terms and previous knowledge can influence respondents' perception of the questions. To avoid this kind of misunderstandings we have worked with formulating the questions right, tested them on a group of individuals with and without knowledge about marketing and we have mainly used terms known to most without leaving our theoretical foundation.

The interaction with the respondents can also influence the validity. If they get a preconception of what results we are aiming for, they might adapt their answers accordingly. To avoid this we kept a distance to our own perception to make the respondents make up their own mind.

The main reason why we chose to perform quantitative interviews is because we wanted to reach a large and diverse population and we were able to generalize with the result as a base.

Nordstan's target group is broad and Anders Larsson considers that Nordstan has something for everyone, which is why we have chosen respondents at all ages between 16 to pensioners. We have performed the interviews inside the shopping centre, because we wanted to interview mainly people who are visiting Nordstan, independent of the reason. These people are visiting Nordstan and we believe has enough experience to form an opinion about the shopping centre, whether it is positive or negative.

After interviewing Anders Larsson, we had received a lot of information and a good insight in the company. There are very few people working in the management of Nordstan and Anders Larsson was the most appropriate to interview regarding our purpose of the thesis. Anders Larsson recommended us to interview Katarina Bouraza regarding the publicity of Nordstan.

¹⁶³ Patel, R., Davidson B. (2003)

¹⁶⁴ Kinnear, T., Taylor, J.R. (1996)

4.4.3 Reliability – are we measuring in a reliable way?

Reliability refers to the consistency, accuracy and predictability of the research findings. Further reliability refers to how trustworthy one's measurements are. Reliability is defined as to what extent the measurement is free from random errors. When the problem analysis is clearly formulated, the risk of random errors is smaller and the probability for higher reliability is greater. Research with high reliability should be able to be repeated by someone else with a similar result.¹⁶⁵

4.4.4 How to maintain high reliability

In order to maintain high reliability we have spent time collecting and evaluating relevant literature. We have used literature written by well-known and respected authors, such as Philip Kotler, David Aaker and Jean-Noël Kapferer. We have collected numerous data and compared it, analysed and put different theories in the context of our study in order to reach high reliability. Further we have excluded literature older than 12 years in order to maintain high reliability. The oldest book is written by a well-know author such Aaker David who has since then written numerous books and is a reliable source.

In order to reach a high reliability we have tried to avoid our own preconceptions and perceptions to influence the respondents. We have tried to be as neutral as possible in the interviews situations.

¹⁶⁵ Kinnear, T., Taylor, J.R. (1996)

5. Empirical study

In this chapter the empirical study is represented, which contains our research findings. It is based on the theoretical framework. The information is based on a qualitative interview with the manager of Nordstan, Anders Larsson, and the press responsible, Katarina Bouraza. The quantitative interviews were done with customers at the shopping centre.

5.1 Nordstan's perspective

Since the completion of Nordstan as a shopping centre, the brand has developed and a brand building process has recently started. Nordstan views its brand as a central part in the development towards becoming “Best in Scandinavia”, which is the vision of the company. The purpose with the brand building process is to strengthen the brand identity and to market Nordstan, in order to attract more customers and increase the growth.¹⁶⁶

The brand building is a continuous process and goes far beyond just the surface that the customers see, for example the logotype. It is a tool for communicating the identity of Nordstan, which creates an image in the consumers' minds.¹⁶⁷

In the following sections we will present the brand identity, the business concept, brand associations, market communication and customer needs. These aspects have been defined by Nordstan in order to decide the expected quality and what should be communicated to consumers.

5.1.1 Brand identity of Nordstan

We have applied the elements in the identity prism, in figure 3.2, on Nordstan. By defining these elements the sender, Nordstan, is expressing a picture of the company that is perceived by the recipient, the customers. In its turn, the customers perceive the image of Nordstan depending on how well Nordstan succeeds in communicating their identity. As we have mentioned before, also factors such as word-of-mouth, advertisement etcetera affect the perception of the image.¹⁶⁸

Physique

The shopping centre consists of Nordstan's facade, entry areas and Nordstan's logotype at the entrances. The building is situated in the central parts of Gothenburg city and has six entry areas. Outside every entry there are public transportation, motor traffic and pedestrians. The logotype of Nordstan is visible, placed above every entrance.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Anders Larsson, 2008-10-27

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

Personality

According to Anders Larsson, it is important to have a personality that express what kind of person Nordstan wants to be perceived as, who they are and what they stand for. Nordstan wants to be perceived as a modern 35 year old woman with family. She is active, outgoing and exciting. She is also stabile, secure, trustworthy and young at heart. She likes fashion, design and travelling.¹⁷⁰

Culture

It is of great importance for Nordstan that there are no barriers between different stores in the shopping centre. The core values are welcoming, lively, accessible and safe and the culture is the source of these values.¹⁷¹

The identity of Nordstan is the soul of their brand and the core values are regularly communicated from the company management to their employees through the information sheet “Stan I Stan”, arranged breakfast meetings and the company’s Intranet.¹⁷²

Welcoming means that Nordstan wants the costumers to feel welcome and comfortable when entering the shopping centre, through kindness, good service and creating a pleasant environment. This is shown by, for example, welcoming signs in the parking lot, plants and some decorations by the sitting areas in the middle of the shopping centre.¹⁷³

Lively is one of Nordstan’s most important values, which has always been highly prioritised. To fulfil this value, Nordstan has organised different events, such as fashion shows. Other events and topicalities held in Nordstan have been sports activities and challenges, exhibitions etcetera. Further actions made in making Nordstan a lively shopping centre and more a experiential centre is the broad range of products. In order to stay competitive and attract more costumers, Anders Larsson claims that Nordstan will expand the range of boutiques in the future.¹⁷⁴

Accessible refers to the location of Nordstan, which in the centre of the city of Gothenburg. The shopping centre is surrounded by public transport at every entrance and exit, which makes it a natural meeting place. The parking lot takes 2700 spaces, which increases the accessibility and makes it easier to park at shop under one roof. Nordstan has chosen to have longer opening hours, even on weekends, in order to be as accessible as possible. The shops in Nordstan is open week days 10.00 am – 07.00 pm, Saturdays 10 am – 06.00 pm and Sundays 11.00 am - 05.00 pm.¹⁷⁵

Safe means that Nordstan wants all their customers to feel safe when shopping, but also when walking through the shopping centre at night after all the shops have closed. A couple of years ago Nordstan chose to keep all the doors locked at night, but since it is public property this

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Anders Larsson, 2008-10-27

¹⁷¹ Ibid

¹⁷² Ibid

¹⁷³ Ibid

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

had to be changed. Today Nordstan keeps closed at 02.00 am – 04.00 pm and have security guards making sure no one is left in the buildings between these hours.¹⁷⁶

According to Anders Larsson¹⁷⁷, it is important that the employees are aware of the core values of Nordstan and it is an important stage in the brand building process. In that case they can help communicating the identity of Nordstan through their service and the way of treating the customers.

Founded in 1975, Nordstan still has an important position in Gothenburg. Nordstan has since the beginning been involved in the society by providing a place for numerous events in fashion, music and culture. Through sponsorship of, for example, sports events Nordstan communicates that it represents a good company in society.¹⁷⁸

Relationship

The Nordstan brand should satisfy customers' needs via its variety of stores and restaurants. Sometimes the customers' want to do big food shopping (Hemköp), sometimes they want to buy fish, shoes, electronic devices, jewellery or toys. Sometimes customers' are in a hurry and just want to grab a quick snack (McDonald's), take a coffee (Mokki) or sit down at a restaurant after a long day of shopping (Jensens Bofhouse). An important aspect is that Nordstan is striving to be an experiential shopping centre. The design of the stores is more than just selling goods and merchandise, it is a fun and lively place to visit. The management of Nordstan encourages the stores to take action towards a more experiential retail by arranging competitions. Some stores have for example make up sessions.¹⁷⁹

Reflection

The reflection is attractive, modern, entertaining and not like everybody else.¹⁸⁰

Self-image

Nordstan gives me a unique experience and enjoyment. It is always accessible and gives me inspiration. It solves my needs for food, cloths, shoes, groceries etcetera. It is a place where I can find everything.¹⁸¹

5.1.2 Business concept

Nordstan's vision is to become "Best in Scandinavia", which means to be a precursor in all activity areas in the shopping centre.¹⁸²

To reach the vision, Nordstan has developed a business concept. The business concept is that the shopping centre will have an assortment of goods and services that corresponds to the

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Anders Larsson, 2008-10-27

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

¹⁷⁹ Ibid

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

¹⁸¹ Ibid

¹⁸² Ibid

demands of the city customer. The range of the assortment will be deep and sophisticated. Nordstan will appear as the most obvious, modern and experiential shopping centre in Sweden.¹⁸³

5.1.3 Brand associations

Anders Larsson¹⁸⁴ wants the customers to associate Nordstan with the wide range of products and shops and mentions that customers can buy various products, such as fish, commodities, as well as clothes and shoes inside the same shopping centre. He points out that it is important to continue to let new shops establish in Nordstan. A sport shop, Stadium, is opening in late December and Elgiganten, a large electronics shop is opening in the beginning of 2009.

Nordstan also wants to be associated with being located in the centre of Gothenburg and a place for tourists to visit. Consumers should be able to find products that they can not find anywhere else.¹⁸⁵

Other associations, which Anders Larsson mentions is welcoming, and an overall good service and quality in the shops. It is essential for the employees to have knowledge about Nordstan's vision and the core values, in order to work on communicating these associations and live up to a good service that Nordstan wants to be associated with. It is also important to have a nice environment in Nordstan, in order for customers to associate Nordstan as welcoming.¹⁸⁶

Nordstan prioritizes to be eventful, by events taking place in the shopping centre and by focusing on experiential retail. According to Anders Larsson it is important that the shops are eventful as well and that the shopping is like an experience, which is why the employees are being encouraged to make the shopping more eventful. Some shops have make-up sessions and others guidance for example.¹⁸⁷

This is a chart displaying levels of supply and experiential retail. (1) describes where Nordstan is aiming to be.

¹⁸³ Interview with Anders Larsson, 2008-10-27

¹⁸⁴ Ibid

¹⁸⁵ Ibid

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

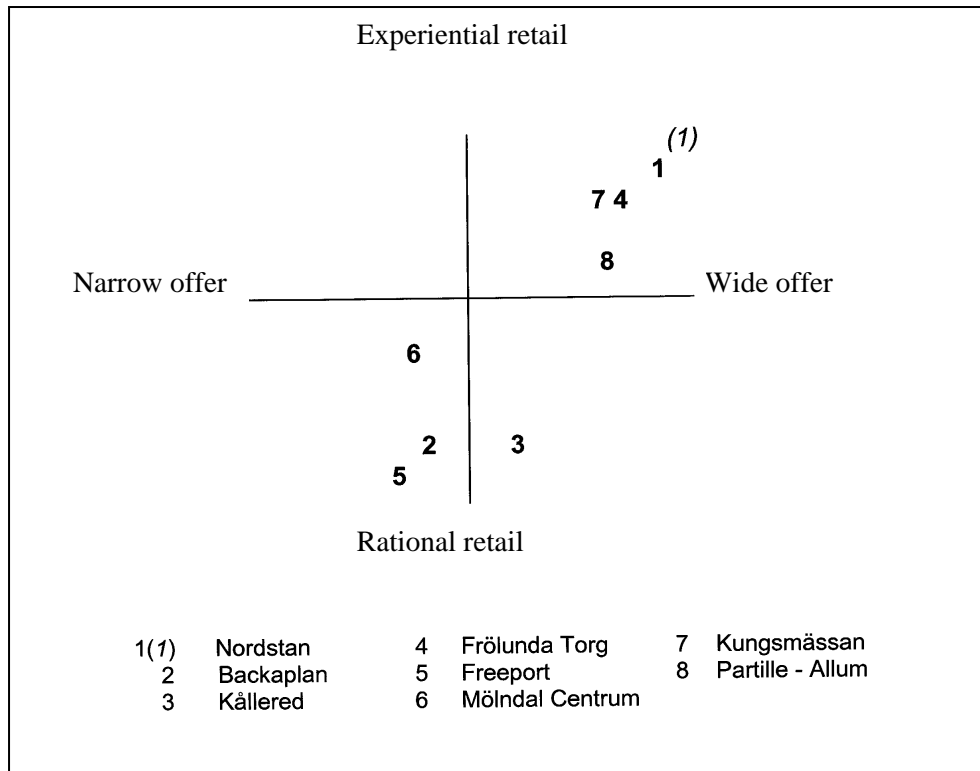


Figure 5.1 Supply and experiential retail (Activity plan of Nordstan, The management of Nordstan 2008)

5.1.4 Market communication

Nordstan's most essential media choices are GöteborgsPosten (GP), Metro, GöteborgsTidningen (GT), outdoors advertising, Internet advertising and billboards. In cooperation with the car park, P-hus Nordstan, Nordstan will appear in some television- and radio commercials.¹⁸⁸

Nordstan is collaborating with Göteborg & Co, which is the advertising agency for the city of Gothenburg. The agency is advertising and developing Gothenburg as a tourist-, meeting-, and event city.¹⁸⁹ A shopping guide is produced a couple of times per year, which will be available in the Tourist service in Nordstan, all hotels, arrival terminals and camping grounds in Gothenburg.¹⁹⁰

Nordstan's shopping booklet is distributed exclusively to special business associates. In the shopping booklet there are many valuable offers from the stores and restaurants of Nordstan. The edition of the shopping booklet will this year be 200 000 copies.¹⁹¹

Nordstan has recently started to make gift cards, which can be bought in the Tourist Information and used in any store or restaurant in the shopping centre. This is a way of

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Anders Larsson 2008-10-27

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.goteborg.com/templates/Page.aspx?id=663> accessed 2008-12-13 17.30

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Anders Larsson 2008-10-27

¹⁹¹ Ibid

connecting the consumers to the shopping centre and not going to the same store somewhere else.¹⁹²

Nordstan is also available on their homepage, www.nordstan.se. There is information about events, opening hours, gift cards, competitions, pictures etcetera. The homepage is pervaded by the four core values.¹⁹³

Information about opening hours during festivals, such as Easter and Christmas, is advertised in newspapers like GP or GT. It is important to show the accessibility in media and therefore Nordstan also advertises that they have free parking on Sundays in their car park.¹⁹⁴

As mentioned before, it is essential that the employees are aware of Nordstan's core values and the vision in order to transmit that to the customers. The tenants of Nordstan regularly receive information from the management of Nordstan to be able to stay updated about activities and events. It is also important that they receive information about the core values, says Anders Larsson, which is why there has been written a book for everyone working in Nordstan.¹⁹⁵

The stores in Nordstan are advertising their products in different ways and this could draw consumers to the specific store in Nordstan, which is indirect advertisement for the shopping centre.¹⁹⁶

Since Nordstan is situated in an attractive place, where there are many people passing by, there are also many articles written about different incidents in Nordstan. This type of publicity could be both positive and negative, but Anders Larsson believes that the negative publicity has decreased over the past years.¹⁹⁷ The total amount of unpaid publicity for 2007 was estimated at about 23, 5 million Swedish crowns. This was written in different newspapers, mostly in GöteborgsPosten.¹⁹⁸

The advertisement of Nordstan has changed over the past years. Before, advertisement of Nordstan could just be a picture of the logotype on the main entrance. Today, Nordstan's advertisement is based more on emotions, where you can see two people interacting for example. This type of advertising is better corresponding to the brand identity that Nordstan wants to communicate, such as being lively and that Nordstan wants to offer experiential retail. This kind of advertisement is also easier for customers to relate to, as creating more emotion, and Anders Larsson believes that it better represents how Nordstan wants to be perceived, as explained throughout the empirical study. In conjunction with the brand building process, Nordstan wants all the market communication to be permeated by the four core values, welcoming, accessible, safe and lively.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹² Interview with Anders Larsson 2008-10-27

¹⁹³ Ibid

¹⁹⁴ Ibid

¹⁹⁵ Ibid

¹⁹⁶ Ibid

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Katarina Bouraza 2008-10-27

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Anders Larsson 2008-10-27

5.1.5 Customer needs

According to Anders Larsson the target group of Nordstan is broad and consists of youths, families and elder people. Faced with competition from other malls it is of great importance to meet the needs of their consumers'. The way to do so is by offering a broad range of stores. In Nordstan people can buy merchandises such as beauty, fashion, shoes, toys, food, and electronics etcetera and eat at numerous restaurants. It has large department stores such as Åhlens City, supermarket such as Hemköp, specialty shops such as Systembolaget and entertainment area where numerous events take place. One example is Nordstans' "Days for Health" where different health organisations visit Nordstan and promote their activities and products. Non-profit organisations, such as the Red Cross, and cultural business, such as Gothenburg Opera, visit Nordstan. As well as providing the supermarkets, department stores and boutiques there are also toilets, car parks, access to public transport etcetera. Being situated in central Gothenburg and having longer opening hours Nordstan is available for their customers'. Furthermore Nordstan meets the needs of customers' visiting the shopping centre by car by offering an indoor parking house with 2700 parking spaces. Different offers, from stores and restaurants in Nordstan, are collected in a booklet and distributed to a wide range of customers, from youths to doctors.²⁰⁰

To satisfy this wide base of different customers' needs, Nordstan offers products in the premium price segment as well as the lower price segment.²⁰¹

We have explained the perspective of Nordstan. Further follows the consumers' perspective and how they perceive the image of Nordstan. This is based on the survey we have performed on 123 respondents.

5.2 Consumer's perspective

The consumers' perspective indicates the experienced quality and how the consumers perceive the brand of Nordstan. We have chosen to eliminate decimals in the following results to make further reading easier.

We have interviewed 123 respondents in Nordstan, during three days. Of all the respondents, 52 % are women and 48 % are men.²⁰² The respondents have also been divided into different age groups. 21 % of the respondents are between 16 to 25 years of age, 15 % are between 26 to 35 years of age, 26 % are between 36 to 45 years of age, 20 % are between 46 to 55 years of age and 18 % are over 56 years.²⁰³

The questions have been based on the theoretical framework and their answers will suitably be presented under these headlines, which are product attributes, word-of-mouth, advertisement, customer's value and image.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Anders Larsson 2008-10-27

²⁰¹ Ibid

²⁰² Appendix 4.2

²⁰³ Appendix 4.1

5.2.1 Product attributes

The products of Nordstan are both all the products that you can buy, but also the variety of shops that you can find. When we asked the question, which attributes describe the products/shops of Nordstan, 33 % answered the low to medium prices. 20 % of the respondents said that the low to medium quality is a distinguishing attribute for the products in Nordstan. 16 % answered the wide range of offer in the different shops, 14 % answered mediocre products, 7 % answered the lack of personnel characterizes the shops in Nordstan and 6 % answered that it is the low service. Only 4 % answered that the good conditions of purchase characterizes the shops in Nordstan.²⁰⁴

5.2.2 Word-of-mouth

When we asked the question how much word-of-mouth influences the respondents, 59 % answered that it has a big influence, 30 % said small influence and 11 % said no influence at all. The majority who answered that word-of-mouth has a big influence, said that it was mostly advice from friends and family that is of great importance.²⁰⁵

5.2.3 Advertisement

On the question if the respondents have noticed advertisement for Nordstan, 54, 5 % said no and 45, 5 % said yes. 48 % has noticed advertisement in newspapers and many respondents mentioned Metro as one newspaper they have seen the advertisement. 27 % answered they have seen advertisement outdoors and 12 % answered television. The respondents who mentioned television had recognized the commercial “Stan I Stan”, which is not shown on television anymore. 9 % of the respondents have seen advertisement for Nordstan through direct advertisement. 4 % of the respondents answered they had noticed advertisement in brochures, shopping guides/booklets, referring to the shopping booklets that are distributed to customers with different discounts and offers.²⁰⁶

Out of the 56 (45, 5 %) respondents who have seen advertisement of Nordstan, 30 % answered that they think Nordstan’s advertisement mediates “something for everyone”. Further 18 % of the respondents answered “attract customers”. 16 % answered “low price”. 16 % of the respondents answered “inspiration” is what Nordstan wants to mediate with their advertisement and 9 % of the respondents said “many shops assembled under one roof”. The rest of the respondents answered “central”, “accessible”, “shopping” and “opening hours”.²⁰⁷

We asked the 56 respondents who have seen advertisement of Nordstan how they perceive the advertisement and 18 % answered that the advertisement is informative. Further 18 % answered the advertisement is informative, but boring and creates no emotion or desire to visit Nordstan. 14 % of the respondents consider the advertisement as meaningless. 12 % of the respondents answered that the advertisement attracts attention respectively 12 % said that it creates an emotion and desire to visit Nordstan. 13 % answered that it does not create emotion

²⁰⁴ Appendix 4.11

²⁰⁵ Appendix 4.15

²⁰⁶ Appendix 4.6

²⁰⁷ Appendix 4.7

or desire to visit Nordstan. 7 % thinks that it is fun, 4 % said that it is boring and 2 % said that the advertisement is uninteresting.²⁰⁸

We asked all the 123 respondents in what media they would best notice Nordstan's advertisement and 33 % answered on television. Further 26 % answered direct advertisement. Also 24 % answered they would best notice in newspaper, 9 % of the respondents answered outdoors, 7 % answered on Internet and only 1 % answered brochures and shopping guide/booklet.²⁰⁹

5.2.4 Customer value

We asked the respondents if Nordstan offers any value to them and in that case what value Nordstan offers. 49 % answered that the value Nordstan offers them is a wide range of shops, 18 % answered inexpensive goods, 12 % answered many shops assembled under one roof and 6 % answered quality. The rest of the respondents said practical, no value, accessible and least respondents answered experiential retail.²¹⁰

5.2.5 Image

As we have mentioned, image is the way the customer perceives a certain brand. This can be determined by the brand's associations and characteristics and how the consumers interpret the signals from products, services and communication. Therefore we have asked such questions to understand what image the consumers have of Nordstan.

49 % of all the respondents answered that they think the main target group of Nordstan is everybody. 18 % think 27 – 35 years (younger middle age) is Nordstan's target group, 14 % think 36 – 56 years (elder middle age), 9 % think 20 – 26 years (youth), 5 % think families with children and 5 % think 13 – 19 years (teenagers). No one of the respondents answered that the main target group of Nordstan is individuals over 65 years.²¹¹

We asked the respondents how they would characterize Nordstan and 24 % answered ordinary shops. Further 15 % answered chain of stores, 12 % answered wide range of shops, 11 % answered many shops assembled under one roof, 11 % answered central, 9 % answered shopping centre, 8 % answered crowd, 6 % answered stress, 2 % answered always open and also 2 % answered entertainment.²¹²

When asking the question about the best characteristic of Nordstan, 34 % of the respondents answered central. 20 % answered many stores under one roof, 19 % answered wide range of offer and 13 % answered indoors shopping. The minority answered opening hours, wide target group, entertainment and Claes Ohlsson as best characteristics of Nordstan.²¹³

²⁰⁸ Appendix 4.8

²⁰⁹ Appendix 4.9

²¹⁰ Appendix 4.10

²¹¹ Appendix 4.5

²¹² Appendix 4.3

²¹³ Appendix 4.16

When asking the question about the worst characteristic of Nordstan the majority of the respondents, 34 % answered the crowd was the worst. Further the respondents answered beggars, folk musicians without permission and gangs of youths, bad air conditions, unsafe, the lack of unique and specialised stores, the interior lacks uniqueness, disorder and that it is stressful.²¹⁴

When asking the question what the respondents want to change about Nordstan, 22 % answered to increase security. Further 21 % want to increase experiential retailing, 15 % want more spacious areas, 11 % answered more activities for children, 10 % want more unique shops, 9 % want more fresh air, 7 % want Nordstan to create a food court and 5 % want Nordstan to create a more modern interior.²¹⁵

If the brand Nordstan were a person, who would it be and why? The majority, 32 % answered a mediocre “Svensson” because Nordstan consists mostly of regular chain of stores that lacks uniqueness. 15 % answered an active middle-aged woman with average income because of the plain appearance. 15 % answered that if Nordstan were a person it would be a celebrity because it is popular, entertaining and attracts a large audience. Further 14 % answered a middle-aged man with a formal behaviour who prefers inexpensive shopping. The minority of the respondents answered a stressed middle-aged woman because many activities take place simultaneously at Nordstan, a fashion conscious 25-35 years old woman because according to them Nordstan contains many shops for her and unisex because Nordstan is versatile and attracts a broad target group.²¹⁶

When asking how well a wide range of offer agrees with respondents’ perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre 50 % highly agree. 46 % have a relatively high agreement and the minority answered neither nor. No one disagreed with this perception.²¹⁷

When asking how well good service in different shops and restaurants at Nordstan agrees with respondents’ perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre 35 % answered neither nor. 29 % answered relatively high disagreement and 4 % answered high disagreement. 26 % answered relatively high agreement and 6 % answered high agreement.²¹⁸

When asking how well safety agrees with respondents’ perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre 41 % answered relatively high disagreement and 15 % answered high disagreement. 15 % answered relatively high agreement and 6 % answered high agreement. 23 % answered neither nor.²¹⁹

When asking how experiential retail agrees with respondents’ perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre 41 % answered relatively high disagreement and 2 % answered high disagreement. 17 % answered relatively high agreement and 4 % answered high agreement. 36 % answered neither nor.²²⁰

²¹⁴ Appendix 4.16

²¹⁵ Appendix 4.17

²¹⁶ Appendix 4.4

²¹⁷ Appendix 4.12

²¹⁸ Ibid

²¹⁹ Appendix 4.13

²²⁰ Ibid

When asking how well modern agrees with respondents' perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre 41 % answered relatively high disagreement and 1 % answered high disagreement. 16 % answered relatively high agreement and 6 % answered high agreement. 36 % answered neither nor.²²¹

²²¹ Appendix 4.14

6. Analysis

In this chapter the theoretical framework is compared with the empirical results. Further the brand identity of Nordstan, company's perspective, is compared with the brand image of Nordstan, consumer's perspective.

6.1 Brand identity versus brand image

According to Mårtensson²²² a brand is an immaterial asset that influences buyers by creating associations.

According to Aaker²²³ brand identity is a set of brand associations that represent what the brand stands for. These set of associations imply a promise to the customer and establish a relationship between the customer and the company. According to Melin²²⁴ brand identity specifies the frames of a brands uniqueness and value. Kapferer²²⁵ claims that brand identity expresses the unity and durability of a brand.

According to Kapferer²²⁶ brand image is on the receiver's side. Further, Kotler²²⁷ claims that brand image is the way consumers' interpret all of the communication that the brand sends out. According to Grönroos²²⁸ brand image communicates expectations. Further he claims that image affects consumers' perception of the company and is a powerful purchase influencer.

It is of great importance that brand identity and brand image are homogenous. This coherence reflects how well a company has succeeded in building their brand identity. Aaker²²⁹ claims that if there is discrepancy between brand identity and brand image it can result in consumers experiencing that the company does not offer what it promises. In its turn, the consumers can create wrong or even negative brand associations. But when brand identity and image are homogenous, customers' receive what they expect and become more loyal towards the brand.

According to the result in our consumer survey, the majority claim that if Nordstan were a person it would be a mediocre "Svensson", because it lacks uniqueness and consists of mostly chain of stores. This does not agree with the way that Nordstan wants to be perceived. 15 % view Nordstan as an active middle-aged woman with average income, but with plain appearance. Many respondents mentioned attributes such as ordinary, chaotic and stressful. Only 9 % answered a fashion conscious 25 – 35 years old woman, because the respondents believe there are mostly shops for her. This is close to the personality Nordstan wants to be perceived as and it is a step in the right direction.

²²² Mårtensson, R. (2008)

²²³ Aaker, D. (1996)

²²⁴ Melin, F. (1997)

²²⁵ Kapferer, J-N. (2004)

²²⁶ Ibid

²²⁷ Kotler, P., Armstrong, G. (2004)

²²⁸ Grönroos, C. (2002)

²²⁹ Aaker, D. (1996)

The identity of Nordstan is pervaded by its core values, which are welcoming, lively, accessible and safe. Nordstan wants to communicate these four core values in everything they do, such as in their market communication, the environment of Nordstan, the products and events.

When we asked the respondents how well they believe that safety, modern, experiential retail and good service agrees with their perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre, the majority of the respondents answered relatively high disagreement on all the above mentioned categories. This is contrary to what Nordstan want to be perceived as. Many of the respondents said that the interior lacks uniqueness, which is why we think it is crucial to work on improving the first impression the consumers get when entering Nordstan. On the other hand, the respondents perceive that Nordstan has a wide range of offer, which is what Nordstan believes is their strength.

Nordstan's core value, accessible, is very important to communicate to consumers since it is located in the centre of Gothenburg. Anders Larsson wants consumers to feel that it is easy to get to the shopping centre. 34 % of all respondents answered that the best characteristic about Nordstan is the central location and some of the respondents mentioned that the opening hours is an advantage. This is homogenous with what Anders Larsson says and Nordstan informs the consumers especially about deviant opening hours in newspapers, such as GöteborgsPosten and GöteborgsTidningen. Most of the respondents said that it is easy to get to Nordstan, since there are both buses and trams that stop right outside. 20 % answered that the best characteristic is that there are many shops assembled under one roof, which corresponds to the brand identity that Nordstan has.

One of our discoveries after completing our survey is that there are negative attributes about Nordstan. The most frequent attributes are crowd, unsafe, there are too many beggars and folk musicians without permission, bad air conditions and the lack of unique and specialized shops. Anders Larsson mentions the crowd and that Nordstan is working on that problem. We believe that it is important to create a safer environment for the consumers and take action in making Nordstan a safer place, since it is one of Nordstan's core values and something that Nordstan wants to communicate through their brand identity.

When the respondents were questioned about what they would change in Nordstan, 22 % answered that they would increase the security. One option could be to have more visible security guards by the entrances or outside some of the large shops. 21 % of the respondents want more experiential retail, and this is something that Nordstan strives for. We believe though that different shops in Nordstan should focus more on experiential retail to make Nordstan livelier, as a step to improve the image of Nordstan and make it more homogenous with the identity that the company wants to communicate. Other frequent answers are to make more spacious areas and activities for children.

Grönroos²³⁰ description of image problem can partly be applied to Nordstan; the organisation is well-known, but needs to work on improving the image.

²³⁰ Grönroos, C., (2002)

6.2 Market communication versus advertisement and word-of-mouth

According to Mårtensson²³¹ the purpose of market communication is to create strong, unique and favourable associations to a company's brand. Further the communication makes the brand visible on the market.

Further, Mårtensson²³² claims that advertisement is a tool that builds up and maintains a positive appearance of the company. To achieve this and get a positive result, advertisement must attract attention.

According to Solomon²³³, word-of-mouth is informal information, such as comments, gossip and suggestions, mediated between individuals. People tend to believe that this kind of informal information is more reliable than the information received through formal channels, such as advertisement.

The media channels that Nordstan uses most often are newspapers, such as GöteborgsPosten and Metro, outdoors advertisement and Internet. In order to communicate the brand identity, the advertisement has changed from being only informative to more emotional, according to Anders Larsson²³⁴. It is based on emotions and the images are displaying interaction between individuals, rather than just displaying the Nordstan logotype. With this advertisement Nordstan want to attract more customers and show that there is a wide range of offer in the shopping centre.

The majority of the respondents, 33 %, would best notice advertisement of Nordstan on television, 26 % in direct advertisement and 24 % in newspapers. Therefore we believe that Nordstan should continue with advertising in newspapers and also on television. Television is a powerful media channel, according to Solomon²³⁵, especially when repeatedly broadcasting a commercial. Since Nordstan has recently begun their brand building process, a television commercial can be an effective approach in communicating emotional benefits with the experiential retail and the wide range that Nordstan offers, but also a way of making more people notice their advertisement, especially more tourists. The advantage with direct advertisement is that the specific target group is easily reached, but since this is an expensive method we do not consider this as a necessary investment, since Nordstan attracts customers. However, direct advertisement can be used to attract a specific target group for certain events.

Of the respondents who have seen Nordstan's advertisement, 30 % think that Nordstan wants to mediate that they have something for everyone, 18 % think that they want to attract customers, 16 % answered the low prices and also 16 % answered inspiration. This corresponds well to what Nordstan want to communicate with their advertisement.

According to Mårtensson²³⁶ effective advertisement should create attractive associations around the brand, which is why we believe that Nordstan should continue to communicate these attributes in their market communication.

²³¹ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

²³² Ibid

²³³ Solomon, M. (2002)

²³⁴ Interview with Anders Larsson 2008-10-27

²³⁵ Ibid

²³⁶ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

To understand if Nordstan's market communication has succeeded and has been perceived as emotional and offering an experience while shopping, we asked the consumers who have seen the advertisement how they perceived it. 18 % answered it is informative and also 18 % think the advertisement is informative, but boring and creates no emotion or desire to visit Nordstan and 14 % answered it is meaningless. This shows that Nordstan has not completely succeeded with their market communication, but the questionnaire does not reveal which advertisement was boring or what type of advertisement the respondents have seen. However, the majority of the respondents have either only seen informative advertisement, such as a newspaper clip about the opening hours, or they have seen the emotional advertisement as well, but have perceived it differently than Nordstan intended to.

None of the respondents had noticed Nordstan on the Internet, which is surprising since according to Anders Larsson it is one of the main media channels.

None of the respondents mentioned gift cards, but Anders Larsson says that there has not been much advertisement for the gift cards. This might be a good way to tie more customers to Nordstan and something Nordstan should increase.

Anders Larsson believes that word-of-mouth is important to consider, but since there is so much written in articles about Nordstan or events near or outside Nordstan, he believes that the consumers form their own opinion about the shopping centre.

When we asked the respondents about how much word-of-mouth influences them, 59 % answered that it has big influence and 31 % answered small influence. 10 % answered no influence at all because they like to form their own picture and opinion about the brand.

6.3 Business concept, brand associations and customer needs versus product attributes and customer value

According to Mårtensson²³⁷ a well defined business concept helps the company to describe and communicate which and whose needs the company needs to satisfy.

Nordstan's business concept is to have a wide range of offer that corresponds to the demands of the city customer. The range of products in the shops is deep and sophisticated and Nordstan wants to appear as a modern shopping centre, with experiential retail. The business concept corresponds to whose and which needs that Nordstan wants to satisfy.

According to Anders Larsson, Nordstan's target group is everybody because he believes that everyone can find something to buy or do in the shopping centre. This corresponds to what the respondents believe is Nordstan's target group, where 49 % think it is everybody, 18 % said 27 – 35 years (younger middle age) and 13, 8 % answered 36 – 56 years (elder middle age). Many of the respondents said that since there are many chain of stores in Nordstan it attracts a broad target group.

Solomon²³⁸ claims that there are two different types of needs, which are needs for basic necessary elements and needs for power, status, and affiliation etcetera. What customers

²³⁷ Mårtensson, R. (2008)

²³⁸ Solomon, M. (2002)

believe that a certain brand can deliver and what they associate with the brand depends on what needs that can be satisfied by the brand.

According to Anders Larsson, Nordstan satisfies the customers' basic needs with the variety of shops, cafés and restaurants that Nordstan has. *"There is something for everyone, he says"*. By offering an experience, not just a place selling goods and merchandise, Nordstan satisfies customers who are driven by other needs, such as events.

The majority of the respondents answered that they can find a variety of goods and merchandise in Nordstan, which is corresponding to Anders Larsson's opinion. Our results from our researches show that the consumers lack specialised and unique shops and more experiential retail. However some of the respondents, who said that the best about Nordstan is the entertainment, mentioned that there is always something happening in Nordstan, which they feel is positive.

Kotler²³⁹ states that product attributes directly affect consumers' perception of a product and indirectly affects what associations consumers create about a brand.

Aaker²⁴⁰ claims that consumers create associations to a brand when they are exposed to its name, advertisement and products etcetera. When more senses are involved in the experience the associations are more unique, which is a strong advantage in competitive markets.

The majority, 33 % of the respondents, answered that they associate the shops in Nordstan with low prices, 20 % answered the low to medium quality, 16 % answered wide range of offer and 14 % associates them with mediocre. Anders Larsson says that he wants the customers to feel that Nordstan has a wide range of offer, but that they also offer sophisticated products that you can not find anywhere else, which the respondents do not experience.

The most frequent characteristics about Nordstan are ordinary shops, chain of stores, wide range of shops and central. The results of our researches show that many of the respondents feel that there is a wide range of offer in Nordstan and something for the majority of people.

Many shopping centres are large, have similar shops and supply, which is why we believe if there were more specialized shops in Nordstan it would be easier to differentiate from their competitors and build stronger, more unique and positive associations around the brand.

The respondents disagree with the brand associations modern, good service, quality and experiential retail, which Nordstan wants to be associated with. However, some respondents feel that there are some shops that have better service than other, but their overall experience in that the service is relatively low. This may be lack of communication between management and employees or between the manager of the shop and his or her staff. Some shops that have low prices may not focus as much on the service, since they do not have that image in the consumers' minds.

Only 6 % answered quality as the value that Nordstan offers and 5 % answered no value. Most frequent answers were wide range of shops, which is good for Nordstan, and inexpensive goods.

²³⁹ Kotler, P., Armstrong, G. (2004)

²⁴⁰ Aaker, D. (2002)

By looking at the chart on supply and experiential shopping, Nordstan wants to be associated with a wide range of offer and experiential retail. Nordstan has succeeded in being associated with a wide range of offer, but the consumers have not perceived Nordstan as offering experiential retail and they are lacking more specialized smaller shops.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions of the thesis. The purpose will be presented and answered. Further, some recommendations to Nordstan will be presented. These recommendations focus on the areas where we believe Nordstan have a great potential for improvements. Finally, we outline what we believe could be interesting to study further within this subject. The conclusions and recommendations are based on the information attained by studying the brand identity, the company's perspective, and the brand image, the consumers' perspective. By analysing these concepts, we have reached our conclusions and recommendations that can be important to consider in Nordstan's future brand building process.

7.1 Conclusions and discussion: Does brand identity of Nordstan agree with the consumers' image of Nordstan?

The purpose of the thesis has been to describe and understand the brand identity of Nordstan and how well it is homogeneous with the brand image of the consumers. After having studied the brand identity and the brand image of Nordstan, we have experienced difficulties for Nordstan to communicate the brand identity that they want to possess. This conclusion is based on the fact that the image of Nordstan does not completely correspond with the brand identity.

One example is that the majority of the respondents characterize Nordstan as having ordinary shops. Further discrepancy we found is the personality of Nordstan, which the majority of the respondents perceive as a mediocre "Svensson". We believe that it is due to the consumers' perception that Nordstan lacks uniqueness, both in the interior and variety of shops.

However, Nordstan has achieved in communicating their wide range of offer and their attractive location in their market communication, since many of the respondents experience that these are the best characteristics about Nordstan. Though, our findings show that Nordstan has to work on making their advertisement more emotional and this way they would communicate their identity better.

Our results show that in order to be perceived as Nordstan desires and stay competitive in the increasingly competitive retail environment, they need to continue developing the experiential retail.

We consider the main reason for not achieving a correlation between brand identity and brand image is related to wrong associations about the brand. Nordstan works hard on communicating their four core values in everything the company does, but our results show that the majority of the respondents have not noticed this.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions in section 7.1, we believe that we have sufficient recommendations to give Nordstan on issues to keep in mind for future actions in their brand building process. Aware of that there are no right or wrong in this subject, our recommendations should be considered as guidelines rather than rules.

Our first recommendation for Nordstan is to maintain their core values they have today and continue working hard in communicating these values. We find it crucial for Nordstan to develop the market communication, in order to raise higher awareness and create more emotions around the advertisement and their brand.

Since Nordstan wants to be associated with experiential retail, we believe it is important to develop this concept further and encourage the shops to take more action. Many of the respondents would want activities for children and some kind of children's area in the shopping centre can be considered to implement. Furthermore, to drive frequency of visits, a food court could be something to consider.

The respondents reacted negatively to the crowd in the shopping centre, which is why we recommend Nordstan to consider improvements in this area. We think they should consider the position of McDonalds, next to Forex and Burger King, since customers think they create queues that make the street crowdie. Our results showed that customers complained about the air in Nordstan, this might be something to improve.

Further, Nordstan need to consider alternative communication channels, such as television and direct advertisement. These communication channels were mentioned by the majority of respondents as the media where they would best notice advertisement of Nordstan.

Finally, we believe that it is of great importance for Nordstan to make the shopping centre homogenous. One example of how this can be done is by incorporating a certain advertisement, music etcetera in consumers' minds. This music can even be played in the shopping centre.

7.3 Future studies

We consider it very interesting to investigate how Nordstan in the best way can communicate their brand identity to the customers?

Further, it would be of interest to investigate how a shopping centre can strengthen their brand identity and if there are any specific strategies to apply?

Finally, we consider another interesting topic to be how a shopping centre builds a strong brand?

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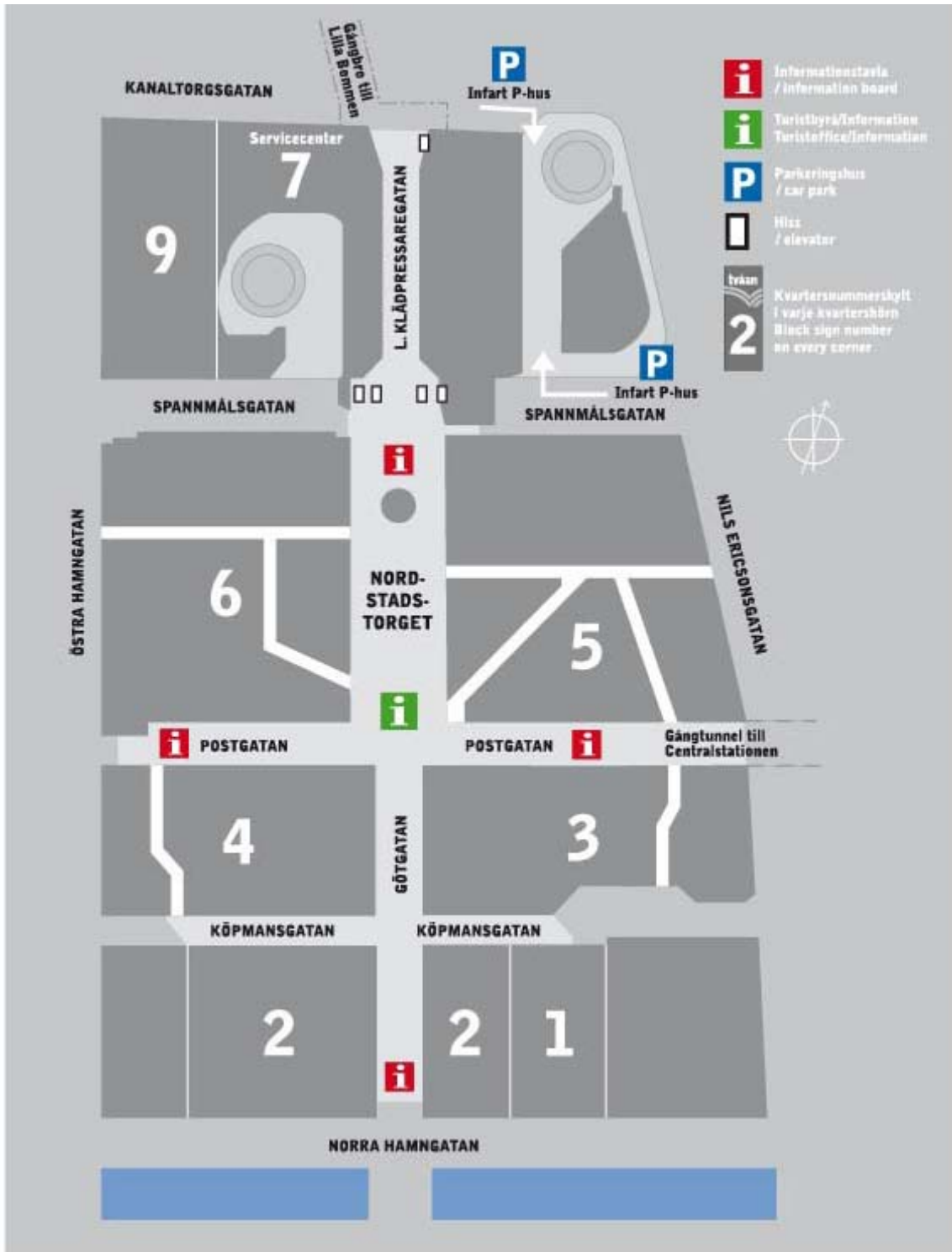
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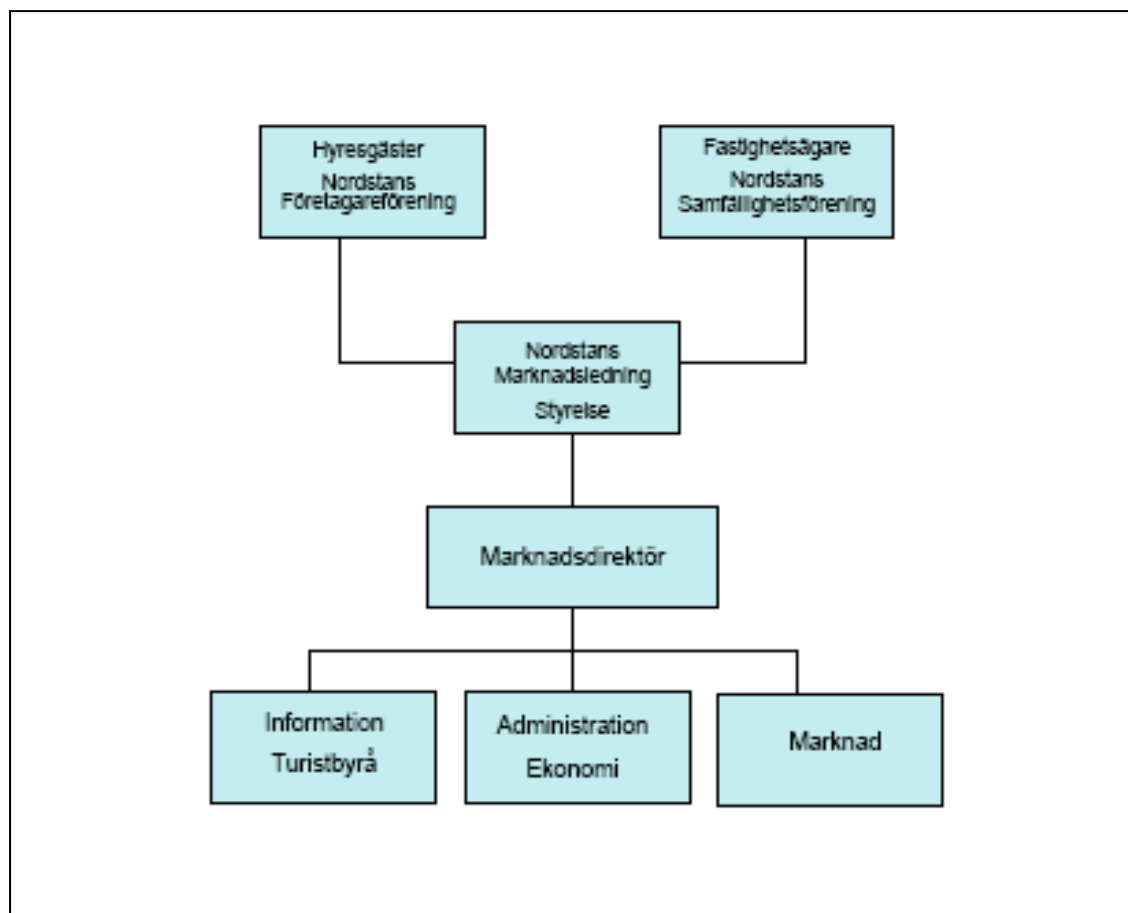
Anders Larsson, *manager of Nordstan*, 2008-10-27

Katarina Bouraza, *chief of information*, 2008-10-27

Appendix 1 – Owner structure



Appendix 2 - Management structure



Appendix 3 - Questionnaire

Bakgrundsvariabler

1. Vilken ålderskategori tillhör du?

- 16-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 >56

2. Respondentens kön?

- Kvinna Man

Frågor om Nordstan

1. Vad kännetecknar Nordstan enligt dig?

.....

- Vet ej

2. Om varumärket Nordstan var en person, vem skulle det vara och varför?

.....

3. Vilken typ av kunder (målgrupp) tror/tycker du att Nordstan främst vänder sig till?

- Alla
- Tonåringar
- Ungdomar (under 26 år)
- Yngre medelålders (under 35)
- Äldre medelålders (över 35)
- Pensionärer (över 65 år)
- Barnfamiljer
- Vet ej

4. Har du uppmärksammat annonser och reklam för Nordstan? (Om nej, gå vidare till fråga 9)

- Ja Nej Vet ej

5. Om ja, var har du sett eller hört reklamen?

- Tv
 Tidningar
 Internet
 Direktreklam
 Utomhus
 Broschyrer, shoppingguide/häfte
 Vet ej

6. Vad tror du att Nordstan vill förmedla med sin reklam?

.....

- Vet ej

7. Hur upplever du Nordstans reklam?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informativ | <input type="checkbox"/> Intetsägande |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rolig | <input type="checkbox"/> Tråkig |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skapar känsla och lust att besöka köpcentret/handla | <input type="checkbox"/> Skapar ingen känsla/lust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fångar din uppmärksamhet | <input type="checkbox"/> Ointressant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informativ, men tråkig och skapar ingen lust och känsla | |

8. I vilken media skulle du bäst uppmärksamma Nordstans reklam?

- Tv
 Tidningar
 Internet
 Direktreklam

- Utomhus
- Broschyrer, shoppingguide/häfte
- Annat
- Vet ej

9. Vad anser du att Nordstan erbjuder för värde till dig?

.....

- Erbjuder inget värde

10. Vilka attribut sammankopplar du med Nordstans produkter (butiker, restauranger)?

.....

11. På en skala mellan 1 – 5, hur väl stämmer följande påstående överens med din bild av Nordstan som köpcentrum?

	1	2	3	4	5
Brett utbud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bra service/bemötande i butiker, restauranger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tryggt/säkert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upplevelsehandel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modernt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Instämmer inte alls	Instämmer delvis	Varken eller	Instämmer delvis	Instämmer helt

12. Hur stor påverkan har word-of-mouth/rykte för dig? (positiv/negativ information som sprids om Nordstan i artiklar, via vänner, andra kunder och bekanta etc)

- Stor
- Liten
- Ingen alls

13. Vad är det bästa med Nordstan, enligt dig?

.....

14. Vad är det sämsta med Nordstan, enligt dig?

.....

15. Om du skulle kunna ändra något hos Nordstan, vad skulle det då vara?

.....

16. Är det något som du vill lägga till, gällande Nordstan, utöver det vi har frågat?

.....

TACK FÖR INTERVJUN!

Background variables

1. Age?

- 16-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 >56

2. Gender?

- Female Male

Questions about Nordstan

1. According to you, what characterize Nordstan?

.....

- No opinion

2. If the brand Nordstan were a person, who would it be and why?

.....

3. What do you think is Nordstan main target group?

- Everybody
 Teenagers
 Youths (below 26 years)
 Younger middle-ages (below 35 years)
 Elder middle-ages (above 35 years)
 Pensioners (above 65 years)
 Families with children
 No opinion

4. Have you noticed advertisement of Nordstan? (If no, move to question 9)

- Yes No No opinion

5. If yes, where?

- Television
- Newspaper
- Internet
- Direct advertisement
- Outdoors
- Brochure, shopping guide/booklet
- No opinion

6. What do you think Nordstan wants to mediate with their advertisement?

.....

- No opinion

7. How do you perceive Nordstan's advertisement?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informative | <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fun | <input type="checkbox"/> Boring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creates an emotion or desire to visit Nordstan | <input type="checkbox"/> Creates no emotion or desire to visit Nordstan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attracts attention | <input type="checkbox"/> Uninteresting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informative but boring and creates no desire or emotion to visit Nordstan | |

8. In what media would you best notice advertisement of Nordstan?

- Television
- Newspaper
- Internet
- Direct advertisement
- Outdoors
- Brochure, shopping guide/booklet

Other

No opinion

9. What values does Nordstan offer you?

.....

No value

10. Which attributes describes Nordstan's products best (shops/restaurants)?

.....

11. On a scale between 1 – 5, how well does following statements agree with your perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre?

	1	2	3	4	5
Wide offer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good service in shops, restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experiential retail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

High disagreement Relatively high disagreement Neither nor Relatively high agreement High agreement

12. How much does word-of-mouth/reputation influence you?

Big influence Small influence No influence

13. According to you, what is the best characteristic with Nordstan?

.....

14. According to you, what is the worst characteristic with Nordstan?

.....

15. If you could change anything about Nordstan, what would it be?

.....

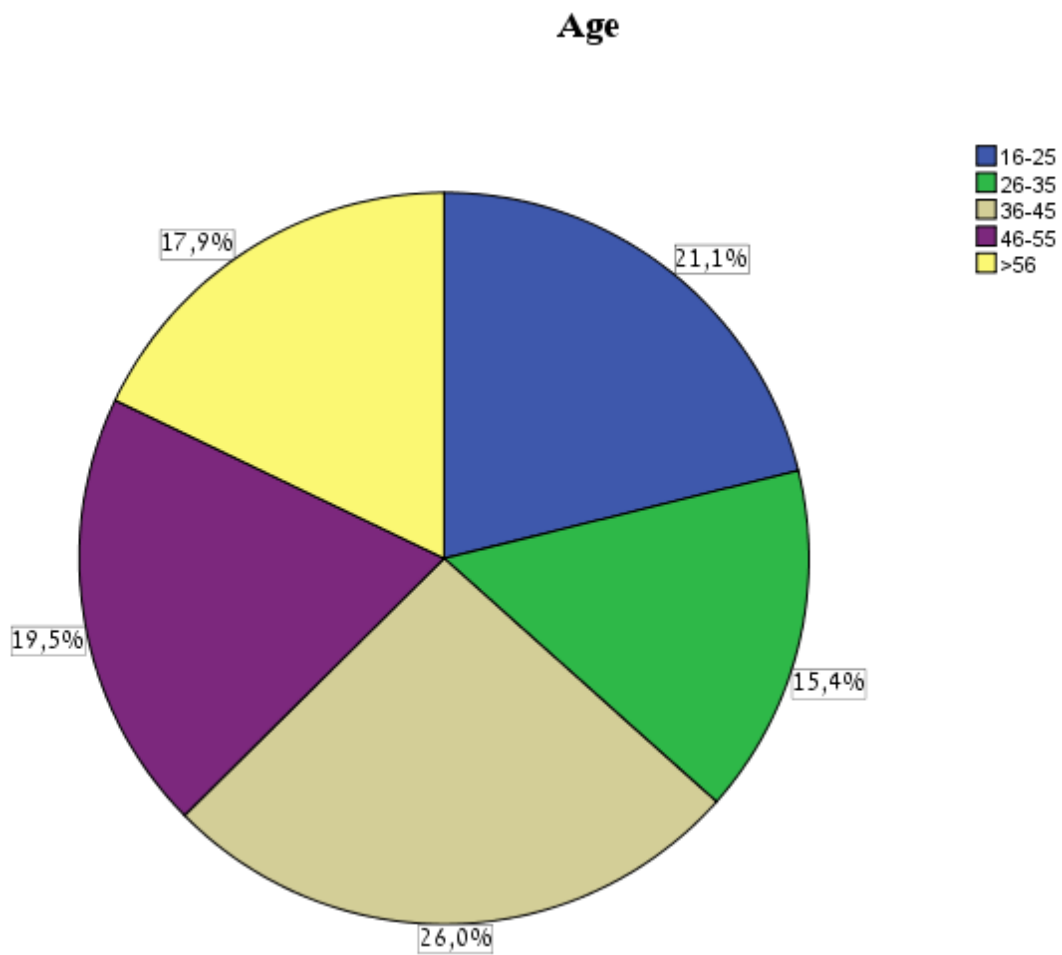
16. Is there anything about Nordstan you would like to add?

.....

THANK YOU FOR THIS INTERVIEW!

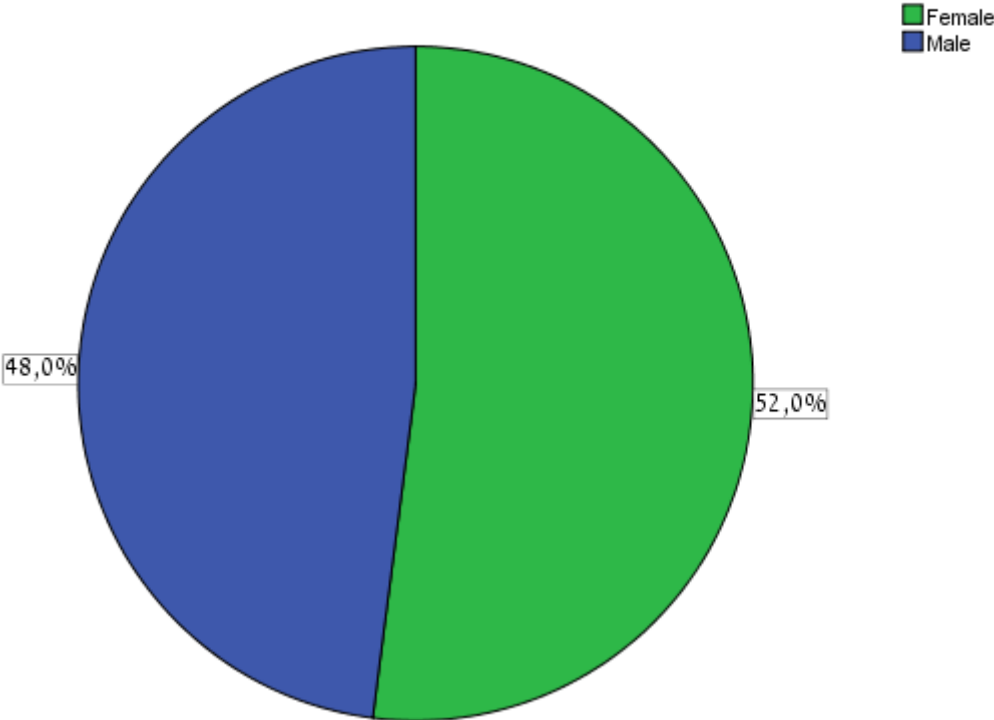
Appendix 4 – Statistic analysis of quantitative research

Appendix 4.1 Age



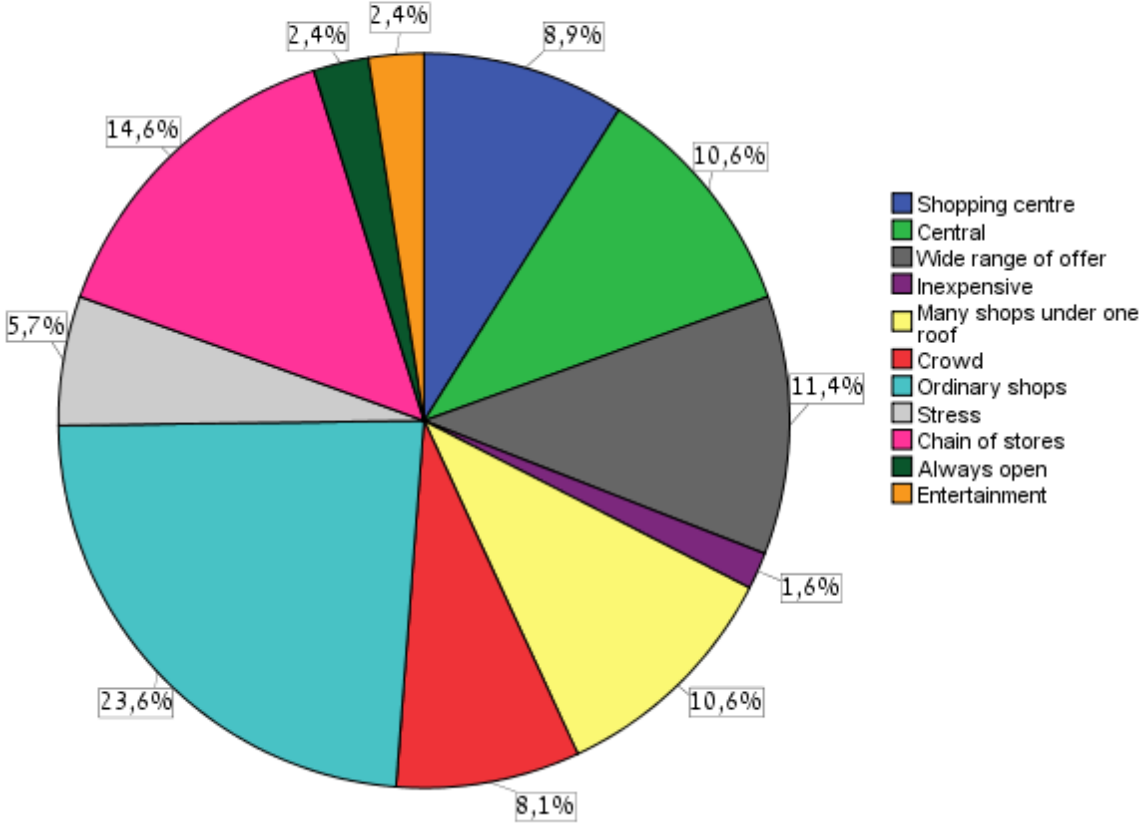
Appendix 4.2 Gender

Gender



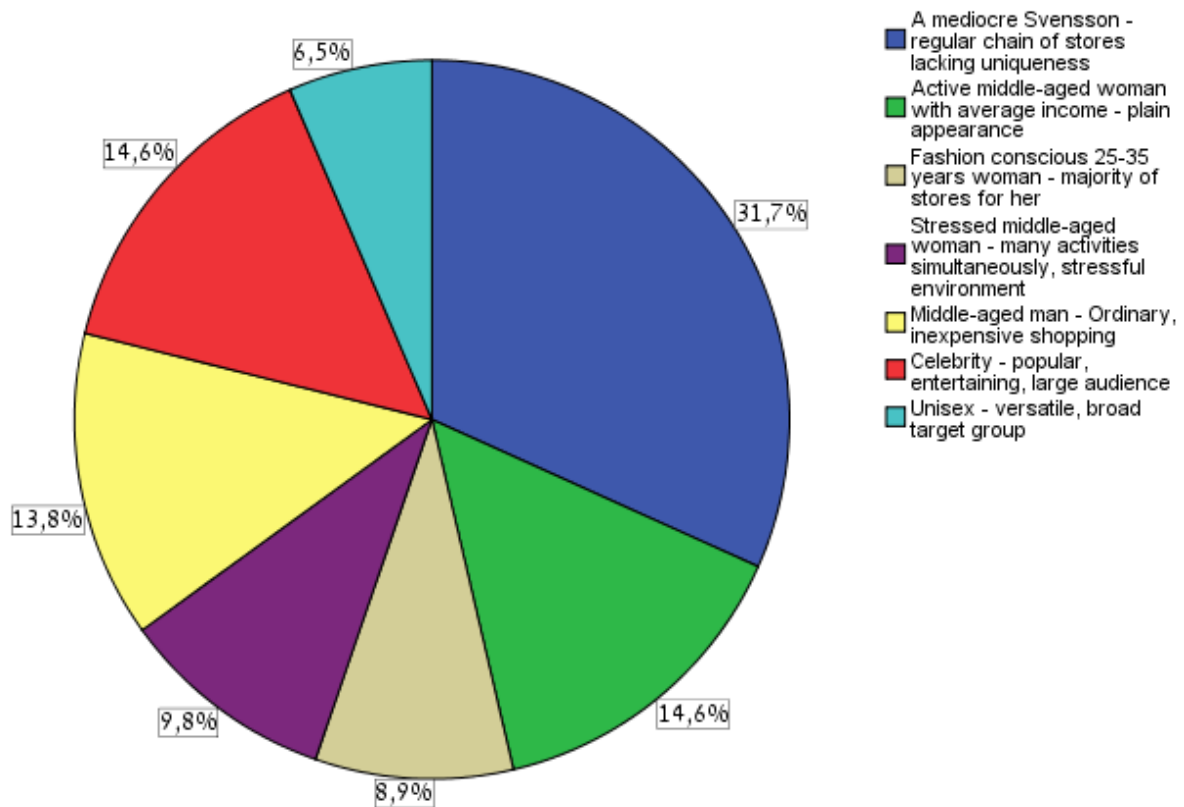
Appendix 4.3 Characteristics

How would you characterize Nordstan?



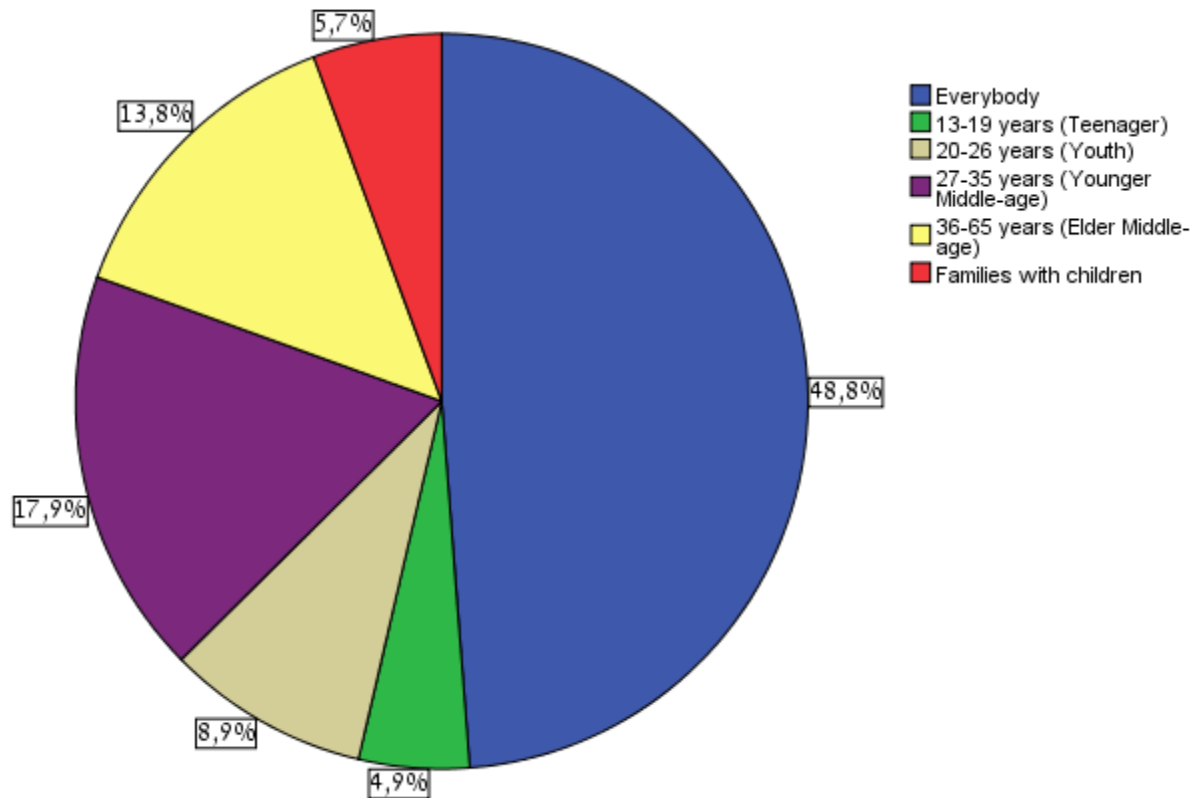
Appendix 4.4 Personality

If the brand Nordstan were a person, who would it be and why?



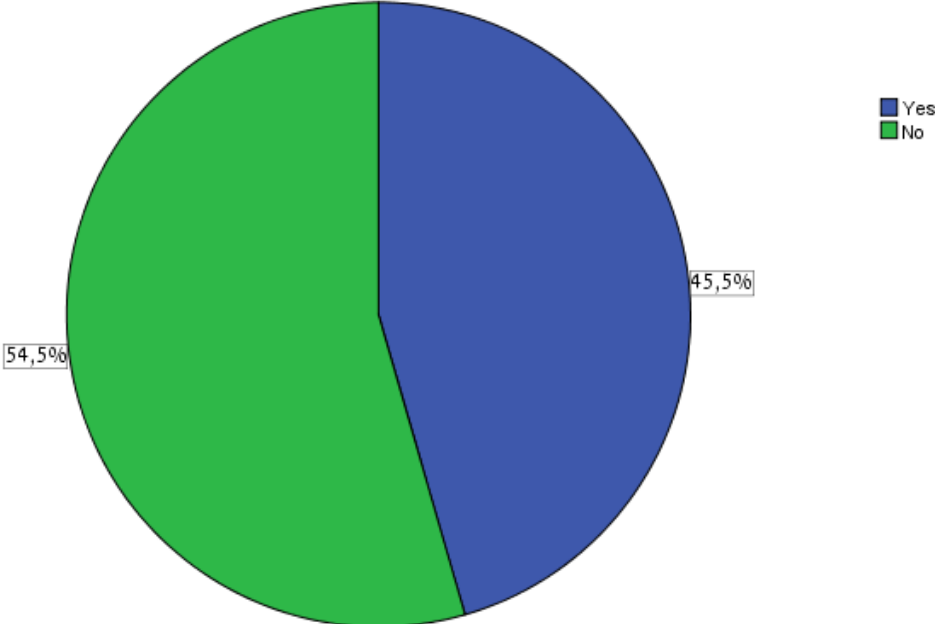
Appendix 4.5 Target group

What do you think is Nordstan's target group?

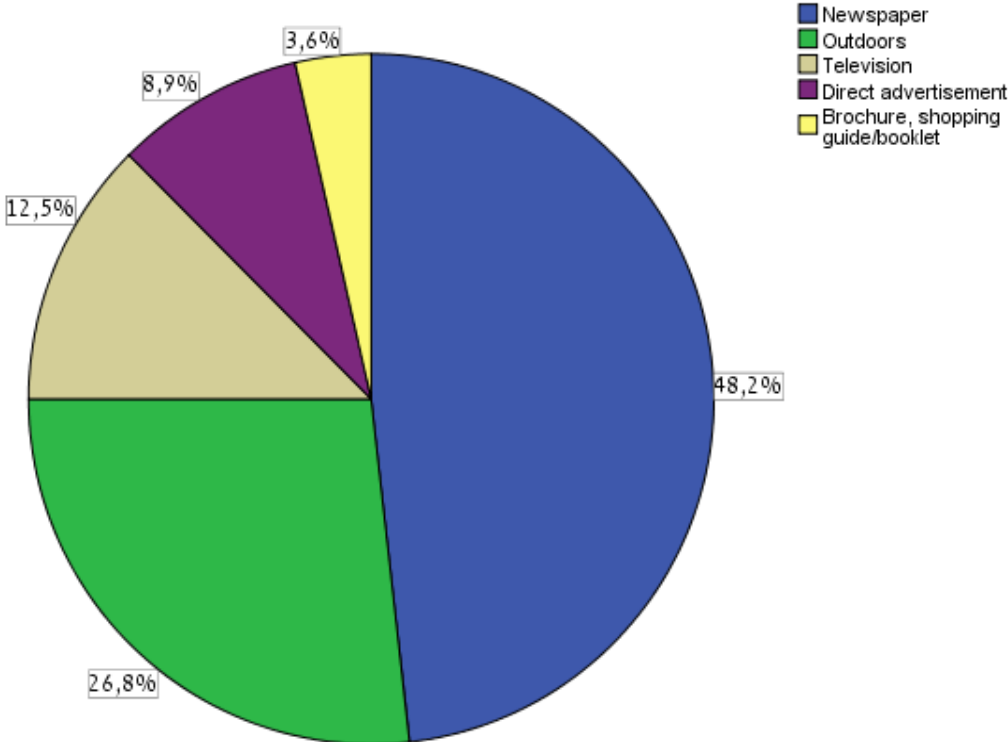


Appendix 4.6 Advertisement

Have you noticed advertisement for Nordstan?

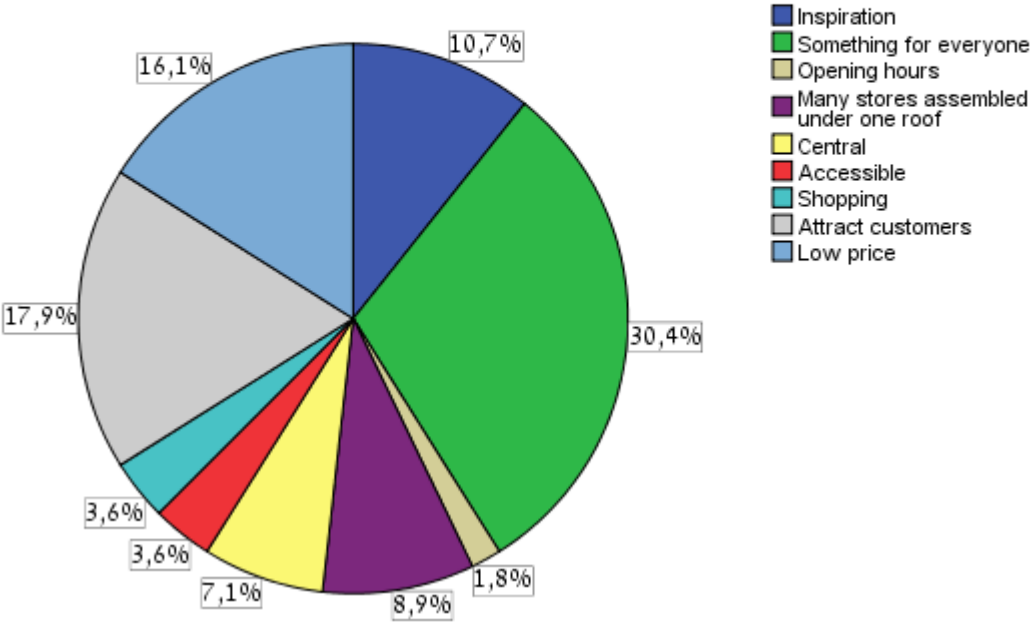


If yes, where?



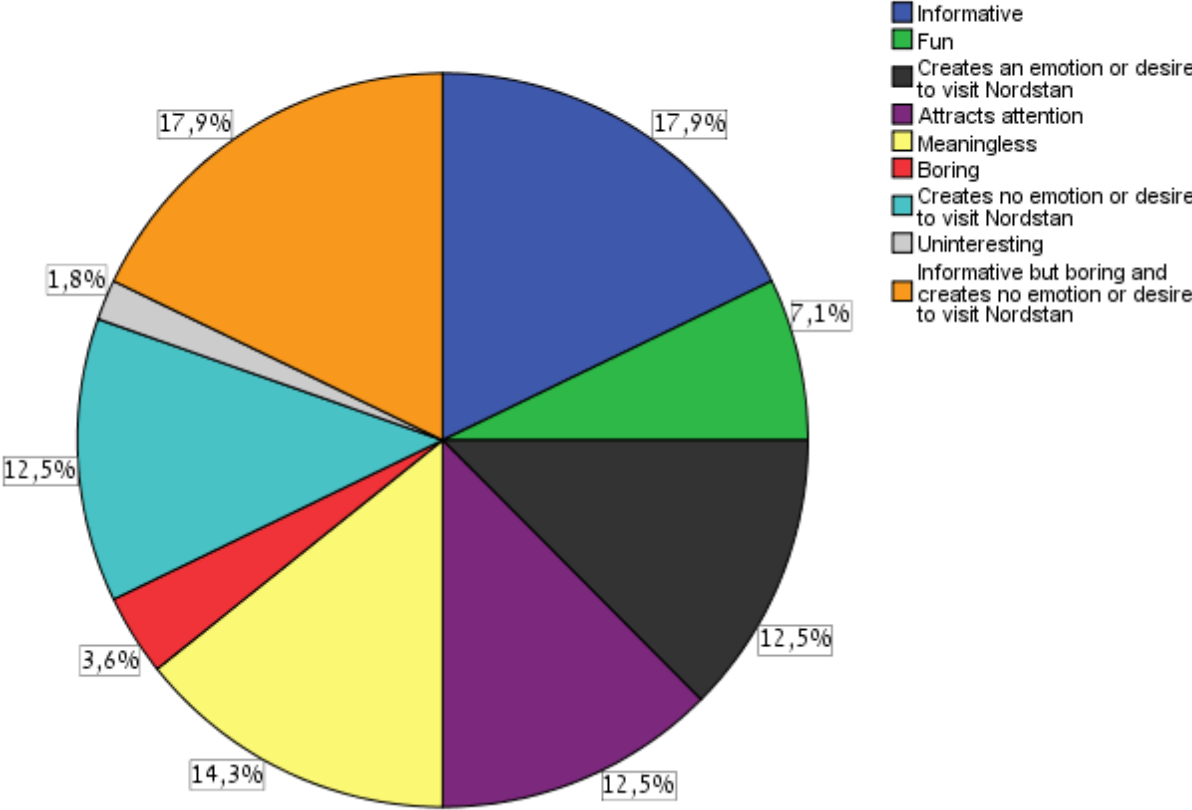
Appendix 4.7 What do you think Nordstan wants to mediate with their advertisement?

What do you think Nordstan wants to mediate with their advertisement?



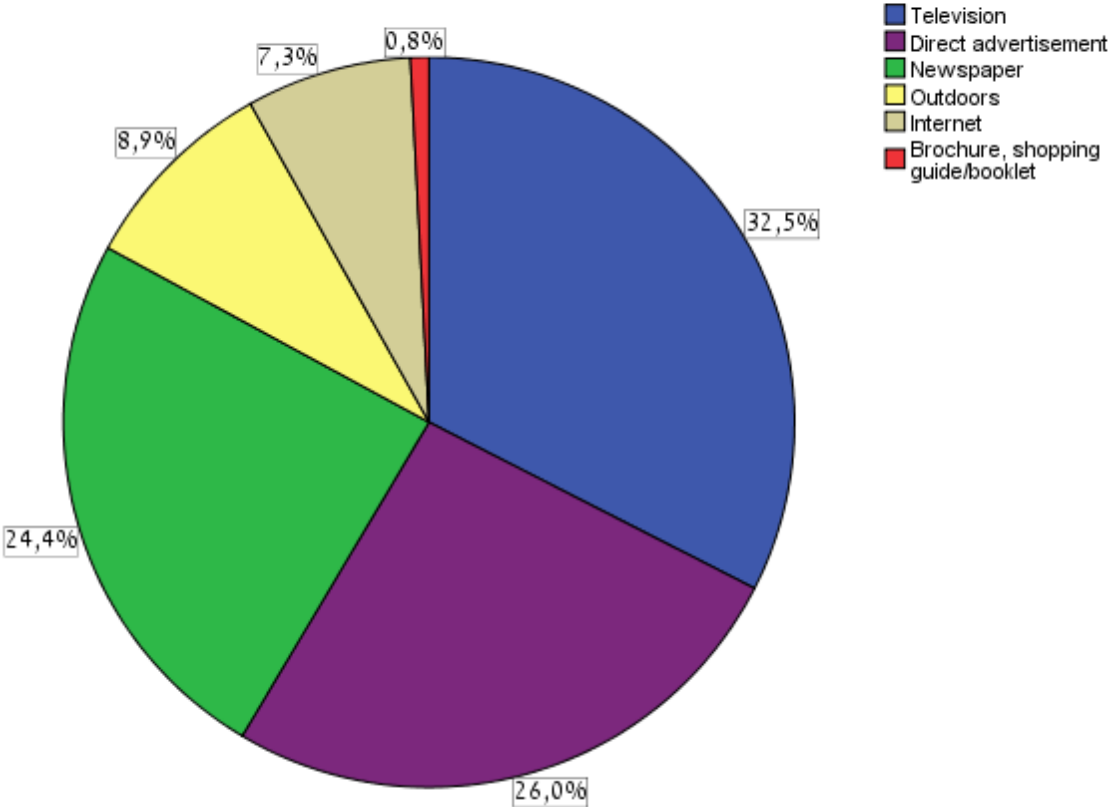
Appendix 4.8 How do you perceive Nordstan’s advertisement?

How do you percieve Nordstan’s a dvertisement?



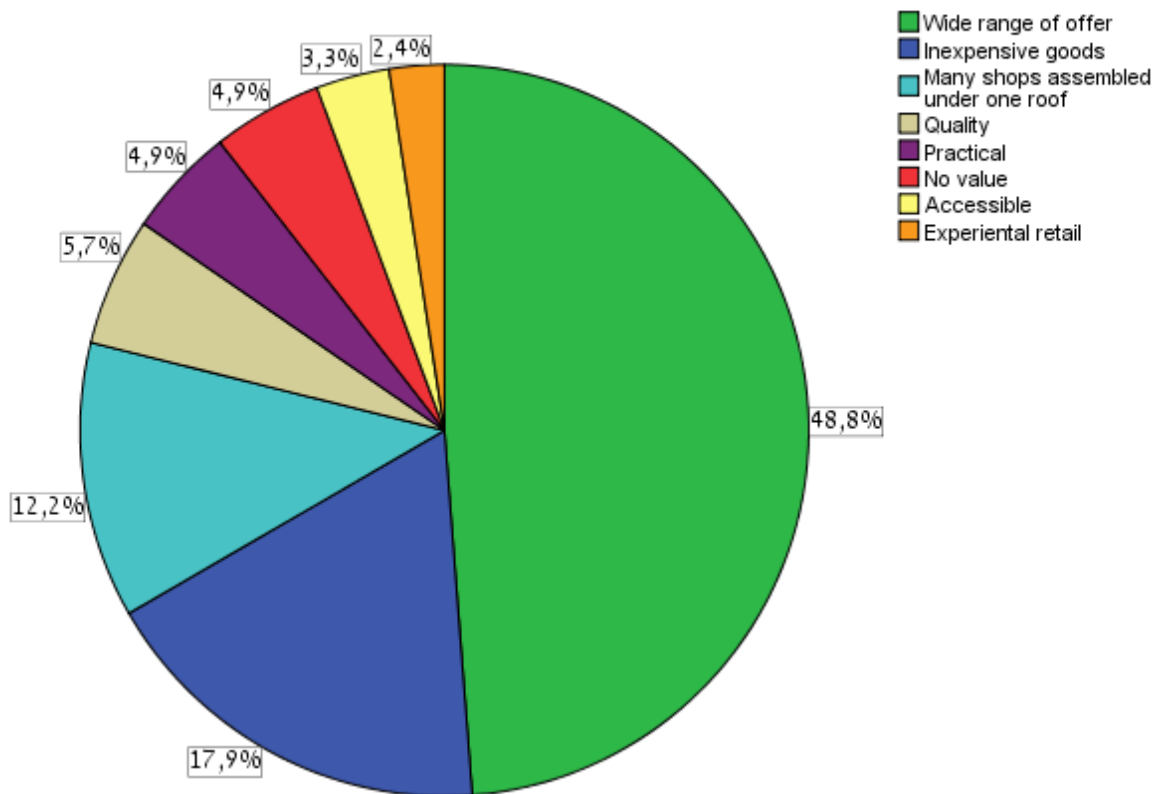
Appendix 4.9 Media

In what media would you best notice Nordstan's advertisement?



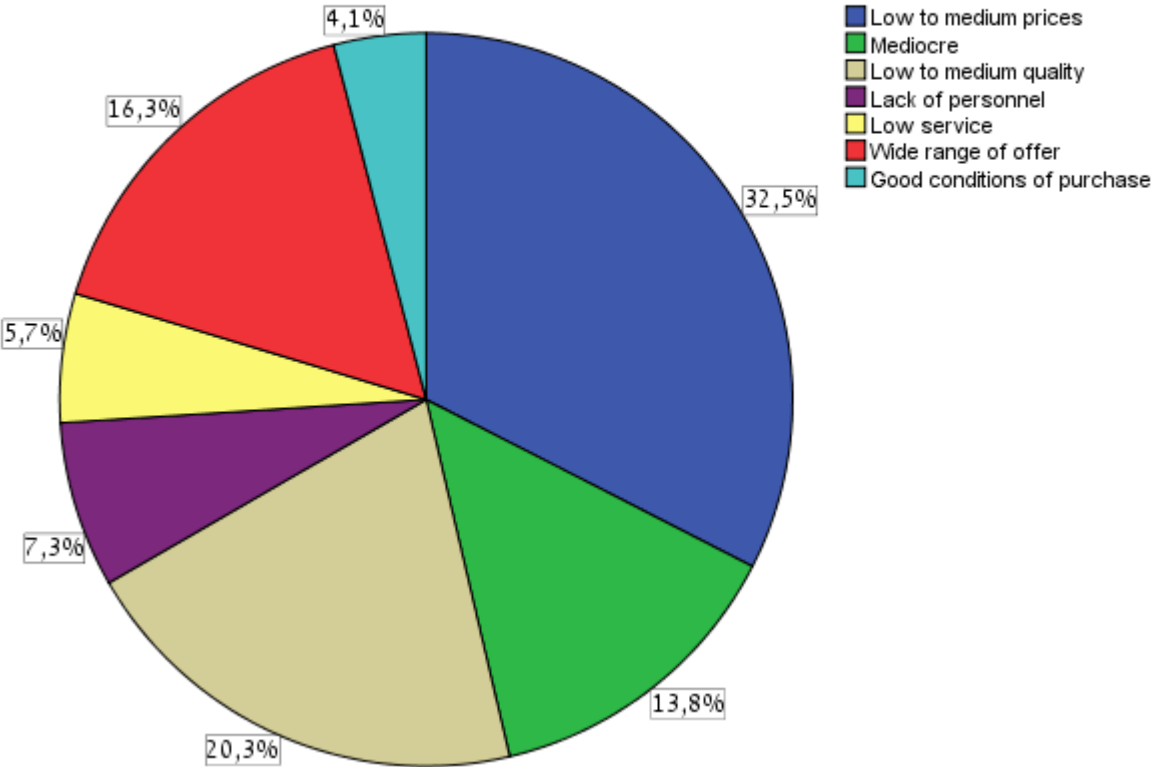
Appendix 4.10 Values

What values does Nordstan offer you?



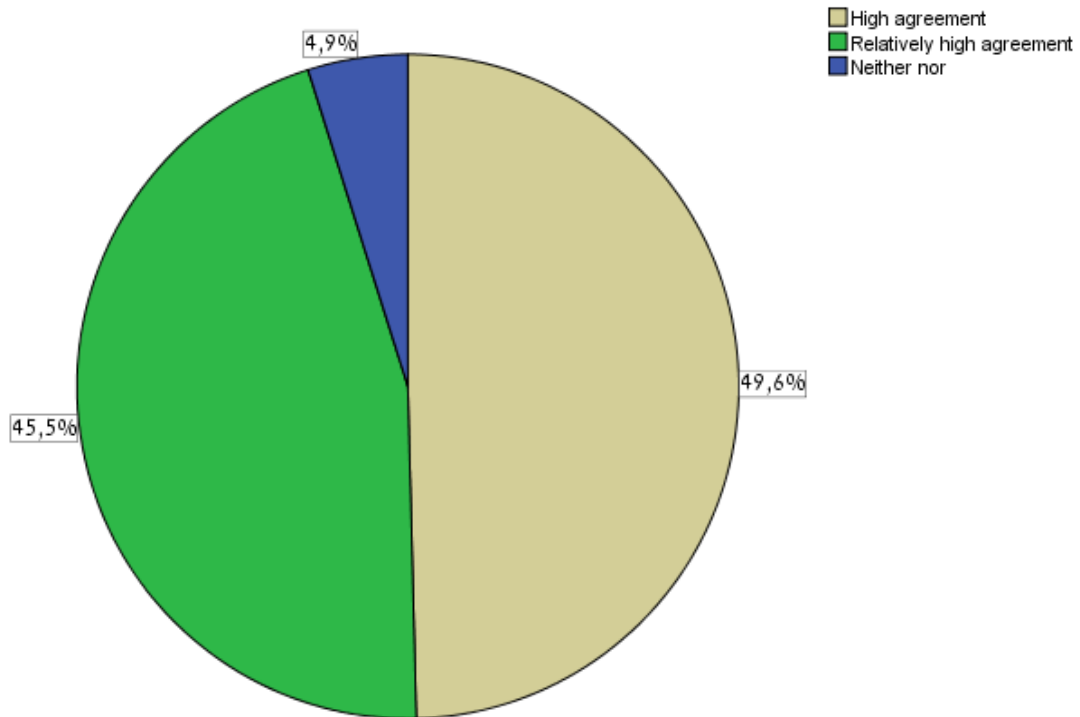
Appendix 4.11 Attributes

Which attributes describes Nordstan's products (shops, restaurants) best?

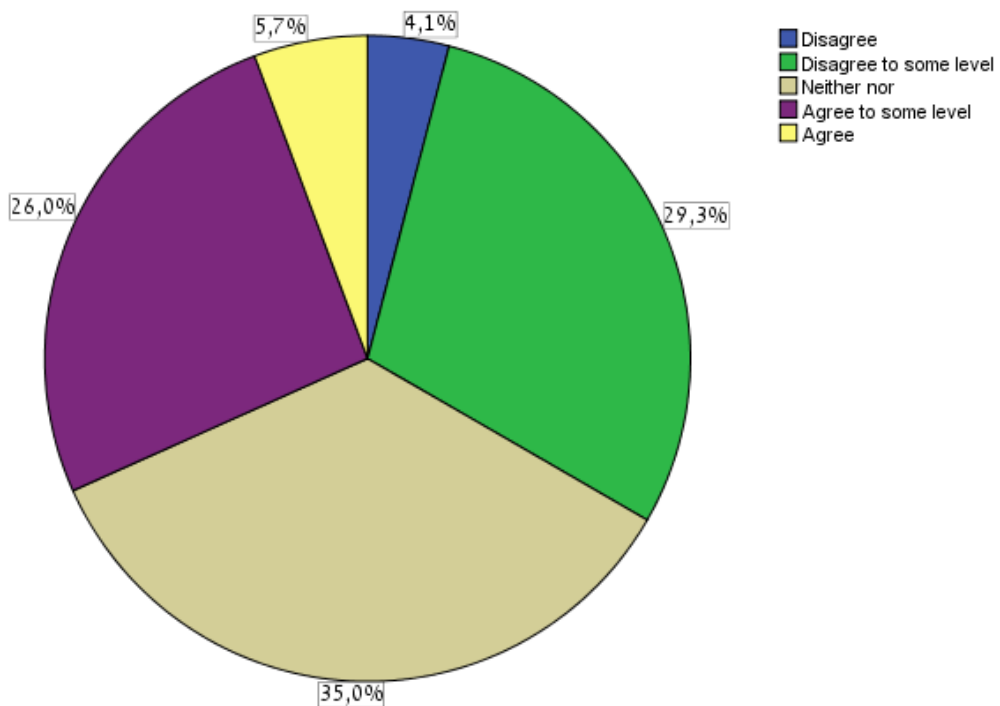


Appendix 4.12 Wide range of offer and service

How well does a wide range of offer agree with your perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre?

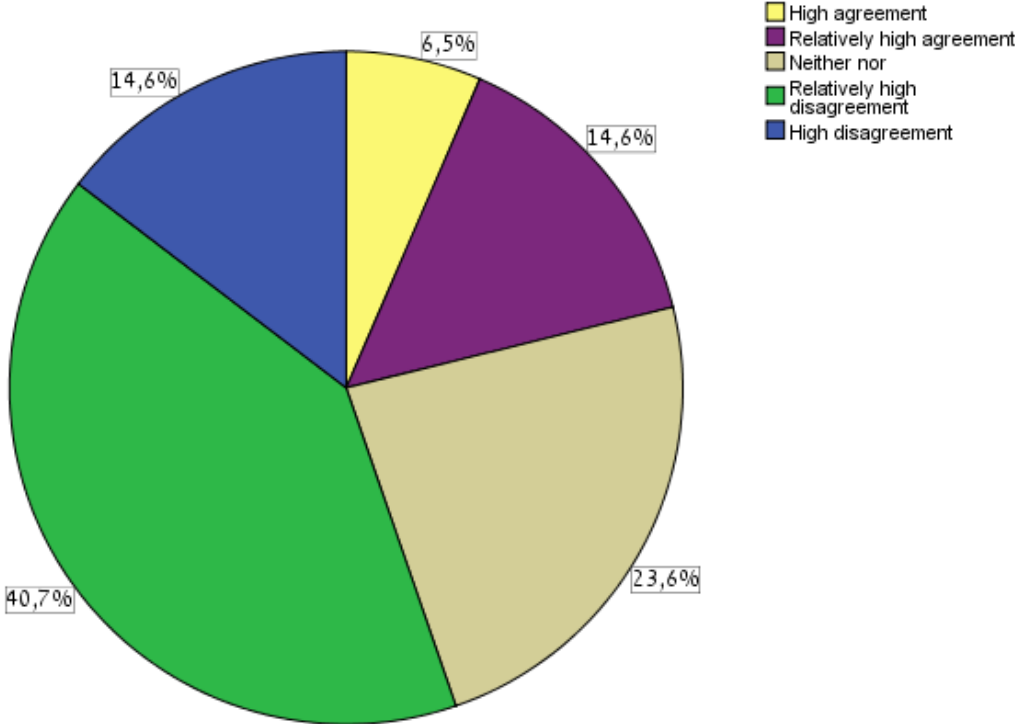


How well does good service in different shops and restaurants at Nordstan agree with your perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre?

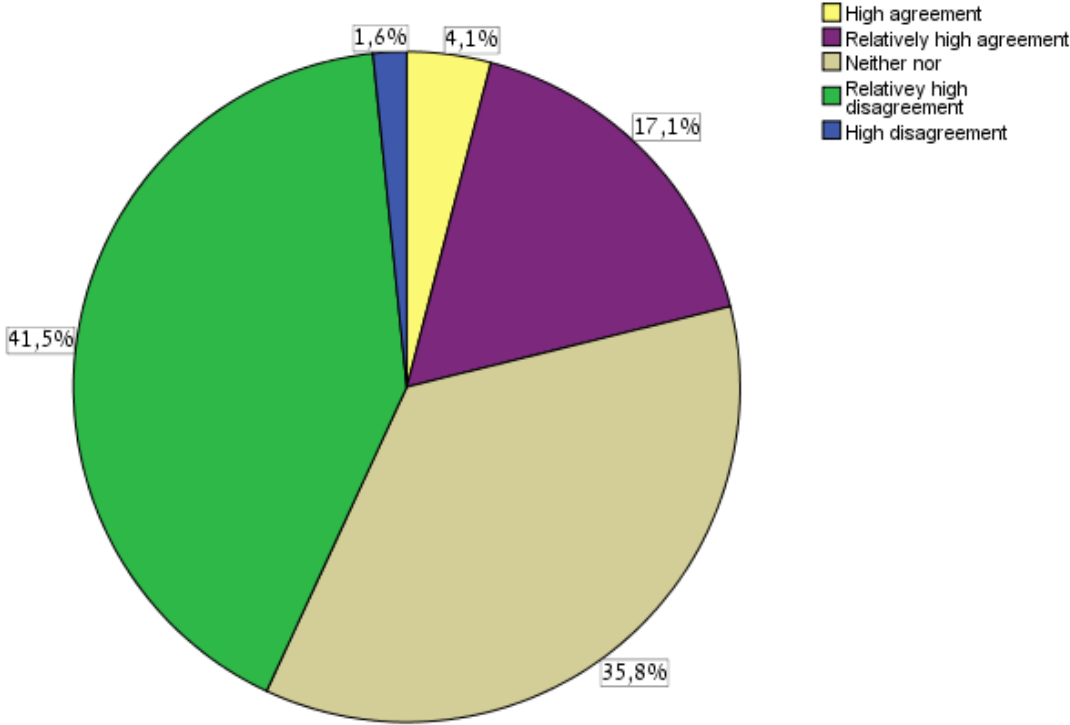


Appendix 4.13 Safety and experiential retail

How well does safety agree with your perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre?

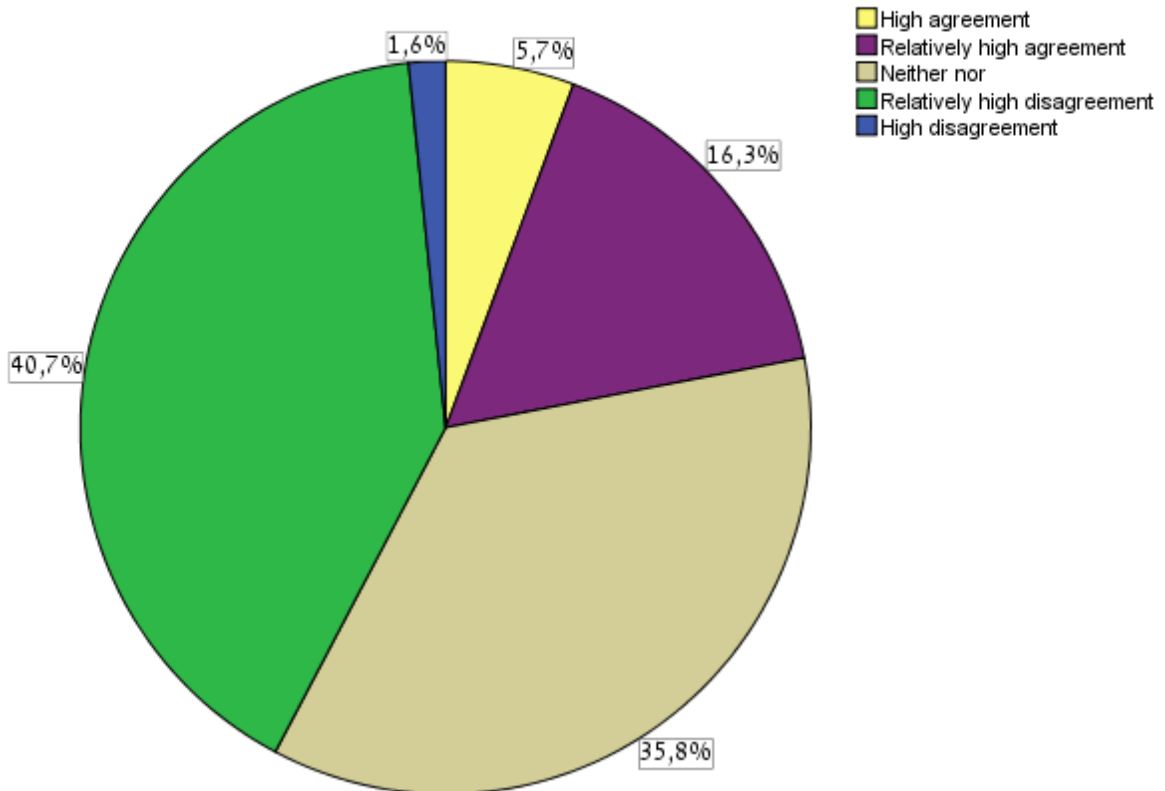


How well does experiential retail agree with your perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre?



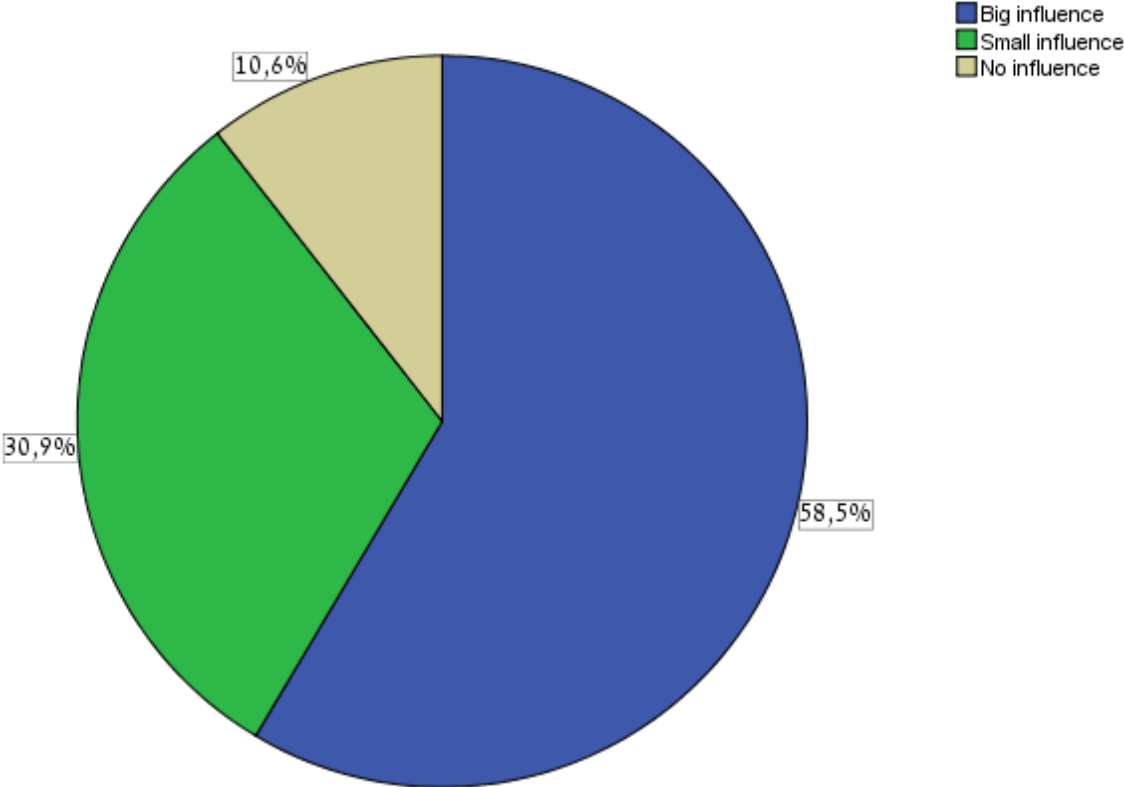
Appendix 4.14 Modern

How well does modern agree with your perception of Nordstan as a shopping centre?



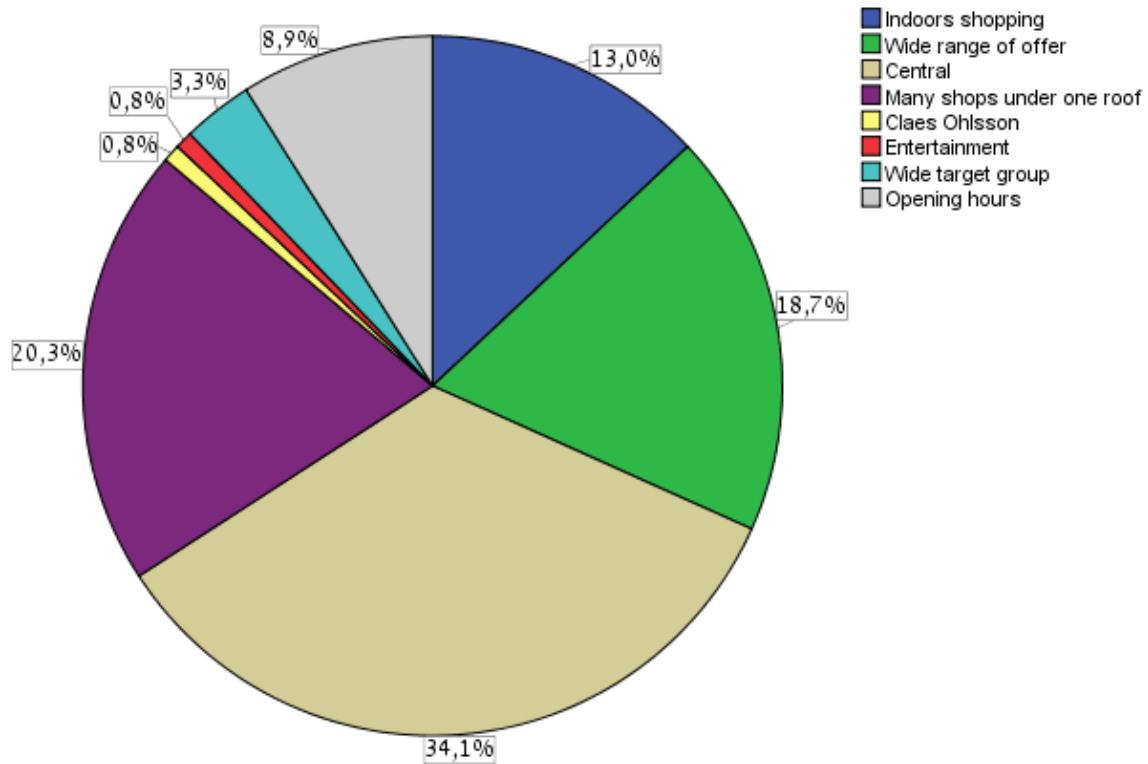
Appendix 4.15 Word-of-mouth

How much does word-of-mouth/reputation influence you?

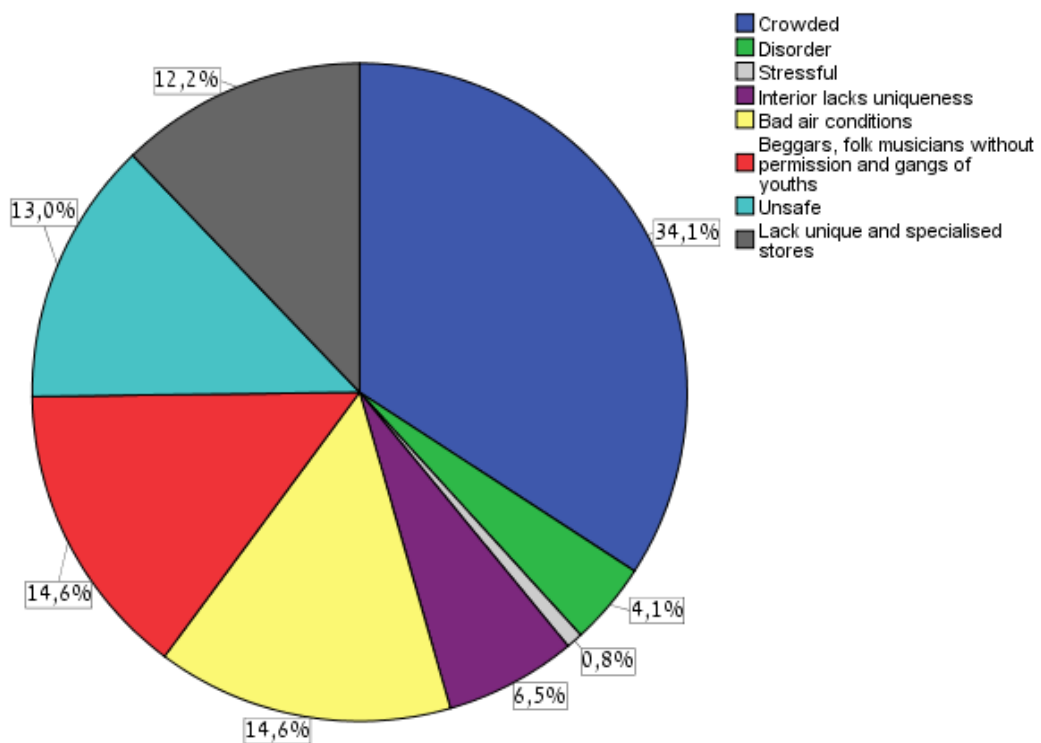


Appendix 4.16 The best and the worst characteristic

What is the best characteristic of Nordstan?



What is the worst characteristic of Nordstan?



Appendix 4.17 If you could change anything about Nordstan, what would it be?

If you could change anything about Nordstan, what would it be?

