



Semester 4

Master Thesis

REBRANDING A GROWING OUTSOURCING COMPANY FROM AN EMERGING MARKET AS A GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGY: THE CASE OF IMPERIA MOBILE

Aalborg, 2017

Front Page

Word count: 17,821

Pages: 68

By: Dimitar Dimov

Student №: 20151308

Abstract

This paper aims to give recommendations to brand manager, marketing managers and decision makers in IT outsourcing companies from emerging markets which are planning to go through a rebranding process in order to achieve a global presence. The first step in constructing such recommendations is to build a body of theoretical knowledge based on reviewing the existing literature in the following fields: Branding, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty and Rebranding. This knowledge is therefore used to analyze the global IT industry, the IT Outsourcing business, the examples of successful and failed rebranding strategies and the case of Imperia Mobile as an emerging market company which is in the exact position of rebranding. With the collected, reviewed and analyzed information recommendations were constructed in two main directions – first, to specific considerations companies should take into account in the initial part of the rebranding process, and the main factors which companies should bear in mind during the execution of the rebranding strategy.

Table of Content

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Research Background.....	2
1.2. Problem Formulation	7
1.3. Limitations and Delimitations	9
1.4. Project Objectives	9
1.5. Project Outline	10
CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY	12
2.1. Social Theory Paradigms by Burrell and Morgan.....	12
2.2. Chosen Typology	15
2.3. Chosen Approach	17
2.4. Research Approach	18
2.5. Research Literature.....	19
CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW	21
3.1. Branding	21
3.1.1. Elements of the brand	22
3.3.2. Corporate Branding.....	23
3.3.3. Services Branding.....	25
3.2. Brand Image	26
3.2.1. Brand image and Brand identity	28
3.2.2. The effect of brand image on brand equity	30
3.3. Brand Loyalty	31
3.3.1. Brand Loyalty's Two Dimensions	32
3.3.2. The role of Brand Loyalty	33
3.3.3. Building Brand Loyalty	34
3.4. Rebranding.....	36
3.4.1. Rebranding motives	39
3.4.2. Principals of Corporate rebranding.....	40
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS.....	41
4.1. Discussion of the literature	41
4.2. Global IT industry	42

4.2.1. Global IT Industry forecast and trends	45
4.3. IT Outsourcing business	46
4.3.1. IT Outsourcing motives	48
4.3.2. IT Outsourcing factors	49
4.4. Real examples of failed and successful rebranding strategies	50
4.4.1. Five examples of successful rebranding.....	50
4.4.2. Five examples of failed rebranding	54
4.5. The case of Imperia Mobile.....	56
4.6. Discussion of the examples and the case of Imperia Mobile	60
CHAPTER V: RECOMMENDATIONS	62
CONCLUSION	67
References	II
Appendix.....	VII

List of Figures

Figure 1 Burrell and Morgan's four social science paradigm dimensions	13
Figure 2 Corporate branding decisions.....	25
Figure 3 FSTA Framework for building brand loyalty	34
Figure 4 Dimensions of rebranding changes	36
Figure 5 Hierarchical rebranding process	37
Figure 6 Regional distribution of IT spending	43
Figure 7 Global IT Industry components.....	44
Figure 8 Global Outsourcing industry revenue.....	47
Figure 9 Global IT Outsourcing Market size.....	48

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world, brands represent a huge share of the company total value. According to the BrandZ (2017) all the brands in top 10 have brand value of billions of dollars with a positive growing trend every year. Therefore, for companies it is essential to build the right branding strategy. However, due to several reasons, some of which might include the need of new or misleading image, or a new product/service added to the company portfolio, or even going global, companies take the step and start rebranding.

This thesis's goal is to help brand manager, marketing managers and decision-makers of emerging market outsourcing companies which are using the rebranding marketing strategy as a tool to reposition themselves in the global market stage. For achieving this goal, the first step will be to conduct a descriptive literature review which will define the four main pillars of theoretical knowledge that according to me are of crucial importance – Branding, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty and Rebranding itself.

With the help of the already reviewed literature, an analysis chapter will be formed striving to provide another, practical and more industry oriented point of view. There, starting from the most general – IT Industry and going to the case-specific IT Outsourcing industry, then continue to problem-specific examples of successful and failed rebranding strategies worldwide. Then the case of real rebranding process of Imperia Mobile will be presented.

Finally, based on both – theoretical knowledge, and real practical information gathered and analysed, there are going to be presented answers to the thesis research questions in form of recommendations.

In the following part I am going to define the general theoretical fields that are in the core of the problem formulation and furthermore give clarification of the applied theories in the thesis's body.

1.1. Research Background

In modern times, everything around us is related to a certain brand. Everything has a label, a name that incorporates not only the manufacturer of the product, but much greater value-based corporate identity that often is used as a marketing management tool (Abratt and Kleyn, 2011). Generally, the theoretical idea over corporate branding become more popular when marketing literature started to argue that the corporation as a brand add an additional layer of values on the products and services that companies offer (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). It is proven that a well-developed brand offers intangible values that are nearly impossible for companies' competitors to duplicate. Moreover, this is transformed as a long-term sustainable competitive advantage for the corporation (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2003).

The main and crucial constructing element of the theory of corporate branding is for companies to adopt a sustainable single brand name that is the face of companies' products and services when presenting them to their customers, consumers, employees and even the top management (Xie and Boggs, 2006). This is only achievable through dedicated management team who oversees the processes of all organizational departments, creating a tailored strategy which every member of the company has to follow comfortably in order to achieve a unique brand identity (Pillai, 2012).

The organisation's determination to succeed in creating profitable brand identity can be done in various ways. Moreover, currently, in the literature, according to my knowledge, there is no a single answer of how this problem has to be undertaken and furthermore, which are the brand identity dimensions that construct its core and therefore companies have to focus on. For example, Abratt and Kleyn (2011) argue that there are four factors that are of crucial importance for brand image, being:

1. visual identity;
2. brand promise;
3. brand personality, and;

4. brand identity.

On the contrary, Harris and de Chernatony (2001) suggests that there are more – brand vision and culture, positioning, personality, relationships, and presentation. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, the theory of Souiden et al. (2006) is adopted as it combines all the theoretical pillars of knowledge that are being investigated. The theory states that corporate branding is built on four main parts:

- Brand Name;
- Brand Image;
- Brand Reputation, and;
- Brand Loyalty.

Since brand name works as the physical representation of the company, brand image is related more to mental aspect of an individual - memory, thoughts and feelings. According to Keller (1993, cited by Lee et al. 2009, p. 1093), brand image is “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand association held in consumer memory”. In general, brand image represents customers’ feelings and thoughts to a specific brand (Roy and Banerjee, 2007). However, the main component that closes up this mental cycle is the comparison with the other brands in the mind of consumers. (Faircloth, 2005).

According to Martinez and de Chernatony (2004), brand image is actually the perception that customers have for this brand build by investigating and understanding the brand identity elements. With the right communication tools, this brand identity creates an exact set of associations in consumers’ minds, which ends in forming the brand image itself. Moreover, according to Kotler et al. (2003) brand image is not only thoughts and feelings, but also beliefs towards a specific brand.

In business-to-business situations, brand image has a crucial role due to the rate of difficulty that companies face when trying to choose between two or more organisations in regards of purchasing their products or simply buy their services (Mudambi et al., cited by Lee et al., 2009). Often this results as foundation of creating a web of trusted companies of sustainable perspective business partners.

When it comes to looking at a company as a brand there is one main factor that describes the actual relationship and attachment to its customers to the brand itself. In the theoretical field of marketing this is observed as brand loyalty. According to Lazarevic (2012), this is more of a feeling that a customer builds towards the brand. It drives them to raise their attention and follow closely this brand's activity, then it makes them buy their products, completely ignoring the variety of options this brand's competitor has to offer.

In the literature, some researchers like Mark Uncles et al. (2003) observe the customer loyalty as a theory that has to be completely separated from the brand loyalty. Their main point of defence is that, according to their research, "loyalty" is something that cannot be owned by a brand, but it is rather something that a customer feels towards a brand. Nevertheless, there are not a few definitions of customer loyalty, arguing that there is no enough reason to believe that there is an actual difference.

It is not surprising that researchers are having different perspective on this matter as there is no one united opinion about what is brand and loyalty themselves – it highly differs according to how various scholars perceive them. However, many academic papers agree on Heskett's (1997) description of brand loyalty, which is something that first, leads to a relationship with the brand, second, is related to customer behaviour that is mainly described in marketing literature as repurchasing, and third, is process of purchasing that is influenced by the environment, but consciously controlled by the individual's own will.

In this paper, it is adopted the general statement that the brand loyalty and customer loyalty are actually interchangeable (Lazarevic, 2012). On the one hand, scholars say that the brand gains loyalty from its customers, and on the other that - customers are developing loyalty towards the brand. Therefore, this work observes it as a general phenomenon of brand loyalty.

Building a strong brand image and creating brand loyalty is something all companies are trying to do. However, sometimes that is not achievable with the current brand, or the company wants to change its image. Then, a marketing strategy is undertaken by this company, called corporate rebranding (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004).

According to Stuart and Muzellec (2004), to some degree, the idea of rebranding is opposing the mainstream view in the marketing literature regarding product branding, where there has to be a large amount of long-term commitment on the one hand, and investment on the other – slowly building a strong brand. No matter this fact, companies are still willing to execute a rebranding strategy. Usually this is related with very high costs for that organisation reaching, in many cases, millions of dollars for developed companies (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004).

In the dictionary case, rebranding is described as just making the process of branding again. However, this term in the business literature is more often used to describe a process of a brand being reborn (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). There are several actions that may indicate this change:

- New name and logo;
- New logo and slogan;
- New name, logo and slogan;
- New logo alone;
- New slogan alone.

Regardless of the element which is being changed, this will lead (through the effect of domino) to a change in the brand itself. However, the most extreme case is when the name, the logo and the slogan are changed in the same time. This is an extremely challenging task for companies, willing to take this step.

Taking into account the theories of branding, brand image, brand loyalty and rebranding is only one side of the problems today's marketers has to acknowledge. On the other side, there is the real, practical struggle of the companies from emerging markets. An extremely good example is Imperia Mobile – Bulgarian outsourcing company, which very recently faced the truth of going global and trying to make a name for itself separately from the mother company Imperia Online. With its two years of experience on the Bulgarian and few neighbour countries Imperia Mobile have the unique chance to take advantage of not very well-known brand abroad, however with the setback of already established brand as being the fastest growing IT company in Bulgaria winning several Bulgarian and international awards.

Being subsidiary of a bigger and well-known company worldwide, Imperia Online – the biggest gaming production studio in Bulgaria with more than 15 years of experience, is a unique opportunity as having access to large amount of know-how. The fast rates of growing and taking more and more projects from around the globe, pushes organisation's decision makers to partly separate the two companies and build a completely new brand that will be the new face of the outsourcing subsidiary to the world.

However, the rebranding process is often taken lightly (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004), which forms a perfect case for examination of best practices and lessons learned in form of what the company did right and where it failed. Then this experience could be taken into account in a parallel with the theories in the literature in order to form recommendation for other companies which are going- or are considering to go to the same experience.

1.2. Problem Formulation

The information presented above serves as a background for formulating the following problem statement: **Rebranding a growing outsourcing company from an emerging market as a global marketing strategy: the case of Imperia Mobile**

The idea of this thesis is basically to observe the process of rebranding of a growing outsourcing company in the IT Sector that faces the difficulty to position itself in the global market when going international. This project will be based on the case of Imperia Mobile – the fastest growing outsourcing company in Bulgaria where many businesses and customers around the globe are misled by the company's current brand. This force a decision of the organization's management to rebrand and reposition itself in order to overcome the barriers of the international market.

The main focus of the project will be on the one side, searching for the most effective and efficient way for already known company in the local market and several other countries to change its name and identity for its global purposes forming a list of recommendations based on theoretical and empirical evidence through observation.

On the other side, this thesis is trying to combine the existing theoretical knowledge on the topics of branding, brand image, brand loyalty and rebranding with the real practical experience of a fast-growing outsourcing IT company in the emergent market – Imperia Mobile, in order to find an answer to the following research questions:

RQ 1: What should outsourcing companies from emerging markets consider as an initial process when changing their brand identity in response of going global?

The main focus of this question is about the preparation and reading which decision makers in companies should do before they create a rebranding strategy. Which are the main factors that they

have to take into account when they decide to go through the rough terrain of changing the brand identity? Do they have to measure all the different possibilities, or there is a set of rules/practices that is enough to successfully execute the rebranding strategy? In order to answer this research question, this paper is going to take two points of view – on the one hand, the theoretical one – looking into the existing literature, and on the other, the practical one – looking into the experience of the rebranding process of a real-world company from emerging market by taking interviews with the main people responsible for the execution of the strategy.

RQ 2: Which are the main factors that outsourcing companies should take into account during the execution of the rebranding strategy?

Being prepared is only the one side of the coin. Despite the initial reading and thinking, a lot can go wrong during the execution of one strategy – being rebranding or not. The purpose of this question is to find out which are the main factors that may turn the rebranding process around and cause unmeasurable problems. In a contrary, how can companies recognize the good signs so that they could know if they are going in the right direction or not – early signs of warning or success. In order to answer this research question, a deeper investigation in the current literature has to be made. From there, an observation of the successful and failure stories of rebranding which already took place in the history – analysing them and pointing out the problems or the good practices. And finally taking empirical evidence in form of interviews with the business development team of Imperia Mobile who stays behind their rebranding process. Combining all of three elements listed above will result in finding the answer of this research question.

In the following parts of this chapter there are going to be presented the main limitations and delimitations that this research has and its main objectives. Furthermore, the whole project's outline is going to be described.

1.3. Limitations and Delimitations

The main limitation that during the development of this paper is encountered is that not all of the academic journals related to branding and corporate rebranding had free access, therefore this thesis is limited to the materials, papers and journals that that were available and should not be seen as an exhausting interpretation of all the development that has been made in this area so far.

This paper is also limited in terms of the amount of the closely observed companies. However, the delimitation here comes from the various other companies which are used as an example for certain rebranding practices.

In terms of delimitations, in order to overcome the complexity and the scale of the observed area which is also not well-studied, this research strives to collect an inside information from the company which case is used (Imperia Mobile) to strengthen the collected knowledge through various methods. In addition to that, this paper's focus is only on corporate rebranding, excluding the already well-known product rebranding.

1.4. Project Objectives

This research strives to understand the main factors affecting companies which take the step to rebrand themselves. Despite the fact that this is often underestimated as a complex and costly process. On the one hand, by preparing companies for the research which has to be done upfront, going through all of the most important factors which has to be taken into account before the formation of the rebranding strategy. On the other hand, by preparing companies for what they could expect during the rebranding process. What signs they should look for in order to understand the direction of the execution of their strategy – being successful, or it is going in the wrong direction.

The paper is directed mainly towards the marketing departments of outsourcing companies from emerging markets. However, employees taking managing and decision-making positions within a company, could also find the content of this thesis of a value

1.5. Project Outline

Topic: Rebranding a growing outsourcing company from emerging market as a global marketing strategy: the case of Imperia Mobile

Chapter I: Introduction:

- Identifying the research gap and forming a problem statement;
- Constructing the research questions:
 - **RQ 1:** What should outsourcing companies from emerging markets consider even before start thinking of changing their brand identity in response of going global?
 - **RQ 2:** Which are the main factors that outsourcing companies should take into account during the execution of the rebranding strategy?
- Formulating the thesis' limitations and delimitations and describing its objectives as: this study indicating the core issues marketing experts and decision-makers in outsourcing companies will face before and during the corporate rebranding process

Chapter II: Methodology:

- Exploring the social science paradigms;
- Explaining the chosen paradigm plus the ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology;
- Explaining the chosen research approach;

- Defining the chosen literature research approach – *Systematic*.

Body:

- **Chapter III: Literature review** – describing the main theories in the academic fields of:
 - Branding – being the very core of the reviewed theories combining all the others. Going from the general – brand itself, including its elements. Then through corporate branding as a theory and even more specific - services branding.
 - Brand Image – as one of the inner-related theories both to the branding and rebranding literature. Explaining the brand image itself, then its relation with the brand identity and its effect on brand equity.
 - Brand Loyalty – as another inner-related theory to both branding and rebranding. Explaining first the two dimensions of brand loyalty, going through its actual role and how to build it.
 - Rebranding – as the most specific theory, closely related with the problem formulated in the previous section of this chapter. Explaining in the theory itself, the motives behind it and its main principals.
- **Chapter IV: Analysis:**
 - Beginning with a discussion of the abovementioned reviewed literature;
 - Going through an analysis of the global IT and the outsourcing industries;
 - Giving examples of failed and successful corporate rebranding strategies worldwide;
 - Explaining the case of Imperia Mobile;
 - To finally analyse those practical examples, including the one of Imperia Mobile

Chapter V: Recommendations and Conclusion

- Answering the research questions in form of recommendations that marketing experts and decision makers of outsourcing companies from emerging markets can follow in order to be better prepared when they have to execute a corporate rebranding strategy.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, there is going to be described the development and the nature of knowledge which is in the basis of the paper and it is closely associated with the research philosophy. Furthermore, this thesis is built upon relevant beliefs and philosophical assumptions which are more popular in the literature as ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology. These beliefs and assumptions are actually forming the way that the world is seen from the authors perspective. With that basis, the chosen research strategy and methods will be described in details. Moreover, according to Saunders et al., 2009) by choosing a coherent research strategy is crucial for being aware of the philosophical commitments and furthermore has a fundamental impact on the way that the research is approached with addition to the way the investigation is undertaken.

2.1. Social Theory Paradigms by Burrell and Morgan

In the literature, there are different studies which describes the social science paradigms. They bring a solid back support to the choice which authors of studies make with how to actually approach their investigation in the papers. Paradigm as a term is described by Oxford Dictionaries (2016) as “a world view underlying the theories and methodology of a particular scientific subject”. Another point of view is that paradigms are more or less a way of investigating a social phenomenon where at the end it is constructed knowledge and definition of that phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2009). Burrell and Morgan (1979) give more practical understanding by presenting four-dimensional model of social paradigms where they are grouped in exclusive and

distinct from one another vertical and horizontal dimensions – subjectivist, objectivist, radical change and regulation (Figure 1).

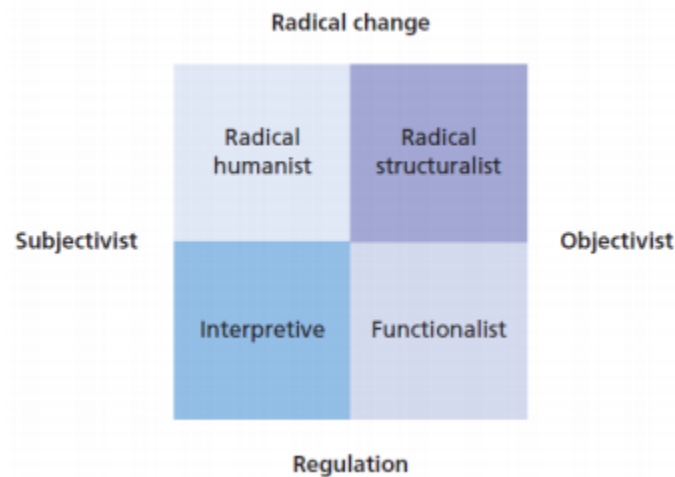


Figure 1 Burrell and Morgan's four social science paradigm dimensions
(Source: Saunders et al. 2009)

- Horizontal point of view – **the axis Subjectivist - Objectivist**. Business and management researchers are commonly accepted those two approaches. According to Kuada (2010) objectivism is the very certain approach where researchers generally select the same facts for each organisation, where on the contrary, subjectivist approach is related more with the assumptions or perceptions of the social actors. Saunders et al. (2009) describes objectivism as something that is actually outside of the social actors.
- Vertical point of view – **the axis Radical change – Regulation**. As the names suggests, the radical change is describing judgement about how exactly some processes has to be undertaken in order to make crucial core changes in the organisation structure. Regulation, on the other hand, is taking the point that the current state has to be improved.

Taking these four-paradigm dimensions is actually crucial for understanding and determining the author's point of view of the nature of science and to better understand where exactly his/her work has limitations based on the chosen approach. (Saunders et al. 2009, Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Additionally, Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggests that there is a need not only for social science paradigms clarification, but a philosophical one as well. Therefore, they conceptualize four philosophical dimensions:

1. **Ontology** – according to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 111) this is the “nature of reality”. It basically describes how the author see the reality. Moreover, the crucial, fundamental part in the research is considered as an ontological nature of that paper. It basically defines the need of collecting only related with the subject of the research data that helps to find an answer to the problems overseen by the author.
2. **Epistemology** – according to Kuada (2010, p. 36) this is “the nature of knowledge and the means of knowing”. It basically describes the way the researcher observes the world, understands it and then how it succeeds to share it to the other people. It generally answers the question – what is true and what is false according to the author. There are many ways of communicating a message to the world, however this indicates what the research belief as being the truth.
3. **Human Nature** – according to Burrell and Morgan (1979) this is the explanation of how the researcher see the links and relationships between other people with the environment. Whether or not they coexist and co-determine one another.
4. **Methodological Nature** – according to Kuada (2010) this is the actual way to approach a certain strategy or an action plan which is in the basis of the researched observation.

2.2. Chosen Typology

The very core of this paper is built on the RRIF Typology by Burrell and Morgan (1979). Furthermore, it is focused on the functionalist paradigm which is in the Objectivist-Regulation quadrium (see Figure 1). The main attribute of this paradigm is that it is related with effective regulation. Its focus is directed towards the exploration and definition of social order, punctuality, solidarity, demand satisfaction and interaction with society. The last is actually looked upon as real, with exactly defined existence and systematic character. According to Kuada (2010), the social affairs are described as objective and value free.

Ontology - Realism

This point of view takes the perspective that the world is built on real and objective things and furthermore with a structured reality. A person is born in a created by the reality itself society, not in something created by others (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

The means of performing and creating branding strategies for creating brand value are based on structured measures that can be used by other organisations worldwide which are on the beginning of overtaking a rebranding strategy. Furthermore, those for image are tangible. Nevertheless, rebranding as a process is a marketing tool with set overall outlines for the customers, employees and the organisation itself.

Epistemology – Positivism

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), positivism strives to define and foresee what exactly is happening or it is about to happen in the social world by constantly searching for the links or the relationships between the constructive elements. Therefore, this epistemology requires literature that is peer reviewed and based on scientific proofs.

This research is based on two main pillars of knowledge. First one, being the academic studies and books which are scientifically accepted, and the other one being its own research based on one of the observation methods – interviews. Therefore, a vast majority of the paper is constructed on collected scientific literature and analytical data (Saunders et al., 2009). Nevertheless, rebranding theory suggests that there is a strong relationship between the branding strategy and every single element of the process of building a new brand.

Human Nature – Determinism

This point of view observes the human being as a completely determined person which is fully aware of the environment and the current situation in which he/she is situated. Inner interference is something that is not included in the general understanding of reality (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Simply put in this paper, customers are highly influenced by the branding strategy of organisation which furthermore reflects in a desired by the company way over their actions related with the brand.

Methodology - Nomothetic

According to Kuada (2010) backed up by (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) nomothetic approach is constructed by the idea of strict systematic protocol and observation methods. Those being questionnaires, interviews or other quantitative or qualitative methods.

In the practice, the most used methods of collecting data related with brands, brand image, brand loyalty is questionnaire, focus groups and interviews. Although, the primary source of scientific information in this paper is focused on the literature review, the research is also trying to evaluate the rebranding process building its own observational data collected through the method of

interviews with the decision-makers of the company which case is used in the analytical part of the study.

2.3. Chosen Approach

The chosen approach in this paper is functionalist paradigm which strives to be objective and have:

- Realist ontology;
- Positivist epistemology;
- Determinist human nature, and;
- Nomothetic methodology.

As they and their influence on the project were defined in the previous section of the paper, this part will mainly focus on arguing the choice of paradigm.

This paper strives to identify and construct solid structured recommendations which will help companies from emerging markets in their struggle to rebrand and reposition themselves in the mind of their consumers. Therefore, there is a need of regulatory and structure which are provided by the functionalist paradigm. Additionally, this paradigm allows the researchers to use rational explanations which are a mandatory for the chosen topic and the formulated problems. The focus of the paper is actually in bringing these recommendations, which in the literature are considered as rational explanations, to the marketing specialists all over the globe. As branding practices are being part of every single corporation's marketing set of tools, the core constructs of the rebranding process are similar across the companies.

In a sense, this paradigm might be observed as a limitation in such a way that other researchers that have different perspective and point of view could have written the paper in a completely

different way. For example, this paper might not bring value for highly specialized companies or such having highly specialized problems in the field of rebranding. However, the very purpose of the study is to guide emerging market companies through the overall process of rebranding building universal links and recommendations.

2.4. Research Approach

Since the fundamentals of the thesis are being defined and argued upon, the chosen research approach has to be described as well. According to Bryman and Bell (2007) there are two approaches which are highly used by the researchers. Those being Inductive and Deductive:

- 1) Inductive approach – the outline of the project is determined in such a way that the researcher has to go from a specific area in the beginning and then goes to the more general;
- 2) Deductive approach – in the contrary, this approach makes the researchers to observe and define the general area first and then to become more and more specific going through more specific theories.

Based on the abovementioned, this paper is built upon the rules of the deductive approach. First, the general area of Branding is explained going through the different main constructs of the brand and then trying to identify specific problem in the specific point of interest – rebranding. The result is highly specified recommendations which are focused in resolving a specific problem.

Moreover, Kuada (2010) suggests that a study could also be observed as:

- 1) Explorative – this approach is related with studying a phenomenon with the purpose of creating specific statements;
- 2) Descriptive – this approach is related with studying a phenomenon with the purpose of “drawing” as closest as possible map of reality.

- 3) Exploratory or hypothesis-testing – this approach is related with studying a phenomenon with the purpose of defining the links of the effects of specific events

Based on the abovementioned, this paper is built upon the guides of the explorative approach which strives to bring specific statements – formulated in this study as recommendations.

2.5. Research Literature

As reviewing the existing literature is taking big place in this study, the chosen research literature approach has to be defined. The third chapter of this project is constructed on the systematic approach to make sure that the collected literature is only relevant to the formulated problem and research question that this research strives to answer. The systematic approach is chosen in favour of conventional approach due to the fact that according to Collins and Fauser (2005), it is related with methodology, structure, and transparency which furthermore corresponds with a choice of objectivism in the previous parts of this methodological chapter.

For a systematic literature review to be conducted properly, Petticrew and Roberts (2008) suggests 7 core steps that researchers have to follow:

1. The questions that the literature review have to answer has to be constructed and described in a clear manner;
2. The proper types of studies have to be defined and chosen for the researchers to conduct the literature review;
3. An exhaustive search for papers have to be undertaken in order to find a relevant literature;
4. The results of that search have to be carefully skimmed;
5. All founded papers have to be approached critically;

6. The main points of the studies have to be collected and proven that there is a heterogenic assessment among its findings;
7. Communicate the finding of the literature review.

Based on the Petticrew and Roberts (2008) 7-steps model, the literature review was conducted successively from step one to seven. Therefore, the following questions were formed in order to start the search for relevant literature:

- What amount of papers has been released in the recent years in regard of the main theoretical fields in this study – Branding, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty, and Rebranding?
- What is the core problem that is being defined in these papers?
- Is there equilibrium between the definitions of the same theories and terms in the different papers?
- Can all of the theories presented in these papers be applied in the current study and if not, which ones could be regardless?
- What is the literature gap that is being researched in these papers and is it relevant to the current paper?

Then following the second and the third steps, two separate databases has been selected in order to find the relevant literature – Emerald and ABI/INFORM. Additionally, the electronic resources of the Aalborg University Library were used to back up the research. As for identifying only relevant to the problem stated in this study and papers answering the abovementioned questions, the following keywords were used: “Branding”, “International Branding”, “Brand Image”, “Brand Loyalty”, “Rebranding”, “Corporate Rebranding”, “Services Rebranding”, including various combinations between them. Due to the selected methodological approach and paradigm, only peer-reviewed papers were selected where more recent articles had a priority advantage. As it can be observed in the following chapter, the academic theorization of rebranding is not at its peak yet so as much researches are conducted, the more the chances of different outcome data are better.

For narrowing down the amount of found literature, first their titles were reviewed, second, from these which left, the abstracts were reviewed and finally from the latest by skimming through the papers a total number of 17 articles were selected. Appendix 1 consist of a descriptive list of all of these articles, including author, year of publication, titles, country of origin and brief description.

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following chapter the main theories that underlines the problem stated in this paper will be deeply described. Including Branding, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty and Rebranding. All of these theories have a strong relationship and all have direct and/or indirect effect on one another.

3.1. Branding

Before going deeper into branding theories, first some core theoretical ground has to be specified. To be more exact, the brand itself has to be defined as a term. According to the Oxford American Dictionary (1980), brand is:

“(noun): a trade mark, goods of a particular make; a mark of identification made with a hot iron, the iron used for this; a piece of burning or charred wood, (verb): to mark with a hot iron, or to label with a trade mark.”

The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English formed relatively the same definition in 1934. However, with the difference of time:

“(noun) Piece of burning or smouldering wood, torch, (literaly); sword (poet.); iron stamp used red-hot to leave an indelible mark, mark left by it, stigma, trademark, particular kind of goods (all of the best bb.). (verb) Stamp (mark, object, skin), impress indelibly (is branded on my memory)”

The abovementioned definitions clearly indicate the commercial development of that word, however illustrate the common origin. In general, in its passive form brand is described as an object by which an impression is formed and in its active form – the process of forming this impression (Clifton et al., 2003). Nowadays, this trend continues and in its latest edition, Oxford Dictionary of Business and Management (2009) defines brand as a “*tradename used to identify a specific product, manufacturer, or distributor*”, completely removing its primal origin and focusing entirely on the commercial meaning of this word.

3.1.1. Elements of the brand

In this section, only visual elements of the brand will be reviewed. The rest will be explained throughout the next parts of the literature review chapter according to the essentials of the discussed theories.

According to Clifton et al. (2003), the elements of the brand might be any of the following and/or combination between them: name, letters, number, a symbol, a signature, a shape, a slogan, a colour, a sound, a particular typeface. Among them all, the name, according to Clifton et al., is the most important element because it can be communicated as a universal language tool. Companies should try to stick to their brand name and, to preferably, never change it. However, the name itself is not enough for companies to achieve visual distinctiveness. It should be combined with other elements in a harmonious manner. And there are a lot of examples for this in the practice – Nike and McDonalds with their logo and slogan for example. They form a bond between the elements so strong that they, in time, become inseparable. (Clifton et al., 2003)

Furthermore, this is not the case in every single market. For example, in the highly-developed markets where the customers are particularly sophisticated, this theory is not always applicable. This is especially seen in the example of the fashion brand Diesel, which changed its name leaving all the other brand elements the same as before and succeeded. Companies generally change their

names due to one of the following two reasons: there is a change in the ownership, or the name is misleading.

3.3.2. Corporate Branding

The theory of corporate branding is born from the concepts of product branding. The earliest definitions of corporate branding were based only on the theory that it is just a development of a name, logo and slogan. Nowadays, researchers (Simoës and Dibb, 2001; de Chernatony, 2006) all agree that corporate branding is more than that. It is more like “physical and functional attributes and socio-psychological beliefs and values” that are related with a specific product or a service (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2010, p. 48).

There is a new perspective to the marketing that corporate branding brings – it uses company’s mission, vision and culture as a powerful selling tool. In short, corporate branding is the promise that companies make to its stakeholders (Foster et al., 2010). The main view behind corporate branding is that in its roots is the assumption that customers build images of the company based on their experience. (Heding et al., 2009). The corporate branding concept in a contrary of product branding requires a holistic approach, meaning that everyone in the company has to be fully involved in the idea and the values of the brand. For that reason, for corporate branding to be successful it has to be based on one constantly developing company’s story (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2010).

A crucial concept for corporate branding is corporate identity. It basically is defined as the company’s mission, vision and values that brings uniqueness to this organisation and furthermore, differentiate it from the other competitors by building a competitive advantage (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2010; Balmer and Gray, 2000; Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Kay, 2006; Knox, 2004; McDonald et al., 2001). Sayed in a different way, corporate identity is the way company communicate its core ideas, what it stands for and how it does it.

Burt and Sparks (2002), go even further by saying that in order to promote the corporate brand, the decision-makers, the management of the organisation should ensure that there is no gap between the three main (according to them) components: Vision, Culture and Image.

Corporate Branding Decisions

Relatively the same as in the decisions strategic management literature, those of corporate branding can be separated in two distinguished groups according to Griffin (2002) – strategic and operating:

- Strategic decisions – their main focus is for management to identify and maximize the place company has within the environment.
- Operating decisions – their main focus is to develop the brand on daily basis through some activities based on a certain tactic.

However, some organisations use rather different approach, which represent some form of specialisation in some tasks as an answer to the complex variety of information. This tactic often leads to increase in the organisation ability to adapt and to respond to the environment (Griffin 2002).

According to Griffin (2002) there are two groups of factors that influence the corporate branding decision-makers (see Figure 2):

- External factors – environmental uncertainty and institutional environment;
- Internal factors – business exposure and top management philosophy.

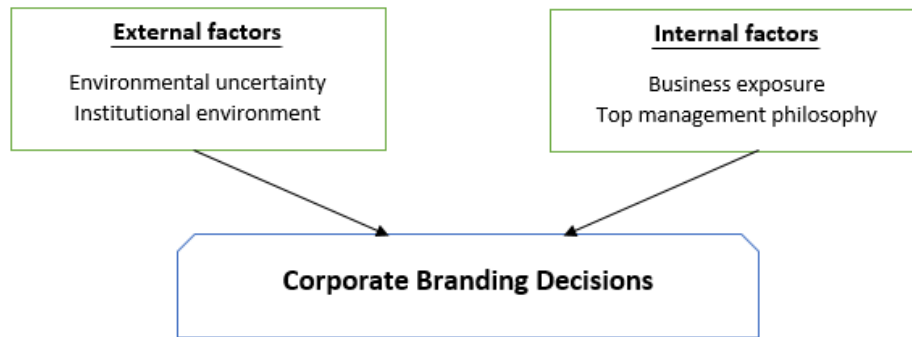


Figure 2 *Corporate branding decisions*
(adopted by Griffin 2002)

Importance of corporate branding to globally oriented companies

According to Souiden et al. (2006), with the increasing rate of globalisation and the businesses that are looking at other than domestic markets, corporate branding is becoming an important factor that companies cannot ignore. For example, there are even cases of merges of two organisations with already established corporate brands which they want to keep. This is causing some problems not only for the companies but for consumers as well. Such merges in the past are SonyEricsson, DaimlerChrysler and many others. The main problem is not actually that customers struggle to remember the company name, but that they are not sure about the company identity. The main concerns are – which values are adopted in the new company, what is the new company's vision (Souiden et al., 2006). On the contrary, when the merge is between companies with strong and developed brands it can lead to transfer the positive associations with the old brands to the new one and boost sales, resulting in increasing brand equity.

3.3.3. Services Branding

In today's world where it can be observed that there is a shift in the output from manufacturing to services led by the raised demand for financial and leisure services. Therefore, brands have and will have a crucial role in pleasing the customers' needs which become more and harder to fulfil.

Companies promoting a specific brand will now have to ensure that they can deliver services with high standards and quality which is communicating its vision and values and it is based on a commitment for customer satisfaction (Clifton et al., 2003).

According to Clifton et al. (2003), corporations that use the brand not only externally, but as an internal organisational principal are among the most successful companies in regards of branding. A popular example is the founder of Virgin Atlantic – Richard Branson and his determination to give to the ordinary people a better proposition than his competitors. No matter if it is in the financial area, the train transportation, air traveling, this determination communicates to organisation's customers his vision and values, which acts as a filter for the development of the organisation itself (Clifton et al., 2003).

In general, these which are among the best services brands are actually these, which in their core are built around the vision and the values of a unique business idea. The most important thing is that the employees of the company are fully committed and fascinated by that idea. If that is true, through their enthusiasm, they will help with sustaining it and communicating it with not only company's customer, but its supplier and other people as well (Clifton et al., 2003).

3.2. Brand Image

In the literature, brand image is presented as the perception of a brand in the mind of consumers that is being created when decoding brand identity facets, meaning that through communication tools customers build a picture of that brand in their heads which in the end result in a brand image.

According to Roy and Benerjee (2014) those brand identity facets are:

- Physique;
- Personality;
- Culture;

- Self-Image;
- Reflection, and;
- Relationship

This definition did not change significantly during the years. Most of the researchers in this theoretical field are talking about the inner beliefs, the mental perceptions of an individual towards a brand as a moving force of what brand image truly is. According to Keller (1993 cited by Lee et al., 2009, p. 1093) brand image is the “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand association held in consumer memory”. This indicate that brand image is not a physical object, but it is rather a way of memorizing a brand and giving it unique qualities depending on who exactly is the one observing the brand. Now, this suggests that brand image is rather different for different people. However, not surprisingly for marketers, this is something that can be affected. There are different mainly communication tools that marketing experts that build a brand use in order to position the company in its customers minds. Those are closely chosen and strategically executed marketing messages that in one way or another influence the internal belief of the brand’s consumers in a desired way (Lee et al., 2009).

With other words, brand image is more of a description of what people think and feel about a specific brand. It is described as a mental image, which is unique for each brand and it is perceived in sometimes unique way by the consumers (Faircloth, 2005, cited by Lee et al., 2009).

According to Lee et al. (2009) brand image is something that act as a representation of individual symbolism that people relates with a brand, which is constructed by descriptive and evaluated information related with a specific brand. And it is two-ways relationship – not only consumers give a feedback to the company and form the image, but the stronger the brand picture they have in their minds, the better companies can actually communicate corporate messages and hence influence those consumers. Therefore, brand image is actually a very important factor that in a way determine customers’ behaviour. And this is also true in business-to-business market where

brand image has an important role. The reason behind this is that for companies as well as for consumers it is hard to differentiate between products and services, based only on their tangible attributes (Lee et al., 2009).

Furthermore, brand image concept is built by the perception that it can lead to positive feelings and good attitude towards the brand (Roy and Benerjee (2014). Brand image is related with the feelings customers have towards the brand, their general attitude, but also to the brand credibility and brand character. Furthermore, Kotler et al. (2003) suggest that brand image is in a deeper mental level, presented as a set of beliefs that consumers have toward a certain brand.

3.2.1. Brand image and Brand identity

Abovementioned indicates that there is a linkage between brand image and brand identity. In fact, some researchers like Roy and Benerjee (2014) believe that these two theories are emerging. Before actually go deeper into this link, brand identity has to be defined separately. Aaker (1991, cited in Roy and Benerjee, 2014) states that brand identity is a combination of brand meanings which are contained in the brand's products, organisation, symbol and person. Through the right communication channels – internal and external, the true brand identity is actually that, which specifies the mission, vision and values of the company. The identity of the brand is truly the one thing that makes this brand unique and distinguished from other competitive brands.

Actually, the concept of brand identity is the one which helps marketing specialists to spread among the targeted audience of the company its unique characteristics. This is so called brand identity communication which is in the beginning of the relationship between the company (more precisely its brand) and its customers. Therefore, it allows the management to better position the company in the minds of its customers and more importantly to provoke strategic approaches in the decision-making process (Roy and Banerjee, 2014).

Some researchers like Silveria (2013, cited by Roy and Banerjee, 2014) believe that brand identity is actually something that is built over time with the main focus being on the management with their input and on the other side there are companies consumers which are also part of this process. In fact, customers play crucial role in forming the brand identity through constant feedback which they provide to the management of the company.

In the literature, there is an agreement between researchers (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Grayson and Martinec, 2004 cited by Roy and Benerjee, 2014) that there are several factors that are in the core of shaping the brand identity:

1. Competition;
2. Industry;
3. Environment conditions, and;
4. Partners' actions – being media, distribution, consumers etc.

According to Roy and Benerjee (2014), brand image inconsistencies, in particular that being the gap between its identity and image, can even act like a change of the core values which are associated with the brand. In the real world, there are many examples of such brand image inconsistencies. One being the Hugo Boss global brand that tries to differentiate as the world most successful fashion brand by being able to appeal the demands not only of women, but men as well. Despite that fact, according to Matthiesen and Phau (2005, cited in Roy and Benerjee, 2014), in Australia this brand is being seen only as such that provide only high-quality business suits for men. Another example is Adidas, which globally is positioned as mainly football oriented brand, in India it is observed as no different than all other competitors in the market like Puma, Nike, etc.

Therefore, companies should carefully measure the gap between brand image and brand identity in order to better position themselves. The more the gap is researched and known, the better the

chances of that company to be successful on the brand building perspective (Roy and Benerjee, 2014).

In the literature, there are different approaches on how to measure the gap-related problems. However, according to Sutar and Sustar (2005) where there are marketing-related problems that requires marketing mix oriented approach, the third “P” of the mix (Place) is highly neglected. Moreover, they believe that exactly this “P” is one of the core sources of identifying the gap between brand image and brand identity. What is the basis of their belief being that channel members usually decode the identity which furthermore is transferred to the brand customers. This, actually means that there are two main sources of information for customers:

1. Direct – from brand marketers which are using various communication channels, and;
2. Indirect – from other channel members.

More or less, this in basic economics is being described like a seller-buyer situation. According to Matthiensen and Phau (2010), brand knowledge is actually extremely important if companies want to achieve a consistent brand image between buyers and sellers.

3.2.2. The effect of brand image on brand equity

According to Martenson (2007, cited in Lee et al., 2009), a positive brand image would influence the behaviour of the consumers in a favourable way towards the brand in terms of raising the level of loyalty and constructing a positive word-of-mouth. In the current literature, researchers are suggesting that brand image is actually a very important factor that has an effect over brand equity (Biel, 1992, 1993; Villareji-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco, 2005, cited in Lee et al., 2009). Actually, the relationship is in a straight line – the more positive is the brand image, the more willing consumers are in terms of paying a bigger price, resulting in a bigger brand equity.

Actually, brand image is used by companies to increase their market share. This is done by companies with poor or at least lower brand image, which then buy another company with far better image. This not only result in a bigger market share but may improve the initial company brand image as well, transferring the image from the acquired company to the new one. However, this may not always be the case (Lee et al., 2009).

This statement is based on the balance theory presented by Heider in 1958. In short, in terms of brand image, it says that wherever there is imbalance in the brand image of two companies which are after a process of acquisition, customers through their behaviour and attitude are trying to restore the balance. This tool is well-known and well-used by companies all around the world. The theory states that the relationship is – “the attitude towards the original object, the more likely it is that similar attitudes will be held towards other associations related to that object” (Dalakas and Levin, 2005, cited in Lee et al. 2009, p 1094).

3.3. Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined in the international marketing literature as an internal perception that customers have and develop towards a brand. This perception then makes the customers to closely keep on track with the brand’s activities and buy its products and services without considering the options they have offered by this company’s competitors. (Lazarevic, 2012)

Some researchers like Ha and John (2010) make a direct link between brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. In the literature cited in their paper (Gustafsson et al. 2005, Bloemer & Kasper, 1995, Geise & Cote, 2000) are given many examples as a back up to that theory. It all ends in the statement that the efforts for customer satisfaction result in a commitment on brand loyalty.

This paper adapts the definition cited in Ha and John (2010, p. 1028):

“Brand Loyalty is a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour.”

The reason behind the decision to adapt this definition is because of the fact that it clearly indicates and distinguish the two main constraints of the brand loyalty theory. They are furthermore explained in details in the following subpart.

3.3.1. Brand Loyalty’s Two Dimensions

According to Lazarevic (2012) brand loyalty is constructed by attitudinal and behavioural elements:

- Attitudinal element of brand loyalty explains why some customers prefer one brand even if the price is higher and furthermore overcoming setbacks to the purchasing process;
- Behavioural element of brand loyalty explains the process of one customer who returns and purchase again the same brand.

The actual relationship between those two elements is that attitudinal element is more or less on a psychology level, meaning that it is the driver that causes the behaviour of a repurchase. The attitudinal element is the one which is in the core of the continuing brand loyalty in terms of drivers causing an individual to prefer buying one brand over and over again completely ignoring other competitors’ options (Lazarevic, 2012).

According to Ha and John (2010), the distinction between the two dimensions of brand loyalty, attitudinal and behavioural, has been used to furthermore understand the relationship between

customer satisfaction and loyalty. In fact, customer satisfaction is one of the core constructs to brand loyalty. Ha and John (2010, backed by Bennett & Bove, 2001, Bennett, Hartel, & McColl-Kennedy, 2005 and Jones & Suh, 2000) state that the increase in the level of customer satisfaction leads to increase in attitudinal brand loyalty. However, that does not directly reflect with the same force to the behavioural brand loyalty. Nevertheless, factors like brand trust and affection could result in forming both forms – attitudinal and behavioural (Ha and John, 2010).

Ekinci et al. (2011), goes even further by explaining the preceding of attitudinal element to behavioural one. In short, he describes the attitudinal component as the reason behind the act of purchasing, and the behavioural component as way of purchasing behaviour customers have – the act of purchasing. He furthermore, gives an example with one of the most popular mobile phone manufacturers in the world – Apple and their flag title – iPhone. He explains that no matter the price of the iPhone, no matter of the availability, loyal to the Apple's brand customers will never choose another smartphone. Loyal customers identify themselves with the brand, they express their own identity with the brand (Ekinci et al. 2011).

3.3.2. The role of Brand Loyalty

When it comes to the financial side of the business, companies strive to have more and more loyal customers as they always return to make another purchase on the one hand and are much less expensive for retention, resulting in constant and increased profit for that organisation. And this is not short-sighted, in long-term loyalty customers are willing and thus spending more currency into the company's account. Moreover, brand loyalty plays crucial part of placing barriers for other companies which are trying to enter a certain market (Lazarevic, 2012).

And this is particularly true about the services companies. Their main goal is to achieve customer satisfaction, which is something if done correctly and consistently, leading to brand loyalty. Therefore, an increase in the level of brand loyalty for services companies results in a raise in this company's profit. And those organisations have a powerful tool to higher the level of brand loyalty

– their main activity is to deliver value. However, for these companies, the crucial part is actually to find out what exactly is leading to customer satisfaction, therefore loyalty (Roy, 2011).

3.3.3. Building Brand Loyalty

Latif et al. (2014) have created so called FSTA framework for building brand loyalty, named by its four main elements – brand Familiarity, customer Satisfaction, brand Trust, and Attitudinal brand loyalty, as shown in Figure 3 below:

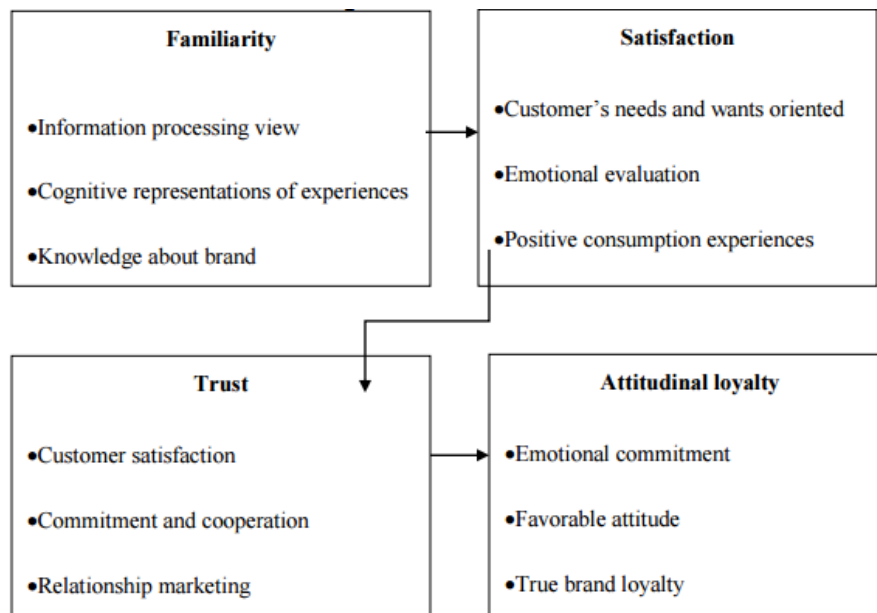


Figure 3 FSTA Framework for building brand loyalty
(Source: Latif et al. 2014, p. 552)

1. **Familiarity of the brand** – one view in the literature is that there is a link between the brand familiarity with the product familiarity which is related with the customer's iterations in form of experiences with the product that he/she has. Another view is that it is an information processing view, meaning that there is a much deeper meaning in the

experiences that one has with the brand - it is more on a cognitive level. The final point of view is related with the time that an individual spends acknowledging the brand. According to Latif et al. (2014), the more time customer is spending to research the brand and to process the brand information, the better the familiarity with that brand becomes;

2. **Satisfaction of customer of the brand** – customer satisfaction plays an enormous role in the long-term brand loyalty. In this case, customer satisfaction is regarded more like emotional evaluation from a judgment perspective, resulting in a process that consumers evaluate if the product or the service has met their expectations.
3. **Trust on the brand** – according to Latif et al. (2014), trust has become a central topic for researchers in the field of relationship marketing. It is based on the commitment trust theory, which is built on the foundations of long-term relational exchanges between those who represent the demand and offer. In this theory, trust affects the relationship and cooperation in a positive manner. Therefore, companies should emphasise on the trust when building or developing their brands.
4. **Attitudinal brand loyalty** - this final element of the FSTA Framework is generally used for examination of the attitudinal brand loyalty with the focus on the cognitive commitment with the brand. According to Latif et al. (2014), this commitment leads to increase in the preference for that same brand and therefore, makes the customer to buy over and over again. There are several factors that can be used to measure the attitudinal brand loyalty:
 - a. Customer's intentions for repurchase from the same brand;
 - b. Customer's brand recommendations to his/her peers;
 - c. The low level of changes in purchasing between competitive brands;
 - d. The level of attachment to the brand;
 - e. The willingness to pay a higher price.

3.4. Rebranding

From building a brand, tailoring its image in the minds of its customers and converting them to loyal ones, all affects the decision of a corporation to rebrand itself. This is not an easy decision as it might raise or crash company's income literally within days. In the literature, corporate rebranding is mostly seen as a process of changing/adjusting or even building up an entirely new brand from scratch with the focus of creating a new, in most cases better, image in the minds of the consumers and other business partners and furthermore make a clear differentiation with all the other competitors (Le et al. 2014).

This definition suggests that by corporate rebranding it might be understood that it could be actions or activities that are of various size – minor to evolutionary, could be in various assets – like logo, slogan etc. to fulfill only sporadic changes in the corporate positioning in the mind of its consumers. Nevertheless, it could be a total change, meaning every single aspect of the brand is transformed into something new, resulting in major changes in the way the company position itself. According to Le et al. (2014); (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2005), those two processes are called evolutionary and revolutionary rebranding (see Figure 4).



Figure 4 *Dimensions of rebranding changes*
(Source Muzellec and Lambkin, 2005. p. 805)

- 1) Evolutionary rebranding – this kind of rebranding is less noticeable by outside (from the company's stakeholders) observers;
- 2) Revolutionary rebranding – this kind of rebranding is much easier to identify because it is related with change of the definition and/or the name of the brand itself.

Muzellec and Lambkin (2005) suggests another way in looking at the rebranding process. This being the hierarchical model. The interesting part of this point of view is that companies are now observed based on their hierarchical level. They give an example with the German concern Volkswagen – this is the first hierarchical level, going down we go through a car brand such as Audi – another level, then going even further, there is a specific model of that car – e.g. RS8 – which adds another layer, at the end there is a specific component of that model – TDI – the final level. In their study Muzellec and Lambkin (2005) believe that the rebranding process may occur only on one or few of those levels or in all of them at a time. Figure 5 better illustrates this model:

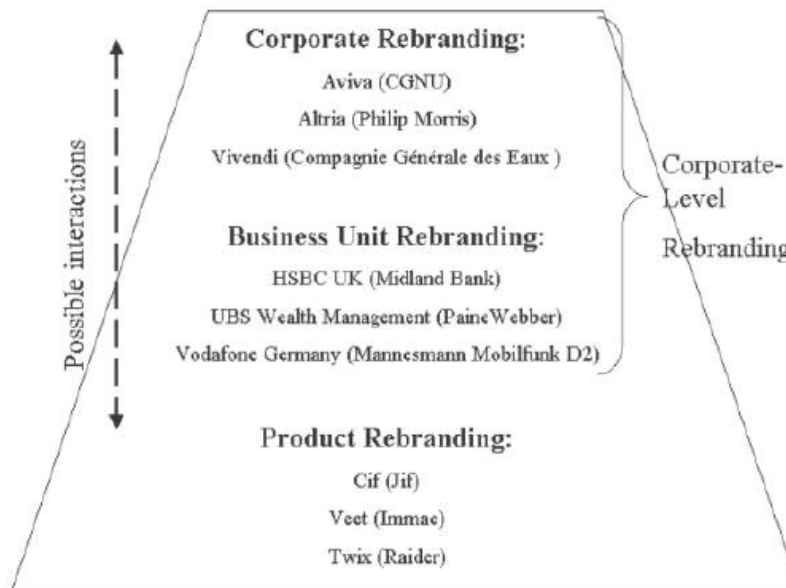


Figure 5 Hierarchical rebranding process
(Source: Muzellec and Lambkin (2005), p. 806)

Although, in some cases rebranding is related just with some changes, it actually requires from companies to pay a high cost (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004, cited in Le et al., 2014). This is due to the fact that the whole process of rebranding entirely deletes from existence some or all of the attributes of a specific brand, which in result might jeopardize the image and the reputation of the brand and even make it worse. Therefore, it is crucial for companies to closely observe and acknowledge their customers reaction towards making changes in various brand attributes (Le et al. 2014).

In their study, Le et al. (2014), point out the important note that currently there is a dilemma regarding how exactly companies should go to the entire process of rebranding, which outlines the need of further research on the topic.

As far as the current trend in the existing literature about rebranding, there can be distinguished two main flows on the subject:

First one raising the question whether or not only few or all of the elements of a brand has to be changed, and;

Second one raising the question whether or not rebranding can actually increase the value and preference of a brand.

However, Le et al. (2014) have made the conclusion that the studies related with the topic of rebranding are more or less either descriptive case studies or exploratory investigations. Typical examples for the prior ones are Lambkin and Muzellec (2010); Melewaret al. (2005) and Muzellec and Lambkin (2007), and for the other ones - Lomax and Mador (2006); Muzellec et al. (2003) and Stuart and Muzellec (2004). According to Ing (2012, cited in Le et al., 2014) until this moment, empirical studies are mainly directed towards some of the constructs of the corporate rebranding strategies like brand value or brand preference rather than the process as a whole.

When it comes to the actual factors that determines the customer perception from the corporate rebranding point of view when creating a new brand, one of them is customer attitude towards the old/original brand. Another factor according to Le et al. (2014) is the level of knowledge customers have about the brand products or services. Therefore, the role of the moderators in this process play the attitude towards the brand name and product expertise.

3.4.1. Rebranding motives

The corporate management could have various motives behind getting to the decision to perform a rebranding process. However, Collange (2013) suggests that there are four main motivators that influence this choice:

- 1) **Ownership structure change** – this being mergers, acquisitions, joint-ventures, etc. A typical example of such rebranding is HSBC which acquired both the British bank Midland, and the French – CCF. Both of those banks changed their names to the new owner's one – HSBC;
- 2) **Corporate strategy change** – this being refocus, going global, etc. For example, one of the world biggest telecom companies in Europe – France Telecom, decided to make a single brand name for all of their portfolio services, resulting in a new brand name – Orange;
- 3) **Competitive position change** – this being too old brand image, problems in the reputation, etc. Typical examples, due to never stopping scandals or continuously fails in service delivery French companies Credit Lyonnais, Vivendi and EuroDisney changed their names respectively to LCL, Veolia and Disneyland Paris;
- 4) **External environmental change** – this being mainly macroeconomic obstacles and/or unfortunate events – legal obligations, major crisis or catastrophe. For example, the American airline company ValuJet changed their name because of a fatal incident.

3.4.2. Principals of Corporate rebranding

Despite the numerous advantages that companies can take when performing rebranding strategy, it is almost always related with high risk. According to Collange (2014) the brand name is actually the crucial construct element of the corporate identity. That is the reason why there is a possibility that the current consumers of a specific brand may fear a potential change in one of the brand attributes, which they have enjoyed until the moment of the change. This might lead to irreversible consequences. It may even to lowering the brand's market share, customers' base, or even totally crash the business model, which might also not be offset by the acquisition of new customers. Nevertheless, the rebranding might have a serious negative influence not only externally – customers, but internally as well – company's employees, resulting in lowering their productivity or even make them leave the company they once believed in (Collange, 2014).

In their study, Opuni et al. (2013) outline that in order for companies not to end up being another example of a company which failed in its rebranding strategy no matter if it is only a change in a single brand attribute or more, organisation should follow the following principals:

First principal, in order to shape the vision which is compatible with customers needs, organisations should strive to find a balance in the need to continue pleases the desires of the corporate stakeholders and in the same time trying to stay as close as possible to the brand's original mission, vision and values;

Second principal, in order to build a sustainable new brand, organisation should try to keep at least some of the previous brand attributes or qualities, so that it can be built a bridge between the new corporate look and the old one;

Third principal, in order to perform a successful rebranding strategy, organisations should fulfil the demands of new market segments that are closely related with the current target of the existing brand.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

After the main theoretical fields were discussed in the previous chapter, now it is time to present and analyse the real practical situation. Starting from the general to the specific with the global IT industry, followed by the IT Outsourcing business. Then, after the general picture of the business that this thesis is directed towards is being defined and discussed some examples of failed and successful rebranding strategies are going to be presented. Finalising this chapter with the case of Imperia Mobile and a general discussion over the analytical part of the thesis.

4.1. Discussion of the literature

This section represents the author's critical view on the reviewed literature in the previous chapter. This literature included the four main theories, being – Branding, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty and Rebranding. In general, the core issues that are related with the literature is mainly related with the fast changing business environment which require new and innovative ways to overcome the obstacles of everyday marketing processes.

Furthermore, during the literature review, various authors which conducted their research in the recent years stated that there is an actual gap between the current theoretical knowledge and the real practical situations. This gap is mainly related with the lack of significant amount of empirical studies of rebranding available for the general public. Most of the researches, according to my knowledge, are mainly conceptualizing a possible solution to a rebranding problem, however their theories and hypothesis were to some extend never put on a real scientific test by performing quantitative investigation methods. However, those studies are generally accepted by the scientific society which adds a sort of objectivism and reliability. Nevertheless, a more concrete framework or at least theoretical conceptualization has to be made on how to effectively measure the effect of the rebranding and the process live-stages themselves.

4.2. Global IT industry

Before actually going into the specifics of the topic, the more general business area has to be defined and analyzed in order to acknowledge from where the IT outsourcing companies begin. That is the global IT industry.

According to CompTIA IT research report (2017), the global IT industry have already passed the 3.4 trillion dollars milestone in 2016 and according to IDC (2017), this is only going to grow in the current year. As a majority of that financial flow is coming from the businesses themselves. However, it is extremely hard to determine if some concrete types of technology purchases are actually coming from the companies or the consumers.

If we take a look at the world map, the regional distribution of IT industry spending for 2016 will look like that (see figure 6):

- North American market – 34% with the USA market alone forming 28% or about 1 trillion dollars;
- Asia-Pacific region – 28%;
- European market – 23%;
- South American market – 8%
- African market – 7%

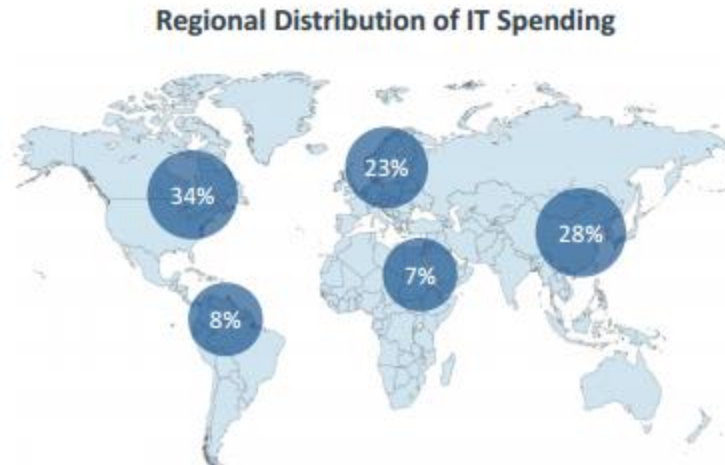


Figure 6 *Regional distribution of IT spending*
(Source: IDC)

Asian-Pacific IT market has grown significantly and the signs are that it will even continue to grow. This is mainly due to the Chinese and Japanese IT companies grow with addition to the very slow market growth in Europe.

According to the CompTIA industry report (2017) the IT market can be divided into 4 main components – hardware, software, IT services and telecom services (see figure 7). The spending in each of those categories completely differ in various countries. For example, some might be specialized in hardware production, others might not have strong influence in the software component, but to be very advanced in the telecommunication and wireless services. Taking the subject of this topic into account, the outsourcing business which will be defined in the following subpart of this chapter, lays into two of those components: IT Services (the majority) and Software.

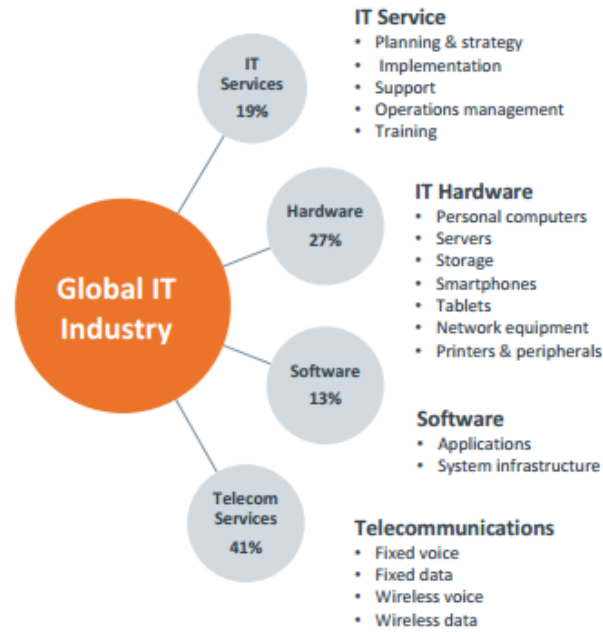


Figure 7 *Global IT Industry components*
(Source: IDC)

However, an impotent note has to be made when analysing the IT industry. As, nowadays, technology is everywhere and it is closely incorporated within other industries processes, products and services, it is extremely difficult the line between the IT industry alone and the rest to be defined.

When we take a look at the distribution between the sizes of the firms which operates in the IT industry, it follows the most common economical pattern. Meaning, the small and micro companies taking the vast majority of firms worldwide. According to the CompTIA industry research, the distribution is the following:

- Micro companies – 82.8%;
- Small companies – 15%;
- Medium-sized companies – 1.9%;
- Large companies – 0.3%.

4.2.1. Global IT Industry forecast and trends

According most of the researchers and professionals this year – 2017 will have steady growth. It is worth mentioning that it is almost the half of the year, so those forecasts may shift during the next couple of months. The Global IT Industry growth is according to:

- Gartner – 2.9%;
- IDC – 2.6%.

According to Forrester, the USA only market will grow with around 5.1%. This optimism is backed up by several industry indexes, one of which is CompTIA IT Industry Business Confidence Index which is on its highest peak in fifteen years.

However, in the modern connected society even the slightest change in one country might lead to positive or negative impact on the global industry. With the current economic challenges around the globe this IT Industry growth is not granted and might swiftly change.

CompTIA's IT Industry outlook 2017, suggests 4 main trends in the IT Industry this year:

- 1) The emerge of the cloud era tools;
- 2) For security to actually get safer, it first has to get worse;
- 3) The gap between the IT industry and the business is closed by so called Data teams;
- 4) Internet of Things change the physical world as we know it.

According to Deloitte 2017 Technology Industry Outlook there are several areas of interests which are showing significant growth rate in this year:

- 1) Machine learning;

- 2) Blockchain – or the core of the bitcoins system.
- 3) Digitalization of the enterprises;
- 4) Cloud Adoption;
- 5) Cybersecurity;
- 6) Virtual and Augmented reality.

Deloitte's technology outlook report also indicating the main strategies IT companies are using to take advantage of the industry growth:

- Organisations should transform the way they do business in order to adapt to the fast changing environment and the growing market. As the market evolves, this requires a significant expertise in a wide range of areas;
- Companies are now trying to deliver end-to-end solutions. Therefore, they combine their forces with other companies to acquire essential know-how;
- Another commonly used strategy among technology companies is to work closely with the giants on the field – Google, Amazon and Facebook.
- And the last strategy that, according to Deloitte, companies are using is to form conglomerates forming a multi-level expertise

4.3. IT Outsourcing business

According to STATISTA's IT Outsourcing dossier (2017), the IT Outsourcing is "the use of service providers for delivering IT-reliant business processes, application services, and infrastructure solutions.". Taking a more general perspective, outsourcing is basically to relocate some parts of the work process to outside companies – those companies are called outsourcing organisations. The foundation of the IT outsourcing business is considered to be for example cloud technologies or SaaS (coming from Software as a Service).

According to Faisal and Raza (2016), in general, by IT outsourcing it is understood that some physical and/or human resources directed towards the IT processes of a company are passed by or contracted to a third party (vendor) who is highly specialized in providing IT services at a lower cost. Moreover, according to them, processes which are not crucial for the company are a very good foundation to outsource. Nowadays, the IT outsourcing is observed as a process of transferring an essential know-how from the outsourcing companies which are built around the idea of collecting a crucial industry and technology knowledge.

The fast growth of the information technology sector gave to the industry participants competitive advantages, efficiencies and effectiveness in the overall processes and end-services, however it is a huge challenge to the companies all around the world as, on the other hand, it requires handling much complex problems in the end product/service or even the workflow process. (Faisal and Raza, 2016)

Statistics about the size of the global IT outsourcing industry might vary based on the exact definition that is adapted by the data analyzation providers. According to the Information Services Group and STATISTA based on annual statistics on the global IT outsourcing industry, the estimated annual revenue of the industry is around 60-70 billion dollars (see Figure 8).

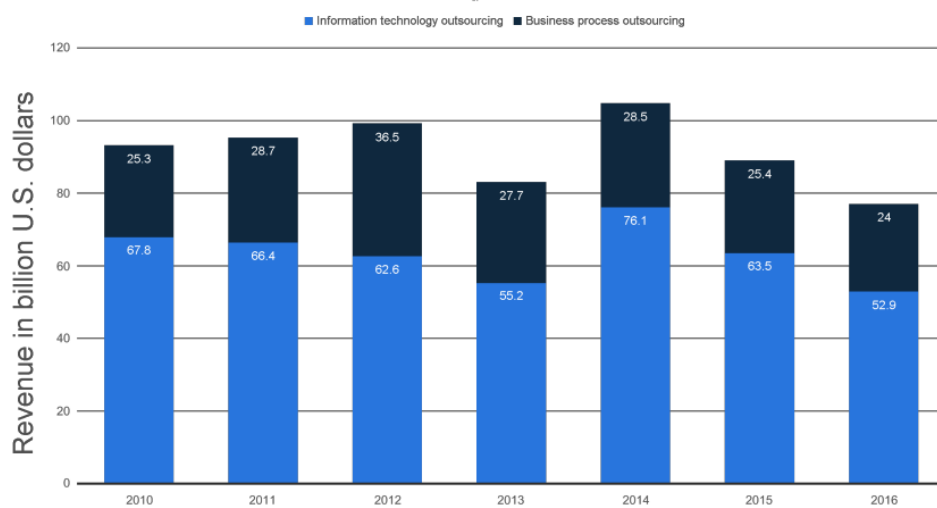


Figure 8 Global Outsourcing industry revenue
(Source: STATISTA)

Moreover, Gartner (2013) stated that the size of the outsourcing market in 2013 is approximately 280 billion dollars and growing. According to STATISTA (2017), the biggest share in the global outsourcing market have Networks and other outsourcing with almost 110 billion dollars spending, followed by Infrastructure and application outsourcing. The least part of that market has the infrastructure as a service which only started to grow from 2015 (see Figure 9).

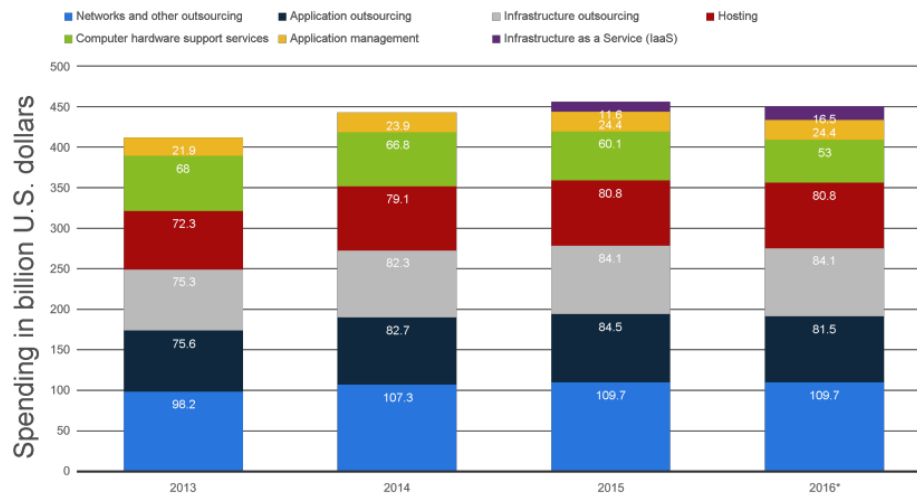


Figure 9 Global IT Outsourcing Market size
(Source: STATISTA)

4.3.1. IT Outsourcing motives

According to Faisal and Raza (2016) there are two main reasons behind the choice of outsourcing some processes to other companies. These being:

- 1) Lower the costs;
- 2) Get access to state-of-art technology which is available to highly specialized companies.

The most common expectation in organisations is that they will reduce their costs, raise the quality of the product or service they are providing, implement a better technology and increase the flexibility thanks to the outsourcing strategy (Faisal and Raza, 2016).

Outsourcing is what it comes at the end from efforts put in one direction forming a unique competitive advantage. Therefore, processes in the organisations which are not expected to add to the sustainability of the company are great for outsourcing. According to Faisal and Raza (2016), the top management and/or the strategic management are actually the most important roles in the outsourcing decision-making process. Moreover, outsourcing provide organisations with a better alternative instead of building its own IT infrastructure, processes, and acquiring significant professional expertise in a long-term.

4.3.2. IT Outsourcing factors

Nowadays technology is developing in such a fast pace that for companies it is getting really hard to stay on track with. That is why IT outsourcing is becoming more and more a popular choice as the outsourcing companies have the expertise and capabilities to continue ride the wave of the technological development.

One of the main issues in the outsourcing industry is to actually choose the right vendor. Due to the fact that the projects that are undertaken are becoming more and more complex it is of an essential importance to choose the outsourcing company which can take, develop, and release an end product and/or service at a lower price.

According to Faisal and Raza (2016) there are 4 main criteria which has to be researched before selecting the right outsourcing organisation:

- 1) Collection of relative intel on the past or current projects in the same field;
- 2) Outsourcing company's long-term financial stability;
- 3) The flexibility and desire to update technology;
- 4) Management culture.

Fink and Shoeib (2003) developed a framework that is used for describing the phases which decision-makers have to go through when choosing an outsourcing partner:

Phase 1 - Intelligence;

Phase 2 – Analysis/Planning;

Phase 3 – Strategy selection;

Phase 4 – Action, and;

Phase 5 – Evaluation/monitoring

4.4. Real examples of failed and successful rebranding strategies

In this section I am going to present examples of global brands that did their rebranding process right or wrong.

4.4.1. Five examples of successful rebranding

UBER

Uber is one of the most controversial companies nowadays. Its services are being banned in several countries with the number counting. Despite these, mainly European, regulations, the company is very successful in the countries where it operates.

When they redesigned their mobile applications icons, many people started wondering what is wrong and what happened with the good old U-shaped logo on a black background. Some people even started to argue that this act was just rebrand in the name of rebranding. Despite that fact, Uber has already established and executing their strategy.

According to Gorackowski (2017), the company plans were not just to freshen up the way the application looks, but to change the way their customers logically think about the organisation. They have created two completely separated logos – one for drivers, which are their partners, and one for the clients (see Figure 10) with the general idea that this could be used as a foundation for icons design for future growth.

The reason behind the success is that Uber actually took a very long time just to think about who they really are as an organisation and how do they manage their business. Only then they have successfully invented a style that reflect their vision.

Instagram

Without any doubt, Instagram is one of the most popular social media in the modern life with more than 400 million active users who upload approximately 80 million different pictures every single day.

According to Gorackowski (2017), they wanted to truly communicate their mission, vision and values to its users. Therefore, they have decided to take that step with rebranding their logo. In their case it was much harder for users to actually easily forget the old one and start enjoying and understanding the new one, mainly due to the “used to” factor. Instagram’s old logo generally represented a retro photo camera. They didn’t get entirely off this idea. However, they have just made it more simplified modern-looking and with warmer background. Moreover, they didn’t stop

there – they have made all the other “sister” applications having similar logo style – Boomerang, Hyperlapse and Layout.

The reason behind the success of Instagram rebranding is that they have found a very good way to visualize what they stand for, what they represent and how they actually fit in the society with no need to actually openly communicate it.

DC Comics

DC Comics is one of the most popular American comics creation studios in the world. They have created iconic super heroes like Batman, Superman, The Flash and many others.

One year ago, they have decided to rebrand with changing their logo. Although, it is very simple and according to the most DC fans looks like it is created in 1970's, this turned out to be their biggest advantage at the end. The uncomplicated look is made on purpose in order to be used universally while making it different and comfortably used on a wide number of medias without any additional effort.

To straighten the company's position about the new logo change, Amit Desai (DC Entertainment Senior VP of Marketing and Global Franchise Management) gave it his full support by stating that “the launch of the new logo is the perfect tribute to DC's legacy, exciting future and most importantly, our fans” (DC Official Press Release, 2016).

Apple

There is no actual need to define Apple as a company. Its brand is on the top of the charts for several years now and does not seem that there is a chance of this significantly changes in the near future.

Moreover, most of the branding articles are giving Apple as a must-read example of a successful rebranding strategy. In 1997 the company was extremely close to announce bankruptcy. Then Steve Jobs took over it for a second time and everything changed. It started producing products like iMac, iPod, iPad, iPhone and shortly after Apple became a company which everyone looks upon for the next technological wonder. (Business Insider, 2011)

The main advantage of Apple in terms of branding is that they successfully communicate their vision on all levels, starting from its CEO and getting to the sales representative level. All employees of the company understood the new company vision and then knew exactly how to address it. Additionally, they have created products which are very well-made and with futuristic for its early stages design which furthermore reflected as an extremely positive customer experience.

UPS

Nowadays UPS is one of the world's leaders in logistics. However, in the 1990's the company was far behind its main competitor in the US – FedEx which back then introduces overnight delivery and even package tracking using computer systems.

UPS then decide to rebrand themselves. They have changed their slogan from “Moving at the speed of business” to “What can brown do for you?” and continue building it by inventing characters like Mailroom guy and CEO within their ads. Their main goal was to show that they can help any person who is happened to be on the managerial position. Shortly after, this new communication approach started to give “fruits”, and UPS profit margins takeover those of FedEx in 2001. Years later, they have kept this strategy as their main communication tool.

Most valuable lesson that can be learned from this case is that forward-looking slogans that claim for company flexibility and adaptation to the ability of satisfying customer demand is something that worked very well for UPS.

4.4.2. Five examples of failed rebranding

BP

BP is one of the largest oil companies in the world. In 2000, they have decided that it is time for a change and performed a rebranding strategy changing their logo design. They have completely removed all of the elements of the old logo which stood by the company for more than 70 years keeping only the colour palette. The new logo is called Helios upon the Greek God of the sun.

The main idea behind that change was to represent the company's green growth strategy. However, there is nothing green about drilling oil and people understood that and they didn't take it very lightly. Additionally, an incident with an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 caused by BP put more salt into the wound. Greenpeace even launched a campaign asking internet users to come up with a better logo. There were extremely creative ideas all of which used the "green" sun logo against the oil company.

According to Hardy (2013), the cost of this logo is roughly estimated on 211 million US dollars with company investing in marketing and PR approximately 125 million dollars annually.

GAP

One of the most common examples for failed rebranding strategy is the redesign of the logo of suits making company – GAP. In 2010, they have made a decision to rebrand by changing their 20 years old logo, which they did without any warning.

Then in the beginning, discussions have started across the designers' community, immediately growing into an internet boom. People started "protesting" against the new logo design in the social medias like Facebook and Twitter. What happened after is mostly known as "the fastest branding turnaround of all times" (Hady, 2013), as only six days after releasing the new logo, GAP have

decided to put back their old one. According to Hady (2013), the cost of the rebranding process of GAP is estimated on 100 million US dollars.

Pepsi

Pepsi is a company that does not need presentation. However, they have always struggled with their brand identity due to the fast-paced competitive race with Coca-Cola – the company which presents in almost all Marketing books.

In 2008, Pepsi have decided to change their logo yet again after various other attempts during the years. According to the company, this was meant to represent a circular icon with “cheeky smile”. However, not many people actually liked it. According to Forbes Magazine (cited by Hady, 2013) “The white stripe on the new logo varies across Pepsi products, getting wider or thinner depending on product. The design team that spearheaded the campaign explains that they’re supposed to be “smiles,” but we don’t really see it.”.

According to Hady (2013), the estimated cost for the entire rebranding process of 3 years is approximately 1.2 billion US dollars where the logo mark alone cost them around 1 million.

MasterCard

MasterCard is yet another example of failed rebranding attempt. Its original logo is probably one of the most recognizable and iconic logos, maybe staying in a line with the current Visa logo.

When they have decided to redesign their logo few years ago, it didn’t go too well. Actually, the original logo of MasterCard is one of the simplest ones. The new one had a third circle in the middle and used shadows and gradients which made it extremely hard and heavy to handle. And there was even a transparency added. Shortly after they have returned to the original logo and in 2016 they have finally showed a new version that was generally accepted.

Tropicana

Tropicana is one of the brands of PepsiCo, which alone was given as an example for a failed rebranding. Now it's juice brand is joining up with their rebranding attempt.

According to the critics (Hady, 2013), Tropicana have lost their identity by changing the whole look of the package. And the customer reaction did not get late. The sales reports indicated that after the new design was released, the brands sales were plummeted by 20%. That forced PepsyCo to bring back the old original design of the carton juice package.

According to Hady (2013), there were no exact number published, but whole rebranding move from changing the design to reverting it cost PepsyCo around 137 million US dollars in sales for the period between 1st of January to 22nd of February alone.

4.5. The case of Imperia Mobile

Founded only two years ago, Imperia Mobile has already become the biggest mobile development studio in Bulgaria. It has over 150 IT specialists: software developers, web designers, QA engineers and certified product managers. The company delivered more than 50 projects of local and international magnitude and their digital solutions are used by over 2 million mobile users across the world. Imperia Mobile rapidly entered into the business specifics of industries such as healthcare, transportation, insurance, financial services, telecommunications, digital media and e-commerce. Although their main market for the moment is in Bulgaria, the company has also delivered software solutions to clients in UK, Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, Austria, Russia, India, USA and Canada.

Imperia Mobile is now a leading provider of highly customized client-oriented software solutions in the South-eastern European region (SEE). At first, Imperia Mobile have started as a company

offering only mobile application development solutions. Now its portfolio includes wide range of end-to-end customer solutions. However, more than 10 years' experience of their key specialists, the company faced a real fast-paced growth in the last 2 years. This allowed them to learn valuable lessons about the industry, the practices and the essence of the work. Therefore, they have expanded their offered services to Mobile and Web Applications, Enterprise Solutions, Cloud Deployment, Quality Assurance, Consultancy and Art and Design Solutions.

Despite that fast growth, becoming a leading company in the region is not enough for Imperia Mobile, they feel that that is just the beginning for them and they would like to expand on a global scale.

According to Imperia Mobile website (2017), there are four main focus points which determine the quality of their services

- 1) “Your success is our focus” – probably the main competitive advantage of the company is its employees' mindset which is always customer-centric and product ownership oriented. They strive to understand the clients' idea analyse it and then overdeliver. Additionally, they believe that they offer a level of flexibility that not many emerging market companies could offer;
- 2) “One partner, endless capabilities” – because of the experience in the field, the company have built a wide range of competences and expertise. They are very proud of the fact that are one of the few that are perfectly balanced between business-to-business and business-to-customers solutions. Resulting, in industry recognition by various companies;
- 3) Unmatched Innovation and scalability” – currently the company is participating numerous early adopters' programs, it has its own IT academy, training around 15% of the industry specialists in Bulgaria and is onboarding more than 60 new experts each year;

- 4) “World-class partner” - the company have quality-proving certificates like ISO 9001 and very shortly ISO 27001. It is partnering with global giants in the face of Google, IBM and Microsoft.

Thanks to the dedicated team of specialists and the fast growth, the company have won several major awards during the past two years:

- In 2015 – Business project of the year, b2b Media Annual Awards;
- In 2015 – Business debut of the year, b2b Media Annual Awards,
- In 2016 – IT Project of the year – Medium and Small Enterprises, Computerworld Magazine Annual Awards;
- In 2016 – IT Project of the year – Corporate Sector, Computerworld Magazine Annual Awards;
- In 2016 – Delivering Business Value in Bulgarian Outsourcing – GSA (Global Sourcing Association) European Awards.
- Its business partners which counted on Imperia Mobile for the development, like Credo, Comac Medical, BroshuraBG have won different awards for their mobile and web services.

Imperia Mobile’s mission is to deliver maximum value to its customers by designing, developing, implementing and maintaining custom software solutions, aligned with their specific business needs and potential. Their team of highly professional web designers, software developers and QA engineers who are always eager to build world-class applications, while incorporating the partners’ goals and ambition. Imperia Mobile’s values include client and employee satisfaction, stable operational efficiency, removing communication barriers and mutual trust.

So, if everything went really that well, what triggered the need for them to rebrand? Well, it was generally because of two main reasons:

- 1) The constant growth of the company led to developing not only mobile apps but also web and other software solutions. That is why at first, they needed to change "Mobile" as a word itself;
- 2) In order for us to create our own identity they needed to differentiate and separate the brand from "Imperia" family. "we wanted to distinguish, to cut the ties with Imperia Online which is our sister company and focus only on building Upnetix brand mainly because we are self-sustaining company" (Atanasov, 2017)

According to Yulian Atanasov (2017, see Attachment 2 for the full interview), Business Development Manager in Imperia Mobile (now Upnetix) "we [The company] decided to rebrand Imperia Mobile to Upnetix because we wanted our company name, brand and identity to better reflect our services and our business model.". Furthermore, he noted out that "some people thought that we [Imperia Mobile] are telecom because of the "Mobile" word".

In terms of preparation and action plan they have followed and executed several carefully thought steps as suggested by Yulian Atanasov (2017):

1. Make a final decision to rebrand;
2. Start working on a detailed plan;
3. Choose a new name
 - a. Choose a catchy, short name
 - b. Check if the internet domain is available;
 - c. Reflect that they are software company
4. Prepare an internal and external plan
 - Internal - all processes that are going to be inside the company and affecting only the employees;
 - External - communication with their customers and partners

5. Create a logo, company colors, a website reflecting the services and solutions that they are offering. They needed a more corporate-looking website.
6. Business cards, notebooks, pens and all the other branding materials;
7. They even hired an external PR agency to help them with the external communication and guide them through the rebranding process in terms of communication.

4.6. Discussion of the examples and the case of Imperia Mobile

There are many lessons that can be learned by examining even a single company rebranding strategy execution. Based on the continuous and stable growth in the IT Outsourcing industry companies all around the globe have to be prepared to take the step to rebrand a process or even the whole company as in the case of Imperia Mobile. This kind of flexibility is crucial in order to stay up to date and to be able to “swim among the sharks” in that face-paced sea of technology innovations.

One of the most common similarity between the successful examples of rebranding is that corporate awareness and goal to achieve something bigger, by the means of change, without leaving behind the corporate vision and values. Those companies like Uber and DC Comics for example performed their rebranding by incorporating their main values. And the beauty of it is that there is no one-way-always-working solution, meaning every single company could have unique missions, vision and values and still build their rebranding strategy around them. Of course, that is something, among all others, which could have been changed as well. Companies could change their values, however should keep their fundamental beliefs which customers are used to and agreed on.

Another similarity is that all the successful rebranding examples are built upon a general idea. A higher belief that inspires the change. Rebranding strategies that does not have a well-thought idea behind them are most likely going to be with hard-risk low-reward outcome.

Furthermore, huge budget does not make the rebranding successful or not. BP is the most obvious example. Company have spent 211 million US dollars and all that they have received is people's outrage. Steve Jobs' initial rebranding strategy was to change the way people think about technology and its evolution and development, and especially what they believe Apple stands for.

The rebranding process is very often underestimated. Upnetix's (Imperia Mobile's) Business Development Manager Yulian Atanasov says that "to be honest, the rebranding process was way more difficult than we thought. There were a lot of things that we didn't anticipate when we first started the process". Many companies fail because they didn't take time to think about all the possibilities that this process provides and requires.

Nevertheless, companies might fail from overestimating as well, which is just as bad as the underestimation. PepsiCo have believed that they are making their products simpler, closer to the customers. They have invested time and effort in order to perform this rebranding strategy as best as possible. However, they could not have arguments with the numbers and the extreme sales drop showed them that what they believed is better for their customers is actually the one that caused the failure of their campaign.

Imperia Mobile (Upnetix) is now at the very end of their rebranding process. It is still too early to draw any conclusions. However, what could be noticed is that they have followed the examples of the successful rebranding strategies of already proven companies. They have incorporated their employees' mindset, their corporate values into the new brand. Furthermore, they have created list of steps and rebranding related tasks that had to be completed. By doing so every single employee of the company have participated in the process making them feel like a real part of the company.

CHAPTER V: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following part will present author's recommendations entirely built on the body of knowledge collected and reviewed in the Literature Review chapter with addition to the real world practical analysis of the previous chapter. By combining them several main points might be highlighted which are formed to help marketing specialists and decision makers in emerging market companies when they chose to use the rebranding strategy as one of the tools of going global.

5.1. The initial part of the rebranding process

- **Plan the rebranding process extremely carefully**

Before the actual start of the rebranding process, the most important activity that has to be done is to make plan. This plan involves a lot of research, business analysis, etc. It should also include all the people who are involved with specific tasks that have to be finalized and deadlines for their completion. Delegate the tasks according to the employees extremely careful and make sure you have them in control.

When planning a change in the brand name for example, companies should not focus only on the name itself. Nowadays, the internet presence is of an essential importance for every corporation. Therefore, they have to make sure that the new domain which is going to represent the new corporate look online is available. Buying an already taken domain might be an extremely time-consuming negotiation deal which have to be included in company's rebranding plan.

Planning is even more essential when companies are rebranding due to global expansion. Companies should therefore, carefully analyse the specifics of the markets they are planning on expanding, including customer behaviour, cultural differences, etc. For instance, one brand logo could be extremely well-accepted in a specific country, but its colours might be offensive in others.

- **Trivial tasks may become big**

Here is, where most of the companies underestimate the rebranding costs, effort and time required. Imperia Mobile was not an exception. According to their Business Development Manager “the main issue was that we didn’t take into consideration a lot of small tasks that we had to do, which at the end led to rescheduling the announcements”.

Example of such small trivial tasks might be all the marketing communication branding materials like pen, business cards, notebooks, etc. All of those tasks are related with costs according to the company size, but most importantly are time consuming. They first need to be designed, approved, send to an external vendor to make them, then wait the time required for their manufacturing and finally delivery time. If this process is not well-planned from the beginning it might cause a lot of headaches for the marketing managers and even delaying the announcement of the rebranding.

- **Company should inform its employees about the changes in the brand**

This will help with the internal acceptance. Employees are a key element of the corporate organism and communicating the rebranding strategy with them in the right way will: first, eliminate any doubt or negative emotions that they could feel about the change, which will result in lowering their productivity, losing motivation, which additionally, may spread across all the organisation levels, and second, they could have creative and innovative ideas about the change which will improve the rebranding strategy plan and execution.

According to Yulian Atanasov (2017), “the main factor, first of all is how your colleagues are going to react on the new change”. Therefore, essential part of Imperia Mobile’s rebranding strategy was directed towards the internal communication and the needs and fears of their employees. Some of their uncertainties might be that “they might think that their jobs are at risk or somebody is buying the company”. Despite that fact, somebody could be really buying a company. Then the internal communication is even more crucial due to abovementioned reasons.

A good idea is to organize corporate events like parties or team buildings in order to better communicate the rebranding idea with your colleagues. Imperia Mobile, for example, “organized a party to announce the new brand, which” - according to them, “was very successful because the employees liked it a lot” (see Attachment 2).

- Company should inform its clients and partners about the change in the brand

Accordingly, company should communicate the brand changes with their business partners. Business relations are not usually as fragile as customers ones. However, there might be few issues that may occur:

- 1) Business partners might be confused if that rebranding process changed some or all of the aspects of the workflow which you conduct together. Also, they might be wondering if the new brand still proposes the same set of services and solutions;
- 2) Legal setbacks – business partners might be forced to renew their contracts with the rebranded company. This is especially true in the case of Imperia Mobile, where they have not only changed their brand name, but they have transformed from Limited to Joint-Stock company.

In this line of speaking, Yulian Atanasov (2017) states that “in terms of B2B and mainly our client communication we had to be very careful how to inform our current clients for the rebranding. Some of them had to sign new contracts with us. We wanted to be very clear why we are rebranding.”.

5.2. During the rebranding process

- **Company should not only inform but explain the change to its customers**

There are companies that fear the customer feedback and the possibility that they might not like the new change or because of the fact that it might look like the change is made due to a big management failure with the old brand. However, this might lead to even bigger customer disorientation. Therefore, companies should then strive to provide not a fully transparent, but acceptable explanation of the reasons behind the rebranding which customer to understand and believe in. Loyal customers might be extremely hard to convince with the need of a new brand as they are already used to and, to some extent, addicted to the old brand.

- **Company should make sure that all marketing activities are directed towards specific customers' tasks and makes the changes as simple and easy to comprehend as possible**

This is mainly done to avoid misunderstanding, surprise and negative emotions towards the new brand. In other words, this recommendation means, that companies should stay back from any other changes apart from the one which were already planned in the rebranding strategy.

According to Collange and Banche (2015) improving some characteristic of the marketing mix or the product does not reflect on the acceptance level of the brand's customers in regard with the rebranding. In fact, it only adds to the anxiety that they are feeling and increase their level of worrying feelings.

- **Collect external feedback**

External feedback is in some cases crucial for the success of the rebranding strategy. It gives companies another point of view which provides a priceless opportunity for marketing managers to clear some of the errors and mistakes before they actually grow bigger.

In the case of Imperia Mobile, they have hired an external PR agency not only to help them with the communication and the overall corporate presence, but to give them an opinion as an external observer. Their feedback helped to shape the rebranding strategy of the company according to its Business Development Manager – Yulian Atanasov (see Appendix 2).

- **Do not underestimate the online presence of the company – website and social media**

Within today's digital world online presence of the company is just as important as the physical one. Online users have their specifics and they require different kind of corporate attention.

According to the GAP example of a failed attempt for rebranding, the social medias like Facebook and Twitter were in the very core of their failure. Company's customers used those two platforms to share their negative vision about the new corporate look.

Company's website is not different. Marketing manager should be very picky what kind of information is actually stored on their corporate websites. An outdated information might lead to confusion and push away not only customers but business partners as well.

Imperia Mobile have seen this potential issue and to avoid it, they have created a brand-new website to correspond with the new corporate vision, mission and values.

CONCLUSION

Rebranding is a complex process that companies should be extremely cautious when performing. However, it might be a necessary exercise when regional companies are trying to make a global expansion.

In order to achieve the goal of this thesis there were two main points which had to be performed: first, a descriptive literature review in order to help with the theoretical explanation of the problem formulation and analysis, in order to give more practical and industry-oriented point of view. Then the case of Imperia Mobile was defined in order to give an example of a real emerging market company which uses the techniques of the rebranding strategy to make an international expansion.

This study main goal is to answer the following two research questions:

RQ 1: What should outsourcing companies from emerging markets consider even before start thinking of changing their brand identity in response of going global?

Based on the literature review theoretical knowledge and the analysis chapter the main consideration points were formed in the following recommendations:

- 1) Plan the rebranding process extremely carefully;
- 2) Take in consideration the trivial tasks as they may become big;
- 3) Internal communication;
- 4) External – Partners-oriented communication

RQ 2: Which are the main factors that outsourcing companies should take into account during the execution of the rebranding strategy?

With the help of theoretical overview, the presented examples in the analytical part and the interview with the business development manager of Imperia Mobile, the main factors during the execution of the rebranding process were formed in the following recommendations:

1. External communication – customers;
2. Specific and directed marketing activities;
3. External Feedback;
4. Online presence.

References

A

- Abratt, R. and Kleyn, N. (2011). "Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: reconciliation and integration". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 46, p. 1048-1063
- Appel-Meulenbroek, R., Havermans, D. and Janssen, I. (2010). "Corporate branding: an exploration of the influence of CRE". *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, Vol.12, p. 47-59

B

- Balmer, J. and Gray, E. (2000). "Corporate identity and corporate communications: creating a competitive advantage". *Industrial & Commercial Training*, Vol. 32, p. 256-61
- Bryman, Alan and Bell, Emma (2007). "Business Research Methods". 2nd Edition Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Burrell and Morgan (1979). "Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis – Elements of the Sociology of Corporate Life". Ashgate Publishing Company, ISBN: 0566051486
- Burt, S. and Sparks, L., (2002). "Corporate Branding, Retailing and Retail Internationalization". *Corporate Reputation Review*, p. 194-212

C

- de Chernatony, L. (2006). "From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation". 2nd ed., Elsevier, Oxford.
- Clifton et al. (2003). "Brands and Branding". The Economist in association with Profile Books LTD, ISBN 1 86197 664 X
- Collange, V. (2015). "Customer reaction to service rebranding". *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 22, p. 178-186
- Collins, A. J. and Fauser, C.J.M. B. (2005). "Balancing the strengths of systematic and narrative reviews". *Human Reproduction Update*, Vol. 11, p. 103-104.

E

- Ekinci, Y., Nam, J, and Whyatt, G. (2011). "Brand Equity, Brand Loyalty and Consumer Satisfaction". 'Annals of Tourism Research', Vol. 38, p. 1015

F

- Faircloth, J.B. (2005). "Factors influencing non-profit resource provider support decision: applying the brand equity concept to non-profit". *Journal of Marketing Practice and Theory*, Vol. 13, p. 1-15
- Faisal, M. and Raza, S. (2016). "IT outsourcing intent in academic institutions in GCC countries. An empirical investigation and multi-criteria decision model for vendor selection". *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, Vol. 29, p. 432-453
- Fink, D. and Shoeib, A. (2003), "Action: the most critical phase in outsourcing information technology", *Logistics Information Management*, Vol. 16, p. 302-311.
- Foster, C., Punjaisri, K., and Cheng, R. (2010). "Exploring the relationship between corporate, internal and employer branding". *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, p. 401-409

H

- Ha, H. and John, J. (2010). "Role of customer orientation in an integrative model of brand loyalty services". *The service Industries Journal*, Vol. 30, p.1025-1046
- Harris, F. and de Chernatony, L. (2001). "Corporate branding and corporate brand performance". *European Journal of Marketing*, p. 441-456
- Hatch, M.J. and Schultz, M. (2003). "Bringing the corporation into corporate branding". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37, p. 1041-1064
- Heding, T., Knudtzen, C.F. and Bjerre, M. (2009). "Brand Management: Research, Theory and Practice". Routledge, London.
- Heskett, J., Sasser, E. and Schlesinger, L. (1997). "The Service Profit Chain: How Leading Companies Link Profit and Growth to Loyalty, Satisfaction and Value", New York: Free Press

K

- Kay, M. (2006). "Strong brands and corporate brands". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 40, p. 742-60.
- Knox, S. (2004), "Positioning and branding your organization", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 105-15.
- Kotler, P., Adam, S., Brown, L. and Armstrong, G. (2003). "Principles of Marketing", 2nd ed., Prentice-Hall, Frenchs Forest.

Kuada, John (2010). "Research Methodology. A Project Guide for University Students". Samfundslitteratur, Centre for International Business Department of Business Studies, Aalborg University, September 2010, ISBN: 978-87-593-1554-5

L

Lazarevic, V. (2012). "Encouraging brand loyalty in fickle generation Y consumers". *Young Consumers*, Vol. 13, p. 45-61

Le, A., Cheng, J., Kuntjara, H. and Lin, C. (2014). "Corporate rebranding and brand preference. Brand name attitude and product experience as moderators". *Asia-Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, Vol. 29, p. 602-620

Lee, H., Lee, C. and Wu, C. (2009). "Brand image strategy affects brand equity after M&A". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45, p. 1091-1111

M

Martinez, E. and de Chernatony, L. (2004). "The effect of brand extension strategies upon brand image". *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 21, p. 39-50.

Matthiesen, I. and Phau, I. (2005). "The "Hugo boss" connection: achieving global brand consistency across countries". *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 12, p. 325-338

McDonald, M., de Chernatony, L. and Harris, F. (2001). "Corporate marketing and service brands: moving beyond the fast-moving consumer goods model". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 35, p. 335-52.

Muzellec, L. and Lambkin, M. (2005). "Corporate rebranding: destroying, transferring or creating brand equity?". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 50, p. 803-824

O

Opuni, F., Baffoe, M. and Adusei, E. (2013). "The Effectiveness of Rebranding as a comparative study of Ghanaian Business Using the Principles of Corporate Rebranding". *Journal of Marketing and Management*, Vol 4. p. 69-77

P

Petticrew, M. and Roberts, H. (2008). "Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide", John Wiley & Sons, ISBN: 1405150149

Pillai, A. (2012). "Corporate branding literature: a research paradigm review". *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 19, p. 331-343

R

Roy, D. and Banerjee, S. (2007). "CARE-ing strategy for integration of brand identity with brand image". *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, Vol. 17, p. 140-148

Roy, S. (2011). "Brand Loyalty Measurement: A Framework". *Journal of Indian Management*, April-June 2011, p. 112-122

S

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009). "Research methods for business students". New York: Prentice Hall, ISBN: 978-0-273-71686-0.

Simoos, C. and Dibb, S. (2001), "Rethinking the brand concept: new brand orientation", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 6, p. 217-24.

Souiden, N., Kassim, N.M. and Hong, H.J. (2006), "The effect of corporate branding dimensions on consumers' product evaluation: a cross-cultural analysis". *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 40, p. 825-845

Stuart, H. and Muzellec, L. (2004). "Corporate makeovers: Can a hyena be rebranded?". *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 11, p. 472-482

Sustar, B. and Sustar, R. (2005). "Managing marketing standardization in a global context". *Journal of American Academy of Business*, Vol. 7, p. 302-309

U

Uncles, M., Dowling, G. and Hammond, K. (2003). "Customer loyalty and customer loyalty programs". *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 20, p. 294 – 316.

X

Xie, H.Y. and Boggs, D.J. (2006). "Corporate branding versus product branding in emerging markets: a conceptual framework". *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 24, p. 347-364

Others

CompTIA's "IT Industry Outlook 2017" report – <http://comptia.org> (last accessed on 05.06.2017)

Deloitte's "2017 Technology Industry Outlook" report – <http://deloitte.com> (last accessed on 05.06.2017)

STATISTA "IT Outsourcing" dossier – <http://statista.com> (last accessed on 05.06.2017)

DC Official Press Release (2016) - <http://www.dccomics.com/> (last accessed on 05.06.2017)

Gorackowski, S. (2017) - <http://ervinandsmith.com> (last accessed on 05.06.2017)

Hardy, T. (2013) - <http://www.canny-creative.com> (last accessed on 05.06.2017)

Imperia Mobile website (2017) – <http://www.imperiamobile.com> (last accessed on 10.04.2017)

Upnetix website (2017) – <http://www.upnetix.com> (last accessed on 06.06.2017)

Appendix

Appendix 1 Literature review articles table

Author & Year		Title	Region of publication	Type of Study	Description
1	Appel-Meulenbroek et al. (2010)	Corporate branding: an exploration of the influence of CRE	Netherlands	Empirical	The purpose of this paper is to understand how corporate real estate (CRE) can add value to corporate branding and how corporate branding strategies for CRE can be determined.
2	Burt and Sparks (2002)	Corporate branding, retailing and retail internalization	Scotland	Conceptual	This paper discusses examples from the field of corporate branding, retailing and internalization, raising issues about the interaction of these interlinked areas and about the future research agenda.
3	Clifton et al. (2003)	Brands and branding	UK	Book	This book aims to bring greater understanding into the complex and emotive area of branding.
4	Collange (2013)	Consumer reaction to service rebranding	France	Empirical	The aim of this research is to understand consumers' reactions to brand name changes in the service sector.
5	Ekinci et al. (2011)	Brand equity, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction	South Korea	Empirical	This study aims to investigate the mediating effects of consumer satisfaction on the relationship between consumer-based brand equity and brand loyalty in the hotel and restaurant industry.
6	Foster et al. (2010)	Exploring the relationship between corporate, internal and employer branding	UK	Conceptual	This paper strives to define the corporate branding concept as placing an emphasis on employees' attitudes and behaviours.
7	Griffin (2002)	To Brand or Not to Brand? Trade-offs in Corporate Branding Decisions	USA	Conceptual	This paper presents a framework for managers that identifies critical internal and external, dual-acting, pressures affecting strategic branding decisions.
8	Ha and John (2010)	Role of customer orientation in an integrative model of brand loyalty in services	UK	Empirical	This study attempts to model the development of brand loyalty by examining the simultaneous effects of customer orientation, perceived quality, brand associations, and satisfaction on brand loyalty
9	Latif et al. (2014)	A conceptual framework to build brand loyalty in the	Malaysia	Conceptual	In this paper, authors have summarized the literatures on currently prevailing concepts

		modern marketing environment			and approaches on brands that allows them to identify the necessary components of brand loyalty, and therefore will help companies and business enterprises to improve their marketing efficiency.
10	Lazarevic (2012)	Encouraging brand loyalty in fickle generation Y consumers	Australia	Conceptual	The purpose of this paper is to argue that marketers need to create a relationship between their brand and generation Y consumers through various steps in order to increase brand loyalty of this notoriously disloyal segment.
11	Le et al. (2014)	Corporate rebranding and brand preference Brand name attitude and product expertise as moderators	Taiwan	Empirical	The purpose of this paper is to investigate the moderating roles of brand name attitude and product expertise on the impact of different corporate rebranding strategies on consumer brand preference.
12	Lee et al. (2009)	Brand Image strategy affects brand equity after M&A	Taiwan	Empirical	The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the variance of two brand images and dimensions of brand equity after M&A, especially when the acquirer-dominant is affiliated to a weak brand image and the acquired one has a stronger brand image.
13	Muzellec and Lambkin (2005)	Corporate rebranding: destroying, transferring or creating brand equity?	Ireland	Conceptual	This paper sets out to understand the drivers of the corporate rebranding phenomenon and to analyse the impact of such strategies on corporate brand equity.
14	Opuni et al. (2013)	The Effectiveness of Rebranding as a comparative study of Ghanaian Business Using the Principles of Corporate Rebranding	Ghana	Conceptual	This research has been set out to investigate the contribution of a recent rebranding exercise undertaken by Vodafone Ghana, Ghana Commercial Bank (GCB) using the Principles of Rebranding proposed by Merrilees and Miller (2008).
15	Roy (2011)	Brand Loyalty Measurement. A framework	India	Conceptual	Brand loyalty audit framework is proposed in this research paper. This model uses a tri-dimensional approach to brand loyalty, which includes behavioural loyalty and the two components of attitudinal loyalty – the emotional and the cognitive.
16	Roy and Benerjee (2014)	Identification and measurement of brand identity and image gap: a quantitative approach	India	Empirical	This paper aims to offer a quantitative methodology to identify and measure the gap between the communicated brand identity and perceived brand image by channel members and the consumers.

17	Souiden et al. (2006)	The effect of corporate branding dimensions on consumers' product evaluation. A cross-cultural analysis	Japan	Empirical	The paper aims to investigate both Western and Eastern corporate branding thoughts and examine the interrelation among four corporate branding dimensions and their joint impact on consumers' product evaluation.
----	-----------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------	-----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Appendix 2. Interview with Yulian Atanasov – Business Development Manager in Imperia Mobile (Upnetix)

Q1: What triggered the need to rebrand?

Well, we decided to rebrand Imperia Mobile to Upnetix because we wanted our company name, brand and identity to better reflect our services and our business model. We saw that Imperia Mobile in some cases didn't give correct information to our customers as a name, because for example some people thought that we are telecom because of the "Mobile" word, others that we make only mobile apps which is not the case because we make other solutions. Moreover, we wanted to distinguish, to cut the ties with Imperia Online which is our sister company and focus only on building Upnetix brand mainly because we are self-sustaining company with our own resources, our own budget. Our employees also have the need to feel as part of this company and not as a part of Imperia Online.

Q2: How did you prepare for the rebranding process? And what were the first things you did?

To be honest, the rebranding process was way more difficult than we thought. There were a lot of things that we didn't anticipate when we first started the process. Our first steps were:

8. Make a final decision to rebrand;
9. Start working on a detailed plan;
10. Choose a new name
 - d. Choose a catchy, short name
 - e. Check if the internet domain is available;

f. Reflect that we are software company

11. Prepare an internal and external plan

- Internal - all processes that are going to be inside the company and affecting only the employees;
- External - communication with our customers and partners
- Create a logo, company colors, a website reflecting the services and solutions that we are offering. We needed a more corporate-looking website.
- Business cards, notebooks, pens and all the other branding materials;
- Hired an external PR agency to help us with the external communication and guide us through the process.

It was mainly to make our services and solutions more visible to the customers. It was more customer and business recognition and aware.

Q3: Which were the main factors that you have taken into account before the actual start of the rebranding process?

The main factors, first of all is how your colleagues are going to react on the new change, because they don't know why we are changing. We also did company restructuring as we changed from Limited company to Joined-Stock company. We needed to address this in a right way to our colleagues which is really important to be done correctly, in order to not to give them wrong message because they might think that their jobs are at risk or somebody is buying the company. Some of them had to sign new contracts or not. You have to consult with legal advisors in some situations. We therefore, organized a party to announce the new brand, which was very successful because of the employees liked it a lot. This was also one of the things that we had to organize very carefully.

In terms of B2B and mainly our client communication we had to be very careful how first inform our current clients for the rebranding. Some of them had to sign new contracts with us. We wanted to be very clear why we are rebranding.

In terms of potential new customers, because we've changed our website we had to very clear that they know that Imperia Mobile is rebranding to Upnetix, because while doing a Google search for example, they might come across information about Imperia Mobile and they might start wondering if this is the same company, a new one or something else.

We had to work hard on the content on our website and how we describe what we do because that was initially one of the reason behind the rebranding - changing the brand identity.

Q4: What were the main issues that you faced during the rebranding process?

The main issue was that we didn't take into consideration a lot of small tasks that we had to do, which at the end let, not to a delay, but to rescheduling the announcements.

- **Can you give me an example of such a small task?** - Well, all the rebranding materials that had to be designed like pencils, pens, business cards, notebooks, etc. They need time to prepare, design, order. The content of the website took quite a while to prepare, the development of the website was also quite challenging.

In terms of budget, I think we were able to fit within the budget. We did most of the work ourselves. All the t-shirts, pens, etc., they had to be ordered anyway so we didn't consider that as part of the rebranding costs. Probably, the PR agency was not something that we have planned at first, but they helped us a lot with the external communication and organization of events

Q5: Now that the rebranding process is /almost/ over, would you do something different, if you were about to start it now?

Yes, definitely! One of the things is the planning because initially we didn't know all the steps that are going to be necessary. Then the internal communication could have been performed better

before the rebranding was announced because some of them were wondering until the end why are we rebranding what is changing. There were rumors. We handled it good at the end but we could have done that earlier. Finally, the content of the website could have been done earlier because it was finalized in the last minute.